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Implications of Colonially Determined Boundaries in (West) Africa: the Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin in Perspective

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IMPLICATIONS OF COLONIALLY DETERMINED BOUNDARIES IN (WEST) AFRICA: THE YORUBA OF NIGERIA AND BENIN IN PERSPECTIVE

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IMPLICATIONS OF COLONIALLY DETERMINED BOUNDARIES IN (WEST) AFRICA: THE YORUBA OF NIGERIA AND BENIN IN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the Nigeria – Benin international boundary, around the Yoruba geo-cultural space. The primary research question, which the study is centred on, is the assessment of the impact of partition on the Yoruba identity and group relations

The study relies on the multidisciplinary approach in the analysis of the boundary and the people it partitions. Multidisciplinarity is particularly required for such a study as this in order to accommodate the various nuances, which a specific disciplinary approach would not be able to adequately cater for.

The methodology utilised in answering the research question was the historicised case-study, which relied on field work in the specific borderland communities astride the Nigeria – Benin boundary as well as archival research. It also relies on a content analysis of the news media as well as government publication. The secondary sources of data are collected from extant literature on the theme of African boundaries.

The study finds that contrary to the expectation in the research literature that the partition would have a disruptive effect on the Yoruba, the peculiar characteristics of the group created a buffer, which resisted change. Thus, the Yoruba identity has remained relatively unscathed by the forces of colonisation and contrasting socialisation processes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPC…………………….All African Peoples' Conference

AfDB/OECD....................Africa Development Bank/ Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development

AHG……………………..Assembly of Heads of Governments

AU………………………African Union

AUBP……………………African Union Border Programme

BBC……………………...British Broadcasting Corporation

CEAO…………………….Communaute Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

CFAF…………………….Communaute Financiere Africaine Franc

CIA………………………Central Intelligence Agency

COPAZ…………….……Co-Prosperity Alliance Zone

CSSDCA………...……….Conference on Security Stabilisation Development and

Cooperation in Africa

ECOWAS………………...Economic Community of West African States

EU………………………...European Union

FCO……………………....Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FGD……………………....Focus Group Discussion

GDP……………………....Gross Domestic Products

IBRU……………………...International Boundaries Research Unit

ICJ………………………...International Court of Justice

ICRC……………………...International Committee of the Red Cross

IDIs………………………..In-depth Interviews

IMF………………………..International Monetary Funds

INRAM………………….....Institut pour la Recherce d'Application des Methode

de Develeppement

INSAE…………………....Institut Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Analyse

Economique

LARES…………………....Laboratoire d'Analyse Regionale et d'Expertise

Sociale

NAL………………………National Archives, London

NATO…………………….North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OAU………………………Organisation of African Unity

RECs ……………………...Regional Economic Communities

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original research work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any tertiary institution, including university. Materials from published and unpublished works of others, which are quoted in this thesis are duly referenced and credited to the author. Even where contributions of others are involved, like in interviews and discussions, every effort is made to indicate this.

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Glory of God

and

My family: Imo my wife and lovely daughters, Oluwadayomi, Toluwalase and

Ayotunde

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

International boundaries in Africa are colonial creations; they were deliberately determined by rival colonial authorities following intensive struggles and competitions for territories all over the continent. Although boundaries everywhere are artificial and largely arbitrary and forcefully imposed, the magnitude, duration as well as the process of boundary making in Africa make its case more dramatic and problematic (Anene, 1970; Asiwaju, cited in Anderson, 1996). Unlike in Europe[1] where the evolution of boundaries was gradual and evolved essentially, over three centuries,[2] the delimitation of African boundaries was completed in less than three decades.[3] Though the boundaries were determined in a hurry, this did not pose as many problems as the fact that they were imposed with little or no consultation with the Africans. Thus, the supposedly self-determined boundaries that predated the colonial intervention were undermined. The emergent boundary regime, among others, dismembered several pre-existing ethnic groups into two or more nation-states (Coleman, 1958; Hargreaves, 1963 and 1984; Anene, 1970; Asiwaju, 1985 and 2001; Phiri, 1985). Once ethnic groups are divided by state boundaries, the fractions tend to grow along different paths, developing contrasting loyalties, languages, values and economies (Asiwaju, 1985; Sahlins, 1989). Furthermore, in the process of the

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[1] The contemporary state system is European in origin; it was from here that the model was diffused everywhere else, essentially through colonialism.

[2] Even though the Westphalian state emerged from Europe, the boundaries of the European state are not a settled reality. Following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, new state boundaries emerged; and in places like the Cerdanya and Basque regions between France and Spain, state boundaries are still being contested. In other words, the boundary making process is current even at the source of the Westphalian state system.

[3] Interstate boundaries in Africa were determined essentially between 1885 and 1914 by which time the present map of the continent had almost evolved.

colonial determination of boundaries in Africa, some ethnic (tribal) groups were divided into spheres of influence of different colonial lords, some of which were engaged in bitter and fierce competition for territories in one another's spheres of influence.

As boundaries function to separate and exclude, the incidence of identical cultures on both sides of an international boundary holds significant implications for post-partition (post-independent) interstate relations in Africa. Ethnic loyalties compel inter-group relations whether or not the group is wholly located within a single country or split between countries. Thus, there exists a wide range of relationships between parts of partitioned groups across interstate boundaries in Africa (Phiri, 1985). The corpus of the negative and positive implications of these relationships, including problems of nationality and citizenship, irredentism, trade and commerce, territorial dispute, cooperation and integrative linkages, and so on, is the subject of this study with the Yoruba divided between Nigeria and Benin as the focus.

1.2 Statement of Problem

This study investigates the impact of the colonial partition of the Yoruba divided between Nigeria and Benin. Central to the study is the 'dismemberment' of the Yoruba group and culture area by the colonial boundary that was determined with little or no consultation with the group and whose interests were not part of the consideration in the process (Griffiths, 1986). The fractions fell under different colonial administrations and expectedly followed different developmental trajectories. The fraction in present-day Nigeria fell under the control of Britain while the part in Benin fell under French colonial administration. As the different fractions are exposed to centripetal forces of

integration within the states in which they are located, they are further pulled apart from the part included in the other country (Asiwaju, 1984).

The pertinent research question is what is the impact of the colonial partition on the Yoruba identity? To answer this question, it is necessary to explore related questions and issues, which would further enhance the analysis of the research question. These questions and issues are: did the Yoruba as we have come to know it today exist before the partition? If it did, did the culture area of the group occupy a continuous stretch of territory? Is it possible to talk of disruption of ties by the imposition of boundary? What are the discourses of disruption? Such interrogation is necessary because at the formal level, that is, state/government, the boundary is regarded as the jurisdictional extent of territoriality and sovereignty, separating citizens from aliens; while at the informal level, that is, the people/groups, it could very well be regarded as an administrative line, and no more! People still cross the boundary as though it is not there (Phiri, 1985).

What is responsible for the absence of conflicts and tensions along the boundary in spite of great potentials for irredentism occasioned by the presence of the Yoruba partitioned between the states, contrary to the conventional wisdom in the literature around the time of independence in Africa? Furthermore, there exists a wide range of trans-border below-the-state interactions between members of the partitioned group that may be potentially conflict-prone and inimical to the forging of nationhood in these states, yet this region has been largely conflict free.[4]

Moreover, many early independent African leaders were pan-Africanist in outlook and they sought vigorously for pan-African political integration based on

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[4] Indeed, this boundary line is the most stable among Nigeria's territorial borders.

the revision or eradication of the colonial boundaries as they were regarded as anomalous contraptions that have only succeeded in fostering competition and rivalry rather than cooperation among African states. Yet almost fifty years after independence, these boundaries, as inherited from the colonialists have remained the basis for ordering interstate relations rather than the massive redrawing anticipated by many African and Africanist writers. This study investigates the reasons behind the resilience and stability of African boundaries; the nature of the relationship between parts of a partitioned group and the ensuing inter-state relations between neighbouring states with an ethnic group astride their shared boundary.

In specific terms, the substantive research question which this study attempts to answer is: what has been the impact of partition on the Yoruba identity? The related sub-research questions are:

1. What was the manner of the boundary making process? Were Africans involved in the process? What roles did they play? This question addresses the issues surrounding the debate regarding the roles of Africans in the boundary making process. Were the Yoruba involved in the process of partitioning their territory, would the present map be located where it is presently? In other words, would the Yoruba be partitioned into two had they been actively involved in the negotiations and agreements leading to the determination of the Nigeria – Benin boundary?

2. What are the reactions of the bifurcated people to the boundary and how do they negotiate it? Boundaries are meant to divide and separate, especially those which partitioned homogenous groups into competing spheres of influence. Has the boundary under investigation really functioned as a

rampart, keeping the partitioned fractions of the group apart? How do the Yoruba negotiate it?

3. Unadjusted inherited boundaries were thought, in the years leading to independence and just beyond, to create continental upheavals. Have these expectations come to pass? What are the dynamics of boundary discourse (state versus group perceptions) and how has that affected the function of this boundary in the post-colonial period? What are the consequences of contemporary globalisation on the role of the African boundary?

1.3 Justification of Study

The creations of state boundaries have seldom been the result of democratic consensus or plebiscite (Anderson, 1996). This, and the peculiarity of the determination of boundaries in Africa make its boundaries generally problematic; this is no less so with Nigeria. Even though, there have been no violent disputes with its neighbours,[5] which makes the case with Cameroon over Bakassi the exception, there is abundant evidence that border lines create a wide variety of political tensions, and hold significant potential for conflict. The Somali and Ewe irredentism are ready examples of boundary problems emanating from bifurcated groups. It was expected that West Africa, especially, would face a lot of irredentist agitations given the sheer number of partitioned groups along its boundaries. Yet, the Ewe Irredentism has proved to be the exception rather than the rule. One of the main justifications for this study will be to explore the absence of irredentism and other related problems in West Africa, especially at the Nigeria-Benin axis on the one hand; on the other hand, the study will examine

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[5] With the exception of the Chadian incursion into some northern states in the early 1980s, which almost led to confrontation between Nigeria and Chad, Nigeria has enjoyed peaceful relationship with all its neighbours.

the potentialities for cooperation and integration in the region given its pre-colonial interdependence as well as the bridge-building potentials of boundaries, especially those straddled by identical culture groups.

Although, African boundaries have been subjects of intense analysis since independence, these studies are focused on historical, spatial, economic and legal aspects. However, there has not been much emphasis on the political implications for states that host the partitioned groups as well as the nature of the ensuing inter-state relations. This study seeks to bridge this gap by providing the political implications for the states as well as for the region.

Another major justification for this study is the need to confront received wisdom regarding the pattern of the pre-colonial arrangement of this society. The general trend in the literature appears to follow the conventional wisdom that the pre-colonial spatial arrangement of society in (West) Africa was characterised by identifiably distinct groups. What this position overlooks is that all over Africa, societies were separated from one another by large tracts of unclaimed and unoccupied territories. This presupposes that it was almost impossible to have a continuous spread of a culture area of the extent being claimed for the Yoruba in the literature. This study examines alternative concepts such as dispersal and Diaspora community in understanding the geographical spread of the Yoruba culture area as evidenced by the observable pattern of the location of the group in a disjointed spread from western Nigeria through midland Benin to certain enclaves in Togo.

Furthermore, in recent times, there has been a dearth of academic activities focused on boundaries in Africa contrary to what obtains elsewhere, particularly in Europe. This study therefore is set to provide:

i, the political and international relations dimensions of boundary-partitioned groups and;

ii, an up-to-date analysis of international boundary study in (West) Africa.

1.4 Scope of Study

The study area is the border region (frontier zone) between Nigeria and Benin as well as the region lying just behind it. It corresponds roughly to the South-western part of Nigeria and the east-central part of Benin, that is, the region occupied by the Yoruba in these countries. Yoruba locations in Togo will also be included in the field of study as stated in the methodology. The study adopts a historicised approach, thus, it will cover pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. However, particular emphasis will be on the post-colonial period for the analysis of inter-group, inter-state relations and sub-regional integration.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 presents the general introduction to the thesis. It introduces the theme of the study, the research problem, scope and justification. It also presents an overview of the structure of the study.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the review of extant literature on international boundaries generally, and African boundaries in particular. The function of this chapter is to develop an hypothesis for the thesis to test in answer to the research question. The first section deals with the historical evolution of boundaries in Europe. The next section then considers the approaches to boundary study, which is a reflection of the treatment of boundaries by policy-makers that has curiously shaped the academic research on the subject. Section 3 reviews literature on the evolution of boundaries in (West) Africa following the European Scramble and the Berlin West African Conference. The chapter closes with an examination of

the territorial extent of the Yoruba group, in order to justify the geographic scope of the study.

Methodology, which is a critical aspect of research, is the subject of chapter 3. It begins by justifying the research methodology, as distinct from earlier studies of the subject. It then describes the methods of data collection, using a multidisciplinary approach. The rationale for the research methodology adopted is also provided. Similarly, the limitations of the data collection techniques are also identified.

Chapter 4 sets out the historical background of the study. As the study adopts the historicised case study approach, this chapter provides the historical basis of the study by examining and analysing the consequences of boundary making on the specific Yoruba societies. The chapter is divided into the pre-colonial and the colonial periods, in order to be able to assess the impact of the imposition of boundary and colonial rule on the case study.

The theme of chapter 5 is the consolidation of colonial rule as well as the reactions of the partitioned Yoruba subgroups to foreign rule and territorial differentiation. It examines the different colonial administrations and the impacts of contrasting socialisation processes on the Yoruba group identity and ethnic affinity. It also focuses on the responses of the group to their separation, and subsequent inclusion in competing spheres of influence. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the development of contrasting and competing discourses of the boundary.

Post-colonial interstate relationship is the subject of chapter 6. The purpose of this chapter, relating to the research question, is to examine the impact of the reification of the African border in the post-colonial period on partitioned groups

and interstate relations. It begins with an analysis of the OAU Resolution and its implications for post-colonial interstate relations in Africa. The chapter then examines the relationship between Nigeria and Benin, which it arranges into three stages, highlighting the significance of each stage and the factors that translated one stage into the other. It also considers the 'unofficial-official' discourse of the boundary, which it claims is partly responsible for the inability of the states to effectively control their borders, especially in relations to the sustenance of clandestine cross-border activities.

Chapter 7 investigates the inability of the two states to respond to challenges to their sovereign control over (the Yoruba) border. The chapter demonstrates the disparity between the responses of the state to the border and those of the Yoruba people. It also highlights the impact or otherwise of globalising forces on state sovereignty in this part of West Africa.

Chapter 8 presents the summary and the conclusion, which includes the contributions of the study to the theme of boundary and partitioned groups in Africa. The chapter concludes with an agenda for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2:1 Introduction and Origin of Boundaries

The purpose of this chapter is to review extant literature on international boundaries generally, with a specific focus on African boundaries, especially the Nigeria – Benin boundary. The objective being the development of an hypothesis for the thesis to test in answer to the principal research question. The chapter begins by historicising the contending perspectives on geographical boundaries. Second, it examines the disputations around the concept of boundary. Third, it focuses on colonially-constructed boundaries in Africa, emphasising the making of the boundary between Nigeria and Benin.

Geographically, the notion of boundary is universal (Foucher, 1988); boundary is also an important part of human social organisation (Alexander, 1963; Anene, 1970; Anderson, 1996). Through the ages, boundaries have remained the 'container' by which national space is delineated and 'contained' (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999).

For as long as there has been human society based on territoriality and space, there have been boundaries (Cukwurah, 1967; DeBlij, 1973). Little wonder that boundary studies have been the concern of scholars since classical times, through the middle ages to the present times. Although, the concept has evolved through the ages, from zones of separation to frontiers (no man's land); or border regions and finally to its present form as a finite line of division, it has remained (either as frontier or boundary) a zone/line indicating the extent of the area of jurisdiction of one independent political community in relation to another (Weigert, et al, 1957; DeBlij, 1973). For instance, in the ancient Greek city-state,

boundary was the extent of the city representing the enclave of subjects and slaves who were subject to the rules as well as the protection of the rulers of the city and beyond which were barbarians who were unwelcome and prevented from the city which marked civilisation or citizenship (van Creveld, 1999).

The emergence of modern boundaries as finite delimiters of geopolitical space evolved gradually over the ages, beginning from zones of separation or 'no-man's land', to the frontier, and finally, to the definite 'line on map'. The Treaty of Westphalia and the Enlightenment were crucial to the development of the finite boundary. The Treaty of Westphalia heralded the advent of the modern state system with its requirement for definite territorial sovereignty, while the Enlightenment was a period marked by rationalism, increasing empiricism, reductionism and scientific rigour. In other words, the Enlightenment engendered new ways of thinking, which influenced the contemporary thoughts on territoriality as fixed lines and definite boundaries which were preferred over zonal boundaries (Taylor, 1985). In the medieval period, authority over territory was shifting and overlapping. The transformation of the conception of territoriality involved the merging of delimited territory with exclusive authority (Zacher, 2001: 216). Since then, giant strides have been made in boundary making with the invention of sophisticated survey equipment and mapping methods, which aided the quest for definite boundaries as the juridical limits of territorial sovereignty.

Crucial to the establishment of boundaries as finite delimiters of geopolitical space is the concept of territoriality. Territoriality is the 'attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena or relationships, by delimiting or asserting control over a geographic area' (Sack,

1986: 19). This behaviour is territoriality and the area of control is the territory (Sack, 1983). In other words, territoriality is a 'spatial strategy' which actively uses territory and boundary to 'provide classification, communication and enforcement; it regulates information, symbols, resources and people' (Sack, 1986: 32) by delimiting and asserting control over territorial boundaries. Territoriality is thus characterised by enforcement of control over access to a geographic space as well as to things within it, or to things outside by restraining those within and outside its confines. In other words, territories would be meaningless without the attendant ability to exercise control and ownership, which sovereignty provides.

Foucault's (1977) study of governmentality explains the manner in which states organise practices of control, discipline and exclusion in order to engender unity and homogeneity of the state. This implies that the state is to be regarded as an effect of both disciplinary practices which seek to guarantee the security of its territory by differentiating it from, and securing it against all forms of external threats (Devetak, 1995). Territorial sovereignty forcefully marks the boundary between inside and outside as the limits of the territory denoted by boundaries signifying simultaneously what is external to the states and what is internal to them (Devetak, 1995: 26).

Closely related to the concept of territoriality is the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty implies a superior and absolute authority within a given domain of power. The relationship between territoriality and sovereignty did not evolve until the Treaty of Westphalia when the two concepts were welded together as the nucleus of the modern state system (Taylor, 1985: 96). The Treaty provided for the sovereignty of each state and made provisions against external interference in

the domestic affairs of the state, which was regarded as the first offence of international law. Article 64 of the Treaty of Westphalia states without equivocation that 'and to prevent for the future and Differences arising from in the Politick State, all and everyone of the Electors, Princes and States of the Roman Empire, are so establish'd and confirm'd in their antient[6] Rights, Prerogatives, Libertys, Privileges, free exercise of territorial rights…that they never can or ought to be molested therein by any whomsoever upon any manner of pretence'. In other words, in relation to the state, the Treaty codified the basic principles of territorial integrity, border inviolability, and supremacy of the state (rather than the Church); effectively establishing the basis of territorial sovereignty.

The legal concept of sovereignty was backed by a 'hard shell' of defences, in this instance, the territorial boundaries, which made the violation of territorial sovereignty an international offence demanding collective action, thus becoming the ultimate unit of protection (Taylor, 1985). Ruggie (1989) argues that not until the essence of the newly emergent territorial states was defined by the possession of territory and the exclusion of others did the international system evolve an ordering principle.

To Anderson (1996: 4), the boundary 'acquired a mythical significance in building nations and political identities'. In terms of building nations and political identities, boundaries could be classified into two principal categories, one based on origin and the other on cultural relationship which will further enhance our understanding of the nature and implications of boundaries on divided societies. Alexander (1963) distinguishes between generic and functional classifications of boundaries. The generic classification is based on origin and consists of four types

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[6] Obsolete use for ancient

– physical, ethnic, historical and geometric. The functional classification is based on cultural relationships, which is related to the ethnic type under the generic classification. This classification is anthropological in that it considers boundaries in relation to the human aspect of the landscape such as patterns of settlement, land utilisation and population distribution. This category is sub-classified into: antecedent, superimposed and consequent. For the purpose of this study, this classification, that is, functional (based on cultural relationships) will be explored in detail.

Antecedent boundaries were created before the present cultural landscape developed. The territory had been pre-partitioned before the development of human societies or cultural features of the area, such as the pattern of economic activities, arrangement of roads, settlement patterns and so on. Kapil (1966: 657) contends that antecedent boundaries refer to the situation 'where political boundaries have been formally allocated before human settlement has taken place, or at least before socio-cultural features, such as industrial growth, markets or regions of articulation and movement have had time to develop'. The boundary between the United States and Canada, west of Lake Superior is antecedent (Alexander, 1963).[7] However, contrary to his (Alexander's) claim that many African boundaries are antecedent,[8] boundaries in the continent are superimposed. This is because contrary to antecedent boundary, a superimposed boundary is only delimited after the development of the human pattern of the area had taken place. Such boundaries (often termed *subsequent*) cut through the cultural pattern of the

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[7] The Treaty of Washington settled territorial disputes between the United States and British North America by determining the boundary on the western part of Lake Superior to the Pacific before the development of the human features of the area.
[8] This perception may not be unconnected with the European treatment of Africa, which was regarded as 'unpeopled' and without territoriality in their Scramble for territory and subsequent partitioning of the continent.

area and are thus superimposed on the pre-existing social formations. Boundaries in Africa are superimposed in that these boundaries were established long after the area had evolved established territorial patterns, which the imposed boundaries subsequently disordered. Reader (1997: 127) rightly contends that colonially-superimposed boundaries in Africa 'cut through 177 ethnic culture areas, dividing pre-existing economic and social units and distorting the development of the entire region'.

Could the dismemberment of indigenous African societies have been avoided? Did the colonialists deliberately partition these societies or were attempts made to prevent the division? Some have argued that territorial boundaries should be coterminous with ethnic boundaries, claiming that that would ameliorate the divisive impact of territorial boundaries, as well as the 'suffocating' tendencies arising from the lumping together of disparate groups within the newly contrived states (Soyinka, Mazrui, and wa Mutua, in Asiwaju, 2003). However, would ethnically determined territorial boundaries be problem free? Indeed, in the colonial metropolis, the state is an assortment of diverse ethnic groups that suggests that ethnic based boundaries are simply not the norm.

Yet another level of distinction can be made in the study of boundaries; this is the externally (superimposed) and internally (negotiated) determined boundary. This distinction is of great importance to this study as African boundaries were externally determined. Externally determined boundaries are imposed by outsiders whose own interests are the sole consideration in the partitioning. This is true of interstate boundaries in Africa. As Griffiths submits, 'African boundaries were drawn by Europeans, for Europeans and, apart from localised details, paid scant regard to Africa, let alone Africans' (Griffiths, 1986:

204). Thus, Africans do not consider these boundaries as dividing them, but the colonialists who needed definite lines to distinguish one territory from another (Asiwaju, 1984). On the other hand, internally determined boundaries are those that are consciously determined by the people themselves or their representatives with their interests as the central determinants through treaties, negotiations, cessions, etc, such boundaries are relatively crisis free. On the other hand, externally determined boundaries are those superimposed by foreign powers and interests; they are usually contested and conflict prone.

It is important to note, however, that the manner of the determination of boundaries in Africa was not an exception, but in tandem with the practice of boundary determination everywhere else; either before the African experience or after it. Indeed in Europe (for instance in the Cerdanya and the Basque regions straddling France and Spain) boundaries were superimposed on a previously homogenous culture area, just as was the case in Africa (Sahlins, 1989 and Lancaster, 1987).[9] In the words of Sahlins (1989: 286), 'Cerdans came to identify themselves as either French or Spanish...' For Colley (1992), Britain is an invented nation superimposed onto much older alignments and loyalties; the amalgamation of four politically and culturally distinct peoples – the English, the Scots and the Welsh as well as the Northern Irish into one identity.

Empire building and overseas colonisation was not a novel idea, but an extension of internal colonisation in the metropolis, which pioneered the shifting of boundaries and the establishment of new ones. The question then is: what is so peculiar about African boundaries (seeing that their process of becoming was not

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[9] Though the boundary here was a superimposition, it differed from the African experience by the fact that the determination process involved intricate negotiations and renegotiations between the two governments.

different from the process elsewhere)?

Another category of boundary differentiation in the literature is the conception of boundary as either artificial or natural. Are boundaries natural or artificial? The debate was between two schools: the artificiality school (Weigert, et al, 1957; Asiwaju, 1984; Williams, 2006), and the natural boundary school (Ratzel, 1897; Cukwurah, 1967; Malaka, 1989). The debate has since been settled with the acceptance of the position of the artificiality school.

One may seek to reiterate the artificial boundary position by interrogating the rationale for boundaries and boundary making. Cukwurah (1967) posits that human society began from the most rudimentary form of social organisation made up of several independent bands of people who had no prior contact with one another. As population grew with a concomitant pressure on land, adjoining territories became assimilated until such a point that contact was made with another band or group of people. In this case, there had been no mutually agreed mode of spatial interaction as well as inter-group relations; what followed would be a struggle for space with the weaker group either expelled from the land or assimilated into the stronger group.

On the other hand, as Prescott (1965) claims, boundary negotiation ensued between political communities once a conflict of interest developed or appeared imminent. These conflicting interests may involve territorial contacts and disputations. Boundaries are therefore drawn to eliminate potentially dangerous situations and to secure peace by neighbouring groups. War was prevented between Britain and France in the Niger Basin in the closing years of the 19th century, especially in the hinterland of Lagos where there were protracted territorial contact and struggles until the boundary determination of 1898

(Prescott, 1965: 58). Indeed, the Berlin West African Conference was convened in order to regulate the inter-imperial territorial 'scramble' in Africa to prevent war in metropolitan Europe.

Another reason why boundaries are drawn is the need to gain economic advantage, especially in areas of strategic or economic potential. The international boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon, around the Bakassi Peninsula was only settled following international adjudication by the International Court of Justice in 2002. The Peninsula became a subject of conflict following the discovery of huge deposits of petroleum in an area of ambiguous international boundary. In earlier times, this same boundary had been a subject of intense disputation and negotiation between Britain and Germany with the tropical areas capable of supporting valuable tropical crops as objects of interest (Prescott, 1965).

The danger of a possible loss of autonomy may compel states to negotiate boundary agreements. Prescott (1965) supports this assertion by submitting that states facing imminent defeat in war agree to boundary negotiation in order to retain some degree of independence. 'The Guadalupe-Hildago Treaty of 1848, which ended the Mexican-American war resulted in Mexican territorial concession to America, but did secure Mexican independence in the remaining territory' (Prescott, 1965: 57).

Finally, boundaries become necessary between states in order to regulate administrative matters at the frontier. The frontier is a no man's land and may provide escape routes or a safe haven to offenders or those escaping from financial responsibilities. In order to sort the administrative problems between their colonies in the Gold Coast and Togoland, Germany and Britain negotiated a boundary to demarcate the neutral zone between those colonies (Hertslet, 1896).

Given that the various needs for the determination of boundaries arise out of expediency and are deliberate constructs, consciously and purposely contrived to meet specific social demands, they are artificial. In the words of Williams (2006: 18), boundaries are...'social practices and as such the product of human agency and choice...' which 'requires a rejection of the idea that territorial borders are exclusively ...natural'. Boundaries are only categorised as artificial or natural depending on their use of natural features. Thus, 'natural' boundaries are supposed to follow natural features such as rivers, mountains ranges, ravines, etc, while artificial boundaries are man-made without regard for physical features. Indeed, all boundaries are man-made, whether or not they follow natural features. Artificiality is often used as the 'equivalent for "bad boundaries"' (Weigert, et al, 1957: 93-94). In the same vein, natural boundaries ('as nature intends') are regarded as good.

Having established that (all) territorial boundaries are deliberate social constructs (rather than natural), African boundaries could therefore not be described as 'artificial'. As stated above, these boundaries are only artificial in the sense that they are described as 'bad'. What is a 'good' boundary? What would be required to transform African boundaries into good boundaries? From Lord Curzon's (1907) description, good boundaries would be those that promote peace, while bad ones would be those that provoke (or potentially can provoke) war between neighbours. Again from Curzon, every boundary possesses that dual capacity to either provoke war or to promote peace, depending upon which of these characteristics the state chooses to adopt (Curzon, 1907). In other word, states can choose how to interpret their boundaries either as points of cooperation or conflict highlighting the potential dynamism and malleability of boundary

discourse.

A recent theme in the literature on boundaries is the role of globalisation in the changing nature of boundaries. Some authors have argued that no debate on boundary is complete without examining the concept of globalisation (Brown, 1995, Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999).[10] Globalisation is the compression of space and the resultant *de-delimitation* of territories. Sovereignty as a concept and character of the state has been significantly affected by contemporary globalisation; and if territorial sovereignty is crucial to the bounded space of the state, it follows that the fortunes of boundaries are inevitably linked with those of sovereignty. As Williams (2006: 16-17) asserts, 'if sovereignty declines in importance or changes in its nature, then territorial borders will change too in order to accommodate the need for a "new" sovereignty regime…'. International boundaries have been undergoing considerable changes both in form and in function as a result of the impact of globalisation on the nature and function of sovereignty. Hence, the effect of the disciplinary practice of states to control and differentiate, elucidated by Foucault is hampered by globalisation.[11]

Globalisation is an intensification of an age-old phenomenon in the context of boundaries in Africa. Before, as well as through the colonial period and beyond, Africans never regarded boundaries as finite lines of exclusion, barrier or wall, but as corridors of opportunities, either for trade or expansion (DeBlij, 1973; Reader, 1997; Asiwaju, 2003). Indeed, boundaries (frontiers) were zones of expansion opportunities as they were 'no man's land' (interstices) between political organisations in pre-colonial Africa. However, it is curious to note that

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[10] Globalisation is the theme of Chapter 7 later on.
[11] The emergence and growth of the European Union is one classical example of the redefinition of the nature and role of sovereignty especially as it relates to territorial boundary and citizenship.

the impact of contemporary globalisation on African boundaries has been limited compared to its impact on interstate boundaries in Europe. In other words, sovereignty has remained static in post-colonial Africa while it has constantly been redefined elsewhere. One of the tasks before this study is to examine and analyse the fixation of the state in Africa with the statist, realist approach to sovereignty and territoriality, which reifies the 'artificiality' of territorial boundaries and hampers cross-border cooperation and integration.

As noted above, boundaries everywhere are a social construct; the boundaries of every state are deliberately created. Given that all boundaries are artificial as they are man-made, what makes the African situation extraordinary? The issue with the boundaries in Africa is that they are external impositions; superimposed by outsiders on pre-existing social formations and created with little or no knowledge of the region and completed in a hurry. The externality (superimposition) of the boundaries would not have been a major issue had the process been completed with due regard to the pre-existing social context, involving the leadership of the local population ensuring local details and interests were integral parts of the process. However, in the arrogance of power of the invading, omniscient imperial powers, the deciding factors could not have included local interests or knowledge of the socio-political circumstances of African societies. Again, time was of the essence, especially as territorial boundaries were desperately needed to order inter-colonial (metropolitan) relations. Thus, according to Church (1956: 774-75):

> The key to understanding African boundaries is the speed with which they were defined. Most of them were decided between 1884 and 1919…boundaries drawn on maps by European politicians bore little relation to the physical and even less to the social, economic or political fabric of indigenous societies. Yet, of course, the rapid and

intensive partition of Africa took place when little or no knowledge had been available of the terrain, peoples or economies of the interior. Nevertheless, even if that knowledge had been available, the mood of the statesmen who partitioned Africa was not as to suggest that they would have been willing to use it in their boundary deliberations.

2.2 Approaches to Boundary

International boundaries have been conceptualised across two broad approaches (the Structuralist and the Functionalist), which have influenced their perceptions, both in theory and practice. Structuralism and functionalism refer to the analytical approaches to understanding interactions with the border. For the sake of analytical clarity, actions by the agents of the state, resulting from the embedding of boundary in the political structures of the states are described in this study as being 'structurally induced' behaviour, as distinct from structuralism. On the other hand, functionalism is regarded as behaviour patterns that are typical of those expected to arise from a functionalist understanding of boundary and are classified here as 'practical' behaviour. Most behaviour patterns are a mixture of the two to some extent, however there is more practical activity than there is structurally-induced activity among the Yoruba, suggesting that functional analyses are more persuasive in this case. However, given the primacy of the state in foreign policy, functional analysis alone will be unable to effectively explain boundary dynamics. Hence structuralism is also important as an analytical tool for this study.

It is important to note that a thesis that aims to deploy both approaches faces certain challenges, that is the difficulty of producing results likely to lead to theory-building that stresses parsimony and predictive power. However, these challenges are overshadowed by the ability of the thesis to offer a far richer explanatory account of events that will serve as a more accurate basis for identifying currently rising and falling trends in behaviour related to the core issue

of Yoruba identity that will enable some predictions about the future trajectory of that identity's development to be made. These are not of the dependent-independent variable, type, but are more hermeneutic in character.

This section examines these approaches, highlighting the difference between them as well as their appropriateness to the understanding of boundaries and partitioned groups. Given the tendency of behaviour patterns at the border to be both practical and structurally-induced, as well as the centrality of the state in the border decision-making process, this section concludes that some form of synthesis between these approaches is required for a proper understanding of the dynamics of the border, the borderland and the borderland peoples.

2.21 The Structuralist Approach

The Structuralist approach manages a state's boundaries with 'one rule for all' policies, while the Functionalist approach employs integrative trans-border mechanisms to manage everyday trans-boundary realities of the borderland peoples (Stoddard, 2002: 45). In other words, the Structuralist treatment of boundaries is a state-centric approach whose exclusive preoccupation is with the maintenance of the sanctity of the integrity of the state while other considerations are relegated to the background. On the other hand, the Functionalist approach views boundaries from the perspective of the people whose interests are secondary or ignored in the statist approach. The Structuralist approach focuses on the *high politik* of the realist school of international relations while the Functionalist perspective is centred around issues of *low politik*

The government/state regards boundaries as an immutable feature of the state from which the character and essence of the state derives; it marks the extent

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of its territorial jurisdiction, beyond which are foreigners whose access into the state must be controlled and within which are citizens who must be protected and provided for (van Creveld, 1999). For the state and state elite, boundaries are a powerful 'ideological symbol' of national unity and represent a crucial component of the national interest (Anderson, 2001: 220). To the Structuralist, international boundaries are barriers and filters, separating foreigners from nationals. Conversely, to the group and people separated by international boundaries, ethnic loyalties compel inter-group relations whether or not the group is wholly located within a single country or split among countries (Phiri, 1985). To them, lines of political jurisdiction halt at fixed national boundaries, while those of economic, social and cultural activities must continue beyond such strictures. This is underscored by the everyday realities of the borderland people: price differential and opportunity for cross-border arbitrage, the need to visit kith and kin, religious shrines, farmlands, and so on across the boundaries make boundary crossings (largely unauthorised and therefore, illegal from the perspective of the state) inevitable. Thus, the dynamics of interactions among borderland people requires cross-border movement of people and goods as though the boundaries are non-existent.

The Structuralist approach regards the international boundaries of the state as the juridical extent of state territory and sovereignty. Contemporary territorial sovereignty focuses on international boundaries as the points at which a state's territorial competence finds its ultimate expression (Sahlins, 1989: 2). Thus, central to the Structuralist approach in the study of international boundaries are the twin concepts of territoriality and sovereignty. The Structural approach reifies the doctrine of territorial integrity, which refers to a preoccupation of the state

with the issues of self-preservation and accumulation of power aimed at maintaining territorial and political continuity (Losch, 1954: 200). The approach is hinged on three core hypotheses (Stoddard, 2002: 42):

1. Nation states are homogeneous coercive entities where all subgroups accept their respective national goals and objectives;
2. Formulating policies affecting the survival of the state is the exclusive preserve of national leaders with the basic assumption that interests of the various sections are aggregated as the interests of the state;
3. The singular function of every international boundary is the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the state it encloses. The responsibilities of national leaders include the preservation of territorial integrity by protecting the people and its land from external encroachment.

Many studies on boundaries have employed this approach. Solutions to boundary related issues are examined within the Structuralist framework of national sovereignty (Boggs, 1940; Kristof, 1959; Prescott, 1965 and 1970). However, this approach has proved inadequate in the study of boundaries, particularly those that partition previously existing homogeneous culture groups. The preoccupation of the approach with the maintenance of territorial integrity over every other consideration ignores the every day realities of the people around the boundary region as well as the age-old history of relationships and affinities that had existed prior to the colonial demarcation, which colonisation and subsequent (independent) state system have not been able to completely eliminate.

Another important criticism of this approach is its assumption that state and society, or state and nation are necessarily synonymous or coterminous and therefore, the application of 'one-rule-for-all' approach of the state. This assumption informs the aggregation of the interests of the people by the political elite as the interests of the states. In other words, the interest of the state in

policing (and maintaining) the boundary is equated with the interests of the people. However, this attitude is constantly queried as the same people cross the same boundary for sundry reasons and circumvent state policies in spite of the strictures imposed by the state. This dichotomy in perception between the state/government on one hand, and the people/groups on the other and subsequent policy by the state have contributed in no small measures to the failure of the Structuralist approach in transforming the barrier challenge of boundaries (which are often conflict prone) to cooperative and integrative advantages.

Another challenge for this study is the analysis of the contrasting perspectives between the state (and government) and the society (people); highlighting the implications of such situations for both the state and the people as well as for interstate relations.

2.22 The Functionalist Approach

The Functionalist approach to the study of boundaries developed as a reaction to the failure of the Structuralist school in the study of boundaries. It takes off on the premise that certain research endeavours could not be effective if restricted to formal institutions, but they must spread to include informal groups and organisations (Jones, 1967: 10). Functionalism involves the employment of sociological and anthropological techniques and conceptual frameworks in the understanding of certain political phenomena which traditional political science techniques alone would not be able to adequately address. It provides tools for the analysis of informal, non-institutional politically relevant activities; it reduces value orientation to an insignificant degree; it is concerned principally with what happens, and not such ethical judgment as what ought to happen (Jones, 1967).

The Functionalist approach, contrary to the Structuralist views boundaries as points of 'differential converters' to ameliorate socio-economic and political differences between people and institutions across international boundaries. It is 'based on the doctrine of mutual necessity or symbiotic reciprocity, which promotes cooperation and integration' (Stoddard, 2002: 45). It acknowledges and employs informal functions and affinities between people straddling a bi-national boundary. This becomes important when the people across the boundary are of the same stock that the delimitation of the boundary had partitioned in the first instance. Asiwaju (1984) refers to such groups as vivisected, that is, de-linked parts of the same body which would always seek reunification, or at least, some form of re-linking. The perspective promotes permeable boundaries, which allow unfettered mutual cross- boundary interchanges.

The Functionalist approach is a dynamic view of contemporary boundaries based on land-use and ownership customs. At the primitive stage of the development of human social organisations, primeval societies were essentially nomadic. They frequently moved about in tribal bands in search of fruits and game as well as land to be used in the simplest form of tillage. Life was essentially insecure, 'nasty, brutish and short'. Travels and communications were hazardous and hampered by natural obstacles and wild beasts (Cukwurah, 1967: 10-11). In their continuous search for fertile land, they came into contact with other groups from whom they must have been separated by natural barriers. Competition and conflicts necessarily ensued over access to land and other resources. Subsequently, some forms of crude limits of territories were worked out, usually in the form of frontier zones insulating neighbouring groups from each other. In these buffer zones, a whole range of interactions including

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annexation (of the frontier) went on without necessarily violating each other's designated ancestral lands or territoriality (Stoddard, 2002). When modern state boundaries (with precise locations and as the absolute limits of state territoriality) were imposed in the New World, Africa and much of the Third World, frontier zones disappeared but indigenous borderland peoples continue to use them in surmounting the disruptive impact of boundaries as well as exploiting them for economic gains through trans-border arbitrage among others.[12]

The Functionalists view frontier networks as continuous trans-boundary linkages, the so called 'cultural borderland'; a permanent non-state system for coordinating activities of contiguous cultural areas separated by colonial boundaries. Since boundaries in Africa are colonial impositions with little or no regard for pre-existing boundary situations, local trans-boundary cooperation usually subsists in spite of the structurally-induced strictures imposed by states. Momoh (1989) identifies the maximum interaction frontier zone as one of three frontier interaction zones, which is one where two cultures overlap or where one culture area had been partitioned by international boundary but continues as though the boundary was non-existent. Thus, long after the determination of the boundary, trans-boundary interactions continue even though they may not be sanctioned by the states (Stoddard, 2002: 60). Apparently, state policies would be geared towards the production of a zero-frontier where absolute control of the territory can be maintained.

There are three fundamental postulations of the Functionalists on boundaries

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[12] At the time of colonial rule in Africa, many African societies had developed highly organised indigenous political structures based on territoriality. In other words, political societies in Africa were not at the primeval stage of hunting and gathering as pre-colonial Africa was home to a number of empires and kingdoms. However, the traditional African conception of territoriality was different from the European conception, characterised by definitive lines on the ground (see Kehinde, 2008b)

(Stoddard, 2002: 62), namely:

1. A contemporary nation-state is made up of a sundry array of interest groups and social classes as well as a complex mosaic of ethnic, racial and religious categories
2. Trans-boundary interfaces involving cultural, economic, political and ideological influences preserve important channels of communication between local populations straddling international boundary. These local informal networks allow local authorities to coordinate common regional goals while reducing bi-national tensions between the states.
3. Whenever centrist structural policies for the borderland are ineffective, local functional practices are employed in attempts to find solutions to current border problems. Regional and local jurisdictions, more familiar with chronic boundary irritations are more appropriate to support functional policies which reflect realistic solutions to boundary problems.

These functional assumptions about the nature of boundary are important in the understanding of the primacy attained by functionalism over structuralism in boundary studies in recent years. While the Structuralists believe that the nation-state is coterminous with the society and as such, collective policies are made on such bases which have had grave repercussions for the borderland people and regional integration, Functionalists on the contrary see the modern state as being comprised of a mosaic of interests and social groups. State decision makers must necessarily factor in these multifarious interests and aspirations in the decision making process about boundaries and borderland people.

To the Structuralists, the singular function of the boundary is territorial maintenance with its attendant separation and exclusion tendencies. Indeed, to this school of thought, any amount of 'boundary leakage' is a measure of the state's ineffectiveness in asserting its territoriality. This perception of boundary by the state fosters rival territoriality and competition between neighbouring states that should rather be involved in cooperative and symbiotic relationships. Unauthorised trans-boundary movements intrinsic to the nature of borderland

people, especially those separated by the boundary are considered as grave crimes against the state. However, the Functionalists advocate permeable boundary to cater for the realities of everyday interactions with the boundary by people who live along and are directly affected by the boundaries. The livelihood of these people are tied to the boundaries as they are largely left to their own devices by the state whose policies toward the border are largely characterised by neglect, as these regions are considered peripheral zones.

The Functionalist approach to boundaries constitutes the crucial component of the perspective adopted by this study as it seeks a community oriented, bottom up approach to understanding boundaries and borderland people. The Structuralist approach with its one rule-for-all approach has proved to be inadequate in understanding and handling the dynamics of every day reality of the borderland people as well as their interactions with the boundary. The Functionalist approach, with its focus on historical, social and cultural linkages and affinities of the people as well as its view of frontier networks as continuous trans-boundary linkages have proved to be very useful for our purpose. As many interstate boundaries in Africa are colonial creations with little or no regard for pre-existing boundary situations, local trans-boundary cooperation usually subsists in spite of the structurally-induced strictures imposed by states. The 'bridge-building' characteristics of functionalism is also instructive for this study in terms of cooperative interstate relations between geographically contiguous states hosting fractions of the same ethnic group partitioned by an international boundary, ultimately fostering sub-regional integration. However, as boundaries remain central to the essence of the state and interstate relations remain a preserve of the central authorities of the state, the Structuralist perspective cannot be completely

discarded in its entirety. Thus, this study adopts a perspective which uses a combination of both approaches- the Structuralist and the Functionalist.

2.3 Determination of African Boundaries

Much of the knowledge available on pre-colonial African history is derived from oral tradition.[13] However, beginning with the Portuguese adventure and subsequent European exploration and colonisation of the continent, African society, history and culture became more actively recorded as the subject of study by explorers, adventurers, colonial officials and missionaries. The implication of this is that this history is recorded with the eye of the stranger, such that what would be correct and normal in the local African context may not make sense to the eighteenth and nineteenth century European. However, there have been attempts by African scholars (especially the Ibadan School[14]) to produce knowledge about the African past in order to present an African account of the history of the continent. The following section details a review of relevant literature on the determination, delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries. The first section of the review considers literature that affirms the disruptive character of the colonially-determined and imposed boundaries, arrived at without the interests and consent of the indigenous peoples. This is followed by a review of the literature that takes an opposing view to the first, that is, that colonial boundary makers did factor-in the interests of the indigenous population in the boundary making process.

Brownlie (1979) presents a comprehensive checklist of African

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[13] Though, oral tradition constitutes the bulk of pre-colonial African history, there are other minor written sources, especially those influenced by Islam. Law (1977: 12) claims that Islam brought Arabic literacy to Yorubaland which facilitated some written records.
[14] Prominent members of the Ibadan School include K. Dike, J. Ade-Ajayi, O. Ikime, E. Alagoa and I. Akinjogbin).

boundaries; the legal documents leading to their determination as well as the diplomatic manoeuvrings between rival imperial states prior to, during and after the determination and delimitation of these boundaries. Brownlie records a significant agreement between France and Britain over communities that were partitioned by the establishment of the boundary between their possessions in the Gulf of Guinea. The agreement virtually acknowledged the fact that the boundary indeed cuts across a homogenous ethnic (culture) area, and care was taken to accommodate any problem ensuing therefrom. Section 3 of the delimitation agreement states:

> The villages situated in proximity to the frontier shall retain the right to use the arable and pasture lands, springs and watering-places where they have heretofore used, even in cases in which such arable and pasture lands, spring and watering places are situated within the territory of the one Power, and the village within the territory of the other (Brownlie, 1979: 171-172).

This provision unambiguously indicates that the boundary so determined by the colonialists disrupted social relationships and patterns of interaction; and provisions were made to ameliorate its divisive impact on the borderland people. The provision was made at the point of the delimitation of the boundary and could not have been influenced by any other consideration but the genuine concerns of the colonial officers to create a boundary with a 'human face'. The question at this point is, in spite of this agreement, was there ever a time that such cross-border exchange was allowed, even during the colonial era? Furthermore, had this section of the agreement been implemented, would it have engendered greater cross-border cooperation between neighbouring states? Why have the post-colonial states not exploited this provision to further the integration of the sub-continent, especially the kind being promoted by the Economic Community of

West African States (ECOWAS)?

Perham (1956) presents a criticism of the manner of the colonial partition of Africa. She claims that boundary making process in Africa was merely a game whose rules were constantly changing depending on the whims of the players. It was a game without referee, whose outcome could be nothing better than the confused and bizarre political maps of contemporary Africa. This arbitrariness was echoed by Sir Claude Macdonald, a member of the pioneering Nigeria-Kamerun boundary survey team when he stated that:

> In those days, we just took a blue pencil and ruler and we put it down at Old Calabar[15] and drew that blue line to Yola…I recollect thinking when I was sitting having an audience with the Emir of Yola surrounded by his tribe, that it was a good thing that he didn't know that I with a blue pencil had drawn a line through his territory. (Macdonald, 1914: 650).

The much trumpeted use of treaties between imperial officers and agents and local rulers as the basis of colonial acquisition of African territories was absent here. What was present was the arbitrary imperial determination of the boundaries of indigenous societies without their knowledge and acquiescence. It represents the arrogance of power of the incomers and synonymous with the proverbial 'shaving of a man's head in his absence'. Given such a scenario as the one described above by Sir Claude Macdonald, it would not be far from the truth to describe such boundaries as bad, especially since this kind of boundary would more likely engender conflict rather than cooperation between the successor states. Indeed, the most protracted and bloody of Nigeria's boundary disputes occurred along this stretch over the Bakassi Peninsula.

Freund (1984) draws on a materialist perspective in examining indigenous

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[15] Indeed, the Anglo German boundary around Old Calabar provides some comic relief! In the delimitation of the boundary, the river, Rio Del Rey had been prescribed as the boundary between the two colonial possessions of Britain (Nigeria) and Germany (Kamerun). However, at the point of demarcation, it was found by the surveyors that no such river existed! The officials of the two Powers then had to devise ad hoc limits to their territories.

social development as well as the implications of contacts with Europe. He traces the evolution of European imperial rule in Africa, highlighting the 'Scramble' and the ultimate partition of the continent. Freund argues that the quest of Europe in Africa in the 19th century was driven by capitalist accumulation, which impelled inter-imperial competition for 'choice' areas in the continent leading to the 'Scramble' and the ultimate 'haphazard' division of its territories. Attempts are made to show that the indigenous population did not fold their arms while their territories were being over-run by the conquering imperialists, but presented a resistance, albeit futile, to the European imposition owing to the superior military and tactical approach. Freund's work is essentially a general reader, drawing inspiration from Marxian political economy.

The challenge posed by Freund for this study revolves around the resultant geopolitical structure (and implications) of the continent following the capital-inspired demarcation of its territories. As capital was the motivation, these boundaries made sense to those who drew them, but do they make any sense to those whose culture area was partitioned and subsequently subjected to immigration and customs control?

Griffiths (1986) presents an analysis of the legacies of colonially ordered boundaries in Africa. Like many others, Griffiths submits that 'boundaries collectively divide the continent into many states and individually divide people…they are sources of international conflicts and affect spatial patterns of economic development' (Griffiths, 1986: 204). For him, African boundaries are traceable to Berlin where the conference to determine the modalities of sharing the territories of the continent among competing European powers was held.

Griffiths contends that the process of arriving at inter-European

boundaries in Africa was 'dehumanising' as it partitioned groups and nationalities into the spheres of influence of different colonial powers and the Africans whose territories were being shared were not stakeholders in the process (Griffiths, 1986). Thus, the emerging boundaries could not have been better than what obtains. Indeed, Griffiths describes African boundaries as haphazard as they are products of foreign impositions benefiting from scant knowledge of the subject territories (Griffiths, 1986). Furthermore, a greater percentage of the boundary lines were determined through a combination of astronomical lines (longitudes and latitudes), straight lines, physical features, arcs and curves. And as human social organisations are hardly configured on these bases, colonial boundaries thus distorted several pre-colonial African societies.

Griffiths argues that the bulk of the territorially-based problems in contemporary Africa are traceable to the manner of the partition of the continent. His contention hinges on the 'dehumanising' effect of these boundaries and their haphazard nature, which have foisted on the continent its economic problems and endemic conflicts (Griffiths, 1986: 204). Illuminating as his work is, Griffiths could be accused of over-simplifying the African predicament. Every predicament cannot be blamed on colonialism, even though it has remained pivotal and epochal, the roots of the African crisis go further back to the era of the slave trade which depleted the continent of the bulk of its active labour force on the one hand. On the other hand, it has been about fifty years since Africans have assumed the reins of power and yet have not been able to undo the perceived evils of foreign domination. Rather, Africa is worse off than it was at the point of independence owing largely to maladministration, corruption and unfair international political economic relations. Indeed, Galtung (1971) in his structural theory of imperialism

blames the problems in Africa on the peripheralisation of the continent as well as the active collaboration between African leaders and those of the West. Furthermore, the claim that conflicts in Africa emanate from haphazard boundary is an exaggeration. Granted, there have been a number of interstate conflicts in Africa since the 1960s, the number is so few considering that over 177 groups (Reader, 1997) are partitioned by its international boundaries. Had boundary been conflict generating in the mould suggested by Griffiths, the whole of the continent ought to be one massive cauldron.

Zartman (1965) explores the dynamics of imperial boundary-making, as well as post colonial territorial politics in Africa. Like other Africanist scholars, Zartman (1965) agrees with the assertion that interstate boundaries in Africa are colonial impositions, foisted on the continent and its peoples by Europeans whose interests were the only determining factors. These boundaries have remained as the basis for ordering interstate relations in Africa, in spite of their inadequacies. Zartman falls into the same trap which many colonial historians and analysts were victims of regarding pre-colonial boundaries in Africa. He argues that pre-colonial African societies were not territorial as finite limits to spatial spread were non-existent (Zartman, 1965: 160). This was probably the same argument projected by would-be colonial officers that Africa was *unterritorial* and as such the principle of effective occupation should be adopted in farming out its territories among *discovering* European powers. It also explains why a segment of the literature about Africa at the time of the colonial penetration and afterwards regards African boundaries as consequent, that is drawn on unoccupied territories which later formed the basis of spatial configuration of these societies.

McEwen's *International Boundaries of East Africa* is a legal analysis of

the boundary-making process in East Africa as well as consequent implications for the successor states. McEwen provides a detailed study of individual boundary lines in East Africa, drawing on the processes involved in their determination in treaties and inter-imperial relations as well as the problems associated with the externally-imposed boundaries. According to McEwen (1971), the reliance on treaties between European powers and African societies as the basis for territorial claims in Africa was a spurious and dubious manipulation of international law. For treaties to be regarded as legal, they must be between subjects of international law, which pre-colonial African societies were not. Resting on McEwen therefore, the European domination of Africa was illegal as it had no legal backing of international law.

McEwen further departs from the general norm in African studies where pre-colonial Africa was thought to be *unterritorial* and devoid of territorial limits with his contention that though 'factual knowledge concerning the territorial limits of African communities in pre-colonial times is often scanty' (McEwen, 1971: 3), there are certain instances which show that the notion of boundaries as foreign cannot be completely accepted. This work focuses on East Africa; however, it mirrors events elsewhere in the continent as the same dynamics were at work all over Africa during colonisation.

Kapil (1966) presents one of the earliest challenges to the received wisdom regarding the conflict potentials of African boundaries. This was a bold initiative in the hey-days of pan-Africanism, and calls for the revision of these inherited 'unnatural' boundaries partly on the grounds of their potentials for conflicts emanating from irredentism and the haphazardness. He agrees with the assertion that African boundaries are exogenous or ahistorical in relation to the

indigenous political history of the societies they demarcate (Kapil, 1966: 659). This consequently creates a disjuncture between the boundaries and locally generated political processes. He claims further that the argument for the conflict potentials of African boundaries hinges on this very fact (Kapil, 1966). However, he argues that certain factors, including un-demarcated or delayed demarcation of boundary lines and an absence of homogenous traditional societies divided by the boundaries mitigates against this perception (Kapil, 1966: 660).

Furthermore, he contends that as the boundaries are relatively recent in origin and were determined rather speedily, the speed involved in the process required that the boundaries be easily defined and quickly agreed upon (Kapil, 1966). As prophetic as Kapil's work has turned out to be, his justification of the European imposition of boundaries which disrupted age-old traditions on the grounds of exigency is an attempt to gloss over the ills of the process of boundary making. As claimed by Griffiths, the boundary making process in Africa was dehumanising and just like colonialism, boundaries have remained epochal in shaping the geo-politics of the continent.

The following set of literature presents a dissenting view of colonial boundaries in Africa, asserting that boundaries determined and imposed are the best possible under the prevailing circumstances and that Africans indeed took part, either actively or passively in the process.

Anene presents a paradox: the need for nation-states to consolidate national unity in spite of a disparate array of incongruous ethnic multiplicity on the one hand, while on the other, there exists a multitude of ethnic and language groups that are separated from their kith and kin by the nature of the European ordered boundaries. The process of national consolidation 'will increasingly

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outrage communities which the boundaries…sundered' (Anene, 1970: 23).

Anene's work presents a sharp departure from the norm: he argues that 'no one who goes through the documentary material of the boundary negotiations for Nigeria will fail to be impressed by the extent to which data on treaty with native rulers including the extensiveness of their states figured in the negotiations' (Anene, 1970: 12). In other words, care was taken by the colonialists to factor into the boundary making process local peculiarities, local interests and pre-existing social order. However, it appears that Anene did not take into consideration the fact that many traditional rulers simply exploited the presence of the Europeans (with superior fire-power) to lay claim to contested territories, or territories they had long coveted but could not attain. An example is the King of Calabar who owing to his advantageous position in the palm trade with the Europeans, laid claim to outlying territories that had never belonged to his domain in his protective treaty with the British (Uzoigwe, 1985). Anene also alluded to treaties between native African rulers and the colonising Powers as a basis of African acquiescence and participation in the process of territorial acquisition by the colonialist. This, to me appears to be an over-simplification of the issue. Independent archival study (depended upon by Anene) shows that indeed some indigenous societies invited the colonial powers to extend their protection to them, but this would not in itself approximate African involvement (Colonial Office, 1812-1880). For many of these societies, the promise of European civilisation (not colonisation), and, more importantly, protection against rampaging and more powerful neighbouring states, were the motivating factors for the invitation. Had the rulers of the societies been aware of the fact that the treaty agreement constituted a ceding of their power and authority to the colonialists, they would

not have gleefully invited them. For instance, the Ijebu of present-day Nigeria refused to have any dealings with the Lagos authorities being aware that it would allow the colonialists the opportunity to take over the political control of the Ijebu Kingdom (Oduwobi, 2004). In spite of the resistance of the Ijebu, they were forcefully incorporated into the emergent Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

Furthermore, Anene's conclusions are at variance with claims raised in his work, especially the portion about 'boundary sundered communities' referred to above. Indeed, field work involving interviews with members of the communities across the Nigeria/Benin boundary shows that the boundary cuts across culture areas of homogenous groups. Anene criticised Perham's analysis of Africa's colonial boundaries as an exaggeration, however, a closer look at Perham's view reflects an objective examination of the subject.[16] Perham had claimed that the boundary making process in Africa was 'a game in which the players on each side changed the rules to suit their position at any given time in the field, and as there was no umpire, confusion and bad temper, with the possibility of something worse, were the inevitable results' (Perham, 1956: 627). Anene (1970: 12) claims on the contrary, that 'the existence of native states and the inclusiveness of their territorial dominion afforded a sort of "umpire", though not necessarily always an effective one'. His assertion is not supported by history as these 'native states' were either defeated or subdued by the superior powers of the European expansionists and thus unable to be at all effective as umpires. Were they to be considered as umpires, of what purpose is an ineffective umpire in a game?

Nugent attempts to present a dissenting view on colonial boundaries in West Africa. His argument hinges on the *assumption* that Africans could not have

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[16] Sir Claude Macdonald's comments recorded above supports this assertion.

been isolated from the boundary making process. This argument is based on what he terms a 'new revisionism' deriving from the questioning of borders elsewhere in the world and the threatened disintegration of many states in Africa.[17] Rather than the threatened disintegration of the state system in Africa being a case for the participation of Africans in the partition of their territories, it is indeed a colonial legacy of external imposition and capitalist exploitation, which was at the roots of the imperialist expansion into Africa.

Nugent's study reiterates the partition of African communities by the colonial imposition of boundaries. All through the chapter are instances of partitioned groups, from the Yoruba between Nigeria and Benin, to the Hausa of Nigeria and Niger, to the Ewe between Ghana and Togo, and so on. The *dissention* he claims in the chapter revolves round the fact that Africans could not have been uninvolved in the process of the making of the boundaries of the continent. However, were Africans involved, either as some kind of umpires or stakeholders in the process, how then do we explain the haphazard and bizarre political map of the continent as well as the groundswell of oppositions to the boundaries by certain African elite, including traditional elite in the years prior to independence? For instance, the *Alaketu* of Ketu (the King of Ketu), a traditional Yoruba kingdom located in Benin Republic was reported as saying that the Nigeria-Benin boundary only partitioned the British and the French, and not the Yoruba (Prescott, 1971: 103-104).[18] The same assertion was made   by the *Onisakete* of Sakete (the King of Sakete), another Yoruba town in Benin

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[17] Indeed, the conventional wisdom has it that the failure of the state in Africa derived from its colonial origin: the lumping together of disparate ethnic nationalities, the deliberate colonial policy of divide and rule, among others, make impossible the emergence of a community from the medley of groups forced into the emergent state in Africa.

[18] This same view was reported to the researcher by the present *Alaketu* during the fieldwork for this study (18.10.2008)

Republic.[19] The present *Alaketu* on a recent visit to Abeokuta, Nigeria reiterated the connection between the Yoruba across the boundary calling for greater relations between the two fractions (Alaketu, on Ogun State Television, 2007).

Herbst (1989) seeks to challenge the current perspectives that African boundaries are haphazard and arbitrary, and contends that the present boundary system represents a rational response by both the colonialists and independent African political leadership. To him, it is paradoxical that in spite of criticisms of external imposition and the partition of pre-existing societies, as well as the high mortality of political institutions in the continent, these boundaries have not only survived but they have been reified as the basis for ordering interstate relations in independent Africa. This, to Herbst, is a mark of the appropriateness of these boundaries as markers of territorial limits.

Herbst glosses over the 'dehumanising' character of such a division excusing it on misinformation and exigency. He draws a linkage between the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-85 and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)[20] as both initiating and sustaining the boundaries respectively. In other words, the inference of his claim is that the OAU ratified what was done at Berlin, thus ascribing credibility to the Berlin misadventure. On the contrary, the decision of the OAU to retain the inherited colonial boundaries as the limits of each state was borne out of the pressing need to contain the inevitable discontent that would ensue were Berlin to be unmade. This singular act of the OAU, rather than being construed as validating Berlin ought to be regarded as the only rational option available to the leadership of an abused and deeply divided continent. In

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[19] Interview with the *Onisakete* in his palace (28.10.2008)
[20] The OAU in its solemn declaration in 1964 had supported the inherited colonial boundaries as reified them as the basis of territorial sovereignty in the continent

other words, how relevant is the OAU declaration of 1964 to the issues of cooperation, peace and security in the continent?

2.4 Evolution of Boundaries in West Africa

Following the abolition of slavery in the early years of the nineteenth century, European interests in Africa were diverted to the more humane transactions aptly regarded as 'legitimate trade'. This new venture in Africa necessarily expanded the scope of European interactions with the continent. Hitherto, while the object of trading was human, European traders did not need to venture beyond the coastal confines of the continent where the human cargoes changed hands from the native traders through middlemen to European traders who cargoed them across the Atlantic. However, with the change from human to legitimate trade, it became necessary that European prospectors, adventurers (discoverers) and missionaries moved beyond the shores into the hinterlands. This adventure into the hinterlands of Africa, albeit, commercially motivated, inadvertently laid the foundation for the partition of the 'dark' continent between rival European powers.

There is a dearth of current research activities and published works on the partition of West Africa, which is indicative of the gap in the literature. What is available, even though dated focuses scanty attention on the impact of the partition on, and the reactions of the local population. As much of early Africa's colonial history was either commissioned by the colonial offices of the respective metropolitan governments or by missionary groups, the lack of attention paid to the impact of colonial rule (in this instance, boundaries) reflected the colonial policy of exploitation and extraction. Indeed, a focus on the population of Africa would be counter-productive to the imperialists as the ills of the partition process

would be bare before the whole world. In spite of this criticism, the literature on the partition of West Africa remains, still, indispensable in the study of African boundaries as they provide source materials to be examined and analysed in understanding the nature of boundaries.

Hargreaves (1963, 1969 and 1974) perhaps presents the most comprehensive study of the partition of West African territories in a trilogy which covers every sphere and imperialist penetration of this part of Africa. Indeed, the most compelling attraction to Hargreaves lies in the fact of his comprehensive examination of the processes and dynamics leading to the partition and the period after it. Hargreaves' works cover all the imperial powers and their interchanges leading to the Scramble, the Berlin West African Conference and the eventual division of the continent. He highlights the bitter rivalries between colonial powers and the subsequent division of the continent. This body of scholarly research presents an 'over-detailed' historiographic account of inter-imperial competitions, the reactions of the local population and the eventual imposition of foreign domination on Africa through spurious and extra-legal treaties on the largely unperceptive and ignorant African potentates.

Hargreaves' work is a spirited effort to tread a path spurned by other Africanist scholars at the time. He seeks to present a dispassionate analysis of the African situation and the processes leading to the partition of the continent as well as the endurance of the emergent boundaries, in spite of their weaknesses. This collection of works remains crucial to the understanding of boundaries in the continent and it provides material which may contribute to further research on the theme.

Prescott (1971) presents a geographical analysis of both Nigeria's

international and regional boundaries. Prescott agrees that the international boundaries were determined at different points during bilateral negotiations between Britain and France, or Britain or Germany. However, he claims that the view that the evolution of international boundaries in Africa did not take account of local realities is not supported in the case of Nigeria as there was a genuine attempt in each case to reflect tribal land use patterns in the process (Prescott, 1971: 10). Prescott goes to a great length to support this assertion relying largely on historical accounts of European adventurers, missionaries and colonial officers. However, in view of the boundary delimitation agreement between France and Britain, reported by Brownlie (1979: 171-172) presented in section 2.3 of this chapter, the emergent boundary did not reflect the social and cultural realities existing in the region at the time. Indeed, Prescott (1971: 102) argues that 'the Nigerian villages of Tobolo, Ibiyan and Igbaw Kawfin have farms in Dahomey (Benin), and the Dahomean villages of Ibate and Oke Awo have farms in Nigeria'. This clearly shows a disruption of social and economic patterns by the boundary as these villages are all Yoruba villages. Furthermore, regarding Ipobe, Prescott is uncertain 'whether the boundary divided political units' (Prescott, 1971: 103).

In McEwen's (1991) work on the establishment of the Nigeria/Benin boundary, McEwen presents a cartographical examination of this specific boundary beginning with the Convention dated 1 August 1863 establishing the eastern limits of Porto Novo and culminating in the Anglo-French agreement of 1889 (McEwen, 1991: 62). The boundary-line was drawn employing a mixture of natural features and artificial limits that included rectilinear segments, arcs, and astronomical lines, which cuts through sections of the Yoruba communities,

thereby placing them in opposing spheres of European influence. McEwen makes reference to inter-imperial relations, especially relating to the boundary determined through inter-imperial treaties and conventions (McEwen, 1991). His claim that 'once the European powers had completed their partition of Africa, they adopted a fairly liberal attitude towards the regulation of colonial boundaries' (McEwen, 1991: 62) is misleading. Given the 'Scramble' that prefaced the partition as well as the need to contain and control territories, adopting 'a fairly liberal attitude towards boundaries…' could only be counter-productive to the colonial administration. Though the agreement delimiting the boundary incorporated liberal outlooks, for instance, Africans whose territories were partitioned and thus separated from their sources of livelihood and religious observation, were allowed to cross these lines unimpeded to access these resources (Brownlie, 1979). However, in practice, the borders were strictly regulated, especially following different tariff regimes and subsequent illegal exchange of goods and services across the boundary. Furthermore, different colonial administration (especially of justice) engendered forced migration largely from the French regions to British colonies which compelled a strict enforcement of the boundary (Asiwaju, 1976b).

Asiwaju (1976a) presents one of the earliest African perspectives on partitioned groups in Africa from a comparative study of French and British colonial policies in western Yorubaland. This work reiterates the partition view of the evolution of the Nigeria-Benin boundary. Asiwaju notes:

> the boundary separated all Egbado kingdoms from Porto Novo and Dahome and placed them within the British sphere. The Anago kingdom of Ipokia was in a similar situation to that of Egbado. The boundary placed Itakete (Sakete), Ohori Ije and Ipobe exclusively within the French sphere. It then drove through and split into two the areas of the kingdoms of Ifonyin, Ketu, and Sabe, leaving the capitals

and the former metropolitan districts of these ancient Yoruba kingdoms and the bulk (except in the case of Sabe) of their former subordinate towns and villages in the British territory (Asiwaju, 1976a: 45).

Again, Asiwaju (1984) presents a checklist of partitioned groups in Africa and their trans-boundary relationships. This work provides additional evidence in support of the colonial partition of Africa, which paid scant attention to prevailing social and cultural realities at the time of the partition. Although, there are specific case studies, the book presents a rather general overview of partitioned groups which are cloaked in the traditional state-oriented approach.

In his later works, Asiwaju (2001 and 2003) reflects on the growing need for a change of perspective in the study of boundaries. Asiwaju charts a novel, but a brave attempt at studying the people and society at the boundary, rather than the boundaries themselves in an attempt to overcome the problems associated with boundaries in Africa. Much of the literature on African boundaries is state-centric in perspective neglecting the people whose daily lives are affected by state boundary politics and policies. Asiwaju (2001) analyses the impact of contrasting French and British colonial policies in West Africa as well as the reactions of the subject population to these impositions. Significantly, Asiwaju presents an ambivalent attitude of the local population to the boundary: on the one hand, the people treated the boundary line as irritants; a foreign imposition hindering intra-group relations, and so on. On the other hand, they crossed the lines in order to avoid harsh state policies in one territory while seeking refuge in the other. They further exploit the price differential across the boundary for economic gains.

Asiwaju (2003) engages with the issues of regional integration in the continent. He rehearses the axiomatic characters of African boundaries and their implications for peaceful coexistence and integration and concludes that though

African boundaries are fraught with problems and are potentially conflict prone, they have remained an unchangeable reality of the African geopolitical scene. Rather than continue to bemoan the inadequacies of the boundaries, state policies towards them should exploit their bridge-building characteristics to promote greater regional integration, modelled after the European Union.

Asiwaju's work presents a maturity over the years beginning from a state-centric perspective and culminating in a socio-cultural perspective on African boundaries as evidenced by his 2001 and 2003 collections of works. For him, understanding the African boundary situation would entail a lot more reliance on the socio-cultural perspective than typically presently obtains.

Miles (1994) presents a comparative study of specific impacts of boundaries on the Hausa partitioned between Nigeria and Niger. This study presents the closest parallel analogue to the present study as it does to the Hausa what this study seeks to do to the Yoruba. Miles' work, though similar to the present research is located almost exclusively in the realm of inter-state relations, diplomacy and territoriality. However, this present study argues that the problem with territoriality in Africa stems from the neglect of the people at the border region with the preoccupation of the state with issues of *high politik*. This study seeks to move beyond Miles' to explore the rationale for the absence of conflicts in the boundary area given its significant potentials for irredentism as well as the integrative potentials across almost all the boundaries in the sub region. Another point of departure from Miles is in relation to the scope and methodology of study; while Miles' focus was on two Hausa villages, one each in Nigeria and Niger, the scope of this present study is wider incorporating the communities at the borderland between Nigeria and Benin, up to the Ketu section of the

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international boundary.

Flynn (1997) is an analysis of the borderland Yoruba group astride the Nigeria - Benin boundary. Flynn's work provides a close parallel analogue to this present study. The work, mainly anthropological, explores the economic adaptation and exploitation of this boundary by the border-partitioned group. She analyses the process which transformed Africa's arbitrary borders into being embedded and entrenched in the local communities that surround them. She argues that though, the borders were imposed by the colonialists, and disruptive, the borderland communities can not now imagine their existence without the same border. Indeed, Flynn (1997: 313) contends further that the border, rather than separate the partitioned group, binds them together as they both rely on it for economic advantage. She claims that the borderland people are able to exploit the arbitrage opportunity provided by the boundary, as they maintained a certain degree of freedom of movement across and around the border. They have appropriated the boundary and emphasised their deep placement within the borderland that they are able to, not only control their own movement, but also the movement of others (non locals) across and around the border. Flynn (1997: 317) argues that this freedom to control movements is responsible for the ability of the Yoruba to avoid the 'borderland hysteria', or the crises of identity, similar to those being experienced at the US – Mexico borderlands.

Flynn's work provides very critical references for this present study. It provides, by far, the closest parallel analogue. The functional slant of this work shares the focus of Flynn on the borderland people, however, the scope of this study extends beyond basically anthropological and economic, to include interstate relations.

For most of the literature on African boundaries, the tendency has been a preoccupation with the statist perspective which prevents local cooperation efforts across the boundaries (Zartman, 1965; Anene, 1970; Touval, 1972; Prescott, 1971; Miles, 1994; Kacowicz, 1997). A more appropriate approach, deriving from Asiwaju (2003) and Stoddard (2002), which this study employs is (structural) functionalism guided by the doctrine of mutual necessity, which sees boundaries as points of symbiotic reciprocity rather than the rigid line of separation espoused by the Structuralist school. According to the Functionalist perspective, boundaries are points that act as 'differential converters' to ameliorate economic, political and cultural disparities between people of the same stock divided by foreign imposed boundaries (Stoddard 1982). On the other hand, the Structuralist perspective treats boundaries as the point of the exercise of state power and control.

In addition, the received wisdom in the literature, particularly on the eve of, and immediately after independence was full of apocalyptic 'predictions' of a pan-African crisis arising from boundary-related issues (Hargreaves, 1963, 1985; Zartman, 1965; Cukwurah, 1967; Anene 1970). Yet, almost fifty years after, this has not been the case. Part of the rationale for this study is to provide the reasons for this negation of the received wisdom in the literature concerning boundaries in Africa.

There remain vocal and influential voices calling for the revision of these colonial boundaries. Wole Soyinka and Ali Mazrui have both lent their voices to the redrawing of African boundaries. Soyinka argues that the colonial powers 'divvied up Africa like some demented tailor who paid no attention to the fabric…'; he consequently suggested that 'we should sit down with square rule and compass and redesign the boundaries of African nations' (Soyinka, in

Asiwaju, 2003: 433). On his part Mazrui (1994) avers that 'over the next century, the outlines of most present day African states will change one way or the other…' (Mazrui, in Asiwaju, 2003: 431).

However, as cogent as these claims are, the solution to the products of the 'demented' tailor is not to redesign the 'fabric'. Were boundaries to be revised, what parameters should be adopted? Should ethnic nationality boundaries be the basis as much of the criticisms against the present boundary regime borders on ethnic groups? Were this criterion to be used, Africa will be further divided into bits and pieces and many existing states would cease to exist. What the revision of the present boundary would achieve would be further confusion, discontentment and upheaval all over the continent, which was what early independent African leaders sought to prevent by their solemn declaration in Cairo in 1964.[21]

The line of argument which this study pursues hinges on the assertion that these boundaries are a geopolitical reality that has crystallised over the decades, being the basis of territoriality and inter-territorial relations in Africa. Hence, attempting to redraw them would only create more problems than it seeks to solve. The solution to the issues about them would begin with an examination of the approach to the treatment of boundaries in the continent. Though, it has been claimed that Africa is the most partitioned continent, yet other continents are also partitioned if not balkanised. Indeed, the intensity of partition is greater in Europe than in Africa considering the number of boundaries and small states that exist due to intense nationalism, self determination and expansionist projects. However, many of the issues that Africa still grapples with have become history in Europe,

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[21] It was at the Cairo Summit of heads of states and governments in 1964 that the OAU adopted the declaration that the sanctity of inherited colonial boundaries should be upheld and maintained as the basis of post-independent territoriality and interstate relations

which really is a consequence of the re-examination and re-interpretation of the concepts of territoriality and sovereignty in the latter.

There is a need for a shift of perspective by policy makers in Africa; if for almost fifty years after the (regional) integration initiatives were started, without any appreciable progress on the horizon, perhaps it is time to change approaches. This study claims that the problem with African boundaries is located in the state-centric approach of policy-decision makers, which curiously has shaped the literature on the subject. The dual character of boundaries, that is, their ability to unite and to divide simultaneously, ought to be regarded as a major consideration in fashioning an appropriate theoretical framework for international boundary studies, particularly those that partition culture groups and areas between contiguous states. Structurally-induced (statist, formal) and practical behaviours (non-statist, informal) operate simultaneously across most international boundaries and they both deserve almost equal attention in designing boundary-related policies.

2.5 The Yoruba Geo-cultural Space

This last subsection reviews literature on the Yoruba with a special focus on their spatial spread. This is needful to set the geographic scope of this study in order to determine whether indeed the boundary under consideration actually cuts through the Yoruba culture area. Furthermore, some authors (e.g. Prescott, 1965: 52) have argued that the westernmost pre-colonial Yoruba kingdom is the Egba kingdom,[22] effectively questioning the basis of this thesis, namely that the territories occupied by the Yoruba extend beyond the Nigerian boundary into

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[22] Egba is not even the westernmost Yoruba group in Nigeria. Lying between the territory of the Egba and the international boundary with Benin are the Yoruba sub-groups of Ketu, and Ifonyin.

Benin and certain enclaves in Togo.

Law's (1977) *The Oyo Empire* is a history of Oyo, the Yoruba Empire that exercised suzerainty over almost the entire geographic space covered by this study.[23] Even though, this region was composed of several sub-groups of the Yoruba and Oyo control was not completely imperial, its influence over the region was such that it was possible to ascribe a common identity and community to these groups of people.[24] The work presents the prevailing situation of the research area prior to the colonial intervention and highlights the reactions following the imposition of colonial rule. According to Law (1977: 4), the 'Yoruba is today applied to a group of peoples who inhabit a large area of south-western Nigeria…and parts of the neighbouring republics of Benin (Dahomey) and Togo…'. The title Yoruba was originally designated only for the Oyo as the name which the Hausa people to the north used in referring to this group. However, owing to the overarching influence of Oyo over the rest of the group, Christian missionaries who worked in this region in the nineteenth century ascribed the title to the whole region.[25]

The major contribution of Law's study to this work is the establishment of a Yoruba identity for the group of peoples found in the research area. This reinforces the partitioning of the group as they are found across the boundary in Nigeria and Benin, contrary to certain authors who claimed that the boundary determination was mindful of the social and political situations prevailing at the

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[23] There were stretches of territories that did not come under Oyo control (the Ijebu and Egba territories). In the other regions, especially those far removed from metropolitan Oyo, its control, in the main, was not more than reducing these places to vassals where tributes were exacted.
[24] This was the thinking of the Church Missionary Society at the advent of colonial rule: the Mission adopted the Oyo brand of Yoruba as *the* Yoruba language owing to the extant influence of Oyo in the region.
[25] There were oppositions to this appellation initially by the rest of the group, but gradually, they became used to it and the title remains in use till the present

time of the imposition of the boundary.

Adediran (1994) studies western Yoruba territories and their socio-political history from 1600-1889. Much of the study is based on oral tradition. As Fage (1965: 4) point out, 'the sense of history, the need for history can be quite independent of the ability to write'; many African societies, in the absence of writing 'developed formal oral records of their past and elaborate methods of maintaining these records for their posterity'. Smith (1969: ix) argues that in the case of the Yoruba, the use of oral tradition as a source of history is quite plausible as they are a people 'unusually rich in tradition, expressed and conserved in many ways'. Alagoa (1966) has further shown the usefulness of oral tradition as a scientific tool of investigating the unrecorded past.

Adediran establishes a spatial spread for the Yoruba extending from south-western Nigeria through the mid-latitudes of Benin to specific locations in Togo. He further analyses the various waves of migration of the Yoruba groups, initially from a central location in Ile Ife (Nigeria) and subsequently from other points in the course of the evolution of this group of peoples. This position is also validated by field work to the locations identified by this researcher.

Smith (1969) presents the south-western part of Nigeria through the southern tip up to the middle of Benin and specific locations in Togo as being home to the Yoruba before the colonisation. He submits that there is a 'Yoruba "irredenta" in Benin and Togo, cut off from their brethren by the European frontier makers in the Scramble for Africa at the end of the nineteenth century…' (Smith, 1969: 7) To Smith, the homeland of the Yoruba (*Ile Yoruba*) 'stretches from the swamps and lagoons of the coast across the rainforests, rising gradually towards the oil palm bush and woodland savannah and the distant bend of the

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Niger' (Smith, 1969: 7). Just like Adediran, Smith was able to identify the Yoruba homeland as coterminous with the area identified as such by this study.

Akinjogbin in *Dahomey and its Neighbours* also supports the spatial spread of Oyo's political influence to include the entire research area of this study, stretching from Nigeria to Benin and even beyond to Togo. It details the relationship between Oyo and its vassal kingdoms as well as the eventual liberation of these vassals owing to the weakening of the power of Oyo. Indeed, there is consensus in the literature of the partitioning of the Yoruba into three states.[26]

Inter-colonial as well as inter-service correspondences are awash with evidence of the geographic spread of the Yoruba from their 'homeland' modern Nigeria to the Sabe and especially Ketu regions of present day Benin (Colonial Office, 1886).

2.6 Conclusion

Existing literature leads to an expectation that the colonial partition would have a disruptive effect on the Yoruba identity and group relations. Given their separation into different spheres of influence and exposure to distinct socialisation processes, beginning with colonisation, this expectation of disruption could be taken for granted. However, the particular characteristics of the Yoruba geo-cultural space, reinforced by the maintenance of traditional authority structures, question the basis of the disruptive impact of partition on the Yoruba. Hence, the research hypothesis of the thesis is: the partition of the Yoruba geo-cultural space,

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[26] Even where the author seeks to present a contrary opinion like Nugent, the fact of the partition could not be wished away. As earlier stated, the *Alaketu* of Ketu, a prominent Yoruba king in Benin claimed that the partition only separated the British and the French, not the Yoruba. Evidence from field work, supplied not only by the traditional elite, but also by the people and government agencies supports the fact of the partition.

and the subsequent contrasting socialisation processes have not led to the disruption of Yoruba group affinity and identity.

There are obvious gaps in the study of border partitioned groups in West Africa, especially the Yoruba which straddle the Nigeria – Benin boundary; several questions and issues are left unresolved, while some others are curiously left unaddressed. For the focus of this study, as with other boundary making processes in the continent, the literature is divided regarding the manner of the partition. One school of thought championed by Perham (1956), Asiwaju (1976), and Griffiths (1986) contends that the boundary making process did not consider prevailing local social realities at the time. On the other hand, another school (Anene, 1970; Herbst, 1989) argue that Africans were part of the process, either as passive umpires or active collaborators. This debate has direct significance for the sub-research questions relating to the manner of the boundary making process and the role played by Africans. Part of the challenge for this study is the need to investigate the boundary making process, especially by field study and archival research, in order to be able to unearth the reality about the process.

Another unresolved question arising from the literature review relates to the location of the boundary vis-à-vis the Yoruba culture area. Some authors (e.g., Prescott, 1965, Anene, 1970) argue that the boundary did not partition the territorial area of the Yoruba, as it was deliberately positioned in the frontier zone between the warring kingdoms of Dahomey and Egba (Mills, 1970). On the other hand, several other authors, the most prominent among whom being Asiwaju (1984, 1989, 2001, 2003) and Griffiths (1986), have argued that the boundary actually partitioned the culture area. The primary research method adopted in this study allows ethnographic surveys as well as the examination of the instruments

of the boundary making, in order to contribute original knowledge about this particular question.

A related issue is the debate over the Yoruba identity. Granted, a Yoruba identity as we have come to know it today was non-existent prior to colonial rule; indeed, many of the subgroups which make up the Yoruba today were organised as semi-autonomous kingdoms. Is it possible then to talk of a Yoruba identity prior to colonisation? The Empire of Oyo was influential in the process of determining and mapping the Yoruba identity. However, while Johnson (1921) have claimed an overarching political authority for the Oyo Empire, some have indeed, queried, and charted a contrasting extent of its territorial sovereignty (Akinjogbin, 1967; Law, 1977). This study seeks to examine and analyse the historiography of the Yoruba with a focus on the Yoruba 'community' and identity before, during and after colonial rule in order to answer the sub-research question regarding the impact of the boundary as well as contrasting colonial administrations of the Yoruba.

Owing to conflicting perspectives, the boundary under study has been a source of significant tension between the neighbouring states,[27] with Nigeria being always the aggrieved party. Governments consider boundaries as immutable part of the state and treat them as such, while the people, especially borderland inhabitants whose territories are partitioned by the boundary regard them as merely administrative and carry on as though the boundaries are not there. Indeed, for some of these people, the boundary is an irritant and thus, they engage in activities (for example, smuggling) as a reaction to the arbitrary imposition

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[27] Every interstate boundary in Africa possesses the potentiality for conflict as they are largely ambiguous, challengeable and un-patrollable.

(Flynn, 1997). The question that the literature has failed to provide answer to is: in the face of such pressure and tension, why has this boundary been peaceful and territories treated as settled realities? There is also the related issue of irredentism, which is capable of unsettling the 'settled' realities of boundaries.

Just as the debate over the process of their determination continues, there also remains a growing controversy over the fate of these boundaries. While authors and commentators like Soyinka and Mazrui continue to provide support for the need to redraw the boundaries, other authors contend that the issue is not with the redrawing of African boundaries, but with the use to which the boundaries are deployed (Asiwaju, 2003). However, given the groundswell of opposition against the boundaries by nationalist African leaders, they (boundaries), as inherited at independence ought to have become history, yet, almost fifty years after independence, they remain strong; they remain the basis for ordering interstate relations. This study seeks to investigate this durability in spite of interests and forces which have consistently sought to abolish them.

These questions and issues are at the core of this study. It is hoped that by the concluding chapter, these issues would have been thoroughly examined and analysed, adding to the knowledge base on the subject.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

There is a dearth of research works on the assessment of the impact of partition on the identity and group affinity of the Yoruba partitioned between Nigeria and Benin. The most significant researches on these subjects are over thirty years old (Anene, 1970; Mills, 1970; Prescott, 1971; Asiwaju, 1976a) with the exception of (Flynn, 1997). While Anene's work focuses on the entire boundaries between Nigeria and all its neighbours, Mills' focus was on the geography of the entire Nigeria – Benin boundary. Prescott's work extends beyond the evolution of Nigeria's international boundaries to include its internal boundaries. Asiwaju's work compares the colonial policies of France and Britain in the partitioned western Yorubaland. The works of Asiwaju, Prescott and Flynn provide a close parallel analogue to this present study.

Prescott (1971) is essentially a geographic analysis of Nigeria's international boundaries with the Yoruba area constituting a part of the study. The work relies mainly on historical reports of missionaries and explorers as well as an analysis of archival sources. For Asiwaju (1976a), the study is essentially a comparative historical analysis of colonial rule in western Yorubaland between 1889 and 1945. Flynn (1997) is an anthropological analysis of the boundary in relation to the Yoruba borderland. Expectedly, the analysis focuses exclusively on the pattern of interactions across the boundary by the partitioned group.

Methodologically, Asiwaju and Prescott adopt the historical approach, which is appropriate for their studies given the scope and subject of analysis. Flynn's approach reflects the cultural element of her discipline. However, for this

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present study, which seeks to assess the implications of the evolution of the boundary on the successor states as well as the partitioned groups, the research methodology, while incorporating elements of the historical and cultural perspectives, includes a more comprehensive multidisciplinary approach which analyses not only current, but also historical practice of the State(s) and the Yoruba group.

The thesis addresses the 'how' of the boundary making process as well as the impact of how the Yoruba group have interacted with, and negotiated the boundary on the one hand, and how the State(s) have interacted with, and utilised the boundary, on the other. Hence, interrogating the boundary making process requires a political history of partition; the interaction of the Yoruba with the boundary requires the use of the anthropological approach; while the last requires more of political geography.

Data about the partition, being historical, were collected using both the field work interviews of traditional rulers and the archives. Details of the data collection methods are presented in sections 3.2, 3.4 and 3.52 of this chapter. The dataset about how the Yoruba negotiate and interact with the boundary was both historical and contemporaneous; hence the data collection method adopted the horizontal case study approach, which collected data from the point of the partition, through colonial rule, and until the present. Data collection details are also presented in section 3.2 and 3.5 of this chapter. The dataset about the relationship between the State(s) and the boundary, being more recent, was collected from government publications, related research works, interview of relevant officials of government agencies, and the news media. Data collection details are presented in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this chapter.

Furthermore, the earlier studies (Asiwaju and Prescott) are essentially located within the statist perspective, while Flynn's work is located, primarily within the functionalist perspective. For this present study, however, an eclectic approach is adopted, incorporating the structuralist and the functionalist perspectives, in order to be able to examine and analyse the distinct and competing discourses of the boundary.

Finally, these works are dated. Asiwaju's is a comparative study of French and British colonialism in western Yorubaland, between 1885 and 1945. Prescott's study, while also being largely colonial, extends into the first few years of independence. Flynn's is over a decade old, and the scope is limited to three borderland villages. This present study, while also concerned with the historical evolution of society and colonialism, examines contemporary developments in postcolonial Africa. The scope is much wider than Flynn's as it seeks a wider Yoruba perspective on the border. Furthermore, as society is dynamic, issues and challenges in international relations are similarly dynamic, this study is necessary in order to identify the impacts of the transformation of interstate relations since the time of these earlier works on this boundary. These issues and challenges inform the methodology adopted for this study, distinguishing it from the earlier works on the subject.

Given the nature of the substantive and sub-research questions derived from the literature review, the most appropriate research methodology for this study is the historicised case study approach which included intensive field work collecting primary data (mainly interview technique) in the Yoruba area astride the Nigeria – Benin international boundary. It also included archival research at the British National Archives in London. In addition, relevant newspapers (and

electronic media) as well as original government (and intergovernmental) documents were content analysed for primary data for the study. Apart from primary sources of information, the study also relied secondary sources of data collection, which were mainly literature based, and provided relevant background information as well as theoretical and conceptual guidance. The multiple sources of information would afford the opportunity to validate data provided through the triangulation technique.

3.2 Primary Data

Primary sources of data constitute an invaluable and indispensable aspect of the study. Indeed, Prescott (1965: 63) rightly contends that 'field work is an indispensable source of information relating to boundary studies'. Its main sources included archival search for a review of the evolution of the boundary as in treaties, inter-colonial correspondences, surveys and maps, resulting in its delimitation and demarcation. The National Archives in Ibadan (Nigeria) and the British National Archives at Kew Garden, London were particularly helpful.

Essentially, the research involved field study in the designated study area, both in Nigeria and in Benin. The field study involved, in part, a great deal of semi-structured in-depth (individual) interviews (IDIs) of traditional rulers and members of certain traditional guilds of historians on both sides of the boundary to capture pre-colonial as well as contemporary situations in order to be able to highlight any discernible distinction in these periods. Traditional rulers are particularly important to this study as the bulk of pre-colonial African history is unrecorded; therefore, traditional rulers, considered as repositories and custodians of the history and culture of the people become invaluable as sources of information about the African past. Furthermore, the traditional guild of historians

represents a category of specially trained individuals, usually within particular family lineages, who serve as the official custodians of traditional history and culture, which are preserved in codes and in various forms, some of which are not discernible by the uninitiated.

The case study is the Yoruba culture area (the so called Yorubaland) divided between Nigeria and Benin. The choice is informed by the long history of empire making of the Yoruba, their experience of colonial partition as well as their being one of the most populous ethnic groups in Africa. Thus, the findings here could be applied elsewhere in the understanding of boundary dynamics in the continent. Study sites at the boundary (or proximate to it) were the main focus of the study, however, historically significant sites (e.g. Oyo, Abeokuta (Nigeria) as well as Ketu and Porto Novo in Benin) also provided the necessary historical linkage. For instance, what is the place of Oyo in the construction of the Yoruba project? In the same vein, what is the significance of Ketu in the Yoruba project? These interrogations are necessary because what may be considered Yoruba may in fact be elite (royal) construction as distinct from the history of the people. Though the proximate locations are directly impacted by the boundary demarcation the historically significant towns are important to this study as they held suzerainty over the territorial area inhabited by the Yoruba. Furthermore, such government agencies as the departments of customs and immigration services and boundary commission were also included in the field of analysis. A specific border agency, the joint border patrol unit established by the governments of Nigeria and Benin was a veritable source of information.

Specifically, the field work was conducted in the following towns and

villages:[28] Ketu, Ipobe, Ifonyin, Porto Novo, Ita-Ijebu, Sakete, Isale Eko, Cotonou and Seme in Benin Republic. In Nigeria, field work was conducted in Lagos, Ketu, Ijofin, Badagry, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Imeko, Ilara and Abuja.

The effective field work began on the 15th of October 2008. However, owing to tension and insecurity at the border crossing at Seme,[29] it was near impossible to collect data from officers of government agencies and borderland people at this very important border point. Following the passage of time, the researcher's research assistants were able to collect information from this category of respondents later between 4th and 17th January 2009. A total of 91 respondents (75 during the substantive field work and 16 by research assistants) were interviewed. Data collected by the research assistants were validated by follow-up telephone interviews of randomly selected respondents (from among those interviewed by research assistants) by the researcher between 3rd and 18th of June 2009.[30]

Below is a summary of the respondents interviewed:

1. Six traditional rulers[31] (two in Benin and four in Nigeria): The *Alaketu* of Ketu and two other principal chiefs; the *Onisakete* of Sakete (including three of his principal chiefs and advisers) in Benin; while in Nigeria, the following traditional rulers were selected owing to their location at the border region or their shared ethnic affinity with the Yoruba group across the boundary in Benin: the *Onimeko* of Imeko, the *Oloola* of Ilara, the *Balogun* of Ketu and the *Balogun* of Yewaland.[32]

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[28] The research benefitted from the researcher's earlier work in this area as well as in the Yoruba speaking locations in Togo and Ghana.
[29] Details of the crisis are provided below.
[30] As part of measures to check on the veracity of data collected by the research assistants, the telephone numbers of the respondents were collected (of course with their expressed consent) with a view to further interview.
[31] The consent of these chiefs was sought and granted to be named in the study.
[32] Yewaland is the collection of Ketu speaking people in Ogun State of Nigeria.

2.   Two borderland academics: the choice of these academics was deliberate; they were to provide objective views, which provided a basis for the validation of the views of the traditional elite and those of the people. The academics are borderlanders themselves with roots across the boundary. On the Nigerian side, Professor Asiwaju, whose paternal ancestral roots are located in Ketu (Benin), but he is a Nigerian national award winner and one-time Nigeria's National Boundaries Commissioner fitted the role of a borderland scholar for this study. On the Benin side attempts to reach an indigenous borderland academic was unsuccessful; however, at the Universite de Nationale, Lome, the search came up with a Yoruba professor of rural agriculture (John Ogoude) with links with the Yoruba of Nigeria.

3.   Two officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): ECOWAS is crucial to the integration of the sub-region; its Protocol on free movement of ECOWAS nationals across national boundaries of member states is meant to be one of the pillars of this objective of regional integration. The officials, one each from the Political Affairs Department and Free Movement of Persons Department, provided information on the challenges to integration and efforts at overcoming them.

4.   Two senior officials of the Nigerian Boundaries Commission – a director in the international boundaries division and an official of the legal department. The Nigerian Boundaries Commission oversees the maintenance of the country's boundaries; it has organised joint boundary workshops with all of Nigeria's neighbours[33] as well as being part of the mixed commissions set up in the wake of the Bakassi issue with Cameroun. The researcher had the good fortune of

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[33] The proceedings of these joint workshops have been published and are easily available.

attending one of its public seminars organised in conjunction with the Nigerian Population Commission in 2006 to draw attention to the recurrent problems of non-nationals being enumerated in previous censuses as Nigerians.

5. The Boundary Commissioner for Ogun State: the state boundary commission is the regional version of the national commission. Ogun State is a region in the Nigerian Federation whose territories are proximate to the study area in Nigeria

6. Five Beninese customs officials[34]

7. Four Beninese gendarmeries (member of the joint border patrol unit)

8. Two Beninese Immigration officials

9. Six Nigerian immigration officials

10. Two Nigerian border Police officers

11. Three Nigerian customs officers

12. Four Nigerian secondary students in an international school in Cotonou, Benin

13. a Nigerian teacher in the same school

14. Five commercial vehicle drivers

15. A group of commercial motorcycle riders (10)

16. Five Nigerian students (borderlanders)

17. Four elderly (over 70 years old) Beninese (1 in Isakete, 1 in Cotonou, 1 in Ipobe and 1 in Ketu

18. Eight students of the Lagos State University (located about 40 miles from the border crossing)

19. Four Yoruba businessmen at the international motor park in Cotonou

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[34] One of these customs officials impounded the researcher's laptop computer allegedly for not carrying the purchase receipt. To release the computer, the researcher was asked to pay a certain amount of money, which is the usual practice at the border crossings between these two countries. The researcher's refusal led to his 'detention' for a while until a senior official intervened and the computer was released without paying the 'crossing' money.

20.   Two Yoruba hoteliers in Sakete

21.   Two petty traders in Ilara

22.   Five people in Imeko (a gateman, a food seller, the young son of the *oba*, a
        Copy typist and a commercial motorcycle operator)

23.   Two people in Ketu, Nigeria (the Balogun's son and a tailor)

24.   Five people in Ita Ijebu (a motor bike operator, 3 farmers and a petty trader)

Table 1: Demographic distribution of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Sex	
			Male	Female
>70	9	9.89	5	4
60-69	11	12.08	7	4
40-49	15	16.48	9	6
30-39	19	20.87	9	10
20-29	24	26.37	13	11
<20	13	14.28	5	8
Total	91	99.97	48	43

As mentioned above, the field study largely employed the in-depth individual interview strategy. The technique is one of the most important means of case study data collection. The choice of this strategy is the result of a careful consideration of the type of research questions posed, the extent of the researcher's control over actual behaviour of respondents and the historical/contemporaneous character of the data sought. Furthermore, the characteristics of the respondent were also crucial in the choice of technique; the language barrier, as most Beninese respondents are French speaking while the researcher is not proficient in the language. Thus, interview in the Yoruba language best suited our purpose as both the researcher and respondents are Yoruba speakers. Again, as interviews afford the opportunity of immediate

response, the problems of low percentage returns of questionnaires did not arise, as well as improperly filled questionnaires. Furthermore, as certain of the questions are quite sensitive, the interview method afforded the opportunity to ask follow up or probing questions, which would not be possible with the questionnaire strategy.

Essentially, the 'why' and the 'how' components of the research questions were subjected to the interview mode. Yin (2003: 1) asserts that 'the "how" and "why" questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies… This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time rather than mere frequencies' of occurrence, which is the strength of surveys. The other questions relating to the 'what' and the 'where', which obviously the interview methodology cannot adequately address were tackled by the other strands of the triangulation approach, namely, archival research as well as literature review and contemporary newspaper content analysis.

The conduct of the field work was guided by a line of inquiries that was structured in a manner that was open-ended, friendly and non-threatening. For the interview in Benin, though the questions were prepared in English, the actual conduct of the interviews was in Yoruba as many of the respondents are non-English speaking.[35] The interviews in Nigeria were conducted both in English and Yoruba as some respondents cannot freely express themselves in English, while some others preferred to speak in Yoruba. The bulk of the interviews with officials of government in Nigeria were conducted in English.

The interview technique adopted a mix of case study strategies, both target and accidental respondents. The target respondents included the traditional elite

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[35] The whole research would have run into a hitch had the researcher not been able to communicate in Yoruba as he cannot speak French, which is the official language of Benin.

who were specifically sought out for the position they occupied both as rulers as well as the custodians of the culture, history and tradition of their people. The boundary specialists too were deliberately selected for their knowledge and expertise about the subject-matter. Government officials were also targeted in order to acquire information from the men-on-the-ground and to reflect official views on boundary dynamics. The other respondents were not so deliberately selected, but were interviewed on the basis of accessibility and availability. One of the high points of the field work was the group interview of ten commercial motorbike riders, which prompted the researcher to switch strategies from one-on-one interview technique to a focus group strategy. These respondents also transformed into informants with lots of information that may not have been available in the one-on-one format.

3.3 Secondary Data

Secondary data were sourced from libraries in the United Kingdom, especially the Durham University Library; the Library of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne; the International Boundaries Research Unit (IBRU) Library at Durham University. In Nigeria, the libraries of the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos and Lagos State as well as the Library of the African Regional Institute[36] were visited for their collections on colonial rule and the Yoruba groups. Private libraries and collections of certain traditional rulers and scholars (e.g., the *Alaketu* of Ketu and Professor Anthony Asiwaju[37]) were also very useful sources of information. The Library of the National Boundaries Commission in Abuja, Nigeria was also very useful for its collections on joint boundary

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[36] The Library of the African Regional Institute was very useful for its collection of back issues of the *Journal of Borderland*. The Institute is dedicated to border, borderland and regional integration studies and pointedly located at the Yoruba borderland town of Imeko, Nigeria.

[37] Professor Asiwaju is one of the foremost scholars of borderlands in Africa. He is the founder and president of the African Regional Institute.

workshops with neighbouring states as well as government documents (surveys and agreements) relating to boundary issues. In Benin, access to library information was restricted as the documents are published in French.[38] Content analysis of newspaper articles, especially on contemporary issues on the subject matter also provided useful data for the research. Government documents, especially those of its agencies involved in boundary matters were useful sources of data as well.

3.4 Study Design

The field study was planned to last for sixty days, but it actually lasted for forty four days, largely due to tension and insecurity along the border region.[39] It involved a great deal of travel back and forth across the boundary in order to undertake some degree of ethnographic study of the people (borderland inhabitants and government officials) in the study area.

The study involved the use of various tools, mainly qualitative in both countries. The main tool of data collection was the semi structured in-depth (individual) interview (IDI) of respondents. The IDIs were audio-taped/handwritten (shorthand) and later transcribed. At some point in the course of the field study, focus group discussion (FGD) was employed to take advantage of a group relevant to the study. Ethnographic survey was also used to collect data as the researcher exploited his firsthand experience in the borderland, at border crossings and observations of clandestine exchange and transportation of goods across the boundary.

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[38] This limitation was overcome by using the library of the University of Togo in Lome where the researcher had the privilege of Yoruba-speaking 'research assistants' who readily led him to the relevant shelves, books and articles, which were then translated into English.

[39] The tension along was occasioned by the death of a customs officer by allegedly by smugglers. However, by the time the fieldwork was called off, sufficient ground had been covered coupled with a uniform pattern of answers to the question, which made further research unnecessary.

The study design was approved by the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University following clarifications about ethical issues. Each respondent was also intimated with the subject and purpose of the study; the confidentiality and voluntariness of participation were made clear. In specific instances, the consent of respondents was sought and granted to be named in the report of the study. No inducements were given. A letter indicating authorisation and institutional affiliation was also made available to respondents.

3.5 Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is the triangulation strategy, relying essentially on longitudinal case study, archival analysis and field study. Triangulation is a strategy which increases the validity/reliability of the outcome of research. This it does by the use of multiple methods or sources of data collection which compare and synthesise data from different sources or methods thereby corroborating or repudiating findings. Denzin (1978) identifies four types of triangulation, namely: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation.

The strength of triangulation hinges on the fact that the weaknesses of one method are usually the strength of another. In other words, the shortcomings of one method are overcome by another method, hence combining methods helps overcome unique deficiencies. Furthermore, a multi-method strategy helps comparison of data sourced from different sources which strengthens the validity of research findings (Denzin, 1978).

The most obvious expectation with triangulation is convergence among data collected through different sources. However, it is also likely that certain data may be inconsistent with the trend of findings and thus may compel alternative

propositions about the subject being studied. Yet another outcome of triangulation may necessitate a redirection of the scope and focus of the research when data are completely contradictory. In other words, the outcome of triangulation is not given, it may support and strengthen the research hypothesis, but it may also repudiate the hypothesis. The strength of triangulation lies in the ability to provide evidence – convergence, consistent or contradictory - such that the researcher is able to provide plausible explanation for social phenomena (Denzin, 1978).

Following from Denzin's typology, this research employed the methodological triangulation type, hinged on the longitudinal case study method of primary data collection through: in-depth individual interview technique; archival search; and literature review. The longitudinal case study method is most useful for this study because it is a historicized method, which investigates the case study over different phases in the evolution of the society - the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial situations - in a comparative manner, highlighting the status-quo ante, the evolution of the boundary, and the subsequent relationship between parts of the partitioned group, on the one hand and, between the states on the other.

3.51 Participant Observation

The field work required extensive travel, back and forth across the international boundary and afforded the researcher the invaluable opportunity of participant observation. The customs and immigrations officials were seen at work; the smugglers were observed in the process of outmaneuvering agencies of the state; ordinary borderland dwellers were seen exploiting their location at the periphery of the state, which adds an ethnographic quality to the research, albeit, unplanned.

3.52 Oral Tradition

An integral component of the field work was a reliance on oral tradition, especially for the period prior to colonial rule and the advent of recorded history in much of Africa. Knowledge about the 'indigenous' African past is shrouded in myths and fables as much of the pre-colonial history of the continent is unrecorded but preserved in tales, songs and fables.[40] Hence, the recourse to this source of data (tradition and bearers of tradition have been described as a 'talking book' (Tonkin, 1986: 205). Oral tradition is crucial in eliciting information about pre-colonial Yoruba as tales (*itan*) remain a critical means of transmitting culture and history from generation to generation. Songs and folklores are woven round events which are then preserved and transmitted across time. Indeed, the task of transmitting tradition was entrusted to the nobility as the institution of traditional authority is regarded as the custodian of the history and culture of the society.[41] In some Yoruba societies, just as in other professions, guilds evolved to oversee the preservation of the history and tradition of society. Thus, the target respondents here included the *obas* and members of this guild as well as older members of the society.

In spite of the critical importance of the oral tradition in gathering data and collecting information on pre-colonial Africa, it has certain weaknesses. Its criticisms include the lack of absolute chronology; it could be selective in its contents; it is more often than not compromised by human errors, unconscious or deliberate manipulation of facts and figures. However, these weaknesses were corrected through the triangulation approach which checks the validity of one data

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[40] However, E.J. Alagoa has established oral tradition as a veritable source of information about the unrecorded past of Africa. His various works on the subject centring on the analysis of indigenous proverbs to unravel the past have remained the reference point for oral tradition in African history.
[41] While structuring colonial Yoruba for Indirect Rule, the British relied on the authority of the *Ooni* of Ife in determining the number and seniority of Yoruba kings.

collection method against two or more other methods and inconsistencies are identified and controlled.

3.6   Limitations of Study

The research for this study encountered certain limitations, which collectively hampered its conduct. Much of the limitations associated with data collection were taken care of by the triangulation technique adopted for the study. However, there were some other limiting factors which posed a great hindrance for the conduct of the study; they are presented below:

Insecurity was of the greatest concern. Indeed, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office classified Nigeria (especially, the Niger Delta and the Lagos area) as high travel risk. As noted in section 3.2 of this chapter, insecurity at one of the most important border crossings (Seme) along the Nigeria-Benin boundary actually halted the conduct of the research. Furthermore, eliciting information from agents of the state at this border posts was hindered by the uncooperative stance of many of these officials due to the killing of a customs officer by smugglers. Similarly, road travel was perilous as smugglers drive recklessly on the stretch between Lagos in Nigeria and Cotonou in Benin.

Language barrier was another significant limitation. The significance of the English/French divide in West Africa became highlighted during the field work. This limitation prevented access to government officials and academics in Benin where the lingua franca is French. The literature sources in Benin were in French and relevant sources had to be translated into English for the purpose of this study. In certain instances, one of the research assistants acted as an interpreter between the researcher and officials of government agents.

Time was also a limiting factor. Many of the target respondents are

important traditional rulers who are difficult to commit to appointments. Similarly, one of the target academics had to travel for an international conference at the time of the scheduled visit. That appointment had to be rescheduled costing the researcher valuable time and money. Generally, ethnographic research of this kind would benefit from a more liberal time latitude which would afford more in-depth interviews, as well as participant observations of some of the phenomena under consideration. However, given the time-bound nature of a doctoral research, such privileges were unaffordable luxuries.

3.7   Structure of Chapters and Research Question

The aim of this study, as identified above, is to assess the impact of the partition on Yoruba identity, beginning from the partition to the present. The study is therefore best conducted using a multidisciplinary approach, which enables the analysis of the different periods and issues associated with the transformation or otherwise of the Yoruba. Multidisciplinarity is best suited for this study as a unidisciplinary approach would be unable to effectively address the various issues (political history, anthropology, and political geography) and nuances associated with the study.

The purpose of this section is to lay out the functions of the subsequent chapters in answering the research question, highlighting the multidisciplinary approach. Chapter four is largely focused on the dynamics of the partition. The analysis of the issues, actors and factors surrounding the partition demands a political history approach to the partition. Thus, history plays a major role in examining and analysing the pre-colonial situation, which the colonial partition 'disordered' and transformed, as well as the processes that led to the determination of the boundary. Chapter five addresses the impact of partition on the Yoruba as well as their

reactions to the foreign imposition. This chapter also relies partly on history in analysing the reactions and response of the Yoruba to the colonial partition. It also relies on anthropology to address issues relating to perception and the (ab)use of the boundary as well as intra-group relations. Chapter six mainly uses the analytical tools of political geography in addressing the official discourses of the boundary. The reality of contiguity engenders the need for inter-state relations between Nigeria and Benin, which was driven largely by geo-political considerations. However, in the context of the partition and the continuity of traditional Yoruba cultural practices in the borderland between the two states, strictly geopolitical considerations alone would be insufficient as analytical tool. Hence, anthropological tools become necessary in order to offer a more robust analysis of the relations between Nigeria and Benin. As commerce is also an important element of the relations between the two states, understanding the pattern of their relationship also requires some understanding of the economic imperative of cross-border trade and exchanges. Chapter seven addresses the weakness of these two states in a globalised world. It analyses the territorial sovereignty of these states in the context of contemporary globalisation. This would require a political approach to the issues of the weak state and their resistance to globalising forces which then challenges their sovereignty. Chapter eight offers the summary of the findings of the study as well as its main contributions.

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: WEST AFRICA BEFORE AND AFTER THE PARTITION AND PARTITIONING THE YORUBA

4.1   Introduction

The colonial epoch[42] in West Africa led to a fundamental transformation of the region, both in terms of territoriality as well as the organisation of society, replacing traditional modes of territoriality, administration, commerce and exchange, justice, education, etc with new, and more importantly foreign, social formations (Ekeh, 1983). The manner of the imperial advance, in the form of 'pacification' and 'protection' led to the overthrow of traditional African political, economic, judicial and social systems which were considered incompatible with modern civilised norms, imported by the imperialists. As Ekeh (1983: 11-12) has identified, colonialism engendered three kinds of social formations in Africa, namely: transformed pre-colonial indigenous social structures; migrated social structures; and emergent social structures. In other words, colonialism not only transformed indigenous social structures, it imported into Africa European social structures as well as fostered the emergence of entirely new social structures. The implications of these could hardly be ephemeral, but revolutionary and permanent.

In this Chapter, I intend to provide an analysis of the pre-colonial and the colonial social and political situations in West Africa generally, and in the Yoruba geo-cultural space, in particular, highlighting the transformations that were fostered by the intervention of colonialism. The objective of this chapter is to contribute to answering the main research question of this thesis, through the

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[42] Colonialism has been described as epochal as distinct from the more popular characterisation as a phase owing to the revolutionary transformations engendered by the process.

specific supplementary research questions relating to the nature and the extent of the geo-cultural space of pre-colonial Yoruba society and identity; the sub-research question on the 'how' of, and actors in the partition; the impact of the partition on the kin (*ebi*) consciousness of the Yoruba sub-groups; and the roles of the African (Yoruba) elite in the boundary making process.

4.2 West Africa before the Partition

This section presents the characteristics of pre-colonial West African societies in order to establish the pattern of pre-colonial situation against which the impact of colonisation will be gauged. The objective being to answer the research questions on the nature of pre-colonial social and political situations in order to determine the subsequent impacts of colonial rule especially, the imposition of boundaries on largely homogenous societies.

West Africa is situated in the north-western corner of the continent. The region extends from Senegal to Nigeria along the coast, and between Niger on the Northeast to Mauretania on the Northwest. West Africa is one of the most ethnically diverse regions of the world with over three hundred ethnic groups located in sixteen countries.[43] In spite of the vast cultural differences expected from such a wide array of groups, there exist general similarities[44] which distinguish the people of this region from elsewhere in the continent.

Historically, the evolution of West Africa can be divided into three or four phases (Rotberg, 1965), namely: prehistory, which represents the earliest civilisation, characterised by sedentary agricultural practises as well as the

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[43] Nigeria alone is reported to host over 250 ethnic groups.
[44] The most significant distinguishing feature of West Africans is linguistic; unlike the rest of sub-Saharan Africans (almost), the West African groups are non-Bantu speakers, though they all belong to the Niger-Congo language group.

domestication of wildlife. The next historical phase in West Africa developed from advances in human social organisation occasioned by advancements in the means of production that transformed sedentary agriculture to a more large-scaled practise to support the demands of growing population. Thus evolved centralised states and empires, notable among which were the empires of Mali, Songhai, Ghana and Oyo. The later part of this period witnessed the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The period just prior to the advent of colonial rule in West Africa was characterised by kingdoms and political organisations such as Dahomey, Benin[45] and Asante which thrived on the trade in slaves. Slave trading had turned the entire region into a state of chaos as intra- and inter- group conflicts were contrived in order to keep a steady flow of supply in slave commodities. Apart from the chaos engendered by slaving, in the savannah stretch of the region, from Senegal through the Futa Djallon Hills to the Hausa city states in present day Nigeria and Niger, the revolutionary spread of Islam had sprung up and steadily gained momentum.[46] The political turmoil caused by this jihad added to that produced by slaving kingdoms in the southern part of the region. The territories of West Africa can thus be described as one in turmoil, shaped by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the radical spread of Islam.

The final phase in this historiography is the colonial era, which will be

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[45] The Benin Kingdom is distinct from the Republic of Benin. The kingdom of Benin was a prosperous slaving kingdom which thrived on the ruins of the Old Oyo Empire until the superior fire-power of the British ended its growth in 1897.

[46] Indeed, the Sokoto Caliphate, which emerged from the Jihad of the early 19th century in present-day Northern Nigeria and southern Niger, had spread as far south as Ikirun after overrunning Offa in the Yoruba region in southern Nigeria. The aim of the southern spread of the Jihad was to touch the flag of Sokoto to the sea, symbolising the spread of Islam over the entire region south of Sokoto. This grand design was halted directly by the imposition of European rule, which 'pacified' the warring parties in the region.

more critically analysed later in the thesis. For the purpose of this study, the later part of the history of this region, that is, the period just before and after the establishment of colonial rule will be analysed in details while the two earlier periods will only be referenced where necessary.

Geopolitically, the pre-colonial political societies were organised around the capital, with political influence and authority petering out the further one went from the core of the kingdom. As wars and conquests were recurring factors during this period, many pre-colonial West African states were in a constant state of flux, growing and ebbing, depending on their fortunes at the warfronts. Therefore, political boundaries were also unstable. Indeed, territorial extents were not gauged in terms of boundaries, but in terms of frontiers, representing 'no man's land' and targets of future expansion by more dominant groups.

Frontiers in pre-colonial West Africa have been categorised by Momoh (1989) into three, namely: minimal borderland; zero borderland and maximal borderland. A minimal frontier is characterised by the absence of cultural and ethnic affinity between the groups on both sides of the frontier. Here there was little or no interaction among the people on opposite sides of the frontier. Such a frontier was, therefore, a target of encroachment by the more powerful group as it represented a 'no man's land'. However where people on the opposite sides of a frontier are 'diametrically opposed ideologically and even religiously, the borderland space will be zero. It is also likely to be a zone of friction and tension especially when the borderland people are goaded from the centre' (Momoh, 1989: 52). The final category of frontiers in pre-colonial West Africa is the maximal borderland, representing a wide expanse of interactions between populations on opposite sides of a territorial divide. Such contacts as commerce,

emotional and kinship affinities tended to foster cooperation[47] among states which indeed led to the formation of alliances between groups of neighbouring states.[48] For instance, the Ashanti Empire in present day Ghana forged a loose alliance with other Akan societies of Bekwai, Kokofu Mapong and Nsuata for collective defence under a common leadership (Burns and Collins, 2007: 138-39).

Politically, West African societies in pre-colonial times can be grouped into two broad categories: centralised, hierarchical political societies and the so-called 'stateless' societies. The centralised, hierarchical political societies were organised in an intricately stratified manner usually centred on the person of the king or emperor who was usually regarded as the essence of the group. Among the Yoruba, the king or *oba* was regarded as 'he who must be obeyed', whose words were law, but he was not an autocrat as he was constitutionally checked by a group of powerful chiefs who together with the *oba* exercised territorial sovereignty in the kingdom.[49] The same was true of Dahomey, whose kingship was fashioned after that of the neighbouring Yoruba (Akinjogbin, 1967). In the Ashanti Empire, political leadership was vested in the *Asantehene* (the king) supported by an elite córps of civil servants whose progress was measured in terms of merit rather than by birth. The power of the king was guaranteed by a special police force, *Ankobia* which was permanently stationed at the capital (Burns and Collins, 2007).

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[47] In many pre-colonial maximal frontiers, joint markets are usually located here, thus strengthening trans-frontier relations.

[48] However, not all maximal border relations were peaceful and cooperative. Many Yoruba kingdoms, in spite of historical and cultural affinities were engaged in warfare during much of this period.

[49] The power of the Yoruba *obas* was only checked by and subject to colonial powers. Indeed, in the British section of Yorubaland, the *oba* was propped by colonial authority in indirect rule. On the other side in French Yorubaland, the power of the oba was significantly diminished owing to the French policy of direct rule and later, that of assimilation.

In the northern fringes as well as the savannah stretch of the region, the most dominant feature was Islam, which influenced the organisation and administration of society. From Kanem Bornu through the Hausa/Fulani to the Futa Djallon empires, Islam and the Islamic culture permeated the society. In these Islamic states, the *emir* was the theocratic ruler around whom the society revolved while the Islamic legal code (*Sharia)* provided the legal basis for the society.

The 'stateless' societies were so called owing to the absence of 'successive institutions of political authority'. Political control was exercised by ritual experts or big men 'who were more mediators than rulers among the residents, whose associations were bound by kin, secret societies…that control the affairs of the village without a hierarchical administration' (Burns and Collins, 2007: 129-30). Example of 'stateless' societies in West Africa included the Igbo, Ballanta, and the Tiv.[50]

Inter-African relations in pre-colonial times were manifold, sometimes conflictual, while at other times, cooperative. The conflictual aspect of inter-African relations has been discussed in a previous section of this chapter, engendered largely by the drive for slave commodities, Islamic Jihad and hegemonic tendencies of strong states. On the cooperative part, there are records of exchanges of diplomats and ambassadors among African states and between African and European states before colonisation. Smith (1973) catalogues diplomatic relationships between African societies, on the one hand and between African and European societies on the other. Ryder (1961: 258-259) published a

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[50] In these societies, the British policy of indirect rule encountered great difficulties as there were no institutions of traditional authority in place. 'Warrant chiefs' were therefore created by the colonialists, which engendered stiff opposition from the natives.

full translation of a 1539 letter written by three Portuguese missionaries in the Benin Kingdom to their King, John III regarding the ill-treatment meted out to John's ambassadors in the kingdom. There was a Congolese embassy in Rome by 1514 (Bontink, 1970). The Yoruba Empire of Oyo mastered the practice of ambassadorial postings with its custom of posting *Ilaris* (representatives of the *Oba*) to vassal kingdoms in order to enforce Oyo rule and demands for tributes. Between Oyo and Dahomey, there were regular exchanges of ambassadors to negotiate peace and cooperation between the two power neighbouring states (Smith, 1973). The alliance formed between the Ashanti Empire and neighbouring Akan political societies mentioned above was facilitated by the diplomatic activities of pre-colonial African potentates. Indeed, one of the linguists[51] of the *Asantehene* in the early nineteenth century, one Agyei, was described by Bowdich as the 'Foreign Minister' of Ashanti, 'always employed in difficult foreign palavers' (in Smith, 1973: 604).

Treaty agreements[52] were integral parts of inter-African relations during this period. There are records of two treaty agreements between Oyo and Dahomey in 1730 and 1748 with the objectives of a comprehensive settlement of issues as well as prescribing the annual tribute payable to Oyo by Dahomey (Smith 1973: 611). Smith also records the treaty agreement between the Sokoto Caliphate and the Hausa city-state of Kebbi signalling a period of peace between these hardened enemies (Smith, 1973: 611).

In sum, West Africa at the advent of colonial rule was a territory in turmoil, occasioned by widespread insecurity and political instability, which were

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[51] A linguist to the king in pre-colonial Asante was the interpreter between the king and foreign officials and/or businessmen operating in the empire.

[52] These treaties and agreements were broken at will, thus heightening the condition of insecurity and instability in the region.

caused by intra- and inter-group conflicts and the revolutionary spread of Islam originating from the savannah belt of the region. It is therefore no misnomer that the colonial incursion into this region of Africa was referred to in some of the colonial literature as 'pacifying' missions (Hutchinson, 1957; Ajayi, 1965; Abraham, 1978). Some of the treaties signed between indigenous African leaders and colonial officers were regarded in terms of protection, hence these territories were known as 'protectorates'. Indeed, in many places in the region, Europeans saw their involvement in native affairs as necessary in order to halt the carnage being perpetrated in inter-African wars.[53] In several of these conflicts, officials of European powers sought vigorously to mediate in and prevent or halt hostilities between belligerent communities.[54] In many places, European protections were sought by weak communities against their more aggressive neighbour. These weak communities indeed invited and sometimes begged for European protections, thus voluntarily placing themselves under European dominion (Colonial Office, 1861-1906).

Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, almost every square metre of territory in West Africa had come under direct European control; territories either gained by outright conquest of by the agreements of protective treaties between African rulers and officials of European powers.[55]

This section has shown that pre-colonial West Africa, though was

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[53] It is important to note that the colonial adventure in Nigeria began with the intervention of the British Navy in the battle for succession in Lagos. This heralded direct British involvement in local affairs which ultimately culminated in the colonisation of the whole of present day Nigeria

[54] In the Yoruba wars of the 19th century, the British, after initial vacillation, were compelled to intervene to bring the wars to an end. Against the Dahomey Kingdom, the French had to use the force of arms to halt its belligerency and expansionist tendencies. In Lagos, prior to the treaty ceding the slaving coastal town to the British in 1861, British forces had to bombard the town to ensure peace following the succession problems between two rival claimants to the throne.

[55] With the exception of Liberia and the autonomous kingdom of the Egba, which came under effective European control shortly after, everywhere in West Africa had been 'pacified' and incorporated into European spheres of influence by the end of the 19th century.

characterised by different types of political organisation of society, had evolved highly centralised political societies in many places. Some of these societies were organised as empires and kingdoms with identifiable territoriality and intergroup relations. In other words, West Africa was not the *terra nullius* claimed by the imperial powers in staking claims to these territories.

4.3 The Scramble and the Partition of West Africa

John Reader's epitaph to the forty-eighth chapter in his *Biography of Africa* sums up the Scramble for, and the partition of, (West) African territories:

> Africa's colonial boundaries were decided upon in Europe by negotiators with little consideration for local conditions. The boundaries cut across 177 ethnic 'culture areas', dividing pre-existing economic and social units and distorting the development of entire regions (Reader, 1997: 562).

The imperial Scramble for African territories towards the end of the eighteenth century partitioned the continent among the major European Powers and an adventurous and 'crazy' monarch (Pakenham, 1991). The process of the division of these territories is the subject of this section. The examination of the partition of West Africa would enable the study provide answers to the research questions on the manner as well as the impacts of the partition on the indigenous societies and peoples.

Prior to the Scramble, European political influence in West Africa did not go beyond the coastal reaches of the region.[56] Colonies were established and spheres of influence were carved out along the coast. However, following the abolition of slavery and the switch to 'legitimate' commerce, the coastal regions

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[56] This may not be unconnected with the perilous health conditions of the hinterlands characterised as it were by malaria bearing mosquitoes as well as the fact that European activities were largely coast-bound (slavery).

lost their importance as centres of commerce, and there was the need to get beyond these territories into the interior to exploit the 'vast' riches of this 'dark' continent. The penetration of the interior was achieved through the 'carrot and stick' initiative: protective treaties were negotiated (usually unequal and exploitative) between the European invaders and local African rulers. However, wherever a local leader refused to enter into a treaty agreement, armed conflicts ensued from which the Europeans, with superior fire-power always emerged victorious. The local community was then subjugated and added to the *sphere of influence* of that particular European power. Simultaneous with the penetration of the interior of the continent was the accompanying *civilising mission* meant to expose the 'uncivilised' Africans to the modernising European influence. The Christian religion was employed in this regard; conversion to the faith was the qualification for admission into the growing number of schools which were run by Christian missions (Ajayi, 1965; Ayandele, 1967).[57]

Sphere of influence was crucially important in the expansion of empire and imperialism in Africa. Following the Scramble (propelled by mercantilism) for territorial acquisition in Africa and the fear that such unregulated competitions may ultimately lead to war in metropolitan Europe, the Berlin West African Conference was convened at the instance of Otto von Bismarck, ostensibly to provide a framework for the orderly partition of Africa.[58] At the conference, the principle of *effective occupation* was adopted by rival European powers as the

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[57] This became more significant following the establishment of colonial rule and the need to train a crop of native Africans to help in the administration of the colony. In Islamic societies, especially in Hausaland, part of the treaty agreement was the exclusion of Christianity and its influence from the region.

[58] Bismarck's ulterior motive for convening the conference was to get a leeway into the fray that was the scramble for African territories. Germany was a late entrant into scramble and wanted ways to grab some territories from Britain and France who were the major shareholders in the venture.

basis of territorial claims as well as for ordering inter-colonial relations. This principle had been developed around the mid 16th century as sea-faring European powers sought to settle disputed claims to some 'unoccupied' territories they were annexing. Such territories, usually isolated islands, (*terra nullius*) were deemed to belong to their first European occupant whether or not it was already inhabited by an indigenous race (Katzellenbogen, 1996). If the vast territories of Africa where people have lived for centuries could be regarded as 'unoccupied', how then do we begin to talk about pre-partition boundaries? This misleading assumption has led to the claim in the literature (Alexander, 1963: 61) that international boundaries in Africa are antecedental,[59] that is, drawn on previously uninhabited territories.

As spheres of influence became welded together with effective occupation, the nucleus of the modern state system emerged in Africa. The modern state system fashioned after the Westphalian model required the fusion of territoriality with sovereignty (Anderson, 1996). One of the defining features of territorial sovereignty is the international boundary separating one domain of power from another. Thus boundaries were determined, delimited and demarcated (rarely) between the colonial states. Before boundary-making is considered however, it is important to examine the rationale for the vicious Scramble for African territories by the supposedly 'civilised' Powers.

4.31 Rationale for the Scramble

This sub-section helps in answering the research question relating to the nature of the partition and the consequence on African societies. It examines the

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[59] Instead, international boundaries in Africa are subsequent, i.e., the boundaries were delimited after the region had fully developed and evolved distinct characters. The boundaries were superimposed on pre-existing social formations, thus cutting through many culturally homogeneous identities and disrupting age-long affinities and patterns of relationships in many places.

rationale for the partition and establishes the pre-eminence of, (if not exclusive) European considerations, stakes and interests in the partitioning of African territories.

There are two distinct, but related schools regarding the justification of the scramble for African territories in the late 19th century. The first school has two sets of rationales: strategic consideration and the entry of third parties into the competition for territory. For the strategic consideration school, the obsession with security and a fixation on safeguarding the routes to the East were the triggers of the scramble (Robinson and Gallagher, 1961). Strategic considerations impelled the British to seize the Cape (present-day Cape Town territory in South Africa); Egypt was even more important strategically with the Suez Canal being regarded as the spinal cord of the Empire. The British moved troops into Egypt in order to protect the seaways to India, which compelled their involvement in Sudan and Uganda (Gann and Duignan, 1969: 126). This action of the British also forced other countries, especially, France to seek compensations in Africa, and thereby played a major role in determining the context of the Scramble.

The argument regarding the entry of Third parties contends that the Scramble and partition was set off on the African scene by the appearance of two new entrants into the foray – Germany and Belgium. According to Fage and Oliver (1962: 182), 'it was this that upset the pre-existing balance of power and influence, and precipitated a start of international hysteria in which all powers rushed to stake claims'.

The second school argues that the crazy drive for a share of African territories was propelled by economic considerations. Britain had emerged as the leading

economic power of the time following the Industrial Revolution. This economic hegemony found expression in the carving out of the European 'free trade' in Africa (Gann and Duignan, 1969). The free trade meant that other European Powers may not be involved in the economic exploitation of the continent. However, this British hegemony came under severe challenge in the 1860s with the emergence of France, Germany and the United States as economic powerhouses (Gann and Duignan, 1969). The Consequence of this was the saturation of the European market and the subsequent need to exploit other regions, especially Africa, became inevitable. With European industrial and trading competition approaching more equal terms, 'free trade' gave way to 'protectionism'. Britain's rivals, France and Germany, realised that the only way to beat British competition was to establish colonies or 'protected' areas in Africa, where the trade of other European nationals could be excluded or subjected to heavy taxation (Shillington, 1989: 307).

Another economic consideration for the Scramble was the famed resource deposit in the interior of Africa already mentioned above. These factors combined to prompt the Scramble for choice territories in the continent.

4.4 Making the African Boundary

This section consolidates on the analysis of the preceding section by further examining the boundary making through the processes of delimitation and demarcation. It sheds further light on the research question on the colonial partition, the role of Africa elite as well as the impacts on pre-existing social formations in Africa. Contemporary international boundaries in Africa emerged largely in the 30 years following the Berlin West African Conference (1884-1885) where the groundwork for the partition of African territories was laid. The

boundaries that emerged 'were drawn by Europeans, for Europeans and, apart from localised details, paid scant regard to Africa, let alone Africans' (Griffiths, 1986: 204).

Two types of boundaries can be identified in the process of boundary making in the continent. The first includes those boundaries between territorial holdings of different colonial powers. In fact, these boundaries may be regarded as inter-European boundaries (Anene, 1970) and are categorised here as 'boundaries established by international agreements', borrowing from Touval (1972: 4). The second type of boundaries includes those between territorial possessions of the same colonial power. For instance the huge territorial possessions of France in West and Central Africa were partitioned into distinct administrative units, with the lines of division usually unilaterally determined by French colonial officials. They are therefore categorised here as 'unilateral boundaries'.

4.41 Boundaries Established By International Conventions

It is axiomatic that the ultimate authority concerning the determination and delimitation of African boundaries was a European prerogative. The Scramble was chaotic competition and struggles[60] for choice territories and was conducted in such a manner that it was feared would lead to war in continental Europe (Hargreaves, 1963). The principle of *effective occupation* adopted as the ordering formula led to the haphazard and 'bizarre' political map of present-day Africa. Territories were carved up and carved out in spite of pre-existing social formation and patterns of interactions. The resultant boundary regime on the one hand,

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[60] The famous race to Nikki between British and French colonial officials is a case in point. Nikki was a fabled 'Eldorado', which both the French and the British sought to include within their respective sphere of control. The colonial officers of these two colonial powers concluded two different treaties with the rulers of the town with almost disastrous implications.

'lumped' together diverse (and at times, conflicting groups) in the same territorial configuration, while on the other hand, it sliced through homogenous culture areas, dividing some groups into contrasting spheres of European interests (Englebert, et al, 2002).

However, there were few instances where attempts were made to reflect the prevailing political and social realities at the time of boundary making (Anene, 1970; Touval, 1972, Katzellenbogen, 1996; Nugent, 1996). The colonialists attempted to incorporate pre-existing realities in the delimitation of boundaries by making the territorial extent[61] of African societies included in their sphere of influence correspond to their boundaries with rival European powers. African territories were acquired through 'protective' treaties between African rulers who barely understood the contents of the agreement, and colonial officers (who sought to exploit the ignorance of the ruler) (Touval, 1966). Therefore, in the situation of disputes, European powers relied on treaties concluded with African rulers to justify territorial claims.[62] Treaties provided bargaining advantages in territorial negotiations. If a power had obtained a treaty with the African ruler of a territory, the territory could be ceded to another power in return for a counter-concession. Even at that, treaties could not provide an effective panacea to boundary-making problems as African societies did not possess the European conception of boundary as a finite line of division between territorial domains, rather, pre-colonial African conception of boundaries was the frontier type;

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[61] The problem was that pre-colonial conception of boundaries in Africa was distinct from that of Europe.

[62] In certain cases, the unreliability of these treaties have brought competing Powers to the brink of war. In Borgu, the British, through its colonial representative, Lord Lugard had concluded a treat agreement with a supposed ruler of Nikki, but the French, a few days later, concluded a treaty agreement with the authentic Emir of this kingdom, creating a face-off, which was eventually resolved.

regions of interactions, rather than those of separation (Kehinde, 2008b).[63] Furthermore, many such societies took advantage of colonial intervention to settle old scores and reclaim lost or long-coveted territories.[64] Hence, territories claimed by these societies did not correspond to actual realities. Boundaries determined on the basis of such claims tended to be misrepresentative and hotly contested. Thus, the setting of African colonial boundaries reflected a wide range of political, strategic and economic considerations and hopes, as well as ignorance, and misconceptions.

4.42 Unilaterally Determined Boundaries

Unilateral boundaries separated territories belonging to one colonial power essentially for administrative purposes. The process of determining these boundaries did not involve any problematic negotiations with rival colonial powers but emanated from the unilateral decision of the power exercising control over both territories. Though it can be argued that in some isolated instances Africans were involved in the process of boundary making under the international agreement type, albeit marginally. However, their influence was much more marginal in the decisions regarding unilateral boundaries, as the boundary making process resulted from the unilateral decision of the government exercising control over both territories (Touval, 1972: 11). In other words, boundary making was an exclusive preserve of the colonialists as dictated by the exigencies of administering their colonial possessions (Griffiths, 1986). These boundaries were often changed or modified as demanded by the vagaries and exigencies of

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[63] Pre-colonial boundaries of African societies were fluid, expanding and contrasting as a consequence of war and conquest.

[64] For example, the extent of Calabar 'kingdom' in present-day Nigeria was constructed to include former autonomous societies it had always aspired to annex. The case of the Empire of Bornu represents the second scenario. A great chunk of its territory had been lost to invading Fulani Jihadists from the west as well as the Barbers of North Africa, yet, at the time of boundary making, these territories were claimed to belong to Bornu and included in the British sphere of Nigeria

administering the territories determined unilaterally by the colonial authorities. A number of reasons and criteria were responsible for the determinations of these boundaries. In some instances, they were political and reflected the political considerations of metropolitan government back in Europe and in some other instances, they emanated from administrative and economic considerations in the colonies (Touval, 1972: 12). For instance, Mali established in 1890 as a distinct administrative unit in French West Africa, was dismembered in 1899 and its territory attached to each of the neighbouring territories. Between 1902 and 1947, when it was re-established, its territories were administered at different times as part of Upper Volta, Niger, Mauritania and Upper Senegal (Touval, 1972). The same is true for many other French territories as they experienced diminishing and expanding territories intermittently. Unilateral boundary determination was not limited to the French as the British also made and adjusted boundaries depending on the exigencies of the time. The Kenya-Uganda boundary presents another illustration of unilateral determination of boundaries. The eastern province of Uganda was transferred to Kenya in 1902 for purely administrative purpose.[65] The transfer meant the delimitation of new boundaries, which was agreed upon by the colonial administrators from both territories to coincide with ethnic boundaries (Touval, 1972: 13).[66]

The resolution of the problems associated with unilateral boundaries was easier than those between different colonial powers. Local interests may or may not be considered in the resolution of such problems, as the overarching interests

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[65] The British Foreign Office believed that this measure would allow for closer supervision of the area than was possible while under Uganda's administration.

[66] Ethnic boundaries were proposed as the boundary between the two territories. However, disagreements developed when it came to the application of the principle over whether the criterion should be a purely scientific classification of ethnic groups or whether the political connections among various tribal subunits should be considered.

of the metropolitan government were ultimately the driving force. On the other hand, negotiation and bargaining were the characteristics of inter-colonial boundary dispute resolution.

This section has examined and analysed the processes of boundary making at the beginning of colonial rule in Africa. It addresses the research question regarding the boundary making process driven entirely by exogenous forces to the territories and peoples being shared amongst the imperialists. It further identifies two different categories of boundary making, each of which possesses distinct consequences for the successor states. The boundary in this study falls within the category of boundaries 'established by international conventions', which was subject to inter-colonial rivalries and control. This would help us in the understanding of the research question on identity and reactions to the boundary by the partitioned group which straddles this boundary.

Map 1: Map of West Africa, showing the location of the Yoruba astride the

Nigeria – Benin boundary.

Map 2: Map of the 'Yoruba country', showing its partition by the international boundary.

4.5   Who are the Yoruba?

The Yoruba are a large ethno-linguistic group or ethnic nation in Africa; the people share a common language, identical culture and a myth of common origin. The Yoruba have an approximate population of about 22 million throughout the West African region and in the Diaspora with Nigeria accounting

for over 80% of this number.[67] They are located principally in southwest Nigeria and the mid-latitudes of Benin (partitioned by the boundary) as well as specific locations in Togo (principally in the Atakpame area of the Plateaux Region). In Ghana, they are located in the large cities of Accra and Kumasi where they are largely migrant traders as they are in Cote d'Ivoire. They are also found in Sierra Leone where their history is quite unique. The bulk of the Yoruba in Sierra Leone were recaptive slaves rescued from slave ships in the mid-Atlantic as well as emancipated slaves from the Americas following the abolition of the slave trade in the early 19th century.[68] Elsewhere in the sub-region (Burkina Faso, Niger, Equatorial Guinea), the Yoruba population is largely composed of migrant traders.

The Yoruba homeland is located in south-western part of present day Nigeria, including the states of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo, south-eastern part of Kwara, western part of Kogi and a small section of northwest Edo; in Benin Republic, the Yoruba are found principally in the Ketu and Sabe Prefectures. In pre-colonial times, the territory occupied by the Yoruba stretched from present day Ondo State in Nigeria to the frontier with the Kingdom of Dahomey. At the advent of colonial rule, Ellis (1894: 10-11) identified the Yoruba 'country' as consisting of the following political units:

1. The Lagos Colony, including the kingdoms of Appa, Ipokia, Lagos, Badagry, Palma, Lekki Mahin, Ogbo and Jakri.

2. Egba, with its capital at Abeokuta lies due north of the Colony of Lagos and southwest of 'Yoruba proper'.

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[67] It is extremely difficult to arrive at a certain number for this group as population census is a very sensitive issue in Nigeria due to the fact that population size is a significant determinant of state patronage. Hence, owing to ethnic competition, ethnic groups manipulate population data and population censuses have remained unreliable.

[68] A significant proportion of this category eventually retraced their steps back home to the Yoruba region in Nigeria where they formed the bastion of resistance to colonial rule

3. 'Yoruba Proper' was the old Empire of Oyo. The people were regarded as Yoruba proper owing to the overarching influence of the old Oyo Empire over the rest of the Yoruba 'country.

4. Ketu was the acknowledged western-most extreme of the Yoruba 'country'. It shared a frontier with Dahomey and was the focus of intermittent Dahomey raids and pillage.

5. The Ijebu Kingdom is the southernmost part of the Yoruba territory. Its capital is Ijebu-Ode and was especially unfriendly to strangers.

6. The Ekiti group located northeast of Ijebu, constituted one of the eastern Yoruba groups.

7. Ibadan was a newly created state following the Yoruba wars of the 18th century, but quickly gained pre-eminence owing to the fact that it was a war camp and made up of warrior elements.

8. The Kingdom of Ife whose only attribute is that it is regarded as the origin of the Yoruba race from where the Yoruba 'country' was subjugated and inhabited through waves of migration from Ife.

9. Ijesa kingdom is situated to the southeast of Yoruba proper and shares territorial frontier with the Ekiti.

10. Ondo is located southeast of Ife. Together with the Ekiti, Ondo was frequently harassed by the Benin Empire. These two groups still have elements of Benin influence in their socio-political organisation.

There are two groups of the Yoruba which Ellis did not include in his classification. This may not be unconnected with the location of these groups, in the interior of the area, and far removed from the other Yoruba groups: the Sabe Yoruba and the group found in Atakpame of the Plateaux Region of Togo. Indeed,

as we will find out shortly, the Sabe are regarded as one of the core groups of the Yoruba, speaking a dialect of the language very close to that spoken by the 'Yoruba proper'. On the other hand, the Atakpame Yoruba are a later migrant group, probably escaping from the harassment and belligerency of Dahomey following its routing and sacking of Ketu (Akinjogbin, 1967). Their dialect of the Yoruba language is so different from the proper Yoruba spoken in the core Yoruba areas of Nigeria and Benin.[69]

There are conflicting accounts of the origin of the Yoruba;[70] however, there are common factors in these accounts. Oduduwa and Ife feature prominently in the accounts of the origin of the group that one can safely conclude that Oduduwa was the founder and Ife was the first Yoruba settlement. It was from Ife that the group began to disperse in different waves of migration to found the several Yoruba kingdoms (Adediran, 1994: 59-74). Indeed, Ife is regarded as a 'pristine' state which influenced developments in other parts of Yorubaland. Political leadership all over Yorubaland, depended on dynastic linkage with Ife. From here in Ife, the type of kingship institution established by Oduduwa was replicated all over Yorubaland through dynastic migrations of the sons and grandsons of Oduduwa (Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1980: 125-30). The possession and the right to wear the *ade ileke* (beaded crown with fringe over the face), the symbol of political authority all over Yorubaland derived from Ife. The possession of the *ade ileke* by an individual or group was related primarily to kinship association with Oduduwa, which confers on that individual the rights and privileges of a king (Adediran, 1994).

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[69] On a field research to Atakpame, it took this researcher extra care to be able to understand the Atakpame Yoruba. The dialect is so infused with the Ewe and French that it becomes quite difficult to understand for the speaker of the Nigerian Yoruba.
[70] See Johnson, 1921; Eades, 1980; Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1980.

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Following several waves of migration from Ife,[71] the Yoruba people spread to cover their present spatial locations across West Africa.[72] In certain cases, the migrating bands met with indigenous settlers whom they either expelled or incorporated into their newly established kingdom. Where they were compelled to coexist with earlier settlers, there emerged a culture-mix, such that the Yoruba people became bilingual, becoming fluent in the use of the language of the other group and vice versa.[73] Furthermore, this language contact led to the incorporation of some words of the other language into the Yoruba language, such that the Yoruba language spoken in these places are etymologically different from the 'parent' language. In other words, in the course of the migration and separation one from another, as well as mingling with other ethnic groups, the different Yoruba groups evolved dialectical variations of the same language and autonomous kingdoms, though they were kept together by the Oduduwa bond. For instance, as recorded by Adediran (1994: 58), 'invariably, the rulers of pre-19th century Yoruba kingdoms saw each other as belonging to the same family (*ebi*), within which inter-kingdom relations had to be conducted. As they were placed upon the same genealogy, their common descent from Oduduwa demanded friendship and cooperation'. They regarded one another as 'brothers' and the Ooni of Ife[74] they saw as 'father' being Oduduwa's successor in Ife (Adediran, 1994). Certain practices subsist till the present time among the Oduduwa princes to

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[71] The source of migration was not limited to Ife as several states were founded from those originally founded from the first sets of migrations from Ife. In addition, political exigencies deriving from wars and conquests and the need to provide security from marauding groups led to new waves of migrations.

[72] This is limited to the indigenous groups in Nigeria, Benin and Togo. The others elsewhere are recent economic migrants who still keep in touch with home in Nigeria.

[73] Observation on the field, which was further affirmed by the Yoruba respondents interviewed.

[74] *Ooni* is the title of the king of Ile (Ife). However, there is an unresolved controversy regarding the status of the *Ooni* vis a vis the *Alafin* (King) of Oyo owing largely to the ascendancy of Oyo as the most prominent Yoruba town which the defunct Oyo Empire depicted.

underline the perception of the same *ebi*: whenever any *oba* regarded as a direct descendant of Oduduwa died, his movable properties, especially his dresses were shared among the remaining surviving obas, his 'brothers'. This practice of inheritance sharing (*ogun pinpin*) is one of the strongest evidences of kinship relationship among the *obas* (Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1980). When *Ooni* Adesoji Aderemi ascended the throne of Ife in 1930, he sent part of his predecessor's clothes to certain principal Yoruba *obas*:

> I waived my claims over my predecessor's clothes, trinkets, money, wives and other goods. The chiefs had no alternative but to acquiesce in my decision since I am the principal party concerned, but by the importunity of the chiefs, I agree to some clothes being sent to certain principal *obas* of Yorubaland with the consent of the family, their father having received many such legacies from abroad (*Ooni* Aderemi, in Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1980: 132).

Another practice, though defunct, is the referral of dynastic disputes to Ife for adjudication (Adediran, 1994). While this practice lasted, succession disputes in many places in Yorubaland were referred to the *Ooni* of Ife for resolution. The British acknowledged this practice by consulting the *Ooni* regarding the authenticity of kingship claims by other Yoruba *obas* during colonial rule.[75]

One can therefore take the kinship relationship among Yoruba *obas* for granted; and the domains of these *obas* can be regarded as the extension of the Yoruba family. Granted, the Yoruba was organised into several autonomous sub-groups, the Oduduwa factor was ever at the forefront of interactions among these groups, keeping the *ebi* alive. Thus, in spite of political autonomy, a semblance of overarching linkages subsisted among these groups in pre-colonial times. In other words, the only veneer of unity in this region is linguistic and cultural rather than

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[75] In drawing up the list of crowned kings, ostensibly to aid its indirect rule system, the British administration consulted with the Ooni of Ife in the determination of the number of crowned kings as well as the validation of the claims of royalty of many pretenders.

political. Consequently, it is impossible to ascribe a national quality to the various sub-groups that emerged from the different waves of migration as they were organised into several autonomous political units speaking mutually intelligible dialects (Johnson, 1921). In spite of this dialectical affinity, the Yoruba spoke of themselves as Oyo, Ijebu, Ekiti, Ijesha, Egba, among others. Right across the centre of Yorubaland were a number of centralised states including Oyo, Ketu, Sabe, Owu, Ijebu, Ife and Ijesa. There are other lesser states such as Egba, Akoko, Kabba, ikale, and so on. Though, at the heights of its glory, the Oyo Empire embraced much of the areas mentioned above, it never was organised as a single political unit (Eades, 1980).[76]

Indeed, the term Yoruba is European in origin as it came into the lexicon of the explorers, missionaries and traders in the mid-19th century to describe the group of people found around and along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa (Johnson, 1921). The name Yoruba, Anene (1970) argues is a corruption of the word *Yarriba*,[77] adopted by the Hausa to describe the people of Oyo Kingdom. As an ethnic description, the word first appeared in a treatise written by the Songhai scholar Ahmed Baba (Willis, 1987) and is likely to derive from the indigenous ethnonyms Oyo or Yagba, two Yoruba-speaking groups along the southern borders of their territory.

Across the boundary in Benin and Togo, the Yoruba speaking peoples are regarded as Anago and Ife respectively (Parrinder, 1947; Igue and Yai, 1973). They are found in the districts of Sabe, Dassa, Ketu, Bante, Djaloukou and Atakpame. Dassa claims an Egba origin while Sabe and Ketu claim dynastic

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[76] This was not borne out of a lack of attempt. The literature is awash of the belligerency and expansionist tendency of Oyo. However, the other groups would go to great extents to defend their independence, even though, some were overpowered and annexed by Oyo.

[77] Indeed, *Yarriba* was the name some pre-colonial maps used to describe this group of people.

linkage with Ife being sons of Oduduwa. The group in Atakpame (about 40% of the population) variously claims to originate from Ife and Ketu. However, given the history of Dahomey belligerency in this region, it is more plausible that the Atakpame Yoruba were refugees from the Ketu area who fled to their present location from Dahomey invasion than migration from Ife.

The further west one moves away from the Yoruba in Nigeria the less intelligible the language becomes to the Oyo Yorubaman.[78] This is especially so in those enclaves in Benin and Togo, which due to isolation from the main Yoruba groups, incorporated the language of their neighbours in their everyday language usage. Thus, some Ewe and Egun words are found in the dialects of Yoruba spoken by these peoples. Furthermore, many of these groups are bilingual, speaking languages of their neighbours together with their Yoruba tongue.[79]

Linguistically, the Yoruba belongs to the Kwa group of West African languages, related to Igala, Edo, Igbo, Igbira, Idoma, among others (Eades, 1980). The glotto-chronological evidence suggests that these languages separated between 2000 to 10000 years ago (Armstrong, 1964 in Eades, 1980: 4). The different dialects of Yoruba in Nigeria form three main families: the northwest Yoruba spoken in Oyo (including those subgroups in Benin which claim links with Oyo - e.g. Sabe), Ibadan and northern Egba area; the southeastern Yoruba spoken in Ondo, Ikale and Ijebu areas; central Yoruba spoken by the Ife, Ijesa and Ekiti (Eades, 1980: 4).

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[78] The Oyo Yoruba was adopted as the standardised Yoruba language and has since become the medium of official expression, education and media.

[79] Field research observation and interaction with the people support this claim.

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4.6   Pre-colonial Yoruba and the Prevailing Conditions prior to Colonial Rule

As noted earlier, at no time did there appear to be any single political authority effectively controlling all the Yoruba; it was never considered as one single unit, and at best can be considered a confederation (Mills, 1970). As Morton-Williams (1967: 37) notes, 'the territory of the early empire…was not incorporated into a centrally administered unitary state, but consisted of a large number of internal autonomous kingdoms, whose rulers were said to have derived their crowns from Oyo and were vassals of the *Alaafin*'.[80] Referring to Yorubaland, Africanus Horton noted that for want of a more appropriate name, as well as the history of Oyo hegemonic rule over most of this region, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) designated it the Yoruba country (Horton, 1868).[81] This labelling however met with opposition from other Yoruba sub-groups who did not consider themselves Yoruba until very much later (Biobaku, 1957).

Pre-colonial Yoruba was made up of different sub-groups, namely: Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, Owu, Ife, Ketu, Sabe, Ijesa, Ekiti, Ije, Ohori, among others. Before the 19th century, Oyo had emerged as the dominant Yoruba Empire covering more than half of the territories occupied by the Yoruba speaking groups. Apart from the Ekiti, Ijebu and perhaps, Ife, all other part of Yorubaland seemed to have accepted the ritual supremacy of the *Alaafin* and only perhaps a very vague political suzerainty of Oyo (Mills, 1970). Owing to its extent, Oyo was able to ascribe on a large part of Yorubaland both cultural coherence and political unity (Anene, 1970: 142). At the apogee of the empire, Oyo's political influence

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[80] *Alaafin* is the official title of the *Oba* of Oyo.
[81] More decisive in this labelling could be the influence of Ajayi Crowther and other repatriated slaves who had become clergymen of the CMS. These returnees were almost entirely from the Oyo region and in 'determining' the history of the Yoruba, projected the Oyo version, hence, the dominance and adoption of Oyo Yoruba as the standardised form of the language.

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extended as far east as the Niger and as far west as the Kingdom of Dahomey which was reduced to a vassal status following its defeat by Oyo cavalry.

For the purpose of this research, and in order to answer the research question regarding the partitioning of the Yoruba, the Yoruba sub-groups whose territories were directly affected by the location of the boundary are examined in details. For obvious reasons, the Old Oyo Empire would be included in the field of analysis given its influence in the area under consideration.[82] Ethnographical maps of the region often show that the boundary split the Yoruba-speaking area into two. This has obvious implications for the boundary, the people and interstate relations. Those groups partitioned by the boundary include: Oyo (Yoruba proper), the Ketu, Ahori, Ifonyin (Nago), Sabe, and Egbado (Asiwaju, 1979; Eades, 1980).

4.61Oyo

The tradition of origin of Oyo claims that it was founded by one of the sons of Oduduwa, who being the youngest was denied any inheritance of value on the death of their father, except land. His heritage was later to gain for him pre-eminence among his siblings who had to pay rent to him to farm or build new towns. This was meant to justify the extent of the old Oyo Empire and its over-lordship over the rest of Yorubaland. Everywhere that the Yoruba Language was spoken, was either under the direct control of Oyo, or was subject to significant Oyo influence. Due to Oyo's military supremacy, several non-Yoruba states and kingdoms came under Oyo control at the height of its influence.

The old Oyo Empire attained pre-eminence among the political units and organisations in the forest belt of West Africa around the 18th century when its spatial spread and influence were recorded to stretch from the Niger in present

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[82] Indeed, part of the Oyo Empire was affected by the delimitation of the boundary.

southern Nigeria to the fringes of the Volta in present day Ghana (Akinjogbin, 1967: 126). The powerful kingdom of Dahomey was defeated and subjugated by Oyo for the greater part of the 18th century till about 1830, when due to the disintegration of the once powerful kingdom, Dahomey gained its independence.

The empire's influence over its wide expanse was effectively controlled by the *Alaafin* through the posting of *ilaris* as palace representatives everywhere Oyo had control (Akinjogbin, 1967; Asiwaju, 1976). This represented a sophisticated administrative style that was absent in the region in pre-colonial time. As noted above, political influence during this period was centred on the capital and petered out, as distance increased from this centre. This probably enabled the rulers of Oyo to export Oyo culture and values to conquered and subjugated territories, such that the missionaries who came to this region later found it easy to ascribe the Oyo identity to the groups of people located in the territories of the old empire.[83] Indeed, the Oyo people were regarded as 'Yoruba proper' and their variant of the Yoruba Language became the codified and standardised form of the language.[84]

At the time of the partition, Oyo had lost its pre-eminence and been destroyed by several waves of external aggression from Borgu, Bornu and most especially the marauding Hausa/Fulani religious wars of that century. Unfortunately for the empire, it had been weakened by incessant internal political instability deriving from succession crisis and petty rivalry among the nobility. Oyo eventually crumbled and several small city-states emerged in its stead, chief

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[83] This was several years after the empire had collapsed and successor states had emerged. The force of Oyo's influence subsisted far beyond it actual existent.

[84] The standardisation of the Yoruba Language will be examined in greater details in the next chapter.

among which were Ibadan and Abeokuta.[85] A new town of Oyo was founded deep in the forest region to provide some defence against the Hausa/Fulani cavalry, but this new settlement could not muster power and influence sufficient to re-enact the old Oyo supremacy.

In spite of the fate of the empire at the dawn of colonisation, it was still possible to ascribe a 'national' quality to the Yoruba people. Indeed, the Governor of the colony of Lagos, Moloney, in one of his letters to the *Alaafin* in 1886 (decades after the collapse of Oyo) recognised the 'Yoruba country' to include-Oyo, Ijebu, Egba and Ketu (Colonial Office, 1861-1906).

4.62 Ketu

Parrinder (2005: 1) introduces Ketu as 'traditionally a Yoruba town, one of the ancient offshoots from the Yoruba home of Ile Ife'. The Ketu people also share historical links with Oyo and Egba. It is one of the older Yoruba kingdoms, and according to Asiwaju (1975), its establishment involved the expulsion and or incorporation of an existing Gun population. The frequent reference to Ketu by Oyo in the 19th century as one of the 'four corners of the Yoruba world' indicates the prominence of the *Alaketu*[86] among Yoruba *obas* (Johnson, 1921). In one of the accounts of Ife regarding the sons of Oduduwa, the *Alaketu* (the king of Ketu) featured prominently. Adediran (1994: 67) records the account in Ife of the circumstances under which the first *Alaketu* left the town on his outward journey to found Ketu:

> A prince of Oduduwa. He got crowns. He blessed him. His mother
> was from *Obawara* of *Ilode*. He gave him a cord (rope) of *oro*… He
> was born hunchbacked. Then an *Ifa* man promised to straighten the
> child's back. Oduduwa gave to the man who took him away

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[85] These cities were founded by Oyo refugees and held some degree of reverence for, but not dependence on Oyo. Indeed, Oyo relied on supports from Ibadan in times of military needs.
[86] *Alaketu* is the title of the *oba* of Ketu.

to…where he was cured, he grew up and later left to found his own city. He stayed where he was cured hence- *Oniketu*

The *Yorubaness* of Ketu is beyond doubt; the people speak a dialect of Yoruba that is intelligible to the Oyo-Yoruba speaker; the capital town (also known as Ketu) exhibits characteristics of a traditional Yoruba town.[87] The relationship that subsisted between Oyo and Ketu in the pre-colonial times remains fuzzy: according to sources in Ketu, it remained independent of Oyo, while in Oyo, Ketu was a subject kingdom. However, it is established that there existed some degree of relationship, largely friendly and cooperative, including exchange of gifts (Eades, 1980:11-12).

In the nineteenth century, Ketu became a victim of the famed Dahomean belligerent expansionism. It was attacked at different times between the 18th and 19th century culminating in its destruction in 1886. The kingdom was sacked and the surviving population was deported.[88] Ketu (the capital) was however resettled in 1892 following the defeat of Dahomey by the French by which time the boundary between the French and the British had been determined. The town of Imeko (a former Ketu outpost) and the eastern half of the kingdom (which had pledged allegiance to Oyo in 1868) was cut off from the capital and included in the British sphere (Eades, 1980: 12).

4.63 Sabe

According to Eades (1980), the Sabe Kingdom lies almost entirely within Benin Republic, however, a fraction is included as part of Nigeria by the international boundary (Igue and Yai, 1973: 6). Johnson (1921: 8) claims that the

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[87] When this researcher visited Ketu in 2008, he had no doubt he was in any traditional Yoruba setting: the market located close to the palace; the houses mainly built of mud with rusting corrugated iron roofs; the ubiquitous courtesy typical of the Yoruba, among several typical Yoruba characteristics.

[88] Perhaps constituting the bulk of the Yoruba found in several locations in western Benin and in Togo, especially around Atakpame.

Onisabe (the king of Sabe) was the son of Oduduwa who inherited the cattle, establishing the vital Oduduwa link with the kingdom. Sabe appears on current Ife list[89] of sons of Oduduwa and there is an Oduduwa shrine in Jabata, one of the early Sabe settlements. However, there are controversies regarding the dynastic link with Ife. According to Adediran (1994: 71-74), the claims of dynastic link with Ife is incredible noting that such claims are recent rationalisations. He hinges his claim on the chronology of the kings who were allegedly contemporaries of the *Onisabe*[90]- since traditions insist that the *Onisabe* and the *Alaketu* were in the same group as the *Alaafin*, it is expected that the length of the king-lists of these towns should be fairly equal, even though the source materials allow for natural omission (Adediran, 1994). It should be noted that the length of king list depends on historical realities of the particular kingdom as well as average lifespan of its ruler. However, Adediran (1994) argues that one would not expect a wide margin between king-lists of 'brother kingdoms'. The apparent discrepancy in the eighteen on the Sabe king-list and the thirty two for Oyo and thirty five for Ketu demands further explanation (Adediran, 1994). He concludes that the obvious explanation is that the kingdom of Sabe was established at a later date than those of Oyo and Ketu and hence a dynastic migration of the *Onisabe* at the same time with the founders of Oyo and Ketu remains unfounded.

However, in spite of this uncertainty regarding dynastic migration and link with Ife, Sabe remains definitely a Yoruba town, probably founded by migrants from Oyo. The Sabe speak a dialect of Yoruba that is identical to Oyo-Yoruba. Indeed, Adediran (1994) suggests that the founder of Sabe may be a member of

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[89] The Ife list of the sons of Oduduwa was drawn up upon request by the British at the dawn of indirect rule. It is therefore regarded as the authentic stamp of dynastic linkage between Ife and other Yoruba towns.

[90] *Onisabe* is the title of the *oba* of Sabe.

the royal family of Oyo, suggesting that the founder was an Oyo prince.

Sabe suffered a similar fate as Ketu regarding the ever expanding Dahomey. It was attacked and became a subject kingdom in 1884 (Asiwaju, 1976a). However, its population was not deported like that of Ketu (Akinjogbin, 1967). Thus, Sabe was under the effective political domination of Dahomey at the point when the boundary was determined. It is not clear what factors informed the location of a fraction of this kingdom in the British sphere unlike Ketu where the part cut off from the mother kingdom had shifted allegiance from the capital to Oyo long before the colonial intervention.

4.64 Ifonyin

The Ifonyin have varied sources of origin: Ipokia and Itakete (Sakete) were both founded by the Awori from the south (Eades, 1980: 11-13). However, oral interview with the *Onisakete* (the king of Sakete) claims an Oyo origin.[91] Ifonyin-Ile and Ihunmbo were founded from Oyo around 1700 (Morton-Williams, 1967) in order to secure the slave route from Oyo to Porto-Novo on the lagoon.

The Ohori are located between Ketu and Ifonyin with Ipobe (Pobe) being the principal town. The Ohori around Ije and Ipobe claim an Oyo origin while others claim to have been founded by Ketu migrants (Asiwaju, 1975: 16).

The other Yoruba sub-groups further west include the Managri, Idaisa, Isa and Ife. These groups are isolated from the main Yoruba stock to the east. They are interspersed with such other non-Yoruba groups as the Ewe, Egun, Ibariba and the Kotokoh (Eades, 1980: 14). The Ife (also called Ana) are the most westerly

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[91] Oral interview with the Onisakete on the 23.10.08

Yoruba sub-group and are located in a number of enclaves from Djakulou in western Benin to Atakpame in the Plateaux Region of Togo. The earliest settlers arrived from Ifita in the early 19th century to be later joined by refugees from Ketu, Idaisa and Sabe fleeing from Dahomey invasion (Igue and Yai, 1973: 22).

Along the coast of West Africa, stretching from Lagos to Abidjan, through Cotonou, Lome, and Accra are found a large number of Yoruba migrant traders who have settled in these regions long before the colonial intervention. In Togo, there are two categories of Yoruba:[92] those of the Atakpame region described above and those of the coastal regions of Agoue, Ilakounji and Lome. The distinction between these two groups is that the Atakpame Yoruba are regarded as autochthonous, aboriginal settlers because they arrived in their present location many years ago and they have integrated with other Togolese ethnic groups. Indeed, it is very difficult, for instance, to distinguish between the Yoruba and the Karie in the North.[93] Those of the south, being late arrivals and itinerant traders did not initially integrate which became an issue when Togo became independent and they had to struggle to acquire the Togolese nationality.

4.7 The Eve of Colonial Rule in Yorubaland

Following the collapse of the Oyo Empire at the end of the 18th century, the stage was set for the political instability witnessed all over Yorubaland in the 19th century. The Yoruba were engaged in fratricidal warfare which dragged on until the *Pax Britannica* which eventually put an end to hostilities and effectively established British control over the region. Simultaneously, in Dahomey, the French had to engage and defeat the Dahomean army in a war before its

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[92] Interview with Dr. Ogounde, Lome, Togo, 20.11.2008
[93] Interview with Dr. Ogounde, Lome, Togo, 20.11.2008

expansionist agenda could be stopped and peace and order restored. While war raged in Yorubaland, Dahomey was also engaged in sacking and subjugating neighbouring kingdoms as well as confronting several Yoruba sub-groups including Oyo, Egba, Egbado and the aforementioned victims of Dahomey invasions. Indeed, Dahomey was considered a particularly hegemonic and warring state whose expansionist tendencies was manifested in the spate of Dahomean adventures in neighbouring communities (Akinjogbin, 1967).

As noted above, while slaves remained the objects of trade, the Europeans needed not go beyond the coast, but with the shift to legitimate trade, it became expedient that the interiors be explored as the coast had little or no commodity of value.[94] Thus, on the British sphere, the Niger Expedition was put together in 1841 driven by evangelism, commerce and the abolition of slave trade. Its aim was to explore the interior, make treaties with local people, evangelise and establish a model farm at Lokoja (Crowder, 1966: 141). Bishop Ajayi Crowther visited Ketu in 1854 as part of the expansion into the Yorubaland hinterland on behalf of the CMS.

The British were initially nonchalant regarding the raging warfare in the Yoruba interior. In fact, the Lagos government was under strict instruction not to interfere even though the fighting had grave effects on the economy of the colony (Colonial Office, 1864-1867).[95] Thus, between 1882 and 1884, Britain did nothing about the war. However, following the Scramble and the changing status of Lagos as separated from the Gold Coast, and especially the fear of French incursion into

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[94] The rush for the interior was further fuelled by the perception that Africa held a vast deposit of natural resources, the utopian Eldorado. The discovery of gold and diamond in South Africa in the early years of the 19th century gave credence to this conception.
[95] Lagos had been annexed in 1861 and subsequently organised into a colony.

Yorubaland[96] (regarded as the British sphere of influence), Britain did a volte-face (Colonial Office, 1864-1867). The British became involved with Yoruba affairs and had to *hastily* draw up the boundary separating its possession from that of the French to prevent French encroachment.

4.8 Partitioning the Yoruba

The Nigeria-Benin boundary is a product of British-French agreements. The section of the boundary from the coast to latitude 9°N (roughly corresponding to the area covered by this study) was first defined in a treaty signed on 18 August 1889. The treaty agreed to a straight line as the boundary and described in the following words:

'On the Slave Coast, the line of demarcation between the spheres of influence of the Powers shall be identified with the meridian which intersects the territories of Porto Novo at the Ajarra Creek, leaving Pokrah or Pokea (Ipokia) to the British colony of Lagos.[97] It follows the above mentioned meridian as far as the 9°N (latitude) where it shall stop' (Colonial Office, 1898).

However, following the delimitation survey conducted later by officials of the two Powers, it was discovered that the boundary as described in the Treaty, at certain points, was unrealistic as it would cut through many coherent settlements[98] which fell along the straight line. Hence, river courses were preferred to the astronomical line as the mutual boundary. Even though attempts were made to

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[96] The British fear of the French soon materialised with the attempt by French officers to sign a treaty with the Egba which provided the tempting offer of a rail link between Abeokuta and Porto-Novo.

[97] What were the criteria used in this division of territories? It is clear that none was used, save expediency and the whims of the colonial administrators.

[98] While this fact could be regarded as one of the few instances where colonial mapping considered pre-existing social realities, it is insufficient to claim a general consideration for prevailing realities at the time of the boundary making. Again, the consideration here was settlements, which in reality were parts of established political organisations.

correct the errors of the initial delimitation, river courses are unreliable delimiters of territories. In addition, rivers may indeed be integral to territories and their employment as markers of territories may indeed, be as disrupting as the initial delimitation attempt. Indeed, the main rationale for the on-the-spot modification of the delimitation agreement was the fact that the ravine so crucial to the determination of the boundary was found to be non-existent. The boundary delimitation was accepted by the Anglo-French convention of 1898 and was later ratified in 1906 (Balogun, 1989: 187-188).

To underscore the arbitrariness and artificiality of the boundary, when actual demarcation began in 1912, certain alterations had to be made due to the fact that some of the villages used as landmarks in the treaty agreement were nonexistent and could not be located on the map. Villages of Ikotun, Ilore, Okoto and Ijalu that had been designated reference points in the treaty agreement could not be found on the ground (Anene, 1970).

It must be stated here for emphasis that the colonialists appreciated and acknowledged the arbitrariness of the boundary they had just conjured and devised means of ameliorating its impacts on the population affected by it. Thus, part of the 1906 agreement stated in Article III:

> The villages situated in proximity to the frontier shall retain its right to use the arable and pasturelands, springs and watering places which they have heretofore used, even in the cases in which such arable and pasturelands, springs and watering places are situated within the territory of the one Power and the village within the territory of the other (HMS Office, in Brownlie, 1979: 171-72).

It is important to note here that the famed Dahomey belligerency and the consequent instability and insecurity that this engendered in the neighbouring political units, played a significant part in the location of the boundary between the French and the British, especially in the kingdom of Ketu. Ketu had recently

been re-occupied following the latest Dahomey invasion and the destruction of the capital, Ketu in 1886, however, during the period of Ketu's subjugation, Dahomey had been defeated by the French in 1892 and a boundary had been agreed between the two colonial Powers that had conflicting interests in this region (Parrinder, 1947: 72-74).[99] Following Dahomey's defeat by the French, it became a French territory and all its satellites and tributary territories were incorporated under the sphere of the French. Thus, Ketu having been incorporated into Dahomey came under the sphere of influence of France, separated from the main Yoruba body in British controlled Nigeria.

In the spirit of the rivalry between France and Britain over territories in this region, Governor Moloney of Lagos in 1888 wrote to the *Alaafin* regarding the fate of Yorubaland especially Ketu following its destruction, in order to whip support for British control over the entire Yoruba territories (Colonial Office, 1861-1906). This was in response to the threat of French encroachment into Yorubaland (supposedly a sphere of British influence). This rivalry led to the hastily determined boundaries between these two Powers in 1889 (Parrinder, 1947).

So much has been written about the arbitrariness of the colonial boundary in Africa as external impositions with little or no regards given to pre-existing social and political realities. However, the instance of the determination of the French – British boundary in Ketuland shows local participation and some level of vindictiveness on the part of the leadership of this kingdom. In appreciation of the role of the French in dealing once and for all with the Dahomey threat, the

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[99] Ketu was reoccupied and rebuilt beginning from 1893

Regent[100] of Ketu unilaterally ceded Ketu to the French, in spite of public opinion in support of the British.[101] However, in determining the location of the boundary between the French and the British, the town of Ilara (an outpost of Ketu) decided unilaterally in favour of the British which was considered an affront by the Ketu leadership. As a punishment therefore, the Regent selected the shrine[102] site of the town as the boundary, thus cutting the town into two spheres, one British and the other French.[103]

4.81 Colonising the Yoruba: the British and the French

Following the determination of the Anglo-French boundary in Yorubaland in 1889, and its demarcation with the erection of concrete pillars in 1896 (Asiwaju, 1975: 51-52), the stage was set for the effective domination of these territories by the two Powers. In a bid to consolidate their holdings, these Powers resorted to similar methods - forceful imposition in the face of native oppositions on the one hand exemplified by the French expedition to Dahomey and the British against the Ijebu in 1892. On the other hand, protective treaties were entered into between these Powers and the native communities to effectively bring them under colonial control.[104]

Ruling the Yoruba was left to the colonial officers on the ground directed by the colonial bureaucracies back in the metropolitan states. The British adopted the

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[100] The *Alaketu* informed this researcher that a regent is a temporary leader in the absence or incapacitation of a substantive king. In Ketu at this time, there was no *Alaketu* as the previous one, Ojeku had been killed in one of Dahomey's attacks. His wife, who had emerged as a leader of the people in captivity led a return to Ketu and became the regent.

[101] Oral interview with the *Alaketu*, 10.11.2008.

[102] In Yorubaland, the shrine is sacred, representing the 'soul' of society and located in the centre of the settlement.

[103] Oral interview with the *Oloola* of Ilara, 10.11.2008. It is important to note that the views of both kings correspond regarding the partition of Ketuland, and especially the peculiarity of the town of Ilara divided by an international boundary.

[104] Many African leaders did not understand the wordings of the treaties and merely appended their X marks in agreement, either to prevent the might of the colonial arms from descending on themselves, or to hide under the protection of these Powers against aggression from neighbouring communities.

indirect rule system owing to inadequate officers to administer the vast tract of territories gained for the British Empire. For the French, it began with direct administration, which proved ineffective and they had to adopt a variant of the British indirect administrative style, albeit not in quite the same manner and extent.

The indirect rule system was perfected in the region of Northern Nigeria by Lord Lugard, the British Governor of this territory prior to 1914 when the system was extended to the rest of the British possession following the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates and the Colony of Lagos to form Nigeria.[105] This system of rule, in the opinion of Lugard should employ local traditional institutions of authority 'as the main agency for administering the territory' (Kirk-Greene, 1968: 69). It hinged on three pillars: a Native Court, a Native Administration and a Native Treasury (Mamdani, 2002: 78). Lugard explains the rationale of this administrative system in his 1919 Report of the Amalgamation of Nigeria thus:

> The policy of the Government was that these chiefs should govern their people, not as independent, but dependent Rulers. The orders of Government are not conveyed to the people through them, but emanate from them in accordance where necessary with instructions received through the Resident. While they themselves are controlled by Government in matters of policy and importance, their people are controlled in accordance with that policy by themselves. A political officer would consider it as irregular to issue direct orders to an individual native, or even to a village head, as a General commanding a division would to a private soldier, except through his commanding officers. The courts administer native law, and are presided over by native judges (417 in all). Their punishments do not conform to the criminal code, but on the other hand, native laws must not be in opposition to the Ordinances of Government, which are operative everywhere, and the courts… are under close supervision of the District staff. Their rules of evidence and their procedures are not based on British standards, but their sentences, if manifestly faulty,

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[105] The Colony was exempted from indirect rule as it was governed as a Crown territory directly by British officials, of course with the aid of local personnel.

are subject to revision. Their prisoners are confined in their own native gaols, which are under the supervision of the British staff. The taxes are raised in the name of the native ruler and by his agents, but he surrenders the fixed proportion to the Native Administration, from which fixed salaries to all native officials are paid, is subject to the advice of the Resident, and the ultimate control of the Governor. The attitude of the Resident is that of a watchful advisor not of an interfering ruler, but he is jealous of the rights of the peasantry, and of any injustice towards them (Lugard, cited in Kirk-Greene, 1968: 70-71).

4.9 Conclusion

Given the intense rivalries and competition that predated the imposition of boundaries marking off the territories of one colonial power from the other, post partition administrative policies were understandably protectionist and 'national' integrative. Each power sought to jealously protect its 'prize' to the exclusion of the other. The implication of this were severe for the fractions of this group as the dynamic centripetal forces of integration inherent in national political units[106] compelled a 'pulling apart' of these fractions, engendering new identities, new neighbours, new values and cultures.

This chapter clearly contributes to answering the substantive research question through the sub-research questions identified at the beginning of the chapter. It establishes, through field research and archival study, a kin (*ebi*) relationship for the Yoruba. It also identifies a geo-cultural space for the Yoruba which evolved out of several waves of migration, initially from the Yoruba centre of Ife. Field work at the borderland astride the Nigeria-Benin boundary in the study area reveals a continuous spread of the Yoruba across this boundary.

Furthermore, evidence presented in this chapter establishes the fact of the colonial partition. Evidence provided by the traditional custodians of the history of the people clearly reports the partition. In addition, ethnographic survey

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[106] Especially in an emergent state, theses forces are stronger and more compelling.

unambiguously supports the fact of the partition of the Yoruba into these two countries. These empirical evidences provide answers to the sub-research question on the partition as well as partly provide answer to the substantive research question on the impact of the partition on the subgroups.

Finally, the chapter answers the research question relating to the manner of boundary making by showing that the process was an exclusive prerogative of the imperialists. Though in many instances, the 'power' of the colonialists 'derived' from treaties concluded between them and local African rules, the ultimate interests in the process was European. In other words, though the subjects were Africa and Africans, the decisions were exogenous to Africa. Consequently, the emergent boundary regime has remained, not only contentious, but potentially a trigger of conflict between states.

The next chapter examines and analyses the imposition and consolidation of colonial rule in this part of West Africa – the new, modified and migrated social formations as well as the reactions of the local population to these impositions. Furthermore, and more especially, the chapter examines the perception and reactions of the Yoruba to the sudden imposition of a wall or barrier between them; the transformation or otherwise of the Yoruba identity, especially among those subgroups whose territories were divided by the colonial boundary. In the same light, the chapter also analyses the issues of irredentism and territorial revision as consequences of the anomalies associated with the colonially determined boundaries.

CHAPTER FIVE

CLASH OF 'CIVILISATIONS': STATE RATIONALITY VERSUS GROUP SUBJECTIVITY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contributes to answering the main research question through the sub-research questions on the impact of contrasting colonial practices (socialisations); the reactions of the Yoruba to the stark reality of the colonial partition; and the various ways through which the Yoruba negotiate the boundary. It begins by analysing the impact of the partition on the subgroups of the Yoruba, divided, as it were, by an international boundary into two distinct states under contrasting colonial administrations on the one hand. On the other hand, the chapter examines and analyses the reactions of these groups to these 'impositions', especially as it affects their 'Yorubaness' or the Yoruba identity. Finally, the chapter also seeks to answer the research question by examining the sub-research question on the various ways through which the partitioned-Yoruba negotiate the externally superimposed boundary.

5.2 Consolidation of Colonial Possessions

The boundary[107] between the territorial possessions of France and Britain in Yorubaland had to be demarcated rather hurriedly given the competition and rivalry that preceded the acquisitions of these territories (McEwen, 1991). The boundary was determined in the Anglo-French Arrangements of 1889, while the demarcation commission was set up in 1895. The actual demarcation of the boundary line was completed between 1911 and 1912 (McEwen, 1991: 67). Imperial control was established, with each Power pursuing policies aimed at not

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[107] Yorubaland extends inland up to about latitude 9^0 North which is equivalent to the only part of the French/British boundary that was demarcated.

only consolidating their hold, but also at long-term domination of these territories. The British fraction of Yorubaland was incorporated gradually into the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, while the French part was also incorporated into the French West African Federation.

Imperial consolidation and control entailed the systematic subjugation of these territories through imperial administrative, judicial, economic and value systems, which were in the main, imported from Europe,[108] while some were deliberately designed for the exigencies of administering the large tracts of territories as the colonial holdings in Africa.[109] Finally, there were those social structures which evolved from the interaction between imperial Europe and traditional Africa.[110] All these, in the opinion of Ekeh (1983), gave form and character, not only to the colonial state, but to the successor African state. Indeed, for Ekeh, colonialism has eternal consequences for Africa as it has been fundamental in the shaping of the colonial, as well as the successor post-colonial state in the continent.

Following the establishment of colonial rule in the dying days of the nineteenth century, there began a process of systematic consolidation of foreign rule in West Africa, which produced varying forms of reactions from the native populations. Foreign domination, bearing the nucleus of western civilisation encountered and sought to tame traditional African civilisation with varying consequences.

Given the fierce competition and 'scrambling' that preceded the partition of Yorubaland, inter-colonial policies were expectedly protectionist and

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[108] Imported social structures included: the cash economy, the penal system, taxation and forced labour, among other.
[109] An example of deliberate colonial construction was the Indirect Rule system.
[110] The organised labour and the nationalist movements were two chief examples of social structures that emerged as a reaction to colonial rule.

simultaneously 'national' integrative. In other words, as the colonial regimes became involved in the process of state-building, which required the creation of a sense of national 'belonging', they also needed to protect what constituted the 'national' from competitors from across the boundary. This became even more crucial given the 'irredentist' aspirations of the Yoruba elite in the French sphere. In the early years of colonial rule, the French colonial authorities had to repress irredentist aspirations by exiling leaders of such movements. In the words of Noufflard, the Lt. Governor of Dahomey against Louis Hounkanrin, a pioneer nationalist in the same territory: '…is a supporter of Mekpon and leads his fight against the French administration in order to annex Porto Novo to Nigeria under the rule of Mekpon' (Ronen, 1974: 64). Even as late as 1942, irredentist tendencies remained ever strong (and ever strongly viewed by the French authorities) when one local leader in Porto Novo committed suicide following accusation of plotting with the allies in Nigeria (Parrinder, 1989: 269). Thus, there was a pressing need to foster the sense of 'us' versus 'them' across the boundary in order for each colonial power to consolidate its hold on its domain, keeping it distinct from the domain of the other colonial power. Again, due to the competition and rivalry that preceded the determination of this boundary, each colonial authority embarked on policies that distinguished the territory of one from the other. One major policy was that of the imposition of differing customs regimes and border patrols in order to keep out 'aliens', control 'subjects' and maintain the 'difference'.

5.21 The French and Yoruba Traditional Authority

The administrative styles of the colonising powers were instrumental in the subjugation and exploitation of the colonies; indeed, these styles gave form and

character to the territories under colonial rule. It is noteworthy, for the purpose of this study, that the British and the French adopted contrasting (sometimes, competitive) administrative styles in their territories in Africa[111]. It has been noted above that the French began their colonial adventure in Africa by employing a direct administrative style,[112] whose objectives included making Frenchmen out of 'civilised' Africans through the policy of *assimilation*. The aim of assimilation was to make French colonies more like France, through education and acculturation in the 'high' culture of France, thus making these territories extensions of France rather than outposts.

We need not be bothered by the policy of *assimilation* as it did not apply to the area under consideration by this study, rather, the successive policy of *association*, which was the policy adopted to govern the vast territories of French possessions in (West) Africa of which the Yoruba region of Benin Republic fell would be examined in details.

Even though the policy of *assimilation* was regarded by politicians and publicists in France as the best style for administering its vast overseas territories in order to secure for the people of the colonies, irrespective of colour, liberty and equality, the policy ran into troubled waters and had to be jettisoned for the more realistic policy of *association*.[113] In the words of Jules Harmand, 'the social

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[111] Even though, the French later adopted the indirect rule system of the British, this does not infer a similar administrative style, as the mode of administration adopted was different. For instance, the French system was highly centralised with local chiefs being subordinated to the control of French officials. In the British sphere on the other hand, administration was localised, woven around the personality of the local political authority who was regarded by the British as the de facto ruler under the guidance of the local district officer. Furthermore, the British traditional ruler was consulted on a number of issues regarding the administration of the colony.

[112] In sub-Saharan Africa, assimilation was restricted to the three French Communes of St. Louis, Rufisque and Dakar. The reason for this may not be un-connected with the size of these communities as direct administration characteristic of assimilation would not be feasible in the larger expanse of French territorial holdings in West Africa. Indeed, assimilation was associated with early French colonisation which these communes represent.

[113] Critics of assimilation argued that unlike Physics, unlike poles do not attract; rather, only people

standards of the Native inhabitants were too remote from those of France for *assimilation* to be practicable' (in Mamdani, 2002: 83). In its place, Harmand suggested a 'policy of association', which he defined as 'indirect administration, with the preservation but improved governance of the institutions of the conquered peoples, and with respect for their past' (in Mamdani, 2002: 83). Thus since 1923, with the publication of Sarraut's *La Mise en Valeur des Colonies Francaises*, the French colonial policy in (West) Africa was officially changed to that of *association* which was seen by a French official in the following light: '...Natives will retain their traditions and their genius in order to associate themselves with our great work of national greatness in which they will be our faithful and loyal helpers' (Labouret, 1940: 27). The aim of the policy of *association* was to seek to improve the Native in every respect in his own environment. He was to be allowed a free rein, employing his own organisations (not repugnant to civilised norms) to attain these objectives (Labouret, 1940). This represented a direct opposite approach to that of *assimilation* with local chiefs becoming more relevant and, indeed, crucial in the administration of the colony. The chief 'represented his community in its dealings with the administration' and 'even more importantly', he represented 'the administration vis-à-vis the community' (Delaignette in Mamadani, 2002: 82).

Labouret (1940: 30-31) identifies the functions of the African chief in the

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of similar cultures and dispositions can be assimilated, not dissimilar people as typified by Africans who were intent on speaking their own language and following their cultural norms. Thus, assimilation could only produce a few Frenchified African elite who were supposed to be intermediaries between the French and the Natives thereby propagating the idea of *assimilation*. However, this group was so preoccupied with its own interests that it could not help the cause of *assimilation*. In addition, there were inadequate French personnel to administer directly these vast territories. For example, in 1912, there were only 341 colonial administrators in the whole of French West Africa, an area extending from Senegal to the western boundary of Nigeria and extending inland to the territories of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. In 1930s, years after the introduction of indirect administration, territorial administration revolved around 118 cercle commanders who supervised 48,000 village chiefs and 2200 canton chiefs (Mamdani, 2002: 82). Without these chiefs, French colonial administration would have been grossly ineffective.

French indirect rule system to include:

1. Tax collection on behalf of the colonial authority. He is eligible to a very small percentage of the total tax collected as salary;

2. Recruitment for the colonial army. Conscription, by the very nature of colonial rule, was forced and was very unpopular among the natives. Indeed, one of the rationales for protest migration from the French colonial territories to the British was forced conscription;

3. Supply of forced labour (*covées de presta taires*) for building and maintenance of public utilities (roads, toilets, portage, bridges, etc);

4. Led by example and propaganda in contributing to the development of cultivation and production;

5. The chief must wait on the local French administrator, whose auxiliary he was.

In return for such responsibilities, reflecting his 'auxiliary' role, the chief was:

1. Badly paid or in some cases, not even paid at all. He had no choice, in any case as dissent was treated as treasonable felony with the unpleasant consequences of deposition, exile or imprisonment;

2. He was shorn of any form of authority and power. Indeed, he was no more than an errand boy for the local French official

3. As the chief had no power or authority to carry out his colonial-ordered responsibilities, he was provided with a *Garde de Cercle* (native police) to enforce his instructions. However, in practice, the police usually supplanted the chief, further diminishing his power.

It is important to examine the fortunes of local chiefs in the two Yorubalands in order to determine the impact of these contrasting administrative

styles on this crucial element of the Yoruba culture. In pre-colonial Yorubaland, the institution of the *obaship* was highly revered with the king regarded as the human representative of the gods. He held an exalted position in society; he was considered the father and protector of the community; his words were laws (though there were in-built checks and balances). However, with the introduction of colonial rule, this changed, albeit in varying degrees on both sides of the boundary. The difference in the status of the *oba* was no more than a function of the difference in colonial policies. During the era of direct rule in French Yorubaland, Yoruba *obas* were relegated to the background. France governed its territories directly employing French nationals and those very few privileged Africans who had attained the 'high culture' of France through education and had been granted full French citizenship.[114] Traditional chiefs were relegated as primitive and relics of a pre-modern social order. French cultural values were espoused and proposed to replace African values, which were considered 'barbaric, retrogressive and primitive' (Wallerstein, 1961: 66). Indeed, the *oba* was reduced to a mere elected agent of the central colonial administration with clearly defined delegated duties (Crowder, 1968: 199). The French were intolerant of a rival locus of power, and made spirited efforts to 'crush and destroy' the traditional chieftaincy, especially in the early days of colonial rule (Miles, 1987: 239). The French were thus high handed and insensitive to traditional culture in replacing *obas* in disregard of traditional modes. Traditional norms of legitimacy were much less important than the ability to speak French or prior service to the colonial regime. The powers of the *obas* were further diminished as the French policy tended to carve up large dominions into smaller administrative districts.

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[114] Indeed, this category of Africans was to become invaluable in the administrative machine of the French as they provided a significant proportion of the civil service in French West Africa.

However, with the shift in the pattern of administration from direct to indirect rule in the early years of the 20th century, the French were compelled to govern their vast territories through the institution of traditional authority. The native traditions and customs that were previously regarded as completely repugnant to civilised principles had to be adopted as the basis of indirect rule. However, the adoption of customary law did not simply mean a continuation of things as they had been as it had to conform to 'acceptable practices' all over the civilised world. Custom in other words was state-ordained and state-enforced (Wallerstein, 1961). Even with the adoption of more liberal attitude to traditional rulers, the fortunes of Yoruba *obas* under French rule did not change appreciably, rather the Native perception of the *oba* suffered greatly owing to the demands of the colonial state on him (the *oba*). The French may have been compelled by political exigency to depend on the *obas* for administration, they never did grant them the authority to initiate actions or drive change as they were merely agents of the colonial state whose power and authority (derived from the state) alienated him from his people. In the words of Michael Crowder:

> the chief in French West Africa progressively lost his traditional authority while his new functions of taxation, recruiting of forced labour and troops and checking on anti-French movements within his area of supervision, together with the authoritarian way in which he was treated by the Commandant, transformed him from the embodiment of the collective will of the community into an agent of the most hated aspects of French colonial rule (Crowder, 1968: 139)

The *oba* not only lost his traditional authority, status and territory, he was treated with scorn by the French on the one hand, and on the other, by his people; people who were bound by tradition and custom to revere the person and office of the *oba*. While the French reduced him to a mere agent of the 'state', he was

alienated from his people as he was seen as nothing more than an agent of the oppressor.

The cumulative effect of French paternalism was the gradual disappearance of the Native traditional authority system. Granted, certain Native practices had undeniable flaws, which could be reformed under French 'civilising' guidance, however, colonial officials tended to 'pull down' and 'crush' local cultures and replace them with structures similar to those they were familiar with. Thus, the vast majority of pre-colonial political organisations like the Kingdom of Dahomey were reduced to a shadow of their former glory. Uncooperative traditional rulers were deposed and exiled or jailed, while his territory was split into small administrative units as punishment (Labouret, 1940). Native chiefs had no real authority and the aura surrounding the office in pre-colonial times was eroded as they were regarded as officials of the colonial administration (rather than divinely ordained by the gods); traditional structures of hierarchy became undermined, such that a junior chief, simply due to the ability to speak French and possession of administrative experience, could be upgraded over and above senior chiefs. This practice posed grave dangers to the institution of traditional authority and the French administration.

5.22 The British and Yoruba Traditional Authority

In the British sphere however, the situation was different. The British adopted the policy of indirect rule where, though Britain was ultimately sovereign in its colonies, it sought to govern through the institution of traditional rulership already in place.[115] The *obas* were to oversee and monitor the day-to-day activities of their subjects based on customary law on behalf of the colonial authorities who were to

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[115] Where there existed no pre colonial traditional rulership, one was created to cater to the colonial need for native authority

guide and 'advise' the Native rulers. Unlike the situation across the boundary in the French possession, greater care was taken to avoid the wholesale disruption of native culture, tradition and legitimacy. Again, as Michael Crowder explains: 'indirect rule...implied the government of the African peoples through their traditional political institutions, shorn of those features that conflicted with British concept of civilised behaviour, the extraction of taxes and the establishment of regularised treasuries' (Crowder, 1968: 211).

In many places in Yorubaland, British rule enhanced the authority and power of the *obas*. Indirect rule strengthened the power of the *oba* in two ways that marked a departure from what obtained in the pre-colonial period. For the first time, the scope of the power of the traditional ruler became all embracing. Previously autonomous social domains like the household, age groups, traditional councils, and so on, now fell under the power of the king (Mamdani, 2002: 110). Secondly, he was backed by the armed might of the colonial state; any challenge to the power of the king was considered as a challenge on the colonial authority. Furthermore, the territories of the *oba's* domain were often enlarged in conformity with British colonial mapping. Colonial administration was territorially organised into provinces and districts, which were organised around native authorities. For instance, the Ijebu Province was organised under the native authority of the *Awujale* (the *oba*) of pre-colonial Ijebu Kingdom where every other *oba* and territory (some with competing claims with the *Awujale*) within the District were brought under the control of the *Awujale*.[116]

Unlike the practice in French Yorubaland, when appointing new *obas*, the British took great pains to follow the tradition and culture of the people. The

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[116] At the Provincial level, the House of Chiefs was instituted as an umbrella body of first-class chiefs whose responsibilities included advisory roles to the colonial administration.

impact of the indirect rule policy was especially beneficial to British Yoruba *obas,* as many of them had already lost credibility owing to the protracted internecine warfare prevalent in the period around the advent of the colonial intervention. The policy reified the institution of the *obaship* and restored its lost esteem and values. However, in certain instances, just as in the French sphere, uncompromising *obas* were deposed and sent into exile.

While the authority and power of the *oba* in French Yorubaland were greatly diminished, the lots of the *obas* in British Yorubaland were highly enhanced. In his study of Ketu and Imeko, two towns of the pre-colonial Ketu Kingdom whose territory was partitioned by the international boundary into Benin and Nigeria respectively, Asiwaju shows that Ketu, the capital of the kingdom fared worse than Imeko, an outpost town. Indeed, their fortunes were reversed with Imeko becoming more prominent and its *bale* (junior chief) elevated to the position of an *oba* while the *oba* of Ketu was reduced to an elected representative subject to periodic elections in conformity with French policy (Asiwaju, 2001: 134-137).

Following independence, the lots of the *obas* were to continue on different planes. In Nigeria, traditional authority initially continued to enjoy great roles in the polity with the second chamber of the regional parliaments (House of Chiefs) made up of traditional rulers with the most senior traditional ruler in each region constituting the ceremonial head of government (governor) enjoying unprecedented power and influence. However, following the coup d'état of 1966 and subsequent coups, their influence was gradually eroded and their roles became increasingly advisory.[117]

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[117] However, recent developments in Nigeria may yet restore the powers of the *obas* and other traditional authorities as the ongoing (early 2010) constitutional review consultations have highlighted the need to provide constitutional roles for *obas* and chiefs

In Benin, the colonial policy of repression of the traditional institution continued and indeed became codified in the Republican Constitution of 1958 (Asiwaju, 2001: 149). The *obas* are no more than mere custodians of the culture and tradition of the people.

5.3 Contrasting Administration and Socialisation

Another decisive feature of colonial administration was the territorial structure of administration. While the French favoured a centralised structure with its entire West African territories organised into the French West African Federation with the capital in Dakar, the British organised their spheres of influence on a decentralised mode, employing the territorial domains of Native authority as basis. This has implications for identity as it appears that the French colonial subjects were oriented to consider themselves first as West Africans rather than Senegalese or Guineans (these were indeed non-existent markers of identity for much of colonial rule). On the other hand in British Nigeria, localised administration reified the sense of the ethnic identity as customary law of ethnic groups was the basis of governance. The issues of identity shall be further explored at a later stage in this chapter.

Given the intensive inter-colonial competition for footholds in each other's territories, as well as the relatively high level of 'community' and kinship in Yorubaland, each colonial administration embarked on rigorous propaganda to build the sense of oneness and belonging in its respective sphere. The fear of the pull of ethnic consciousness, making for irredentism, compelled deliberate misinformation (propaganda) by both States as one major tool of state building. This is usually beneficial to the originating state which constitutes the 'in-group' (us) but at the detriment of the targeted neighbouring state - the 'out-group'

(them). Therefore, the need to create contrasting (differentiated) identities became compelling. The school system was the most prominent setting for the socialisation so direly needed to foster the 'imagination of the nation', one distinct from the other across the boundary. Education meant a certain separation, a contrasting process of differential socialisation into two distinct states (Asiwaju, 2001: 213-214).

The educational policies of both powers sought to deny full access to western education to Africans (Asiwaju, 2001: 214). However, the restrictions which the French policy imposed were greater than the British. Consistent with French administrative policy, education was centrally controlled by the state; government owned most of the schools and exercised very strict supervision over the few privately run schools, chiefly by the Roman Catholic Mission. This was consistent with the Law of Separation of 1904, which separated the realm of the state from that of the Church and secularised education both in France and all over its colonial possessions (Asiwaju, 2001).

The quality of educational facilities was very poor in the Yoruba areas under French rule as was the case all over the entire French West African Federation. Furthermore, the French policy included a specification strictly limiting school eligibility to age fifteen. At this age, students had to withdraw from school irrespective of the level of education attained. The significance of all these was an extremely low rate of school attendance throughout the colonial period in French Yorubaland (Asiwaju, 2001: 215).

In the British territory, a contrasting situation prevailed where Christian missionaries were more involved in education than the government and had greater leeway in terms of contents and curricula. Later on, in the course of

colonial rule, local initiatives in education were also introduced in Nigeria with several community groups and associations becoming involved in the establishment of schools. As the country moved towards independence, federalism (regional) was introduced with each regional government (made up of the indigenous elite) responsible for education among other responsibilities. The Regional government in the West (Yorubaland) introduced free universal primary education, which witnessed unprecedented enrolment and founding of schools that formed the foundation of the educational pre-eminence of the region in independent Nigeria.

The distinction in educational policies had contrasting impact on the two Yoruba groups. First, the members of the two educational elites[118] were mutually estranged as schooling in the traditions of two distinct western civilisations had alienated members of the same African culture (Asiwaju, 2001: 214). The Yoruba elite in Dahomey communicated in French and associated more with their counterparts from other parts of Francophone Africa than they did with their kinsmen just across the boundary in Nigeria.[119] The survival of Yoruba language as the mother tongue of the two elite groups has not nullified the barrier imposed by the two different official languages, but remains significant still in their identity as Yoruba, in spite of the centrifugal effects of contrasting colonial (official) languages (Asiwaju, 2001).

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[118] The estrangement of the elite did not significantly affect the Yoruba ethnic affinity as they constitute a small minority whose influence was not strong enough to adversely affect the loyalty of the masses of the people to Yoruba values and custom. Indeed, the educated elite ended up being alienated from the general population as they became so Europeanised that they could no longer fit into the traditional mould.

[119] This was more so given the centralised administrative style of the French, precluding the development of national or ethnic identities. However, following the granting of independence to new states based on the former administrative divides, national identities emerged and so did ethnic identities, which had been suppressed under colonial rule.

Secondly, as the French educational system was geared toward making French-men out of Africans, school curricula were decidedly oriented towards this end. The implication of this for the products of the educational system was the creation of a docile elite group, apathetic to the French administrative system. The French policy of assimilation permitted qualified Africans to become members of the French parliament, which was considered the height of *frenchification* and assimilation. For a while, the elite considered French policy as satisfactory as it allowed assimilation; however, with the shift from assimilation to association and the replacement of the elite by native authority, the elite perception of colonial rule change dramatically and they worked assiduously to end colonial rule. However, the relatively late shift of focus to nationalism by the elite in French West Africa affected the response of France to independence movements such that by the mid-1950s when France began preparation to hand over power to the native elite, Britain was already far gone in instituting reforms and processes for transfer of power.[120]

Across the boundary in British Nigeria, the objective of the educational policy was chiefly to produce labour for the administration of the colony, as it was in the French colonies, and no more. However, as British policy was non-assimilationist, foreclosing any opportunity for Nigerians to become Britons, as well as the sidelining of the elite from the colonial bureaucracy, the educated elite saw colonialism for what it was without the distracting idea of assimilation. Thus, the educated elite saw the exploitative tendencies of colonialism, which propelled huge nationalist sentiments earlier than in the French territory to the west. The nationalist movement in Yorubaland was propelled by the Yoruba culture and

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[120] Indeed, Nigeria's first constitution (the Clifford Constitution of 1922) was deliberately made to begin the preparation of the natives for self government.

tradition. Though nationalist activism in Nigeria began as truly national, owing to ethnicity and ethnic rivalry, nationalism soon became ethnic and the political parties that evolved were ethnically based. The foremost political party in Yorubaland during this period, the Action Group evolved from a pan-Yoruba socio-cultural association, the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*. In other words, the Yoruba identity became a political tool, which was possible because of the affinity among the Yoruba groups. Indeed, during this period, the Action Group advocated the readjustment of the Nigerian western boundary to incorporate the Yoruba speaking people in Benin. This marked a novel, but short-lived, idea originating from the Nigerian Yoruba for irredentism. The significance of this agitation was the consciousness among the people of the oneness of the Yoruba group, the affinity among the group irrespective of location. Indeed, Prescott (1971: 104) reports that the *Alaketu* of Ketu acknowledged this consciousness by welcoming the reunification of the Yoruba groups within the same geopolitical space, however, the initiative must be taken by the Nigerian Yoruba.

5.4 Reactions of the Yoruba to the Partition and Colonisation

This section seeks to provide answer to the research question through the sub-research question on the reactions of the Yoruba people as divided, to their partition and colonisation. Did the Yoruba on both sides of the boundary simply accept their partition, and colonisation as an 'act of God' without protestation and rebellion? Would the imperial subjugation, repression and exploitation of these peoples have been met with simple acquiescence? The imposition of alien rule with its alien social structures and formations, which displaced traditional African structures and formations, elicited varying types of reactions from every corner of West Africa. These reactions, which reflected localised details, included the

adaptation and exploitation of the economic and political opportunities afforded by colonial rule. Another form of reaction was active protest and resistance movements against the novel forms of political and economic organisations which did not correspond to Native forms of political, ethnic, economic, social and religious patterns (Kastfelt, 1976: 1). Indeed, what colonialism (especially determination of boundaries) did to traditional African norms was to foster a 'disordering' of settled patterns and simultaneously foster new, but alien modes. African reactions to these stimuli were a manifestation of their resentment and opposition to the colonial intervention.

Perception is of crucial importance in understanding the reactions of the Yoruba sub-groups whose daily lives were directly affected by the position and positioning of the boundary line. The general proclivity was (is) ambivalent: on the one hand, they treat the line as though it is non-existent, especially regarding its character as a wall and barrier. On the other hand, they treat the line as a point of opportunity; circumventing the state and its strictures largely because the line provides a point of arbitrage opportunities. Indeed the perception of the people is captured in the words of the late *Alaketu* to Prescott in 1971: 'the boundary was between the British and the French, not between the Yoruba'. Interestingly, almost forty years later, the current *Alaketu* echoed these same words to this researcher during a research visit in 2008. This reflects a deep-seated perception of the boundary as a mere administrative line, and no more.

At one point along the boundary, the Yoruba town of Ilara is divided in half by the international boundary. In other words, the town lies astride the boundary, with a fraction in Nigeria and the other fraction in Benin; making the inhabitants either Nigerians or Beninese depending on which side of the boundary they fall.

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This town is headed by an *oba*, the *Oloola* located on the Nigerian side, but he exercises rulership over the entire town. This provided a veritable laboratory for testing questions relating to perception among other crucial issues about boundary during the field work. The field research questions: 'how would you describe the boundary?'; 'how often do you cross the boundary?' and so on, did not make sense as the inhabitants of this town cross the boundary as often as they desire/need without hassle from anyone. Granted, there is a boundary, but it does not perform the traditional functions of boundaries as wall and barriers at this particular border crossing.[121]

For the purpose of this study, those reactions that derived from, and related generally to the colonially ordered international boundaries, with a particular focus on the Yoruba territory are the subjects of analysis. For the purpose of analysis, the period under consideration is divided into colonial and post-independence phases. During the colonial period, the two kinds of reactions to colonial rule were exhibited by Africans, namely, adaptation and exploitation of the colonial condition for political and economic gains as well as active protest and resistance to colonial rule. Active protest and resistance took various forms, but for our purpose, protest migration from the region of one colonial power to that of another is the focus. This is due to the fact that this was a cross-border inter-imperial movement which demonstrated one of the extreme forms of resistance to colonial rule. It was relatively easy for people to migrate from one colonial possession to another, especially for borderland people whose cultural

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[121] Indeed, it appears as though there is some kind of tacit agreement by the two states to treat this particular boundary line as merely administrative; the immigration barriers here are almost non-existent. During the field work visit to this town, the researcher was left wondering whether he had actually crossed an international boundary usually characterised by massive state presence and hindrances to movement in this part of the world. The immigration posts were located at the border quite alright, but located in such a way as to be out of the way. Compared to the other crossing points at this segment of the boundary, the Ilara border crossing is relatively stress-free.

territories were split by the colonial boundary.[122] Given the contrasting colonial policies, especially of administration, taxation, justice and education, there existed contrasting sociopolitical conditions across colonial boundaries, making the prospect of cross-border migration alluring.

5.41 Migration as Revolt

Migration as a reaction to unfavourable political and social conditions was a common phenomenon in pre-colonial Africa, the so-called 'traditional primacy of exit in Africa' (Herbst, 1990: 183). There is significant evidence to support 'migration as revolt' in pre-colonial Africa which suggests that the colonial manifestation of protest migration was simply a re-enactment of age-old practice in the continent. This was especially common among the Yoruba and the Edo peoples of present day Nigeria. As Kopytoff (1987: 10) suggests, the ability to migrate was inherent to the African in pre-colonial times:

> Established societies were surrounded by large tracts of land that were open politically or physically or both. Together these tracts made up a continent-wide interstitial network of thousands of potential frontiers. Settlers wishing to leave the established societies could move into this internal African frontiers and set up their own social order in the midst of what was effectively an institutional vacuum.

During colonial rule, faced with adverse conditions, the Africans simply relocated as they had always done. The factors responsible for the protest migrations were manifold. It was generally regarded by the Natives that conditions were better-off in British controlled territories than they were in the French sphere and they gravitated towards the British controlled regions.[123]

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[122] In spite of the views of Asiwaju (1976) and Smith (1967) of the exaggeration of the ethnic connection in migration across colonial boundaries, the existence of a group with similar culture and tradition would, no doubt assist the émigrés in settling down and being integrated into their host communities more easily than if the group had been one with which they had no affinity.

[123] In the course of the field work, the researcher was informed by a prominent traditional ruler in the Yoruba section of Benin that he had to migrate to the British side around 1947 when there was

Indeed, the recourse to protest migration was a reaction by the people to the harsh and insensitive colonial policies of the French. According to Asiwaju (1976b), French West Africa showed the best examples of manifestations of discontent to colonial rule and witnessed varying degrees of 'migration as revolt' to British controlled territories. However, as he further points out, even the British territories which offered refuge for most subject people fleeing French high-handedness, also witnessed occasional protest migrations.[124]

The French colonial policy in (West) Africa was characterised by forced conscription, harsh capitation tax, forced labour, forestry regulation and the forced cultivation of certain crops, and cultural alienation, which provided the necessary 'push factors' for forced or protest migration to the British administered areas given their less-harsh conditions, constituting the 'pull-factors'. While the features of colonial administration prevalent in French colonies were also present in the British sphere, the high-handedness of French colonial laws and administrators made the ills of British administration pale into insignificance. French policies were mercantilists as opposed to the laissez faire approach of the British (Asiwaju, 1976a). Just like the British territories, the burden of administering the colony was borne by Africans, however, unlike the British, the French exacted this cost through a harsh fiscal policy. For example, children of ten years old and above had statutory obligations to pay tax (Asiwaju, 1976a: 584).

Furthermore, as noted above, the French administration in Africa was centralised with its entire territories in West Africa organised into the French West African Federation administered from Dakar. The implication of this for the

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famine in the French controlled territory. Some elderly respondents in Sakete also talked about their migration to the British side to avoid forced labour and taxation.

[124] In protest to the evils of House Rule in Eastern and Central Nigeria in 1912, some people fled to the Spanish territory of Fernando Po. The *Emir* of Borgu also migrated with scores of his people in protest to French Borgu in 1904.

fiscal system was the centralisation of fiscal control which deprived the component units of the much needed custom revenues and other forms of income, forcing them to depend on direct taxation, which really was an extra fiscal burden on the Natives.

French colonial administrative policy was guided by French paternalism (Wallerstein, 1961), which in spite of indirect rule, supplanted African norms of interaction and political organisation with the French conception and norms of civilisation, unlike in British colonies which were administered through the medium of traditional African political authority system. In addition, the French further assaulted the sensitivity of the Natives by creating *warrant chiefs (chiefferie)* where no such existed previously or even more crucially, appointing those perceived by the people to lack the authority, or through processes that are alien to the custom and tradition of the Africans.[125] The French system of relocation of entire populations also contributed to the perception of the French as the worse evil by the colonised people of Africa. The system literally dislocated entire settlements to meet the colonial demands for labour at public work sites, without considerations for the costs and implication to the people.

To underscore the push factors in the French territories, it is instructive to examine the French legal regime of the *indigenat*. The *indigenat* was described as a 'charter of modern slave trade' for subjecting Africans to 'horrifying acts of brutality and inhumanity against Africans' (Rene Maran, in Egonu, 1981: 249). The underlying principle of this legal order lay in the early colonial assumption that almost all the whites 'had the authority to inflict punishment' on any native

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[125] Though the British also created warrant chiefs where none existed before due to their reliance on the Native authority system, they generally tended to respect native customs regarding the appointment and office of Native chiefs.

(Mamdani, 2002: 126). It was formally adopted as the colonial 'rule by decree' in the 1870s in Algeria from where it was exported elsewhere, reaching West Africa in the 1880s (Asiwaju, 1976b: 125). The *indigenat* was characterised by summary justice and arbitrary and inhuman imposition of sentences without the option of appeal. The exercise of the *indigenat* was limited to white officials in 1924 and extended to non-administrative chiefs whose privilege was limited to the imposition of five days' imprisonment and a fine of twenty five francs.

Mamdani (2002: 126) further characterised the *indigenat* as 'white privilege, rule by decree, or administrative justice', which codified rather ordinary day-to-day practice in the colonies. It was the exercise of administrative justice without judicial restraints. Mamdani (2002: 127) reproduces a list of charges extracted from a colonial court book:

- four lashes for 'wasting time instead of buying food'
- five to ten lashes for 'sitting around fire instead of working'
- one man was fined for 'absenting himself from hospital while under treatment'
- another man was fined for 'singing near the native church at 11.30pm'
- some were fined for 'being late to work'
- others were fined for 'gross disrespect'

The scope of the *indigenat* was all-embracing, irrespective of the status of the offender or non-offender (the important index was the skin colour), every one was subject to that rule of law.

The legal system was so harsh that faced with the choice of 'voice' or 'exit', the peasants simply walked across the boundary into the warm embrace of kith and kin on the other side. In any case, the 'voice' was not an option as the French were known to crush every form of opposition, no matter how benign with heavy fine, exile or imprisonment. Thus, the main reaction to the harsh legal regime of

the French system was protest migration to British territories; from the Ivory Coast, Mali and Burkina Faso to Ghana; from Senegal to the Gambia and from Benin to Nigeria. This trend became so pervasive in colonial West Africa that the two Powers had to meet several times to resolve the issue of trans-border migration as it had negative impacts on production and taxation in the French colony (Asiwaju, 1976b: 146-146).

While the harsh and inhuman policies of the French constituted the necessary 'push' factors, the more 'conducive' policies of the British as well as the presence of related groups on the other side of the boundary constituted the 'pull' factors. As it has been pointed out above, the British were regarded as the lesser of two devils, whose rather laissez faire attitude to colonial administration characterised by the employment of Native Authority as well as their more humane policies tended to attract revolt migrants from the French sphere. In addition, British territories were usually more prosperous (Crowder, 1968; Asiwaju, 1976a) than French territories, which naturally attracted folks escaping from the *indigenat* and the rather harsh French fiscal policies. Furthermore, the presence of related groups across the boundary provided further impetus for protest migration as the migrants simply 'returned' to the warm embrace of kith and kin. As in the case of the French Yoruba, relations with the fractions of the group in the British sphere were never severed in spite of the colonial boundary and indeed, they moved up and down across the boundary for sundry reasons. Thus, when the movement became forced, the people simply crossed over as they had always done, with little or no disruption to their normal lives.[126]

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[126] Field interviews over two months in 2008. Almost every respondent, over 70 years old, both traditional elite and the ordinary people alluded to periods when they migrated, either as a result of

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However, the employment of structural violence and coercive measures was not restricted to the French in Africa. As the essence was to teach the recalcitrant Africans a lesson, to ensure they learned to respect constituted authority, colonial policy all over the continent was based on a command and control system. In the words of Lord Lugard, the architect of indirect rule in Nigeria, '…occasions may arise when the strictly legal aspect may give way to expediency' (Lugard, in Mamdani, 2002: 125). Comparatively though, the French institution of the *indigenat* as a state policy and its practice raised the employment of structural violence in French colonies to the level of statecraft which made the practice in British colonies child's play in comparison.

5.42 Smuggling

The other kind of reaction to the arbitrary imposition of the French/British boundary on Yorubaland was the adaptation and exploitation of the 'social fact' of the boundary. The most significant adaptation of boundary is smuggling[127] which could be seen as either a reaction (protest) to the imposition of boundary or its exploitation for personal gains (Flynn, 1997: 313). As a reaction to the boundary, local borderlanders deliberately engage in clandestine activities to sabotage border policies as the border was/is regarded as an irritant, imposed to cause dislocation between kith and kin. However, this attitude to the boundary was not as popular as that which takes advantage of boundaries for personal gains. For the Yoruba, the people have so adapted and domesticated the boundary in spite of the partition of their culture area that they cannot imagine life without it (Flynn, 1997). The

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famine or revolt against forced labour and conscription. Some claimed they moved over to their father's compound or their family farmland, which made integration easy for the migrants.

[127] Smuggling refers to those trans-border business transactions conducted outside the framework of the institutions of the state, thereby depriving the state of valuable revenues from custom duties and tariffs.

boundary has become entrenched and thoroughly embedded in the local borderland communities and regarded as sites of arbitrage opportunities.

Flynn (1997: 320) in her study of the Yoruba borderland people of the Nigeria and Benin border areas argues that the people have been able to appropriate the border, emphasising their 'deep placement' within the border. The people did not see the boundary as a fence or barrier, rather, they saw it as an opportunity for wealth creation as they exploited their location at the 'periphery' of national states.

Smuggling could actually be located in the pre-colonial modes of interactions between and among these peoples. It has been established that this region was home to the Yoruba groups and pre-colonial interaction was indeed heavy along the border region. Mills (1970) shows that the boundary region has a dense network of communication which the colonially imposed boundary (and related state policies) could not undo. Traditional (trade) routes had been well developed before colonial rule which is a reflection of a wide variety of interactions among the people without the 'unnecessary' encumbrance of border structures. However, with the imposition of colonial boundaries, new realities had to be negotiated - impediment to movement of people and goods and custom duties - which were nonexistent prior to this time. This led to the development of trade by 'other routes'.

The character of the colonial state aided the growth and sustenance of smuggling. The sheer size of the borders coupled with the well-developed network of communication along this border made securing and patrolling them difficult, if not impossible. The colonial infrastructural pattern of neglecting the border region as per development of infrastructure compounded the arduous tasks

of patrolling the border. Furthermore, price differentials across boundary lines, occasioned by competing state policies, increased the allure of traders to smuggling, especially with the institution of custom posts[128] along at the border. For example, tariffs in the French region were deliberately reduced in competition with the British for a share of the sea-trade (Dioka, 1994). He further submits that 'in the 1860s, import duties in the French sphere were about 4% while it stood at 10% across the boundary in Nigeria' (Dioka, 1994: 38). This made goods cheaper in the French territories than in Nigeria, which attracted businessmen to the French territories where goods were brought into Nigeria while avoiding customs duties, thus maximising gains.

The adaptation and exploitation of the boundary was not limited to smuggling as other forms of adaptation were contrived by the *borderlanders* to benefit from their peculiar location at the periphery of the state. Infrastructural facilities were also exploited, irrespective of their location. Educational and health facilities as well as ritual symbolic linkages across international boundary lines were also exploited by the border region people. In order to adequately analyse this phenomenon, it is necessary to compare educational and health facilities across the boundary; the comparison will focus on number and content (for educational facilities) and number and standard (for health facilities). This will highlight the need by the people to cross borders in order to access these facilities.

Between 1890 and 1939, there were only six schools in the whole of French Yorubaland, all of which (excluding one) were primary schools (*classe primaire*) - all founded by 1934 (Asiwaju, 2001: 215). In spite of growing demands for schools, the French administration deliberately prevented the provision of more

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[128] The first custom post between Nigeria and the French West African Federation was established at Badagry in 1866 (Dioka, 1994: 38)

schools on ideological grounds (Babatunde, 1994: 51). In tune with the French system of administration, the educational system was centralised and hinged on stiff control and selection, not necessarily aimed at making education available to the largest number of people. Indeed, at age fifteen, all pupils must be withdrawn from school irrespective of achievement (Asiwaju, 2001). The aim of the French educational system by the 1930s, as stated by the Governor General of the West African Federation was:

> The recruitment of the cadres of native more vigorous and more content and more and more assured, and by a vigorous and progressive selection more and more advanced. It is the diffusion of the French language, by the contact established more intimately and completely with French life and activities; it is the constitution of a native elite to the greatest possible extent, in whom the passionate thriving towards a culture completely and jealously French could be strengthened (Babatunde, 1994: 51).

As late as the 1930s, the aim of the educational policy in French West Africa was still couched in paternalistic moulds. Not surprisingly, the curriculum of these schools was taught in the French language right from the first day. The pattern was a whole day affair with a two hour break in the afternoon (Babatunde, 1994: 52). This was incompatible with traditional Yoruba child rearing culture where children assist adult members by running chores, etc. This led to a high rate of dropouts in the French system. In Ketu, the nature of the French educational policy compelled many to send their wards to school across the boundary in Nigeria. In the words of the immediate past *Alaketu* (1988):

> The manner in which the French behaved was completely different. They turned our customary ways of behaviour upside down. They started to provide education in a half-hearted manner. The British took care of the king and the chiefs. They also established *sharp* education. That is why our people send their children to receive proper education over there (meaning Nigeria) (Babatunde, 1994: 52).

The British on the other hand adopted a partnership ideology to the provision of educational facilities; partnership between the state and charitable organisations, especially Christian missions. Government established few schools as models of standards, while charitable organisations established the majority of the schools in the region. Thus, in the western Yorubaland of Nigeria, there were thirty six primary schools, thirty of which were mission owned by 1934. Between 1934 and 1939, fifteen additional native schools were founded (Babatunde, 1994). The British style allowed instruction in the vernacular until a certain stage which allowed the gradual integration of the child into an alien system and language.

Regarding healthcare infrastructure and delivery, there existed a reversal of routes as the French were regarded by the people to possess more effective healthcare methods and medicines. Again, due to inadequate provision of facilities in the British sector, as well as the proximity of the facility on the French side to the Nigerian Yoruba, they tended to attend the health centre at Idirin (close to the boundary) rather than have to travel to Abeokuta (nearest general hospital) incurring additional cost and time (Babatunde, 1988).

5.5 Impact on the Yoruba Identity

This section addresses the core research question, that is, the impact of the colonial partition on the Yoruba identity, or the *Yorubaness* of the partitioned groups. It examines and analyses the consequences of the partition on the Yoruba group identity and affinity. It also addresses the debate regarding the transformation or otherwise of the identities of boundary partitioned groups.

Citizenship[129] and nationality, just as the nation state (characterised by definite boundary lines) emerged with colonialism as the Westphalian state model was absent in Africa prior to colonisation. Thus these identity markers imposed a novel form of identity on colonised Africans, which required specific duties, obligations and rights, contrary to what obtained hitherto. As Miles (1994: 42) so cerebrally posits, 'to colonise is to alter identity'. Nigeria is not only a British contraption the people who *became* Nigerians were not so identified before colonialism.[130] Identity in pre-colonial Africa was not tied to territorial space as people tended to migrate either as a reaction to unfavourable socio-political conditions or to famine, drought or conflict (Asiwaju, 1976a; Kopytoff, 1987). Indeed, following colonisation, roles have been swapped between groups and territories. In pre-colonial Africa, socially cohesive groups once defined their territories, however, through colonialism politically bounded territory came to define the people. The transference of loyalty and allegiance from the local community to the nation-state was a product of colonial rule. Thus identity shifted from association with the ethnic group to the colonial state. However, the sense of community engendered by the nation-state in Europe was missing in the state in Africa.[131] And this dissonance between the ethnic group and the nation-state has significant implications for identity and immigration in the continent. This is more significant considering that the modern state is an embodiment of several groups, many of which, having been partitioned by the colonial boundaries, have kith and

[129] Africans attained citizenship at independence as they were regarded as subjects under colonial rule. However, for analytical purpose, no distinction is made here of citizen and subject as the present analysis does not require such classification.

[130] The same is true of Benin; the inhabitants of the territory that became Benin were not classified as such before colonial rule. Indeed, the different groups protested their identity as Dahomeans (old name for Benin) at the onset of independent rule.

[131] This may probably be connected with the different historical backgrounds of these regions. The situation may have been further aggravated by the colonial administration style which actively promoted disunity through divide and rule.

kin on the other side of their state boundaries. During colonial rule, pre-colonial networks of communication were kept alive and active and were useful as people migrated from one colonial territory to another in search of 'greener pastures' or 'exiting' from repressive rule. However, the colonial era migration had implications that the earlier kind of migration did not have; the people were now subjects tied to a particular region, under a particular ruler, which unlike the pre-colonial ruler was interested in keeping its people and territorial extent intact. For instance, the French had to negotiate with the British over the spate of protest migration from the Ivory Coast region to the Gold Coast (Asiwaju, 1976b).

Before a detailed analysis of identity and its (non) transformation, it is helpful to examine the nature of the emergent state as this will provide an invaluable background to understanding identity in this part of Africa. The state can been described as a bounded 'container' for the 'contents' of a given geographic space (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999: 594); it monitors, controls and arbitrates territory – what Sack (1986: 21-34) refers to as territoriality. Territoriality is the exercise of control over geographical space; determining who enters and who exits the domain of a particular power. Thus, territoriality is contingent upon sovereignty, that is, the ability to control boundaries is an attribute of territorial sovereignty. As submitted by Giddens (1985), it is only with the institutionalisation of sovereignty as a structural attribute of the system that boundaries could clearly demarcate internal and external political spaces. Before sovereignty, it was 'unusual for state administrative power to coincide with territorial boundaries'. Boundaries of contemporary state distinguish between 'inside' and 'outside'; between nationals and foreigners. The consequence of this attribute of boundary defines and unifies national identity by alienating others (Der Derian, 1992). For the state and the

governors of the state, 'borders are a potent "ideological symbol" of national identity', and statecraft thus remains a 'practice of differentiation' (Ashley, 1989: 259). The practice of differentiation is conducted through the performance of 'surveillance and intelligence operations'. Foucault in his concept of governmentality, explains how the state conducts the practices of discipline and exclusion to engender the homogeneity of the state (1977). In effect the state could be regarded as an effect of both disciplinary practices which seek to 'normalise and homogenise a population, giving it a sense of internal unity, and exclusionary practices which seek to guarantee the security of this domestic society by differentiating it from, and securing it against, a threatening outside' (Devetak, 1995: 31).

Inclusion (of the inside) and exclusion (of the outside) ascribe character to identity. In other words, those individuals located within the bounded space of the state (representing 'us') are regarded as nationals or citizens who qualify for the protection and patronage of the state while those individuals who are located beyond the borders of the state are regarded as foreigners who must be prevented (or sifted) from the inside in order that they may not benefit from the benevolence of the state. This is one of the justifications for strong borders which function as fences/walls and barriers to differentiate between those who qualify for state protection and benevolence and those who do not and must be prevented from 'gate-crashing'.

Colonial rule engendered a wholesale transformation of the totality of society in West Africa. Indeed, colonial rule as experienced in this region had contrasting impacts on indigenous groups especially those divided between two different (and most times, competing) spheres of influence. In other words, as fractions of

partitioned groups fell under different colonial administrations, it is expected that these fractions would follow different trajectories and may in fact evolve different identities from their pre-colonial identity. However, before considering the difference, there are areas of convergence of colonialism irrespective of the coloniser on West Africa. The *colonial situation*[132] was the same everywhere, bearing as it were, the nucleus of the modern state system characterised by territorial sovereignty, population welded to the territory of the sovereign and boundary lines that were closely guarded and controlled. Such epochal developments could only have lasting impacts on not only specific segments of the society, but on the entire society as a whole.

Underlying the theory and practice of colonialism was European paternalism, that is, the superiority of the European and his civilisation over and above every other kind of civilisation. Hence, through the instrumentality of colonial education and Christianity, the European sought to civilise the 'barbaric' Africans, whose custom and practice were 'repugnant to civilised practices'. One of the most significant impacts of colonial education and Christianity was the creation of a class of educated and 'civilised' Africans - distinct from the mass of uneducated natives - who aspired to become Europeans. This created identity problems for this category of Africans who on the one hand have become alienated and delinked from the rest of their society; while on the other hand, they were not regarded by the Europeans as being really Europeans, in spite of their European socialisation (Spinner, 1996).

As noted above, the two Powers adopted different administrative, economic,

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[132] Balandier defined the colonial situation as the 'proper sociological conception of colonialism … encompassing the activities and even the dispositions of both the coloniser and the colonised, especially in their interactions' (Ekeh, 1983: 4).

legal and educational policies, which effectively gave distinct character, form and identity to territories and peoples within their boundaries. In tune with the French policy of *assimilation* (aimed at making Frenchmen out of Africans) at the onset of colonisation, the Yoruba in Benin became *Frenchified*, developing a distinct identity from the group across the boundary in the British territory.[133] Coupled with this European socialisation was the French ordered onslaught on the core of the Yoruba cultural value and identity - the institution of the *obaship*. As noted above, the traditional institution of the *oba* was the essence of the Yoruba community in pre-colonial times but due to French policy, that institution was all but destroyed by French colonialism. Indeed, the unifying force which the *oba* signified was demeaned and could no longer function in that capacity.

The Yoruba identity in Nigeria, while being 'British' remained comparatively intact. Yoruba remained the language of instruction in schools (at least at the primary level, and bilingual beyond this level). The language was taught in schools, up to university level and Yoruba dress culture was accepted in the public domain (Asiwaju, 2001). Thus, as early as the 1900s, there was already a discernible difference in the identities of the two Yoruba groups. The forces of integration in the two countries further drove a wedge between the groups as they were exposed to opposing centripetal forces of state building.

The deliberate invention of the nation in the two colonies reflected the distinction in colonial administrative policies. Given the strength of French paternalism, the nation that was projected in the French sphere was the French national identity. Thus, the Yoruba identity was deliberately undermined, and

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[133] This was particularly so among the educated elite who were oriented towards Paris, while on the other hand, the educated elite in Nigeria were oriented towards London. However, owing to the strength of ethnic affinity, the colonial civilisation was unable to entirely delink the Yoruba across the boundary.

sought to be replaced by the French. Indeed, the French pattern of administration did not favour such group labelling as its vast territory in West Africa was administered as a single entity (the French West African Federation[134]). Furthermore, as nationalism presents a rallying point for the advancement and projection of a people and civilisation, brooking such sentiments and movements would only negate the ideals of French paternalism.

On the contrary, the British policy not only strengthened the Yoruba identity, it also encouraged it. The main pillar of indirect rule was customary law, and the bearer of custom was identified to be the tribe. There was not one unified customary law for the whole colony, but distinct customary law for each tribe. The more custom was enforced, 'the more the tribe was restructured and conserved as more or less self-contained community - autonomous but not independent - as never before. Encased by custom, frozen into many tribes, the subject population was containerised, heightening ethnic self-consciousness and identity' (Mamdani, 2002: 51).

Furthermore, it was in the early years of colonisation that the Yoruba language evolved as a written form and newspapers and school texts were produced in Yoruba. This helped the 'imagination' of the Yoruba nation as local dialects gave way to the standardised form in general usage all over the territorial space occupied by the various Yoruba sub-groups. Print-capitalism aided the imagination of the nation in Yorubaland just as it did earlier in Europe and Latin America by creating a universe of homogenised experiences, histories and destinies through the collective experience of homogeneous empty time (Anderson, 1983). Indeed, beyond the immediate confines of Yorubaland,

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[134] There were not supposed to be Malians, Senegalese, Ivorians, and so on, as these identities only emerged towards independence.

neighbouring ethnic groups began to identify with the Yoruba identity largely because the British colonial mapping included them in the same regional grouping as the Yoruba (where Yoruba was the spoken language and language of instruction in schools). Thus, while the Yoruba identity in Benin suffered due to stifling policies that across the border in Nigeria enjoyed a leeway and blossomed due to a more favourable colonial policy.

The Yoruba, both in Nigeria and Benin faced one common and important challenge – ethnicity. Yorubaland had been partitioned into two different colonial entities, both of which comprised of groups and peoples the Yoruba had had little (most time, conflicting) or no contact with in pre-colonial days. In Nigeria, the Yoruba were grouped with the Hausa, Ibo, Ibibio, Kanuri, and so on while in Benin, they were grouped with the Aja, Fon, Ewe, Wese, among others; groups whose destinies have become tied to theirs and with whom they have to contend for space - political and economic. In none of these two states does the Yoruba constitute the majority. Indeed, in Benin, they constitute an oppressed minority while their lot in Nigeria is better as they constitute the second most populous group.

This has significant implications on their access to the apparatuses of state in both countries, especially in the post-colonial era. As ethnic identity is a major determinant of access to state power in Africa,[135] ethnic mobilisation becomes a powerful tool in this regard. In post-independent Africa, where the state is the most important and biggest actor in the economy, access to the apparatuses of state and control of resources are important sources of ethnic competition as the

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[135] Owing to the crucial roles played by (tribal) ethnic groups during indirect rule, as well as their employment as the basis of regional federalism toward the twilight of colonial rule, they emerged as the main platform for political participation in independent Nigeria. Indeed, political parties had to be ethnically based to be relevant.

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group that captures the state has control of an enormous amount of resources and thus, can reward its supporters, provide for group members and proceed to install barriers to entry into political and economic markets (Mbaku, 2001). Primordialism, clientelism and neopatrimonialism are the hallmarks of the African state.

Four main consequences of ethnic competition for resources are identifiable from the literature: 'increased ethnic identification and group formations, increased racism and prejudice, increased inter-ethnic conflicts, and ethnic mobilisation and activism' (Nagel, 1995: 955-961). This is a picture of what the Yoruba were (are) exposed to in both countries. The fraction in Benin, due to its small size could not muster adequate political clout to influence state policies in its favour. The fraction in Nigeria, even though it does not constitute the majority, is well placed by reason of its size to negotiate concessions in public policy decision-making.

Ethnicity reinforces ethnic or group identity; how does this affect the Yoruba identity? Miles (1994) has argued severally that contrary to received wisdom group identity is subsumed under the national identity in groups partitioned by international boundaries. In his study of the Hausa partitioned between Nigeria and Niger, Miles concludes that national identity either as Nigerians and Nigeriens is stronger than ethnic affinities as Hausa. He further argues that the Hausa, either in Nigeria or Niger showed a stronger affinity to other non-Hausa co-citizens than to 'foreign' Hausa. In other words, the national identity fostered by integrative state-building processes overshadows the Hausa ethnic solidarity. This same position is also projected in his joint work with Rochefort when they assert that 'part and parcel of the conventional wisdom about rural publics in

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Africa is that the populations on the periphery will accord ethnic solidarity greater significance than national consciousness. A survey of neighbouring Hausa villages on different sides of the Niger/ Nigeria boundary counters this myth' (Miles and Rochefort, 1991: 393). In their view, the Hausa identity is subsumed under the national identity; affinity with co-citizens, they claim is greater than cross-boundary inter-Hausa relations. This is a reflection of the success of integrative state- building and penetration process, they claim. This assertion runs counter to conventional wisdom as well as this researcher's findings on the field, as relating to the Yoruba identity and ethnic affinity vis-à-vis national identity.

In Nigeria, ethnicity has remained a potent marker of identity. The Nigerian federalism acknowledges and reinforces ethnic differentiation; the component units of the federation reflect the colonial geopolitical structure which was based on ethnic groups and customary laws; political competition through the party system is based on ethnicity; access to state benevolence and patronage is also a function of ethnicity.[136] Given such a system, inter-ethnic relations would be far from cooperative but rather competitive as they struggle for access to the resources of state. Over the years, the relationship between the Hausa and the other groups in Nigeria has been one of mutual distrust fraught with violent exchanges. Furthermore, the Hausa is largely Islamic and they regard everyone else as *kaffirs* (unbelievers) who even when they are converted to Islam, could only be second rate Muslims.[137] The spate of ethnic violence prevalent in Nigeria

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[136] The federal character principle (read ethnic balancing) is a system by which every identifiable ethnic group (state) is fairly represented in the share of federal patronage.

[137] Interview with a southern Nigerian Muslim cleric who points out that the Hausa Muslim in Yoruba communities prefers to queue behind a Hausa rather than a Yoruba Imam during *Jumaat* or any other prayer. This explains why the Hausa congregation organises separate prayer groups, even in Muslim Yoruba communities (10.04.2010). This may not be unconnected with the fact that the Hausa historically considered the Yoruba as non-Muslim whom it is legitimate to enslave (Ahmed Baba, in Law, 1977: 14)

stems from the irreconcilable differences between the various groups forced together in the 'merely geographical expression' that is called Nigeria.

The state has failed to properly penetrate to foster national integration. There is an absence of a linkage between the state and the groups in Africa. In spite of the so-called centripetal state-building influence of the state, the average African state has failed to really foster a sense of community and has remained just a collection of disparate groups that are in constant competition for resources. Where access to state patronage is ethnically based, identification with the ethnic becomes the ticket to the 'national cake'. Thus this identity becomes more important than the national; indeed, the ethnic identity is a prerequisite for the national. Consequently, the claim that the Hausa identity is subordinated to the Nigerian identity and that the Hausa prefer their non-Hausa co-citizens to their Hausa kith and kin across the boundary in Niger appears far-fetched.

However, Miles' claim may not be without basis though, considering the controversies surrounding the Hausa ethnic identity. Some Hausa scholars do not regard Hausa as an ethnic group, but merely as a linguistic group. Their claim hinges on the diverse cultural and historical experiences of the different Hausa groups, which are only connected by the Hausa language (Smith, 1959; Hill, 1972). This may be responsible for the survey outcome Miles' analysis and conclusion were premised on. Had the groups shared a common historical antecedent, fears and aspirations, a truly cohesive Hausa ethnic group may have evolved a sense of community that in spite of the fundamental impacts of colonialism and differential state building processes, ethnic loyalty would be strong enough to compel inter-ethnic relations and affinity that Miles claimed are missing among the Hausa.

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For the Yoruba, evidence from field work shows that ethnic solidarity is accorded greater place than the national identity and solidarity. This is summed up in the words of the current *Alaketu* that 'the boundary was between the French and the British. We are kith and kin and cannot be separated by foreign powers.[138] It is important at this point to revisit and analyse some of the field work findings to buttress this point.

As the case study is the Yoruba group, the interview subjects were carefully selected to reflect the subject of interrogation. All the respondents were Yoruba except for some officials of the agencies of the state with responsibilities for border control. Consequently, the interview subjects possess high proficiency in the Yoruba language, except of course, the non-Yoruba state officials.

All the respondents demonstrated sufficient awareness of the presence of the Yoruba ethnic group and culture area across the international boundary. They further demonstrated knowledge about the historical and cultural linkages amongst the Yoruba sub-groups in spite of the partition. As many of the respondents are borderland Yoruba, they are not only aware of the Yoruba on the other side, they actually claimed to have relatives on both sides of the boundary. In the interview with one of the principal *obas* in Benin Republic, he claimed to have migrated to his mother's side across the boundary during the famine of 1947 - 1949. The degree of awareness of the historical and cultural linkages was

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[138] Interview with the Alaketu in his palace in Ketu in October 2008

especially true for the groups at Ketu, Ilara and Ifonyin[139] than for those at Sakete, Ipobe, Porto Novo and Ita-Ijebu.[140]

Given the ethnic affinity among the Yoruba, a wide gamut of interactions ranging from cultural to economic exists among the people of shared history and culture across the boundary. The population of Ketu in Lagos, Nigeria regularly make visits 'home' to Ketu in Benin from where the group migrated from in the 19th century apparently escaping from Dahomey harassment. A high ranking chief of the Ketu group in Lagos confirmed their relationship with Ketu (Benin) in these words: 'we consider *Ile* Ketu as our home; we were only forced to relocate and become refugees and pilgrims elsewhere'. When installing a new chief, 'approval' is sought from the *Alaketu* who is considered as the father of all the Ketu people, irrespective of national identity.[141]

The people exchange visits routinely; some cross the border for economic activities, some for farming, some others cross the border to benefit from public services on the other side. Indeed, during civic activities like elections and census, the people often migrate to swell the population of their kith and kin on the other side.[142]

This perception of the people, which is at variance with official perception, has great implications for immigration, citizenship and identity. It has indeed created a whole lot of problems and has also afforded politicians tools with which

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[139] These (both the Nigerian and Benin) are the groups whose territories were partitioned by the colonial boundary. They represent the groups acknowledged in the partition documents who are to be accorded the privilege of cross-border farming, access to water and grazing for their cattle.
[140] These Yoruba locations were not partitioned as they are located some distance from the boundary. In other words, their culture areas remained intact, however, they share close cultural and historical linkages with the Nigerian Yoruba.
[141] Interview with the Balogun of Ketu in Lagos in November 2008.
[142] Field work interviews with members of the borderland Yoruba, especially at Ilara in October - November 2008. Again, the Nigerian Census Commission in conjunction with the Nigerian Boundary Commission in 2005 organised a sensitisation seminar to draw attention to the illegal activities of borderland peoples during census exercises in Nigeria.

to exclude credible oppositions. In the Nigeria's Second Republic, one Alhaji Shugaba the majority leader of the Borno State House of Assembly was deported from Nigeria on the claims that he was not a Nigerian. Borno is a state in the northeastern corner of the country sharing boundaries with Chad, Niger and Cameroun. Shugaba was born in a Nigerian village by a father who had migrated from the territories of Chad in pre-colonial times. His father had also served in the army of the local potentate, the *Shehu* of Borno in 1911. Shugaba's mother was a Kanuri from Borno in Nigeria and no one doubted his Nigerian identity until political expediency warranted his being labelled a foreigner. Shugaba eventually won his identity case at a Nigerian court and was reinstated with his Nigerian passport and returned to his position at the House of Assembly (Mackenzie, 1981).

The import of the Shugaba case, which unfortunately was replicated in Cote d'Ivoire in the 1990s between Alasane Ouattara and Kona Bedie, reflected the 'dehumanising' character of the boundary inherited by Africa at independence. Ouattara, a former prime minister was denied political participation when the Ivorian National Assembly approved an electoral code which prevented candidates whose parents were of foreign nationality. Ouattara, whose parents had migrated from the regions of Burkina Faso in the period before independence is a reflection of the crisis of identity and citizenship fostered by the haphazard nature of the determination of boundaries in West Africa. Indeed, Ouattara was born in Cote d'Ivoire and had risen in that country to become the prime minister, yet, by the contrivance of an intolerant despot exploiting the 'dehumanising' geopolitical arrangements of the colonialists, he was declared a foreigner and precluded from political participation (Monga, 1997).

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The Yoruba identity and ethnic affinity play significant roles in cross-border (trans-border) relations among members of the group. Even for those respondents, who by reason of distance from the border do not have kith and kin across the border, they still have a close affinity with the Yoruba across the boundary. Some respondents, including the *Onisakete* in Sakete claimed to have grown up on the other side in Nigeria. Indeed, the *Onisakete* claimed to have been educated in Lagos while living with his uncle who was a trader in that city. Many other respondents claimed to have either been educated or benefitted one way or the other from close relationship with the Yoruba in Nigeria. The *Onisakete* confirmed that the electricity project gifted to Benin Republic by the Nigerian Government in 2007, but located in Sakete was made possible by the affinity between the Yoruba groups of which the Nigerian leader at the time was a member.

By reason of location at this margin, a complex array of cross-boundary activities abound. As the study is concerned with the use and abuse of the boundary by the borderlanders, interview questions were asked focused on the subject. Smuggling and currency and human trafficking are aided by the knowledge of the informal networks of communication that are centuries old. In her study of the Yoruba of Sabe, Flynn (1997) claims that the Yoruba have so internalised and been so embedded with the boundary owing to their location at the periphery of the state that they benefit economically from that location. However, many respondents claimed not to be involved in cross-border activities which they equated with smuggling.[143]

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[143] Smuggling remains an illegal activity and in spite of assurances of anonymity of respondents, they remained non-forthcoming with answers to this question.

The borderland people cross the boundary as often as necessary. In order to elicit further response to the question about cross-border activities, respondents were asked if they cross the border at official border posts. Some of them saw through the question and preferred not to answer. However, for those who were able to provide answers, they claimed they only cross at official crossing points when it is safe to do so. Otherwise, they resort to the numerous footpaths and waterways that are unknown to, or difficult to patrol by, customs and immigration agents.

When the respondents do cross at official border points, they do not tender travel documents as many do not possess such. Again, they claimed that they may be required to cross the border several times in a day; at that rate they would require a passport per week. In any case, there are several other means of border crossing should passport become an issue. Immigration agents allow them to cross the border without travel documents on the 'payment' of some inducement.

The Yoruba respondents claimed to prefer dealing with fellow Yoruba across the border than relating with non-Yoruba co-citizens. In other words, the ethnic affinity amongst the Yoruba compels greater intra-ethnic relations than relations with non-members of the group. Eliciting non-political answers to this question was really difficult; many respondents would want to provide politically correct answers. However, by asking probing or follow-up questions, answers were coaxed from respondents. The follow-up question that more often than not did the trick was: 'I am a Yoruba man; does that influence your reception of me?' Or 'even though I am a stranger here, suppose I got engaged with a Gun or Hausa in a conflict (depending on which side of the boundary), who would you support, the other ethnic or me, a fellow Yoruba?' Or 'were there to be a conflict between the

Yoruba across the boundary with any other group, who would you support'? Such questions appealing to the collective Yoruba identity and solidarity more often than not compelled respondents to reluctantly answer this question. The general answer was 'we are one people, even though war is not good, yet we must support each other'. This in fact is a re-enactment of pre-colonial inter-Yoruba relations where the *Alaketu* would seek Oyo or Egba support against the Dahomey, and so on.

On the nature of the boundary, responses were also subject to political correctness. All manners of answers were provided some acknowledging the boundary claiming that for as long as states are delimited by boundaries, boundaries are inevitable. However, beneath the politically correct answers are underlying nuances about the boundary. For those who by virtue of their location at this margin, benefit economically through the exploitation of the boundary characteristics, boundary is good and must be sustained, even though, in the same breath, they alluded to the arbitrariness of the same boundary. On the other hand, many other respondents regard the boundary as merely administrative and treat it as such. The oft-quoted statement of the *Alaketu*, interviewed by Prescott claiming that the boundary is a division between the French and the British, but not between the Yoruba is germane in this regard.

Following from the nature of the boundary, the follow up question considering the arbitrariness of the boundary sought the view of respondents regarding the debate about the redrawing of boundary lines in Africa generally. The question posed the greatest challenge to the interview sessions. It obviously borders on the spirit of patriotism and loyalty to the 'fatherland'. Hence, the answers reflected this value of loyalty to the nation-state. Answers to the question

vary depending on the strength of the perception of the respondents about patriotism, tradition and economic advantages. For those who consider the boundary as a necessary part of the modern state system, it should be retained as it is. Even among those who claimed that the boundary is a disruption of tradition, it should be maintained as it is, though they advocated for closer cooperation and collaboration across the boundary. To some respondents still, the boundary is merely administrative, so it does not represent a problem and should be left as it is. For those engaged in smuggling, the boundary must not change for obvious reasons. However, to an insignificant number of respondents, the boundary should be redrawn to include all the Yoruba in one country. When these answers were presented to a leading Yoruba scholar of international boundaries, he argued that the answers reflected the role of the economy in the perception of the people. Apparently owing to the economic prosperity of Nigeria, many Yoruba in Benin wish they were included in Nigeria. Even though many Yoruba in Benin may not have considered a re-adjustment of the boundary, economic adversity may indeed, compel such sentiments among the people. Indeed, this would only be making formal the colonial practice of migration from Benin to Nigeria during periods of famine and economic hardship.

In spite of the division of opinion about the future of the boundary, every respondent desired freer movement of goods and services across the boundary. They also wished for greater integration at the level of governments. They claimed this will attract development to this margin of the state.

From the result of the field research presented above, it is apparent that there exists a great sense of affinity between the Yoruba fractions across the boundary. A wide variety of interactions subsists among the people who still

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consider themselves as one people in spite of the several years of differential colonial experiences and subsequent contrasting civilisations in the post-independent period. All the six traditional rulers that were consulted during the field work concurred in their view of the colonial partition as not dividing the Yoruba, but the colonialists. What is evident in the answers of these traditional custodians of culture and history is the acknowledgement of their Yorubaness. Indeed, they were all able to trace the tradition of origin of their respective domains to the Yoruba homeland of Ife. The significance of this for their strong affinity with the Yoruba across the boundary in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised. When asked of the relationship between them as traditional rulers and the Nigerian Yoruba traditional rulers, they all responded that they have familial relationship with the *obas* in Nigeria. The *Alaketu* especially recalled the exchange of royal visits between his predecessors and important Nigerian Yoruba *obas*. As he recently ascended the throne, he has not been able to arrange for a visit to these *obas*, but he assured the researcher that plans are afoot to make such a trip.[144]

In the process of the making of the Yoruba nation, *printcapitalism* was pivotal in the imagination of the Yoruba community. The Oyo dialect of the Yoruba language was codified and sanctioned by the colonial administration as the standardised version of the language. Newspapers, journals, book and religious instructions (catechisms) were published in the standardised form of the language and used all over the Yoruba country[145]. Of significant importance in this regard was the collection and publication of Yoruba myths of common origin,

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[144] The *Ooni* of Ife visited Ketu as part of a national visit to Benin in 2009.

[145] In the early years of European penetration of the African hinterland, Ketu was visited by the Anglican mission from the British colony of Lagos as part of Yorubaland. Indeed, the head of the mission was a liberated former Yoruba slave who later became the first African bishop of the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England

the several waves of migration from, and the centrality of Ife in the history of the people. In tune with the British educational policy of including a substantial part of the history and culture of the colonised in educational curricula, the history of the Yoruba so recorded was taught to pupils at appropriate levels. Consequently, the individual Yoruba pupil from the earliest stage possible was exposed to the Yoruba history and conception, creating in his imagination the Yoruba worldview, which considers every part of Yorubaland as one having originated from Oduduwa and migrated from Ife.

The first lesson in Yoruba history would include an exploration of the so-called 'four corners of Yorubaland': Ketu (in Benin), Ijebu, Oyo and Ife (Johnson, 1921). Another crucial influence of the Yoruba history as recorded through the use of the standardised version are the fabled seven sons of *Oduduwa* who due to sibling rivalry migrated from Ife to found the primary towns from which Yorubaland evolved. These son-kings were the *Alaketu* of Ketu, the *Onisabe* of Sabe and the *Onipopo* of Popo (located in present-day Benin) as well as the *Alaafin* of Oyo, the *Orangun* of Ila, the *Olowu* of Owu and the *Oba* of Benin. Every other Yoruba town and settlement evolved from these earlier phase of migration from Ife. The implication of dynastic relationship and affinity for the Yoruba identity is significant. The inclusion of Yoruba history as part of school curriculum aided the imagination of the Yoruba nation and ingrained in the minds of the people a community of shared history, values and expectations. There therefore exists a strong historical linkage among all the Yoruba kingdoms and groups that even differential colonialism could not sever. This is contrary to the Hausa identity that has remained a subject of controversy: questions about whether Hausa is an ethnic or merely a language may not be unconnected with the

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perception of the subjects of Miles' (1991 and 1994) examinations and analyses.

On the research field, the Yoruba identity of the population of the borderland on both sides of the boundary is unambiguous. To begin with, every Yoruba respondent spoken to was well aware of his identity as Yoruba. They could all recall the oral tradition of their origin from the Yoruba heartland of Ife/Oyo in Nigeria. Furthermore, the *obas* recalled pre-colonial relationships with Oyo which included military alliances to deter Dahomean harassment as well as ritualistic relations. Ritual and religious relations outlast colonialism. Asiwaju (2001) records that the coronation rituals of a new *Alaketu* are not complete without the ritual procession to Imeko in Nigeria. During an interview with the current *Alaketu* in his palace in 2008, he claimed that he had to perform the ritual including a pilgrimage to Imeko without which he could not ascend the throne as *oba*. The significance of this for ethnic solidarity cannot be over-emphasised as the *Alaketu* is regarded as the chief traditional authority over all Ketu whether in Nigeria or Benin;[146] it reinforces the assertion that ethnic loyalty (affinity) compels inter-ethnic relations in spite of forces to the contrary.

5.6 Conclusion

The partition of Yorubaland into two distinct colonial states following the European scramble for African territories towards the end of the 19th century, expectedly led to the disruption of age-old patterns of interaction, social organisation and the simultaneous development of new patterns. This has had

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[146] At the time of the field research for this study, a conflict over the authority to appoint junior chiefs for certain villages under the domain of the *Oloola* of Ilara between the *Oloola* and the *Alaketu* had just been resolved. The territories of the *Oloola* as noted above lie astride the Nigeria/Benin boundary, making for ambiguous identities. Again, the *Alaketu* is the king of a town in Benin, yet, his 'sphere of influence' cuts across the boundary into Nigeria where all the Ketu people regard him as their paramount ruler. This is further given credence by the recognition accorded the *Alaketu* by the Ogun State Government in Nigeria which treats him as one of the 'high' chiefs of the state.

significant consequences on the group partitioned, outlasting actual colonisation with crucial implications for the group and the successor states. Over six decades of colonial rule characterised by contrasting state building processes bestowed profound legacies on French and British Yorubaland. While official British policy tended to promote local culture and nationalism (unwittingly) through the institution of native authority based on customary law, the initial French policy of assimilation characterised by 'crush and destroy' approach tended to undermine and replace local culture with French culture as the local culture was considered primitive and uncivilised. Even when French policy became more liberal, it really did not translate into much gain to the native population. In effect, the contrasting policies resulted in the making of two distinct national identities from a hitherto homogeneous African culture group. However, owing to the depth and strength of ethnic affinity among the Yoruba, as well as the inability of colonial practices to promote the development of a truly national identity, pre-colonial ethnic linkages and affiliations survived the colonial epoch, almost unscathed.

Colonialism was an epoch whose legacies are as far-reaching as they are deep-rooted. The political map of the continent was redrawn, largely without consideration for the people whose territories were not only being partitioned, but whose lives would never remain the same throwing up crucial consequences that nationalities and states have continued to grapple with. The Yoruba is one of the several such partitioned groups whose culture areas were sliced through by arbitrary colonial mapping and re-mapping. The consequences of the partition of Yorubaland presented here are duplicated all over the continent contributing to the labelling of Africa as troubled and conflict-prone.

While the political map of the continent is a given and can hardly be redrawn to reflect ethnic identities, boundaries as rigid, inalienable character of the state can be re-construed as windows of opportunities, bridges and sites of collaboration. This would remove the tensions and barriers that have developed between neighbouring states owing to differing perception between the state and the partitioned people.

In effect, this chapter addresses the substantive research question directly by addressing the question relating to the impacts of colonial rule on the partitioned group, which in the main, engendered the fostering of enduring, but contrasting perceptions by the states on the one hand, and by the people and groups on the other. It also addresses the question of how contrasting colonial administrative systems and socialisation processes, which fostered the development of different national identities, affected or not, the Yoruba identity of the partitioned sub-groups. The chapter also addresses the main research question indirectly through a series of sub-research questions relating to contrasting colonial administrative styles, which produced wholesale transformation of the colonised societies. It also analysed the reactions of the people to the imposition of boundaries and foreign rule.

The next chapter, among other themes, investigates and analyses the perception and attitude of the post-colonial state in Africa to the vexed issue of colonial boundaries. In the build-up to independence, there were agitations by nationalists for a re-examination and re-drawing of the colonial boundaries as they were foreign, arbitrary and 'dehumanising'. The expectation therefore was that with the transfer of sovereignty to the African, the arbitrariness of colonial boundaries would be addressed and boundaries would either correspond to agreed

patterns or that in view of the growing strength of pan-Africanism, inherited colonial boundaries may indeed be eradicated completely. How did independent Africa handle its colonial heritage of boundaries? These are some of the research questions addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

INDEPENDENCE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE?

6.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to contribute to answering the research question by examining the sub-research questions on contrasting perceptions (State versus group); and the conflict potentials of the ex-colonial boundaries in Africa. The previous chapter deals extensively with the character of intra-ethnic interaction across the international boundary between Nigeria and Benin. This present chapter is focused on the official discourses and perception of the boundary by the state, which contrasts sharply with the perception of the people. It also analyses the tensions that this contrasting perspectives generate between the states and the people as well as between the two neighbouring states. The post-colonial official discourses of the boundary are couched within the context of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Solemn Declaration of 1964, which has remained crucial to territoriality in the continent.

Beginning with the attainment of independence by the former Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957, there commenced a wave of political independence all over Africa. Indeed, the decade of the 1960s was regarded as the decade of emancipation for the continent. The implication of independence for this study is obvious: as dependencies, colonial African territories were not subjects of international law, but were appendages of their imperial overlords. However, at independence, the status of these territories changed from dependencies to recognised states in the international system. Similarly, the status of their populations changed from that of subjects to citizens. Concomitant with this transformation was the problem of what becomes of the colonially-ordered

boundaries that had been the subject of much contestation and debate since the inception of colonial rule. Having gained sovereign control of affairs in the former colonial geo-polities, there were heightened expectations that these anomalous colonial contraptions would eventually be remedied and a new boundary regime, reflecting the interests and socio-political characteristics and realities of Africa would be overseen by the emergent African leaders.[147] The remedy envisaged could either be a redrawing of individual boundary or in the spirit of the popular pan-Africanism, these boundaries would be eradicated as the post-colonial state system would be replaced by a United States of Africa. Whichever the choice, the remedy would radically alter the territorial status quo in the continent. Indeed, the weight of (elite) public opinion in the continent supported these expectations as an influential section of the political elite was at the forefront of this agitation.[148]

Another rationale for the expectations about the future of the colonially determined boundaries was the general belief that owing to the nature of their determination, these boundaries would provoke irredentist agitations and conflict would be rife in post independence Africa. This claim hinged on the fact that many of the boundaries were ambiguous, un-demarcated, porous and un-patrollable and hence, they would be sources of conflicts among neighbours regarding territorial extent.[149] Furthermore, as the boundary partitioned several groups into different spheres, ethnic loyalty would compel intra-ethnic relations

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[147] This is inferred from the groundswell of debates against the manner of the determination of these boundaries as well as the popular pan-African movement which had been crucial in the agitation for self-rule and Union Government in the continent.

[148] The most vocal proponent of a United States of Africa was the Ghanaian charismatic nationalist leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

[149] Starr and Most (1976) have argued that geographically contiguous states are more likely to engage in conflicts than geographically distant states. However, the propensity for conflict among neighbouring African states is further heightened by the nature of the boundary, especially its divisive character, ambiguity, porosity and un-patrollable character.

and for such people, the height of such intra-ethnic interactions may compel irredentist agitations (Phiri, 1984). However, contrary to received wisdom, the excited expectations of boundary revision and boundary generated conflict have been the exception rather than the rule in Africa.[150]

This chapter analyses the characteristics of boundaries in post-independence Africa in order to answer the research question by addressing the sub-research question relating to the conflict potentials of the ex-colonial boundaries, especially since their adoption as the basis for ordering postcolonial relations. Africa ought to be embroiled in territorially-derived conflict given that these ex-colonial boundaries, problematic as they were, were reified by postcolonial African leaders. Have there been widespread territorial conflicts? If not, why have the expectations of conflict, so radically and forcefully projected, failed? The chapter seeks to provide answers to these questions by examining and analysing post-colonial boundary discourse between Nigeria and Benin in order to further provide answer to the impact of the partition on the Yoruba astride the Nigeria – Benin boundary. It begins by examining the intervention of the OAU in boundary consolidation, that is, the OAU adoption of the principle of *uti possidetis*[151] in its declaration of the sanctity of colonial boundaries as the basis

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[150] Granted, there have been a number of boundary related disputes and conflicts among African states since independence, these however have been the exception rather than the rule. One can count on the finger tips the number of such conflicts: Ghana/Togo (Ewe irredentism); Morocco/Spanish Sahara (historically based territorial claims and counter claims); Nigeria/Cameroun (borderland resource conflict); Nigeria/Chad (water resource based over control in the Lake Chad area); Ethiopia/Eritrea (historically based territorial claims); Somalia and her neighbours-Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti (Somali irredentism). This runs counter to the widespread upheaval predicted should the colonial boundaries remain unchanged.

[151] *Uti possidetis* is the principle of international law which stipulates that the parties to a particular treaty are to retain possession of that which they forcibly seized during a war. A treaty ending a war may adopt the principle of *uti possidetis*, the principle of *status quo ante bellum* (the state of affairs before the war).

for ordering post-independence interstate relations in the continent. It then examines the pattern of contemporary interstate relations based on the preserved and reified ex-colonial boundaries, highlighting the collaboration and cooperation between neighbouring states as well as conflict (and conflict resolution strategies) occasioned by the difference in perception between the state and the people whose lives bear the brunt of the partition of their culture area.

Given the theme, the chapter is structured into three broad sections namely: a general descriptive and historical section which highlights the intrigues and power politics antecedent to the OAU Solemn Declaration of 1964 in the period just before and after independence.[152] The second section then undertakes a similar historical (chronological) description of the specific inter-state discourse between Nigeria and Benin highlighting the (ab)use of the boundary between them as a symbol of power as well as a point of collaboration. The final section presents an analytical discourse of the role of boundary in post-independence interstate relations between Nigeria and Benin.

6.2 Boundary Regime and National Consolidation: the OAU Recipe

The Organisation of African Unity was established in 1963 as the regional organisation for all the independent states in the continent. The objectives of its founders included the promotion of unity and solidarity among Member States; the eradication of all forms of imperialism and minority rule in Africa as well as the promotion of the quality of life of the average African (Preamble, OAU Charter, 1963). The OAU at its First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in 1964 solemnly declared that 'all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national

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[152] The root of the debates leading to the Solemn Declaration is founded in the pan-African movement which gained momentum in the early years of the twentieth century.

independence' (OAU: Res. 16, 1). This declaration offers two explanations concerning post-colonial boundaries in Africa: first, it ended the debates regarding the status and future of these boundaries between two contending blocs, one rooting for a wholesale readjustment of boundaries or their virtual abolition in the formation of a Union Government, while the other bloc advocated for a gradual, but functional integration of the states in the continent, based on the inherited colonial boundaries. Secondly and more importantly, the declaration sanctioned inherited colonial boundaries as the basis for ordering post-colonial inter-state relations in the continent.[153]

The adoption of the principle of *uti possidetis*, reflects the changing meaning and emphasis of the principle as a legal concept. As Shaw (1997: 492) notes, *uti possidetis* as a legal principle began as a Roman law which sought to maintain the status quo of a situation irrespective of the origin of the conflict. This definition and emphasis were to change in the early colonisation period when it became the principle of endorsement of actual possession in disputes over ownership by imperial powers (Shaw, 1997). Finally, the principle became the basis of the transformation of colonial boundaries to the boundaries of sovereign states following decolonisation. The essence of *uti possidetis*, in this regard, was to prevent boundary conflicts between successor states. As the International Court of Justice has identified, the essence of *uti possidetis*:

> Lies in its primary aim of securing respect for the territorial boundaries at the moment when independence is achieved. Such territorial boundaries might be no more than delimitations between different administrative divisions or colonies all subject to the same sovereign. In that case, the application of *uti possidetis* resulted in administrative boundaries being transformed into frontiers in the full sense of the term (ICJ Reports, 1986: 554).

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[153] For the Latin American experience, please see Schwarzenberger, G. 1957; St. John, R. 1977 and Dominiguez, J., et al, 2003

In the case of post-colonial Africa, adopting the principle of *uti possidetis* for the retention of inherited colonial boundaries was principally to prevent the much expected boundary-based conflicts. As the next section shows, preservation of the colonial boundaries was the best option available to the post-colonial African leadership as other options would create more problems that they would solve.

6.21 The Making of the Solemn Declaration

It is important to examine and analyse the antecedents (intrigues and power politics) to the OAU 'Solemn Declaration' of 1964 granting sanctity to the colonial boundaries, in spite of the expectations and agitations to the contrary. Following the Manchester Conference[154] of the pan-African movement in 1945, which was pivotal to the decolonization efforts in Africa, pan-Africanism as a movement became very popular, not only among African political elite, but across classes and divides in the continent (Langley, 1979). Simultaneous with the agitation for independence across the continent was also the movement for a Union Government for independent Africa which was the ultimate objective of pan-Africanism (Oliver and Atmore, 1972). To further the cause of pan-Africanism, in 1958 the All African Peoples' Conference (AAPC) was convened in Ghana at the behest of Kwame Nkrumah, the socialist President of Ghana who was Gold Coast's leading nationalist and had been a major player at the 1945 Manchester pan-African Conference (Oliver and Atmore, 1972).

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[154] It was at this conference that Africans from the African continent for the first time attended the pan-African conference. Prior to this time, pan-Africanism was exclusive to Africans in the Diaspora. The seeds for a more aggressive nationalism towards decolonisation were planted at this conference such that when the African elite returned home, they initiated massive movements aimed at wresting powers from the colonialist.

It is instructive to note that the AAPC was the very first gathering of African leaders and that the resolution among other things called for the general readjustment of the colonial boundaries. The Conference resolution:

- Denounces artificial frontiers drawn by imperialist Powers to divide the peoples of Africa, especially those which cut across ethnic groups and divide people of the same stock;

- Calls for the abolition or readjustment of such frontiers at an early stage. (Source: AAPC Resolution, 1958).

It is obvious that the least expectation in independent Africa would be a readjustment of the inherited colonial boundaries as evidenced by the resolution of this conference, which was attended by three hundred delegates from the few independent states at the time and sixty two African nationalist groups (Binaisa, 1977). Indeed, the objective of the convenors of the conference was the initiation of the groundwork for the establishment of a United States of Africa.[155] Given this background, it then becomes paradoxical that independent African leaders elected to preserve and reify these boundaries, contrary to pre-independence agitations and expectations. One of the major tasks before this chapter is to unravel this volte face and to justify the maintenance of the ex-colonial boundaries as the basis of territorial sovereignty in independent Africa.

The answers to this paradox are found in petty rivalry among emergent post-independence African leaders; ideological differences and the neo-colonial aspirations of France which found expression in its influential control over its former colonies in the continent. These factors led to the emergence of three

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[155] Given the antecedents of Nkrumah in the pan African movement, and his utterances and actions since assuming office as President of Ghana (the first independent sub-Saharan African state), one can safely conclude that the ultimate objective of the conference was the formation of a union government for the continent.

contending blocs regarding the future of African integration as well as the status of the inherited boundaries: the Casablanca group, which championed the cause of the emergence of a Union Government as well as the redrawing of the colonial boundaries; the Brazzaville bloc - was made up of former French colonies (apparently influenced by France) which sought the protection and maintenance of the inherited boundaries; and the Monrovia group which sought a piecemeal, functional integration of the continent on the basis of the inherited boundaries – meaning political integration would have to wait until it became practicable. The Monrovia and the Brazzaville blocs later merged to form a united front against the Casablanca group at the Addis Ababa conference of 1963.[156]

At the Addis Ababa conference of 1963 where the Charter of the OAU was signed, the two contending blocs strongly presented their positions as the preferred choice for post independence African regionalism. As expected, the Casablanca bloc, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah argued that 'African unity is, above all, a political kingdom which can only be gained by political means. The social and economic development of Africa will come only within the political Kingdom, not the other way round' (Nkrumah, in Binaisa, 1977: 57). On the other hand, Binaisa (1977: 57) reports the address by the moderate bloc, targeted as a pot-shot at the Casablanca bloc, in an address read by Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria's Prime Minister at the time:

> Some of us have suggested that African unity should be achieved by political fusion of the different states in Africa; some of us feel that African unity could be achieved by taking practical steps in economic, educational, scientific, and cultural cooperation and by trying first to get the Africans to understand themselves before embarking on the more complicated and more difficult arrangement

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[156] The union explains the defeat of the Casablanca bloc in spite of its political influence in the continent at the time.

of political union. My country stands for the practical approach to the unity of the continent.

The subsequent OAU Charter, in reflecting the position of the dominant bloc (the merger of the Brazzaville and the Monrovia groups), stipulated that Member States should pledge themselves to respect their inherited borders. In the spirit of the Charter, the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments at Cairo in 1964 made a 'Solemn Declaration' which in effect reified these boundaries. The Declaration sought to commit African states to 'respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence' (AHG: Res. 16, 1). This effectively put paid to suggestions for the readjustment of these boundaries.

Over the course of the decades since 1963, the OAU became regarded by many commentators as a waste of time as it failed in its principal objectives.[157] Indeed, African political leaders themselves acknowledged the inability of the organisation to meet its lofty objectives and began the process of its transformation which culminated in the founding of the African Union (AU) in 2002 with re-oriented and 'achievable' objectives. In keeping with the spirit of its predecessor, the AU chose to adopt the 'Solemn Declaration' of 1964 as its mantra on boundaries (AU, Constitutive Act, 2002). Indeed, the AU went a step further than its predecessor by establishing a standing programme on borders known as the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) under the direct supervision of the African Union Commission. This approach of the AU underscores the crucial importance of boundaries to the issues of 'peace, security, progress and integration' in the continent. Indeed, in the Constitutive Act establishing the AU, high up in the Union's objective is the defence of 'the

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[157] With the exception of the struggle for emancipation where it recorded 100% success, the OAU failed to achieve any significant success on almost every other score.

sovereignty, **territorial integrity** and independence of its Member States' (emphasis added) (AU, Constitutive Act, 2002). Furthermore, the Act prescribes that the Union shall function in accordance with the following principles:

(a) Sovereign equality and interdependence among Member States of the Union;

(b) **Respect of borders existing on achievement of independence** (emphasis added). (Source: AU, Constitutive Act, 2002).

Where the OAU failed in transforming the inherited boundaries to points of collaboration and cooperation between states, the AU seeks boundaries that connect between neighbours and regards these as the basic building blocks of effective Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that are considered as crucial to the integration project of the Union (AU, 2007). The Programme hinges on the principle of the respect of the borders existing on the attainment of national independence (in other words, the inherited colonial boundaries) as enshrined in the OAU Charter, the 'Solemn Declaration' of 1964 and the Constitutive Act of the AU. The principles of negotiated settlement of border disputes as well as the shared commitment to delimit and demarcate inter-state boundaries as the basis for peace and security are also crucial foundations of the AU Border Programme.

One of the major objectives of the AUBP is the task of demarcating every un-demarcated boundary in Africa by the year 2012 (AU, 2007). The argument being that realizing this objective will reduce boundary-related conflicts in the continent as un-demarcation breeds ambiguity which could then engender conflict between neighbours over territorial extent. The details of the Union's stance on boundary demarcation are presented below with added emphasis:

> (i) The delimitation and demarcation of boundaries depend primarily on the sovereign decision of the States. They (**the states**) must take the necessary steps to **facilitate** the process of **delimitation and demarcation** of African borders, including maritime boundaries,

where such an exercise has not yet taken place, by respecting, **as much as possible, the time-limit** set in the Solemn Declaration on the Conference on Security Stabilisation Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA). **We encourage the States** to **undertake and pursue** bilateral negotiations on all problems relating to the delimitation and demarcation of their borders, including those pertaining to the rights of the affected populations, with a view to finding appropriate solutions to these problems (emphasis added);

(ii) The Regional Economic Communities and the African Union should assist the States in mobilising the necessary resources and expertise, including by facilitating exchange of experiences and promoting inexpensive border delimitation and demarcation practices;

(iii) The Commission of the African Union should conduct a comprehensive inventory of the state of African boundaries and coordinate the efforts of the Regional Economic Communities, and launch a large-scale initiative aimed at sensitising the international community on the need to mobilise the required resources and any other necessary support. On their part, the former colonial powers should submit all information in their possession regarding the delimitation and demarcation of African borders. (Source: AU, 2007).

The Border Programme was considered expedient (by the Union) in the continent by the need to address the following:

1. The persistence of border delimitation and demarcation issues as it is estimated that only about a quarter of boundary lines in Africa have been demarcated creating 'undefined zones' and ambiguous borders with critical implications for sovereignty and peace and security;

2. Growing cross-border criminal activities;

3. Deepen the gains of the RECs and other numerous large scale cooperative initiatives; and

4. Facilitate the development of cross-border integration dynamics sustained by local stakeholders. (Source: AU, 2007).

Interstate relations in post-independence Africa have been conditioned by the OAU Resolution of 1964 and the provisions of the Constitutive Act of the AU (2002) which offered the Westphalian model of territorial sovereignty based on the inherited colonial boundaries as the basis of international recognition and thus,

the essence of interstate relations in the continent. There are obvious (ab) use and tensions with this stance, which have implications for regional integration initiatives as well as interstate cooperation and collaboration. The next section locates the official discourse between Nigeria and Benin with respect to their shared boundary (border-partitioned Yoruba area) within the context of the OAU resolution. It presents the interactions between these two states in a chronological order stressing points of cooperation as well as those of tension in their interrelationship.

6.3 The Nigeria – Benin Boundary: Official Discourse

Having established the rationale for the maintenance and subsequent reification of the ex-colonial boundaries in Africa, this section considers the specific discourse of the Nigeria-Benin relations highlighting the problems with their shared boundary in the context of tensions arising from the dissonance between the formal (statist) perspective and the (ab)use of this boundary by the cultural group it partitioned.[158] On the other hand, the section draws attention to the issues of cooperation and integration between these states in spite of the tensions arising from the dissonance in perspectives. As highlighted in chapter 2, there are two distinct perceptions relating to the boundary between these two states, reflecting the conflict between official policy and the realities of the borderland people. The implication of this is largely that official policies, mainly insensitive to the situation of the borderland people are always undermined by the people, whose daily lives are constrained and hampered by these policies.

This section therefore begins by tracing the pattern of interaction between the two independent states as territorial sovereigns within the context of the OAU

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[158]The partition and its implications have been analysed in considerable details in the previous chapter.

declaration of 1964; highlighting points of interests such as instances of border clashes, issues of border demarcation and border closures. It also draws attention to the manner in which the states handle cross-border ethnic (cultural) interactions (and related cross-border activities) as well as formal interstate relations, including economic cooperation as well as the expulsions of 'illegal' immigrants from Nigeria in the 1980s.

Nwokedi (1991) has identified three distinct phases in the formal inter-state discourse between these two states indicating the direction and character of the relationship. These phases are identified as: the challenge of independence characterised by the tension between France's neo-colonial interest and Nigeria's anti-imperialist stance in the continent. The second phase was the normalisation and consolidation era largely between the 1970s and the 1980s. This phase was characterised by the growth of bilateralism and multilateralism underpinned by the growing realisation of cooperative and interdependent relationship. The final phase began from the 1990s to the present; it is characterised by what has been described as 'co-prosperity' and 'co-security' relations, signifying the acknowledgement of the ever growing need for collaboration and cooperation between the two neighbouring states (Nwokedi, 1991).

6.31 Formal Interstate Relations: the First Phase

Nigeria - Benin relations began shortly after the attainment of independence by the two states in 1960. It began and was nurtured within the milieu of France's neo-colonial enterprise in Africa as well as the simultaneous, but contending Nigeria foreign policy which sought (seeks) to make Africa its centrepiece. Given the strength of France's neo-colonial aspirations and influence over its former colonies, Nigeria's relationship with Francophone (West) Africa

was bound to be problematic. By 1962, barely two years after independence, a Community of former French colonies had developed to include thirteen of the twenty four independent states at the time. Benin was a prominent member of this Community, having provided the core of the French West African civil service (Staniland, 1987).[159] Furthermore, given that the two countries initially belonged to different blocs, as well as contrasting colonial heritages (languages, monetary systems, official cultures and judicial systems), one can safely conclude that the relationship between these two states began on a tentative note. Indeed this view has been supported by some commentators on interstate relations in the continent (Ojo, 1980; Nwokedi, 1991; Omede, 2006).

It is necessary at this point to examine the 'French connection' in post-colonial Africa as it has remained a crucial and recurrent factor in contemporary interstate relations in the continent. In the late 1950s, the French President, Charles de Gaulle initiated and actively promoted the French 'policy of grandeur', which sought the resurgence of the prestige of the French state and of French capitalism (Luckham, 1982). France withdrew from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) integrated military command structure in 1967 following what de Gaulle perceived as its subordination by both the United States and Great Britain (Kaplan, 2004; Michel, 2007). Having lost national esteem by its treatment in NATO, as well as the need to resurrect the greatness of the French state, France turned to the only place on earth where its hegemony would be unchallengeable, and where it felt it had strategic interest for the restoration of its national esteem.

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[159] Dahomey, as Benin was known in colonial times (and early independence years) was regarded as the 'Latin Quarter' of the French West African Federation owing to the large number of Dahomeans engaged in the services of the French colonial administration throughout the length and breadth of the Federation.

Thus, Africa came under the effective sphere of influence of France even on the threshold of national independence.

The policy of grandeur was summarised by de Gaulle in these words: 'France, because she can, because everyone wants her to do so, because she is France, must carry out in the eyes of the World a truly global policy' (Le Monde, 1964 in Luckham, 1982: 75). This *truly* global policy was not more than a neo-colonial project, which sought to continue the subordination of its former colonies, in the main, and the rest of Africa generally to French control and exploitation. The French African connection is not limited to the economy, but it also encompasses the military and regime maintenance and change. Indeed, 'French militarism', for a long time, was the most visible part of the French neo-colonial project in the continent. France has been actively engaged in military intervention in Africa (more than any other foreign power). Between 1962 and 1995, France intervened militarily nineteen times[160] in the domestic affairs of members of the *Communaute*[161] (the Francophone Community of states in Africa) (Gregory, 2000: 437). A critical component of Francophonic-French military alliance remains war games or military manoeuvres. The most practical objective of the military manoeuvres has been to act as a deterrent force to potentially belligerent non-alliance countries by demonstrating French military capabilities,

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[160] French military policy has since changed in Africa, following the Rwandan crisis and the implication of the French military in the genocide. Furthermore, the exclusivity of France in Francophone Africa had been ended with the encroachment of the United States, Britain and Anglophone African states (especially Nigeria and South Africa) which necessitated a re-examination and refocusing of French military policy in the continent (See Gregory, 2000).

[161] A critical component of Francophonic-French military alliance remains war games or military manoeuvres. The most practical objective of the military manoeuvres has been to act as a deterrent force to potentially belligerent non-alliance countries by demonstrating French military capabilities, which are highly mobilisable given the ubiquitous presence of French military bases and installation all over Africa.

which are highly mobilisable given the ubiquitous presence of French military bases and installation all over Africa.

In the pursuit of its policy of grandeur, France has had to contend with the OAU and especially Nigeria. Nigeria was considered by de Gaulle as the most important opposition to the actualisation of the French policy in Africa (Bach, 1980). Thus, when the Nigerian Civil War provided an opportunity to destabilise the country, France actively supported the break-away Republic of Biafra and influenced its Francophone satellites to support the secessionist republic. Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Gabon were some of the Francophone countries which supported Biafra's secession from Nigeria.

The Nigerian threat to the French project in Africa stemmed from its size and resources as well as its perception of itself as the light-bearer for African emancipation from all forms of foreign domination. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, is Nigeria's aspiration to become the industrial heartbeat of Africa. This aspiration, Ojo (1980: 573) claimed was 'plausibly realisable only within a West African sub-regional integration scheme that would be implemented at a pace which would not outstrip Nigeria's ability to develop the productive capacity needed to make it the centre of growth'.

Right from the beginning of independent statehood, Nigeria sought actively to carve a niche for itself in Africa, but more especially in the West African sub-region. The threat of Nigeria's economic hegemony in the sub-region, it has been claimed, was one of Nkrumah's major driving forces for a pan-African government (Ojo, 1980: 573). To the Francophone bloc, Nigeria's economic ambition which sought to exploit the West African sub-regional integration was considered with trepidation. To France and its ambitions in Africa, Nigeria was

(is) the major stumbling block and France guided its African satellites to oppose and undermine Nigeria's ambition at every turn. For instance, the earlier initiatives, sponsored by Nigeria, towards the creation of a common market in West Africa were frustrated at every turn by the Francophone elements of the sub-region, especially with the French sponsorship of the *Communaute Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO).

It was within such inauspicious milieu that Nigeria-Benin relations began. The highlights of this period are presented below:

The decade of independence posed the challenge of domestic stabilisation for both countries. For Benin, Nwokedi (1991) argued that it would have been practically impossible for this country to embark on any meaningful foreign policy given the spate of instability it witnessed during this decade. He pointed out that Benin 'witnessed the adoption of twelve constitutions, the emergence of ten successive presidents and an equal number of successful and unsuccessful military coups' (Nwokedi, 1991: 36). Such levels of political instability will undoubtedly hamper any meaningful foreign policy. Nigeria, to a certain degree, also experienced its fair share of the 'African malaise' of political instability and military coups. The culmination of these was the civil war between 1967 and 1970, which has significant implications for the relationship between these countries.

A few months after independence, Nigeria concluded treaty agreements with Benin within the context of its foreign policy of 'emphasising and building upon cultural links which already exist' (Nigerian House of Representative Debates, 1960 in Oyebode, 1994: 246). These treaties included the Convention on Common Frontier Posts with Dahomey as well as the Visa Abolition Agreement. A short while later in 1961, relations with Benin were put in jeopardy following

the diplomatic face-off between Nigeria and France occasioned by France's atomic weapon test in the Sahara, in spite of opposition led by the independent African states. Nigeria severed diplomatic relations with France and further banned French aircrafts and ships from its territories (Phillips, 1964: 125). Given the overwhelming influence of France in its former colonies, which depended on French technical and other forms of support, the potential impact of the ban on Benin was significant. As it was in the process of constructing the Cotonou harbour at this time and depended on the Lagos port for the offloading of the equipment needed (mainly French originated), Benin was to suffer untold hardship. However, following appeals from Niger, Chad and Benin, Nigeria lifted the ban on French vessels a few weeks later (Nwokedi, 1991: 36).[162]

In 1962, Nigeria and Benin signed a joint agreement establishing a common custom tariff along their shared boundaries. The agreement was aimed at creating a common market for the two countries in order to speed up the integration of the sub-region. In the same year, the attempt to form the Benin Union (at the prompting of Nigeria and Benin in order to expand the gains of their earlier bilateral agreement) comprising of Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana failed (West Africa, in Nwokedi, 1991). The failure may not be unconnected with the tension between Ghana and Togo over Ewe irredentism. In the course of the same year, the Yoruba party - Action Group – while appealing to Yoruba solidarity and irredentism proposed to the Nigerian Parliament that the western boundary of the country be redrawn to include the Yoruba in Benin Republic (Bach, 1978: 81-92). However, the proposal did not enjoy the support of the majority of the Parliament

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[162] Chad and Niger are landlocked states and have always depended on Benin for the transportation of their import and export commodities, hence their concern with the Nigerian ban on French vessels.

as readjusting the boundary as proposed would shift the ethnic balance (population) in favour of the Yoruba in the ethnic dominated Nigerian party politics of the time.

In the midst of the instability leading to the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, Benin closed its diplomatic post in Lagos along with those in Kinshasa and Accra in what its authorities termed a diplomatic reorganisation (Nwokedi, 1991: 37). However, commentators of African affairs found this move extremely inexplicable given the significance of Nigeria to Benin, as it should be a keen watcher of unfolding events in the former which will undoubtedly impact on the economy of the latter (Nwokedi, 1991: 37).

As the instability in Nigeria led ominously towards a total outbreak of war, Benin in the spirit of African brotherhood, sought to mediate through its foreign affairs minister in the conflict, but to no avail.

The conduct of the civil war will later strain the relationship between the two countries as Nigeria accused Benin of complicity with France[163] over the latter's support for the breakaway Biafra Republic. The allegation stemmed from the permission Benin granted to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to use its territory as a transit point for the airlifting of relief materials to Biafra.[164] Besides the weakening of Nigeria's economic embargo on Biafra, Nigeria accused the ICRC of clandestinely shipping weapons and other logistic

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[163] The press suggested that France, together with Switzerland, applied pressure on Benin to allow the use of its territory. Indeed, it was further suggested that the Swiss Government granted aid worth £2.1m to Benin on the same day that the transit agreement was signed between Benin and the ICRC (Nwokedi, 1991: 39).
[164] Nigeria's most potent weapon of war against Biafra was a food blockade which ultimately forced the secessionist republic to surrender after thirty months of confrontation.

supports to Biafra under the cover of humanitarianism (Kirk-Greene, 1971: 78). [165]

This phase of the interstate relations between Nigeria and Benin initiated formal relations as sovereign entities following independence. The challenge of French neo-colonial aspirations aided the creation of the 'official' boundary discourse as Benin was a key actor in the emerging French *Communaute* in post-colonial West Africa. The tension generated by the clash of ambitions between Nigeria and France affected relations between Nigeria and Benin, which culminated in the Nigeria's allegation that France used Benin as a launching pad to airlift weapons to the breakaway Biafra Republic under the guise of humanitarian intervention. However, this situation was to change during the second phase of their inter-relationship following the end of the Nigerian Civil War and the growing dependence of the Benin economy on Nigeria.

6.32 The Second Phase of Interstate Relations

The second phase of the interstate relationship between Nigeria and Benin began following the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, when driven by the task of revamping its war-ravaged economy, Nigeria initiated rapprochement with Benin. This was made possible following the overthrow of the Beninese president who had permitted the ICRC the use of Cotonou port as a transit point during the civil war as well as Nigeria's acknowledgement of the critical importance of Benin to its security and stability.[166] Subsequently, in June 1970, Benin's three-

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[165] The airlift of humanitarian materials to Biafra was later halted by Nigeria over disagreement with the ICRC on the issues of cargo verification and night flights.

[166] Following the civil war, Nigeria realised the critical importance of friendly neighbours; had any of Nigeria's neighbours actively subverted its war efforts, the war may have dragged on for much longer or the outcome may indeed be different. Furthermore, the Nigerian authorities acknowledged the strategic importance of Benin to Nigeria's economic progress being the 'gateway' between it and the rest of the West African sub-region.

man Presidential Council made an official visit to Nigeria during which commitment to the re-opening of the Beninese embassy closed in 1967 was made. In August of the same year, Nigeria's head of state reciprocated the visit and a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed; heralding the beginning of particularly mutually beneficial and buoyant interstate relations. The renewed relationship thrived on the threat of the CEAO; Nigeria courted Benin and concluded bilateral economic and military agreements, which removed Benin from the CEAO orbit and effectively laid the foundation (together with Togo) for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Aluko, 1976).[167] This marked a landmark achievement in intra-African relations in spite of the foreboding presence of an imperial hegemon.[168]

In 1971, further agreements were reached in the areas of economic harmonisation leading to the trade treaty concluded the same year. This treaty spurred the growth of trade relations between the countries. However, the volume of trade is difficult to quantify as the bulk of exchanges across their international boundary is mostly unrecorded (through smuggling).

The rapprochement was nurtured in the midst of growing French influence, which made the success recorded all the more significant. Early in the 1970s, the French President, Pompidou, visited Francophone West Africa and charged the Francophone countries to harmonize efforts to counterbalance Nigeria's weight, which led to the formation of the CEAO (Nwokedi, 1991). As highlighted above,

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[167] Benin has always been of strategic importance to Nigeria. In its bid to weaken the emerging CEAO, Nigeria needed to separate Benin from the Union and included it in its sphere of influence which will eventually force the landlocked Francophone states of Niger, and Chad (dependent on the port of Benin) to transfer allegiance from the CEAO to the Nigeria-led ECOWAS in formation.

[168] In spite of this feat, relations across this boundary have been disappointingly limited. Had these states built on the gains of the 1970s, that sector of West Africa would have blazed the trail in regional integration, more so with a shared culture group which would have further bridged the gap created by colonial rule.

Nigeria was able to deal with the CEAO threat through what has been described as 'spraying diplomacy'.[169]

Following the Nigeria's *cement armada* of 1975, when its main ports were clogged with countless ships with hardened cement owing to congestion emanating from excessive government order of cement for the bourgeoning construction industry, Nigeria sought the assistance of Benin to divert Nigeria bound ships to the Cotonou port. Subsequently, Benin sought unsuccessfully to make this transit arrangement permanent by seeking for a permanent percentage of Nigeria's import trade routed through its port[170] (Nwokedi, 1991: 41).

In July 1976, Nigeria and Benin signed a technical cooperation agreement under which joint venture projects were established. The main joint projects under this agreement are the Save Sugar Company and the Onigbolo Cement Company both sited in Benin Republic (Oyebode, 1994: 243). Nigeria also granted an interest-free loan of over One Million Pounds (£1m) to Benin for the reconstruction of the Porto-Novo – Idi-Iroko road (Aluko, 1981: 119).

In 1978, Nigeria introduced its first in a series of import prohibition lists, leading to significant reduction in the volume of recorded trade between the two countries. Beginning from the mid-1970s, motivated by its National Development Plan (hinged on import-substitution and industrialisation), Nigeria's main trade policy instrument shifted from tariffs to import restriction and prohibition (Oyejide, et al, 2005). From 1978 when the first import prohibition list was published till date, Nigeria has relied on import control as a policy instrument. The impact of this on the economy of Benin has been significant prompting that

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[169] Spraying diplomacy is how Aluko (1976) described Nigeria's liberal gifts of money and other assistances to Benin, which he claimed bought over the Beninese authorities to the side of Nigeria.
[170] Nigeria's Third National Development Plan included the revamping and expansion of six ports which have been able to handle all of Nigeria's import export transaction leading to the end of the transit arrangement with Benin.

country's ambassador to Nigeria to raise issues regarding the prohibition. The ambassador issued a statement complaining about the ban on importation, especially of textiles claiming 'it has dealt a blow on the economy of the Republic of Benin' and 'constitute a violation of the memorandum of understanding between the two countries regarding trade liberalisation' (Guardian, 20.11.2003: 3).

The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Person, the Right of Residence and Establishment was ratified in 1979 by Member States. This Protocol has significant implications for the role of boundaries in interstate relations and cooperation. However, as we have seen above and we shall further elaborate shortly, Nigeria flouts the provisions of this protocol almost at will following alleged Benin complacency in controlling cross-border crimes (especially smuggling) from its side of the border. Similarly, Benin does not rate highly on the enforcement of the Protocol as its officials especially at the border crossings constitute a hindrance to free movement of people and goods.[171]

The joint border commission established in the 1960s was reactivated in 1981 to cater for the growing rate of cross-border crimes as well as prevent and mediate in territorial disputes.

Consequent upon the ever growing spate of smuggling and related cross-border crimes, the Nigerian authorities closed its border with Benin twice between 1984 and 1986. As the Nigerian import prohibition lists of 1978 continued to increase in the number of items included, making these items much sought after in Nigeria as supply dwindled, it led to a simultaneous increase in smuggling as the

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[171] Observation at the border crossings and field work interview; over 75% of respondents claim that (even with the presentation of valid travel documents), they are still subjected to extortion and harassment by officials of border agencies. This researcher had a first hand experience of the harrowing experience of cross-border travels in the region.

payoffs became very significant. On the other hand, certain agricultural as well as petroleum products are being smuggled out of Nigeria to Benin across their porous interstate boundary. Indeed, during the early 1980s, Benin was exporting smuggled Nigerian cocoa as its own product prompting its classification (statistically) as a cocoa exporting country, even though it produced a very small quantity of the product (Meagher, 1997).

Between 1983 and 1984, Nigeria expelled millions of illegal immigrants, the bulk of whom were from the West African sub-regional countries of Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroun. Of these people, it is only Ghanaians who do not have close ethnic affinity with ethnic groups in Nigeria and hence the bulk of the repatriated aliens were from Ghana. A small fraction of Beninese nationals were expelled, however, the bulk of these belong to the non-Yoruba and non-Ajah groups as it was impossible to distinguish between Nigerian and Beninese Yoruba.[172] Again, owing to the multiple networks of interactions, which predated and outlasted colonial rule, differentiation between these groups is simply impossible. During the enforcement of the expulsion order in Nigeria, the Beninese Yoruba simply got integrated into the households of their Nigerian Yoruba kith as has always been the practice.[173] Indeed for those Beninese nationals who were expelled, they simply trekked back into Nigeria and resumed their livelihood as though there was never an interruption.[174]

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[172]Thoug, some immigration officials interviewed claimed that there is a slight dialectical difference between the Yoruba dialects of these groups evidence from the field suggests no such difference, especially for the borderland Yoruba.

[173] Interview with the Balogun of Ketu, Lagos (15.11.2008). This view was corroborated in interviews at various locations on both sides of the boundary.

[174] Field research interview at Ijofin, a Nigerian border town (17.10.2008). The present *Onisakete* of Sakete (a major Beninese Yoruba town) was invited to become King while living in Nigeria during and beyond the expulsion order (Interview with the *Onisakete* at the Palace in Sakete - 29.10.2008)

In spite of the border closures and the forceful expulsion of illegal aliens in the early 1980s, Nigeria was able to conclude the quadripartite extradition treaty with Benin, Togo and Ghana in 1984 (West Africa in Nwokedi, 1991: 45). This treaty was aimed at securing Nigeria's border against fleeing fugitives as well as to ensure their repatriation should they succeed in escaping border surveillance and cross the border to any of these countries.

As every effort to contain the spate of border crimes continued to fail and Nigeria continued to suffer the consequences of these activities, the Nigerian government established about one hundred additional border posts in 1986 to deal with this hydra-headed problem.

In 1988, a major international conference was jointly organised by the two countries to brainstorm on issues of cross-border cooperation and security. The conference was motivated by the acknowledgement that the border between these two countries remained both a potential source of conflict as well as of cooperation. A major fallout of the conference is seen in the agreement to relax border regulations by both countries later in that year to allow local cross-border cooperation on issues of immigration and security.

At the close of the decade in 1989, spurred by the need to eliminate ambiguity at its border, the Nigerian government began the re-survey of its boundary with Benin, which would then be followed by (re) demarcation. In that same year, Nigeria granted Benin emergency financial relief to assist in that country's economic crisis (Nwokedi, 1991).

The relationship between these countries for the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s was conducted within the context of West African integration (ECOWAS) as well as the growing economic downturn in Nigeria. Perhaps the

more significant of the two factors was the economy, which led to the breakdown of existing technical agreements owing to the inabilities of each party to meet the aspirations of the other. Benin had pinned its hope of economic revival on these agreements and in the face of the failure of Nigeria to meet these expectations, Benin began to gravitate towards the CEAO, which it had spurned in the 1970s (Oyebode, 1994).

Relationship between the two states began to blossom following the civil war in Nigeria in spite of the influence of France on Benin, along with the other Francophone West African states. The rapprochement came from the acknowledgement of mutual importance by the two states. Following its experience during the war, Nigeria realised the significance of friendly neighbours in the maintenance of its territorial integrity and sought vigorously to encourage cooperation with all its neighbours[175]. Similarly, the economy of Benin had grown to depend on the Nigerian market, hence cooperation and collaboration, especially in the area of trade and industrialisation were desirable to Benin.

However, these initiatives were to suffer owing to the contrasting perception of the boundary line by the border partitioned groups (the Yoruba for the purpose of this study), which manifested in the form of smuggling across the boundary. This development contributed to the official border discourses as it led to the adoption of different policies which reified the structuralist perception and treatment of the border by the state. As a reaction to the growing spate of smuggling and other illegal cross-border activities, the Nigerian government adopted import prohibition as a trade policy instrument which uses the border as a point of enforcement. Border closures and expulsion of 'illegal' immigrants were

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[175] The ICRC case was an eye opener to Nigeria's leaders.

other policies adopted by the Nigerian state, which use the border as sites of state power and control.

In summary, the border discourse during this phase of the interstate relations vacillated between the cooperative and the unfriendly, owing to various compelling factors. However, it is clear that the underlying desire of the two states during this period tended to be cooperative but mitigated by other factors. Hence, the final phase in this periodisation represents a period characterised by the deepening of interstate cooperation and collaboration given the growing interdependence between the two states.

6.33 The Third Phase of Interstate Relations

The third phase of the relationship between Nigeria and Benin, according to Nwokedi (1991) began from the 1990s to the present. It is a period characterised by the acknowledgement of growing interdependence both in terms of security and prosperity, the so called 'co-security' and 'co-prosperity' relations.

Inexplicably, data for the early part of this period are rare; however, the bulk of the commercial transactions between the two countries remained largely unrecorded as clandestine exchange continued across the border, even during periods of hostile state policies. Re-export activities remained the most important link in Benin-Nigeria trade relations, accounting for about 25% of customs revenue and 13% of Benin's total revenue (LARES-INRAM, 2004). These re-exportations to Nigeria are largely in officially prohibited products which are subject to high taxation when imported into Nigeria. A significant percentage of imported products to Benin are re-exported either officially or clandestinely. In the estimate of Benin's non-recorded trade, INSAE indicates that the overall values of re-export amounted to CFAF 93.3 billion on average over the 1995-

2003 period. It has been established that close to 51% of Benin's foreign trade is destined for clandestine re-export with other countries. Nigeria is the major destination for the bulk of Benin's clandestine re-exportation (World Bank: African Working Paper Series, 2007).

Benin hosted *La Francophonie* Summit in Cotonou in 1995. The major decision of the summit was a commitment by the Heads of State and Government to concentrate the operating agencies' activities on the five major cooperation programs of *La Francophonie*: freedom, democracy and development; culture and communications; knowledge and progress; economics and development; and *La Francophonie* in the world (Canada: Foreign Affairs and International Trade). The major implication of this was the reduction in official re-exportation to Nigeria following the commitment of Benin to the ideals of *La Francophonie*. Though, the exchange picked up between 1996 and 1999, however owing to the implementation of the West African Monetary Union (WAMU) Common External Tariff[176], re-export to Nigeria declined further by close to 30% of the total volume of re-exportation in 2000 (World Bank: African Working Paper Series, 2007).

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[176] The West African Monetary Union is based on the recognition of one monetary unit - the Franc of the African Financial Community (CFA F), which is issued by the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO). WAMU is composed of Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Table 2: Benin's direction of recorded imports (in millions of US Dollars)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
World	559.1	602.8	639.5	843.2	1,449.4	1,561.6	1,542.4	1,794.2
Africa *Of which*	97.4	99.6	98.5	213.5	191.0	152.6	210.2	263.9
Burkina Faso	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Cameroun	2.5	13.9	4.4	8.8	13.3	1.5	1.6	1.9
Cote d'Ivoire	24.6	26.8	29.4	88.3	47.3	33.8	36.7	44.5
Morocco	3.7	3.2	3.8	5.8	6.6	3.3	3.6	4.3
Niger	3.7	3.2	3.8	5.8	6.6	3.3	3.6	4.3
Nigeria	7.3	8.9	1.6	8.5	10.5	11.3	12.0	15.2
South Africa	1.7	3.8	16.5	4.4	0.0	18.9	20.5	24.9
Togo	0.9	4.1	5.7	47.2	54.3	40.9	44.4	53.8

Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics for 1996 to 2003

Table 3: Benin's direction of recorded exports (in millions of US Dollars)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
World	261.9	184.8	232.4	207.1	210.4	187.8	198.0	270.9
Africa *Of which*	183.7	137.9	179.4	163.0	134.6	133.1	142.7	231.1
Burkina Faso	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.5
Cote d'Ivoire	0.6	2.0	2.1	2.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5
Morocco	22.0	15.6	13.0	4.24.8	4.8	6.2	6.7	8.5
Niger	3.0	3.5	3.7	5.4	5.1	5.7	8.7	11.1
Nigeria	5.1	1.4	21.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
South Africa	8.2	1.6	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Togo	3.4	1.5	2.4	0.6	0.7	3.0	3.2	4.1

Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics for 1996 to 2003

Tables 2 and 3 present official record of recorded trades between Benin and its major trading partners. Relying of this data could be misleading as trades with Nigeria represent an insignificant position in the direction of trade to and from Benin. The real situation (including clandestine trade) is presented in Table 4 from studies conducted by the Cotonou-based independent non-governmental organisation *Laboratoire d'Analyse Regionale et d'Expertise Sociale* (LARES).

Table 4: Benin: Influence of Main Trade Partners, 1996-1999 (annual average over the period)

	Exports		Imports		Exports+Imports	
	Market share	Standardised weight	Market share	Standardised weight	Market share	Standardised weight
Developed countries						
France	3.15	1.77%	86.08	29.97%	89.22	19.21%
Italy	5.15	2.90%	10.20	3.55%	15.35	3.30%
Spain	4.23	2.38%	12.53	4.36%	16.75	3.61%
USA	0.58	0.33%	20.73	7.22%	21.31	4.59%
Developing countries						
China	2.51	1.41%	17.79	6.19%	20.29	4.37%
India	3.95	2.23%	7.37	2.56%	11.32	2.44%
Indonesia	9.49	5.35%	1.74	0.61%	11.24	2.42%
Thailand	9.25	5.21%	12.33	4.29%	21.57	4.64%
Morocco	31.45	17.73%	2.00	0.70%	33.45	7.20%
Nigeria	107.60	60.67%	116.44	40.54	224.04	48.23%
Total	177.35	100.00%	287.20	100.00%	464.55	100.00%

Source: Linjoum, 2007 (calculated from the IMF Direction of Trade Statistics and LARES).[177]

On the non-trade stage, interstate relations between Nigeria and Benin received wider coverage in the period beginning from the turn of the new century. By 2003, Nigeria was forced to close its borders with Benin owing to increasing levels of cross-border crimes, especially smuggling, cross-border banditry and human trafficking. This followed the lack of consensus and progress following the

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[177] The data on table 4 are combination of both recorded trade (from the IMF Direction of Trade) and un-recorded trade from *Laboratoire d'Analyse Regionale et d'Expertise Sociale (LARES)* and *Institut pour la Recherche d'Application des Methode de Developpement (IRAM)*

security summit between officials of the two countries earlier (BBC News, 09.08.2003). The immediate impact of the closure, that is trade restriction, was the spiralling costs of petroleum (smuggled from Nigeria), and the related spill over effects as well as port congestion at the Cotonou port in Benin (of products destined for the Nigerian market). The Beninese economy began to reel prompting a meeting between the leaders of the two states, which led to the signing of a memorandum committing them to cooperation on cross-border smuggling and insecurity (AfDB/OECD, 2008: 142). The border was re-opened a week after the closure, apparently following the commitment of Benin to tackling cross-border crimes emanating from within its territory.

In the same year (2003), Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana signed a treaty on a five hundred million dollar gas project (Bank Information Centre, 01.02.2003).

In 2005, Nigeria and Benin launched the Joint Border Security Patrol to jointly police their shared boundary and prevent cross-border criminal activities and promote legitimate trade exchanges. In the same year, they amicably resolved territorial disputes along the Okpara River when Nigeria agreed to cede thirteen villages to Benin, which also agreed to return three villages to Nigeria (CIA, 2005). During the course of that year, the two countries signed an agreement against human trafficking (Thisday Newspapers, 23.09.2005).

In a bid to strengthen cross-border cooperation in combating international crimes, Nigeria and Benin held a joint security meeting in 2006 where the challenges and benefits of an effective joint border patrol were highlighted. At this meeting, Nigeria, through its chief of police, committed to the provision of men and materials for the joint venture.

It is important to note that only the first thirty five kilometres of the land boundary between Nigeria and Benin from the sea was demarcated by 2007, which had been a source of ambiguity and tension between them. In 2007, Nigeria's boundary commissioner, Sadiq Diggi claimed that re-demarcation exercise had started and already cost Nigeria over four hundred and forty thousand United States Dollars (US$440,000) in compensation payment to Nigerian owners of properties on the borderline that were set for demolition (Live Journal, 11.02.2007). In the same year, Nigeria provided a seventy five megawatt power station to Benin.[178] Furthermore, Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana, guided by the need to fast track the integration of their economies, formed the Co-Prosperity Alliance Zone (COPAZ) at a summit in Abuja, Nigeria in 2007 (COPAZ, 2007)

6.4 Analysis of Findings

The trend of the border discourse between Nigeria and Benin from independence to date has constantly changed from cooperation and collaboration to friction and tension. In this pattern, the border has always been used as a point of state control and regulation, through border closures, strict customs control and boundary re-demarcation. These discourses reify state territoriality and simultaneously highlight the differentiating character of boundaries. However, these uses of the boundary fly in the face of the perception, and the uses to which the borderland people associate with the borderline.

The purpose of this section is to analyse the competing and contrasting discourses of the boundary in the post-colonial state, based on the preceding periodisation of the relationship between Nigeria and Benin. Furthermore, the

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[178] Field work interview: Sakete, 28.10.2008

section also makes explicit reference to the sub-research question on the contrasting perception, and the use, of boundaries by both the state and the borderland groups.

Interstate relations began on a cooperative note with the two states concluding mutually beneficial treaties including the establishment of a customs union, a common frontier post, and the abolition of visa requirement for their nationals. This move hinged on a foreign policy which emphasised and built 'upon cultural links which already exist' (Nigerian House of Representatives Debates, 1960, in Oyebode, 1994: 246). Furthermore, the exigency of geographic proximity promoted mutually beneficial relations. However, French neo-colonial ambitions in the continent, which clashed with Nigeria's foreign policy objectives, were to intermittently affect the good-neighbourly relations, by promoting tension or causing disaffection between Nigeria and Benin. France nearly caused a diplomatic row between Nigeria and Benin (and the other Nigeria's Francophone neighbours) over the atomic test in the Sahara in 1961. Relations reached a frosty climax following the allegation by Nigeria that Benin was being used by France as a transit point for the airlifting of arms to Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War.

Following the end of the civil war in Nigeria, rapprochements were reached, initiated by Nigeria's appreciation of good and friendly neighbours owing to the experience of the war. Cameroun was pivotal in the food blockade adopted against Biafra; had Cameroun not supported Nigeria, the war would have dragged on and the outcome may be different (Konings, 2005: 286). Hence, Nigeria began to cultivate cooperative relationship with its neighbours. This period marked an especially cordial relationship between Nigeria and Benin as Benin also needed Nigeria's economic and financial aid.

If the early period of cooperation between Nigeria and Benin was influenced by the 'French connection', relations from the 1970s have been largely conditioned by the competing and contrasting perception of the borderland people who consider the boundary as points of economic opportunity. Furthermore, owing to the strength of ethnic affinity in this region, the border-partitioned groups continue to treat the boundary as merely administrative in the conduct of their social and cultural activities, which necessarily transcend the borderline. As recorded by Flynn (1997), the Yoruba astride this boundary have become embedded with the border, exploiting the arbitrage opportunities of living at the edge of the nation-state. The implication of this for the official border discourse is significant; as the state was forced to adopt import prohibition strategies, borderland people continue to circumvent the state by engaging in clandestine exchange of prohibited commodities, with the connivance of officials of the state. Contrasting perceptions also account for border closures and expulsion of 'illegal' immigrants. Indeed, as noted above, these policies of the state (import prohibition, strict border control, and expulsion of immigrants) have largely failed owing to the dissonance between official and unofficial discourses.

Official discourse between these states has been guided, in the main by the considerations of territorial integrity characterised by strong borders and border controls.[179] Owing to considerations of national interest, Nigeria's foreign policy towards Benin, though theoretically guided by the principle of 'good neighbourliness' has often vacillated between the cordial and the frosty as

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[179] There are countless border posts with equally countless border checks and controls along the Nigeria-Benin boundary indicative of strong state presence at these crossings. For instance, the sheer number of control points (with numerous armed security personnel of state agencies) at the Lagos (Nigeria) and Seme (Benin) border crossing may indeed mislead the observer to conclude that the two states are at some form of war. The air around the border crossing is tense and hostile as these personnel are seen harassing travellers.

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evidenced by the findings presented above. Though, the interactions between them have incorporated issues of *low politik*, strong borders have always been required and preferred by Nigeria in order to control immigration, trade and services across its most important boundary. Subsequently, it has employed the concept of the hard border characterised by very visible border policing strategies (customs, border police, immigrations, quarantine, and so on) quite often in its relations with Benin. In an interview with a Director at the Nigeria Boundaries Commission, this researcher's hypothesis about the structurally-induced attitude of state was confirmed. Official view of the borderland people is captured in the following words: 'people do not comply with rules…nomadic people disregard for boundaries…the people cross boundaries indiscriminately'.[180] The official perspective is couched in rules and legalism, not minding the implications of such on the people on whom these rules are exercised.

The border has been closed at intervals; several border posts have been established and multiplied over the years, manned by well trained and well armed agents of the states. All of these strategies point to the significance placed on the control of this border by the Nigerian state; the border with Benin represents Nigeria's gateway to the rest of the West African sub-region and therefore regarded as very important to the economy of the country being the major access to and from the market of the sub-region.

The significance of the border is further raised with the character of the Benin economy, which is essentially re-export in orientation, the bulk of which is destined for the Nigerian market (AfDB/OECD, 2008). And as Benin's tariff and tax regime is much lower than Nigeria's, much of the cross-border exchanges are

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[180] Telephone Interview with a Director at the Nigerian Boundaries Commission, Abuja, Nigeria (16.11.08)

conducted through the clandestine channel to avoid paying the rather heavy Nigerian taxes by importers of goods meant for the Nigerian market, but routed through Benin.[181] It can be argued that smuggling developed in this area owing to the imposition of the colonial boundary, which created opportunity for arbitrage. As colonial boundaries were inherited wholesale by African states at independence, reactions to the boundary remain unchanged. Indeed, post-colonial boundaries in Africa became further reinforced as states struggled to consolidate and keep disparate groups intact as well as to protect fledging economies. However, the harder boundaries became as walls, the more the people adjusted their strategies to circumvent the state. For instance, even when borders were closed by the Nigerian government at different times, significant illegitimate cross-border trades subsisted.[182]

Smuggling is by far the most serious cross-border activity and it has had severe repercussions for interstate relations between Nigeria and Benin. Indeed, it has been claimed that smuggling is deliberately encouraged by the government of Benin in order to benefit from the larger and more prosperous Nigerian market (FCO, 2009). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office claims that 'the other mainstay of the economy is reexport trade with neighbouring countries, particularly Nigeria. Much of this is unrecorded and some estimate that this trade represents over 30% of GDP. It is estimated that 75% of imports into Cotonou

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[181] The researcher gathered from anonymous Nigerian customs officers that Nigeria's import policy directly and indirectly encourages smuggling (telephone interviews, 3-18.06.09). The Nigerian Customs tariff for fully-built imported (used) motor vehicle ranges between 20 and 35% of the value of the vehicle including an extra 5% VAT. As the tax regime in Benin is considerably lower, vehicles meant for the Nigerian market are shipped to Benin and smuggled across the border into Nigeria.

[182] Border closures can hardly affect a borderland people whose culture area is partitioned by the same boundary. This is true for the Yoruba astride the Nigeria-Benin boundary as they circumvent the state and its agents at every turn. During border closures, they simply divert their routes from officially sanctioned border crossings and reverted to the pre-colonial networks of communication which have been preserved.

port are destined for Nigeria'. Indeed, the economy of Benin has suffered at such times when Nigeria has tightened its import rules partly to stop the thriving smuggling of goods from Benin. The government of Benin depends on customs receipts for about half of its income. Nigerian trade policy is critical to the health of the economy (FCO, 2009). The bulk of the motor-vehicles (and second hand clothing) on Nigerian roads are smuggled through Seme in Benin Republic, while a large proportion of the petroleum products consumed in Benin is likewise smuggled from Nigeria. These activities only benefit Benin at the expense of Nigeria and have led to disagreements between the countries at different times.

As the next sub-section shows, smuggling, though engendered by arbitrage opportunities, created by two distinct economic zones, could only be sustained by the connivance of state officials in charge of border control and regulation. These officials exploit their role as enforcers of body regulations for personal gains at the expense of the state.

6.5 'Unofficial Official' Discourse of the Border

As pointed out above, the Beninese economy is heavily dependent on trade relations with Nigeria, the bulk of which is conducted through unofficial networks. According to an estimate by the Cotonou-based *Laboratoire d'Analyse Regionale et d'Expertise Sociale* (Centre for Regional Analysis and Social Studies), at least 75% of the consumer goods unloaded at the port of Cotonou are bound for the Nigerian market (AfDB/OECD, 2008). However, owing to Nigeria's use of its shared border with Benin as an instrument of power and

control, Nigeria has had to close this border at different points as it deemed necessary.[183]

Though, the two states have demonstrated resolves to contain the menace of cross-border crimes at the bilateral level, these efforts have failed to yield any significant success owing to a combination of factors: systemic (official) corruption; Benin's dependence on the Nigerian market; contrasting perception of the borderland people as distinct from official perception; differential tax regimes, among others. Smuggling[184] and cross-border criminal activities have also been serious points of divergence between the two countries, prompting the establishment of the joint Nigeria - Benin border security patrol (mentioned above) to contain these problems, with Nigeria providing the bulk of the resources (men and material)[185]. However, according to a Beninese gendarmerie at the Benin end of the Ilara border post, the overbearing attitude (abuse of power and arrogance) of Nigerian officials of the joint security border patrol has rendered the venture ineffective and potentially counterproductive. The Nigerians are accused of 'invading' Beninese territories without authorisation or courtesy, to arrest and harass Beninese nationals.[186] According to this official, this attitude has alienated the Beninese part of the joint patrol making them disillusioned about any joint venture with Nigerian officials. This researcher was informed that just the week before his visit, the Nigeria Police segment of the joint border patrol 'invaded' a Beninese border village, without authorisation, right in the presence of Beninese security officials, shooting sporadically and arresting Beninese nationals at

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[183] Apart from the importance of the need to control what crosses its borders, Nigeria also uses the strategy of border closures to protect and nurture its domestic industrial capacity, which bears the brunt of massive re-exportation and smuggling from Benin

[184] The question of smuggling has been examined in detail in the previous chapter.

[185] Field work interview, 30.10.2008

[186] Field work interview, 31.10.2008

random. This could be considered as an act of war, but because of Nigeria's stature, it got away with such unprovoked invasion.[187]

Smuggling has become endemic and difficult (if not impossible) to control largely due to the culpability of officials of state agencies, whose responsibility it is to enforce border related regulations and prevent smuggling and other cross-border crimes. Granted, the border is porous, however, clandestine cross-border activities are sustained by official corruption, indicated by the manipulation of border regulations as well as the exploitation of their official position for personal economic gains. Customs, immigrations and police officers on either side of the boundary collude with smugglers and other cross-border criminals to evade the payment of official rates by collecting a fraction of the due rate into personal pockets.[188] The Nigerian President in 2004 expressed his exasperation with the culpability of government agents (customs services, especially) in the smuggling business in these words: 'we just have to beg them. I think other than begging, I don't know what else to do. If it is possible to run a nation without customs, I will do it' (Guardian, 15.01.2004: 7). The collection of unofficial toll has been extended to cover every traveller; traders and non-traders alike. Travelling between the two countries, especially at the Seme border crossing, has become an ordeal to tourists and other non-smuggling travellers. Ethnographic evidence collected during the field work supports this claim as the researcher witnessed

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[187] Field work interview, 31.10.2008

[188] This is one manifestation of growing state failure and the resultant 'self-help' strategies of the citizens (both private citizens and officials of the state) in Africa. Hence, this development is difficult to contain as the state continues to fail in its responsibilities to its citizens; the more the state fails, the more the dependence on 'self-help' strategies by the citizens.

extortion of travellers and those unwilling to 'cooperate' were subjected to undue delay and harassment.[189]

The efforts of the states to challenge this growing menace has largely failed as those who are charged with the responsibilities of maintaining the border and enforcing the rule are themselves actively engage in violating and (ab)using the border and the law.[190] Indeed, uniformed personnel of the state agencies at the border are regularly recruited by amateur smugglers to personally transport contraband from Benin to given addresses in Nigeria. The aim of this 'joint-venture' is to ensure the safe delivery of the contraband as security personnel are hardly stopped or questioned by fellow security officers on duty, in a warped sense of *espirit de corp*.[191]

Smuggling and related cross-border crimes would not have been a major issue had there existed no differential tax and tariff regimes across the boundary. As noted in chapter four, the authorities in Benin, right from early colonial times, have actively sought a lower tariff regime on imports, initially to attract more ships to its port at Cotonou. However, following the dependence of the Beninese economy on re-exportation into Nigeria, contemporary Benin policies not only encourage, by imposing significantly lower import duties and tariffs on consumer goods (meant for the Nigerian market), but actively support the practice. The maintenance of differential tax regimes, continues to support the re-export policy

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[189] As this researcher was unwilling to pay the unofficial tolls (at several points) either side of the boundary, he was detained and harassed at every point. At the immigration control on the Benin side, his international passport was confiscated owing to his uncompromising stance, which led to undue delay. His passport was eventually released after about three hours of delay.
[190] Field work interviews: 15-16.11.08.
[191] The researcher was informed by an anonymous respondent that he regularly uses such mercenaries to 'cross' used vehicles from Benin to Nigeria.

of Benin, as the imported products from Europe are then re-exported (smuggled in the main) to Nigeria. Finally, the existence of a continuous geo-cultural space making for a maximum (cultural) border region between these two countries has aided the inability of the states to effectively police the boundary and deal with the tensions emanating therefrom. As noted in the analysis of Flynn (1997) presented above, the borderland people have so internalised and domesticated the boundary that they have become intricately attached to it. They continue to exploit their location at the border and their knowledge of the many informal channels of communication to aid their clandestine cross-border activities. Apart from being active participants in the clandestine trade, they also mediate between non-local traders (smugglers) and customs officials by negotiating bribes between them for a fee (Flynn, 1997: 321). Furthermore, they also act as informants to smugglers by leading them to foot-tracks in order to beat customs patrol. On the other hand, they provide information on smuggling to customs officials, especially when the smugglers are uncooperative.

Granted, smuggling would still have been carried on had the Yoruba not been located across the boundary as the economic forces (of differential prices) would still stimulate smuggling, yet, it has been proved that their existence at this location has been critical for these activities, especially owing to their knowledge of centuries-old informal networks of communication, which are used to beat official traps, as well as the provision of safe-haven for cross-border criminals, who are usually *borderlanders* (Flynn, 1997).

In spite of all the efforts of the two states (mainly Nigeria-led), smuggling and other related cross-border activities will continue to be a serious source of friction between the two states as there are fundamental sources which mitigate

against these efforts. In the face of ineffectiveness of joint efforts, Nigeria has always resorted to the only effective tool it knows: border closures.[192] It is evident that this may still be resorted to in the near future in view of the apparent failure of policy to control the border.

Border closures as a state policy has crucial impacts on the Beninese economy which depends significantly on both official re-exportation as well as clandestine exchanges with Nigeria. Beginning from the civil war period, Nigeria has closed its border with Benin fairly regularly, especially during military rule (to prevent the escape of coup plotters) and during border clashes with Benin. Border closures have also been used as an instrument of state regulation and control, especially as a state policy either to protect the Nigerian economy or to compel the Beninese regime to tighten its end of the border. However, over the past couple of decades, beginning from the 1988 bilateral workshop on trans-border cooperation held in Nigeria, there has been a growing acknowledgement of the merits of cooperation rather than conflict between the two states.[193] They have both organised joint border patrols, to stem the scourge of trans-border criminal activities and to promote peaceful interchanges across the boundary. They are both cooperating in the areas of industrial development, power and other infrastructural developments. In 2006, the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo commissioned an electricity power distribution plant (installed by Nigeria) donated to the Beninese government in the Yoruba town of Sakete. This act, to the

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[192] Border closures would also remain ineffective as far as smuggling goes; major smugglers are not usually the 'crossers' of these contrabands, but politicians and big businessmen, who are always able to pressure the government to relax border controls. A popular Nigerian online newspaper recently reported that the wife of the Nigerian president and one of the most influential aides of the president are Nigeria's biggest smugglers. The friend became close to the president when he almost single-handedly bankrolled the president's campaign to become the governor of Katsina state earlier in his career (Saharareporters.com, 18.07.2009).

[193] The proceedings of the workshop have since been published; see Asiwaju and Igue (eds.), 1988

Sakete Yoruba population, is a reflection of the need for greater cooperation with the Nigerian government across the boundary.[194] As one elderly Yorubaman stated 'this whole separation into different spheres is hampering development; in truth, we now belong to different countries, but we are still the same people. We should reach across the boundary in cooperative relationship for progress'.[195]

It is important to note that efforts are being intensified at the official (interstate) level to build bridges across the colonial divides.[196] Beginning from independence, Nigeria's attitude has been conditioned by the need for regional integration which it considers as the basic vehicle for African development and emancipation from neo-colonial aspirations from outside the continent (Ojo, 1980: 573). In spite of external forces directed at counterbalancing Nigeria's political and economic weight, strategic considerations compelled bilateral and multilateral relations, even between historical (colonial) rivals. As we shall see in the next chapter, the integrative effects of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), though, blighted for a long period, has taken a positive turn with the commitment of member states to the spirit of the Community and intensified cross-border cooperation. The significant part of the cross-border cooperative efforts of the ECOWAS is the incorporation of the borderland people, a category which was previously neglected in the early years of the Community. As the next section shows, informal interactions, if not as important as those between the state in building bridges and enhancing cooperation across boundaries, surely enhance the role of the state in trans-border cooperation.

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[194] Interview with a group of commercial motorbike riders at a park in Sakete (04.11.08)
[195] Interview with Mr. Leon Ogoutolu (over 70 years old), Isale Eko, Sakete, 18.10.08)
[196] The most significant of these efforts is the ECOWAS initiative, which will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter.

As noted above, both Nigeria and Benin established the ministries of Integration and Cooperation in Africa (apart from the traditional Foreign Affairs Ministry). As the title denotes, the Ministry is committed to integration and cooperation at the governmental level between them and other neighbouring states as well as other African states; its objectives are hinged on the promotion of inter-African trade, assistance and cooperation. However, in a classical example of the lack of will and direction by the political leadership in Africa, this all important ministry has been scrapped following regime change in Nigeria. Dedicated agencies and institutions are needed to cultivate and promote interests in cooperation across international boundaries in Africa, reminiscent of the creation of dedicated agencies on colonial rule by the colonialists. Interstates relations between Nigeria and Benin are abysmally low; the level of (formal) trade relations is so low that it contributes to the domination of these economies by the West. Economic complimentality between these two states would have reduced the dependence on foreign consumer goods which aggravates their balance of trade deficit. Cultural and other linkages are not being encouraged by the present predominant statist disposition of these states, which inevitably treats international boundaries as delimiters of sovereign authorities and associated claims of exclusive authority and control. Their failure to enact policies which engender cooperation across boundaries have left the borderland people with no option but to resort to 'self-help' which largely exploits their location for economic advantage (Igue, 1992 and Flynn, 1997). This has led to frictions and tensions generated by the dissonance between the formal perspective and the informal perspective to the boundary line. The gap is also being exploited by corrupt state officials to enrich themselves at the expense of the state. In other words, the

inability of these states to adopt effective border policies has left them worse off in every ramification.

The reactions of the borderland people to state policies and the 'unofficial-official' discourses hinge on these borders as irritants and state officials as rogues, who must be beaten at their own game. They divert their routes to those age-old foot tracks, way off the official crossing points where they would not be bothered by rogue state officials and where they would not have to pay customs duties. Those who have taken to smuggling have had to become armed and violent to contend with the increasing sophistication of the customs agency and other border control agencies.[197] For those travellers who would not be bothered by the extortionist officials of state agencies, they simply prepare to bribe their way through the border as they are left with very little, inconvenient choices.[198]

The contrasting perception on the boundary between the state and the people has led to conflicts, first between agents of the state and the people, and secondly, between the two states. Ordinary travellers are harassed and exploited regularly at these border points;[199] goods are routinely seized (even legitimately acquired commodities); while those smugglers who are prepared to pay the 'price' enjoy a field day. There are frequent deadly confrontations between state officials and dare-devil smugglers who are prepared to die in order to ferry their contraband across the border.[200]

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[197] It was one such confrontation that led to the killing of a customs officer, which hindered the conduct of the field work at the Seme border crossing reported above.

[198] Long delays at border crossing, confiscation of possessions or worse still, being branded as smugglers or drug dealers.

[199] Crossing the border is not a task one would want to undertake regularly; it could be very dangerous and unpleasant. However, for the borderland people, owing to familiarity with several clandestine road networks, official hostilities could not seriously hamper movement. Even when the border was officially closed, people still transacted their daily business almost unhindered (interview report)

[200] The Lagos- Cotonou road is a smugglers' track; at each customs post are visible makeshift sheds where seized goods are stored. However, along this stretch are gun duels between customs officials

There are contending views across the Nigeria-Benin boundary. These competing perspectives have regularly created tensions and conflicts along the border. Official border policies cannot remain largely oblivious to the contending perspectives of the borderland people who regularly undermined the perceived hostile policies of the state. Though boundary is an essential part of state territoriality, it would remain exploited and abused as long as states perceive it essentially as a point of state control and regulation. As it shall be analysed in the next chapter, the failure of the state in Africa to benefit from regional integration led by the processes of contemporary globalisation is partly traceable to the fixation of the state with the structuralist orientation. This perspective is also responsible for the 'unofficial-official' discourse of the boundary, which exploits the dissonance between the formal state perspective and the informal (functional) perspective. For effective interstate relations, there is the need to harmonise these contending perspectives; cooperation and collaboration should be promoted and supported by visible state commitments. Inhibitions to cooperative interstate relations, especially those in the 'unofficial-official' realms should be eliminated with the active adoption the AU and ECOWAS integrative mechanisms.

6.6 Conclusion

In an attempt to answer the research question through the sub-research questions on the conflict potentials of the inherited colonial boundaries as well as contrasting perceptions of the boundary by the state and the borderland people, this chapter examines and analyses the use and abuse of the international boundary between Nigeria and Benin in the post-colonial era. The fate of these boundaries was left to the newly formed Organisation of African Unity in 1963,

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and smugglers. Due to the increasing dangers involved in customs duties, the Nigerian Customs Service has become an armed service.

whose decision to maintain them as the basis of ordering post-independence interstate relations, paradoxically has been lauded as the right choice. The contention here is that the other choices, namely revision or abolition of these boundaries would create more problems than they would solve. The successor African Union, while preserving the 'Solemn Resolution' of the OAU, has gone a step further by instituting a standing Programme on Borders and regular Ministerial conferences on the same subject under the direct auspices of its Commission. The AU Border Programme seeks to reduce the potential for territorially based conflicts by ensuring that all un-demarcated boundaries in the continent are demarcated by 2012. It also seeks to incorporate border communities into its initiatives on interstate cooperation and regional integration. The cumulative effect of the intervention of the OAU (AU) is the reduction of conflict through its sanctification of the inherited boundaries as the basis for ordering post-independence relations as well as its other various mechanisms of promoting trans-border cooperation between states.

The second section of this chapter examines the dynamics of formal interstate relations within the context of territorial sovereignty as well as the contending perspective of national citizens (the Yoruba) at the border who belong to the same cultural persuasion as the group across the boundary in the neighbouring country. Cross-border interaction between the states and the peoples as well as the contrasting official and informal perceptions about the boundary create tensions and potentiality for conflict. In spite of efforts aimed at reducing these tensions and conflicts, the chapter posits that various factors, especially the structurally-induced posturing of the states (as against the reality of a multiplicity of channels of interactions) create and promote these tensions.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

WEAK STATE AND RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES TO SOVEREIGN CONTROL OVER THE (YORUBA) BORDER

7.1   Introduction

This chapter contributes to the primary research question by providing answers to the sub-research question on the enduring quality of the Yoruba identity and solidarity in spite of forces to the contrary. This it does by analysing the preoccupation of Nigeria and Benin with securing their territorial integrity (at all cost), in spite of contemporary globalising influences. The chapter advances the position that this preoccupation is an indication of the weakness of the two states to effectively broadcast their power and enforce their rules, especially relating to the border as well as the several ways through which the Yoruba people have continued to negotiate the boundary.

State weakness is very significant in understanding not only the effectiveness of the broadcast of state authority across the length and breadth of the territory of the state, it is also important in understanding the actions of population at the fringe of the state to the exercice of state power. Indeed, there is an ongoing struggle over control of the periphery of the state in Africa. Bratton (1994: 231) argues that there is 'an unresolved political struggle' in Sub-Saharan Africa: 'on the one hand, political elites wish to extend the authority of the state over scattered population, most of whom live in rural areas; on the other hand, peasants remain determined to preserve a realm of authority within which to make decisions about their own lives'. This assertion captures succinctly, the conflicting and competing perceptions of the Nigeria – Benin boundary between the state the Yoruba astride the boundary, which underlies the 'struggle' over control of this boundary between the people and the

state.

This chapter advances the argument that state weakness is fundamentally responsible for the inability of Nigeria and Benin to effectively control their border with the implication that the border remains an object of power to the states, but to the people, it is both a point of opportunity as well as an irritant. Consequently, these states (especially Nigeria) adopt a strong border policy, thereby maintaining a facade of authority over territory. This border approach is contrary to the West African regional integration initiative which was ironically championed by the two countries in the 1970s.

Nigeria and Benin are fundamentally weak states. Therefore they are particularly protective of their sovereignty and consequently tend to resist forces which impinge on their territoriality (as defined by boundary), including regional integration. Simultaneously, state weakness also influences the way in which the borderland population, especially one which straddles the border negotiates it. Indeed, many of the practices of negotiation, such as smuggling and cross-border banditry, are consequences of state weakness or failure. State practices regarding the border and the borderland people as well as the reactions of the people to these practices are products of the weakness of the state. This chapter therefore begins by summarising state weakness in Africa with emphasis on Nigeria and Benin in explaining their resistance to globalising forces as well as the resilience of Yoruba group affinity.

7.2   State Weakness in Africa

Weak states are defined by Rice and Patrick (2008) as countries that lack the fundamental capacity and or the will to fulfil four sets of critical government responsibilities: 'fostering an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable

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economic growth; establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent and accountable political institutions; securing their populations from violent conflict and controlling territories; and meeting the basic needs of their population' (Rice and Patrick, 2008: 3). In other words, weak states are those that are unable to meet the basic requirements of statehood, thereby creating a structural gap, which is exploitable (exploited) by the powerful who feeds off the weakness of the state (Englebert and Tull, 2008). On its part, the World Bank's (n/d) description of weak states as extremely impoverished countries experiencing difficulties arising either from conflict or weak institutions and capacity' (Susan and Patrick, 2008: 5) . On the other hand Herbst (2000: 3) argues that states are only viable if they are able to control the territory defined by their borders. In the same vein, Rotberg (1991: 28) describes functional states as those 'constituted as repositories of power and authority within borders' and as 'performers and suppliers of the political goods'. In essence, a viable state is one which possesses the capability and the willingness to effectively fulfil the four set of critical governmental responsibilities as identified by Rice and Patrick.

State weakness is directly related to the inability of the state to project state power and authority over and across its territory. Herbst (2000: 11) argues that the fundamental problem facing state builders in Africa (across history) has been the difficulties associated with projecting state authority over inhospitable terrains characterised by low population density. Similarly, Illife (1995) contends about state formation in Africa that under-population was the chief obstacle as it is more expensive to extend central control over sparsely populated distant (fringe) locations. Low population densities engender a disconnection between capitals and the

hinterland.[201] Consequently, sub-Saharan Africa hosts the World`s largest concentration of weak and failed states (Rice and Patrick, 2008). Likewise, Weinstein and Vaishnav (2006) argue that African states constituted seventy five per cent of the World`s worst performing states, and that ninety percent of states struggling on many fronts were African. Englebert and Tull (2008: 108) also argue that nineteen of the twenty five countries ranked by the Centre for International Development and Conflict Management as being at the highest risk of instability in 2007 were African. They conclude that given these indices, the future of the state in Africa remains shrouded in conflict, despondency and instability.

State weakness, characterised by reduced capacity and weak institutions, creates the dysfunctional state. In many instances, the functions of a weak state are taken over by other organisations, for instance, civil society organisations, given the inability of the state to perform these functions. In the face of reducing state capacity, despondency and self help strategies simultaneously develop in the society (Adesina, 2007). The consequence is a state where government is far removed from the citizens and subsequently `might is right` and corruption becomes the order of the day. Mkandawire (2001) argues that the state has not only become dysfunctional in terms of engaging larger societal issues, it is also a real nuisance in the daily life of its citizens, evidenced by the withdrawal from state dominated economic and social spaces.

Englebert and Tull (2008: 108) contend that the consequences of state weakness are not limited to the national scope of the weak state, rather, in many cases, state weakness has triggered regional crises. For instance, the Liberian crisis spilled over to Sierra Leone and Cote d`Ivoire bearing wider consequences for the

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[201] A summary of why the African state is fundamentally weak is provided in the next sub-section.

other countries in the sub-region. For the purpose of this study, state weakness is examined within the context of the national state in relation to the capacity of the state to exert authority over its territories, as well as the institutions and agencies of the state deployed to this end.

Given the number and degree of weak and failed states in Africa, Mkandawire (2001) submits that the state, which was once the cornerstone of development, has become critical in the underdevelopment of the continent. Hence, the African state is variously described as 'the rentier state', 'the over-extended state', 'the parasitic state', 'the predatory state', 'the lame Leviathan', 'the patrimonial state', 'the prebendal state', 'the crony state', 'the kleptocratic state', 'the inverted state', etc (Mkandawire, 2001: 293).

7.21   Rationalising State Weakness in Africa

As noted above, Africa hosts the highest number of weak states in the world. The prognosis for many of these states remains bleak (Englebert and Tull, 2008). The purpose of this sub-section is to provide an analysis of the rationale behind the fundamental weakness of the state in the continent.

The first and perhaps the most significant explanation for state weakness in Africa is the patron-client basis of politics in the continent. Though clientelism has become so central to the state in contemporary Africa, its roots are located in pre-colonial African history where the organisation of society reified the 'big-man/small-boy', male/female linkages in society. For instance, the Yoruba traditional authority system of the *obaship*, though checked by the institution of *Oyomesi* (in the Old Oyo Empire), was essentially elitist and authoritarian. The *oba* dispensed with state patronage as he deemed fit, favouring the elite class and supporters over the rest of the society. Hence, there existed a pattern of client-patron relationship in pre-colonial

Yorubaland, sustained by the traditional authority system.

Colonial rule, with its dependence on existing traditional authority structure, not only maintained the patron-client linkages, it reified it. As noted in section 5.22 of chapter 5, colonialism enhanced the power and prestige of the Yoruba *obas*, and by extension, it sustained the already existing patron-client linkages. Furthermore, colonial rule was essentially exploitative and extractive; hence, it was less interested in the social welfare of the colonised territories. This led to the creation of what Ekeh (1975) refers to as the 'two publics' in Africa instead of one public. The two, made up of the 'primordial public' and the 'civic public' reflected the reactions of disempowered Africans to the extractive political economy of colonial rule. As argued by Ekeh, the primordial public developed as distinct from the civic public in order to extract from the civic public to meet the social and economic needs of the primordial groups being neglected by the authority. In his words, 'the primordial public is moral and operates on the same moral imperatives as the private realm' (Ekeh, 1975: 92). Primordial groups, ties and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public actions. The civic public, Ekeh describes as the public realm traditionally associated with the colonial administrative structures and has no moral linkage with the private realm. One of the most significant characteristics of African politics, both colonial and post-colonial is that individuals operate simultaneously in the primordial and the public realms, which leads to the obfuscation of these distinct realms. Individuals who worked or were actors in the civic public realm extracted from the state to feed the patron-client network. This remains true in post-independence Africa where the loyalty of the public officer is first and foremost to his primordial linkages rather than the state. It is also at the roots of the ethnic basis of political contestation in Africa as the control of the apparatuses of state guarantees

for the controlling group, continuous flow of patronage from the state. The relationship between ethnicity and politics is therefore mutually-reinforcing.

Patron-client linkages weaken state institution as the rule of law is subordinated to the dictate of sentiments and interests. Institutional frameworks of order and control lose out to clientelism and 'man-knows-man' becomes the underlying principle of societal organisation. Subsequently, the state becomes weak without the capacity and willingness to enforce rules, which leads to the fundamental failure of the state to broadcast its authority over its territory.

Herbst (2000: 126-130) identifies the disconnection between the nation and the state as another significant factor in understanding state weakness in Africa. The African state is an artificial collection of a various array of ethnic nationalities which were never bound together by the unifying chord of nationalism. Rather, colonial rule, which favoured 'divide and rule' based on customary law, differentiated ethnic groups and placed them in competition for state patronage with one another. As Smith (1986: 258) submits, 'the central difficulty of "nation building" in much of Africa and Asia is the lack of any shared historical mythology and memory on which state elite can set about "building" the nation'. The only shared history was the 'un-unifying' experience of colonial rule which reinforced ethnic identity, affiliation and differentiation. National identity therefore remains problematic and indeed has lower salience than ethnic identities as seen in the case of the Yoruba.

Another factor, related to colonialism, which has promoted the weakness of the state in contemporary Africa, is the disconnection between capitals and their hinterlands. The state was forged in Africa via colonial rule; the administration of the colonial state (many were so large and incongruous) deepened the pre-colonial disconnection between capitals and their hinterlands owing to inhospitable terrains

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and political and economic upheavals as highlighted in section 5.41 of chapter 5. The colonial infrastructure pattern which tended to link points of resource extraction with the capitals (usually located close to the seaports) further led to the neglect of the hinterlands, especially the periphery of their spheres of influence. Colonial authority therefore was never able to extend state power into these places, save for the feeble demands for taxation which were conveniently ignored (Herbst, 2000: 84). The problem of extension of power over territories continued into the postcolonial period. As Herbst argues, the newly independent states of Africa did not have to earn sovereignty, but had sovereignty ascribed following independence as pronounced by the UN General Assembly Resolution 2621. Subsequently, there exists no imperative to broadcast state power in order to secure territory; territory was a given, as is at the time of independence. The periphery of the state is therefore largely left to their own devises, which as we have seen, has been antithetical to state territoriality.

At independence, African states inherited not only territories as determined by the colonisers, but also the colonial structure of administration and governance. However, these institutions were structurally weak as their purpose during colonial rule was different from what they were expected to fulfill in the postcolonial period. As colonial rule was exploitative, these structures were necessarily exploitative, arbitrary and repressive. At independence therefore, the majority of African states plainly 'did not meet what had hitherto been the normally accepted criteria of statehood' (Clapham, 1996: 34). Consequently, client assuaging independent African leaders simply appropriated the defective structure of governance in the service of patron-client network, which as argued above, is the basis of much of the problem of the state in contemporary Africa.

Geography has been contributory to the weakness of the state in Africa. As

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noted above, sparse population and inhospitable territory have made the broadcasting of state power problematic across the history of the continent. For the postcolonial era, Herbst (2000: 146) identifies three broad categories of the state in Africa based on population distribution: states challenged by geography; hinterland countries; and countries with favourable geography.[202] According to Herbst, dispersed population densities create problems for the effective extension of state power over a large percentage of the population. Again, scattered pockets of high population densities heighten ethnic fragmentation and differentiation and create a more complex ethnic situation. Consequently, the state not only faces problem of extending central authority over outlying groups that are not only spatially distinct, but can also be mobilised around ethnic and cultural symbols that can and do compete with the state (Herbst: 146). Nigeria clearly satisfies the conditions of a country challenged by geography being quite large territorially and characterised by pockets of dispersed high population densities, with a variety of fragmented and competing ethnic groups. On the other hand, countries with favourable geography are those where the concentration of population is not far removed from the capital, making the extension of state power more easily achievable. Benin is one of such countries, being characterised by small territorial extent within relatively easy reach of the capital. It is further characterised by a concentric ring of population distribution, which corresponds to contemporary understanding of sovereignty (Herbst: 154).

While the classification of Nigeria as being challenged by geography is without debate, Benin's classification as characterised by favourable geography may lead to the conclusion that it can easily control its territory. However, the political

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[202] For the purpose of this study, only two of the three categories, namely: countries challenged by geography and countries with favourable geography are the focus as the two states under consideration fall into either one of these categories.

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history of that country shows that size may not matter and 'small may not necessarily be beautiful'. Benin has had its own share of authoritarian and corrupt regimes, especially under Marxist Kerekou when the country was almost run aground, unable to pay salaries of civil servants while the banking system collapsed (Allen, 1992).

7.22 Nigeria and Benin as Weak States

Nigeria and Benin are classified as weak states, albeit in varying degrees. The Index of Weak States in the Developing World (2008) rated Nigeria in the most vulnerable category, as number twenty eight in the World. The Index described Nigeria as bordering on failure given the performance of the Nigerian state in the four set of critical government responsibilities used in the classification scheme (Rice and Patrick, 2008). Benin is ranked number seventy one in the category of states that are essentially not weak, but states to watch being characterised by fragile democracies or authoritarian regimes.

The colonial legacy of bureaucratic authoritarianism, pervasive patron-client relations, and a complex ethnic dialectic of assimilation, fragmentation and competition has persisted in these countries (Berman, 1998). Patron-client networks have extended to the very core of the state, which account for the personalistic, materialistic and opportunistic character of politics. Sit-tightism, the reluctance of incumbent regime to allow democratic ideals by manipulating the rule or by outright stealing of votes, has been a common feature in Nigeria and Benin.[203] Again, political parties have remained ethnically based, accompanied by clientelism, violence and deepening corruption (Allen, 1992; Joseph, 1987; Osaghae, 1998). In elections, policies and manifestoes do not matter, but ethnicity. In the 1991 general

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[203] While the national conference of 1991 led to a transformation of the state and governance in Benin, albeit transient, Nigeria has remained democratically insolvent with the electoral system characterised by violence and corruption.

election in Benin, Allen (1992: 54) shows that Kerekou won 80% of his votes from his Northern part of the country, while Soglo won nearly no vote in this region. However, Soglo won over 80% of his votes from the south-eastern part where he originated from. Politics in Nigeria has always been ethnically based. Political parties were formed along ethnic fault-lines. Ethnicity has been so woven into the fabric of the state that the constitution provides for ethnic balancing in the disbursement of state patronage.

Owing to pervasive clientelism, or what Ekeh (1975) refers to as the competing primordial public, the civic public, characterised by the formal institutions and structures of the state has been rendered incapable and fundamentally weak in these states. Coupled with the inherent weakness of the colonially inherited structures and inhospitable geography, patron-client networks have remained antithetical to the state in Africa. In spite of the favourable geography of Benin as identified by Herbst (2000), the Beninese state continues to flounder economically and politically, it is unable to effectively broadcast central authority over the extent of its territory owing to its weak institutions and lack of will by its political elite. For Nigeria, it has been perennially classified as chronically weak and one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2009). Its ability to control its territory and border has always been challenged by ethnicity, corruption and weak institution.

State weakness is responsible for the dissonance between official state perception and actual treatment of the border, on the one hand, and the perception of the Yoruba people on the other. As the state is almost absent and / or unable (unwilling) to exert its authority in these fringe locations, the Borderland Yoruba people are compelled to devise means to meet their needs, which oft times, are at

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variance with the expectations of the state. This deepens the conflicting perceptions of the border between the state and the people. Furthermore, as weak state distances regimes from the people, it further removes the borderland (treated as the periphery of the nation-state) from the sphere of state control and influence, which also fosters reactions that are antithetical to the expectations of the state.

The next section examines the impact of globalisation on territorial sovereignty, setting the background for the following section which analyses the response of Nigeria and Benin to the sovereignty eroding characteristics of globalisation. The objective is to provide answer to the sub-research question on the impact of globalisation on the state and the Yoruba. This is necessary as globalisation has enforced a reconceptualisation of territoriality, elsewhere in the world, especially in Europe. Given the the preoccupation of the two states with the maintenance of territorial integrity, how have they responded to the border-eroding impact of globalisation on the one hand, and on the other, how have the Yoruba adapted globalising forces for the furtherance of the Yoruba project?

7.3   Globalisation and Territorial Boundaries

The character of the state as a 'territorially contained sovereign' has been greatly diminished and been reshaped since the 1980s and the 1990s like never before (Cohen, 2001; Schaeffer, 2003). The lowering of the Berlin Wall was instrumental in the changing roles of state territoriality. Before the Wall was dismantled, the world was divided into political blocs defined by the Cold War (Schaeffer, 2003: 9). Subsequently, the control of the state over the flow of persons, goods and services, ideas and capital over its borders has been significantly

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diminished, essentially by the processes of globalisation.[204] Indeed, Williams (2006) submits that the concept of sovereignty has been the subject of some kind of rebirth in recent years owing to its changing nature and diminishing importance.[205] Traditionally, sovereignty implies the juridical equality of states in the international system; freedom from external control; and the ability of the state to exercise control over its territory demarcated by international boundaries. Indeed, the control over boundaries, that is the ability of the state to protect its territorial integrity (sanctity of territorial space, control of flows of people, goods, services and capital across their boundaries as well as domestic control) is an inherent character of the Westphalian state.

The contemporary changing nature of sovereignty is engendered by changes brought about by social, economic and political processes, which have reconfigured the map of the world since the 1990s (Cohen, 2001). Another dimension in understanding the changing nature and role of sovereignty relates to the role of international treaties/agreements contracted amongst states where national sovereignty (including control over borders) is subordinated to supranational treaty organisations. The combination of these forces has diminished the power of the sovereign state to control its domestic affairs as well as flows across its borders. State territoriality is being reconfigured by issues of globalised capital market operations; the integrated system of production and consumption; international labour mobility;

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[204] Diminishing state control of flows across its boundaries presents a study in contradiction, especially in those regions of the world where regional integration has so developed as to lead to the formation of a supranational political organisation. While intra-regional boundaries have virtually disappeared, the external boundaries have simultaneously been fortified and even more difficult to cross than ever before.

[205] While what Krasner describes as domestic sovereignty remained a critical character of the Westphalian state, state territoriality was almost absolute; as sovereign, the state exercised absolute control over and across its territory free from external interference. However, following the intensification of the processes of globalisation, domestic sovereignty has experienced diminishing importance.

products of mass-media technology and revolutions in information and telecommunication technology; as well as international alliances, which have radically transformed the role and nature of the state (and state territoriality). 'The roof has literally blown off the nation state' as its traditional control over its boundaries has been rendered almost obsolete by the forces of globalisation. Globalisation therefore has reduced the significance of international boundaries 'in shaping the conditions of life of persons and society' (Cohen, 2001: 81). It suggests significant changes in the roles and nature of international boundaries as indicators of territorial limits between states on the one hand, and between states and the international environment on the other. These changes also include the regulation of the relationship between the state and the international environment (Cohen, 2001).

The impacts of globalisation on the sovereign state with regards to territoriality could be summarised as following:

- Globalisation has engendered a reappraisal of the traditional role of the nation state, especially with reference to territoriality and control over national boundaries;

- The reappraisal has led to the reconceptualisation of the role of national boundaries as points of the exercise of state power and control. In some places, national boundaries have become obsolete in the process of regional integration, yet the external boundaries of these regions still exhibit the characteristics of boundaries as points of state control and regulation.

- The processes of globalisation, though critical, have not been able to *deterritorialise* state territories marked out by boundaries; though trade liberalisation, transnational relations and globalised capital market operation

aided by information and telecommunication technologies have impinged on the traditional domain of state control and regulation, they have not been able to render the state obsolete. In other words, the state remains critical in the dynamics of the international system.

The following subsections examines and analyses three relevant forces of globalisation in the context of Nigeria and Benin. The aim is to highlight the resistance of these weak states to forces which seek to diminish their own sovereign control over territory as defined by boundaries. This explains the resistance of these states to globalising forces as seen in the hardening of borders while inter-regional borders are being reconceived elsewhere.

7.31   Nigeria and Benin in the Context of (West) African Integration

The idea of a pan-African government has always been a critical consideration of the political elite in the continent. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was established in 1958 by the ECOSOC Resolution 671 (25) which made provision for facilitating 'concerted action for the economic development of Africa…with a view to raising the level of economic activities and standards of living in Africa and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of countries and territories of Africa' (Adedeji, 2002: 299). Immediately after independence, pan-African integration was on the front burner of issues and discussions as well as considerations for the establishment of a Union government. Indeed, the African political elite were agreed on the ideals of a pan African government (with critical implications for the status and role of the inherited colonial boundaries), but differed on the modalities and timing of its becoming.[206] Following the 1963 Addis Ababa

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[206] Details of the power-politics involved in these negotiations are presented in Chapter 6 (section 6.21).

conference which culminated in the founding of the OAU, it was agreed that continental integration be hinged on Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) as the precursor to continental integration.[207] Hence, for West Africa, following the Franco-Nigerian power struggle in the sub-region,[208] which effectively stalled the establishment of a regional economic community, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded in 1975, made up of all the states in the sub-region irrespective of colonial antecedents.

The objectives of ECOWAS include: the establishment of a Community of states, where nationals of Member States are treated as Community citizens with the right of free and unhindered movement as well as the right of residence and establishment anywhere in the Community. It seeks the promotion of cooperation and integration leading to the establishment of an economic union for West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent (Article 3 of the ECOWAS Treaty). The Community seeks to achieve these objectives through:

▪ the **harmonisation and coordination of national policies and the promotion of integration programmes**, projects and activities particularly in food; agriculture and natural resources; industry; transport and communications; energy; trade; money and finance; taxation; economic reform policies; human resources; education; information; culture… (ECOWAS Treaty, Article 3 (2a))

▪ the **establishment of a common market** through trade liberalization (abolition of customs duties) and the **abolition of non-tariff barriers** in Member States in

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[207] Details of this conference and the diplomatic wrangling and intrigues are presented in Chapter 6 (section 6.21) on the role of the OAU in anointing theses boundaries as the basis of ordering interstate relations.

[208] Details are also presented in Chapter 6 (section 6.31).

order to **establish a free-trade area in the Community**; the adoption of a common external tariff and common policy towards third countries; **removal of obstacles to free movement of persons, goods, services, ideas, capital and the right of residence and establishment**

- the **establishment of an economic union through the adoption of common economic and financial policies and the creation of a monetary union**;

- the promotion of joint venture initiatives, both between governments and private investors through the adoption of regional agreements on cross-border investment (emphasis added).

The implications of the Community for sovereignty, territorial boundaries and related formal border structures in the sub-region are obvious, that is, if these provisions are implemented to the letter. The idea of Community citizenship, in spite of its weaknesses;[209] the Protocol on Free Movement and Establishment; the establishment of a common market and a customs union, and so on are expected to erode the basis of traditional territorial sovereignty as it has done in the European Area. Border and immigration control of Community citizens, with the capacity to hinder free movement of persons, goods, services, ideas and capital ought to have become history in the region. Boundaries as delimiters of territorial extent; points of differential converters and immigration/customs control, therefore become obsolete as border posts recede. The roles of the boundaries change from inhibitors to free movement and filters to that critical point linking one region of the Community to another.

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[209] Community citizenship as provided for by the ECOWAS Treaty allows for the deportation of the national of a Member State from another Member state; it does not allow full integration into the society of the Member State where the national of another Member State is domiciled. Indeed, the progression to the right to establishment, as part of the Protocol on Free Movement and Establishment has not been reached as the Community is still grappling with the right of free movement which is a precursor to the right of establishment.

However in actual practice, ECOWAS is far from its description in its Treaty and protocols. Bach (1997: 83) has been quite pungent in his criticism of ECOWAS; he claims quite correctly that there exists a 'state of paralysis in almost every area of target'. Official intra-regional trade represents an insignificant proportion of total export; the proposed establishment of a single monetary zone has failed to materialise in spite of three changes in the target date since 1994; the Protocol on free movement and establishment for Community citizens has also failed dismally. In essence, the ECOWAS has failed to create the right kind of impetus for interstate cooperation, regional integration, and, indeed, for the lowering of the divisive impacts of the ex-colonial boundaries. In other words, the failure of ECOWAS could be partly held responsible for the maintenance of boundaries as barriers and the inability of globalisation to temper the traditional role of boundaries as it has done elsewhere.

7.32   Explaining the Failure of ECOWAS

As noted above and as evidence from field work across the Nigeria – Benin boundary shows, the goals of ECOWAS as a regional economic community have remained far from realisation. Particularly in its core target area of regional integration, trade liberalisation and free movement, the Community has been a colossal failure.

The most significant factor responsible for the failure of ECOWAS is state weakness, which hinders member states from implementing its integrative objectives. Other factors, including the lack of political will, political instability, repressive regimes, historical factors of contrasting colonial heritages (including, contrasting official languages, legal systems, monetary and taxation systems, Anglophone/Francophone rivalries, etc) as well as neo-colonial aspirations of former imperial states; institutional factors which breed corruption; Nigeriaphobia (Adesina,

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2007: 40); and so on are all founded on state weakness.

As analysed above (section 7:2), state weakness, characterised by weak or dysfunctional state institutions as well as the inability to effectively broadcast state power, leads the state to resist forces which seek to reduce its territorial sovereignty. African states are extremely insecure about their sovereignty as many hardly exercise absolute authority across their territory. Therefore, these states are hard put to defend their territorial integrity and consequently they have consistently resisted regional integrative initiatives by refusing to implement integrative arrangements (Herbst, 2000).

The inability of the state to effectively broadcast state power and perform the traditional functions of the state is related to the nature of the structures of the state instituted during colonial rule. Deschamps (1994: 176) submits that 'Africa inherited rudimentary or worthless sub-structures', which are unable to meet the postcolonial demands of statehood. In order words, the institutions of the state in Africa, as inherited at independence are unable to sustain the conducts of state affairs. Hence, Adesina (2007: 39) notes that the structures of state impede and work at cross-purposes with the integration processes in West Africa.

Regarding territoriality, the consequence of state weakness is two-fold: control over territory on the one hand, and the reaction of the state to contemporary globalising influences on the other. Owing to weak institutional framework, state weakness allows all sorts of exploitation and manipulation by both the Yoruba (and other cross-border traders) and officials of state border agencies at the borderland. The failure of state agencies to effectively implement border policies is behind the extreme policy of border closures. Indeed, Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's president for the greater part of last decade voiced his exasperation with the Nigeria Customs

Service over the hydra-headed problem of smuggling across this particular section of the boundary between Nigeria and Benin. Obasanjo claimed that smuggling was being actively promoted by officials of the agency, paradoxically charged with controlling the movement of goods across the country's border (Guardian, 15.01.2004: 7).

Relating to integration, state weakness engenders the resistance of the state to forces which seek to reduce the sovereign control of the state over its territory as mapped out by boundaries. Clientelism, bad governance, corruption, economic despondency and conflict, which make for the weak state, force the state to adopt an anti-integration stance in a bid to keep control over its territory. As noted above, the border closure and the import prohibition strategies of Nigeria are symptomatic of the inability of the state, owing to weak state institutions to functions effectively. Hence the inability of these states to pursue and implement the integration agenda of ECOWAS in spite of multilateral and bilateral agreements, as well as public opinion in support of regional integration.[210]

Had the Treaty provisions and other agreements and protocols been implemented to the letter, the objectives of regional integration would have been attained in the sub-region. However, there exists a disjuncture between policy and practice (Adesina, 2007); it is a case of good intentions, without the necessary will to transform the intentions and policies into practice. A critical appraisal of the Treaty of ECOWAS indicates a significant influence of the EU in the integration process in this sub-region. However, it is easily observable that the depth of integration in Europe (led by the political will) is missing in the West African experience.

The integration initiative in West Africa has largely failed to achieve its set

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[210] Globalisation and integration are examined in details in the next section.

objectives owing to the failure of the political elite in the sub-region to transform policies into practice, which is contingent on the character of the state as essentially weak. There are abundant conventions and agreements promoting liberalisation, cooperation and collaboration among Member States, yet, the actual practice of states constitutes a hindrance to the actualisation of the integration objectives. The failure of these elites to promote regional integration is a reflection of weak state, bad governance and corruption as well as neo-colonial influences as seen in the sponsorship of a rival organisation by France in the sub-region.

The inability of the state in West Africa to implement liberalisation policies and promote regional integration means that the region remains almost impermeable to the globalising influences of liberalisation and integration. In other words, relating to integration, the state in West Africa remains at the pre-liberalisation, pre-integration era where the control of the nation state over its territory remains almost absolute. Boundaries remain ever so strong as a point of state control and regulation in West Africa. In other words, the border eroding qualities of integration are scuttled by the resilience of the state and the actions of state elite which hinder the globalising impacts of integration.

7.33   Yoruba Migration

It has been established in the preceding sections that in spite of the efforts at regionalism and the ever current agitation for pan-Africanism, state territorialism in West Africa has remained largely impervious to the impacts of globalising forces, especially regionalism which has diminished the traditional role of the Westphalian state and eradicated national borders as exemplified in the case of the European Union. This subsection further examines the impact of globalisation on the border-partitioned Yoruba group with the objective of answering the sub-research question

on globalisation and Yoruba ethnic relations across the Nigeria – Benin boundary. Are the Yoruba also impervious to the globalising forces, especially of transnationalism in the face of current forces which promote the *deterritorialisation* of identity and group relations? The section also seeks to assess the impact of transnationalism on the Yoruba project, its impacts on intra-ethnic relations across the boundary as well as the reaction of the state to the influences of transnationalism.

There are two questions which will help in the analysis of the impact of transnationalism on the Yoruba: do the Yoruba also ignore this dynamic of globalisation just as the states have resisted regional integration initiatives? Consequently, globalisation has had little or no influence on the dynamics of trans-border intra-group relations. On the other hand, could transnationalism as an agent of globalisation be nothing new to group relations among the Yoruba that the impact of contemporary globalisation becomes less noticeable? In other words, globalisation dynamics have been an integral part of the Yoruba group relations before the colonial partition that it is hardly possible to notice and calibrate any dramatic changes in the relationship among the fractions of the group astride the boundary. Field findings and extant literature reviewed in this study support the argument that globalisation is not a new phenomenon among the Yoruba as they had always exploited dynamics associated with globalisation in their relationship before the colonial intervention (Awe, 1973; Asiwaju, 1976a; Kopytoff, 1987; Adediran, 1994; Usman, 2009). Consequently, the impact of transnationalism as a factor of globalisation are not so identifiable being part of an age-long processes. However, as we shall discover shortly, some of these processes are being intensified while some are being revived in the context of contemporary globalisation.

The analysis of the impact of transnationalism on the Yoruba will be pursued

on two distinct but interrelated themes, namely: the traditional Yoruba system of authority and the ordinary Yoruba who both conduct relations with related groups across the boundary. The traditional elite, for reasons highlighted earlier, are crucial to the Yoruba project, while the rest of the Yoruba community provides a broader perspective for analysing the impacts of globalisation on the group.

The concept of transnational flow of people has a long history in Africa. In pre-slavery Africa, migration was an integral part of the way of life of the people. The state of territoriality ebbed and grew depending on fortunes at the war battle; or the occurrence of natural disasters which have been known to displace entire populations. In other words, transnationalism in Africa prior to contact with Europe was driven largely by reactions to social and natural developments. The dispersal of the Yoruba group and the emergence of 'Yorubaland' are the consequences of the combination of these factors. Yorubaland witnessed a period of socio-political changes throughout the 15th century; Economic and political pressures forced people to migrate from the central Yoruba area towards northern and eastern Yoruba (Usman, 2009). War and conquest impelled the migration of the people as seen in the case of the Ketu who were forced to seek 'protective' locations following Dahomey belligerency.

The transnationalisation of the Yoruba identity and culture became heightened following the onset of slavery. Indeed, slavery could be regarded as the genesis of the transnational (transcontinental) dispersal of the group which remains quite influential until the present times.[211] Contemporary pan Africanism is rooted in the

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[211] One of the most enduring legacies of slavery with regards to transnationalism is the social reality of traditional Yoruba religions: in Cuba, Brazil (Bahia), Haiti and Dominican Republic where variants of Yoruba religious practices exist, largely in slightly modified forms. Another very significant linkage between the West African Yoruba and the Diaspora is the establishment of Oyotunji Village in the United States, as part of the 'New World Yoruba' initiative. The village was founded as a resurrection of the Old Oyo in present day Nigeria and run on the traditional culture

African Diaspora and was led by Blacks in the United States and the Caribbean until the middle of the last century.[212] It is important to note that long before the terms globalisation and transnationalism became analytical descriptions, transnational and globalising forces were already at work.[213] The translocation of the Yoruba people, who constituted the bulk of the slaves from the Bight of Benin to the New Worlds, could be regarded as the precursor to transnational (transcontinental) flows in the region, which only became deepened in recent times owing to the forces of intensified globalisation.

Transnationalism became even more intensified with the advent and consolidation of colonial rule. The epochal character of colonialism left Africa fundamentally transformed and initiated the incorporation of the continent into the global community. The processes of modernisation and westernisation characteristic of colonial rule, destroyed indigenous processes in the society and simultaneously introduced lasting and crucial social structures and formations, transforming Africa from its traditional state into a 'modern' and 'civilised continent'.[214]

In the postcolonial era, transnationalism has been driven by contemporary globalisation processes of increased international labour mobility, human trafficking and refugee outflow. Consequently, the contemporary period has witnessed a migration from the African continent which is close in size to the forced emigration

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and practice of the Yoruba. Members of the commune make regular 'pilgrimage' to the Yoruba 'source' in Nigeria (Clarke, 2004).

[212] Pan Africanism was the precursor of nationalism in Africa; the leadership of pan-Africanism promoted local agitations for independence in Black Africa.

[213] This argument challenges the notion of the contemporaneous character of globalisation as claimed by the globalists.

[214] This period witnessed the migration of Africans to the metropolis in search of civilisation and modernisation. Many left the continent to study in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Portugal and the United States and returned to become the elite class. The West African Student Union (WASU) was established to meet the needs of African students in the United Kingdom as well as to provide emotional succour in a difficult environment. WASU became crucial in the independence movement as emergent African elite had the unifying experience of the WASU having been members in their student years.

of the slavery era.[215] Indeed, some have argued that contemporary labour migration is a replication of the slavery period, albeit, unforced but voluntary.

Adeyanju (2006) identifies five trends in the discourses of transnationalism and their impact on social groups and identity formation: transnationalism as social morphology; mode of cultural reproduction; arena of capital and material resources accumulation; site of political activism and engagement; (re) construction of place or locality.

Transnationalism has transformed the African Diaspora into a credible force, both in their new homes and their 'traditional' homes. Home town associations are formed in the Diaspora to provide social and emotional cushions to the impacts of location in strange (and often hostile) territories as well as to maintain cultural linkage with their original homes. In other words, the Diaspora population constitutes a link between their new homes and their original homes, which poses a challenge to the nation state as their 'demands, expectations and loyalty are not restricted to their place of settlement but are extended to their community of origin and co-ethnic members in other countries' (Adeyanju, 2006).

The impacts of transnationalism on the nation state include the emergence of new identities and related assertion or demand of rights (and new crimes[216]) in the host countries as well as political activism and engagement driven by remittances in the countries of origin. New identities based on the countries of origin of immigrants act as bonds which promote ethnocentrism (in host countries) as well as linkages to

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[215] The hopes of African emancipation and development at independence were shattered a few years into independent rule by mis-governance and corruption almost everywhere in the continent. The subsequent crisis of the state and the failure of the neo-liberal therapies led to massive emigration (forced and voluntary) from the continent, especially beginning from the 1980s onward.
[216] The 'torso in the Thames' case of a decapitated body labelled Adam by the Scotland Yard detectives investigating the case in 2003 was alleged to be voodoo or ritual murder related. The case was linked with the Yoruba religious rituals of sacrifice to the gods as it was alleged that the boy was a victim of ritual sacrifice. The Guardian raised the alarm 'that African ritual killings have been imported to Europe' (Okome and Banoum, 2004).

the countries of origin. Ethnic affinity and solidarity as well as the reality of social exclusion and inequality in their new homes play a major role in the formation of Diaspora identities. Adeyanju (2006) argues that the transnational practices of Yoruba immigrants in Toronto emerged out of the combined influence of material experience in Canada and the already developed Yoruba ethnic identity prior to immigration.

The impact of transnationalism as a globalising force on the Yoruba has been influential in many ways: remittances, investment and home town development, as well as political activism are the most crucial. The bulk of contemporary emigration from Yorubaland was propelled by economic considerations arising from the crisis of the state beginning from the 1980s; these émigrés retain very close linkages with their home communities contributing substantial financial support to their immediate families as well as being involved in community development initiatives. Indeed, remittances in the face of growing state failure and despondency have continued to play significant roles in the eradication of poverty and investment in developing countries. Remittances, according to de Montclos (2005: 1-2) have several advantages:

- They can contribute to sustainable development since they are more endogenous than foreign aids;

- They help reduce poverty and the other negative effects of globalisation dominated by market forces;

- Assist African countries with debt servicing, increase foreign reserves, and partly compensate for capital flight. The World Bank puts the total value of remittances to Africa in 2002 at US$80 billion. If the value of remittances through the informal channel is added, the total value of

remittances may be more than tripled. Remittances have since become the second largest source of external funding for developing countries after foreign direct investment (FDI);

- Remittances account for a significant fraction of the income of many developing states. Indeed, in many states, the Diaspora is actively encouraged to contribute to the investment in development. In Nigeria, the state has provided incentives, including an exclusive residential area for its Diaspora population in the Federal Capital Territory, to invest in the Nigerian economy.

It is important to note the role of transnational linkages in remittances from the Yoruba and other African Diaspora to their original communities. As the rates of the conventional money transfer agencies (Western Union, Moneygram, etc) and bank transfers are quite high, the Diaspora simply rely on informal channels for the transfer of funds back home.[217]

The Yoruba transnationalism aside from remittance for the socio-economic benefit of the Yoruba at home (Nigeria and Benin), constitutes a significant pool of political activism in these countries. In addition, the Yoruba astride the boundary of these two countries have been instrumental in influencing national politics in the other country. The failure of the Nigerian expulsion of illegal aliens, especially those from Benin, is related to the Yoruba transnationalism, which made the expulsion of Beninese Yoruba difficult.[218]

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[217] Apart from the high charges on transfer, the Yoruba Diaspora communities prefer to deal with the informal transfer channels as the sum remitted (in foreign currency) could be exchanged at the black market rates which are usually higher than the official rates used by the conventional money transfer agencies.

[218] Details of the expulsion and the role of the Yoruba are provided in Chapter 4.

During the Abacha Regime[219] in Nigeria, the Yoruba ethnic group led the opposition, which challenged the regime following the annulment of the 1993 presidential election. The crusade to reclaim the electoral mandate won by a Yoruba politician was expectedly led by the Yoruba ethnic group, which pitted the group against the regime. The reign of terror forced many Yoruba elite and activists into exile; their exit was largely facilitated by the Yoruba in Benin even as it (Benin) became noted as the escape route for the opposition group. The fleeing Yoruba elite and activists exploited their Yoruba linkages and affinity with the Yoruba across the boundary in Benin to escape from the onslaught of the repressive regime (de Montclos, 2005: 13). Apart from providing safe exit, Benin also provided safe haven for these refugees and became a launching pad for the opposition action against the Nigerian state. The opposition radio station (Radio Kudirat) was beamed into Nigeria from Benin as the Nigerian regulatory body would not register such an organisation (de Montclos, 2005: 11).

The point being made here is that opposition to the Nigerian regime (and subsequent regime change) was possible due to the ethnic solidarity and affinity between the Yoruba groups in both countries. The oppression of the Nigerian Yoruba created an 'ethnic community of suffering' which reinforced ethnic affinity and relations (de Montclos, 2005: 9). The Yoruba refugees simply appealed to the Yoruba identity which made room for them in Benin. Similarly, de Montclos (2005: 24) reports that during the 1972 military coup led by Mathew Kerekou in Benin, prominent Yoruba elements of the deposed leadership fled to Nigeria and were

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[219] The regime was especially repressive leading to the suspension of the country from the Commonwealth and the imposing of sanctions by the EU and the US.

provided safe haven by the Nigerian Yoruba.[220]

Responding to the accommodation of the Yoruba activists in Benin, the Abacha regime actively supported the re-election of Mathew Kerekou who had lost an earlier election to the incumbent, Nicephore Soglo, whose administration had not only turned a blind eye, but granted refugee status to Yoruba activists in Benin. Abacha's support included the closure of the border between the two countries and the donation of one million dollars to Kerekou (de Montclos, 2005: 13).

Religion is very central to the Yoruba, as a group and as individuals. Indeed, one of the most significant issues in transnational theory of revivalist movements today is the search for African roots (Clarke, 2004). And in this search, traditional Yoruba religion (*orisha* worship) and the Yoruba language are crucial. There has been a recent proliferation of the adherents of orisha worship among the Black Diaspora seeking a 'connection' with their African roots. The quest for their African roots has led many revivalists to make regular pilgrimages to the West African countries of Nigeria and Benin (the traditional homesteads of the Yoruba). The most significant development in this regard was the establishment of the Oyotunji Village whose residents use Yoruba as a second language as well as a tool for cultural reclamation (Clarke, 2004). The significance of quest for cultural reclamation for the Yoruba transnationalism is that it creates a *deterritorialisation* of the Yoruba identity as the practice of the Yoruba culture creates transnational communities which transcend national boundaries.

The *deterritorialisation* of the Yoruba identity is not limited to transcontinental aspect of its transnationalism. In the partitioned homeland of the Yoruba in West Africa, the practice of the Yoruba culture across the border aids the

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[220] Rigobert Ladipo, the industry minister was welcomed in Nigeria by Wole Soyinka who facilitated his appointment as a professor at a Nigerian university (de Montclos, 2005: 24).

deterritorialisation of the Yoruba identity. Of the many ritualistic and cultural rites across the boundary is the *Gelede* religious cult. The *Gelede* is a religious cult that is prevalent everywhere in the border region and serves as a strong unifying marker of identity as it binds adherents together in a relationship that transcends the physical. The *Gelede* festival is an annual gathering of all the adherents of the cult from all over the region, across the boundary[221]. The *Gelede* masquerades from every place related to Ketu are gathered together in the town, once a year for a public presentation in dance and ritual performances. It serves to preserve the age-old affinity between the people which has subsisted over the years. Another important ritualistic cultural linkage between the people across the boundary is the *Alaketu* coronation ritual pilgrimage to Imeko and neighbouring villages.[222]

Generally, *orisha* worship has the capability of creating a unified worldview among the Yoruba. Though, the number of adherents to the traditional Yoruba religion is dwindling, it still serves as a unifying force among the Yoruba across the boundary and between the Yoruba in the traditional homeland of Nigeria and Benin and the Yoruba in the Diaspora seeking a reclamation of their lost culture (Clarke, 2004).

The generality of the borderland people could be regarded as holding dual nationalities, as nearly every borderland Yoruba respondent during the field work interview claimed to have relatives and farmlands across the boundary. They cross the boundary as many times as they need, without immigration hassles, and where there are hassles, they simply avoid the official routes by turning to the preserved ancient routes; they do their businesses on their farmlands irrespective of the

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[221] Interview with the Balogun of Ketu, Lagos Nigeria (24.10.08)
[222] In an interview with the present *Alaketu* installed in 2005, he confirmed to the researcher that he cannot be crowned king without this all important pilgrimage to Imeko and surrounding villages.

location. Typical with the traditional Yoruba setting is the location of farmsteads at considerable distance from the town, to which town dwellers relocate at planting seasons and return home to the city at a later stage or whenever the need arises. These farmsteads over time grow as population increases and become outposts of the main town. For the Yoruba of Ketu and Ifonyin[223] especially, whose territories were divided by the boundary placing the head towns in Benin and the outposts in Nigeria, the degree of cross-border interaction is greater than those of Sakete, Porto Novo, Ipobe and Ita-Ijebu. The former Yoruba subgroups are compelled to cross the borders frequently to work in farms, visit family members, participate in cultural activities, and so on, much more than the latter group.

The point being made is that Yoruba movements, both across the Nigeria – Benin boundary and transnational, imperil territorial sovereignty. In other words, while the state, owing to its peculiar characteristic as weak, deliberately and inadvertently hinder integrative force, the imperatives of cross-border movement and international labour migration have engendered the *deterritorialisation* of the Yoruba space which hold important consequences for the two states. As noted above, the unifying force of the Yoruba religion, as well as the pull of the Yoruba homeland (to Diaspora Yoruba) have contributed immensely to the *deterritorialisation* of the Yoruba. Furthermore, weak state institutions promote cross-border movements of the Yoruba as the state is unable to effectively control its territorial borders.

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[223] Information gathered on the field research points to greater integration among these groups across the boundary. Crossing the border posts at Ilara (Ketu) and Idi Iroko (Ifonyin) are the least strenuous; the other border post at Seme is very difficult to cross, in spite of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People. The officials at the border posts at Idi Iroko and Ilara are hard put to distinguish between Nigerian Yoruba and Beninese Yoruba. Indeed, these individuals cross the border several times in the course of the day, either to trade, farm or visit family.

7.34 Smuggling and Communications

Over the years, smuggling and communications have posed a sustained challenge to the broadcast of state power, especially to geographically distant and economically marginal locations. As noted above, smuggling and many other practices of negotiation at the societal level are consequences of state weakness or failure. The Yoruba borderland between Nigeria and Benin is one of the most smuggling-intensive of Nigeria's borderlands as it constitutes Nigeria's most-important link with the other countries on the West African coast. As Flynn (1997) notes, the Yoruba have internalised the border, controlling the smuggling network by intermediating between non-local smugglers and officials of government agencies, while also being major players in the business.

The consequence of smuggling for state territoriality in this region is pretty obvious. Nigeria is unable to exercise absolute control over flows across their boundaries; even when borders are closed as an extreme control measure, evidence from the field work suggests that the Yoruba people still conducted cross-border businesses as the people resort to the multiple channels of communication outside the sphere of state control. For Benin, it would appear that the state deliberately weaken its control over cross-border flows as it encourages smuggling across its border with Nigeria. Border closures, which have become Nigeria's ultimate border control strategy, is against the letter of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement and settlement and the several bilateral agreements between the two states. Of significant note is the establishment of customs union between the two states in the 1960s. However, given the need to forcefully preserve its territorial integrity, Nigeria has not consciously promoted the union rather its actions (border closure and import prohibition) have been antithetical to the objectives of a customs union. For Benin, a

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customs union with Nigeria will not be in its advantage as it exploits the differential tariff regime in Nigeria to further its re-export trade as well as smuggling to and from Nigeria.

In spite of state regulation and control, smuggling continues to thrive and function as an indication of fundamental state weakness. While seeking to police its borders, the Nigerian state highlights the weakness of its structures and institutions to effectively function as required. As noted earlier, border closure to control movement of persons and goods, is an indication of state weakness to use its statutory border structures and institutions to control flows across its boundary. Subsequently, cross-border activities essentially among the Yoruba subsist across the Nigeria – Benin boundary, promoting group affinity and identity.

A recent factor which has further aided the group affinity of the Yoruba in this region is the introduction of the Global Systems Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) services in Nigeria and Benin in 2001 and 1997 respectively. Telecommunication has become easily affordable and accessible; people have been empowered to communicate and keep in close touch. Prior to this period, it was near impossible to connect with remote locations (which the borderland represents) on the old analogue telecommunication system. Indeed, for the Yoruba *borderlander*, international roaming services are unnecessary as the coverage areas of the GSM services providers extend some distance across the international boundary.[224] Previously isolated groups have been brought into closer contact and this has engendered greater trans-border (transnational) relations.

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[224] During the field work, the researcher did not need to subscribe to roaming services on his Nigerian mobile phone, nor did he need to purchase a Beninese SIM card as the network of his service provider extends to cover his movement in Benin.

In addition to the GSM is the electronic media as a means of fostering closer group relations in the borderland astride the Nigeria-Benin boundary. In a similar manner as the GSM coverage area, the coverage areas of Nigerian television and radio services extend far into Benin. At the palace of the *Alaketu* during the field work interview, the Ogun State Television service was broadcasting a news bulletin, which, apparently was regularly tuned into by the *Oba's* household.[225] At the palace of the *Onisakete's* during the field work interview, the transistor radio was tuned in to the Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation. These media undoubtedly promote kin affinity and inter-group relations as well as the Yoruba worldview.

7.4   Conclusion

While globalising forces, including regional integration, transnationalism and innovations in telecommunication have enforced the reconceptualisation of traditional territorial sovereignty almost all over the world, state practices in (West) Africa have remained at the pre-globalisation period. The major significance of the reconceptualisation of territoriality, prompted by contemporary globalisation, affects the traditional role of boundary as the juridical extent of state sovereignty, distinguishing between nationals and non-nationals, as well as point of state control and regulation over flows in and out of its territory. As integration withers state control over borders and communications and transnationalism engender *deterritorialisation* of space, state control over boundaries are consequently redefined.

The thrust of this chapter is to contribute to the principal research question by providing answers to the sub-research question related to the resilience of the Yoruba

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[225] As the interest of the researcher was roused by the news bulletin, he asked the *Oba* whether he also watches Beninese television station and does he prefer. The *oba* of course watches Beninese stations and he has no preference. He claimed that he watches Nigerian television because the service has some Yoruba programmes, which the Beninese televisions do not have.

identity and affinity. The chapter establishes that the Nigeria and Benin states actively promoted distinct national policies and used the border as a major instrument of state control. However, in spite of the strong border policy, these states have remained fundamentally unable to effectively police their territories. The chapter finds that state weakness, characterised by defective structures, bad governance, corruption and poor geography, is essentially responsible for the failure of these states to assert their authorities over territory.

The failure of these states to effectively broadcast their power across the length and breadth of their territories allows the exploitation and manipulation of the border by the Yoruba people as well as officials of the states charged with policing the border. The consequence of this is the almost 'unfettered' cross-border movements (goods and persons) among the Yoruba which function to promote intra-Yoruba identity and solidarity.

Relating to regionalisation and its impact on territorial sovereignty, Nigeria and Benin, as with other African countries, have consistently resisted sovereignty withering forces in order to preserve their control over territory, which regionalisation challenges. As established in this chapter, state weakness is the principal explanation for the resistance of the state to regional integrative initiatives. However, while the states are able to resist integration, they have been unable to control Yoruba movements across their shared boundary. Again, state weakness indicated by institutional inefficiency as well as clientelism (ethnicity) is responsible for this incapacitation of the state to control flows across its territory. Coupled with this is the revolutionary impact of telecommunication technology, which allows the bypassing of traditional state control measure in trans-border interactions amongst the borderland Yoruba. The cumulative impact of state failure, Yoruba

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transnationalism and telecommunication is the preservation and reification of Yoruba

identity, solidarity and affinity.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1   Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide a précis of the findings of this study as well as to highlight its major contributions to knowledge in the study of international boundaries in Africa. As pointed out in the General Introduction and the Literature Review, there are obvious gaps in the academic study of boundaries in the continent. These gaps inform the justification for this study. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to examine this attempt to fill the gap by linking the empirical findings to the research questions. Finally, the chapter considers issues for further research arising from the limitations and the challenges faced by the study. The chapter is therefore divided into three sections, namely, summary, conclusion, and issues for further research.

8.2   Summary

The primary objective of this study was to critically assess the impacts of the international boundary between Nigeria and Benin, mainly on the Yoruba borderland subgroups, as well as the interstate relations between the two states. The principal assumption being that the manner of the colonial partition of African territories divided culturally homogeneous groups into different spheres of influence. For the Yoruba under consideration, their territories were partitioned into the colonial holdings of France and Britain, which respectively became Benin and Nigeria following independence. However, as there are contrasting views regarding the territorial extent of the Yoruba groups as well as the role of Africans in the boundary making process, the study, adopting the field research approach as well as archival research, begins by examining the manner of boundary making as well as the

prevailing conditions in Yorubaland at the time.

Though, the Yoruba identity as it has come to be known today did not exist prior to colonial rule, yet, there existed some modicum of the Yoruba consciousness among the several Yoruba subgroups before the colonial intervention. Apart from the myth of common origin, strengthened by dynastic link with Ife (the acclaimed origin of all the Yoruba subgroups), Oyo was particularly instrumental in the Yoruba project as its empire extended the frontiers of the Yoruba identity and influence. Indeed, evidence from ethnographic field work in the study area supports the spatial spread of the Yoruba subgroups across the Nigeria-Benin boundary. It also shows that the boundary indeed cut through previously homogeneous culture areas of the subgroups around the border. Furthermore, field findings, supported by archival research reveal that the Nigeria – Benin boundary was essentially the making of French and British agreements, which were founded on treaties, concluded with naive or conquered African potentates. There was limited and insignificant African participation in the process, as the decisions were taken in metropolitan Europe, with several strategic interests being the determining factors.[226] Again, as the European conception of territoriality differed considerably from the African conception, the emergent boundary did not reflect prevailing conditions. Hence the boundary, along with other African boundaries, has been described as superimposed, arbitrary and dehumanising (Reader, 1997: 127; Griffiths, 1986: 204).

In the years leading to, and immediately after independence, the role of these boundaries in post-independence Africa became the source of major debates. Quite paradoxically, these boundaries were adopted, unmodified, by the OAU, as the basis

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[226] Many of these determining factors were not related to Africa. For instance, as identified in chapter 4.31, the strategic consideration of safeguarding the route to the East propelled Britain to acquire the Cape as well as its involvement in Egypt and the Sudan. Fishing rights in Newfoundland were also critical to the scramble as France bartered these rights for territories in West Africa with Britain (Prescott, 1965).

of state territorial recognition and interstate relations. This position was informed by the need to prevent the turmoil which the redrawing or abolition of the boundaries would engender. The adoption of the ex-colonial boundaries was tantamount to sacrificing ethnic reunification[227] on the altar of political expediency. The option would either have been a redrawing, which would create more problems than it would solve as the process would dismember already existing states, and simultaneously establish new ones, essentially on the basis of ethnicity. This would have created hundreds, or even thousands of new states, some of which would be unviable, owing to size and location, to effectively function as sovereign states.

The second option, inspired by pan-Africanism, would have been the establishment of a 'United States of Africa'. This was by far the more popular expectation following independence. However, this option would have multiplied the problem of the nation-state in Africa. As the various states were colonies of different European states with distinct administrative styles, the emergent African states were as diverse as their colonial masters. Furthermore, colonial rule in each of these states failed to evolve a common identity, such that at independence, these states were a collection of disparate groups, forced together by colonialism. Hence, Englesberg, Tarango and Carter (2002) describe postcolonial inter-group relations in the African state as characterised by 'suffocation', making for conflict, instability and underdevelopment. The consequence of this for a Unites States of Africa would be the multiplication of the problems of the individual states, which would create more problems than presently experienced in the continent.

As territoriality, determined by boundaries, ascribes identity, the colonial

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[227] The major argument for the adjustment of the boundaries hinged on the claim that they divided several cultural groups, which was perceived as a potential trigger of conflict in postcolonial Africa. The revision of the boundaries, along ethnic lines, or such other historic or cultural alignments, was thought to be the solution to the problem.

partition, and the postcolonial reification of these boundaries, ought to foster distinct identities for the partitioned groups. Colonisation with its epochal characteristics is expected to transform the identities of the colonised, just as Miles (1994: 42) notes, 'to colonise is to alter identity'. Furthermore, the formal postcolonial discourse of boundaries, which was meant to consolidate the ex-colonial territorial divisions, should also reinforce the colonially-ordered identities as distinct from the pre-colonial identity of members of the partitioned group. For the partitioned Yoruba, this study discovers that the expectation of a transformation of identities did not occur. The so-called 'border hysteria' is absent at this borderland. Field research in the borderland area astride the Nigeria – Benin boundary shows a strong group affinity and identity in spite of the several years of distinct, and sometimes, competing socialisation processes. In other words, the strength of the historical linkages, kin affinity, as well as commerce has kept alive the Yoruba group identity.

One significant paradox of the French colonial administration, with reference to identity, relates to the traditional institution of authority. While French policy all but crushed this institution, it has remained an important factor in trans-border Yoruba relations. As shown in the study, in spite of the partition of the culture areas of the borderland Yoruba subgroups, as well as the diminution of the status of the *oba* in Benin, the Beninese Yoruba *obas* whose traditional sphere of influence extends across the boundary in Nigeria continue to exercise authority over such places. For instance, new *obas* are only appointed in the Ketu areas of Nigeria, by the Ogun State governor, on the approval of the *Alaketu*, who is a Benin national. Given the role of the *oba* in the traditional Yoruba society, the trans-border influence of the *Alaketu* holds significant implications for the contemporary Yoruba project by promoting transnational linkages.

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Considering the manner of the evolution of the boundary, as well as the imposition of colonial rule, with its foreign and transformed social structures (Ekeh, 1983), two distinct perceptions evolved and has endured, as to the meaning and role of the boundary. While the partitioned groups sought to continue with pre-colonial intra-group relations in spite of the new colonial order, the imperial powers needed to differentiate territories. This has led to the development of different and competing perceptions about the boundary which, unsurprisingly, has endured into the post-colonial period. The new order, propelled by Westphalian territoriality, involved the establishment of border structures, to control and regulate flows across the boundary. To the partitioned group, this was the height of imperialism as people who were members of the same groups, suddenly became alienated; people who previously moved about within their territories were suddenly corralled, and expected to acquire authorisation in order to visit family members and friends as well as farmlands and markets. The reactions of the people to this imposition took different forms. One the one hand, it was active protest, which involved protest migration and resistance to colonial rule. On the other hand, the borderland people simply adapted to the emergent territorial order by exploiting what Flynn (1997: 313) refers to as their 'deep placement' in the borderland for arbitrage.

The contrasting and competing perceptions have created opportunities for the borderland people to sustain the abuse the boundary, which has led to frictions between the states. Flynn (1997: 321) claims that the borderland Yoruba groups exploit the boundary for economic gains, either by participating in smuggling, or simply acting as brokerage agents between non-local smugglers and border guards. The ability of the Yoruba to exploit the boundary for pecuniary gains has been established in the course of this thesis to be a function of the weakness of the two

states to effectively broadcast their power over and across their respective territories. The cross-border exchange, largely clandestine, deprives the states of tax revenues accruable from customs regulations. This has led to the development of strong border policies, especially by Nigeria, to control cross-border commercial activities. However, owing largely to state weakness characterised by inefficient and dysfunctional institutions, the Nigeria – Benin boundary continues to leak, leading to intermittent interstate tensions between Nigeria and Benin as the Yoruba people continue to treat the boundary the way they deem fit, in the absence of effective state control.

Apart from the tension emanating from contrasting perspectives, Nigeria – Benin interstate relations have suffered from the influence of external forces. France remains a critical force in the post-independence affairs of its former colonies in Africa. This influence was brought to bear in the relations of the former Francophone countries with Nigeria. France regards Nigeria as the major hindrance to its neo-colonial project of grandeur in Africa and instigated its former colonies to checkmate Nigeria's influence (Nwokedi, 1991). However, in spite of the French pressure and the irritations of contrasting perceptions, Nigeria and Benin, propelled by geopolitical expediency, have been able to foster some degree of cooperative and collaborative relationship. In spite of the strong statist view of the boundary, this relationship, from the perspective of Nigeria, hinges on 'emphasising and building upon cultural links which already exist' (Nigerian House of Representatives Debates, 1960, in Oyebode, 1994: 246). Indeed, the Nigeria – Benin relationship, provided the basis for the establishment of the ECOWAS (Aluko, 1976).

Related to the role of external forces in the relationship between Nigeria and its neighbours is what Adesina (2007) refers to as 'Nigeriaphobia'. The fear of

Nigeria's size, influence and ambition, promoted by France has fostered a lack of unity in the subregion which has contributed to the slow development of regionalism in West Africa. This phobia, also expressed by the other non-Francophone countries[228] in the sub-region, is captured by Abdoulaye Wade, Senegal's President in 2000 when he 'indicated that he would seek greater unity among the ECOWAS states that would exclude Nigeria' (Wade in Adesina, 2007: 45). These factors (negative external influence and Nigeriaphobia) have enduring consequences for regional integration in West Africa.

In spite of this however, cross-border cooperation and collaboration has been given further fillip by the initiatives of ECOWAS on regional integration as well as the rejuvenated AU on African integration. The AU recommends the incorporation of the borderland peoples into the integration efforts of the various regional economic communities, which ECOWAS has adopted as one of the important bases of its integration project. Regional integration, especially following the lowering of the Berlin Wall, has become one of the arrowheads of contemporary globalisation. This has led to the reconceptualisation of the twin ideas of territoriality and sovereignty. In spite of the debates on the essence and roles of globalisation, territorial sovereignty has been significantly transformed owing to the forces of globalisation, chief of which is regionalism. Regional integration has led to the eradication of international boundaries, especially in Europe, with the development of the transnational European Union. However, the degree of integration being experience in Europe and propagated by the EU elsewhere has failed to be replicated in Africa, where international boundaries retain their traditional role of separation and filter.

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[228] See Aluko's (1976) account of the relationship between Ghana and Nigeria and the role played by the fear of the latter's hegemonic domination of the sub-region.

The African boundary has remained impervious to the border-eroding forces of integration, largely due to the OAU/AU Resolution of 1964, as well as the weakness of the state characterised by weak and dysfunctional institutions and structures, which is exploited by the political elite to retain political power and influence. Allowing integration, with its sovereignty eroding characteristics, would further weaken the control of the state by the political class. Hence, the typical African political elite would resist integration by refusing to muster the required political will to transform integration policies into practice. As shown by evidence from the field work, the movement of goods and persons across the Nigeria – Benin interstate boundary is an arduous task due to the sheer size of the border control structures. It is however interesting to note that this anti-integration stance of the states are not only contrary to public opinion in the region, it is also contrary to bilateral and multilateral agreements which they have concluded. There is an acknowledgement of the inadequacies of this boundary by both policy makers and the borderland people, yet, the states continue to treat the border in a manner that reify it as a factor of division and differentiation rather than that of cooperation and collaboration. State territoriality has subsequently been unaffected by the globalising force of integration. However, this study shows that though, the control of the state over its international boundaries in Africa remains undiminished, transnationalism, promoted by the contrasting and competing discourse of the boundary has been critical in the region. In other words, while the state has been able to withstand the globalising impact of integration, it has failed to check the advances of transnationalism, which is an age-old phenomenon in the region.

8.3   Conclusion

This section presents the major contributions of this study to the theme of international boundaries in West Africa. It seeks to achieve this by linking the empirical findings of the study to the primary and subsidiary research questions identified in chapter 1. It also links the findings to conceptual and theoretical work on boundaries. Furthermore, some of the findings of this study challenge some settled opinions in the literature, as well as chart new knowledge regarding some of the issues related to boundaries in the continent.

This section begins by focusing on the linkage between the empirical findings of the study and theoretical and conceptual work on African borders. The imperial European idea of territoriality in Africa was flawed as it conceived Africa as unterritorial. This was a misreading of Africa, seen from the perspective of Europe, where distinct territorial sovereignties were mapped out by precise boundary lines. However, in Africa, the pre-colonial conception of boundary was not of precise lines, but zones of interaction. Again, the idea of territorial sovereignty in Africa was different from the European idea. In Africa, territorial sovereignty was dynamic as territories were lost and gained depending on wars and conquests. Furthermore, political influence petered out the farther one moved from the capital of the political organisation. In Europe, the union of territory and sovereignty had long been settled at the time of the colonial expansion into Africa. In other words, while state power finds ultimate expression at the European border (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999), in pre-colonial Africa, fringe locations would potentially be no-man's land, subject to appropriation by neighbouring powers. As Mbembe (2000: 263) notes, 'pre-colonial territoriality was an itinerant territoriality', as the jurisdictions of political entities flowed and ebbed through wars, conquests, and the mobility of goods and persons.

This was the case with the fringe locations in the pre-colonial Yoruba society just before colonial rule when the kingdom of Dahomey pillaged locations along its frontier with both Oyo and Egba (Asiwaju, 1976a; Law, 1977).

These contrasting ideas of the boundary and territoriality may be partly responsible for the haphazard partition of Africa. The Europeans saw *terra nullis* simply because the geopolitical organisation of the African society did not resemble what they were familiar with, hence, their characterisation of African boundaries as antecedental (Alexander, 1963). On the contrary, however, over the centuries, Africa had evolved some highly organised hierarchical societies, bounded by (shifting) frontier zones. This study shows, therefore that the evolution of boundaries could not have been antecedental, but subsequent, being superimposed on well developed preexisting social and political entities.

Another major conceptual and theoretical contribution of this study on boundaries in Africa relates to the role of globalisation on the concept of sovereignty. Just as studies on African boundaries are few and far apart, studies on the impact of globalisation on African territoriality are also few. Indeed, as pointed out in this study, states (colonial or post-colonial) have provided the dominant contexts for research into the boundary and the persistence of traditional patterns of authority and identity. This present study has not only done this, but it has also asked questions about how and why it is that globalisation is affecting (or not) these patterns. This study shows that forces of globalisation (especially integration), which have ordered a reconceptualisation of the idea of territorial sovereignty, especially in Europe, is being actively resisted in Africa. State boundaries remain at the pre-globalisation stage due largely to the weakness of the state which makes it impossible for the state to effectively project its power and authority over its territorial space, as defined by

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boundaries. The consequence of state weakness is that the influence of the state, especially at fringe locations, is weak and local elite constitute 'parallel' locus of power, and these societies operate on a set of rules which is almost independent of central rules (Flynn, 1997; Boone, 2003). This situation therefore compels state elite to resist every form of rival territoriality, which regionalism represents. State elites in the continent, in the pursuit of personal ambitions and objectives, fail (refuse) to translate integration policies into reality. As evident in this study, through field work interviews and a review of relevant intergovernmental documents, both public and private opinions, through multilateral and bilateral agreements and transnational relationships, support the withering away of the borders as points of control and regulation, yet, owing to the failure of the state, these boundaries remain as barriers to movements and cross-border cooperation.

Furthermore, the fixation of the African state with the OAU Resolution, which reified these boundaries as the basis of interstate relations also hardened them as points of division and separation. States have jealously guarded their territorial integrity by reinforcing border control even when it is more expedient to liberalise trans-border movement of goods and persons. The problem of smuggling, for instance, is sustained by state weaknes on the one hand, and on the other by the existence of different customs regimes on either side of the Nigeria – Benin boundary. This makes for price differentials across the boundary which encourages smuggling as the states are unable to effectively control movements across their shared border and the resultant loss of revenue to Nigeria.[229]

However, while the forces of regional integration are being muzzled by state failure and complacency, other forces of globalisation especially transnational

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[229] As shown in this study, Benin actually benefits from smuggling across this boundary with Nigeria and indeed, encourages it as its policy of re-exportation is targetted at the much larger Nigerian market.

relations and technology continue to undermine the resistance of the state to globalising forces. The study shows that, in spite of distinct colonial and postcolonial systems, the strength of the Yoruba project, supported by historic and kin affinities, has sustained trans-border relations between the border-partitioned Yoruba subgroups. Just as technology has been pivotal to the intensification of contemporary globalisation by promoting respatialisation and deterritorialisation, the GSM revolution in Nigeria and Benin, as well as the electronic media, have also been identified by this study as aiding the transnational relations amongst the borderland Yoruba.

Before considering the empirical contributions of this study to knowledge, it is important to stress the significance of the field work. Interview sessions with the *obas* were critical elements of the field work. The obas, considered as repositories of the history and traditions of the Yoruba, were indispensable to the conduct of the study, as they provided the critical oral traditional sources of information. This kind of study, incorporating the *obas'* invaluable knowledge of history, has not been done in this region since Asiwaju's over twenty years ago.

The empirical contributions of this study to knowledge are presented by examining the empirical analysis of the study vis-à-vis the relevant research questions. Each research question is highlighted, together with the corresponding answers provided by the study.

Regarding the Yoruba ethnic group, as it has come to be today, this study finds that no ethnic identity as the Yoruba existed in the pre-colonial period. Rather, the Yoruba existed largely as (semi) autonomous groups, which shared a common history, a myth of common origin, common customs and practices, as well as mutually intelligible dialects of the same language. However, owing to the

overarching influence of imperial Oyo, as well as dynastic relationship with Ife, it is possible to ascribe a common identity to these groups of people. It was this modicum of homogeneity which informed the labeling of these groups as Yoruba by the missionaries at the onset of colonisation. However, through the colonial system of indirect rule, which governed the colonies through autochthonous authority system, the ethnic identity developed (Mamdani, 2002: 51).

If the Yoruba identity did not exist at the advent of the colonial expansion, how then do we justify the partition of the Yoruba? Though strickly speaking, there was no 'Yorubaland', the Yoruba subgroups had migrated from Ife, through various waves of migration, to cover a vast territorial expanse. These subgroups were organised into semi (autonomous) kingdoms, some of which had been conquered by Oyo, or in some military alliance with it, or any of its successor kingdoms (especially Egba). It was the territories of these groups that were affected by the location of the colonial boundary. In other words, the boundary partitioned the territories of several Yoruba subgroups, placing the fraction into the territories of different colonial authorities. Field work, supported by archival research of the original partition documents including inter-colonial agreements and correspondences, Colonial Office correspondences and treaties between local African rulers and colonial oficers, show that, indeed, the boundary cut through the territories of homogeneous culture groups. Hence, the field work included such locations as Ketu, Ilara and Imeko in the old Ketu kingdom, partitioned between Nigeria and Benin; Sakete, Ipobe, Isale Eko and Ifonyin in the old Ohori kingdom partitioned into Benin and Nigeria.

The boundary was a product of British and French imperial agreements, with treaties concluded with several Yoruba and Dahomey rulers as the basis. The essential considerations were not the local communities, but wider strategic and

economic considerations. Hence, the emergent boundary sliced through the territories of several previously homogeneous groups, placing the fractions in different spheres of influence. The boundary is therefore regarded as superimposed and arbitrary. Africans were not consulted in the process. Indeed, at the Berlin West African conference, where the groundwork for partitioning Africa was laid, there were no African representatives (Pakenham, 1992). Griffiths (1986: 204) argues that 'African boundaries were drawn by Europeans, for Europeans and, apart from localised details, paid scant regard to Africa, let alone Africans'. Grifitths further submits that the boundaries are 'dehumanising' as the process that determined them did not factor in prevailing social, economic and political realities at the time of the partition.

Having established that the boundary partitioned certain subgroups of the Yoruba, what are the impacts of the division on these subgroups? A related subsidiary research question relates to the impact of contrasting colonial rule on these subgroups. The first obvious impact of the partition would be the severing and location of the parts into two distinct colonial spheres of influence, initially, and eventually into two distinct states at independence. This separation, coupled with contrasting socialisation processes, was expected to foster new values, new identities and new loyalties. The fractions initially became, either French or British subjects, and eventually became Beninese and Nigerians respectively. National identities are meant to spur patriotic fervour in the national, however, this study finds that, owing to the exploitative and oppressive nature of colonialism, and more especially, the strength of the Yoruba group affinity, the separation into two distinct states has not been able to foster distinct identities for the partitioned Yoruba groups. Indeed, the partition process and contrasting socialisation processes reinforced elements of Yoruba identity, especially the traditional authority structures.

In addition, the partition and the mposition of European state system and institutions created weak states in Africa with accompanying dysfunctions. Subsequently, the typical African state has been unable to enforce actual control over its borders in spite of the rather visible defence of their validity and the state's sovereign relationsship to them. Indeed, as it has been submitted in this study, the rather strong border policies of these states as exemplified by Nigeria, is an indication of the weakness of state institutions to project and enforce state authority at the borders.

Furthermore, the Yoruba identity has proved to be resilient, not least since it was more firmly established prior to the partition than has previously been recognised, but also they continue to negotiate the border as if it was not there to divide them, but rather to serve as a new domain for them to relate to and exploit. They treat the boundary as merely administrative;[230] they exhibit a certain degree of freedom of movement across and around it that they are able to maintain group affinity, and conduct intra-group relations as they had always done. Hence, the conflict of identity, witnessed at the US – Mexico border regions is absent here. In other words, the boundary, colonial rule and independence have not been able to alter the Yoruba identity of these subgroups.

Expectedly, the dissonance between the perception of the groups and that of the state has led to tensions at the border. While the subgroups treat the border as merely administrative (an at times, as an irritant), the state regards it as the juridical extent of the state as well as the point of the expression of state power and control. Many of the cross-border activities of the subgroups are at variance with the

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[230] The borderland Yoruba treatment of the boundary actually reflects a conflict of perception. Sometimes, they treat it as though it is not real, while at other times, they exploit its reality to their advantage.

expectation of the state. Along the border under consideration, smuggling, human trafficking, and cross-border banditry are the major abuses of the borderline. These have prompted Nigeria (the more aggrieved of the two states), to adopt some strong border policies, some of which breach bilateral and multilateral agreements, in order to check these activities. However, as this study reveals, these measures, rather than stop these activities, have led to the sophistication of their perpetrators. This, the study discovers, is due to the dissonance of perception, which promote the abuse of the border, as well as the failure of the state to meet its responsibilities.

Another major reaction of the borderland Yoruba to the colonial imposition of the boundary (in colonial times) is protest migration. The Yoruba in the French territory at different times, in reaction to oppressive and exploitative, migrated across the boundary into the British sphere. The study shows that this migration was facilitated by the present of kin-groups across the boundary, which made the adaption of the migrants relatively easy.

Going by the apocalyptic expectations that the ex-colonial boundaries, if unaltered, would generate continent-wide upheavals in postcolonial Africa, African ought to be one massive cauldron. Though, the rate of conflict in Africa is unmatched in the world, very few of these conflicts are related to territorial disputes. Indeed, this study shows that, were the ex-colonial boundaries not adopted as the basis of postcolonial territoriality, Africa would have been embroiled in the type of continental upheaval anticipated by the protagonists of boundary revision. The diminution of the conflict potential of the African boundaries is credited to the OAU Resolution adopting the inherited boundaries as the basis for ordering postcolonial interstate relations in the continent.

Finally, the study contributes to knowledge on the place of the African

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boundary in the context of intensified globalisation. Globalisation has prompted the respatialisation and deterritorialisation of the state, with implications for state territorial sovereignty. Boundaries are being reconceived and redefined, as regional integration has thrown up transnational political organisations, where flows across previously controlled borders, have become unhindered. This pattern is growing across the globe, but most developed in the European Union. However, Africa is yet to be influenced by the reconceptualisation of territorial sovereignty, propelled by regional integration. The rein of the African state over territorial matters are undiminished. Flows across international boundaries are tightly controlled and regulated. As higlighted above, state weakness and the OAU Resolution on borders of 1964 are largely responsible for this resistance of the African state to sovereignty eroding regional integration initiatives.

In spite of the resilience of the state against the globalising forces of integration and respatialisation, it has not be able to resist the influence of transnationalism. This is essentially due to the fact that transnationalism has always been a part of the African society, long before colonisation. As noted above, owing to the depth of ethnic affinity among the Yoruba, ethnic loyalty has always compelled intra-ethnic relations, whether or not the group is located within the territories of one state.

Given this conclusion, what then are the prospects for the long term, for the border and for the Yoruba? We will consider the long term prospect for the border first. As the border is a characteristic of the state, its fortune is directly related to the health of the state. In other words, the state gives form and character to its border. As long as the African state remains weak, characterised by dysfunctional institutions, its borders will be less effectively controlled. Furthermore, as long as these states

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resist integration initiatives and continue to implement competing economic and fiscal policies, the border will remain a tool of economic exploitation and appropriation. Therefore, borders will remain points of loss of state revenues; points of corruption and criminal activities; potential points of interstate conflict, etc.

For the Yoruba people, I do not forsee any fundamental change in their pattern of intra-group relations across the border. The most significant exaplanation for this remains Phiri's (1984) argument that whatever the condition, fractions of the same ethnic group will always interact propelled by the pull of ethnic affinity and solidarity. This is especially true for the Yoruba subgroups whose strength of group affinity and solidarity had been very firmly established prior to colonialism and has been sustained through rival colonialism and rival postindependence territoriality. Again, as the forces which allows the Yoruba to continue to negotiate the boundary as if it is not there to separate them remain, I foresee no tno change in the current pattern of interaction. Indeed, were there to be any transformation, I see a deeper transborder relations developing owing to the recent development of transborder community associations among the Yoruba along this borderline.

In conclusion, the border as presently managed, will be unable to foster a differentiation between the Nigerian Yoruba and the Beninese Yoruba for the foreseeable future. Rather, state weakness and the strength of the Yoruba group identity will make for the reinforcement of the Yoruba identity, thereby sustaining the present resilience of the group identity.

8.4   Agenda Further Research

A number of issues and challenges thrown up in the course of this study warrant examinations which are beyond the scope of the study. This study, being principally a study of the boundary between Nigeria and Benin around the specific

geographical region occupied by the Yoruba ethnic group astride the boundary, is limited in scope to this region, boundary line, people as well as the nation-states. Issues of perception and treatment of the boundary by the states on the one hand and the people on the other; identity and nationality and immigration; smuggling and security concerns; trans-border relations; trade and regionalism, and so on have been approached and studied within the scope of the present study as defined in the background. Consequently, the analysis contained in the study derives primarily from the subject of examination, limited to the particular geographical space.

The research technique adopted for this study reflects the scope and subject of investigation. In the attempt to address the research question relating to the territorial extent of the Yoruba, the research methodology is necessarily characterised by a fluid, accidental observation of a diverse range of actors across a specific geographic range. However, bearing in mind the functionalist inclination of this study, a bottom-up approach, which focuses on two Yoruba borderland settlements, may be more compelling. As Miles (1994: 17) argues, micro-level analysis 'permits a more intimate and hence more powerful representation of reality of the border split'. Furthermore, a more scientific approach, owing to the scope, would be more compelling and attractive.

Apart from methodological considerations, the other lessons learnt and challenges faced by this study would demand a further analysis, which its remit does not presently allow. Given the findings of this study relating to issues of integration and the roles presently being played by the states and the people astride the boundary under consideration, several challenges are posed for further study. Principal issues for consideration in the expanded study would include:

- Do all the boundaries (those that partitioned groups) in Africa exhibit similar

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characteristics? Or are there peculiarities that have developed owing to specific factors? For instance, are there differences between the boundaries between former Francophone colonies on the one hand, and between Francophone and Anglophone (or Lusophone) neighbours on the other hand? This will provide the platform for comparison beyond the scope of the present study;

- The policies of the different states towards the boundary on the one hand, and the actual implementations of these policies on the other. Do all the boundaries exhibit the type of dissonance between policies and practice prevalent in the subject of the present study?

- The examination of the different groups partitioned by the boundaries; their relationship with the part included in the other country; and their perception of the boundary which partitions and separates them. How do we define the identity (nationality) of groups which are partitioned by international boundaries?

- Territorial conflicts between neighbours: what are the factors responsible for these? Why has the OAU/AU recipe failed in these (isolated) cases? Kacowitz (1997) describes West Africa as a region of 'negative international peace'; does this really represent the reality in the regions? And could this also be true for the other regions in the continent?

- Regional economic communities: what are their challenges and prospects for success? For instance, regionalism has been an active objective of the OAU since the 1960s; this effort has also been actively supported by the European Union since the Treaty of Rome in 1958 as well as the United Nations, yet the continent has failed to achieve this set objective. What are the factors

responsible and how can they be ameliorated?

This agenda for further study is necessary in order to transform the findings of the present study from the realm of theory to policy recommendations. It would also address the challenges thrown up by this present study. Furthermore, further research, of the kind being proposed would help in the process of validating the findings of this present study by applying it to other boundaries which partitioned groups into different countries in the continent[231]. For instance, would the findings across the Ghana and Togo boundary along the Ewe region be similar to those of the Yoruba presented here? It would therefore aid the formulation of policies and theories regarding borders, borderlands and borderland peoples in Africa.

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[231] As the scope of regional integration extends beyond bilateral relations (the scope of the present study), it is necessary to push the horizon of the study to include all the boundaries in the region, which partitioned groups in order to identify integration retarding forces.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Interview Questions

General

1. Are you Yoruba?

2. Do you speak the language?

3. Are you aware of the presence of the Yoruba across the boundary (Nigeria or Benin?

4. If yes, are you aware of the historical and cultural linkage between your Yoruba group and those across the boundary?

5. Do you have relatives across the boundary?

6. If yes, what manner of interaction exists between you and them?

7. If no, do you feel any kind of affinity with the group across the boundary?

8. Are you involved in transborder activities?

9. Do you regard the Yoruba, (in Nigeria and Benin) as one?

10. Does your knowledge of, and relationship with the Yoruba on the other side of the boundary have any impact on your cross-border activities?

11. How often do you cross the boundary?

12. Do you cross at official crossing points?

13. If no, why do you not?

14. Do you present your international passport at border crossing points?

15. If no, why?

16. Who would you prefer to relate with: the other ethnic groups in your country or the Yoruba across the boundary?

17. How do you consider the boundary? Is it good or is it an irritant?

18. Would you rather see the boundary redrawn to include the Yoruba in one

country?

19.   Would you want to see freer movement of people, goods and services across the boundary?

20.   Do you wish to see greater integration in this region?

Specific for traditional rulers

1.   Is yours a Yoruba domain?

2.   Has your domain always been located here or did your ancestors migrate from some place? If yes, from where and can you trace the history of your sphere of influence?

3.   What relationship exists between your people and the other Yoruba in this country?

4.   Are you aware of the existence of the Yoruba across the boundary?

5.   What manner of relationship exists between your group and the groups across the boundary?

Specific for government officials

1.   What is the nature of cross-border movement?

2.   Do the people comply with border regulations?

3.   Is the boundary porous? How do you ensure compliance with regulations?

4.   Does the existence of the Yoruba astride the boundary influence illegal cross-border movement?

Appendix 2: Interview Transcript 1

Border Security Official (Nigeria)

Q. Which of the Border Security Agencies do you belong to?

A. Immigrations Service

Q. What is your position in this organisation?

A. Assistant Inspector of Immigration

Q. What are your duties?

A. To generally check the movement of illegal immigrants into the country (Nigeria)

Q. What is the nature of cross-border movement of people?

A. There are two kinds of cross-border movement of people. The first is legal, where travellers comply with border regulations. The second type is illegal (backyard movement), where travellers attempt to circumvent border regulations.

Q. What are the regulations that a traveller needs to satisfy in order to cross the border legally?

A. The possession of valid passport and visa, or ECOWAS travel certificate (for ECOWAS nationals), up-to-date vaccination records, and genuine purpose for travel. For those travellers who are driving their personal cars, they need, in addition to the above, valid vehicle insurance, ECOWAS *laissez passé*, international driver licence, and a certificate of road worthiness.

Q. Do travellers comply with border regulations?

A. Most travellers do not comply with border regulations. They prefer to 'cut corners', as many of them do not have the basic travel documents.

Q. Would you consider the border as porous? How do you ensure compliance with border regulations?

A. About 70% of the border is porous. Border policing is not effective owing to the sheer size of the border and its porosity. The common border policing strategy is 'stop and search'. However, this method is not effective as it is difficult to distinguish nationals from non-nationals because people of the same culture lie astride the boundary. However, in view of the difficulties in patrolling the border, the Nigerian government has established a joint immigrations and customs border patrol.

Q. The Yoruba lie astride the boundary, as you have just identified. Does this influence cross-border criminal activities?

A. To a certain degree, yes. Indeed, illegal cross-border movement is facilitated by the Yoruba people of the border area as they lead travellers, especially smugglers, to secret pathways, in order to avoid the border guards.

Q. There have been issues raised in Nigeria, in recent years, regarding the infiltration of Beninese Yoruba into Nigeria during elections and census, to vote and be enumerated as Nigerians. How does the Service seek to prevent this in the future?

A. I don't think it is possible for Beninese to vote or be counted as Nigerians during elections and census, as the Nigerian borders are usually closed during these periods.

Q. You mentioned earlier that the border is porous and difficult to police. Again, the Nigerian Population Commission and the Nigerian Boundaries Commission, in 2005, organised a joint national workshop, to draw attention to the influence of, and the need to control, foreigners participating in these exercises. This shows that this is a real problem. Does this mean that the Immigrations Service cannot check this infiltration because of the porosity of the border and the difficulty in

distinguishing between Nationals and non-nationals?

A. I would suppose so.

Appendix 3: Interview Transcript 2

Border Security Official (Benin)

Q. Which of the Border Security Agencies do you belong to?

A. The Nigeria – Benin Joint Border Patrol Team

Q. What is your position in this organisation?

A. I am a Gendarmerie

Q. What are your duties?

A. To generally check illegal activities across and around the border

Q. How would you describe this border, seeing that you are a Yoruba in Benin? Do you consider yourself as different from the Yoruba across the border ion Nigeria?

A. There is no difference between us. It is colonisation which parted us. Our people cross the border several times in a day, and the Nigerian people also cross it as frequently as they need. As long as the activity is legal and conducted by the local population, the border guards do not stop such movements.

Q. The Joint Border Patrol Team; who finances its operations?

A. Nigeria provides the larger proportion of men and materials for the Team. Indeed, this vehicle (points to a sport utility vehicle parked in the premises of the Gendarmerie) was donated by the Nigerian government.

Q. What kind of relationship exists between the Nigerian and the Beninese contingents of the Joint Team? How does this affect the efficiency of the Team?

A. There used to be a good working relationship at the beginning. However, over the last few months, the Nigerian arm of the joint patrol has been unilaterally embarking on patrols. They have even been crossing the border into Benin territories to harass and arrest Beninese nationals without courtesy to the Beninese

authorities. The other week, they 'invaded' our territories, shooting sporadically, harassing and arresting our nationals, without the knowledge of our authorities. This can be regarded as an act of war, but due to Nigeria's might, it got away with it. The display of arrogance and power by the Nigerians has led to distrust and disillusionment on the part of the Beninese contingent of the Team.

Q. Can you please describe the nature of illegal activities that you usually encounter?

A. Most crimes usually emanate from Nigeria...

The interview ended abruptly when a superior officer called the interviewee (speaking in the French Language).

Appendix 4: Interview Transcript 3

Border Official (Nigeria)

Q. Which of the Border Security Agencies do you belong to?

A. The Nigerian Customs Service

Q. What is your position in this organisation?

A. I am a Deputy Superintendent of Customs

Q. What are your duties?

A. To prevent the illegal importation of goods, as well as the importation of prohibited goods into Nigeria

Q. What is the nature of cross-border movement of people?

A. Travellers could either make legal or illegal movement across the boundary. Legal movement would entail the possession of laissez passé and other travel documentations. For illegal crossings, this is usually facilitated by tribal linkages

Q. Do travellers comply with border regulations?

A. Travellers hardly comply with border regulations. They consider the territory across the boundary from their location as an extension of their land. This actually have historical basis, but since states now use boundaries to demarcate the extent of their authority, tribal conception should be changed accordingly.

Q. Would you consider the border as porous? How do you ensure compliance with border regulations?

A. The border is extremely porous and cannot be effectively patrolled at present. Due to the porosity of the border, the Customs Service is empowered by the Customs and Excise Code to 'burst' warehouses inside Nigeria, which store contraband. This is in addition to the regular 'stop and search' at the border, and along the route between the border and the major destinations of smuggles goods

in Nigeria.

Q. Does the presence of the Yoruba stride this boundary influence cross-border criminal activities?

A. Yes, it does. That is the way they survive. The youths in this area live on smuggling. It is difficult to apprehend criminals in the borderland, as the indigenous people often frustrate such an exercise. They provide smugglers with a safe-haven, direct them to other routes, which are unknown to the border guards. In addition, they speak the same language as the people across the boundary, they inter-marry, and have strong affinities with the Beninese Yoruba. This makes it difficult to get them to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, especially when the Yoruba across the border are the target.

Q. Is it possible, as it is being claimed in some quarters, that the Beninese Yoruba vote in Nigerian elections, and are counted in Nigerian censuses?

A. I really cannot tell. All I know is that the Nigerian borders are closed during these exercises and movements across them are temporarily stopped.

Q. Smuggling has remained a major problem along the Nigeria – Benin boundary. Why is this so?

A. Government policies, apart from the factors identified above, have also contributed to the problem. For example, as a result of the fall in petroleum price in the international market, as well as the activities of militants in the Delta, the Nigerian government lost approximately $30m monthly. To generate revenue from other sources, the government, through the GRIMALDI Bonded Terminal recently increased the tariff on imported used cars (1.6 – 2.0 litre engine) from about $660 to $1,700. However, as the tariff in Benin is a fraction of what obtains in Nigeria, as well as the special rebate offered to Nigerian importers at the

Cotonou port, the bulk of Nigeria's imports are diverted, and rerouted from Benin (mostly smuggled) into Nigeria to avoid paying the exorbitant rates. This has led to an increase in smuggling in recent months.

Appendix 5: Interview Transcript 4

People on the street (Ketu, Benin)

Q. Are you Yoruba?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you speak the language?

A. Yes.

Q. How old are you?

A. 35 years old

Q. Are you aware of the Yoruba across the boundary in Nigeria?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you aware of the historical and cultural linkages between your group and

the Yoruba across the boundary?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have relatives among the Yoruba across the boundary?

A. Yes

Q. What manner of interaction exists between you and them?

A. Exchange of visits in the service of lineage goals/interests and social welfare

Q. Are you involved in cross-border activities?

A. No, I am not.

Q. Does this mean that you do not do business in Nigeria at all?

A. Oh! Is that what you mean? Of course, I do business.

Q. What sort of business do you do?

A. Buying and selling.

Q. Do you regard the Yoruba (in Nigeria and Benin) as one group?

A. Yes. We are one and the same group. We speak the same language and have

the same culture.

Q. Does your knowledge of, and relationship with the Yoruba across the boundary have any impact on your cross-border activities?

A. Yes. It facilitates the conduct of my business as I travel among people of my culture and language

Q. How often do you cross the border?

A. As often as needed

Q. Do you cross at official crossing points?

A. Yes and no.

Q. Why not?

A. At times, the border guards may want to extort money from travellers, especially traders. So, I may choose not to cross where they can harass me. When Nigeria closes it s border, it becomes impossible to cross at official points, so, we turn to the secret routes.

Q. Do you present your international passport at border crossing?

A. I don't have one.

Q. Who would you prefer to relate with: the other ethnic groups in your country or the Yoruba across the boundary?

A. We are all one people. I have no preference.

Q. Does that mean that should I, a fellow Yorubaman, though from Nigeria, be engaged in a quarrel with an Egun here in Ketu, you would leave me defenceless?

A. Em...if that is the case, I would intervene to resolve the quarrel.

Q. Alright, suppose it is your relative in Nigeria who is being molested by an Egun here in Ketu. What would you do?

A. I will join in to defend my relative.

Q. How would you consider the boundary? Is it good or an irritant?

A. It is good.

Q. Would you rather see the boundary redrawn to include all the Yoruba in one country?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. We are already used to the boundary as it is. Besides which way would the boundary be moved? As long as the states do not consider the boundary an issue, so be it.

Q. Do you wish to see freer movement of people, goods and services across the boundary?

A. Yes. It would encourage more business.

Q. Do you wish to see greater integration in this region?

A. Yes. Greater integration would be beneficial to everyone concerned.

Appendix 6: Interview Transcript 5

People on the Street (Ijofin, Nigeria)

Q. Are you Yoruba?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you speak the language?

A. Yes

Q. How old are you?

A. 46 years old.

Q. Are you aware of the Yoruba across the boundary?

A. Yes

Q. If yes, are you aware of the historical and cultural linkages between your Yoruba group and that across the boundary?

Q. Do you have relatives across the boundary?

A. Yes

Q. If yes, what manner of interaction exists between you and them?

A. Very close relationship. We jointly participate in festivals and other activities.

Q. Are you involved in cross-border activities?

A. No.

Q. What is your occupation?

A. I am a teacher

Q. Do you regard the Yoruba (in Nigeria and Benin) as one?

A. Yes.

Q. Does your knowledge of, and relationship with the Yoruba across the boundary have any impact on your cross-border activities?

A. Yes.

Q. How often do you cross the boundary?

A. Once in a while.

Q. Do you cross at official border crossings?

A. No.

Q. If not, why do you not?

A. Because I do not have a passport

Q. Who would you prefer to relate with: the other ethnic groups in your country, or the Yoruba across the boundary?

A. Other nationals, as this would foster greater national unity.

Q. How do you consider the boundary? Is it good or an irritant?

A. It is good.

Q. Would you rather see the boundary redrawn to include all the Yoruba in one country?

A. No. The boundary is good as it is.

Q. Would you rather see freer movement of people, goods and services across the boundary?

A. No, for security reasons. Freer movement could further deepen the present security problems at the borderland.

Q. Do you wish to see greater integration in this region?

A. Yes.

Appendix 7: Interview Transcript 6

Traditional Ruler (Ketu)

Q. Is your domain a Yoruba kingdom?

A. Yes. It is not only a Yoruba kingdom, Ketu is one of the core Yoruba kingdoms having been founded by one of the sons of Oduduwa a very long time ago.

Q. Has your domain always been located at this present site, or did your ancestors migrate from another location? If yes, from where and can you trace the history of that migration?

A. Our forefathers migrated from Ile-Ife. Sibling rivalry led to migration from Ile-Ife. Oduduwa, the founder of the Yoruba race, had seven sons; to forestall conflict after his death, he counselled his children to migrate, establish towns and become kings over these new settlements. It was one of the earliest waves of migration which led to the foundation of Ketu in its present location. About 120 families of sundry vocations banded together with the Alaketu when he led the migration from Ile-Ife in response to Oduduwa's advice about 1000 years ago. Alaketu's journey to the present location was guided by the Ifa divination. Ketu grew from a small settlement to the apogee of its influence in the early 19th century before it was sacked by the warring Dahomey kingdom. However, as Ketu literally means destroyed, Ketu was reoccupied after every Dahomey attack. The first Dahomey attack occurred on August 1, 1846. The second attack was in 1848, while the final attack, which led to the transportation of the bulk of the population of Ketu to Dahomey as captives was in 1886.

Q. What relationship exists between your people and the other Yoruba across the boundary?

A. We are one people. It was whitemen who divided the land, but the people cannot be divided. We are deeply integrated with our people in Nigeria. During the famine of 1949, we, as a family, had to relocate to the Nigerian side and lived with family for a period of time. During this time, our family planted farms and we attended school there.

Q. Why did the whiteman's boundary divide your domain and what was the reaction to its location?

A. At the time of the pacification of the territotories around Ketu, Ketu was just emerging from the last adventure of the Dahomeans. The Alaketu at this time, (Odemufekun) had gone blind, and according to Ketu customs, a blind Alaketu cannot rule. Hence, his wife (queen), who had a very strong personality, was the effective rule. At this time, British influence had been established at Imeko and the popular opinion favoured a British protectorate over the whole extent of Ketu kingdom. However, without regards to the traditional council, the queen ceded Ketu to the French, in appreciation for the deliverance from Dahomey. This decision was not popular in Ketu, especially because the Alaketu had called the council to make the decision regarding European protection, whose power had been usurped by the queen.

Q. Did you make the coronation pilgrimage to villages and towns in Nigeria as demanded by tradition?

A. Without that pilgrimage, I cannot sit on the throne of my forefathers. I indeed visited these places, which were locations that our forebearers settled in on their way to found Ketu. The pilgrimage began from Imeko to Idofa to Ilikimu (the Alaketu's out of town abode), to Irokoyin, to Idofin and finally to Ketu. The pilgrimage began on the 20th of December 2002 and ended with the royal

proclamation at Ketu on the 27th of December 2002.

A. Thank you, Kabiyesi. Having established the linkage between the Ketu of Benin and the Yoruba across the boundary in Nigeria is there any such linkage amongst the Alaketu and the Nigerian Yoruba obas, on the one hand, and between the Alaketu and other Yoruba obas in Benin?

A. Yes. My predecessor made several visits to prominent Yoruba obas (the Alaafin and the Ooni), who also returned the visits. I am making plans to visit the Ooni and the Alaafin soon. We are in close relationship. Here in Benin, the Yoruba obas have an association which brings us all together for our welfare and the promotion of the Yoruba culture.

My relationship with the Yoruba in Nigeria is far more complex than would be expected. Ketu territory in Nigeria is very expansive. The appointment of every oba in Ketuland must be approved by the Alaketu. Again, I am highly revered by the Ogun State government in Nigeria, which invites me to state functions and accord me the same privilege as other Nigerian Yoruba obas. Ketu is a proper Yoruba town. We listen to the Ogun State Televison and radio stations from Nigeria. Indeed, we prefer these channels because the language of transmission is Yoruba, while the Beninese radio and television broadcast in French.

Q. Finally, Kabiyesi, would you wish that the boundary be redrawn to include the Yoruba in the same country?

A. No. That cannot be done because the people are used to the boundary as it is. It might also create problems with new national identity and new ideas.

Thank you Kabiyesi, may your reign be long and prosperous.

Appendix 8: Interview Transcript 7

Borderland Academic (Imeko)

Q. What is your academic title and area of specialisation?

A. I am a retired professor of History. My area of specialisation is border and borderland studies. Though formally retired, I am still actively engaged in academic research and consultancy. We recently founded the African Regional Institute here in Imeko.

Q. Are you Yoruba?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. Are you aware of the Yoruba astride the Nigeria – Benin boundary?

A. I have researched this borderland since my doctoral programme in the 1960s. I am not only aware of the Yoruba astride the boundary, I have relatives on both sides. We exchange visits as demanded by the necessity of group and family relations. We remain in constant interactions.

Relating to ethnic affinity and relations, there is a resurgence of some sort. In 2001, the educated elite in the borderland area established a cross-border development association called Ketu International Region Development Union. It is a community development association which initially met regularly. Bank accounts were to be opened in Nigeria and Benin; only the Nigerian account had been opened as at 2008. This was a very rigorous initiative. Asiwaju was the foundation president, while Kolawole Idji was the vice. The Union pulled together the most educated elite on both sides. It embarked on development projects across the area. It represented the first time in Africa, the establishment of an association of borderland community; a private initiative aimed at community development.

In Ogun State (Nigeria), there is also a Ketu development association, which is a

community development initiative of the Ketu groups in Nigeria.

The coronation rites of the Alaketu include a pilgrimage to locations around and across the border. Indeed at the coronation ceremony of the present Alaketu in 2005, the Ogun State governor was the guest of honour. Hios presence was unprecedented, and was to mark the beginning of a cordial relationship between the government of Ogun State and the Alaketu. The Alaketu reciprocated the governor's gesture by visiting Abeokuta in 2006 where he was accorded a state reception in the presence of some important Yoruba obas. The Alaketu is also regularly invited to the meetings of the obas in Oyo State, Nigeria

In studying this border, the socialisation processes cannot be ignored as they are very critical to trans-border relations. This boundary sits on the base of a common culture; it is expected to be influenced by this culture, and vice versa

Q. Are you involved in trans-border activities?

A. Yes, scholarly/family related

Q. How often do you cross the border?

A. As required. The most significant element of cross-border movement is commerce. The people have become so involved with arbitrage that they would do anything to sustain it.

Q. Do you cross the border at official crossing points?

A. Yes. It must be noted though, that border crossing is not big issue to the borderland people. They must cross the border in the service of lineage goals and interests. Even when the crossing the border was a hazard, for example in the 1984-86 period when the border was militarised and closed, cross-border visits continued unabated. The border cannot be completely sealed owing to the vast informal network of communication around this region.

Q. Do you present your international passport at these points? If not, why?

A. No. I do not need to as I am well known to the border guards due to my scholarly activities around this area

Q. Who would you prefer to relate with: the other ethnic groups in your country or the Yoruba across the boundary?

A. Inter ethnic relation is necessary for promoting national cohesion. For me, I owe Nigeria a lot and would want to see Nigeria as a more united and stable country. I am a holder of the Officer of the Niger, a retired University Professor and one time, National Boundary Commissioner. While being a Yoruba, I am also a Nigerian, who must work for its unity and stability.

Q. How do you consider the boundary? Is it good or is it an irritant

A. The boundary is simply the juridical extent of the state.

Q. Would you rather see the boundary redrawn to include the Yoruba in one country?

A. No.

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