Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment

Statue of Oya, traditional goddess of rivers and the wife of Shango, Yoruba god of thunder

NIGERIA, THE MOST POPULOUS country in Africa and the tenth largest country by population in the world, is located at the eastern terminus of the bulge of West Africa. As with many of the other nations of Africa, Nigeria's national boundaries result from its colonial history and cut across a number of cultural and physical boundaries. Nigeria has a total area of 923,768 square kilometers, it is about 60 percent the size of the state of Alaska, and has the greatest area of the nations along the coast of West Africa (although in Africa as a whole, it is only the fourteenth largest country by area). The maximum north-south distance within the country is about 1,040 kilometers, whereas the maximum east-west distance is about 1,120 kilometers. Although it represents only about 3 percent of the surface area of Africa, Nigeria contains about 20 percent of sub-Saharan African population. In this and other respects, it is arguably the single most important country on the continent.

Physical Setting

Relief and Main Physical Features

Much of Nigeria's surface consists of ancient crystalline rocks of the African Shield. Having been subject to weathering and erosion for long periods, the landscape of this area is characterized by extensive level plains interrupted by occasional granite mountains. These features are a major landscape type in Nigeria and in West Africa as a whole. Smaller areas of younger granites are also found, for example, on the Jos Plateau (see fig. 8).

Sedimentary strata dating from various periods overlay the older rocks in many areas. The sedimentary areas typically consist of flat-topped ridges and dissected plateaus and a characteristic landscape of extensive plains with no major rocky outcrops. This landscape is generally found in the basins of the Niger and Benue rivers as well as the depressions of the Chad and Sokoto basins in the far northeast and northwest of the country, respectively. The most dramatic of the sedimentary landscapes are in southeastern Nigeria, where thick sedimentary beds from the Abakaliki Uplift to the Anambra Basin have been tilted and eroded. This process has resulted in a rugged scarp land topography with east-facing cliffs in the Udi Hills, north of Enugu, and in the area around Nanka and Agulu.

Although relatively little of the Nigerian landscape has been shaped by volcanic episodes, there are two main areas of volcanic

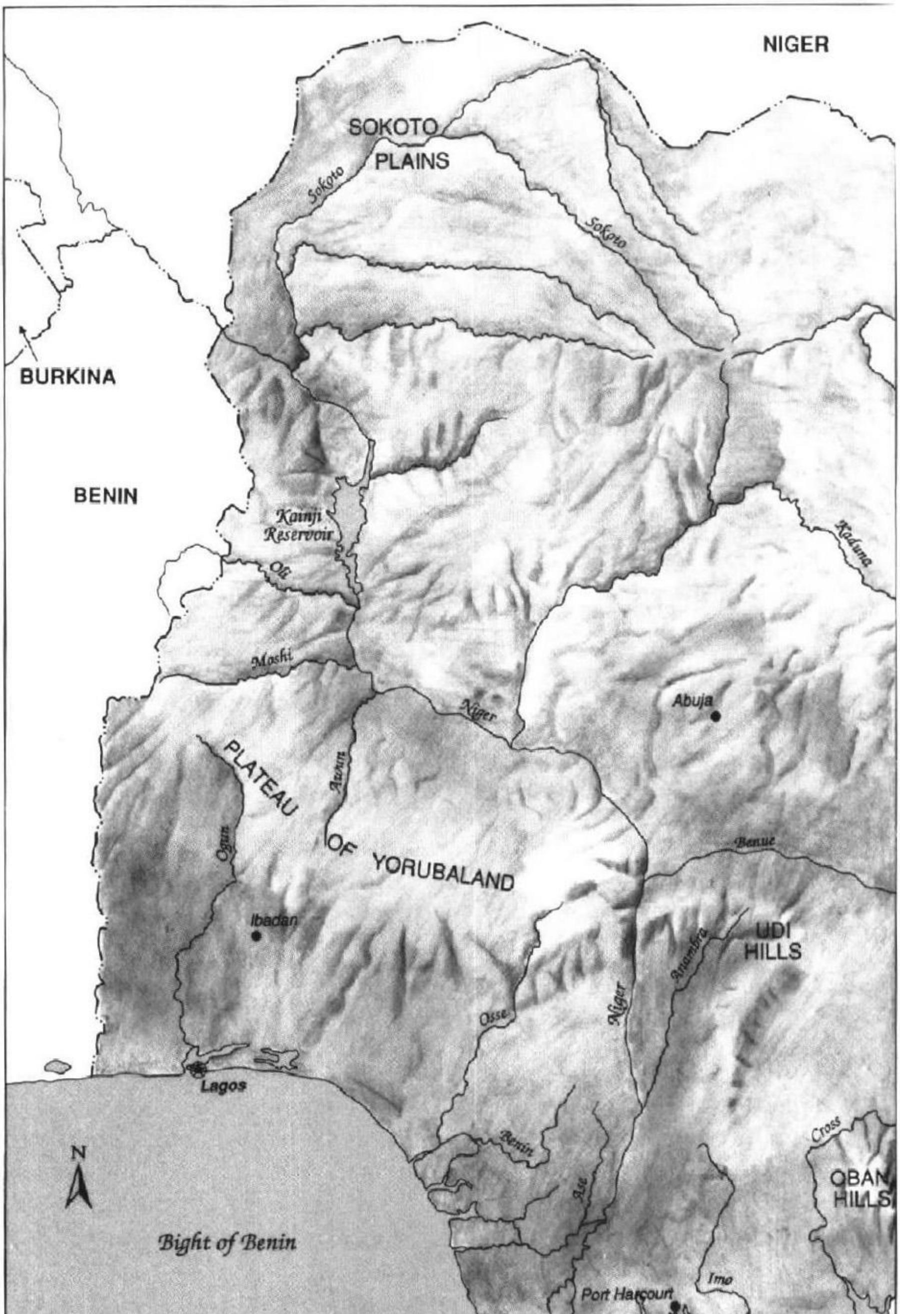
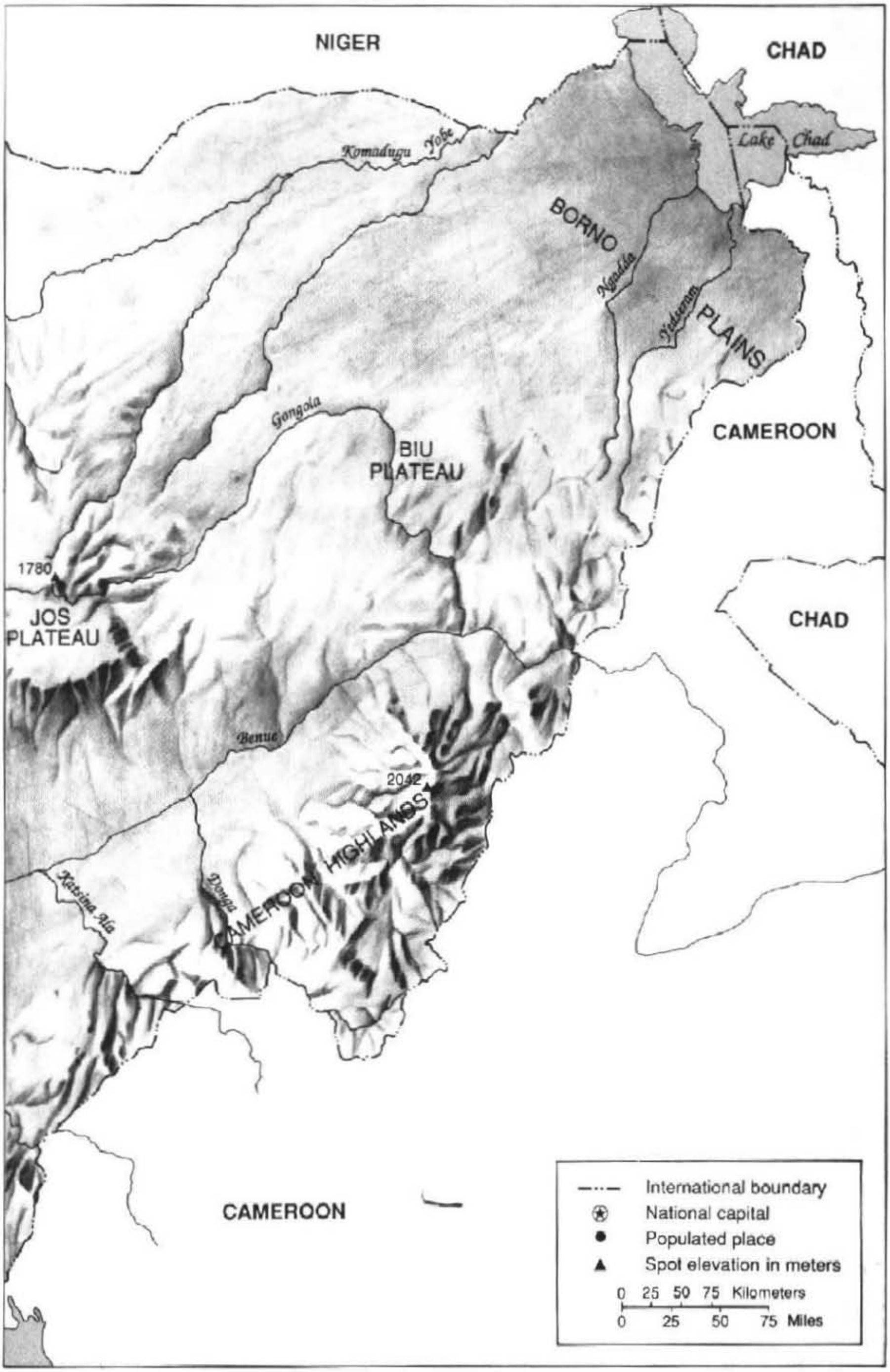


Figure 8. Topography and Drainage


NIGER
CHAD
Komadugu Yobe
Lake Chad
BORNO PLAINS
Ngadda
Yedseram
CAMEROON
Gongola
BIU PLATEAU
1780
JOS PLATEAU
CHAD
Benue
2042
CAMEROON HIGHLANDS
Katsina Ala
Donga
CAMEROON
International boundary
National capital
Populated place
Spot elevation in meters
0 25 50 75 Kilometers
0 25 50 75 Miles

rock. They are found on the Biu Plateau in the northeast, extending into some localized volcanic areas along the eastern border with Cameroon, and on the Jos Plateau in the northern center of the country.

The elevational pattern of most of Nigeria consists of a gradual rise from the coastal plains to the northern savanna regions, generally reaching an elevation of 600 to 700 meters. Higher altitudes, reaching more than 1,200 meters in elevation, are found only in isolated areas of the Jos Plateau and in parts of the eastern highlands along the Cameroon border. The coastal plain extends inland for about ten kilometers and rises to an elevation of forty to fifty meters above sea level at its northern boundary. The eastern and western sections of the coastal plain are separated by the Niger Delta, which extends over an area of about 10,000 square kilometers. Much of this area is swampland, separated by numerous islands. The coastal plain region penetrates inland about seventy-five kilometers in the west but extends farther in the east. This region is gently undulating, with elevation increasing northward and a mean elevation of about 150 meters above sea level. Much of the population of southern Nigeria is located in these eastern and western coastal plains and, as well, in some of the contiguous areas of the coast and the lower Niger Basin.

Separating the two segments of the coastal plain and extending to the northeast and northwest are the broad river basins of the Niger and Benue rivers. The upper reaches of these rivers form narrow valleys and contain falls and rapids. Most of the lower portions, however, are free from rapids and have extensive floodplains and braided stream channels. To the north of the Niger and Benue basins are the broad, stepped plateau and granite mountains that characterize much of northern Nigeria. Such mountains are also found in the southwest, in the region between the western coastal plains and the upper Niger Basin. The western wedge between Abeokuta and Ibadan and the Niger Basin reaches elevations of 600 meters or more, whereas the extensive northern savanna region, stretching from Kontagora to Gombe and east to the border, includes extensive areas with elevations of more than 1,200 meters at its center. The mountainous zone along the middle part of the eastern border, the Cameroon Highlands, includes the country's highest point (2,042 meters). In the far northeast and northwest, elevation falls again to below 300 meters in the Chad Basin in the far northeast and the Sokoto Basin in the northwest.

Climate

As in most of West Africa, Nigeria's climate is characterized by strong latitudinal zones, becoming progressively drier as one moves north from the coast. Rainfall is the key climatic variable, and there is a marked alternation of wet and dry seasons in most areas. Two air masses control rainfall—moist northward-moving maritime air coming from the Atlantic Ocean and dry continental air coming south from the African landmass. Topographic relief plays a significant role in local climate only around the Jos Plateau and along the eastern border highlands. In the coastal and southeastern portions of Nigeria, the rainy season usually begins in February or March as moist Atlantic air, known as the southwest monsoon, invades the country. The beginning of the rains is usually marked by the incidence of high winds and heavy but scattered squalls. The scattered quality of this rainfall is especially noticeable in the north in dry years, when rain may be abundant in some small areas while other contiguous places are completely dry. By April or early May in most years, the rainy season is under way throughout most of the area south of the Niger and Benue river valleys. Farther north, the rains do not usually commence before June or July. Through most of northern Nigeria, the peak of the rainy season occurs in August, when air from the Atlantic covers the entire country. In southern regions, this period marks the August dip in precipitation. Although rarely completely dry, this dip in rainfall, which is especially marked in the southwest, can be useful agriculturally because it allows a brief dry period for grain harvesting.

From September through November, the northeast trade winds generally bring a season of clear skies, moderate temperatures, and lower humidity for most of the country. From December through February, however, the northeast trade winds blow strongly and often bring with them a load of fine dust from the Sahara. These dust-laden winds, known locally as the harmattan, often appear as a dense fog and cover everything with a layer of fine particles. The harmattan is more common in the north but affects the entire country except for a narrow strip along the southwest coast. An occasional strong harmattan, however, can sweep as far south as Lagos, providing relief from high humidities in the capital and pushing clouds of dust out to sea.

Given this climatological cycle and the size of the country, there is a considerable range in total annual rainfall across Nigeria, both from south to north and, in some regions, from east to west. The greatest total precipitation is generally in the southeast, along the coast around Bonny (south of Port Harcourt) and east of Calabar, where mean annual rainfall is more than 4,000 millimeters. Most of the rest of the southeast receives between 2,000 and 3,000 millimeters of rain per year, and the southwest (lying farther north) receives lower total rainfall, generally between 1,250 and 2,500 millimeters per year. Mean annual precipitation at Lagos is about 1,900 millimeters; at Ibadan, only about 140 kilometers north of Lagos, mean annual rainfall drops to around 1,250 millimeters. Moving north from Ibadan, mean annual rainfall in the west is in the range of 1,200 to 1,300 millimeters.

North of Kaduna, through the northern Guinea savanna and then the Sudan (see Glossary) savanna zones, the total rainfall and the length of the rainy season decline steadily. The Guinea savanna starts in the middle belt, or southern part of northern Nigeria. It is distinguished from the Sudan savanna because it has a number of trees whereas the Sudan has few trees. Rainy seasons decline correspondingly in length as one moves north, with Kano having an average rainy period of 120 to 130 days, and Katsina and Sokoto having rainy seasons 10 to 20 days shorter. Average annual rainfall in the north is in the range of 500 to 750 millimeters.

The regularity of drought periods has been among the most notable aspects of Nigerian climate in recent years, particularly in the drier regions in the north. Experts regard the twentieth century as having been among the driest periods of the last several centuries; the well publicized droughts of the 1970s and 1980s were only the latest of several significant such episodes to affect West Africa in this century. At least two of these droughts have severely affected large areas of northern Nigeria and the Sahel region farther north. These drought periods are indications of the great variability of climate across tropical Africa, the most serious effects of which are usually felt at the drier margins of agricultural zones or in the regions occupied primarily by pastoral groups.

Temperatures throughout Nigeria are generally high; diurnal variations are more pronounced than seasonal ones. Highest temperatures occur during the dry season; rains moderate afternoon highs during the wet season. Average highs and lows for Lagos are 31°C and 23°C in January and 28°C and 23°C in June. Although average temperatures vary little from coastal to inland areas, inland areas, especially in the northeast, have greater extremes. There, temperatures reach as high as 44°C before the onset of the rains or drop as low as 6°C during an intrusion of cool air from the north from December to February.

Population

The size of its population is one of Nigeria's most significant and distinctive features. With probably more than 100 million people in 1990—the precise figure is uncertain because there has been no accepted census since 1963, although a census was scheduled for the fall of 1991—Nigeria's population is about twice the size of that of the next largest country in Africa, Egypt, which had an estimated population of 52 million in mid-1989. Nigeria represents about 20 percent of the total population of sub-Saharan Africa. The population is unevenly distributed, however; a large percentage of the total number live within several hundred kilometers of the coast, but population is also dense along the northern river basin areas such as Kano and Sokoto. Population densities, especially in the southwest near Lagos and the rich agricultural regions around Enugu and Owerri, exceed 400 inhabitants per kilometer (see table 2, Appendix). None of the neighboring states of West or Central Africa approaches the total level of Nigerian population or the densities found in the areas of greatest concentration in Nigeria. Several of Nigeria's twenty-one states have more people than a number of other countries in West Africa, and some of the Igbo areas of the southeast have the highest rural densities in sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast, other areas of Nigeria are sparsely populated and have apparently remained so for a considerable time. This pattern of population distribution has major implications for the country's development and has had great impact on the nation's postindependence history.

Migration from rural to urban areas has accelerated in recent decades. Estimates of urban dwellers reveal this shift. In 1952, 11 percent of the total population was classified as urban; in 1985, 28 percent. One-sixth of the urban population, or approximately 6 million people, lived in Lagos, and in 1985 eight other cities had populations of more than 500,000.

Census History

Although numerous estimates of the Nigerian population were made during the colonial period, the first attempt at a nationwide census was during 1952-53. This attempt yielded a total population figure of 31.6 million within the current boundaries of the country. This census has usually been considered an undercount for a number of reasons: apprehension that the census was related to tax collection; political tension at the time in eastern Nigeria; logistical difficulties in reaching many remote areas; and inadequate training of enumerators in some areas. The extent of undercounting has been estimated at 10 percent or less, although accuracy probably varied among the regions. Despite its difficulties, the 1952-53 census has generally been seen as less problematic than any of its successors.

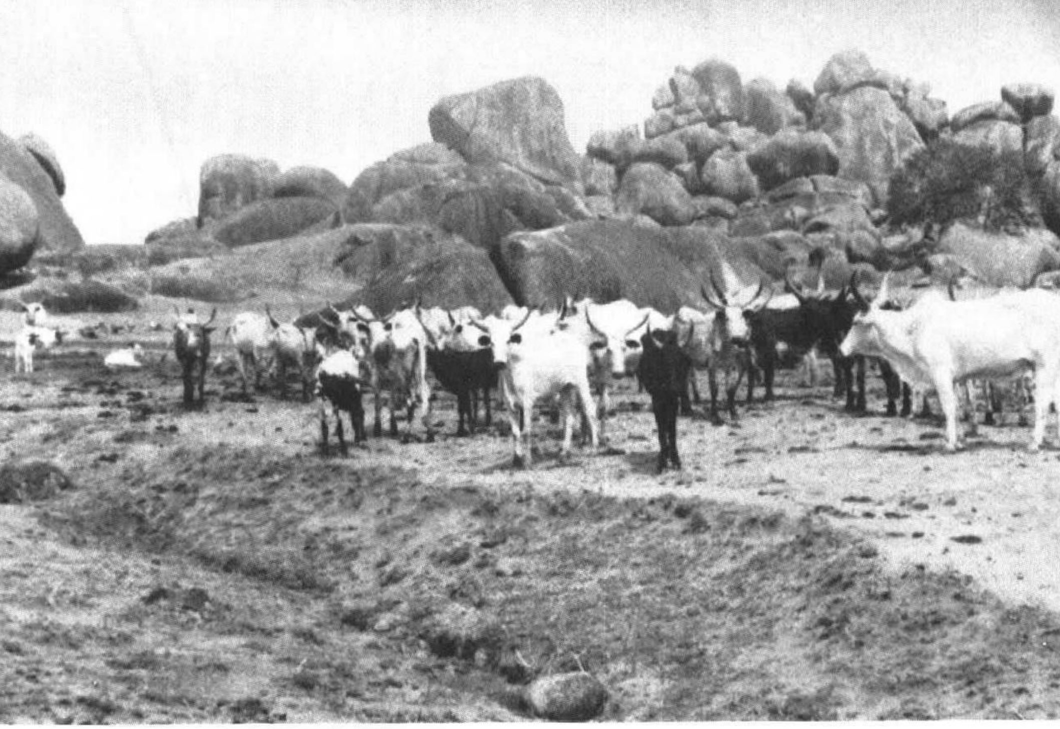
Subsequent attempts to conduct a reliable postindependence census have been mired in controversy, and only one was officially accepted. The first attempt, in mid-1962, was canceled after much controversy and allegations of overcounting in many areas. A second attempt in 1963, which was officially accepted, also was encumbered with charges of inaccuracy and manipulation for regional and local political purposes. Indeed, the official 1963 figure of 55.6 million as total national population is inconsistent with the census of a decade earlier because it implies a virtually impossible annual growth rate of 5.8 percent. In addition to likely inflation of the aggregate figure, significant intraregional anomalies emerge from a close comparison of the 1953 and 1963 figures. In portions of the southeast, for example, the two sets of data imply that some nonurban local government areas (LGAs) had increased at a rate of almost 13 percent per year, whereas other neighboring areas experienced a minute growth rate of 0.5 percent per year. Despite the controversy, the results of the 1963 census were eventually accepted.

After the civil war of 1967-70, an attempt was made to hold a census in 1973, but the results were canceled in the face of repeated controversy. No subsequent nationwide census had been held as of 1990, although there have been various attempts to derive population estimates at a state or local level. Most official national population estimates are based on projections from the 1963 census.

The great improvements in transport and accessibility of most areas, in technological capability, and in the level of education throughout the country, as well as the generalized acceptance of national coherence and legitimacy, favored the success of the fall 1991 census. It was to be conducted in about 250,000 enumeration areas by the National Population Commission, with offices in each of the country's LGAs. To reduce possible controversy, religious and ethnic identification would be excluded from the census forms, and verification of state results would be handled by supervisors from outside the state. Some analysts believe that the effort to carry out a reliable census with perceived legitimacy might become an unexpectedly positive exercise, reinforcing a sense of shared nationhood and providing a model for the attempt to overcome regional and ethnic differences.

Population Estimates and the Demographic Transition

The absence of virtually any reliable current demographic data has not prevented national and international bodies from generating estimates and projections of population and population growth in Nigeria. The World Bank (see Glossary) estimate of Nigeria's 1990 population was 119 million, with an estimated annual growth rate of 3.3 percent. Although other sources differed on the exact figure, virtually all sources agreed that the annual rate of population



Cattle grazing in the hilly terrain of northern Nigeria
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

growth in the country had increased from the 1950s through most of the 1980s. The government estimated a 2 percent rate of population growth for most of the country between 1953 and 1962. For the period between 1965 and 1973, the World Bank estimated Nigeria's growth rate at 2.5 percent, increasing to 2.7 percent between 1973 and 1983. Projections about the population growth rate were uncertain, however, in view of questions concerning the accuracy of Nigerian census statistics.

This increase was typical of most of sub-Saharan Africa, where growth rates increased steadily throughout the post-World War II period. The key to decelerating the rate of population growth would be a sharp decline in the fertility rate, which is defined as the average number of children a woman will bear in her lifetime. Considered the second stage of the demographic transition process, this decline was well under way in 1990 in most other developing regions of the world, except for the Islamic nations of the Middle East. Few African countries, however, had experienced any substantial fertility decline, and the overall fertility rate for sub-Saharan Africa was estimated as 6.5 in 1983.

Any decline in the population growth rate in Nigeria or the rest of sub-Saharan Africa was expected to depend on the balance between the demand for smaller families and the supply of birth control technology. Urbanization (especially when full households, rather than just males, are involved) was likely to be the most powerful factor leading to a decline in fertility because it induced the most radical shifts in the relative costs and benefits of having large numbers of children. Other important factors were likely to include the availability of health care and of birth control information and equipment in both rural and urban areas, the rate of expansion of education, and the general pace of economic development. If the pattern of change in Africa were to follow that in other parts of the world, urbanization, economic development, education, improved health care, increased availability of birth control, and declining infant mortality would eventually lead to a marked decline in fertility rates.

Between 1970 and 1987, life expectancy in Nigeria was estimated to have increased from forty to fifty-one years. Much of this rise resulted from a sharp decline in mortality among infants younger than one year and children ages one to four. Infant mortality was estimated to have declined 25 percent from 152 per 1,000 live births in 1965 to 113 in 1983, and child mortality declined almost 50 percent from 33 to 17 per 1,000 in the same period. These levels were likely to continue to fall, thereby exerting continuing upward pressure on the population growth rate. As of 1990, maternity deaths exceeded 75,000 per year, excluding deaths resulting from illegal abortions, and both were estimated to have risen during the 1980s.

Despite the probable decline in fertility in the 1990s, given the country's age structure, Nigeria's 1990 population was expected at least to double before the middle of the next century. Somewhat less than half of Nigeria's 1990 population was younger than fifteen. As a result, even if population growth were to drop immediately to a replacement rate and remain there, the 1990 population would double before stabilizing. Nigeria, thus, could expect to deal with a population of more than 200 million probably within the next twenty-five years.

These projections suggested that population growth would be an issue of central concern for Nigeria for some time to come. Merely to remain at current per capita levels, agricultural production, industrial and other economic output, and provision of health and other social services would all need to double within twenty-five years. This situation was a challenge of historic proportions for Nigeria, and one faced by many other nations of Africa.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is one of the keys to understanding Nigeria's pluralistic society. It distinguishes groupings of peoples who for historical reasons have come to be seen as distinctive—by themselves and others—on the basis of locational origins and a series of other cultural markers. Experience in the postindependence period fostered a widespread belief that modern ethnicity affects members' life chances. In Nigerian colloquial usage, these collectivities were commonly called "tribes." In the emergent Nigerian national culture, this topic was discussed widely as "tribalism," a morally reprehensible term whose connotations were similar to American terms such as "discrimination," "racism," or "prejudice." Nigerian national policies have usually fostered tolerance and appreciation for cultural differences, while trying at the same time to suppress unfair treatment based on ethnic prejudice. This long-term campaign involved widespread support in educated circles to replace the term "tribe" or "tribal" with the more universally applicable concept of ethnicity. Nevertheless, the older beliefs died slowly, and ethnic identities were still a vital part of national life in 1990.

The ethnic variety was dazzling and confusing. Estimates of the number of distinct ethnic groupings varied from 250 to as many as 400. The most widely used marker was that of language. In most cases, people who spoke a distinct language that had a separate term for the language and/or its speakers saw themselves, or were viewed by others, as ethnically different. Language groupings were numbered in the 1970s at nearly 400, depending upon disagreements over whether or not closely related languages were mutually intelligible. Language groupings sometimes shifted their distinctiveness rather than displaying clear boundaries. Manga and Kanuri speakers in northeastern Nigeria spoke easily to one another. But in the major Kanuri city of Maiduguri, 160 kilometers south of Manga-speaking areas, Manga was considered a separate language. Kanuri and Manga who lived near each other saw themselves as members of the same ethnic group; others farther away did not.

Markers other than language were also used to define ethnicity. Speakers of Bura (a Chadic language closely related to Marghi) saw themselves traditionally as two ethnic groups, Bura and Pabir, a view not necessarily shared by others. Bura mostly adhered to Christianity or to a local indigenous religion, and a few were Muslims. They lived originally in small, autonomous villages of 100 to 500 persons that expanded and split as the population grew. The Pabir had the same local economy as the Bura, but they were Muslim, they lived in larger (originally walled) villages of 400 to 3,000 with more northerly architectural styles, they resisted splitting up into subgroups, and they recognized a central ruler (emir) in a capital town (Biu). There was a strong movement in the 1980s among many Bura speakers to unite the two groups based on their common language, location, and interests in the wider society. Given long-standing conflicts that separated them as late as 1990, however, their common ethnicity was open to question.

The official language of the country is English, which is taught in primary schools and used for instruction in secondary schools and universities. All officials with education to secondary school level or beyond spoke English and used it across language barriers formed by Nigeria's ethnic diversity. Many in the university-trained elite used English as one of the languages in their homes and/or sent their children to preschools that provided a head start in English-language instruction. In addition to English, pidgin has been used as a lingua franca in the south (and in adjoining Cameroon) for more than a century among the nonschool population. In 1990 it was used in popular songs, radio and television dramas, novels, and even newspaper cartoons. In the north, southerners spoke pidgin to one another, but Hausa was the lingua franca of the region and was spreading rapidly as communications and travel provided a need for increased intelligibility. Counting English, the use of which was expanding as rapidly as Hausa, many Nigerians were at least trilingual. This language facility usually included a local vernacular, a wider African lingua franca, and English. Given the long history of trade and markets that stimulated contacts across local ethnic units, multilingualism was a very old and established adaptation. Such multilingualism enabled communication among different ethnic groups in the country.

Regional Groupings

The broadest groupings of linked ethnic units are regional. Britain ruled most of the area of present-day Nigeria as two protectorates from 1900 to 1914, the southern and northern protectorates each having separate regional administrations. These portions were joined finally under a single Nigerian colonial government in 1914. But they retained their regionally based authorities, divided after 1914 into three regional units. The announcement of their imminent demise by the first postcoup military government in 1966 helped to set off violent reactions in the north against southerners who had settled in their midst, contributing to the outbreak of civil war.

Within each of the major northern and southern regions, there were significant subregions that combined ethnicity, geography, and history. What is generally referred to historically as the south included a western Yoruba-speaking area, an eastern Igbo area (the "g" is softly pronounced), a midsection of related but different groups, and a set of Niger Delta peoples on the eastern and central coastal areas. The north was widely associated with the

Hausa-speaking groups that occupied most of the region, but the Kanuri predominated in the northeast, with a belt of peoples between the two. There were also important pastoral nomadic groups (mostly Fulani) that lived throughout the same region. In the middle belt (see Glossary) were congeries of peoples in an area running east-west in the hills, along the southern rim of the north, dividing it from the larger region of Nigeria's south. On its northern side, the middle belt shaded culturally into the Muslim north. In contrast, on the southern side, its peoples were more similar to those of the south.

The Northern Area

The best known of the northern peoples, often spoken of as coterminous with the north, are the Hausa. The term refers also to a language spoken indigenously by savanna peoples spread across the far north from Nigeria's western boundary eastward to Borno State and into much of the territory of southern Niger. The core area lies in the region in the north and northwest where about 30 percent of all Hausa could be found. It also includes a common set of cultural practices and, with some notable exceptions, Islamic emirates that originally comprised a series of centralized governments and their surrounding subject towns and villages.

These precolonial emirates were still major features of local government in 1990. Each had a central citadel town that housed its ruling group of nobles and royalty and served as the administrative, judicial, and military center of these states. Traditionally, the major towns were also trading centers; some such as Kano, Zaria, or Katsina were urban conglomerations with populations of 25,000 to 100,000 in the nineteenth century. They had central markets, special wards for foreign traders, complex organizations of craft specialists, and religious leaders and organizations. They administered a hinterland of subject settlements through a hierarchy of officials, and they interacted with other states and ethnic groups in the region by links of warfare, raiding, trade, tribute, and alliances.

The rural areas remained in 1990 fundamentally small to medium-sized settlements of farmers ranging from 2,000 to 12,000 persons. Both within and spread outward from the settlements, one-third to one-half the population lived in hamlet-sized farm settlements of patrilocal extended families, or *gandu,* an economic kin-based unit under the authority and direction of the household head. Farm production was used for both cash and subsistence, and as many as two-thirds of the adults also engaged in off-farm occupations.

Throughout the north, but especially in the Hausa areas, over the past several centuries Fulani cattle-raising nomads have migrated westward, sometimes settling into semisedentary villages. Their relations with local agriculturalists generally involved the symbiotic trading of cattle for agricultural products and access to pasturage. Conflicts arose, however, especially in times of drought or when population built up and interethnic relations created pressures on resources. These pressures peaked at the beginning of the nineteenth century and were contributing factors in a Fulani-led intra-Muslim holy war and the founding of the Sokoto Caliphate (see Usman dan Fodio and the Sokoto Caliphate, ch. 1). Fulani leaders took power over the Hausa states, intermarried with the ruling families and settled into the ruling households of Hausaland and many adjacent societies. By the twentieth century, the ruling elements of Hausaland were often referred to as Hausa-Fulani. Thoroughly assimilated into urban Hausa culture and language but intensely proud of their Fulani heritage, many of the leading "Hausa" families in 1990 claimed such mixed origins. In terms of local traditions, this inheritance was expressed as a link to the conquering founders of Sokoto and a zealous commitment to Islamic law and custom.

Centralized government in the urban citadels along the southern rim of the desert has encouraged long-distance trade over the centuries, both across the Sahara and into coastal West Africa after colonial rule moved forcefully to cut the trans-Saharan trade, forcing the north to use Nigerian ports. Ultimately, this action resulted in enclaves of Hausa traders in all major cities of West Africa, linked socially and economically to their home areas.

In summary, Hausa is both an ethnic group and a language; in contemporary usage the term refers primarily to the language. Linked culturally to Islam, Hausa are characterized by centralized emirate governments, Fulani rulers since the early nineteenth century, extended households and agricultural villages, trade and markets, and strong assimilative capacities. For these reasons, Hausa cultural borders have been constantly expanding. Given modern communications, transportation, and the accelerating need for a lingua franca, Hausa was rapidly becoming either the first or second language of the entire northern area of the country.

The other major ethnic grouping of the north is that of the Kanuri of Borno. They entered Nigeria from the central Sahara as Muslim conquerors in the fifteenth century, set up a capital, and subdued and assimilated the local Chadic speakers. By the sixteenth century, they had developed a great empire that at times included many of the Hausa states and large areas of the central Sahara (see

The Savanna States, 1500–1800, ch. 1). Attacked in the nineteenth century by the Fulani, they resisted successfully, although the conflict resulted in a new capital closer to Lake Chad, a new ruling dynasty, and a balance of power between the Hausa-Fulani of the more westerly areas and the Kanuri speakers of the central sub-Saharan rim.

Even though Kanuri language, culture, and history are distinctive, other elements are similar to those of the Hausa. Similar elements include the general ecology of the area, Islamic law and politics, the extended households, and rural-urban distinctions. There was, however, a distinctive Kanuri tradition of a U-shaped town plan open to the west. The town's political leader or founder was housed at the head of the plaza, in an area formed by the arms of the U. The people remained intensely proud of their ancient traditions of Islamic statehood. Among many ancient traits were their long chronicles of kings, wars, and hegemony in the region and their specific Kanuri cultural identity, which was reflected in the hairstyles of the women, the complex cuisine, and the identification with ruling dynasties whose names and exploits were still fresh.

Things have been changing, however. Maiduguri, the central city of Kanuri influence in the twentieth century, was chosen as the capital of an enlarged Northeast State during the civil war. Because this state encompassed large sections of Hausa-Fulani areas, many of these ethnic groups came to the capital. This sudden incorporation, together with mass communications, interstate commerce, and intensification of travel and regional contacts brought increased contacts with Hausa culture. By the 1970s, and increasingly during the 1980s and into the 1990s, Kanuri speakers found it best to get along in Hausa, certainly outside their home region and even inside Borno State. By 1990 women were adopting Hausa dress and hairstyles, and all schoolchildren learned to speak Hausa. Almost all Bornoans in the larger towns could speak Hausa, and many Hausa administrators and businesspeople were settling in Borno. Just as Hausa had incorporated its Fulani conquerors 175 years earlier, in 1990 it was spreading into Borno, assimilating as it went. Its probable eventual triumph as the universal northern language was reinforced by its utility, although the ethnically proud Kanuri would retain much of their language and culture for many years.

Along the border, dividing northern from southern Nigeria lies an east-west belt of peoples and languages, generally known as the middle belt. The area runs from the Cameroon Highlands on the east to the Niger River valley on the west and contains 50 to 100

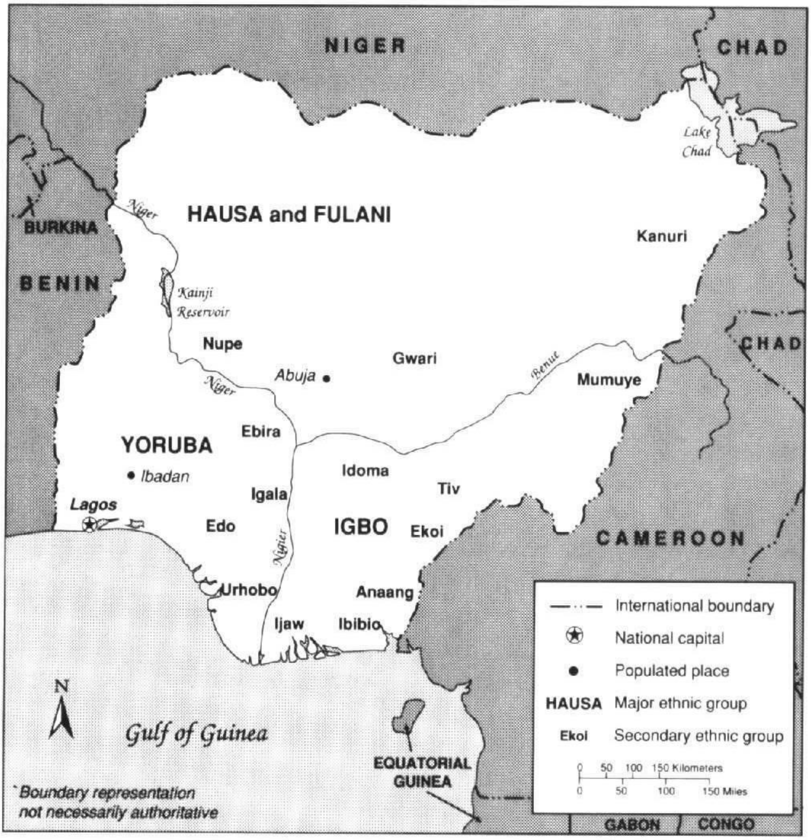


Figure 9. Distribution of Principal Ethnic Groups, 1990

separate language and ethnic groups (see fig. 9). These groups varied from the Nupe and Tiv, comprising more than half a million each, to a few hundred speakers of a distinct language in small highland valleys in the Jos Plateau. On the east, languages were of the Chadic group, out of which Hausa differentiated, and the Niger-Congo family, indicating links to eastern and central African languages. In the west, the language groupings indicated historical relations to Mende-speaking peoples farther west. Cultural and historical evidence supports the conclusion that these western groups were marginal remnants of an earlier substratum of cultures that occupied the entire north before the emergence of large centralized Islamic emirates.

In time three distinct kinds of organized groups emerged. The largest and most centralized groups, such as the Nupe, under colonial administration became smaller versions of the emirates. A few of these peoples, such as the Tiv, were of the classic "segmentary" variety, in which strongly organized patrilineages link large portions of the ethnic group into named nonlocal segments based on real and putative concepts of descent. Local organization, land tenure, inheritance, religious beliefs, law, and allegiances are all related to this sense of segmentary lineage relationship. During the 1960s, some Tiv segments allied with the southern political parties, and others linked with the northern parties. Like the larger groups, they demanded, and by 1960 had been granted, a central "chief" and local administration of their own.

The most common groupings in the middle belt were small localized villages and their outlying hamlets and households; they were autonomous in precolonial times but were absorbed into wider administrative units under British rule. Most often they were patrilineal, with in-marrying wives, sons, unmarried daughters, and possibly parents or parents' siblings living together. Crops separated this residence grouping from similar ones spread out over a small area. They cultivated local fields and prayed to local spirits and the ghosts of departed lineage elders. Descendants of founders were often village heads or priests of the village shrine, whereas leading members of the other lineages formed an eldership that governed the place and a few outlying areas, consisting of those who were moving toward open lands as the population increased.

The missionaries and party politics influenced, but did not obliterate, these older units. Missionaries arrived in the 1910s and 1920s and were allowed into non-Muslim areas. They set up schools using United States or British staff to teach English and helped to create a sense of separateness and educational disparity between the Christianized groups and Muslim ones. From the 1920s to current times, both religions competed for adherents. Political parties representing both southern and northern interests have always found supporters in this border area, making its participation in national life more unpredictable. Attempts in the 1960s and 1970s to create a separate region, or develop a political party representing middle belt peoples, were quickly cauterized by northern Muslim-based political parties whose dominance at the national level could have been weakened by losing administrative control over the middle belt.

At the same time, possibly the greatest influence on the area was that of Hausaization. The emergent dominance of the Hausa language, dress patterns, residential arrangements, and other cultural features was clear as one traveled from the far north into the middle belt area. Local councils that only a few years previously had dressed differently and had spoken in local vernaculars looked and acted in 1990 as if they were parts of more northerly areas. Although Hausaization was weaker in the more remote areas and in Jos, the largest middle belt city, it was progressing rapidly everywhere else and constituted a unifying factor throughout the region.

The Southern Area

In general, the southern groups of peoples are fragmented. In 1990 the two most important groupings were the Igbo and the Yoruba—both linguistic communities rather than single ethnic units. History, language, and membership in the modern nation-state, however, had led to their identity as ethnic groups. In addition, although not as clearly differentiated, two subunits had strong traditions of ethnic separateness. These were the peoples of the Niger River delta area and those on the border between the Igbo and Yoruba.

Yorubaland takes in most of southwestern Nigeria and the peoples directly west of the Nigerian border in the independent country of Benin. In Nigeria alone, Yorubaland included 20 million to 30 million people in 1990 (about double the 1963 census figures). Each of its subunits was originally a small to medium-sized state whose major town provided the name of the subgrouping. Over time seven subareas—Oyo, Kabba, Ekiti, Egba, Ife, Ondo, and Ijebu—became separate hegemonies that differentiated culturally and competed for dominance in Yorubaland. Early nineteenth-century travelers noted that northern Oyo people had difficulty understanding the southern Ijebu, and these dialect differences remained in 1990. The language is that of the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family, related to the Idoma and Igala of the southern grouping of middle belt chieftaincies south of the Benue River. The population has expanded in a generally westerly and southwesterly direction over the past several centuries. In the twentieth century, this migration brought Yoruba into countries to the west and northwest as far as northern Ghana.

The Yoruba kingdoms were essentially unstable, even when defended by Portuguese guns and later by cavalry (in Ilorin and Kabba), because the central government had insufficient power constitutionally or militarily to stabilize the subordinate chiefs in the outlying centers. This separatist tendency has governed Yoruba contemporary history and has weakened traditional rulers and strengthened the hands of local chiefs and elected councils. Ilorin, like Nupe to the north, was an exception, an extension of Fulani imperial expansion; in 1990 it was ethnically Yoruba, yet more closely allied through its traditional rulers to the Islamic societies to the north. It thus formed a bridge between north and south.

The region has had the longest and most penetrating contacts with the outside world of any area in Nigeria. Returned Yoruba slaves, the early nineteenth-century establishment of the Anglican Church, and Yoruba churchmen, such as Bishop Samuel Adjai Crowther (active in the 1820s), made the region's religious life, its formal education, and its elites among the most Westernized in the country (see Christianity, this ch.). The first university, founded in 1948, was at Ibadan in the heart of Yorubaland, as were the first elite secondary schools; the first research institutes for agriculture, economics, African studies, and foreign affairs; the first publishing houses; and the first radio and television stations. Wole Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel prizewinner in literature, claims Yoruba ethnicity. The entry port of Lagos, predominantly Yoruba, is the largest and economically dominant city in the country (and its first capital).

In relation to other Nigerian peoples, the Yoruba have a strong sense of ethnic identity and of region, history, and leadership. In relation to each other, the seven subgroups have inherited prejudices and behavior that could exacerbate animosities should other factors such as access to education or prominent positions create conflict among the subdivisions. At the same time, the longer contacts of the Yoruba with Westernizing influences have created some dedicated nationalists who see their Yoruba identity as a contributing factor in their loyalty to the wider concept of a Nigerian nation-state.

The other major group of the south are the Igbo. The Igbo are found primarily in the southeast and speak a Kwa language of the Niger-Congo family. This language ties them, historically, to regions east and south of their contemporary locations. In 1990 it was hard to find any major town in Nigeria without an Igbo minority, often in an ethnic enclave. As communities they have traditionally been segmented into more than 200 named groupings, each originally a locally autonomous polity. These groupings vary from a single village to as many as two or three dozen nucleated settlements that over time have expanded outward from an original core town. Most of these central villages ranged from 1,000 to 3,000 persons in the nineteenth century. In 1990 they were as much as five to ten times larger, making severe land shortages and overused farmland a widespread problem. Precolonial trade up the Niger River from the coast stimulated the early development of a few larger towns, such as Onitsha, that in 1990 contained a population of several hundred thousand. Igbo culture, however, unlike the emirates and the Yoruba city-states, does not count urban living among the traditional ways of life.

For the Igbo as an ethnic group, personal advancement and participation in local affairs are matters of individual initiative and skill. Villages are run by a council of the most respected elders of the locality. Colonial administration created local headmen, or "warrant chiefs," who were never fully accepted and were finally replaced by locally elected councils.

This development does not mean that Igbo culture is exclusively dedicated to egalitarianism. Rank and wealth differences have been part of the society from early times and have been highly prized. Success, eldership, wealth, a good modern education, political power, and influence have all been recognized as ways by which people, especially adult males, could distinguish themselves. As with all Nigerian societies, Igbo life is complex, and the organization of local and regional society is stratified into more and less affluent and successful groups, families, individuals, and even neighborhoods. Graduates of secondary schools form "old boy associations," some of which have as members wealthy men linked to one another as local boosters and mutual supporters. Comparatively speaking, Igbo are most unlike other Nigerians in their strong positive evaluation of open competition for success. Children are encouraged to succeed; if they do so skillfully, rewards of high status await them. It is no accident that the first American-style land-grant university, linked for guidance during its founding to Michigan State University, was at Nsukka in Igboland, whereas the first universities in Yorubaland and in the north looked to Britain and its elitist traditions of higher education for their models of university life.

Psychological tests of "achievement motivation" that measure American-style individual competitiveness against standards of excellence given to comparable Nigerian groups resulted in Igbo people placing highest, followed by Yoruba, and then Hausa. This stress on individual achievement has made Igbo people seem "pushy" to fellow Nigerians, whose own ethnic traditions foster individual contributions to collective achievements within close-knit kin and patron-client groups that are more hierarchically arranged. In these latter groups, achievements are obtained through loyalty, disciplined membership in a large organization, and social skills that employ such memberships for personal advancement.

The impressive openness of Igbo culture is what first strikes the outsider, but closer inspection produces several caveats. Besides differences of wealth and rank achieved in one's lifetime or inherited, there is a much older tendency for people who trace their descent from the original settler-founders of a village to have higher status as "owners of the land." Generally, they provide the men who act as priests of the local shrines, and often they provide more local leaders than descendants of later arrivals. At the other end of the scale are known descendants of people, especially women, who were originally slaves. They are akin to Indian "untouchables," low in status and avoided as marriage partners.

As with all Nigerian ethnic groups, there are internal divisions. Generally, these have to do with town area of origin. More northerly areas have had a feeling of separateness, as do larger towns along the Niger River. Beyond Igboland, people from the region are treated as a single unit, live in separate enclaves, and even face restrictions against ownership of local property in some northern towns. Once they had suffered and fought together in the civil war of Biafran secession in the 1960s, these people developed a much stronger sense of Igbo identity that has since been expressed politically. Nevertheless, localized distinctions remain and in 1990 were significant internally.

The peoples of the Atlantic Coast and the Niger River delta are linguistically and culturally related to the Igbo. But the ecological demands of coastal life and the separate history of contact with coastal trade and its effects have produced ethnic differences that are strong enough to have made these people resist the Biafra secession movement when it was promulgated by Igbo leadership. Ijaw, Ibibio, Anang, and Efik live partly from agriculture and partly from fishing and shrimping in the coastal waters. Religion, social organization, village life, local leadership, and gender relations have been deeply affected by this ecology-based differentiation. Although there has been a natural and historical pull of migration to Lagos, especially by young Ijaw men who went to the city to find work and send home remittances, the area boasts its own coastal town of Port Harcourt in Efik country that is, in a sense, the headquarters of this subgrouping.

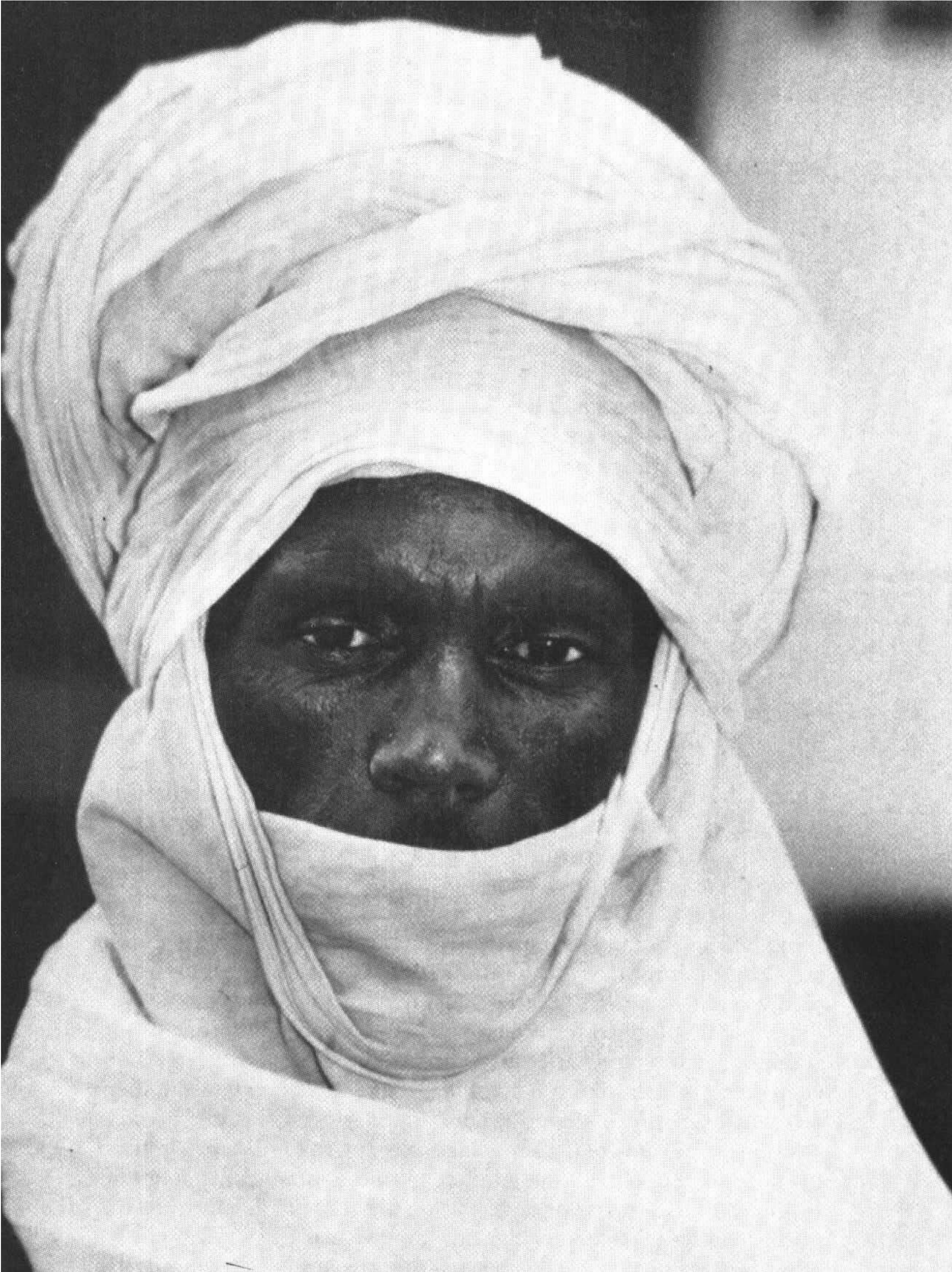
To a lesser extent, the peoples of the western bank of the Niger River—and the western delta—especially the Bini speakers and Urhobo—are culturally close to those around them but have a sufficient sense of linguistic and historical separateness to see themselves as unique. These differences have been partly buttressed by the past glory of the kingdom of Benin, of which a much diminished remnant survived in 1990. Benin had been used to provide the south first with an extra region, then with extra states when the regional level of government was abandoned in 1967.

Ethnic Relations

Relations between ethnic groups remained a major problem for such a large and pluralistic society in 1990. In precolonial times, interethnic relations were often mistrustful, or discriminatory, and sometimes violent. At the same time, there were relationships, such as trade, that required peaceful communications. The most widespread communication was in the north between pastoral and agricultural peoples, who traded cattle for farm products and pasturage rights for manuring. Farmers might also buy a few cattle and have them cared for by pastoralists. Emirate rulers who normally raided and pillaged among non-Muslim village groups often established peaceful "trust" relations with residents of one or two villages; those residents then acted as hosts and guides for the raiders in exchange for immunity for themselves. More subtle and peaceful exchanges involved smaller ethnic groups in the middle belt, each of which specialized in one or more commodities. In towns and along trade routes, occupations such as smithing, producing cotton, selling cattle, weaving, house building, and beer making were often confined to, or correlated with, ethnically defined units. Thus, ecological and economic specializations promoted peaceful interethnic relations. Conversely, promulgating conflict, mistrust, and stereotypes in ethnic relations were droughts; competition for control over trade routes or allies; resistance to, or the creation and maintenance of, exploitative relations; and other factors.

The civil war taught Nigerians that ethnic conflicts were among the most destructive forces in the life of the nation. By 1990 ethnic conflict was suppressed and carefully controlled so that any outbreak or seriously publicized discrimination on ethnic grounds was considered a matter of national security. In the few outbreaks that had occurred since the war, the federal government acted swiftly to gain control and stop the conflict. Nevertheless, the way in which ethnic relations might threaten the security of individuals and groups was one of the most serious issues in national life, especially for the millions of Nigerians who had to live and work in interethnic contexts.

Even in the more cosmopolitan cities, in 1990 more than 90 percent of marriages were within rather than between ethnic units, or at least within identical regions and language groups. Marriages between subgroups of Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, or Kanuri occurred without stigma and had done so for many decades. But in the south, Yoruba-Igbo unions were uncommon, and north-south marriages were even rarer, especially between Hausa-Fulani or Kanuri and any person from southern Nigeria. Northern Muslim intermarriage was not uncommon, nor was intermarriage among peoples of the middle belt. But unions between middle belters and Muslims from emirates farther north remained rare. Migrants who could not find a spouse from their own ethnic group within the



Village elder from Gusau in highlands of eastern Nigeria
Courtesy World Bank (Josef Hadad)

local enclave obtained a mate from the home community. Social pressure for ethnic endogamy was intense and persisted even among elites in business, universities, the military, religion, and politics. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, it appeared that marriages within the Christian and Muslim communities were increasingly transethnic.

The conjunction of location, language, religion, and common and differentiating customs has created a strong sense of shared fate among coethnics and has formed a constant basis for organizing ethnically related groupings into political constituencies. Thus, when political parties emerged, they represented the northern Muslim peoples, the Yoruba, and the Igbo; middle belters and others in between were courted from several directions (see The Second Republic, ch. 4). Given the shortage of government jobs and the expanding numbers of qualified applicants coming out of the education system, ethnic rivalry for government posts exacerbated ethnic competition. It was also a driving force in the establishment of more states, with more state capitals and more locally controlled jobs. Such jobs were likely to be less competitive ethnically because the boundaries of local governments tended to correlate with ethnic units. Under such conditions, would-be leaders stimulated the fears of their ethnic constituents. Ethnic organizations and university students wrote letters to newspapers pressuring for greater representation, more development resources, and separate states or districts for their particular group. Countering this practice, after the civil war the new constitution of 1979 provided that no political party could be legalized unless it obtained support in all parts of the country. This attempt to crosscut ethnicity with rules of political party competition has gone far toward alleviating the problem.

People first looked for relatives when migrating into one of the country's many large cities, as an increasing number of Nigerians were doing. If they found none, they looked for coethnics from their own rural area who shared a network of friends, neighbors, and relations. They spoke the same language, went to the same church or mosque and helped one another to find a job and housing and to join ethnic associations. In the textile mills of Kaduna in the north, studies of "class formation" among workers indicated that ethnic groupings were far stronger and used more frequently by workers than were trade unions, unless working conditions became extremely bad. It was only then that union membership, interaction, strength, and unity rose. Otherwise, ethnicity was the primary dimension for worker relations and mutual aid. Studies elsewhere in the country produced similar results. The trade union movement in Nigeria was well established and strong, especially at times of severe economic downturn, such as the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the structural adjustment program (SAP) severely decreased real wages (see Labor Unions; Structural Adjustment, ch. 3). Rivalry within unions, however, and worker associations for mutual aid, as well as normal social life at work and afterward, were strongly influenced by formal and informal ethnic affiliations.

Ethnic stereotypes remained strong. Each of the main groups had disparaging stories and sayings about the others that were discussed openly when a foreigner was alone with members of a single ethnic group. Such prejudices died slowly, especially when ethnic groups lived in enclaves, knew little of each other's customs, and often attended different schools. It was official policy, however, to protect the rights of minorities, and in several instances the will to do so was ably demonstrated. Thus, Igbo property abandoned in the north at the time of the civil war was maintained by local governments and later returned. Although there were problems, this property restitution, the attempt to ensure that Igbo were accepted at all major universities, and the placement of Igbo in civil service posts has helped to create a sense of nationhood and trust in the rule of law and in the good intentions of the federal government.

Contemporary Society

Nigerian history has provided an extraordinary set of pressures and events as a context for modern nation building: the imposition of colonial rule, independence, interethnic and interregional competition or even violence, military coups, a civil war, an oil boom that had government and individuals spending recklessly and often with corrupt intentions, droughts, and a debt crisis that led to a drastic recession and lowered standards of living. Under such circumstances, people tended to cleave to what they knew. That is to say, they adhered to regional loyalties, ethnicity, kin, and to patron-client relations that protected them in an unstable and insecure environment. Meanwhile, other factors and processes stimulated by education, jobs, politics, and urban and industrial development created crosscutting ties that linked people in new, more broadly national ways.

By 1990 both sets of distinctions operated at once and gave no sign of weakening. For example, from time to time labor unions were able to call widespread, even general, strikes. At other times, unorganized workers or farmers rioted over long-held or sudden grievances. Nevertheless, attempts to create national movements or political parties out of such momentary flare-ups failed. Instead, once the outburst was over, older linkages reasserted themselves.

In effect, the structure of society in 1990 was the result of these two processes—historical, locational, and ethnic on the one hand and socioeconomic on the other. In Nigeria the latter context referred primarily to occupation, rural-urban residence, and formal education. Together these factors accounted for similarities and differences that were common across ethnic and regional groupings.

Social Structure

About 70 percent of all Nigerians were still living in farming villages in 1990, although the rural dwellers formed a shrinking proportion of the labor force. It was among these people that ways of life remained deeply consistent with the past. People lived in small, modest households whose members farmed, sold some cash crops, and performed various kinds of nonfarm work for cash income. With the steady decline of export crop prices since the 1960s and the price rise in locally grown foods after the early 1970s, farmers shifted from export crops to local foods for their own subsistence and for sale to city consumers through middlemen. Most farmers used traditional hand tools in smallholdings outside the rural village. Houses in 1990 might have tin roofs instead of grass, and the village water supply might be a standpipe, or a hand pump. New practices included the widespread acceptance of fertilizers; a few new crops, especially corn; the use of rented tractors; the increased dependence on paid labor; and the development of larger commercial farms. Absentee city-based farmers also had started to buy up agricultural land.

Paved roads, better marketing procedures, and increased extension services in 1990 were producing a change in the rural areas that was missing during the first decades of independence. Surveys indicated that improved transportation (paved or dirt roads and cheap, private minibus services) was felt to be the most important change, bringing almost all rural areas into touch with nearby cities and larger market towns. Still, for most of the 70 to 80 percent of the people who remained involved in agriculture, life was hard, and income levels averaged among the lowest in the country.

Western-style education was a necessary, albeit not always sufficient, means to gain better income and rank. Under colonial rule, literacy and educational qualifications were required for access to more powerful, better paying jobs. Education in 1990 was one of the most widely accepted criteria for job recruitment. Older education systems, especially in the Islamic north, had always produced clerics and judges and some training for the populace. Long years of Quranic learning continued to give one high status in religious occupations, but to qualify for secular jobs in the upper salary scale required at least secondary and, increasingly, postsecondary schooling. Most rural families tried to get at least one child through six years of elementary school and into secondary school, if possible. In the cities, if a family had any stable income, all of the children attended school, tried for secondary level and even went on to university or other postsecondary education if the youngsters could successfully compete for places. For the wealthy, there were private preschools in all major cities that provided a head start in academic work and private boarding schools that generally followed the British model (see Education, this ch.).

By the 1980s, the education system was turning out an increasing surplus of graduates. Dozens of university graduates lined up for a single opening and many more for less specialized positions. Under such conditions, nepotism, ethnic favoritism, and bribery flourished in employment decisions.

Education requirements for work were known and widely discussed. Job descriptions for government posts, commercial companies, and even factory work required set levels of schooling for applicants. Large factories and international corporations had training programs for future managers. In the 1980s, however, the vast majority of workers still learned their skills from the family or on the job. Outside the home, systems of apprenticeship produced cheap labor for the teacher and gave the trainee skills, along with a potential future network of customers or employers. Thus, truck drivers took on trainees, who worked as apprentice-assistants and general laborers for several years before they took a license test and hired out as drivers themselves. During that time, they learned about roads, maps, truck parks, markets, and vehicle servicing; they became acquainted with customers and vehicle owners, who in turn learned about their trustworthiness and efficiency.

In contemporary Nigeria as elsewhere, occupation differentiated people, incomes, and life-styles. In rural areas, smallholder farmers were the rule, but farmers often had a nonfarm occupation in order to produce income during the nongrowing season. The size of the farm depended on family size, farming skills, inherited wealth, and access to nonfarm income to provide money for laborers. Some nonfarm work, such as trade, was prestigious; some, such as butchering, was less so. The most prestigious work in rural areas was in public administration, either as local traditional headmen and chiefs or as rural representatives of government departments—such as teachers, district officers, veterinarians, extension workers, public works foremen, postal officials, and the like. Such offices required formal educational qualifications. The offices offered steady salaries and the possibility of government housing, or housing and vehicle allowances. Unlike farming, such work also meant protection against the vagaries of climate and economic conditions. This situation lasted well into the late 1980s, at which point inflation, recession, and government cutbacks destroyed these advantages.

In 1990 a growing number of medium-sized towns (with more than 10,000 people) were spreading out across the country. They contained branch banks; branches of larger urban-based trading companies; smaller stores; and trade, building, and transport enterprises whose owner-managers formed a rural middle class of semiurbanized households. Often such individuals owned and operated nearby commercial farms as part of their diversified business interests. Their incomes were higher than those of usual farm families; their education level was quite low, ranging up to completion of primary school; and they were often active as local political party representatives with links to more important men and organizations in nearby cities.

In a number of special situations, the government had invested in a rural area, creating peri-urban conditions surrounding a large town. Government involvement might result in a state university or a large irrigation project, for example, or, on a smaller scale, the building of a secondary school that had been sited with appropriate housing, electrification, and transportation links to a nearby urban center. In some instances, such as the Tiga Dam in Kano State or the massive irrigation project on Lake Chad, entire communities had sprung up to provide housing for the technical staff; new schools and markets also were built to meet the increased consumer needs of the farmers whose incomes rose as the project went into production.

Because of high inflation and sluggish salary increases throughout the 1980s and into 1990, rural officials were obliged to moonlight, usually by farming, to maintain real wage levels. Extension workers had been observed spending their days in a nearby city on a second job and carrying out visits to farmers in the evenings and on weekends. The wives of officials set up poultry sheds behind their houses and raised chickens and eggs for local and nearby city markets. By contrast, traditional chiefs, who had less formal education and often received much lower salaries than government representatives, were able to sell services, especially access to land purchases; to adjudicate disputes; and to keep a small portion of taxes. This shadowy income allowed them to maintain or even increase consumption levels more easily and set the pattern for the sale of public services that was quickly picked up by other officials

Migration of Fulani people in northern Nigeria
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

living in rural areas. In the late 1980s, these well-established "corrupt" practices were viewed widely as essential for rural officials because real incomes had fallen so drastically.

In the cities, occupations were highly differentiated. Unskilled traditional work was more common in the northern cities but not yet extinct in southern areas. Unskilled workers in the traditional sector included water carriers, servants, women and young girls selling cooked foods on the streets, and hawkers of all kinds linked to patrons who supplied them and took part of the proceeds. The move to cities involved vast numbers of unemployed, who sought any type of work. In the modern sector, the unskilled were taken on by manufacturing plants, wholesale or retail establishments, hotels, and government departments. Such people lived in crowded rented rooms, often several families in a room with a curtain down the middle. They cooked in a common courtyard and used a latrine that might serve a number of families; the compound might or might not have a source of water. They barely managed even when their wives and children also sought work daily.

Lower-level skilled workers in the traditional sector were employed in house building and a variety of crafts from pottery to iron and brass smithing, leather work, tanning, and butchery. They generally had better incomes, lived in several rooms or even a small house or compound, practiced their craft in the household itself, and sent children to school. Their counterparts in the modern sector were clerks, store attendants, mechanics, carpenters, and factory workers who had some schooling and had managed to get into the lower levels of the wage system. The two groups often lived in the same neighborhoods, although the education of those in the modern sector set them somewhat apart. Their incomes, however, provided them with similar amenities: a standpipe for household water; electricity; a latrine or even a flush toilet; a bicycle or motor scooter, or a motorcycle for the slightly better off; a radio; and, for a few, a small black and white television set and a bank account. Such households often had an extra kin member or two from the country who had come to seek their fortunes.

The middle-level income groups in traditional jobs consisted of higher-level skilled workers and entrepreneurs. They included dye pit owners with a small work force, middlemen who with financing from larger traders bought food and export crops in rural areas for sale and storage in the cities, and wholesalers and retailers of traditional goods and services, as well as transporters of such items as kola nuts, craft goods, specialty crops, and cattle for sale in southern markets. This group was larger in the north than the south because of the larger traditional economic sector in the region. Skilled workers in the modern sector ranged from machine operators and skilled craftsmen to accountants; teachers; lower-level managers of service stations; small to medium-sized storekeepers, who owned or rented and operated a canteen; owners of a truck or two, or of a small minibus used as transport for people and goods; and workers in the middle ranks of the vast public services that, until the shrinkage of the 1980s, accounted for more than half of the salaried jobs in Nigeria.

This group lived in small to medium-sized houses with Western-style furniture, a refrigerator, and electronic receivers; the better-off had color television sets. Housing was sometimes owned by the worker but more often rented. Younger members had motorcycles; more mature ones, cars; and entrepreneurs, a pickup truck. Modern-sector middle-level people generally had some secondary education, which allowed them to spend time filling out applications and to dream of someday attending a university or other post-secondary institution to qualify for higher paid jobs.

At the middle-income level, a number of factors began to separate traditional and modern households. Traditional work did not demand literacy in English, but most jobs at the modern middle level did. The amount of Western-style education and acculturation to more international tastes affected the life-styles of modern-sector workers, although ethnicity, kin, and possible patrons in the more traditional sector meant that connections were not severed. At the same time, both groups had connections upward and downward in both the city and rural areas. For members of the traditional middle group, this meant the possibility of someday becoming wealthier and diversifying their economic activities; for members of the modern group, it most often meant more education, better jobs, and, ideally, entry into the elite level of society in either the public or the private sector. By the late 1980s, a number of middle-income workers and small businessmen in both north and south were putting greater effort into farming in natal or nearby villages, as food prices escalated in the cities and as government policies favored the private acquisition of land and provided farm credits to would-be commercial farmers.

Above the middle rank were the elites. Traditional chiefs in the south had been losing power to business and government leaders for decades. In 1990 they still received respect and officiated at ceremonial occasions, but unless they had taken positions in business or government, their status declined. This situation was less true in the north, where emirs and other titled officials continued to have considerable power and authority. Even there, however, the modern sector produced city and township governments that were eroding the power of local officials. State governments were becoming more important as centralized federal functions carried out by parastatals were being sold off to the private business sector during the 1980s. In the rural areas of the north, however, traditional district and village chiefs remained influential. In the modern sector, public service jobs and incoming top management in corporations required university degrees. Wealthy business leaders might lack formal education, although more and more business leaders, especially in the south, were university graduates. Entry-level salaries for elite jobs were fifteen to twenty times those of the bottom salary scale (compared with two to three times in more developed economies). Added to the basic salary was hidden income in the form of car loans and allowances. Housing often was subsidized to such an extent that only 7 percent of salary was charged for rents and maintenance was free. Housing for holders of elite jobs was generally of the standard of the middle class in a developed country, but ranged up to huge mansions in exclusive housing estates for the very rich.

In the late 1980s, inflation and wage controls had drastically eroded the incomes of the salaried elites, and, in most cases, they had to moonlight in the private sector through farming, trade, consultancy, or business. It was not unusual to find a professor's campus garage used as a warehouse for his trucks and the equipment used in his construction business; behind his house might be pens where his wife conducted a poultry business. Others sought to emigrate, especially highly skilled people, such as doctors, lawyers, and professors, who realized that they could do much better abroad. The sudden decline in the income of the elites resulted from Nigeria's belt-tightening policies. Business people, especially those in trade, were less affected by inflation, but the recessionary effects of the SAP had cut into their incomes, as well, by lowering demand or by controlling imports and exports more tightly. By the late 1980s, many of the elite and even the middle classes were being obliged to adjust to a lower standard of living.

Women's Roles

As with other aspects of society, in the early 1990s women's roles were primarily governed by regional and ethnic differences. In the north, Islamic practices were still common. This process meant, generally, less formal education; early teenage marriages, especially in rural areas; and confinement to the household, which was often polygynous, except for visits to kin, ceremonies, and the workplace, if employment were available and permitted by a girl's family or husband. For the most part, Hausa women did not work in the fields, whereas Kanuri women did; both helped with harvesting and were responsible for all household food processing. Urban women sold cooked foods, usually by sending young girls out onto the streets or operating small stands. Research indicated that this practice was one of the main reasons city women gave for opposing schooling for their daughters. Even in elite houses with educated wives, women's presence at social gatherings was either nonexistent or very restricted. In the modern sector, a few women were appearing at all levels in offices, banks, social services, nursing, radio, television, and the professions (teaching, engineering, environmental design, law, pharmacy, medicine, and even agriculture and veterinary medicine). This trend resulted from women's attendance at women's secondary schools and teachers' colleges, and in the 1980s from women holding approximately one-fifth of university places—double the proportion of the 1970s. Research in the 1980s indicated that, for the Muslim north, education beyond primary school was restricted to the daughters of the business and professional elites, and in almost all cases, courses and professions were chosen by the family, not the women themselves.

In the south, women traditionally had held economically important positions in interregional trade and the markets, had worked on farms as major labor sources, and had had influential positions

A family preparing gari, *cassava porridge*
Courtesy UNICEF (Maggie Black)

in traditional systems of local organization. The south, like the north, however, had been polygynous; in 1990 it still was for many households, including those professing Christianity. Women in the south, especially among the Yoruba peoples, had received Western-style education since the nineteenth century, and hence they occupied positions in the professions and to some extent in politics. In addition, women headed households, something not seriously considered in Nigeria's development plans. Such households were more numerous in the south, but they were on the rise everywhere.

Generally, Nigerian development planning referred to "adult males," "households," or "families." Women were included in such units but not as a separate category. Up until the 1980s, the term "farmer" was assumed to be exclusively male, even though in some areas of the south women did most of the farm work. In Nigerian terms, a woman was almost always defined as someone's daughter, wife, mother, or widow. Single women were suspect, although they constituted a large category, especially in the cities, because of the high divorce rate. Traditionally, and to some extent this remained true in popular culture, single adult women were seen as available sexual partners should they try for some independence and as easy victims for economic exploitation. In Kaduna State, for example, investigations into illegal land expropriations noted that women's farms were confiscated almost unthinkingly by local chiefs wishing to sell to urban-based speculators and would-be commercial farmers.

A national feminist movement was inaugurated in 1982, and a national conference held at Ahmadu Bello University. The papers presented there indicated a growing awareness by Nigeria's university-educated women that the place of women in society required a concerted effort and a place on the national agenda; the public perception, however, remained far behind. For example, a feminist meeting in Ibadan came out against polygyny and then was soundly criticized by market women, who said they supported the practice because it allowed them to pursue their trading activities and have the household looked after at the same time. Research in the north, however, indicated that many women opposed the practice and tried to keep bearing children to stave off a second wife's entry into the household. Although women's status would undoubtedly rise, for the foreseeable future Nigerian women lacked the opportunities of men.

Religion

Several religions coexisted in Nigeria, helping to accentuate regional and ethnic distinctions. All religions represented in Nigeria were practiced in every major city in 1990. But Islam dominated in the north, Protestantism and local syncretic Christianity were most in evidence in Yoruba areas, and Catholicism predominated in the Igbo and closely related areas. The 1963 census indicated that 47 percent of Nigerians were Muslim, 35 percent Christian, and 18 percent members of local indigenous congregations. If accurate, these figures indicated a sharp increase in the number of Christians (up 13 percent); a slight decline among those professing indigenous beliefs, compared with 20 percent in 1953; and only a modest (4 percent) rise of Muslims. This surge was partly a result of the recognized value of education provided by the missions, especially in the previously non-Christian middle belt. It also resulted from 1963 census irregularities that artificially increased the proportion of southern Christians to northern Muslims. Since then two more forces have been operating. There has been the growth of the Aladura Church, an Africanized Christian sect that was especially strong in the Yoruba areas, and of evangelical churches, in general, spilling over into adjacent and southern areas of the middle belt. At the same time, Islam has been spreading southward into the northern reaches of the middle belt, especially among the upwardly mobile, who saw it as a necessary attribute for full acceptance in northern business and political circles. In general, however, the country should be seen as having a predominantly Muslim north and a non-Muslim, primarily Christian south, with each as a minority faith in the other's region; the middle belt was more heterogeneous.

Indigenous Beliefs

Alongside most Nigerian religious beliefs were systems of belief that had ancient roots in the area. These beliefs tied family ghosts to the primordial spirits of a particular site. In effect the rights of a group defined by common genealogical descent were linked to a particular place and the settlements within it. The primary function of such beliefs was to provide supernatural sanctions and legitimacy to the relationship between, and the regulations governing, claims on resources, especially agricultural land and house sites. Access rights to resources, political offices, economic activities, or social relations were defined and legitimized by these same religious beliefs.

The theology expressing and protecting these relationships centered, first, on the souls of the recently dead, ghosts who continued their interest in the living as they had when they were alive. That is to say, authoritative elders demanded conformity to rules governing access to, and inheritance of, rights to resources. Indigenous theology also comprised all of the duties of the living to one another and to their customs, including their obligations to the dead ancestors whose spirits demanded adherence to the moral rules governing all human actions. The second pantheon were the supernatural residents of the land. These spirits of place (trees, rock outcroppings, a river, snakes, or other animals and objects) were discovered and placated by the original founders, who had migrated to the new site from a previous one. Spirits of the land might vary with each place or be so closely identified with a group's welfare that they were carried to a new place as part of the continuity of a group to its former home. In the new place, these spiritual migrants joined the local spirit population. Such deities developed from an original covenant created by the founders of a settlement between themselves and the local spirits. This covenant legitimized their arrival. In return for regular rites and prayers to these spirits, the founders could claim perpetual access to local resources. In doing so, they became the lineage in charge of the hereditary local priesthood and village headship and were recognized as "owners of the place" by later human arrivals. Both sets of spirits, those of family and those of place, demanded loyalty to communal virtues and to the authority of the elders in defending ancient beliefs and practices.

In addition to ensuring access to, and the continual fertility of, both land and people, the spiritual entities protected their adherents from misfortune, adjudicated disputes through trials by ordeal or through messages divined by special seers, and punished personal or communal immorality through personal and group failures, sickness, drought, fires, and other catastrophes. Special practitioners were in control of supernatural forces to heal illnesses, counter malevolent intentions by others and the ghostly entities, and diagnose witchcraft—the effects of malefactors whose personal spirits might cause harm, sometimes without the actual knowledge of the evildoer. Protection against misfortune was strengthened by charms, amulets, and medicinal products sold by the practitioners. In everyday life, misfortune, sickness, political rivalries, inheritance disputes, and even marital choices or the clearing of a new field could be incorporated and explained within this religious framework. Given these beliefs, causal relations were stipulated and explained through the actions of supernatural entities, whose relations to the living involved interventions that enforced morality and traditional values.

As with many peoples around the world, especially in Africa, the adult men were organized into secret societies that imitated the activity of the spirits in maintaining the moral order. In the 1980s in Igboland and in similar societies in neighboring areas, social control and conformity to moral order was still enforced by secret societies. In the 1970s, this pattern was observed spreading into small, originally autonomous communities of the southern middle belt at the northern rim of Igboland. Generally, adult men received some training and were then initiated into membership. In 1990 memberships were more selective, and in some places such organizations had died out. Specifically, these societies enforced community morality through rituals and masked dances. During these performances, secret society members imitated the spirits. They preached and expressed displeasure with and gave warnings about individual and communal morality, attributing accusations and threats to spirits of place and family who were displeased with their human charges.

Sorcery and even witchcraft beliefs persisted and were discussed as forms of medicine, or as coming from "bad people" whose spirits or souls were diagnosed as the cause of misfortune. There also were special ways in which the outcomes of stressful future activity, long trips, lingering illnesses, family and other problems could be examined. Soothsayers provided both therapy and divinatory foreknowledge in stressful situations.

In the city-states of Yorubaland and its neighbors, a more complex religion evolved that expressed the subjugation of village life within larger polities. These city-states produced a theology that linked local beliefs to a central citadel government and its sovereignty over a hinterland of villages through the monarch. The king (*oba*) and his ancestors were responsible for the welfare of the entire state, in return for confirmation of the legitimacy of the *oba*'s rule over his subjects (see Early States Before 1500, ch. 1). In Oyo, for example, there were a number of national cults, each with its own priests who performed rituals under the authority of the king (*alafin*) in the public interest. Shango, god of thunder, symbolized the power of the king and of central government; Ogboni represented the fertility of the land and the monarch's role in ensuring the well-being of the kingdom.

In 1990 these indigenous beliefs were more or less openly practiced and adhered to among many Christians and Muslims in various parts of the country. Thus, in a number of the northern Muslim emirates, the emir led prayers for the welfare of the state at the graves of royal ancestors. In many Muslim and Christian households and villages, a number of the older religious practices and beliefs also survived. On the other hand, research indicated that many, especially younger people, believed the older traditions to be apostasy so that it was common, particularly in rural areas, to see mixtures of local beliefs with either Christianity or Islam. And in some instances, although the overall trend was away from indigenous religions and toward monotheism, older people suffered such mental and physical anguish over denouncing inherited beliefs that they abandoned the newer one.

Islam

Islam is a traditional religion in West Africa. It came to northern Nigeria as early as the eleventh century and was well established in the state capitals of the region by the sixteenth century, spreading into the countryside and toward the middle belt uplands. There, Islam's advance was stopped by the resistance of local peoples to incorporation into the emirate states. The Fulani-led jihad in the nineteenth century pushed Islam into Nupe and across the Niger River into northern Yoruba-speaking areas. The colonial conquest established a rule that active Christian proselytizing could not occur in the northern Muslim region, although in 1990 the two religions continued to compete for converts in the middle belt, where ethnic groups and even families had adherents of each persuasion.

The origins of Islam date to Muhammad (the Prophet), a prosperous merchant of the town of Mecca in Arabia. He began in A.D. 610 to preach the first of a series of revelations granted him by God (Allah) through the agency of the archangel Gabriel. The divine messages, received during solitary visits into the desert, continued during the remainder of his life.

Muhammad denounced the polytheistic paganism of his fellow Meccans; his vigorous and continuing censure ultimately earned him their bitter enmity. In 622 he and a group of followers accepted an invitation to settle in Yathrib, which became known as Medina (the city) through its association with him. The hijra (known in the West as the hegira), or journey to Medina, marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar in the year 622. In Medina Muhammad continued his preaching, ultimately defeated his detractors in battle, and had consolidated the temporal as well as spiritual leadership of most Arabs before his death in 632.

After Muhammad's death, his followers compiled his words that were regarded as coming directly from God in a document known as the Quran, the holy scripture of Islam. Other sayings and teachings of the Prophet, as well as the precedents of his personal behavior as recalled by those who had known him, became the hadith ("sayings"). From these sources, the faithful have constructed the Prophet's customary practice, or sunna, which they endeavor to emulate. Together, these documents form a comprehensive guide to the spiritual, ethical, and social life of the faithful in most Muslim countries.

The *shahada* (profession of faith, or testimony) states succinctly the central belief, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet." The faithful repeat this simple profession on ritual occasions, and its recital designates the speaker as a Muslim. The term *islam* means submission to God, and the one who submits is a Muslim.

The God preached by Muhammad was previously known to his countrymen, for *Allah* is the general Arabic term for the supreme being rather than the name of a particular deity. Rather than introducing a new deity, Muhammad denied the existence of the pantheon of gods and spirits worshipped before his prophethood and declared the omnipotence of God, the unique creator. Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets," the last of the prophetic line. His revelations are said to complete for all time the series of revelations that had been given earlier to Jews and Christians. God is believed to have remained one and the same throughout time, but humans are seen as having misunderstood or strayed from God's true teachings until set aright by Muhammad. Prophets and sages of the biblical tradition, such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, are recognized as inspired vehicles of God's will. Islam, however, reveres as sacred only the message. It accepts the concepts of guardian angels, the Day of Judgment, resurrection, and the eternal life of the soul.

The duties of the Muslim form the "five pillars" of the faith. These are *shahada*, *salat* (daily prayer), *zakat* (almsgiving), *sawm* (fasting), and hajj (pilgrimage). The believer prays facing Mecca at five specified times during the day. Whenever possible, men observe their prayers in congregation at a mosque under direction of an imam, or prayer leader, and on Fridays are obliged to do so. Women are permitted to attend public worship at the mosque, where they are segregated from men, but their attendance tends to be discouraged, and more frequently they pray in the seclusion of their homes.

In the early days of Islam, a tax for charitable purposes was imposed on personal property in proportion to the owner's wealth. The collection of this tax and its distribution to the needy were originally functions of the state. But with the breakdown of Muslim religiopolitical authority, alms became an individual responsibility.

The ninth month of the Muslim calendar is Ramadan, a period of obligatory fasting in commemoration of Muhammad's receipt of God's revelation. Throughout the month, all but the sick and the weak, pregnant or lactating women, soldiers on duty, travelers on necessary journeys, and young children are enjoined from eating, drinking, smoking, or sexual intercourse during daylight hours. Those adults excused are obliged to endure an equivalent fast at their earliest opportunity. A festive meal breaks the daily fast and inaugurates a night of feasting and celebration. Well-to-do believers usually do little or no work during this period, and some businesses close for all or part of the day. Because the months of the lunar year revolve through the solar year, Ramadan falls at various seasons in different years. A considerable test of discipline at any time of the year, a fast that falls in summertime imposes severe hardship on those who must do physical work.

Finally, at least once during their lifetime all Muslims should make the hajj, or pilgrimage, to the holy city of Mecca to participate in the special rites that occur during the twelfth month of the lunar calendar. For most well-to-do Nigerian traders and business people, the trip was so common that the honorific *hajji* (fem., *hajjia*), signifying a pilgrim, was routinely used to refer to successful traders.

Two features of Islam are essential to understanding its place in Nigerian society. They are the degree to which Islam permeates other institutions in the society and its contribution to Nigerian pluralism. As an institution in emirate society, Islam includes daily and annual ritual obligations; the pilgrimage to Mecca; the sharia, or religious law; and an establishment view of politics, family life, communal order, and appropriate modes of personal conduct in most situations. Thus, even in 1990, Islam pervaded daily life. Public meetings began and ended with Muslim prayer, and everyone knew at least the minimum Arabic prayers and the five pillars of the religion required for full participation. Public adjudication (by local leaders with the help of religious experts, or Alkali courts) provided widespread knowledge of the basic tenets of sharia law—the Sunni school of law according to Malik ibn Anas, the jurist from Medina, was that primarily followed. Sunni (from sunna), or orthodox Islam, is the dominant sect in Nigeria and most of the Muslim world. The other sect is Shia Islam, which holds that the caliphs or successors to the Prophet should have been his relatives rather than elected individuals.

Every settlement had at least one place set aside for communal prayers. In the larger settlements, mosques were well attended, especially on Fridays when the local administrative and chiefly elites led the way, and the populace prayed with its leaders in a demonstration of communal and religious solidarity. Gaining increased knowledge of the religion, one or more pilgrimages to Mecca for oneself or one's wife, and a reputation as a devout and honorable Muslim all provided prestige. Those able to suffuse their everyday lives with the beliefs and practices of Islam were deeply respected.

Air transport had made the hajj more widely available, and the red cap wound with a white cloth, signifying its wearer's pilgrimage, was much more common in 1990 than twenty years previously. Upper-income groups went several times and sent or took their wives as well. The ancient custom of spending years walking across Africa to reach Mecca was still practiced, however, and groups of such pilgrims could be seen receiving charity at Friday prayers outside major mosques in the north.

Nigerian Islam was not highly organized. Reflecting the aristocratic nature of the traditional ruling groups, there were families of clerics whose male heirs trained locally and abroad in theology and jurisprudence and filled major positions in the mosques and the judiciary. These ulama, or learned scholars, had for centuries been the religious and legal advisers of emirs, the titled nobility, and the wealthy trading families in the major cities. Ordinary people could consult the myriads of would-be and practicing clerics in various stages of training, who studied with local experts, functioned at rites of passage, or simply used their religious education to gain increased "blessedness" for their efforts. Sufi brotherhoods (from *suf,* or wool; the wearing of a woolen robe indicated devotion to a mystic life), a form of religious order based on more personal or mystical relations to the supernatural, were widespread, especially in the major cities. There the two predominant ones, Qadiriyah and Tijaniyah, had separate mosques and, in a number of instances, a parochial school system receiving grants from the state. The brotherhoods played a major role in the spread of Islam in the northern area and the middle belt.

Islam both united and divided. It provided a rallying force in the north and into the middle belt, where it was spreading. The wide scope of Islamic beliefs and practices created a leveling force that caused Muslims in the north to feel that they were part of a common set of cultural traditions affecting family life, dress, food, manners, and personal qualities linking them to one another and a wider Islamic world. At the constitutional conference of 1978, Muslim delegates walked out as a unit over the issue of a separate Islamic supreme court, a demand they lost but which in 1990 remained a Muslim goal. To adapt fully to northern life, non-Muslims had to remain in an enclave, living quasi-segregated lives in their churches, their social clubs, and even their work. In contrast, becoming a convert to Islam was the doorway to full participation in the society. Middle belt people, especially those with ambitions in politics and business, generally adopted Islam. The main exception to this rule was Plateau State, where the capital, Jos, was as much a Christian as a Muslim community, and a greater accommodation between the two sets of beliefs and their adherents had occurred.

Divisions within the Muslim community existed, however. The nineteenth-century jihad that founded the Sokoto Caliphate was a regenerative and proselytizing movement within the community of the faithful. In major centers in 1990, the Sufi brotherhoods supported their own candidates for both religious and traditional emirate offices. These differences were generally not disruptive. Islamic activist preachers and student leaders who spread ideas about a return to extreme orthodoxy also existed. In addition, a fringe Islamic cult, known as the Maitatsine, started in the late 1970s and operated throughout the 1980s, springing up in Kano around a mystical leader (since deceased) from Cameroon who claimed to have had divine revelations superseding those of the Prophet. The cult had its own mosques and preached a doctrine antagonistic to established Islamic and societal leadership. Its main appeal was to marginal and poverty-stricken urban migrants, whose rejection by the more established urban groups fostered this religious opposition. These disaffected adherents ultimately lashed out at the more traditional mosques and congregations, resulting in violent outbreaks in several cities of the north (see Domestic Security, ch. 5).

Christianity

The majority of Christians were found in the south. A few isolated mission stations and mission bookstores, along with churches serving southern enclaves in the northern cities and larger towns, dotted the Muslim north. The Yoruba area traditionally has been Protestant and Anglican, whereas Igboland has always been the area of greatest activity by the Roman Catholic Church. Other denominations abounded as well. Presbyterians arrived in the early twentieth century in the Ibibio Niger Delta area and had missions in the middle belt as well. This latter area was an open one. Small missionary movements were allowed to start up, generally in the 1920s, after the middle belt was considered pacified. Each denomination set up rural networks by providing schooling and health facilities. Most such facilities remained in 1990, although in many cases schools had been taken over by the local state government in order to standardize curricula and indigenize the teaching staff. Pentecostals arrived mostly as indigenous workers in the post-independence period and in 1990 Pentecostalism was spreading rapidly throughout the middle belt, having some success in Roman Catholic and Protestant towns of the south as well. There were also breakaway, or Africanized, churches that blended traditional Christian symbols with indigenous symbols. Among these was the Aladura movement that was spreading rapidly throughout Yorubaland and into the non-Muslim middle belt areas.

Apart from Benin and Warri, which had come in contact with Christianity through the Portuguese as early as the fifteenth century, most missionaries arrived by sea in the nineteenth century. As with other areas in Africa, Roman Catholics and Anglicans each tended to establish areas of hegemony in southern Nigeria. After World War I, smaller sects such as the Brethren, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others worked in interstitial areas, trying not to compete. Although less well-known, African-American churches entered the missionary field in the nineteenth century and created contacts with Nigeria that lasted well into the colonial period.

African churches were founded by small groups breaking off from the European denominations, especially in Yorubaland, where such independence movements started as early as the late nineteenth century. They were for the most part ritually and doctrinally identical to the parent church, although more African music, and later dance, entered and mixed with the imported church services. A number also used biblical references to support polygyny. With political independence came African priests in both Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations, although ritual and forms of worship were strictly those of the home country of the original missionaries. By the 1980s, however, African music and even dancing were being introduced quietly into church services, albeit altered to fit into rituals of European origin. Southern Christians living in the north, especially in larger cities, had congregations and churches founded as early as the 1920s. Even medium-sized towns (20,000 persons or more) with an established southern enclave had local churches, especially in the middle belt, where both major religions had a strong foothold. The exodus of Igbo from the north in the late 1960s left Roman Catholic churches poorly attended, but by the 1980s adherents were back in even greater numbers, and a number of new churches had been built.

The Aladura, like several other breakaway churches, stress healing and fulfillment of life goals for oneself and one's family. African beliefs that sorcery and witchcraft are malevolent forces against which protection is required are accepted; rituals are warm and emotional, stressing personal involvement and acceptance of spirit possession. Theology is biblical, but some sects add costumed processions and some accept polygyny.

Major congregations of the larger Anglican and Roman Catholic missions represented elite families of their respective areas, although each of these churches had members from all levels and many quite humble church buildings. Nevertheless, a wedding in the Anglican cathedral in Lagos was usually a gathering of the elite of the entire country, and of Lagos and Yorubaland in particular. Such families had connections to their churches going back to the nineteenth century and were generally not attracted to the breakaway churches. All major urban centers, all universities, and the new capital of Abuja had areas set aside for the major religions to build mosques and churches and for burial grounds.

Interethnic conflict generally has had a religious element. Riots against Igbo in 1953 and in the 1960s in the north were said to be fired by religious conflict. The riots against Igbo in the north in 1966 were said to have been inspired by radio reports of mistreatment of Muslims in the south. In the 1980s, serious outbreaks between Christians and Muslims occurred in Kafanchan in southern Kaduna State in a border area between the two religions.

Urbanization

Throughout Africa societies that had been predominantly rural for most of their history were experiencing a rapid and profound reorientation of their social and economic lives toward cities and urbanism. As ever greater numbers of people moved to a small number of rapidly expanding cities (or, as was often the case, a single main city), the fabric of life in both urban and rural areas changed in massive, often unforeseen ways. Having the largest and one of the most rapidly growing cities in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has experienced the phenomenon of urbanization as thoroughly as any African nation, but its experience has also been unique—in scale, in pervasiveness, and in historical antecedents.

Modern urbanization in most African countries has been dominated by the growth of a single primary city, the political and commercial center of the nation; its emergence was, more often than not, linked to the shaping of the country during the colonial era. In countries with a coastline, this was often a coastal port, and in Nigeria, Lagos fitted well into this pattern. Unlike most other nations, however, Nigeria has not just one or two but several other cities of major size and importance, a number of which are larger than most other national capitals in Africa. In two areas, the Yoruba region in the southwest and the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri areas of the north, there are numbers of cities with historical roots stretching back considerably before the advent of British colonizers, giving them distinctive physical and cultural identities. Moreover, in areas such as the Igbo region in the southeast, which had few urban centers before the colonial period and was not highly urbanized even at independence, there has been a massive growth of newer cities since the 1970s, so that these areas in 1990 were also highly urban.

Cities are not only independent centers of concentrated human population and activity; they also exert a potent influence on the rural landscape. What is distinctive about the growth of cities in Nigeria is the long history of urban growth and the presence of urban areas in many parts of the country.

Historical Development of Urban Centers

Nigerian urbanism, as in other parts of the world, is a function primarily of trade and politics. In the north, the great urban centers of Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Sokoto, the early Borno capitals (Gazargamo and Kuka), and other cities served as entrepôts to the Saharan and trans-Saharan trade, and as central citadels and political capitals for the expanding states of the northern savanna. They attracted large numbers of traders and migrants from their own hinterlands and generally also included "stranger quarters" for migrants of other regions and nations. In the south, the rise of the

Yoruba expansionist city-states and of Benin and others was stimulated by trade to the coast and by competition among these growing urban centers for the control of their hinterlands and of the trade from the interior to the Atlantic (including the slave trade). The activities of European traders also attracted people to such coastal cities as Lagos, Badagri, Brass, and Bonny, and later Calabar and Port Harcourt. Overlying the original features of the earlier cities were those generated by colonial and postcolonial rule, which created new urban centers while also drastically altering the older ones. All these cities and peri-urban areas generally tended to have high population densities in the early 1990s.

The northern savanna cities grew within city walls, at the center of which were the main market, government buildings, and the central mosque. Around them clustered the houses of the rich and powerful. Smaller markets and denser housing were found away from this core, along with little markets at the gates and some cleared land within the gates that was needed especially for siege agriculture. Groups of specialized craft manufacturers (cloth dyers, weavers, potters, and the like) were organized into special quarters, the enterprises often being family-based and inherited. Roads from the gates ran into the central market and the administrative headquarters. Cemeteries were outside the city gates.

The concentration of wealth, prestige, political power, and religious learning in the cities attracted large numbers of migrants, both from the neighboring countryside and from distant regions. This influx occasioned the building of additional sections of the city to accommodate these strangers. In many of the northern cities, these areas were separated between sections for the distant, often non-Muslim migrants not subject to the religious and other prohibitions of the emir, and for those who came from the local region and were subjects of the emir. The former area was designated the "Sabon Gari," or new town (which in southern cities, such as Ibadan, has often been shortened to "Sabo"), whereas the latter was often known as the "Tudun Wada," an area often quite wealthy and elaborately laid out. To the precolonial sections of the town was often added a government area for expatriate administrators. As a result, many of the northern cities have grown from a single centralized core to being polynucleated cities, with areas whose distinctive character reflects their origins and the roles and position of their inhabitants.

Surrounding many of the large, older northern cities, including Kano, Sokoto, and Katsina, there developed regions of relatively dense rural settlement where increasingly intensive agriculture was practiced to supply food and other products to the urban population.

These areas have come to be known as close settled zones, and they remain of major importance to the agricultural economies of the north. By 1990 the inner close settled zone around Kano, the largest of its kind, extended to a radius of about thirty kilometers, essentially the limit of a day trip to the city on foot or by donkey. Within this inner zone, there has long been a tradition of intensive interaction between the rural and urban populations, involving not just food but also wood for fuel, manure, and a range of trade goods. There has also been much land investment and speculation in this zone. The full range of Kano's outer close settled zone in 1990 was considered to extend sixty-five to ninety-five kilometers from the city, and the rural-urban interactions had extended in distance and increased in intensity because of the great improvements in roads and in the availability of motorized transport. Within this zone, the great majority of usable land was under annual rainy season or continuous irrigated cultivation, making it one of the most intensively cultivated regions in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the south, there were some similarities of origin and design in the forest and southern savanna cities of Yorubaland, but culture, landscape, and history generated a very different character for most of these cities. As in the north, the earlier Yoruba towns often centered around the palace of a ruler, or *afin,* which was surrounded by a large open space and a market. This arrangement was still evident in older cities such as Ife. However, many of the most important contemporary Yoruba cities, including the largest, Ibadan, were founded during the period of the Yoruba wars in the first half of the nineteenth century. Reflecting their origins as war camps, they usually contained multiple centers of power without a single central palace. Instead, the main market often assumed the central position in the original town, and there were several separate areas of important compounds established by the major original factions. Abeokuta, for example, had three leading families from the Egba clan, all of whom were headed by chiefs, who had broken away from and become important rivals of Ibadan. Besides these divisions were the separate areas built for stranger migrants, such as Sabo in Ibadan, where many of the Hausa migrants resided; the sections added during the colonial era, often as government reserve areas (GRAs); and the numerous areas of postcolonial expansion, generally having little or no planning.

The high population densities typically found in Yoruba cities—and even in rural villages in Yorubaland—were among the striking features of the region. This culturally based pattern was probably reinforced during the period of intense intercity warfare, but it persisted in most areas through the colonial and independence periods. The distinctive Yoruba pattern of densification involved filling in compounds with additional rooms, then adding a second, third, or sometimes even a fourth story. Eventually, hundreds of people might live in a space that had been occupied by only one extended family two or three generations earlier. Fueling this process of densification were the close connections between rural and urban dwellers, and the tendency for any Yoruba who could afford it to maintain both urban and rural residences.

The colonial government, in addition to adding sections to existing cities, also created important new urban centers in areas where there previously had been none. Among the most important were Kaduna, the colonial capital of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, and Jos in the central highlands, which was the center of the tin mining industry on the plateau and a recreational town for expatriates and the Nigerian elite. These new cities lacked walls but had centrally located administrative buildings and major road and rail transport routes, along which the main markets developed. These routes became one of the main forces for the cities' growth. The result was usually a basically linear city, rather than the circular pattern largely based on defensive needs, which characterized the earlier indigenous urban centers.

The other ubiquitous colonial addition was the segregated GRA, consisting of European-style housing, a hospital or nursing station, and educational, recreational, and religious facilities for the British colonials and the more prominent European trading community. The whole formed an expatriate enclave, which was deliberately separated from the indigenous Nigerian areas, ostensibly to control sanitation and limit the spread of diseases such as malaria. After independence, these areas generally became upper income suburbs, which sometimes spread outward into surrounding farmlands as well as inward to fill in the space that formerly separated the GRA from the rest of the city. New institutions, such as university campuses, government office complexes, hospitals, and hotels, were often located outside or on the fringes of the city in the 1980s. The space that originally separated them from the denser areas was then filled in as further growth occurred.

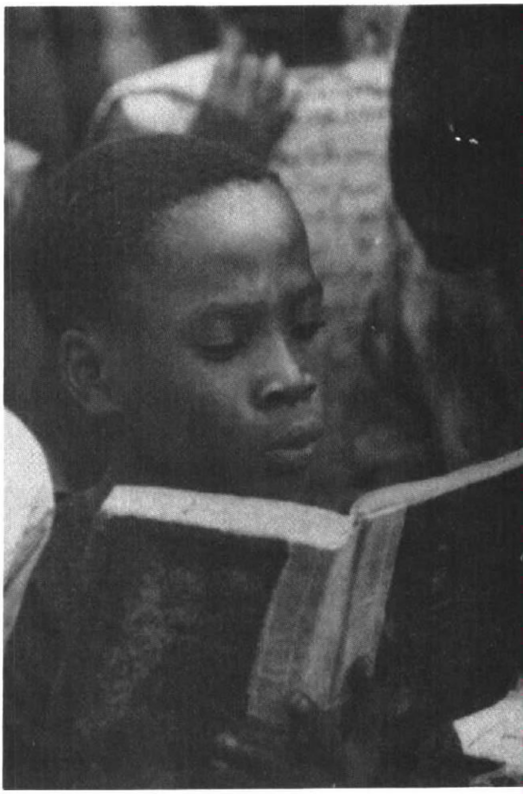
Urbanization since Independence

Spurred by the oil boom prosperity of the 1970s and the massive improvements in roads and the availability of vehicles, Nigeria since independence has become an increasingly urbanized and urban-oriented society. During the 1970s Nigeria had possibly the fastest urbanization growth rate in the world. Because of the great influx of people into urban areas, the growth rate of urban population in Nigeria in 1986 was estimated to be close to 6 percent per year, more than twice that of the rural population. Between 1970 and 1980, the proportion of Nigerians living in urban areas was estimated to have grown from 16 to more than 20 percent, and by 2010, urban population was expected to be more than 40 percent of the nation's total. Although Nigeria did not have the highest proportion of urban population in sub-Saharan Africa (in several of the countries of francophone Central Africa, for example, close to 50 percent of the population was in the major city or cities), it had more large cities and the highest total urban population of any sub-Saharan African country.

In 1990 there were twenty-one state capitals in Nigeria, each estimated to have more than 100,000 inhabitants; fifteen of these, plus a number of other cities, probably had populations exceeding 200,000. Virtually all of these were growing at a rate that doubled their size every fifteen years. These statistics did not include the new national capital, Abuja, which was planned to have more than 1 million inhabitants by early in the twenty-first century, although that milestone might be delayed as construction there stretched out. In 1990 the government was still in the process of moving from Lagos, the historical capital, to Abuja in the middle belt, and most sections of the government were still operating from Lagos. Since 1976 there had been dual capitals in both Lagos and Abuja. If one added the hundreds of smaller towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants, which resembled the larger centers more than the many smaller villages throughout the country, the extent of Nigerian urbanization was probably more widespread than anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa.

Many of the major cities had growing manufacturing sectors, including, for example, textile mills, steel plants, car assembly plants, large construction companies, trading corporations, and financial institutions. They also included government service centers, large office and apartment complexes, along with a great variety of small business enterprises, many in the "informal sector," and vast slum areas. All postsecondary education installations were in urban centers, and the vast majority of salaried jobs remained urban rather than rural.

Although cities varied, there was a Third World urban approach that distinguished life in the city from that in the countryside. It emerged from the density and variety of housing—enormous poverty and overcrowding for most and exorbitantly wealthy suburbs and guarded enclaves for the upper classes. It also emerged from the rhythm of life set by masses of people going to work each day; the teeming central market areas; the large trading



Students at recess in a Lagos primary school
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

Outdoor class at a Quran school in Lagos in the early 1960s
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

and department stores; the traffic, especially at rush hours; the filth that resulted from inadequate housing and public services; the destitution indicated by myriads of beggars and unemployed; the fear of rising crime; and the excitement of night life that was nonexistent in most rural areas. All these factors, plus the increased opportunity to connect with the rich and powerful through chains of patron-client relations, made the city attractive, lively, and dangerous. Urban people might farm, indeed many were trying to do so as food prices soared in the 1980s, but urban life differed vastly from the slow and seasonally defined rhythm of life in rural areas. Generally, even with all its drawbacks, it was seen as more desirable, especially by young people with more than a primary education.

The most notorious example of urban growth in Nigeria has undoubtedly been Lagos, its most important commercial center. The city has shot up in size since the 1960s; its annual growth rate was estimated at almost 14 percent during the 1970s, when the massive extent of new construction was exceeded only by the influx of migrants attracted by the booming prosperity. Acknowledged to be the largest city in sub-Saharan Africa (although an accurate count of its population must await census results), Lagos has become legendary for its congestion and other urban problems. Built for the most part on poorly drained marshlands, the city commonly had flooding during the rainy season, and there was frequent sewage backup, especially in the poorer lowland sections. As in other Nigerian cities, garbage and waste disposal was a constant problem. Housing construction had boomed but rarely seemed to keep pace with demand. The city's main fame, however, came from the scale of its traffic jams. Spanning several islands as well as a large and expanding mainland area, the city never seemed to have enough bridges or arteries. The profusion of vehicles that came with the prosperity of the 1970s seemed often to be arranged in a massive standstill, which became the site for urban peddling of an amazing variety of goods, as well as for entertainment, exasperation, innovation, and occasionally crime. By 1990 Lagos had made some progress in managing its traffic problems both through road and bridge construction and traffic control regulations. This progress was aided by the economic downturn of the late 1980s, which slowed urban migration and even led some people to return to rural areas.

Aside from Lagos, the most rapid recent rates of urbanization in the 1980s were around Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta region, which was at the heart of the oil boom, and generally throughout the Igbo and other areas of the southeast. These regions historically had few urban centers, but numerous large cities, including Onitsha, Owerri, Enugu, Aba, and Calabar, grew very rapidly as commercial and administrative centers. The Yoruba southwest was by 1990 still the most highly urbanized part of the country, whereas the middle belt was the least urbanized. The problems of Lagos, as well as the desire for a more centrally located capital that would be more of a force for national unity, led to the designation in 1976 of a site for a new national capital at Abuja.

Rural-Urban Linkages

Cities in Nigeria, as elsewhere, have historically exerted potent influences on the countryside. The northern city-states played a major role in the distribution of human population and economic activity throughout the savanna region. As citadels and centers of power and conquest, they caused depopulation in some regions, notably those subject to conquest and raiding, and population concentration in other areas. The low populations of the middle belt savanna probably resulted from the raiding and the conquests of the Hausa and Fulani city-states. The subsequent regrowth of bush land is thought to have led to a resurgence of tsetse flies and other disease vectors, which inhibited attempts to repopulate the region. The complementary effect was to increase population in zones of relative security, either areas under the protection of the dominant political states or areas of refuge, such as hill masses, which were difficult for armed horsemen to conquer.

The areas under the control or influence of major city-states would have been economically oriented toward those centers, both through the coercive exaction of taxes or tribute and through the production of food and manufactured products for the court and urban population. Many of these economic factors were replicated in the modern experience of urbanization, although one major change, dating from the imposition of British colonialism in the north, was the removal of the insecurity caused by warring polities.

Although there are similarities to this northern savanna pattern in the historical impact of Yoruba urbanization, the very different nature of the Yoruba cities led to a distinctive pattern of rural interaction. Yoruba cities traditionally had attached to them satellite villages or hamlets, the inhabitants of which considered themselves as belonging to that city, although most of their lives were spent outside the cities and their livelihoods derived from farming or other rural activities. The resulting close connection between urban dwellers and the surrounding farmers, indeed the fact that they were often identical in that urban dwellers also had farms in which they lived for much of the year, was noted by early European travelers to Yorubaland. Even in 1990, many Yoruba urban dwellers owned farms within a reasonable distance from the city and worked them regularly. Moreover, many villagers owned houses, rooms, or partly completed structures in nearby towns or cities and divided their time, investments, and activities between urban and rural settings. Thus, the traditional pattern of urban-rural interconnections continued to be a deeply rooted facet of Yoruba culture.

Among the most important interactions between rural and urban areas through the 1980s in Nigeria and most other parts of Africa were the demographic impacts of urban migration on rural areas. Because the great majority of migrants were men of working age, the rural areas from which they came were left with a demographically unbalanced population of women, younger children, and older people. This phenomenon was not new to Nigeria and had been evident in parts of the country since long before independence. The 1953 census showed that the crowded rural regions of Igboland, among other areas, had already experienced a substantial migration of men, leaving a large preponderance of women in the prime working ages. In what is today Imo State, for example, the sex ratio (that is, the ratio of men to women, multiplied by 100) for the zero to fourteen age-group in 1953 was 100.2, but for ages fifteen to forty-nine, it fell to 79.1, indicating a large surplus of females. Many of the male Igbo migrants left to work in the cities of the north and southwest. Although the civil war subsequently caused many Igbos to return to the southeast, the overall scale and geographic extent of rural-urban migration in the country had increased steadily after the war. Migration was strongly stimulated by the oil boom of the 1970s, with all of the opportunities that era brought for making one's fortune in cities such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Warri, as well as others that were indirectly affected by the oil economy. Since then, migration has waxed and waned with the state of the economy. In the late 1980s, many young people were compelled by the sharp downturn of the economy and the shortage of urban employment to return to their home villages. As a longer-term phenomenon, however, migration from the rural areas, especially by young men, was expected to be an accelerating and largely irreversible social process.

This process affected the rural economy in the areas of migration by creating marked changes in the gender division of labor. In most of Africa, agricultural labor was traditionally specified by gender: men had certain tasks and women had others, although the specific divisions varied by culture and ethnic group. As working-age men left the rural areas, the resulting labor gap was met by others, usually wives or children, or by hired labor—or the tasks were modified or not performed. The departure of men helped to generate a lively market for rural wage labor. In many areas in 1990, male and female laborers were commonly hired to perform agricultural tasks such as land preparation, weeding, and harvesting, which in the past had been done by either household labor or traditional work parties. In turn, the growth in demand for hired labor fostered an increase of seasonal and longer term intrarural migration. The improvement of roads was also extremely important in stimulating the scale of seasonal labor migration. It became feasible, for example, for Hausa and other northern workers to come south to work as hired laborers in the cocoa belt and elsewhere at the onset of the rains and later to return to their home villages in time to plant their own crops.

In more remote areas, however, finding hired workers was often difficult. The absence of men led to neglect of such tasks as land clearing and heavy soil conservation work, which they generally performed. Thus, in forest areas from which there was much male migration, thickly overgrown land that had been left fallow for extended periods would not be cleared for cultivation; instead, the same parcels were used repeatedly, leading to rapid declines in soil fertility and yields. As a result, land degradation also occurred in these low density areas.

Some of the most profound impacts of urban areas on the rural economy derived from the vast increase in food demand generated by the growth of cities. Both the amounts and types of foods consumed by urban populations helped to transform agricultural systems and practices. Cassava, corn, and fresh vegetable production especially benefited from the expansion of urban demand. Cassava tubers can be processed by fermenting, grating, and drying to produce a powdered product known as *gari,* which can be stored and is very suitable for cooking in urban settings. Especially throughout the southern parts of the country, *gari* demand grew rapidly with the expansion of urban populations, causing a large increase in cassava planting and processing, largely done by women as a cottage industry. Demand for and production of corn also increased significantly. In the early portion of the harvest season, fresh corn sold as roadside "fast food" became a highly profitable endeavor, especially in cities. Throughout the northern areas of the country, corn production for dried grain—most of which was grown for sale to urban areas—also expanded rapidly through the 1980s, supplementing or replacing some of the traditional sorghum and millet production. The expansion of commercial chicken and egg production, also largely for the urban market, further raised demand for corn as feed.

The expansion and improvement of the transport network in the 1970s and 1980s played a key role in tying urban markets to rural producing regions. This linkage was most critical for fresh vegetable production, which previously had been very limited in geographical extent but became feasible and profitable in many areas once efficient transport connections to urban areas were established. The continued growth of urbanization and expansion of transport capacity were likely to be the major driving forces of agricultural production and modernization through the 1990s.

Education

There were three fundamentally distinct education systems in Nigeria in 1990: the indigenous system, Quranic schools, and formal European-style education institutions. In the rural areas where the majority lived, children learned the skills of farming and other work, as well as the duties of adulthood, from participation in the community. This process was often supplemented by age-based schools in which groups of young boys were instructed in community responsibilities by mature men. Apprentice systems were widespread throughout all occupations; the trainee provided service to the teacher over a period of years and eventually struck out on his own. Truck driving, building trades, and all indigenous crafts and services from leather work to medicine were passed down in families and acquired through apprenticeship training as well. In 1990 this indigenous system included more than 50 percent of the school-age population and operated almost entirely in the private sector; there was virtually no regulation by the government unless training included the need for a license. By the 1970s, education experts were asking how the system could be integrated into the more formal schooling of the young, but the question remained unresolved by 1990.

Islamic education was part of religious duty. Children learned up to one or two chapters of the Quran by rote from a local *mallam,* or religious teacher, before they were five or six years old. Religious learning included the Arabic alphabet and the ability to read and copy texts in the language, along with those texts required for daily prayers. Any Islamic community provided such instruction in a *mallam*'s house, under a tree on a thoroughfare, or in a local mosque. This primary level was the most widespread. A smaller number of those young Muslims who wished, or who came from wealthier or more educated homes, went on to examine the meanings of the Arabic texts. Later, grammar, syntax, arithmetic, algebra, logic, rhetoric, jurisprudence, and theology were added; these subjects required specialist teachers at the advanced level. After this level, students traditionally went on to one of the famous Islamic centers of learning.

For the vast majority, Muslim education was delivered informally under the tutelage of *mallams* or ulama, scholars who specialized in religious learning and teaching. Throughout the colonial period, a series of formal Muslim schools were set up and run on European lines. These schools were established in almost all major Nigerian cities but were notable in Kano, where Islamic brotherhoods developed an impressive number of schools. They catered to the children of the devout and the well-to-do who wished to have their children educated in the new and necessary European learning, but within a firmly religious context. Such schools were influential as a form of local private school that retained the predominance of religious values within a modernized school system. Because the government took over all private and parochial schools in the mid-1970s and only allowed such schools to exist again independently in 1990, data are lacking concerning numbers of students enrolled.

Western-style education came to Nigeria with the missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the first mission school was founded in 1843 by Methodists, it was the Anglican Church Missionary Society that pushed forward in the early 1850s to found a chain of missions and schools, followed quickly in the late 1850s by the Roman Catholics. In 1887 in what is now southern Nigeria, an education department was founded that began setting curricula requirements and administering grants to the mission societies. By 1914, when north and south were united into one colony, there were fifty-nine government and ninety-one mission primary schools in the south; all eleven secondary schools, except for King's College in Lagos, were run by the missions. The missions got a foothold in the middle belt; a mission school for the sons of chiefs was opened in Zaria in 1907 but lasted only two years. In 1909 Hans Vischer, an ex-Anglican missionary, was asked to organize the education system of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Schools were set up and grants given to missions in the middle belt. In 1914 there were 1,100 primary school pupils in the north, compared with 35,700 in the south; the north had no secondary schools, compared with eleven in the south. By the 1920s, the pressure for school places in the south led to increased numbers of independent schools financed by local efforts and to the sending of favorite sons overseas for more advanced training.

The education system focused strongly on examinations. In 1916 Frederick Lugard, first governor of the unified colony, set up a school inspectorate. Discipline, buildings, and adequacy of teaching staff were to be inspected, but the most points given to a school's performance went to the numbers and rankings of its examination results. This stress on examinations was still used in 1990 to judge educational results and to obtain qualifications for jobs in government and the private sector.

Progress in education was slow but steady throughout the colonial era until the end of World War II. By 1950 the country had developed a three-tiered system of primary, secondary, and higher education based on the British model of wide participation at the bottom, sorting into academic and vocational training at the secondary level, and higher education for a small elite destined for leadership. On the eve of independence in the late 1950s, Nigeria had gone through a decade of exceptional educational growth leading to a movement for universal primary education in the Western Region. In the north, primary school enrollments went from 66,000 in 1947 to 206,000 in 1957, in the west (mostly Yoruba areas) from 240,000 to 983,000 in the same period, and in the east from 320,000 to 1,209,000. Secondary level enrollments went from 10,000 for the country as a whole in 1947 to 36,000 in 1957; 90 percent of these, however, were in the south.

Given the central importance of formal education, it soon became "the largest social programme of all governments of the federation," absorbing as much as 40 percent of the budgets of some state governments. Thus, by 1984-85 more than 13 million pupils attended almost 35,000 public primary schools. At the secondary level, approximately 3.7 million students were attending 6,500 schools (these numbers probably included enrollment in private schools), and about 125,000 postsecondary level students were attending 35 colleges and universities. The pressure on the system remained intense in 1990, so much so that one education researcher predicted 800,000 higher level students by the end of the 1990s, with a correlated growth in numbers and size of all education institutions to match this estimate.

Universal primary education became official policy for the federation in the 1970s. The goal has not been reached despite pressure throughout the 1980s to do so. In percentage terms, accomplishments have been impressive. Given an approximate population of 49.3 million in 1957 with 23 percent in the primary school age-group (ages five to fourteen), the country had 21 percent of its school-age population attending in the period just prior to independence, after what was probably a tripling of the age-group in the preceding decade. By 1985 with an estimated population of 23 million between ages five and fourteen, approximately 47 percent of the age-group attended school (see table 3, Appendix). Although growth slowed and actually decreased in some rural areas in the late 1980s, it was projected that by the early part of the next century universal primary education would be achieved.

Secondary and postsecondary level growth was much more dramatic. The secondary level age-group (ages fifteen to twenty-four) represented approximately 16 percent of the entire population in 1985. Secondary level education was available for approximately 0.5 percent of the age-group in 1957, and for 22 percent of the age-group in 1985 (see table 4, Appendix). In the early 1960s, there were approximately 4,000 students at six institutions (Ibadan, Ife, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University, the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, and the Institute of Technology at Benin), rising to 19,000 by 1971 and to 30,000 by 1975 (see table 5, Appendix). In 1990 there were thirty-five polytechnic institutes, military colleges, and state and federal universities, plus colleges of education and of agriculture; they had an estimated enrollment of 150,000 to 200,000, representing less than 1 percent of the twenty-one to twenty-nine-year-old age-group.

Such growth was impossible without incurring a host of problems, several of which were so severe as to endanger the entire system of education. As long as the country was growing apace in terms of jobs for the educated minority through investment in expanded government agencies and services and the private sector, the growing numbers of graduates could be absorbed. But the criterion of examination results as the primary sorting device for access to schools and universities led to widespread corruption and cheating among faculty and students at all levels, but especially secondary and postsecondary. Most Nigerian universities had followed the British higher education system of "final examinations" as the basis for granting degrees, but by 1990 many were shifting to the United States system of course credits. Economic hardship among teaching staffs produced increased engagement in nonacademic moonlighting activities. Added to these difficulties were such factors as the lack of books and materials, no incentive for research and writing, the use of outdated notes and materials, and the deficiency of replacement laboratory equipment. One researcher noted that in the 1980s Nigeria had among the lowest number of indigenous engineers per capita of any Third World country. Unfortunately, nothing was done to rectify the situation. The teaching of English, which was the language of instruction beyond primary school, had reached such poor levels that university faculty complained they could not understand the written work of their students. By 1990 the crisis in education was such that it was predicted that by the end of the decade, there would be insufficient personnel to run essential services of the country. It was hoped that the publication of critical works and international attention to this crisis might reverse the situation before Nigeria lost an entire generation or more of its skilled labor force.

Health

Whereas traditional medicine continued to play an important role in Nigeria in 1990, the country had made great strides in the provision of modern health care to its population in the years since World War II, particularly in the period after independence, especially the 1960s and 1970s. Among the most notable accomplishments were the expansion of medical education, the improvement of public health care, the control of many contagious diseases and disease vectors, and the provision of primary health care in many urban and rural areas. In the late 1980s, a large increase in vaccination against major childhood diseases and a significant expansion of primary health care became the cornerstones of the government's health policies.

Nonetheless, many problems remained in 1990. Sharp disparities persisted in the availability of medical facilities among the regions, rural and urban areas, and socioeconomic classes. The severe economic stresses of the late 1980s had serious impacts throughout the country on the availability of medical supplies, drugs, equipment, and personnel. In the rapidly growing cities, inadequate sanitation and water supply increased the threat of infectious disease, and health care facilities were generally not able to keep pace with the rate of urban population growth. There were several serious outbreaks of infectious diseases during the 1980s, including cerebrospinal meningitis and yellow fever, for which, especially in rural areas, treatment or preventive immunization was often difficult to obtain. Chronic diseases, such as malaria and guinea worm, continued to resist efforts to reduce their incidence in many areas. The presence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in Nigeria was confirmed by 1987 and appeared to be growing.

History of Modern Medical Services

Western medicine was not formally introduced into Nigeria until the 1860s, when the Sacred Heart Hospital was established by Roman Catholic missionaries in Abeokuta. Throughout the ensuing colonial period, the religious missions played a major role in the supply of modern health care facilities in Nigeria. The Roman Catholic missions predominated, accounting for about 40 percent of the total number of mission-based hospital beds by 1960. By that time, mission hospitals somewhat exceeded government hospitals

University education has a high priority. Main library, University of Lagos
Arts block, University of Ibadan
Courtesy Orlando E. Pacheco

in number; there were 118 mission hospitals, compared with 101 government hospitals.

Mission-based facilities were concentrated in certain areas, depending on the religious and other activities of the missions. Roman Catholic hospitals in particular were concentrated in the southeastern and midwestern areas. By 1954 almost all the hospitals in the midwestern part of the country were operated by Roman Catholic missions. The next largest sponsors of mission hospitals were, respectively, the Sudan United Mission, which concentrated on middle belt areas, and the Sudan Interior Mission, which worked in the Islamic north. Together they operated twenty-five hospitals or other facilities in the northern half of the country. Many of the mission hospitals remained important components of the health care network in the north in 1990.

The missions also played an important role in medical training and education, providing training for nurses and paramedical personnel and sponsoring basic education as well as advanced medical training, often in Europe, for many of the first generation of Western-educated Nigerian doctors. In addition, the general education provided by the missions for many Nigerians helped to lay the groundwork for a wider distribution and acceptance of modern medical care.

The British colonial government began providing formal medical services with the construction of several clinics and hospitals in Lagos, Calabar, and other coastal trading centers in the 1870s. Unlike the missionary facilities, these were, at least initially, solely for the use of Europeans. Services were later extended to African employees of European concerns. Government hospitals and clinics expanded to other areas of the country as European activity increased there. The hospital in Jos, for example, was founded in 1912 after the initiation there of tin mining.

World War I had a strong detrimental effect on medical services in Nigeria because of the large number of medical personnel, both European and African, who were pulled out to serve in Europe. After the war, medical facilities were expanded substantially, and a number of government-sponsored schools for the training of Nigerian medical assistants were established. Nigerian physicians, even if trained in Europe, were, however, generally prohibited from practicing in government hospitals unless they were serving African patients. This practice led to protests and to frequent involvement by doctors and other medical personnel in the nationalist movements of the period.

After World War II, partly in response to nationalist agitation, the colonial government tried to extend modern health and education facilities to much of the Nigerian population. A ten-year health development plan was announced in 1946. The University of Ibadan was founded in 1948; it included the country's first full faculty of medicine and university hospital, still known as University College Hospital. A number of nursing schools were established, as were two schools of pharmacy; by 1960 there were sixty-five government nursing or midwifery training schools. The 1946 health plan established the Ministry of Health to coordinate health services throughout the country, including those provided by the government, by private companies, and by the missions. The plan also budgeted funds for hospitals and clinics, most of which were concentrated in the main cities; little funding was allocated for rural health centers. There was also a strong imbalance between the appropriation of facilities to southern areas, compared with those in the north.

By 1979 there were 562 general hospitals, supplemented by 16 maternity and/or pediatric hospitals, 11 armed forces hospitals, 6 teaching hospitals, and 3 prison hospitals. Altogether they accounted for about 44,600 hospital beds. In addition, general health centers were estimated to total slightly less than 600; general clinics 2,740; maternity homes 930; and maternal health centers 1,240.

Ownership of health establishments was divided among federal, state, and local governments, and there were privately owned facilities. Whereas the great majority of health establishments were government owned, the number of private institutions grew through the 1980s. By 1985 there were 84 health establishments owned by the federal government (accounting for 13 percent of hospital beds); 3,023 owned by state governments (47 percent of hospital beds); 6,331 owned by local governments (11 percent of hospital beds); and 1,436 privately owned establishments (providing 14 percent of hospital beds) (see table 6, Appendix).

The problems of geographic maldistribution of medical facilities among the regions and of the inadequacy of rural facilities persisted. By 1980 the ratios were an estimated 3,800 people per hospital bed in the north (Borno, Kaduna, Kano, Niger, and Sokoto states); 2,200 per bed in the middle belt (Bauchi, Benue, Gongola, Kwara, and Plateau states); 1,300 per bed in the southeast (Anambra, Cross River, Imo, and Rivers states); and 800 per bed in the southwest (Bendel, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, and Oyo states). There were also significant disparities within each of the regions. For example, in 1980 there were an estimated 2,600 people per physician in Lagos State, compared with 38,000 per physician in the much more rural Ondo State.

In a comparison of the distribution of hospitals between urban and rural areas in 1980, Dennis Ityavyar found that whereas approximately 80 percent of the population of those states lived in rural regions, only 42 percent of hospitals were located in those areas. The maldistribution of physicians was even more marked because few trained doctors who had a choice wanted to live in rural areas. Many of the doctors who did work in rural areas were there as part of their required service in the National Youth Service Corps, established in 1973. Few, however, remained in remote areas beyond their required term.

Hospitals were divided into general wards, which provided both outpatient and inpatient care for a small fee, and amenity wards, which charged higher fees but provided better conditions. The general wards were usually very crowded, and there were long waits for registration as well as for treatment. Patients frequently did not see a doctor, but only a nurse or other practitioner. Many types of drugs were not available at the hospital pharmacy; those that were available were usually dispensed without containers, which meant that the patients had to provide their own containers. The inpatient wards were extremely crowded; beds were in corridors and even consisted of mattresses on floors. Food was free for very poor patients who had no one to provide for them. Most, however, had relatives or friends present, who prepared or brought food and often stayed in the hospital with the patient. By contrast, in the amenity wards available to wealthier or elite patients, food and better care were provided, and drug availability was greater. The highest level of the Nigerian elite frequently traveled abroad for medical care, particularly when a serious medical problem existed.

In the early 1980s, because of shortages of fuel and spare parts, much expensive medical equipment could not be operated. Currency devaluation and structural adjustment beginning in 1986 exacerbated these conditions. Imported goods of all types doubled or tripled in price, and government and public health care facilities were severely affected by rising costs, government budget cuts, and materials shortages of the late 1980s. Partly as a result of these problems, privately owned health care facilities became increasingly important in the late 1980s. The demand for modern medical care far outstripped its availability. Medical personnel, drugs, and equipment were increasingly diverted to the private sector as government hospitals deteriorated.

Government health policies increasingly had become an issue of policy debate and public contention in the late 1980s. The issue emerged during the Constituent Assembly held in 1989 to draft a proposed constitution. The original draft reported by the assembly included a clause specifying that free and adequate health care was to be available as a matter of right to all Nigerians within certain categories. The categories included all children younger than eighteen; all people sixty-five and older; and all those physically disabled or handicapped. This provision was, however, deleted by the president and the governing council when they reviewed the draft constitution.

Primary Health Care Policies

In August 1987, the federal government launched its Primary Health Care plan (PHC), which President Ibrahim Babangida announced as the cornerstone of health policy. Intended to affect the entire national population, its main stated objectives included accelerated health care personnel development; improved collection and monitoring of health data; ensured availability of essential drugs in all areas of the country; implementation of an Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI); improved nutrition throughout the country; promotion of health awareness; development of a national family health program; and widespread promotion of oral rehydration therapy for treatment of diarrheal disease in infants and children. Implementation of these programs was intended to take place mainly through collaboration between the Ministry of Health and participating local government councils, which received direct grants from the federal government.

Of these objectives, the EPI was the most concrete and probably made the greatest progress initially. The immunization program focused on four major childhood diseases: pertussis, diphtheria, measles, and polio, as well as tetanus and tuberculosis. Its aim was to increase dramatically the proportion of immunized children younger than two from about 20 percent to 50 percent initially, and to 90 percent by the end of 1990. Launched in March 1988, the program by August 1989 was said to have been established in more than 300 of 449 LGAs. Although the program was said to have made much progress, its goal of 90 percent coverage was probably excessively ambitious, especially in view of the economic strains of structural adjustment that permeated the Nigerian economy throughout the late 1980s.

The government's population control program also came partially under the PHC. By the late 1980s, the official policy was strongly to encourage women to have no more than four children, which would represent a substantial reduction from the estimated fertility rate of almost seven children per woman in 1987. No official sanctions were attached to the government's population policy, but birth control information and contraceptive supplies were available in many health facilities.

The federal government also sought to improve the availability of pharmaceutical drugs. Foreign exchange had to be released for essential drug imports; hence the government attempted to encourage local drug manufacture. Because raw materials for local drug manufacture had to be imported, however, costs were reduced only partially. In order for Nigeria both to limit its foreign exchange expenditures and to simultaneously implement massive expansion in primary health care, foreign assistance would probably be needed. Despite advances against many infectious diseases, Nigeria's population continued through the 1980s to be subject to several major diseases, some of which occurred in acute outbreaks causing hundreds or thousands of deaths, while others recurred chronically, causing large-scale infection and debilitation. Among the former were cerebrospinal meningitis, yellow fever, Lassa fever and, most recently, AIDS; the latter included malaria, guinea worm, schistosomiasis (bilharzia), and onchocerciasis (river blindness). Malnutrition and its attendant diseases also continued to be a problem among infants and children in many areas, despite the nation's economic and agricultural advances.

Among the worst of the acute diseases was cerebrospinal meningitis, a potentially fatal inflammation of the membranes of the brain and spinal cord, which can recur in periodic epidemic outbreaks. Northern Nigeria is one of the most heavily populated regions in what is considered the meningitis belt of Africa, an area stretching from Senegal to Sudan that has a long dry season and low humidity between December and April. The disease plagued the northern and middle belt areas in 1986 and 1989, generally appearing during the cool, dry harmattan season when people spend more time indoors, promoting contagious spread. Paralysis, and often death, can occur within forty-eight hours of the first symptoms.

In response to the outbreaks, the federal and state governments in 1989 attempted mass immunization in the affected regions. Authorities pointed, however, to the difficulty of storing vaccines in the harsh conditions of northern areas, many of which also had poor roads and inadequate medical facilities.

Beginning in November 1986 and for several months thereafter, a large outbreak of yellow fever occurred in scattered areas. The most heavily affected were the states of Oyo, Imo, Anambra, and Cross River in the south, Benue and Niger in the middle belt, and Kaduna and Sokoto in the north. There were at least several hundred deaths. Fourteen million doses of vaccine were distributed with international assistance, and the outbreak was brought under control.

Lassa fever, a highly contagious and virulent viral disease, appeared periodically in the 1980s in various areas. The disease was first identified in 1969 in the northeast Nigerian town of Lassa. It is believed that rats and other rodents are reservoirs of the virus, and that transmission to humans can occur through droppings or food contamination in and around homes. Mortality rates can be high, and there is no known treatment.

The presence of AIDS in Nigeria was officially confirmed in 1987, considerably later than its appearance and wide dispersion in much of East and Central Africa. In March 1987, the minister of health announced that tests of a pool of blood samples collected from high risk groups had turned up two confirmed cases of AIDS, both human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) type-1 strains. Subsequently, HIV type-2, a somewhat less virulent strain found mainly in West Africa, was also confirmed. In 1990 the infection rate for either virus in Nigeria was thought to be below 1 percent of the population.

Less dramatic than the acute infectious diseases were a host of chronic diseases that were serious and widespread but only occasionally resulted in death. Of these the most common was malaria, including cerebral malaria, which can be fatal. The guinea worm parasite, which is spread through ingestion of contaminated water, is endemic in many rural areas, causing recurring illness and occasionally permanently crippling its victims. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 estimated that there were 3 million cases of guinea worm in Nigeria—about 2 percent of the world total of 140 million cases—making Nigeria the nation with the highest number of guinea worm cases. In affected areas, guinea worm and related complications were estimated to be the major cause of work and school absenteeism. Virtually all affected states had campaigns under way to eradicate the disease through education and provision of pure drinking water supplies to rural villages. The government has set an ambitious target of full eradication by 1995, with extensive assistance from the Japanese government, Global 2000, and numerous other international donors.

The parasitic diseases onchocerciasis and schistosomiasis, both associated with bodies of water, were found in parts of Nigeria. Onchocerciasis is caused by filarial worms transmitted by small black flies that typically live and breed near rapidly flowing water. The worms can damage the eyes and optic nerve and can cause blindness by young adulthood or later. In some villages near the Volta River tributaries where the disease is endemic, up to 20 percent of adults older than thirty are blind because of the disease. Most control efforts have focused on a dual strategy of treating the sufferers and trying to eliminate the flies, usually with insecticide sprays. The flies and the disease are most common in the lowland savanna areas of the middle belt.

Schistosomiasis is caused by blood flukes, which use freshwater snails as an intermediate host and invade humans when the larvae penetrate the skin of people entering a pond, lake, or stream in which the snails live. Most often, schistosomiasis results in chronic debilitation rather than acute illness.

Welfare

Welfare concerns in Nigeria were primarily related to its general lack of development and the effects on the society of the economic stringency of the 1980s. Given the steady population growth and the decline in urban services and incomes since 1980, it was difficult not to conclude that for the mass of the people at the lower income level, malnutrition, poor health, and overcrowded housing were perpetual problems.

Nigeria had no social security system in 1990. Less than 1 percent of the population older than sixty years received pensions. Because of the younger age of urban migrants, there were fewer older people per family unit in urban areas. Official statistics were questionable, however, because at least one survey indicated a number of elderly living alone in northern cities or homeless persons living on the streets and begging. There was some evidence that the traditional practice of caring for parents was beginning to erode under harsh conditions of scarcity in urban areas. In rural Nigeria, it was still the rule that older people were cared for by their children, grandchildren, spouses, siblings, or even ex-spouses. The ubiquity of this tradition left open, however, the possibility of real hardship for urban elderly whose families had moved away or abandoned them.

Traditionally, family problems with spouses or children were handled by extended kinship groups and local authorities. For the most part, this practice continued in the rural areas. In urban settings, social services were either absent or rare for family conflict, for abandoned or runaway children, for foster children, or for children under the care of religious instructors.

As with many other developing nations, Nigeria had many social welfare problems that needed attention. The existence of a relatively free press combined with a history of self-criticism—in journalism, the arts, the social sciences, and by religious and political leaders—were promising indications of the awareness and public debate required for change and adaptive response to its social problems.

* * *

The literature on Nigeria is voluminous and includes several classic works on Nigeria's major ethnic groups. Among these are the chapters by M.G. Smith (Hausa), Paul and Laura Bohannan (Tiv), and Phoebe Ottenberg (Igbo) in James L. Gibbs, Jr., (ed.), *Peoples of Africa.* Urban Hausa life and its religious and political nature are explored in John N. Paden's *Religion and Political Culture in Kano.* Possibly the fullest account of a northern emirate society is S.F. Nadel's *A Black Byzantium on the Nupe.* Kanuri culture is the subject of Ronald Cohen's *The Kanuri of Bornu,* and Derrick J. Stenning's *Savannah Nomads* is the best work available on the Fulani. Simon Ottenberg's *Leadership and Authority in an African Society* and Victor C. Uchendu's brief but readable *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria* are recommended on the Igbo. The classic work on the Yoruba is N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba.* This work, together with Robert S. Smith's *Kingdoms of the Yoruba,* is the best general work on Yoruba political society.

Understanding Islam in Nigeria still requires looking at John Spencer Trimingham's classic, *Islam in West Africa,* and Islamization is well-treated in *African Religion Meets Islam* by Dean S. Gilliland. Possibly the most important discussion on the synthesis of Christianity and Yoruba religion is that by John D.Y. Peel in *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba.*

Perhaps the best recent analysis of drought and climatic variation in northern Nigeria is Michael Mortimore's *Adapting to Drought.* For a general overview of population growth in Africa, including Nigeria, the World Bank study, *Population Growth and Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa,* is extremely useful, as are other standard World Bank and United Nations sources on current population trends.

Finally, much useful information on health and education can be found in the annual *Social Statistics in Nigeria,* published by the Nigerian Office of Statistics. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 3. The Economy

Ife bronze head said to represent Olorun, god of sea and wealth

A MAJOR FEATURE of Nigeria's economy in the 1980s, as in the 1970s, was its dependence on petroleum, which accounted for 87 percent of export receipts and 77 percent of the federal government's current revenue in 1988. Falling oil output and prices contributed to another noteworthy aspect of the economy in the 1980s—a decline in per capita real gross national product (GNP—see Glossary) that persisted until oil prices began to rise in 1990. Indeed, GNP per capita per year decreased 4.8 percent from 1980 to 1987, a decrease that led in 1989 to Nigeria's classification by the World Bank (see Glossary) as a low-income country (based on 1987 data) for the first time since the annual *World Development Report* was instituted in 1978. In 1989 the World Bank also declared Nigeria poor enough to be eligible (along with countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Chad, and Mali) for concessional aid from an affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA).

Another relevant feature of the Nigerian economy was a series of abrupt changes in the government's share of expenditures. As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary), national government expenditures rose from 9 percent in 1962 to 44 percent in 1979, but fell to 17 percent in 1988. In the aftermath of the 1967-70 civil war, Nigeria's government became more centralized. The oil boom of the 1970s provided the tax revenue to strengthen the central government further. Expansion of the government's share of the economy did little to enhance its political and administrative capacity, but did increase incomes and the number of jobs that the governing elites could distribute to their clients.

The economic collapse in the late 1970s and early 1980s contributed to substantial discontent and conflict among ethnic communities and nationalities, adding to the political pressure to expel more than 2 million illegal workers (mostly from Ghana, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad) in early 1983 and May 1985.

The lower spending of the 1980s was partly the result of the structural adjustment program (SAP) in effect from 1986 to 1990. SAP was mooted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) and carried out under the auspices of the World Bank, which emphasized privatization, market prices, and reduced government expenditures. This program was based on the principle that, as GDP per capita falls, people demand relatively fewer social goods (produced in the government sector) and relatively more private goods, which tend to be essential items such as food, clothing, and shelter.

The Colonial Economic Legacy

Early British Imperialism

The European struggle to establish forts and trading posts on the West African coast from about the mid-1600s to the mid-1700s was part of the wider competition for trade and empire in the Atlantic. The British, like other newcomers to the slave trade, found they could compete with the Dutch in West Africa only by forming national trading companies. The first such effective English enterprise was the Company of the Royal Adventurers, chartered in 1660 and succeeded in 1672 by the Royal African Company. Only a monopoly company could afford to build and maintain the forts considered essential to hold stocks of slaves and trade goods. In the early eighteenth century, Britain and France destroyed the Dutch hold on West African trade; and by the end of the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815), Britain had become the dominant commercial power in West Africa (see European Slave Trade in West Africa, ch. 1).

The slave trade was one of the major causes of the devastating internecine strife in southern Nigeria during the three centuries prior to the mid-1800s, when abolition actually occurred. In the nineteenth century, Britain was interested primarily in opening markets for its manufactured goods in West Africa and expanding commerce in palm oil. Securing the oil and ivory trade required that Britain usurp the power of coastal chiefs in what became Nigeria.

Formal "protection" and—eventually—colonization of Nigeria resulted not only from the desire to safeguard Britain's expanding trade interests in the Nigerian hinterland, but also from an interest in forestalling formal claims by other colonial powers, such as France and Germany. By 1850 British trading interests were concentrating in Lagos and the Niger River delta. British administration in Nigeria formally began in 1861, when Lagos became a crown colony, a step taken in response to factors such as the now-illegal activities of slave traders, the disruption of trade by the Yoruba civil wars, and fears that the French would take over Lagos (see The Nineteenth Century: Revolution and Radical Adjustment, ch. 1). Through a series of steps designed to facilitate trade, by 1906 present-day Nigeria was under British control.

The Colonial Period

Colonies such as Nigeria became part of British imperial expansion that focused on exploiting raw materials, minerals, and foodstuffs important to Western industrial development. Britain tried to encourage tropical export crops in Nigeria and to stimulate demand there for British manufactured goods. The colonies built a railroad network between the 1890s and World War II and constructed roads at an accelerating rate after the 1930s. These developments, along with the introduction of the pound sterling as the universal medium of exchange, encouraged export trade in tin, cotton, cocoa, peanuts, and palm oil. Britain maintained its economic hegemony over the colonies through military power, strategic alliances, and the collaboration of indigenous rulers.

Development of National Economic Interests to World War II

British rule exacerbated differences of class, region, and community in Nigeria. The emergent nationalist movement in the 1930s was spearheaded by a new elite of businesspeople and professionals and promoted mainly by persons who expected to gain economically and politically from independence (see Emergence of Nigerian Nationalism, ch. 1). The movement first became multiethnic—although limited to the south—between 1930 and 1944, when the real incomes of many participants in Nigeria's money economy fell as a result of a deterioration in the net barter terms of trade (the ratio between average export and import prices). During the same period, the Great Depression and, later, World War II, reduced Britain's investment, imports, and government spending in Nigeria.

Once the wartime colonial government assumed complete control of the local economy, it would issue trade licenses only to established firms, a practice that formalized the competitive advantage of foreign companies. Also, wartime marketing boards pegged the prices of agricultural commodities below the world market rate, workers faced wage ceilings, traders encountered price controls, and Nigerian consumers experienced shortages of import goods.

Labor activity grew during the war in reaction to the heavy-handed policies of the colonial government (see Labor Unions, this ch.). Among the expressions of labor unrest was a strike by 43,000 workers in mid-1945 that lasted more than forty days. Aspiring Nigerian entrepreneurs, deprived of new economic opportunities, and union leaders, politicized by the strike's eventual success, channeled their sense of grievance into nationalist agitation. Educated persons, whose economic opportunities were limited largely to private business and professional activity, began to demand more participation in the colonial government.

National Economic Interests in the Postwar Period

Starting in 1949, when Nigeria's recently emergent labor, commercial, and professional elites were first consulted by the British as part of a constitutional review, the peoples of Nigeria engaged in ongoing debate over the processes of decolonization, independence, and modernization. The two coups d'état of 1966 and the civil war of 1967-70 reflected economic as well as political elements.

Between 1951 and 1960, the major political parties played leading roles in unifying and locally mobilizing the economic elite (see Politics in the Crisis Years, ch. 1). Elites from majority parties in the regional assemblies who cooperated with the ruling federal coalition dispensed a wide range of rewards and sanctions, thus retaining their own positions and power and keeping the masses subordinated. Positions in government services and public corporations, licenses for market stalls, permits for agricultural export production, rights to establish enterprises, roads, electrical service, running water, and scholarships were allocated by the governing group to its supporters. Each major party was backed by a bank, which assisted in the transfer of substantial public funds to the party.

At all levels—local and regional after 1951 and federal after 1954—political leaders could use a range of controls, extending over local councils, district administration, police, and courts, to subdue any dissident minority, especially in the far north, where clientage was the social adhesive of the emirate system. Political superiors offered protection, patronage, and economic security in exchange for loyalty and the obedience of inferiors.

The elites attracted clients and socially inferior groups not only in the far north, where Islam legitimized the traditional hierarchy, but even in Igboland, an area of southeastern Nigeria where power had been widely dispersed before the twentieth century. The elites of the three regions preferred to close ranks to share the fruits of office and to prevent challenges to their positions, but by the time independence was achieved in 1960, policies designed to enhance the security of one regional elite threatened the security of others.

The Role of Government

Some of Nigeria's political leaders have advocated African socialism, an ideology that does not necessarily coincide with the Western socialist concept of the ownership of most capital and land by the state. Instead, the African variety usually has included the following: a substantial level of state ownership in modern industry, transportation, and commerce; a penchant for public control of resource allocation in key sectors; a priority on production for domestic consumption; and an emphasis on the rapid Africanization of high-level jobs. Despite the socialist rhetoric of some politicians, in practice Nigeria worked toward a mixed economy, with the directly productive sector dominated by private enterprise, the state investing in infrastructure as a foundation for private activity, and government providing programs and policies to stimulate private (especially indigenous) enterprise.

None of the major Nigerian political parties controlling national or regional governments from 1951 to 1966 (or 1979 to 1983) was a socialist party or a party strongly committed to egalitarianism. Even the Action Group, led during the First Republic by the ostensibly anticapitalist Chief Obafemi Awolowo, had as its foundation the rising new class of professionals, businesspeople, and traders.

After Nigeria's 1967-70 civil war, petroleum output and prices increased rapidly. The government's control of the extraction, refining, and distribution of oil meant that the state became the dominant source of capital. By the mid-1970s, petroleum accounted for about three-fourths of total federal revenue. To the most vigorous, resourceful, and well-connected venture capitalists (often politicians, bureaucrats, army officers, and their clients), productive economic activity lost appeal. Manipulating government spending became the means to fortune. Because of the rapid growth of the state bureaucracy and the establishment of numerous federally funded parastatals, the size of the government sector relative to the rest of the national economy hit a peak in the late 1970s.

In an effort that culminated in the 1970s, the Nigerian government gradually expanded its controls over the private sector, levying differential taxes and subsidies, increasing industrial prices relative to farm prices, favoring investment in key sectors, providing tariff and tax incentives to vital sectors, protecting favored industrial establishments from foreign competition, awarding import licenses to selected firms and industries, and providing foreign exchange to priority enterprises at below-market exchange rates. While the ostensible reasons for this policy of favoritism were to transfer resources to modern industry, expand high-priority businesses and sectors, encourage profitable enterprises, and discourage unprofitable ones, in practice the government often favored urban areas by promoting production that used socially expensive inputs of capital, foreign exchange, and high technology. Market intervention helped political and bureaucratic leaders protect their positions, expand their power, and implement their policies. Project- or enterprise-based policies (unlike reliance on the market) allowed benefits to be apportioned selectively, for maximum political advantage. Government made it in the private interest of numerous individuals to cooperate in programs that were harmful to the interests of producers as a whole. However, market-clearing prices (for farm commodities or foreign exchange), whose benefits were distributed indiscriminately, inspired little or no political support among farmers and businesspeople.

Beginning in 1979, the policy prescription of the World Bank (and IMF) was for African countries to refrain from interfering in foreign exchange and interest rates, wages, and farm prices; to privatize state-owned enterprises (especially agro-processing, farm input distribution, insurance, and retail and wholesale trade); to relax restrictions on foreign capital; and to encourage indigenous business ventures. By the early 1980s, Nigeria faced substantial international payments deficits in the midst of declining export prices and rising import prices, rising external debt payments, and negative economic growth. In 1986 the government consequently undertook its own SAP. It was patterned along World Bank guidelines, with World Bank conditions that included devaluation of the naira (N, for value of the naira—see Glossary), reductions in real government spending, abolition of official agricultural marketing boards, the sale of public enterprises, liberalized trade, and reduced quotas and licenses (see Planning, this ch.).

Planning

Before 1945 the colonial government had undertaken no serious comprehensive planning. Nigeria's earliest national plans, the 1946-55 Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare (with plan revisions, 1951-55) and the 1955-60 plan (later extended to 1962), were framed by colonial administrators. As the authors of the First National Development Plan, 1962-68 (henceforth, first plan) wrote, these "were not 'plans,' in the truest sense of the word . . . [but] a series of projects which had not been coordinated or related to any overall economic target." After 1960, however, development planning had a broad scope, encompassing government policies to achieve national economic objectives, such as accelerated growth and higher levels of average material welfare. This planning affected the policies of such agencies as the central bank, state-owned enterprises, the Ministry of Education, marketing boards, state-level departments, and extension services.

Nigerian plans included economic forecasts, policies toward the private sector, and a list of proposed public expenditures. Plans did not constitute commitments by public departments to spend funds. Although Nigerian political leaders made decisions about general objectives and priorities for the first plan, foreign economists were the main authors of the actual document. Its authors favored decentralized decision making by private units, disregard of major discrepancies between financial and social profitability, and high economic payoffs from directly productive investments (as opposed to indirect returns from social overheads). They discouraged increased taxes on the wealthy (out of a fear of dampening private incentive) and advocated a conservative monetary and fiscal policy emphasizing a relatively small plan, openness to foreign trade and investment, and reliance on overseas assistance. Foreign aid was set at one-half of public sector investment.

Nobel economist W. Arthur Lewis has suggested that the main weaknesses of the 1962–68 plan were incomplete feasibility studies and inadequate evaluation of projects, meager public participation, and excessive political intervention in economic decisions. Moreover, insufficient attention was paid to the small indigenous sector, and the machinery for implementing developments in the public sector was unsatisfactory. Lewis noted that the most important aspects of Nigeria's 1962–68 plan were "how the government proposes to raise the money and to recruit the personnel to carry out its objectives."

Postwar reconstruction, restoring productive capacity, overcoming critical bottlenecks, and achieving self-reliance were major goals of the Second National Development Plan (1970–74). The replacement cost of physical assets damaged and destroyed in the civil war with the secessionist Igbo area in the southeast, then known as Biafra, was estimated to exceed N600 million (then about US$900 million).

The United Nations (UN) Center for Development Planning, Projections, and Policies observed that Nigeria's real growth in GDP between 1970 and 1974 was 12.3 percent per year. The annual target had been only 6.2 percent. Nigerian growth could be explained by factors largely outside the planners' purview—rapid oil industry growth and sharply increasing oil prices.

Announced in March 1975, the Third National Development Plan (1975–80) envisioned a twelvefold increase in the annual rate of public capital expenditures over the previous plan period. This document included the statement, "There will be no savings and foreign exchange constraints during the third plan period and beyond." The document outlined ambitious plans to expand agriculture, industry, transport, housing, water supplies, health facilities, education, rural electrification, community development, and state programs. The third plan also designated substantial funds for prestige projects, such as the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Lagos.

Amid the euphoria of the 1974 oil price boom, the Ministry of Economic Development approved and added numerous projects for other ministries not supported by a proper appraisal of technical feasibility, costs and benefits, or the technical and administrative arrangements required to establish and operate the projects. According to Sayre P. Schatz, who advised the Ministry of Transport while it prepared feasibility studies for the plan in 1974, "Economic reasoning gave way before economic enthusiasm," and the necessary coordination and implementation were ignored.

Inflationary minimum wage and administrative salary increases after October 1974, in combination with the slowing of the economy, made budget shortfalls inevitable. In June 1975, several state and local governments did not receive their monthly subsidies from the federal government. Just before the July 29, 1975 coup in which head of state General Yakubu Gowon was toppled, government workers in several areas threatened to impair vital services unless their June wages were paid.

In March 1976, in response to an economy overheated by demands for new programs and higher wages, General Olusegun Obasanjo, then head of state, pointed out that petroleum revenue was not a cure-all. Many projects had to be postponed, scaled down, or canceled when oil-revenue-based projections made in 1974–75 later proved too optimistic. Projects tended to be retained for political reasons, not because they were considered socially or economically useful by the Central Planning Office of the Supreme Military Council.

The civilian government that took office on October 1, 1979, postponed the beginning of the fourth plan (1981-85) for nine months. Whereas the plan's guidelines indicated that local governments were to be involved in planning and execution, such involvement was not feasible because local governments lacked the staff and expertise to accept this responsibility. The plan was also threatened by falling oil revenues and an increased need for imported food that had resulted from delays in agricultural modernization. Projected to rise 12.1 percent annually, exports actually fell 5.9 percent yearly during the plan, as a recession among the nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reduced demand for Third World imports. As exports declined, the capacity to import construction materials and related capital goods also fell, reducing growth in the construction, transport, communications, utilities, and housing sectors.

Nigeria was heavily dependent on agriculture, with the sector accounting for more than 40 percent of pre-1973 GDP. But in the decade up to 1983, agricultural output in Nigeria declined 1.9

Mechanized farm in northern Nigeria
Young farmers making vegetable beds at Esa-Oke agricultural settlement
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

percent and exports fell 7.9 percent yearly. Agricultural imports as a share of total imports rose from 3 percent in the late 1960s to 7 percent in the early 1980s. Nigeria's unfavorable agricultural development resulted from the loss of competitiveness among farm exports as the real value of the Nigerian naira appreciated substantially from 1970 to 1972 and from 1982 to 1983.

Thanks in large part to the overthrow at the end of 1983 of Nigeria's second civilian administration, the Second Republic headed by President Shehu Shagari, and of the military government of General Muhammadu Buhari in 1985, the Fifth National Development Plan was postponed until 1988-92. Continuing the emphases of the SAP, the fifth plan's objectives were to devalue the naira, remove import licenses, reduce tariffs, open the economy to foreign trade, promote nonoil exports through incentives, and achieve national self-sufficiency in food production. The drafters of the fifth plan sought to improve labor productivity through incentives, privatization of many public enterprises, and various government measures to create employment opportunities.

In late 1989, the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida abandoned the concept of a fixed five-year plan. Instead, a three-year "rolling plan" was introduced for 1990-92 in the context of more comprehensive fifteen- to twenty-year plans. A rolling plan, considered more suitable for an economy facing uncertainty and rapid change, is revised at the end of each year, at which point estimates, targets, and projects are added for an additional year. Thus, planners would revise the 1990-92 three-year rolling plan at the end of 1990, issuing a new plan for 1991-93. In effect, a plan is renewed at the end of each year, but the number of years remains the same as the plan rolls forward. In Nigeria, the objectives of the rolling plan were to reduce inflation and exchange rate instability, maintain infrastructure, achieve agricultural self-sufficiency, and reduce the burden of structural adjustment on the most vulnerable social groups.

Government Finance

A major cause of political conflict in Nigeria since independence has been the changing formula for allocating revenue by region or state. Before 1959 all revenues from mineral and agricultural products were retained by the producing region. But after 1959, the region retained only a fraction of the revenue from mineral production. This policy was a major source of dissatisfaction in the Eastern Region, which seceded in May 1967 as the would-be state of Biafra. By contrast, the revenue from agricultural exports was retained by regional marketing boards after 1959, but the agricultural exports of eastern Nigeria were smaller than those of the other major regions.

The rapid growth of petroleum revenue in the 1970s removed most of the severe constraints placed on federal and regional or state budgets in the 1960s. Total federal revenue grew from N306.4 million in 1966 to N7.791 billion in 1977, a twenty-fivefold increase in current income in eleven years. Petroleum revenue as a percentage of the total went from 26.3 percent in 1970 to more than 70 percent by 1974–77.

During the civil war, most of the twelve new states created in 1967 faced a revenue crisis. But a 1970 decree brought the states closer to fiscal parity by decreasing the producing state's share of export, import, and excise duties, and of mining rents and royalties, and by increasing the share allocated to all states and the federal government. Also, in 1973 the commodity export marketing boards, which had been a source of political power for the states, were brought under federal control. Other changes later in the 1970s further reduced claims to revenue based on place of origin. In the 1970s, the federal government was freed to distribute more to the states, thus strengthening federal power as well as the states' fiscal positions. Statutory appropriations from the federal government to the states, only about N128 million in FY1966, increased to N1,040 million in 1975 with the oil boom, but dropped to N502.2 million in 1976, as oil revenues declined.

The burgeoning revenues of the oil boom had encouraged profligacy among the federal ministries. Government deficits were a major factor in accelerated inflation in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. In 1978 the federal government, compelled to cut spending for the third plan, returned much of the financial responsibility for housing and primary education to state and local governments. Federal government finances, especially, drifted into acute disequilibrium between 1981 and 1983, at the end of President Shagari's civilian administration. The 1983 federal government deficit rose to N5.3 billion (9.5 percent of GDP) at the same time that external debt was increasing rapidly. The state governments' deficit compounded the problem, with the states collectively budgeting for a deficit of N6.8 billion in 1983.

Falling export prices caused the military governments between 1983 and 1988 to continue cutting real spending, especially for capital, imports, civil service and armed forces salaries and consumer subsidies. Many parastatals also had their subsidies cut, and others were sold off entirely. The result of these actions was a substantial reduction in the federal deficit. The announcement of the spending reductions that would be part of the fifth plan coincided with the military coup of August 1985. Unlike earlier plans, the fifth plan (put back to 1988-92 partly because of the coup) allocated the largest amounts of capital to agriculture and stressed the importance of private investment.

In 1988 the federal budget was still highly dependent on oil revenues (taxes on petroleum profits, mining rents and royalties, and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation earnings). Altogether, oil receipts accounted for 77 percent of total federal current revenue in 1988 (see table 7, Appendix). The federal government retained 62 percent of the revenue it collected in 1988, and the rest of the funds were distributed to the state and local governments by a formula based on population, need, and, to a very limited extent, derivation.

International aid designated for domestic Nigerian development constituted a minor source of government revenue. In 1988 such official assistance amounted to US$408 million, or US$1.09 per capita, which placed Nigeria lowest among low-income and lower-middle-income aid recipients. This aid represented 0.4 percent of Nigeria's GNP, far less than the average of 2.4 percent received by all low-income countries, a group that included such states as China, India, and Zambia.

Economic Development

The reliability of Nigeria's national income statistics was limited by meager industry-wide information (especially for domestically consumed commodities), the questionable validity of data, and quantification based on subjective judgments by state officials. Despite deficiencies in aggregate economic statistics, a few general tendencies concerning growth, income distribution, prices, wages, and the employment rate could be discerned. The Office of Statistics indicated that GDP grew 6.0 percent annually (adjusted for inflation) between FY (fiscal year—see Glossary) 1959 and FY 1967. GDP shrank at an inflation-adjusted annual rate of 1.1 percent between FY 1967 (which ended two months before the secession of the Eastern Region) and FY 1970 (which ended three months after the war). However, because capital destruction such as occurs during wartime is not reflected in annual measures of GDP, the decline in net domestic production was probably severely understated.

Income Distribution

Annual population growth estimates vary considerably, but it is generally held that growth was roughly 2 percent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, 2.5 to 3.0 percent from the mid-1960s to the late

1970s, and 3.0 to 3.5 percent in the 1980s (see Population, ch. 2). Accordingly, annual GDP growth per person can be estimated at 4.0 percent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, 3.0 to 3.5 percent in the mid 1960s, -3.5 to -4.0 percent during the civil war, roughly 7 percent in the early to late 1970s, -6.0 percent from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, and -2.5 percent for the balance of the 1980s.

Nigeria's decline in real GNP per capita to US$290 by 1988 relegated the nation to low-income status below India, Pakistan, and Ghana. Other indicators of development—life expectancy, for which Nigeria ranked 155th out of the world's 177 countries, and infant mortality, for which Nigeria ranked 148th among 173 countries—were consistent with Nigeria's low ranking in income per capita.

The authors of the first plan had argued that a "very good case can be made that premature preoccupation with equity problems will backfire and prevent any development from taking place." Thus, Nigeria's first plan stressed production and profitability, not distribution. Yet people who already own property, hold influential positions, and have good educations are best situated to profit once growth begins. Thus, a society with initial income inequality that begins to expand economically is likely to remain unequal, or even become more so.

Although wealth appeared to be highly concentrated in Nigeria, the government had no comprehensive income-distribution estimates. From 1960 to 1978, the number of rural poor remained constant, but the rural poverty rate declined. During the same period, the urban poor roughly doubled in number, although the rate of urban poverty also probably declined. Federal civil service studies indicating a substantial increase in income concentration from 1969 to 1976 may have reflected a trend toward overall income inequality, exacerbated perhaps by the large raises given to high-ranking administrators by the Udoji Commission on wages and salaries in 1975. But this inequality probably eased from 1976 to the end of the decade, thanks to increased salaries for low-income workers, the abolition of subsidized automobile allowances for the wealthy, and a decline in economic activity, especially in the oil sector.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Nigeria's degree of income concentration was average for sub-Saharan Africa, which, after Latin America, had the highest income inequality of any region in the world. Income concentration in Nigeria was probably higher than in Niger or Ivory Coast, about the same as in Tanzania, and lower than in Kenya and Cameroon.

Because the rural masses were politically weak, official income distribution policies focused on interurban redistribution. More than 80 percent of Nigeria's second plan (1970–74) investment was in urban areas. The third plan (1975–80) emphasized more even distribution, but did not mention urban-rural imbalances (see Federalism and Intragovernmental Relations).

The ratio of industrial to agricultural labor productivity, 2.5:1 in 1966, increased to 2.7:1 in 1970 and 7.2:1 in 1975. (Urban-rural per capita income ratios showed greater differentials for succeeding years, largely because incomes from capital, property, and entrepreneurial activity were far larger for city dwellers than for rural residents.) The sharp rise in industrial productivity between 1970 and 1975 was caused largely by phenomenal increases in oil output, prices, and tax revenues rather than by technical changes or improved skills. Without oil, 1975's labor productivity ratio would have been 3.0:1, as the terms of trade shifted away from agriculture. Moreover, emigration drained the rural areas of the most able young people, attracted by the Udoji Commission's doubling of government minimum wages. The loss of the superior education and skills of these rural-to-urban migrants resulted in a decline in inflation-adjusted agricultural productivity between 1970 and 1975. Average rural income was so low by 1975 that the richest rural quartile was poor by urban standards.

Rising debt and falling average income in the 1980s had a particularly severe effect on the poor. Consumption per capita fell 7 percent annually during that decade, material standards of living were lower in the mid-1980s than in the 1950s, and calorie and protein intake per capita were no greater in 1985 than in 1952. In effect, the economic crisis of the 1980s canceled out the progress of the previous two decades.

Wages and Prices

Urban real wages fell rapidly between 1982 and 1989 as a result of a minimum wage freeze in the formal sector. Rural real wages also fell, but more slowly because few employers had previously paid as much as the minimum wage on the farm. Beginning in 1986, the liberalizing effect of the SAP on agricultural prices and the exchange rate also redistributed income from urban to rural areas, especially in the agricultural export sector. In the 1980s, the urban self-employed, a group that included many in the low-income informal sector (e.g., cottage industries, crafts, petty trade, and repair work), had lower incomes than urban wage earners. Even the rural self-employed (smallholder farmers, sharecroppers, and tenants, as well as a few commercial farmers) had lower incomes than rural wage earners, who ranged from unskilled, landless workers to plantation workers.

During the 1980s, the urban-rural gap narrowed—a result of rising urban poverty rather than of growing rural affluence. A World Bank-International Finance Corporation study estimated that 64 percent of urban households and 61 percent of rural households lived in poverty in FY 1984. Because 70 percent of Nigeria's population was rural, most of the poor were to be found in rural areas. By the late 1980s, with structural adjustment and agricultural price decontrol, the average income of all rural households exceeded the average for urban households. Ironically, rural household income levels in the late 1980s only improved relative to levels for city households, as real income in both urban and rural areas had fallen throughout the 1980s. As a result, for the first time since independence, more Nigerians migrated to the country than to urban areas.

Rapid inflation, 20 percent yearly between 1973 and 1980 and more than 20 percent per year between 1980 and 1984 (as measured by the consumer price index), dropped to 5.5 percent in 1985, 5.4 percent in 1986 (years of good harvests), and 10.2 percent in 1987, before rising to 38.3 percent in 1988 and 47.5 percent in 1989. Under a World Bank SAP, 1986 and 1987 were years of tight-money financial policy. But a poor harvest in 1987 put pressure on 1988 food prices, and authorities lifted the wage freeze and eased fiscal policies in 1988 in the face of rising political opposition to austerity. Inflation abated somewhat in late 1989, as food supplies grew and the Central Bank of Nigeria tightened monetary policy.

Real wages fell significantly in the 1980s following a statutory wage freeze (1982–88), salary cuts in the public sector in 1985, and a constant nominal minimum wage that started in 1981. From 1986 to 1989, real wages fell almost 60 percent.

Labor

The size of Nigeria's labor force was difficult to calculate because of the absence of accurate census data. The labor force increased from 18.3 million in 1963 to 29.4 million in 1983. Census data apparently understated the number of self-employed peasants and farmers, but estimated that the proportion of Nigerians employed in agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishing fell from 56.8 percent in 1963 to 33.5 percent in 1983. The percentage of the labor force employed in mining rose from 0.1 percent in 1963 to 0.4 percent in 1983. Exactly comparable data were lacking on manufacturing, but from 1965 to 1980 industry's share of the labor force rose from 10 percent to 12 percent whereas the services sector grew from 18 percent to 20 percent of the labor force (see table 8, Appendix).

Unemployment

The national unemployment rate, estimated by the Office of Statistics as 4.3 percent of the labor force in 1985, increased to 5.3 percent in 1986 and 7.0 percent in 1987, before falling to 5.1 percent in 1988 as a result of measures taken under the SAP. Most of the unemployed were city dwellers, as indicated by urban jobless rates of 8.7 percent in 1985, 9.1 percent in 1986, 9.8 percent in 1987, and 7.3 percent in 1988. Underemployed farm labor, often referred to as disguised unemployed, continued to be supported by the family or village, and therefore rural unemployment figures were less accurate than those for urban unemployment. Among the openly unemployed rural population, almost two-thirds were secondary-school graduates.

Consistently, the largest proportion of the unemployed were secondary-school graduates. There was also a 40-percent unemployment rate among urban youth aged twenty to twenty-four and a 31-percent rate among those aged fifteen to nineteen. Two-thirds of the urban unemployed were fifteen to twenty-four years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There were relatively few secondary-school graduates, and the lowered job expectations of primary-school graduates in the urban formal sector kept the urban unemployment rate for these groups to 3 to 6 percent in the 1980s.

Labor Unions

Labor unions have been a part of Nigerian industry since 1912, when government employees formed a civil service union. In 1914 this organization became the Nigerian Union of Civil Servants after the merger of the protectorates of Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria. In 1931 two other major unions were founded—the Nigerian Railway Workers Union and the Nigerian Union of Teachers (which included private-school teachers). Legalization of unions in 1938 was followed by rapid labor organization during World War II as a result of passage by the British government of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, which encouraged the establishment of unions in the colonies. The defense regulation of October 1942 made strikes and lockouts illegal for the duration of the war and denied African workers the cost-of-living allowances that European civil servants received. In addition, the colonial government increased wages only modestly, although the cost of living rose 74 percent from September 1939 to October 1943. In June and July of 1945, 43,000 workers, most of whom were performing services indispensable to the country's economic and administrative life, went on a strike that lasted more than forty days. In large part as a result of the strike's success, the labor movement grew steadily, and by 1950 there were 144 unions with more than 144,000 members.

Although the labor movement was federated in 1941, the period from the end of World War II to 1964 was characterized by numerous splits, regroupings, and further fragmentation. Factionalism was rampant, engendered by the reluctance of the Colonial Office to strengthen union rights, dependence on foreign financial support, the thwarting of labor's political objectives by nationalist leaders, and intramural ideological differences. The most visible manifestation of labor problems was the dispute over whether to affiliate with the East European socialist-oriented World Federation of Trade Unions, based in Prague, or the more capitalist-oriented International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, headquartered in Brussels.

In 1963 union members numbered 300,000, or 1.6 percent of the labor force. Despite this low level of organization, labor discontent worsened as the gap widened between the wages of white-collar and those of blue-collar workers. In FY 1964, supervisors were paid thirty-three times as much as daily-wage workers and semiskilled workers in public service. After independence, many workers had begun to feel that the political leadership was making no effort to reduce the inequalities of the colonial wage and benefit structure. Corruption and conspicuous consumption were perceived to be widespread among politicians. An April 1963 pay raise for ministers and members of parliament further fueled labor resentment because rank-and-file civil servants had been doing without raises since 1960. The five superordinate central labor organizations consequently formed the Joint Action Committee (JAC) to pressure the government to raise wages. Numerous delays in the publication of a government commission report on wages and salaries provided partial impetus for a JAC-mobilized general strike of 800,000 supporters, most of them nonunionists, which lasted twelve days in June 1964. Although the strike demonstrated the government's fragility, the JAC could not translate its victory into permanent political strength; labor unity disintegrated in the face of overtures by political parties to segments of organized labor as the federal elections of December 1964 neared.

Political parties and communal associations were banned during the military rule of the late 1960s, so labor unions posed a potential organized threat to the government. The military government's decree in 1969 forbidding strikes was repeatedly defied during the next four years, most notably in 1973, when the regime gave in to demands by striking postal and telecommunications workers, about one-fifth of the federal civil service. Labor activities and internal strife among four central labor organizations continued up to 1975, when the military government attempted, unsuccessfully at first, to merge the four bodies into one unit, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). The government dissolved the four central unions, prohibited union affiliations with international labor organizations, and in 1977 banned eleven labor leaders from further union activity. Under terms of a 1978 labor decree amendment, the more than 1,000 previously existing unions were reorganized into 70 registered industrial unions under the NLC, now the sole central labor organization.

In the early 1980s, the civilian government found itself losing control of organized labor. Numerous wildcat strikes occurred in 1980–81, and in May 1981, the NLC mobilized 700,000 of 1 million unionized Nigerian workers for a two-day strike, despite the opposition of a government-supported faction.

Working days lost through strikes declined from 9.6 million in 1982 to 200,000 in 1985 in the midst of a decline in national income that had begun in 1983. Industrial unrest resulted, however, in demands by larger number of workers for payments of salary arrears and fringe benefits as real wages fell by almost 60 percent. The causes of the decline in real wages were the World Bank-advised SAP and the unfavorable terms of trade that resulted from the collapse of the world oil market between 1986 and 1989.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing

As economic development occurs, the relative size of the agricultural sector usually decreases. Accordingly, Nigerian GDP originating in the agricultural sector shrank from 65.7 percent in FY 1959 to 30.9 percent by 1976. The overall economic decline reversed this trend, and by 1988, 39.1 percent of GDP was derived from agricultural activity (see table 9, Appendix).

The contribution of the agricultural sector increased 3.8 percent yearly between 1983 and 1988, and the percentage of export value in agriculture grew from 3 percent in 1983 to 9 percent in 1988, although much of this growth resulted from the fall in oil export receipts (see table 10, Appendix). Food production also increased rapidly during the 1980s, especially after exchange-rate reform restricted food imports in 1986.

Cocoa House in Ibadan, the cocoa marketing center
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

Spraying cacao plants; cocoa is a major export
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

Land Use, Soils, and Land Tenure

In 1990 estimates indicated that 82 million hectares out of Nigeria's total land area of about 91 million hectares were arable. However, only about 34 million hectares (or 42 percent of the cultivable area) were being cultivated at the time. Much of this land was farmed under bush fallow, a technique whereby an area much larger than that under cultivation is left idle for varying periods to allow natural regeneration of soil fertility. Another 18 million hectares were classified as permanent pasture, but much of this land had the potential to support crops. About 20 million hectares were covered by forests and woodlands. Most of this land also had agricultural potential. The country's remaining 19 million hectares were covered by buildings or roads, or were considered wasteland.

Nigeria's soil is rated from low to medium in productivity. However, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concluded that most of the country's soil would have medium to good productivity if this resource were managed properly.

Traditional land tenure throughout Nigeria was based on customary laws under which land was considered community property. An individual had usufructuary rights to the land he farmed in his lineage or community area. He could possess the land as long as he used it to his family's or society's benefit, and could pass the land on to heirs and pledge its use to satisfy a debt, but could not sell or mortgage it. The right of disposal belonged only to the community, which, acting through traditional authorities, exercised this right in accordance with customary law.

The Fulani conquest of much of northern Nigeria in the early 1800s brought a change in land tenure in areas under Fulani control. The conquerors bestowed fiefs on certain individuals, who sometimes appointed overseers with the power to allocate unused land without regard for local community interests. One result was a growing number of grants to strangers during the nineteenth century because overseers sought to increase the revenue from their landlords' holdings. This practice gradually reduced the extent of bush land and encouraged the migration of farmers to urban areas that began toward the end of the nineteenth century.

In the early 1900s, the British established hegemony over the Fulani and declared all land in the former Fulani fiefs to be public property. Subsequently, in contrast to southern Nigeria, where the community owned land, in the north the government required occupancy permits. However, at the same time the northern authorities were charged with supervision and protection of the indigenous population's traditional rights, and a general reversion to customary land-tenure practices occurred. In predominantly Muslim areas, traditional land inheritance laws were allowed to remain in force. As a result of the government's support of local customary laws, encroachment by outsiders appears largely to have been halted. In 1962 the government of the Northern Region placed formal restrictions on landholding by individuals who were not members of a northern community.

In the south, colonial authorities introduced the concept of individual ownership of property and authorized the legal conveyance of land that could be registered with the government. Various laws and ordinances gave government the power to expropriate statutory landholdings in return for compensation. Expansion of the money economy and the resulting emphasis on commercial crops encouraged farmers to seek private ownership of land. Nonetheless, customary tenure remained the principal form of landholding throughout Nigeria as late as the early 1970s. During the 1970s, however, individuals and business enterprises drove up land prices, especially in newly urbanized areas, by investing heavily in real estate. In the south, customary owners turned from land sales to more profitable high-rent leasing arrangements. In the north, where land was held only by permit, farmers on the outskirts of cities became victims of developmental rezoning. Their permits were revoked, and, only minimally compensated, they moved to other areas. The land was then subdivided and sold at high prices.

In response to a potential crisis in land distribution, the Federal Military Government promulgated the Land Use Decree of March 1978, establishing a uniform tenure system for all of Nigeria. Subsequently incorporated in the constitution of 1979, the decree effectively nationalized all land by requiring certificates of occupancy from the government for land held under customary and statutory rights and the payment of rent to the government. However, the decree stipulated that anyone in a rural or urban area who normally occupied land and developed it would continue to enjoy the right of occupancy and could sell or transfer his interest in the development of the land.

The main purpose of the 1978 decree was to open land to development by individuals, corporations, institutions, and governments. The decree gave state and local governments authority to take over and assign any undeveloped land. Occupancy or possession of undeveloped land by individuals was restricted. To prevent fragmentation, the statutory right of occupancy could be passed on only to one person or heir.

Crops

Nigeria's climate permits the cultivation of a variety of crops in a pattern that emerged in earlier centuries in response to local conditions. As in other West Africa states, rainfall is heaviest in the south, where the forests and savannas benefit from abundant precipitation and relatively short dry seasons. The staples are root crops, including cassava, yams, taro (cocoyams), and sweet potatoes. Tree crops—cacao, oil palm, and rubber—constitute the area's main commercial produce (see table 11, Appendix). Cacao, from which cocoa is made, grows mostly in the southwest. Oil palms (whose kernels can be made into palm wine) predominate in the southeast and are numerous in the south-central area. Rubber stands are common in south-central and southeastern Nigeria.

Smallholder farmers, who use simple production techniques and bush-fallow cultivation and cultivate areas of one-half to two hectares each, contribute two-thirds of farm production. In most areas, some noncash crops are grown, such as sorghum, yams, cassava, cowpeas, millet, corn, cocoyams, sweet potatoes, and rice.

The northern third of Nigeria, which experiences a dry season of five to seven months, during which less than twenty-five millimeters of rain falls, lies mostly in the Sudan (see Glossary) savanna and the arid Sahel (see Glossary) zone. There, the staples are millet, cowpeas, and a drought-resistant variety of sorghum known as guinea corn. Corn is also cultivated, as well as rice in suitable lowland areas. The north's principal commercial crops are cotton and peanuts.

Between the arid north and the moist south lies a Guinea savanna region sometimes referred to as the middle belt (see Glossary). This area produces staples such as yams, sorghum, millet, cassava, cowpeas, and corn, with rice an important crop in some places. The middle belt's southern edge represents the lower limits of the northern grain-dominated economy. The most significant commercial crop of the middle belt is sesame (or benniseed).

Most Nigerians eat grains, but the production and consumption of sorghum (guinea corn) and millet are heavily concentrated in the savanna north. In 1980 the two grains accounted for 80 percent of Nigeria's total grain production. Corn production in the savanna middle belt benefits from heavier rainfall, which frequently permits two crops a year. The demand for rice, much of it imported, increased dramatically during the affluent 1970s, but had to be cut back during the foreign exchange shortages of the 1980s.

Cocoa and peanuts were Nigeria's two major exports until petroleum surpassed both in 1965. Cocoa, cotton, peanuts, oil palm products, and rubber were the principal export crops in the 1960s and early 1970s, but with export reorientation, only cocoa remained of any importance after 1975. Although Nigeria was the world's largest exporter of peanuts in the early 1970s, peanuts fell from the export list by the end of the 1970s as a result of the severe Sahel drought of 1972-74 and a viral disease in 1975. With assistance from the World Bank, the government restored cocoa production in the late 1970s and 1980s through replanting programs and producer price supports. The resulting increase in cocoa output (to 200,000 tons in 1988) kept Nigeria in third place among world cocoa producers, after Ivory Coast and Ghana.

Although the devaluation of the naira and the abolition of agricultural marketing boards in FY 1986 were intended to increase cash-crop output, the results were disappointing. The failure to significantly increase output was caused partly by the lack of incentives for producers to invest in maintenance.

In the late 1980s, Nigeria reduced the structural bias against agricultural activity by decontrolling farm prices, maintaining subsidies on fertilizer and farm exports, and maintaining import bans on some food items. Despite the granting of increased incentives to the domestic farming industry, agricultural output rose slowly because of inadequate transportation and power networks, a lack of appropriate technology, and the ineffective application of rural credit. Although the domestic production of food did not decline, on a per capita basis food became less available during this period.

Irrigation

Traditional cultivators throughout Nigeria used elemental irrigation systems long before the colonial period. These systems included seasonally inundated depressions in upland areas of the south and parts of the middle belt that received heavy rainfall, shallow swamps, and seasonally flooded riverine land. In the north, shadoof irrigation was also used along rivers, and some use was made of wells. Smallholders were using traditional methods to irrigate about 120,000 hectares in the 1950s and about 800,000 hectares in the late 1970s.

In 1949 the Northern Region established the first government irrigation agency. By the end of the 1960s, government projects—all relatively small—brought 9,000 hectares under irrigation. The severe Sahel drought of 1972-74 resulted in the expenditure of large sums for irrigation development by the federal government and by some state governments during the third plan, 1975-80. In 1975 the federal government established the Ministry of Water Resources and in 1976 created eleven river basin development authorities with responsibility for irrigation and the comprehensive development of water resources. Major irrigation projects after the mid-1970s included the South Chad Irrigation Project in Borno State, the Bakolori Project in Sokoto State, and the Kano River Project.

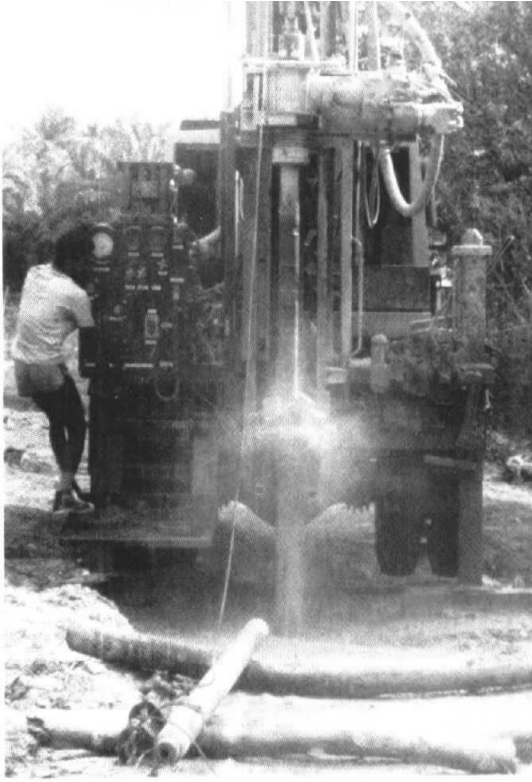
Livestock

Reliable statistics on livestock holdings did not exist, but careful estimates suggested a total of 10 to 11 million cattle in the early 1970s and, after the severe drought, 8.5 million in the late 1970s. Although an epidemic of rinderpest killed more than a million cattle in 1983, production recovered by the end of the 1980s. The UN FAO estimated that in 1987 there were 12.2 million cattle, 13.2 million sheep, 26.0 million goats, 1.3 million pigs, 700,000 donkeys, 250,000 horses, 18,000 camels (found mostly in the Sahel savanna around Lake Chad), and 175 million poultry nationally. This livestock was owned mostly by villages rather than by commercial operators. The livestock subsector accounted for about 2 percent of GDP in the 1980s.

Until the 1990s, cattle-raising was limited largely to the northern fifth of the country that was free of the tsetse fly. A program of tsetse-fly research and eradication was somewhat successful during the 1970s and 1980s, but 90 percent of the national cattle herd was still found in the northern states in 1990. About 96 percent of these animals were zebu-type cattle, most of which were tended by Fulani pastoralists. Traditionally, the Fulani moved their herds during the dry season to pasture in the moister Guinea savanna, returning northward when the rains began and danger from the tsetse fly increased. During the 1970s and 1980s, the expansion of cultivated areas and irrigation seriously obstructed this migration by cutting off access to usual travel routes.

Most of Nigeria's remaining cattle, 3 to 4 percent, are smaller than the zebu type and less valuable as draft animals. However, they possess a resistance to trypanosomiasis that makes it possible to raise them in the tsetse-infested humid forest zone. The government improved these herds in early 1980 by importing breeding stock of a particularly disease-resistant strain from The Gambia.

By the early 1970s, as the general standard of living improved, the demand for meat in Nigeria exceeded the domestic supply. As a result, 30 to 40 percent of the beef consumed in Nigeria was imported from Niger, Chad, and other neighboring countries. In the mid-1970s, Nigeria began importing frozen beef in response to export restrictions initiated by its neighbors. The National Livestock Production Company established domestic commercial cattle ranches in the late 1970s, but with poor results.



Drilling a water well in Okposi region of southern Nigeria, east of Niger River
Courtesy UNICEF (Maggie Black)

Most of Nigeria's sheep and goats are in the north, where the Fulani maintained an approximate ratio of 30 percent sheep and goats to 70 percent cattle. About 40 percent of northern non-Fulani farming households are estimated to keep sheep and goats. Most pigs are raised in the south, where the Muslim proscription against eating pork is not a significant factor.

Almost all rural households raise poultry as a subsistence meat. Chickens are predominantly of indigenous origin, and there is some crossbreeding with foreign stock. Egg production is low. Private commercial poultry operations increased rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s near urban areas, providing a growing source of eggs for the cities. But commercial operations remained largely dependent on corn and other feeds imported from the United States.

Forestry

Nigeria's forests can be divided into two principal categories: woodlands and forests of the savanna regions (four-fifths of the country's forest area) that are sources of fuel and poles, and rainforests of the southern humid zone that supply almost all domestic timber and lumber, with fuelwood as a byproduct. Nigeria's forests have gradually shrunk over the centuries, especially in the north, where uncontrolled commercial exploitation of privately owned forests began in the late nineteenth century. Toward the end of the 1800s, the colonial government began establishing forest reserves.

By 1900 more than 970 square kilometers had been set aside. By 1930 this reserve had grown to almost 30,000 square kilometers, and by 1970 to 93,420 square kilometers, mostly in the savanna regions.

Through the 1950s, forest regeneration was largely by natural reseeding, although the government established some small plantations near larger towns for fuelwood and poles. In the early 1960s, the government began emphasizing the development of forest plantations, especially ones planted with fast-growing, exotic species, such as teak and gmelina (an Australian hardwood). By 1976 about 115,000 hectares had been planted. During the late 1970s and 1980s, state plantations became an important source of timber, paper pulp, poles, and fuelwood. Despite these developments, forestry's share of Nigeria's expanding GDP declined from 6 percent in the late 1950s to 2 percent in the late 1970s and 1980s. Earnings from the export of timber and wood products—6 percent of export income in 1960—declined to 1 percent of export income in 1970 and virtually nothing in the late 1970s and 1980s, as domestic needs increased rapidly. The oil boom of the 1970s slowed exports further, as more and more wood was diverted to the domestic construction industry.

In the 1980s, Nigeria's demand for commercial wood products (excluding paper pulp and paper) threatened to exhaust reserves before the year 2000. To reverse this process, especially in the northern savanna, the government needed to double the rate of annual plantings it set in the 1980s. In June 1989, the government announced receipt of a World Bank loan for afforestation to stabilize wood product output and forest reserves.

Fisheries

Data on fisheries output were meager in 1990. In the mid-1960s, estimates indicated that Nigerian fisheries brought in 120,000 tons of fish per year and imported 180,000 tons, mostly air-dried fish. Domestic production through the 1970s ranged from 600,000 to 700,000 tons annually.

Nigeria has declared an exclusive economic zone extending 200 nautical miles from its coast. These waters include the continental shelf along more than 800 kilometers of coastline, a large area of brackish lagoons and creeks, and freshwater rivers and inland lakes, including fish-rich Lake Chad and Kainji Reservoir, among other artificial bodies of water. In the early 1980s, the bulk of the catch was taken by small businesses using large canoes (some motorized) along the coast, smaller canoes in the creeks and lagoons, and similar small boats in freshwater areas. The modern commercial fishing

Fishing on Lake Chad
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

Fish being examined at Baga Experimental Centre
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

fleet consisted of about 300 licensed craft ranging in size from 20 tons to more than 6,000 tons; about one-third were vessels under 265 tons that engaged in inshore fishing and shrimping. In the mid-1970s, the government set up the Nigerian National Fish Company jointly with foreign interests to operate a deep-sea fishing fleet. In 1975 the Nigerian National Shrimp Company was established in partnership with a North American firm. But deep-sea fisheries were, and in 1990 continued to be, dominated by foreign-owned trawlers, despite substantial investment in fisheries development, including the provision of fishing supplies and outboard motors to small local enterprises in the late 1970s.

Manufacturing

While agriculture's relative share of GDP was falling, manufacturing's contribution rose from 4.4 percent in FY 1959 to 9.4 percent in 1970, before falling during the oil boom to 7.0 percent in 1973, increasing to 11.4 percent in 1981, and declining to 10.0 percent in 1988. Whereas manufacturing increased rapidly during the 1970s, tariff manipulations encouraged the expansion of assembly activities dependent on imported inputs. These activities contributed little to indigenous value added, or to employment, and reduced subsequent industrial growth. The manufacturing sector produced a range of goods that included milled grain, vegetable oil, meat products, dairy products, refined sugar, soft drinks, beer, cigarettes, textiles, footwear, wood, paper products, soap, paint, pharmaceutical goods, ceramics, chemical products, tires, tubes, plastics, cement, glass, bricks, tiles, metal goods, agricultural machinery, household electrical appliances, radios, motor vehicles, and jewelry.

From 1982 to 1986, Nigeria's value added in manufacturing fell 25 percent, partly as a result of inefficient resource allocation caused by distorted prices (especially for exports and import substitutes) and prohibitive import restrictions. Between 1986 and 1988, World Bank structural adjustment program (SAP) measures contributed to larger increases in manufacturing's contribution to GDP, which grew 8 percent in 1988. These measures included liberalized regulations governing the import of capital, raw materials, and components; the creation of import-substitution industries; and, beginning in 1988, privatization. The SAP increased production efficiency, cut into the black market, and reduced factory closures resulting from import bans on essential inputs.

The Nigerian Enterprises Promotion decrees of 1972, 1977, and 1981, by limiting foreign ownership shares in various industries, shifted the manufacturing sector from foreign majority ownership in the 1960s to indigenous majority ownership in the mid-1970s and late 1970s. Businesspeople participated in economic policymaking, influencing the government's implementation of indigenization. "Nigerianization," in which foreigners were obligated to sell ownership shares to Nigerians, became an instrument by which a few civil servants, military leaders, businesspeople, and professionals amassed considerable wealth. In 1985 the government selectively relaxed the indigenization decrees to encourage foreign investment in neglected areas, such as large-scale agrobusiness and manufacturing that used local resources. After March 1988, foreign investors were allowed to increase their holdings in a number of other sectors.

Mining, Petroleum, and Energy Resources

Petroleum products accounted for two-thirds of the energy consumed in 1990, but Nigeria also had substantial resources in the form of hydroelectricity, wood, subbituminous coal, charcoal, and lignite. In the 1980s, most cooking was done with wood fuels, although in urban areas petroleum use increased. Coal, originally mined as fuel for railroads, largely had been replaced by diesel oil except in a few industrial establishments. Coal production fell from 940,000 tons in 1958 to 73,000 tons in 1986, only a fraction of 1 percent of Nigeria's commercially produced energy.

Tin and columbite output fell from the 1960s through the 1980s as high-grade ore reserves became exhausted. A fraction of the extensive deposits of iron ore began to be mined in the mid-1980s, and uranium was discovered but not exploited. Almost none of these minerals left the country, however, as petroleum continued to account for virtually all of Nigeria's mineral exports.

Mining contributed 1.0 percent of GDP in FY 1959, on the eve of independence. This sector's share (including petroleum) stood at more than 14 percent in 1988. Mining's general upward trend since 1959, as well as the fluctuations in the size of its contribution to GDP, can be attributed to the expansion and instability of the world oil market since 1973.

Oil and Gas

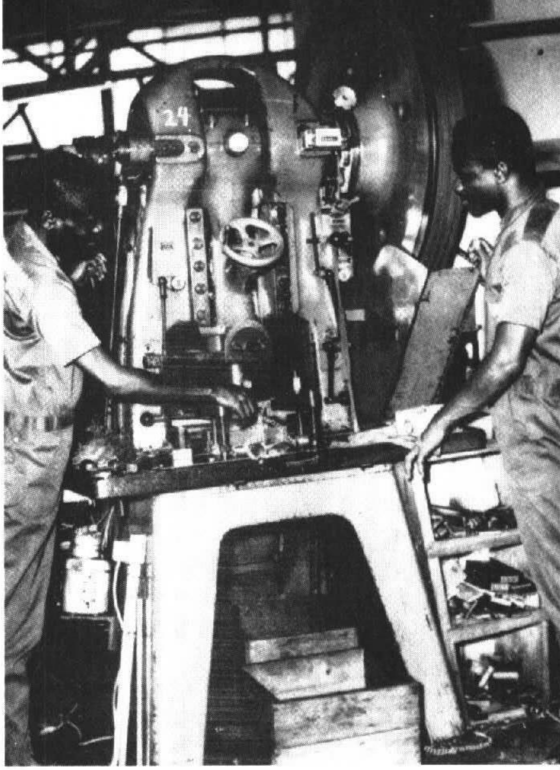
Nigeria's first oil refinery, at Alesa Eleme near Port Harcourt, began operations in late 1965 with a capacity of 38,000 barrels per day, enough to meet domestic requirements at the time. The refinery expanded production to 60,000 barrels per day after the civil war but failed to satisfy the demands of a rapidly growing economy. An additional refinery, delayed by political maneuvering over its location, was constructed at Warri, opening in 1978 with a capacity of 100,000 barrels per day. This plant was entirely owned by a parastatal, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), which starting in 1979 also held an 80 percent interest in the earlier plant. Technical problems and shutdowns for routine maintenance reduced production, and the combined total of petroleum processed by the two plants in 1979 averaged 89,000 barrels per day—about 83 percent of the domestic requirement.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the NNPC had substantial amounts of oil refined abroad (mostly by Shell) to make up the shortfall, and some oil was also processed in Cameroon, Ghana, and Ivory Coast. In October 1980, a third refinery, with a capacity of 100,000 barrels per day, began operations at Kaduna, but did not become fully productive until the mid-1980s. A fourth refinery was completed in March 1989 at Alesa Eleme, increasing Nigeria's refining capacity to 445,000 barrels per day. Domestic petroleum demand stood at 250,000 barrels per day; hence a portion of the output of the four refineries could now be exported. However, by the early 1990s gasoline output was sufficiently short of the growing domestic demand to require that the NNPC still refine some gasoline abroad.

In 1988 about 96 percent of the oil Nigeria produced came from companies in which the NNPC held at least 60 percent of the equity. The NNPC also was responsible for 75 percent of total investment in petroleum. In the late 1980s, the major Western oil companies exploring oil resources in Nigeria (primarily in midwestern, southeastern, and nearby offshore wells) were (in descending order of importance) Shell, Chevron, Mobil, Agip, Elf Aquitaine, Phillips, Texaco, and Ashland. In 1985–88 11 percent of all extracted oil (about 66 percent of domestic requirements) was refined in Nigerian refineries, where the NNPC owned majority equity shares.

From 1974 to 1981, while real oil prices remained high, lending to major oil exporting countries, such as Nigeria, was considered very safe. Indeed, Nigeria did not borrow extensively abroad until 1978, when a fall in the price of oil required Lagos to borrow US$16 million on world capital markets. Thereafter, Nigeria continued international borrowing for an ambitious investment program, anticipating an oil-price recovery. The world's sixth largest oil exporter and the leader in oil exports in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria nonetheless experienced an external trade surplus only from 1973 to 1975 and 1979 to 1980, during two oil price peaks, and in the late 1980s, when debt-servicing burdens forced import reductions, especially in services.

Besides oil, Nigeria had substantial reserves of natural gas. Although the consumption of natural gas increased steadily in the



Punch press with operators
Courtesy Embassy of Nigeria, Washington

late 1970s and 1980s, and in 1990 constituted more than 20 percent of Nigeria's total energy from commercial sources, the quantity of gas used was only a fraction of what was available. In 1988, with the largest natural gas reserves in Africa, Nigeria produced 21.2 billion cubic meters per day, with 2.9 billion cubic meters used by the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and other domestic customers, 2.6 billion cubic meters used by foreign oil companies, and 15.7 billion cubic meters (77 percent) wasted through flaring. Small amounts of gas were also consumed by petroleum producers to furnish power for their own operations and as fuel for some equipment. Domestically, there remained a large potential market for bottled liquid petroleum gas (LPG), which was produced primarily at the Kaduna refinery.

In the early 1990s, Nigeria was undertaking a major project to market liquefied natural gas (LNG) instead of flaring gas produced in the oil fields by building a gas liquefaction plant on the Bonny River. Four companies signed an agreement in May 1989 to implement this plan: NNPC (60 percent share), Shell (20 percent), Agip (Azienda generale italiana dei petroli—10 percent), and Elf Aquitaine (10 percent), with plant construction scheduled to begin in 1991. Other aspects of the project involved Nigerian government construction of gas pipelines for distribution to domestic residential and commercial users and a supply of gas to the NNPC chemical complex at Port Harcourt. Much of the gas was intended for export, however, and the first LNG tanker was launched in October 1990 through the cooperative efforts of Nigeria and Japan.

Electric Power

Hydroelectric power furnished about 14 percent of the energy consumed by Nigerians in the 1980s. Total energy used in the form of electricity was considerably larger, however, because much of the energy provided by petroleum products and gas was converted into electricity. In 1990 most electricity was supplied by NEPA. This agency had been established in 1972 as a semiautonomous government activity through the merger of the Electric Corporation of Nigeria (ECN—created by the government in 1950 to generate and transmit power nationally) and the Niger Dam Authority (NDA—set up in 1962 to develop the economic potential of the Niger River). As part of its mandate, the NDA had constructed the Kainji Dam and an associated hydroelectric plant, which began operations in 1968. Until the late 1970s, the plant was the principal source of Nigeria's electrical power.

The demand for power grew at an average annual rate estimated at 15 to 20 percent after the start of the 1973-74 oil boom. NEPA's total generating plant, having an installed capacity of 881 megawatts in FY 1976—almost half of which was located at the Kainji hydroelectric plant—was unable to meet the rapidly growing requirement. By FY 1978 an additional 250 megawatts had been installed, of which 200 megawatts were at Kainji, but a drought in 1977 and 1978 significantly lowered the level of Kainji Reservoir and thus reduced the plant's output. During the drought, blackouts were frequent, verging on the catastrophic for major industrial establishments. Goods in the process of assembly had to be destroyed, and interruptions in machine operations substantially reduced productivity. The situation improved in the 1980s: two 120-megawatt units were added to the Kainji hydroelectric station, ten units of 120 megawatts each installed in Sapele, new hydroelectric stations built at Shiroro on the Kaduna River and Jebba downstream from Kainji Reservoir, and another 200 megawatts added at various smaller plants.

Power was distributed through a national grid that linked many of the large towns, some of which had been previously served by local diesel power stations. Yet the power sector, lacking spare parts, had neglected maintenance to the point that generating capacity was rapidly declining.

Transportation and Communications

Transportation

Nigeria's transportation network was potentially one of the best

Figure 10. Transportation System, 1990

in Africa in 1990, featuring an extensive system of paved highways, railroads, airports, and ports (see fig. 10). During the oil boom of the 1970s, however, most government funds earmarked for transportation were applied to the construction of new roads, and maintenance of existing facilities was ignored. As a result, the transportation system was plagued with congestion and a deteriorating infrastructure.

Roads

The road system began in the early 1900s essentially as a feeder network for the new railroads. In the 1920s, the government established a basic grid of two north-south trunk roads from Lagos and Port Harcourt to Kano, and several east-west roads, two north and two south of the natural division created by the Niger and Benue rivers. In later decades, this system was expanded until most state capitals and large towns were accessible by paved road. In 1978 an expressway was constructed from Lagos to Ibadan, and a branch from this route was later extended east to Benin City. Another expressway connected Port Harcourt with Enugu. In 1990 Nigeria had 108,000 kilometers of roads, of which 30,000 kilometers were paved, 25,000 kilometers were gravel, and the rest were unimproved earth. Carrying 95 percent of all the nation's goods and passengers, the roads constituted by far the most important element in the transportation network.

The poor maintenance of past years forced the government to shift its emphasis in the 1980s from constructing new roads to repairing existing ones. Massive traffic jams were reported in most large cities, and there were long delays in the movement of goods. Safety standards were low; in 1988 more than 30,000 accidents and 8,000 highway deaths were reported.

Railroads

In 1990 the rail system consisted of 3,500 kilometers of narrow-gauge (1.067-meter) track. The system's basic elements were two main lines running inland from the coast: one, in the west from Lagos to Kano, opened in 1912, and the other, in the east from Port Harcourt to a conjunction with the western line at Kaduna, opened in 1926. Three major extensions were subsequently constructed. One was a branch line from Zaria to Kaura Namoda, an important agricultural area in the northwest, completed in 1929. The second was a branch from Kano to Nguru, a cattle-raising region in the northeast, completed in 1930. The third, a 645-kilometer branch from the eastern line to Maiduguri, was completed in 1964. A short spur to the mining area at Jos and two short branches from Lagos and Kaduna rounded out the system.

Poor maintenance, inadequate government funding, and declining traffic all contributed to a deterioration of the rail system. A plan to convert the entire system to standard gauge (1.435-meter) by laying new track parallel to the old was shelved in the early 1980s for lack of funds. Construction of a new line from Oturkpo to the steelworks at Ajaokuta was also halted in the mid-1980s. In 1988 the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), operator of the system, declared bankruptcy. In an attempt to cut an inefficient and oversized staff, the government laid off one-quarter of NRC's workforce. The remainder responded by shutting down the entire system for six months. In 1989 some trains were reported running again, but the system still was reportedly tottering on the verge of total breakdown.

Airports

In 1990 Nigeria had thirty-two airports with paved runways, three of which—Murtala Muhammad International at Lagos, Aminu Kano International at Kano, and Port Harcourt—offered regularly scheduled international flights. The parastatal Nigeria Airways provided domestic service between these three airports and fields in ten other Nigerian cities. Schedule irregularities and passenger complaints were common, and the government put increasing pressure on Nigeria Airways to improve its standard of service and reduce its financial losses. Despite the problems, the number of passengers on domestic flights increased throughout the 1980s, in part because of the poor state of other modes of transportation.

Ports

Nigeria's port system consisted of three complexes—Lagos, Rivers, and Delta—and the port of Calabar. The Lagos port complex was by far the most important, handling most of Nigeria's cargo. In addition to the cargo ports, two specialized tanker terminals handled crude oil exports.

The Lagos port complex consisted of the large quays at Apapa and new, smaller facilities at Tin Can Island west of Apapa. Apapa was Nigeria's principal cargo port and had direct rail connections to the national system. Docking facilities at Warri, Sapele, and several smaller towns near the mouth of the Niger River comprised the Delta complex. The main element in the Rivers ports complex was Port Harcourt, starting point for the eastern line of the Nigerian railroads and located sixty-six kilometers from the sea on the Bonny River. Calabar, eighty-three kilometers up the Cross

River, served as eastern Nigeria's main port. Nigeria's crude oil was exported through modern facilities at Bonny, near Port Harcourt, and Burutu, near Warri.

Import restrictions imposed in 1982, a soft worldwide crude oil market, and a decline in the country's crude oil exports throughout the 1980s caused a sharp decrease in oceangoing trade. In addition, the government shifted development funds in the last half of the 1980s from improving deepwater ports to building river ports in the hope that increased passenger traffic on the nation's inland waterways would relieve the strained highway system.

Communications

Already one of the best in sub-Saharan Africa, the domestic telecommunication system was undergoing a major expansion in 1990. At the end of the 1980s, there were about 155,000 telephones in Nigeria. About one-third of them were in the capital. A domestic satellite system with nineteen ground stations, along with coaxial cable and a microwave network, linked all major urban areas. Most localities could receive at least one of the sixty-five amplitude-modulation (AM) radio stations. More than a dozen cities had frequency-modulation (FM) radio stations. Shortwave broadcasts from six transmitters were directed at remote rural areas; broadcasts were in English, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, and twelve other languages. Most urban areas also had television service. In 1990 the country had an estimated 10 million radios and 10 million television sets.

International telecommunications were modern and provided high-quality links to the rest of the world. In coordination with International Telecommunications Satellite Corporation (Intelsat) Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean satellites, three ground stations made live television broadcasts; and direct telephone dialing was possible between Nigeria and the rest of the world. Lagos was the terminus of an undersea coaxial cable linking the West African countries with France and capable of carrying 960 simultaneous long-distance telephone calls.

Banking, Finance, and Other Services

In 1892 Nigeria's first bank, the African Banking Corporation, was established. No banking legislation existed until 1952, at which point Nigeria had three foreign banks (the Bank of British West Africa, Barclays Bank, and the British and French Bank) and two indigenous banks (the National Bank of Nigeria and the African Continental Bank) with a collective total of forty branches. A 1952 ordinance set standards, required reserve funds, established bank examinations, and provided for assistance to indigenous banks. Yet for decades after 1952, the growth of demand deposits was slowed by the Nigerian propensity to prefer cash and to distrust checks for debt settlements.

British colonial officials established the West African Currency Board in 1912 to help finance the export trade of foreign firms in West Africa and to issue a West African currency convertible to British pounds sterling. But colonial policies barred local investment of reserves, discouraged deposit expansion, precluded discretion for monetary management, and did nothing to train Africans in developing indigenous financial institutions. In 1952 several Nigerian members of the federal House of Assembly called for the establishment of a central bank to facilitate economic development. Although the motion was defeated, the colonial administration appointed a Bank of England official to study the issue. He advised against a central bank, questioning such a bank's effectiveness in an undeveloped capital market. In 1957 the Colonial Office sponsored another study that resulted in the establishment of a Nigerian central bank and the introduction of a Nigerian currency. The Nigerian pound (see Glossary), on a par with the pound sterling until the British currency's devaluation in 1967, was converted in 1973 to a decimal currency, the naira (N), equivalent to two old Nigerian pounds. The smallest unit of the new currency was the kobo, 100 of which equaled 1 naira. The naira, which exchanged for US$1.52 in January 1973 and again in March 1982 (or N0.67 = US$1), despite the floating exchange rate, depreciated relative to the United States dollar in the 1980s. The average exchange rate in 1990 was N8.04 = US$1. Depreciation accelerated after the creation of a second-tier foreign exchange market under the SAP in September 1986.

The Central Bank of Nigeria, which was statutorily independent of the federal government until 1968, began operations on July 1, 1959. Following a decade of struggle over the relationship between the government and the Central Bank, a 1968 military decree granted authority over banking and monetary policy to the Federal Executive Council. The role of the Central Bank, similar to that of central banks in North America and Western Europe, was to establish the Nigerian currency, control and regulate the banking system, serve as banker to other banks in Nigeria, and carry out the government's economic policy in the monetary field. This policy included control of bank credit growth, credit distribution by sector, cash reserve requirements for commercial banks, discount rates—interest rates the Central Bank charged commercial and merchant banks—and the ratio of banks' long-term assets to deposits. Changes in Central Bank restrictions on credit and monetary expansion affected total demand and income. For example, in 1988, as inflation accelerated, the Central Bank tried to restrain monetary growth.

During the civil war, the government limited and later suspended repatriation of dividends and profits, reduced foreign travel allowances for Nigerian citizens, limited the size of allowances to overseas public offices, required official permission for all foreign payments, and, in January 1968, issued new currency notes to replace those in circulation. Although in 1970 the Central Bank advised against dismantling of import and financial constraints too soon after the war, the oil boom soon permitted Nigeria to relax restrictions.

The three largest commercial banks held about one-third of total bank deposits. In 1973 the federal government undertook to acquirea 40-percent equity ownership of the three largest foreign banks. In 1976, under the second Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree requiring 60-percent indigenous holdings, the federal government acquired an additional 20-percent holding in the three largest foreign banks and 60-percent ownership in the other foreign banks. Yet indigenization did not change the management, control, and lending orientation toward international trade, particularly of foreign companies and their Nigerian subsidiaries of foreign banks.

At the end of 1988, the banking system consisted of the Central Bank of Nigeria, forty-two commercial banks, and twenty-four merchant banks, a substantial increase since 1986. Merchant banks were allowed to open checking accounts for corporations only and could not accept deposits below N50,000. Commercial and merchant banks together had 1,500 branches in 1988, up from 1,000 in 1984. In 1988 commercial banks had assets of N52.2 billion compared to N12.6 billion for merchant banks in early 1988. In FY 1990 the government put N503 million into establishing community banks to encourage community development associations, cooperative societies, farmers' groups, patriotic unions, trade groups, and other local organizations, especially in rural areas.

Other financial institutions included government-owned specialized development banks: the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry, and the Nigerian Agricultural Bank, as well as the Federal Savings Banks and the Federal Mortgage Bank. Also active in Nigeria were numerous insurance companies, pension funds, and finance and leasing companies. Nigeria also had a stock exchange (established in Lagos in 1961) and a number of stockbrokerage firms. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Decree of 1988 gave the

Nigerian SEC powers to regulate and supervise the capital market. These powers included the right to revoke stockbroker registrations and approve or disapprove any new stock exchange. Established in 1988, the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation increased confidence in the banks by protecting depositors against bank failures in licensed banks up to N50,000 in return for an annual bank premium of nearly 1 percent of total deposit liabilities.

Finance and insurance services represented more than 3 percent of Nigeria's GDP in 1988. Economists agree that services, consisting disproportionately of nonessential items, tend to expand as a share of national income as a national economy grows. However, Nigeria lacked comparable statistics over an extended period, preventing generalizations about the service sector. Statistics indicate, nevertheless, that services went from 28.9 percent of GDP in 1981 to 31.1 percent in 1988, a period of no economic growth. In 1988 services comprised the following percentages of GDP: wholesale and retail trade, 17.1 percent; hotels and restaurants, less than 1 percent; housing, 2.0 percent; government services, 6.0 percent; real estate and business services, less than 1 percent; and other services, less than 1 percent.

Foreign Trade and Balance of Payments

Foreign Trade

Until the mid-1950s, agricultural commodity exports—mainly cocoa, peanuts, palm oil, and palm kernels—earned more than the cost of merchandise imports. The demand for imports remained limited by the country's low income, lack of industrialization, negligible use of foreign inputs in agriculture, and sterling bloc restrictions. Nigeria had continued to specialize in primary products (food, raw materials, minerals, and organic oils and fats) and to import secondary products, such as chemicals, machinery, transportation equipment, and manufactures, used in Nigeria's development (see table 12, Appendix). Primary commodities comprised 98 percent of exports and 21 percent of imports in 1955, 92 percent of exports and 19 percent of imports in 1975, and 98 percent of exports and 24 percent of imports in 1985.

Minerals (largely petroleum) accounted for an increasing proportion of exports through the 1970s, increasing from 13 percent in 1955 to 35 percent in 1965, to 93 percent in 1975, and then to 96 percent in 1985 (see table 13, Appendix). The dependence on oil and a few other export commodities made Nigeria particularly vulnerable to world price fluctuations. Nigeria's overall commodity terms of trade (price of exports divided by price of imports) fell substantially, from a base of 100 (1980) to 83.8 (1984) and 35.5 (1986), before rising to 42.6 (1987) and then falling to 34.6 (1988). Meanwhile, export purchasing power (quantity of exports multiplied by the commodity terms of trade) declined from 100 (1980) to 48.3 (1984), 23.0 (1986), 23.1 (1987), and 20.4 (1988), a 79.6 percent reduction in the purchasing power of exports in eight years.

Nigeria traded worldwide with about 100 countries, but the composition of trade by country had changed since the colonial period. During the colonial era, Britain was Nigeria's dominant trading partner. As late as 1955, 70 percent of Nigeria's exports were to Britain and 47 percent of its imports were from Britain. However, by 1976 Britain's share of Nigerian exports and imports had dropped to 38 percent and 32 percent respectively. In the 1970s, Britain was replaced by the United States as Nigeria's chief trading partner. In 1988 the United States was Nigeria's best customer, buying more than 36 percent of its exports (primarily petroleum products); Britain was Nigeria's leading vendor, selling the nation more than 14 percent of its imports.

In 1990 Nigeria had associate status, including some export preferences, with the European Economic Community (EEC). As a result, it had a number of major EEC trading partners, including Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. Nigeria also had an active trade relationship with some members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, notably the United States, Canada, and Japan (see table 14, Appendix). Trade with African countries, mainly neighboring countries within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS—created in 1975), comprised only 3 to 4 percent of total trade. In the 1980s, trade with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union constituted less than 1 percent of Nigeria's total.

Balance of Payments

Nearly all of Nigeria's foreign exchange assets before the 1970s were held in British pounds sterling. Under the post-World War II IMF- modified gold exchange standard, which lasted until 1973, sterling was a key currency in international trade. A country that accumulated sterling, as Nigeria did in the twenty years before 1955, mostly years of restrictions on sterling convertibility, essentially extended credit to Britain. During this period, Nigeria restricted nonsterling imports, strengthening the balance-of-payments positions of the sterling area and Britain's international financial position.

From 1956 to 1965, Nigeria had a persistent merchandise trade deficit, which changed to a surplus in the period between 1966 and

1977 (including the 1967-70 civil war) with petroleum's rapid growth as an export commodity (see table 15, Appendix). In late 1977 and 1978, demand for Nigeria's low-sulfur crude decreased as oil became available from the North Sea, Alaska, and Mexico, and as global oil companies reacted to the less favorable participation terms offered by the Nigerian government. Except for the period from 1979 to 1980, when oil shortages and prices increased, demand for Nigerian crude remained sluggish until 1990. From 1978 through 1983 the trade deficit continued. In April 1984, the Nigerian government closed Nigeria's land borders and international airports for several days, replaced all old naira notes with new currency bills, and introduced tough exchange-control regulations designed to reduce the repatriation of naira smuggled abroad and prevent future convertibility to other currencies.

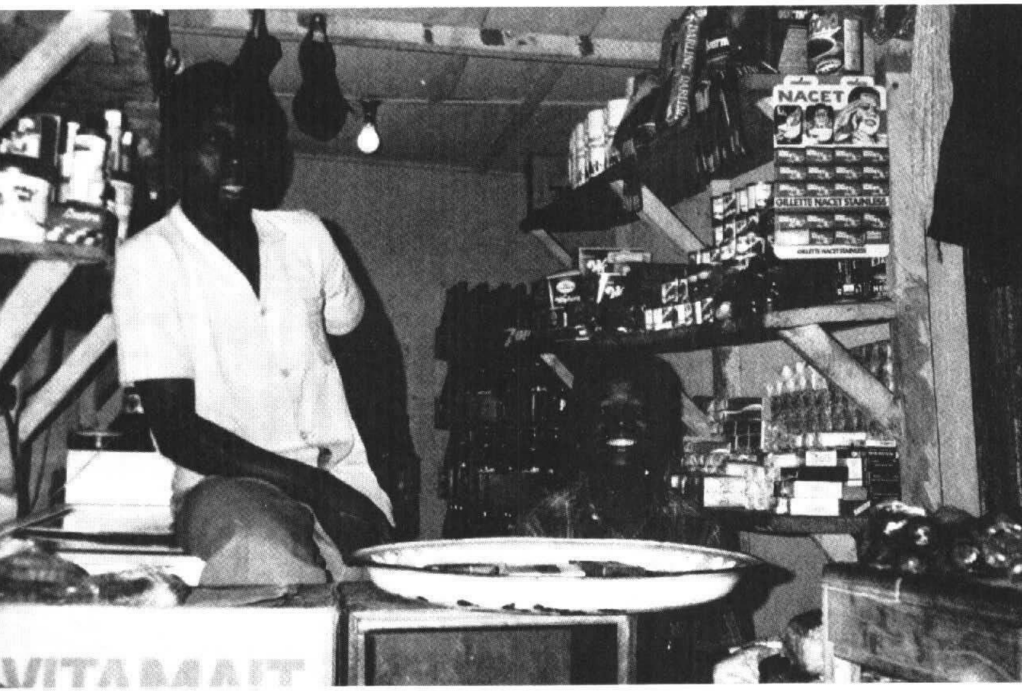
From 1984 through 1986 and in 1990, Nigeria had surpluses. These came, however, not because of export expansion but because an economic breakdown forced Nigeria to adopt severe import restrictions. Nigeria's structural adjustment under World Bank auspices brought some stability in the domestic and international economy but at the expense of falling real wages and decreased government social spending for much of the late 1980s.

The Debt Overhang

Among less developed countries (LDCs), Nigeria had the eleventh largest external public debt in 1989 (and the largest among sub-Saharan countries.) Its debt had increased from US$9 billion in 1980 to US$33 billion by 1989. The country faced persistent difficulties servicing its debt; in the 1980s, debt rescheduling was almost continuous. The secondary market price of Nigeria's bank debt in mid-1989 was only 24 cents on the dollar, indicating that the markets were heavily discounting the probability that Nigeria would pay its external debt.

Official reluctance to devalue the naira between 1981 and 1983, when inflation was more than 20 percent per year, discouraged foreign direct investment, spurred substantial capital flight, and encouraged firms to build up large inventories of imports (often with overinvoicing and concomitant foreign deposits) or to underprice exports (with the difference placed on deposit abroad). Having exhausted its official reserves and borrowing limits, Nigeria built up its arrears on trade credit to US$6 billion by the end of 1983.

From 1985 to 1986, President Ibrahim Babangida skillfully played the World Bank against the IMF for public relations gains, conducting a year-long dialogue with the Nigerian public that resulted in a rejection of IMF terms for borrowing. Subsequently, the



Outdoor market along the railroad line near Lagos
Shopkeeper's stall in Jos, capital of Plateau State
Courtesy Orlando E. Pacheco

military government's agreement to impose similar terms "on its own" was approved by the World Bank, which in October 1986 made available (with Western commercial and central banks) a package of US$1,020 million in quickly disbursed loans and US$4,280 million in three-year project loans.

Nigeria's contractionary fiscal policy in 1986 and 1987 reduced the budget deficit substantially. During early 1988, when the poor 1987 harvest put pressure on food prices and opposition to austerity mounted, authorities eased financial policy, more than doubling the budget deficit. Nigeria also eased monetary and fiscal policy in late 1989. Still, the country had managed to reduce real public spending since the early 1980s.

Despite several debt reschedulings in the 1980s and early 1990s, Nigeria's debt overhang continued to dampen investment and adjustment in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Facing years of austerity and stagnation, Nigeria could not afford to reduce consumption to effect an external transfer; thus a major contributor to adjustment was reduced investment. A lengthy schedule of large loan repayments acted as a tax on investment, since a share of returns had to go to creditors. Substantial debt servicing often meant slowing economic growth to avoid an import surplus. Without concessional funds, rescheduling only postponed an external crisis. Moreover, Nigeria's highly oligopolistic money markets, financial repression of interest rates and exchange rates, and sluggish expansion in response to improved prices in export and import-substitution industries prevented timely adjustments to financial and exchange rate changes.

Structural Adjustment

Under World Bank structural adjustment, the government tried to eliminate inefficient state intervention and obtain budgetary relief by abolishing agricultural commodity marketing boards and liberalizing cash-crop exports. These measures, together with devaluation, increased the naira prices of export crops, especially cocoa. The state also privatized many public enterprises by selling equity to private investors, while restructuring other parastatals to improve efficiency. The federal government encouraged private investment in the late 1980s, allowed foreign ownership in most manufacturing, and liberalized and accelerated administrative procedures for new investment.

The Babangida government, which came to power in August 1985 at a time of depressed oil prices, undertook its structural adjustment program between 1986 and 1988. In September 1986, the government introduced a second-tier foreign exchange market

(SFEM), sold on auction for a near equilibrium price and used for export earnings and import trade requirements. Under SFEM, the naira depreciated 66 percent to N1 = US$0.64 (N1.56 = US$1) and declined further in value through July 1987, when the first and second tiers were merged. When adopting the SFEM, Nigeria abolished the ex-factory price controls set by the Prices, Productivity, and Incomes Board, as well as the 30 percent import surcharge and import licensing system. It reduced its import prohibition list substantially and promoted exports through fiscal and credit incentives and by allowing those selling abroad to retain foreign currency. Although this action opened the way for an IMF agreement and debt rescheduling, the military government declined to use an allocation of Special Drawing Rights (see Glossary) in IMF standby funds.

Meanwhile, the naira continued depreciating, especially after the relaxation of fiscal policy early in 1988. The effect of the SFEM in breaking bottlenecks, together with the slowing of food price increases, dampened inflation in 1986, but the easing of domestic restrictions in 1988 reignited it. Real interest rates were negative, and capital flight and speculative imports resumed. In 1989 the government again unified foreign exchange markets, depreciating—but not stabilizing—the naira and reducing the external deficit. Manufacturing firms increased their reliance on local inputs and raw materials, firms depending on domestic resources grew rapidly, and capacity utilization rose, although it was still below 50 percent. Concurrently, nonoil exports grew from US$200 million in 1986 to US$1 billion in 1988. This amount, however, represented only 13 percent of export value at the level of the 1970s, and cash crops like cocoa dominated the export market. Large firms benefited from the foreign exchange auction and enjoyed higher capacity use than smaller ones. Despite dramatically reduced labor costs, domestic industrial firms undertook little investment or technological improvements.

Structural adjustment was accompanied by falling real wages, the redistribution of income from urban to rural areas, and reduced health, education, and social spending. The decrease in spending on social programs contributed to often vociferous domestic unrest, such as Muslim-Christian riots in Kaduna State in March 1987, urban rioting in April 1988 in response to reduced gasoline subsidies, student-led violence in opposition to government economic policies in May and June 1989, and the second coup attempt against General Babangida in April 1990.

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Current reliable information on the Nigerian economy is scarce. Central Bank of Nigeria periodicals, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Economic and Financial Review,* the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual *Country Profile,* and irregularly issued Office of Statistics publications are the major sources, but income and employment statistics are subject to a wide margin of error. The World Bank's annual *World Development Report* and frequent studies on sub-Saharan Africa include Nigerian statistics. *African Business, Financial Times, West Africa, Africa Research Bulletin* (Economic Series), and *Africa Report* include informative articles on the economy. Pius N.C. Okigbo's *National Development Planning in Nigeria* is an excellent update. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)