

Where Is the Boundary? Cocoa Conflict, Land Tenure, and Politics in Western Nigeria, 1890s–1960

Abstract

This paper is about cocoa-induced conflict between the Ibadan and the Ijebu, two Yoruba sub-groups of southwestern Nigeria. Although historians have examined the socio-economic impact of cocoa, they have however downplayed how it created violent conflict. I examine the interrelatedness of the transformation of land tenure system and economics of cocoa production to show that although the colonialists, and the Ibadan and the Ijebu claimed that land/boundary was the main source of conflict, in reality it was cocoa. Cocoa conflict realigned an indigenous culture of political allegiance, created new methods of litigation and arbitration, and rendered the colonial legal system incapable of solving a conflict that had strong impact on the imperial treasury. As it turned out, the “conflict” not the “law” or “court” dictated the pattern of resolution and compromise. If crude oil is a major source of tension between the Nigerian state and the Niger Delta region since the 1970s, cocoa during the colonial period negatively impacted the colonial economy and reconfigured the pattern of relations between the natives and the British imperial authority.

One thing is certain, and that is that neither in the records of the Ijebu Province nor, do I imagine in those of the Ibadan Province, does there exist an accurate factual records of where the true boundary lies. . . I regret that I am unable to offer a complete solution to this matter and that I depart shortly on furlough with the matter left in this unsatisfactory state. However it has been like that for some 30 years.¹

Introduction

The excerpt above is culled from October 10, 1953, letter from the Resident of Ijebu Province to the Civil Secretary of Western Region, Ibadan. The letter highlighted the frustration colonial officers had encountered since 1909 in resolving a protracted “boundary” dispute between Ibadan and Ijebu.² The British took this conflict seriously for obvious reasons—the region and the whole of southwestern Nigeria were major centers of cocoa production. Before the 1970s when crude oil became the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, proceeds from cocoa

among other cash crops fuelled the colonial economy and helped the Western Nigerian government in immediate post-independent era to launch significant infrastructural development. In addition, the Ibadan-Ijebu boundary was a provincial one, separating the jurisdictions of Ibadan and Ijebu native authorities. Both the colonial masters and the chiefs were therefore intricately involved in a conflict that affected native authority treasury. The conflict transcended elite affairs i.e., relations between the chiefs and the colonial masters. Indeed, farmers, family heads, and “landholders” derived their means of livelihood, honor, and respectability through the ability to control cocoa farms. Hence, the crisis and its resolution were viewed by different groups and agencies from irreconcilable angles. Yoruba ideals of peace, conflict, and compromise were contradictorily deployed to justify the need to stop the fight or legitimize why it had to be prolonged. By spotlighting the perspectives of local farmers on conflict, I highlight grassroots politics of economic survival in a world capitalist system. I put a “human face” on the story of conflict management by presenting the perspectives of “ordinary” farmers whose experience are traditionally supplanted by “bigger narratives” that centered on the contribution of cocoa and other cash crops to the sustenance of British imperialism in Nigeria.

The arguments and observations that underpin this paper are two-fold. First, I observe that scholars have neglected how cocoa created new elements of intra-ethnic tension among the people of southwestern Nigeria. The current body of work emphasizes the socio-economic and demographic impact of cocoa and its contributions to imperial capitalism;³ but has downplayed the dimension of intra-ethnic conflict. Second, I argue that cocoa, not land or boundary, as generally held by the colonialists and the warring groups was the source of conflict. To be sure, land suitable for cocoa production was not scarce throughout the period under examination.⁴ Unlike in some parts of Nigeria and Africa where war and displacement; overpopulation; deforestation; sequestration; famine; among other human or nature-induced calamities were responsible for inter and intra ethnic conflict,⁵ Ibadan and Ijebu territories possessed adequate land for growing both food and cash crops. The region did not witness any climatic or environmental changes that prompted a mad rush for land. Before the 1890s when cocoa was introduced, the territories being disputed were hitherto uncultivated and uninhabited by either of the groups who fought over access to ammunition, trade route and political resources during the century-long wars that ravaged the Yoruba region in the nineteenth century.⁶

In re-reading and counteracting colonial archives, popular narratives, and reference to the conflict in academic works, I examine the economics of cocoa production within the framework of transformation of land tenure system under colonialism. In addition, I carry out close content analyses of the petitions by rival groups, maps, reports, and correspondences among colonial officers to demonstrate that boundary could not have been the main source of conflict if the rival groups did not fight over uncultivated forest but over land that had cocoa-bearing trees. Indeed, the colonial documents on the subject should have been labeled “cocoa” not “land/boundary” conflict.⁷ Land/boundary featured almost wholly in the narratives of conflict because it was on it that cocoa trees were planted. I explain why it was “legitimate” to fight over land rather than cocoa trees. Throughout this study I put quotation marks around land/boundary dispute to complicate the conventional narrative that land was the source of conflict.

The timeline of this paper is from the 1890s when cocoa was first introduced to Ibadan and Ijebu regions by European and African Christian converts, to 1960 when Nigeria received its independence from Britain. The cocoa conflict took divergent dimensions throughout this period in accordance with major developments (such as the Great Depression and the two world wars) and landmark court judgments and boundary delimitation. A separate study is required to investigate how the conflict began to subside from the 1960s and 1970s when crude oil replaced cocoa and other cash crops as Nigeria's main foreign exchange earnings. My colonial archival materials complement oral history materials collected in Ibadan and Ijebu villages of Araromi and Mamu.⁸ After carefully examining maps produced by colonial administrators and physically visiting some of the places mentioned in them, I was able to produce a map included in this study. It was easy to identify the places mentioned in the colonial records and maps because big villages and hamlets have strung up around them.

Cocoa, Land Tenure, and Ibadan and Ijebu in Africanist Literature

Sara Berry's scholarship is the most appropriate starting point for any serious exploration of cocoa and socio-economic transformation in southwestern Nigeria, not only because she conducted some of the earliest historical research on this subject, but also because her findings continue to have significant implications on agriculture and social change decades after crude oil superseded cash crops as Nigeria's main foreign exchange earning.⁹ In *Cocoa, Custom, and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Western Nigeria*—the first book-length historical research on cocoa in southwestern Nigeria¹⁰—Berry examines the introduction and consolidation of cocoa, “as a process of capital formation in a land surplus economy.”¹¹ Cocoa economy, according to her, reconfigured Yoruba demography by paving the way for the establishment of new settlements and villages structured along indigenous socio-political system. In this work and several others, she pays close attention to cocoa farmers' ingenuity in investing in a new economic venture, labor migration, and the creation of new patterns of relations among diverse groups of people. By focusing on the transformation of agrarian economy in response to imperial capitalism, Berry is able to tell the stories of farmers and their families as active agents in the world capitalist system. She proves, convincingly, that the impact of cocoa on land tenure system varied from place to place and was shaped by indigenous culture of various domains. Other notable historians have complemented her pioneering endeavor by focusing on regions and period she did not cover.¹² Reference to cocoa can be found in a clutter of works on government-business relations, fiscal policy, the Great Depression, the two World Wars and in general, the economic history of colonial Nigeria.¹³ This genre of scholarship—unlike Berry's which is more grassroots-oriented—highlights the cardinal position of cash crops to the political-economy of British imperialism in Nigeria. Other body of works deals with post-independent cash crop economy by highlighting the impact of the Structural Adjustment Program on cocoa production during the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁴

This study adds to the literature cited above by looking at the dimension of conflict. The story of cocoa in southwestern Nigeria transcends the transformation of Yoruba land tenure, settlement pattern and capital formation, to include conflict. I contend that contested histories of “ownership” of land formed an

integral component of cocoa culture that historians have overlooked. And that the capitalist nature of cocoa production was largely responsible for vociferous character the conflict took over time. Cocoa conflict between the Ibadan and the Ijebu reshaped pattern of patron-client relations, led to the displacement of people, and paved the way for new forms of tension between the chiefs and the farmers on the one hand, and the colonial masters on the other. If the Ibadan and the Ijebu fought over access to the trade route and ammunition in the nineteenth century, in the colonial era, cocoa created significant source of tension. The continuity and change in the conditions responsible for conflict and how it was prosecuted underscore the creative ingenuity of the people in responding or adapting to circumstances that threatened their means of livelihood and understanding of justice and fairness.

Aside from the scholarship on cocoa, land tenure and socio-economic transformation, the historiography of native authority/indirect rule is also relevant to this study. The general trend of discourse on this aspect of African encounter with colonialism is that the British established a new administrative system in Ibadan and Ijebu (as elsewhere in most parts of Nigeria) by making use of pre-existing political institutions.¹⁵ The adaptation of the indigenous political institutions to the new structure of colonial power control varied from one site to another and was determined by the nature of relations between the colonial masters and the chiefs. In theory, the local chiefs commanded political authority in their domains; but in reality they were subservient to the colonial masters who had the power to overturn their decision or even depose them. Hence between 1900 and 1960, the British deposed and exiled many Ibadan and Ijebu kings mostly because of disagreements over political authority.¹⁶ The colonial masters permitted the use of customary laws provided they did not contravene Britain's "superior" ideals of modern political system.

As vast as the literature on native authority is, it is surprising that historians have overlooked conflict over cocoa an important source of "wealth." The Ibadan-Ijebu cocoa dispute was a major issue between the native authorities and the colonial masters during the first half of the twentieth century. It featured in the minutes of meetings between the chiefs and the colonial masters and attracted the attention of the central government in Lagos. The volume and depth of archival documentation on the subject are adequate to attract the attention of scholars.¹⁷ I observe that cocoa conflict was also one of the many crises that popularized Ibadan's negative stereotype as a "disorderly" polity during the colonial period.¹⁸ Indeed, it shows the extent the British were willing to accommodate indigenous methods of conflict resolution in order to promote peace and prevent loss of revenue accruing from cocoa. As I will demonstrate, if British officers had the final word on several important issues on economy and politics of their districts and provinces, they realized (by the 1930s) that they could not resolve the cocoa conflict without the cooperation of the chiefs. Even when they made arbitrary laws on boundary settlement, they were compelled to yield to the chiefs' position—not only because they (chiefs) were closer to the people, but because the conflict defied Britain's conventional method of arbitration.

There is equally an impressive body of works on conflict between the Ibadan and Ijebu. As seen in the works of Dan Aronson, Olufunke Adeboye and Toyin Falola, the Ibadan and the Ijebu fought over access to trade, credit and business opportunity during the colonial period.¹⁹ Aronson summarizes the tension and

competition between the Ibadan and the Ijebu thus: "A summary statement of the known facts of the situation could suggest that Ijebu are distributed throughout the occupation range in urban Ibadan, are probably underrepresented at the lowest levels and overrepresented at the higher levels, are probably the single most successful migrant group in trade and commerce but hold a monopoly nowhere."²⁰ Adeboye argues along doctrine and practices of urban segregation and stereotypical labeling of various aspects of Ijebu's life in the city.²¹ Falola probes the political circumstances under which Folarin Solaja, a "naturalized" chief of Ijebu ancestry, was denied a major Ibadan chieftaincy title in 1941. Solaja was accused of maintaining his Ijebu root and for being an "Ijebu gidi (a true Ijebu), a very derogatory term which implied greed and selfishness, qualities that were socially and politically unacceptable."²² As highly instructive as these works are, they overlook conflict over cocoa. The Ijebu and the Ibadan did not only fight over chieftaincy title, credit facilities, economic and social space but also over cocoa. Regardless of where it was prosecuted, conflict had strong impact on intra and inter-ethnic relations by heightening hatred and mutual distrust. The systemic nature of inter-group relations meant that rivalry over one aspect of existence snowballed into others. Cocoa conflict contributed in no small way in intensifying the institutionalized discrimination against Ijebu strangers in colonial Ibadan.

Origins of Cocoa Conflict: Cash Crop Economy and the Transformation of Land Tenure System

Conflict between the Ibadan and the Ijebu predates the establishment of colonial rule as earlier stated. During the nineteenth century wars, the Ijebu allied with other Yoruba states to undermine Ibadan's military might. The Ijebu's war aim was clear: they feared losing their political autonomy and preeminent position as middlemen in the coast-hinterland trade to the Ibadan.²³ But trade and economic relations took place despite the militarization of the entire Yoruba region.²⁴ A caravan route traversed uncultivated thick forest between Ibadan and Ijebu towns, ending at the border communities of Oru (in Ijebu) and Akanran (in Ibadan).²⁵ According to oral tradition given by Ibadan and Ijebu family heads and recorded by the colonial government in 1926, Aperin, a famous Ibadan warrior, first attempted to establish a definite boundary around 1870s or 1880s in order to effectively secure Ibadan's frontiers and extract tributes from Ijebu hunters.²⁶ This tradition stated that Ogunsegun, the representative of the Ijebu met with Aperin and both resolved to maintain Shagamu (an Ijebu town) as the boundary. The boundary demarcation according to Baale Ogunjobi Ikolabi, the head of the Aperin family of Ibadan, "consisted of each party bringing a ring and sacrificing dove, snail, a dog, a tortoise and ram."²⁷ If most oral accounts on land and chieftaincy titles are controversial or have different versions, this one was popular and not contested by both the Ijebu and the Ibadan.²⁸ However, the significance of this account transcends the accuracy of Sagamu as the mutually-agreed boundary— it simply justified the claim which descendants of Aperin (Omotoso and Obesisan) laid over the entire track of territory from Akanran to Apata Olowe in the frontier of the Ijebu Ode.

The imposition of colonial rule in 1893 ended the nineteenth century Yoruba wars, Ibadan's militarism, and the Ijebu's preeminent position as

middlemen in the coast-hinterland trade relations. The appointment of Captain Robert Bower as the first Resident and Travelling Commissioner of the Interior of the Yoruba in 1893 heralded the first attempt under colonial rule to establish a firm boundary between Ibadan and Ijebu.²⁹ Bower, who served until 1897, did not make the boundary because of conflict; but as part of his responsibility of organizing the entire Yorubaland into colonial administrative units. The exact year the demarcation was carried out is unknown—colonial administrators writing in the 1920s lamented that the initial boundary settlement documents could not be found.³⁰ However, rival family heads and chiefs gave 1895 and 1897. Bower according to Ibadan chiefs established Olubi as the boundary.³¹ Another colonial officer writing in 1926 mentioned Mamu.³² The method of establishing what colonial administrators in the 1920s regarded as “imaginary” boundary was simple and crude: “Capt. Bower pointed East from Mamu to indicate that the boundary between Ibadan and Ijebu Ode just as Sir John Glover is said to have done in Lagos over the Government land.”³³

The establishment of colonial rule also coincided with the decline in rubber extraction business and introduction of cocoa. As Berry has noted, the Depression of the 1880s compelled the African Christian merchants to experiment with new items of trade such as cocoa.³⁴ Cocoa was first planted in the late 1880s in Agege and Ebute Meta (both in Lagos) where an experimental botanic garden proved successful. It spread quickly to Ibadan and Ondo around 1890s through the help of European and African Christian converts who distributed seeds to local farmers.³⁵ The Ibadan showed strong interest in this new economic venture partly because it created new opportunities to earn a living since colonialism outlawed military exploits which provided means of livelihood for the warriors and their teeming war boys in the nineteenth century.³⁶ By the opening years of the 1900s, people mobilized their families, kin and socio-cultural and economic networks to uncultivated forest land between Ibadan and Ijebu territories. Unlike in pre cocoa era when farmers could walk daily to their farms, the land suitable for the new crop was only available far away from the towns. New settlements and villages which served as permanent abode sprang-up around cocoa plantation. By 1930 cocoa had become the most successful export from Western Nigeria, fetching farmers about thirty pounds per ton.³⁷ In the 1940s, about one third of the total cocoa output in Nigeria came from Ibadan and environ.³⁸ Exports increased exponentially from 202 pounds in 1900 to 104, 681 in 1941.³⁹ A.G. Hopkins and Berry have appropriately labeled the advent and consolidation of cocoa as an “innovation” because it required high level farmers’ creativity and ingenuity in the deployment of means of production in a purely capitalist venture.⁴⁰

But the cocoa success did not come without a major transformation in land tenure system. In Ibadan and Ijebu in precolonial times, people paid tribute (*isakole*) mostly in agricultural produce as gratitude for the opportunity to use land and recognition of “overlordship.”⁴¹ Land was not an item of trade and could not be bought. When a missionary enquired about the cost of land from the Baale (ruler) of Ibadan in 1853, he replied in amazement: “Pay! Who pays for ground? All the ground belongs to God; you cannot pay for it.”⁴² The economics of cocoa production unleashed the process of “commercialization” of land as farmers began to pay tribute in cash and sometime in cocoa. In contrast to precolonial times when land was treated as communal asset, cocoa wealth encouraged the chiefs and family heads to treat it as their private property. Chiefs and descendants of

prominent hunters like Aperin “sold” lands to farmers and constituted themselves into family of “landholders”, which did not exist in precolonial times. In one case, Akinlade of Ibadan paid the Orimolusi (the King of Ijebu Igbo) twenty-five pounds around 1915 to acquire forest land in the Ijebu side of the boundary. Akinlade subsequently “sold” the land to Raji and twenty other farmers at prices ranging from one to two pounds.⁴³ Omotoso, a descendant of Aperin and one of the most controversial “landholders” of the era received two pounds from farmers in 1926.⁴⁴ In 1930, a colonial officer reported that an Ibadan family collected between five and fifty pounds to allocate land.⁴⁵ Not all farmers “bought” land—some appeared to have exploited the “illiteracy” of the chiefs in outright fraudulent manner. For instance Baale Shitu and Balogun Ola of Ibadan denied giving one Oke of Ibadan a letter to the Awujale of Ijebu in 1915 for permission to acquire land. A copy of the letter which was retrieved from the Awujale's archives did bear the signature and seal of authority of the two Ibadan chiefs.⁴⁶ Oke's case came to authorities' attention when some Ijebu families tried to evict him from his cocoa-rich farm.

Prosecuting Conflict: Multiple Agency and the Economics of Cocoa Production

Two interwoven factors best explain the vociferous character the cocoa conflict took and why it was not permanently resolved during the period under examination.⁴⁷ First, the “commercialization” of land produced a pyramid-like

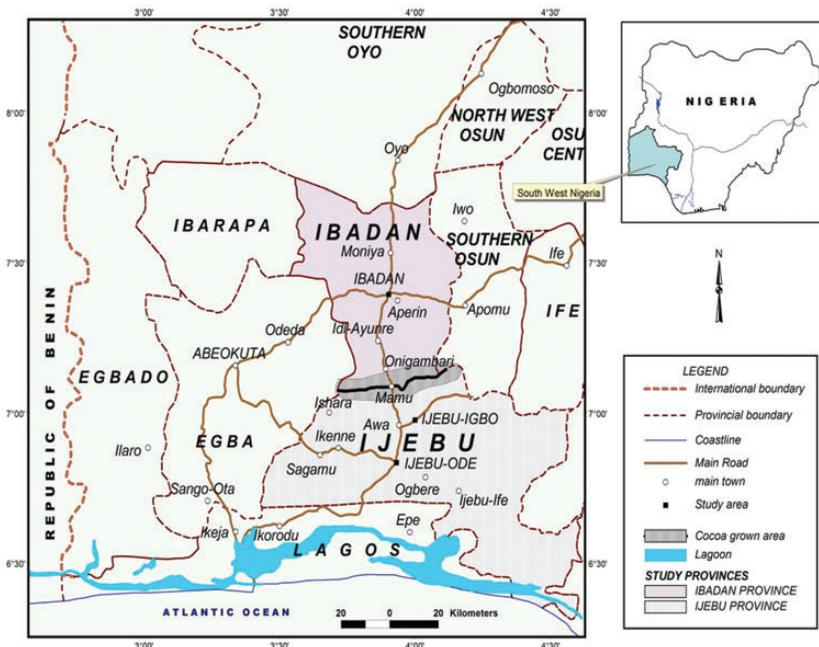


Figure 1. Map of colonial Southwestern Nigeria showing the study area

relations, structured along the confines of social class, place, power, and ethnicity. At the bottom of the conflict pyramid were farmers who mobilized their families, socio-cultural networks, and wage laborers to erect cocoa farms. The apex was occupied by the colonial masters who represented the British imperial interest. Family heads, chiefs, and “landholders” all occupied significant position of authority at various times and in various capacities. Let us use the case of Raji of Ibadan (whose name was mentioned above) to elaborate the prevailing power structure of the era. Although he “bought” his land from Akinlade, he also paid regular tribute (both in cash and cocoa) to the Orimolusi of Ijebu Igbo in order to keep using the land. As a “tenant” farmer, Raji could be ejected at will by either Orimolusi or Akinlade because in “reality” the land was not his personal asset. In the event of crisis, Raji, like most other Ibadan would be represented by the head of their families who also exerted substantial amount of political will.

The fragmentation of land and its corresponding power structures transcended the exchange of cash and goodwill for protection of asset, but involved shifting ethnic identities and loyalties. Many Ibadan claimed “Ijebu” and continued to pay their tribute and income taxes to the Ijebu Native Authority as long as the Ijebu allowed them to keep their farms. But in the event of conflict, they resuscitated their “Ibadan-ness” through their family head and Baale (later Olubadan) of Ibadan.⁴⁸ Stereotypical epithets such as “*Ibadan di 'jebu*” (literally, Ibadan becomes Ijebu) described the powerlessness of an Ibadan farmer who had to comply by all the rules and regulations of his Ijebu “landlord” in order to safeguard his investment.⁴⁹ In reality, no amount of land “payment” and length of residency on Ijebu or Ibadan side of the boundary could overwrite farmers “Ibadan-ness” or “Ijebu-ness”; or entitle them to permanent “ownership” of land. The first family or lineage to open up a forest and the chiefs of Ibadan and Ijebu retained the power to allocate land.⁵⁰ However in serving as the “neutral” umpire, the colonial masters had the final say over disputed land and could overturn any claim over it by both the chiefs and the farmers. As we shall see, arbitrary colonial method of settling conflict did not succeed, but had to give way to traditional and inter-personal resolution.

Generally, individuals and groups received better protection under their immediate ethnic and family affiliations. However, the situation occasionally defied conventional practices of intra-ethnic solidarity. When Omotoso of Ibadan attempted to eject Akinlade, a fellow Ibadan from his farm in Ijebu Ode in 1930, the Awujale (King of Ijebu Ode) petitioned the Resident Officer affirming that: “The farm land in question was granted to Akinlade by me vide agreement paper . . . He [Akinlade] acknowledges himself that he will serve me with his followers. He agrees to pay tribute tax under me.”⁵¹ The chiefs would defend their “tenant” farmers as long as they paid *isakole* (tribute) and taxes to their native authority; and the rival claimant was not from their town. The fluidity of intra-ethnic alliance was also well pronounced after every new boundary adjustments. Instead of losing their farms after new boundary delimitation, farmers readily changed landlords who could be Ibadan or Ijebu. After the boundary settlement of 1927, Adedeji Lawani of Ibadan and co-farmers discovered that the land Omotoso allocated to them around 1922 came under Ijebu side of the boundary. They approached the Resident of Ijebu Province, pledging that they were “ready to submit to the will and wishes of Ijebu Igbo people.” Lawani and his

group preferred becoming the subject of Awujale than losing seven years of investment on their farm.

A similar type clientship described above existed in precolonial times. The history of Yoruba is replete with the story of migration, acquisition of land, and integration into new communities.⁵² Traditionally people respected and abide by the laws of their new abode in exchange for protection by the elites and institutions of the community. However, the introduction of cocoa transformed relationships into “cash-centered” and private “ownership” of communal land—as against the precolonial system which was non-monetary and symbolic. In addition, not all societies in precolonial era welcomed foreigners. The Ijebu for instance maintained “splendid isolation” and refused to allow foreigners to live in their communities until the establishment of colonial rule in the last decade of the nineteenth century.⁵³ Their policy of “splendid isolation” is well documented in oral and written literature. One popular saying goes thus: “*Ijebu Ode Ajeji, ko wo; bi ajeji bawo laro, nwon afi se bo la le*” (meaning “Ijebu Ode, a town forbidden to foreigners; if a foreigner entered it in the morning, he was sure to be sacrificed in the evening”). More so, in contrast to precolonial times when adjudication and litigation of land cases ended at the palace of the head of the community; under colonial rule, colonial masters and European-styled courts had final say.

British officers were not neutral, but overtly and covertly supported one group against the other in order to increase their native treasury (through taxes paid by farmers) and secure the allegiance of the chiefs. During the numerous boundary settlements, the district and resident officers ensured that the interests of their native authorities were protected. This involved carefully monitoring developments in each camp and ensuring that agreements were popular. If Bower and Captain Humphrey, the district officer who “altered the provincial boundary against the wishes of the Ibadans”⁵⁴ in 1909, were careless about the immediate and long term implications of their actions, their successors were careful in reaching definite conclusions. In a 1933 correspondence to his Oyo counterpart, the Resident of Ijebu Province gave what appeared like a simple solution to the biases of colonial officers: “The whole area on both sides of the boundary must be surveyed by government surveyor accompanied by a *neutral administrative officer* [author's emphasis].”⁵⁵ The phrase, “neutral administrative officer” among several other statements used throughout the period established the contradictory nature of colonial officers' involvement in the conflict.

The economics of cocoa production is the second factor responsible for the volatile nature the conflict took. Amelonado, the specie of cocoa introduced to Western Nigeria grew best on newly cleared forest soil and took up to 7 years to start bearing fruits. Hence, cocoa growing required mobilization of huge capital and human resources over a long period of time. Socio-cultural and family ties which Western economists believed was an impediment to the growth of African indigenous business was in fact cardinal to the rise of cocoa economy by providing the much required financial and social support. The huge financial and labor outlays, and the long gestation period of cocoa increased attachment to land and paved the way for new regime/culture of land allocation and “ownership.” Because it was a viable and attractive asset, cocoa's ownership could be contested at any period of time. Indeed, cocoa introduced elements of economic value to land because it was a permanent crop with a life expectancy of about forty years. After investing so much on a land, farmers would do anything to recoup

investment. In theory, land was the problem, but in reality it was cocoa because uncultivated land was not scarce. During the period under examination, all the disputed land had cocoa trees bearing fruits. Ownership of uncultivated land did not cause conflict.

Conflict was also time specific in that it did not begin until when cocoa trees started bearing fruits or at the beginning of the harvesting season.⁵⁶ In addition, “bad or ill thriving cocoa plantations,” according to a report of enquiry, “are never in dispute.”⁵⁷ While it was difficult to lay claim over cocoa trees, it was possible to contest the communal ownership of land. In indigenous jurisprudence—which the British also accepted—the “owner” of a piece of land was automatically entitled to whatever erected on it. Such statements as “*eni to 'le ru, lo le 'ru*” (literally—both the slave and the luggage belongs to their owner) featured in the narratives of claims over land and cocoa. A 1936 report indicated that Madam Musitura of Ijebu seized the plantation of Tanimomo of Ibadan who had 20 farmers under him “without any reason or any compensation. . . there was nothing left for them out of their [farmers] very extensive plantation.”⁵⁸ Farmers driven from their plantations equally lost years of financial and labor investment and the right to ripe the fruit of their labor. Okesopin community of Ijebu Igbo wrote in a petition that, “Motoso [an Ibadan ‘landholder’] and his gangs are now contemplating to sell our people’s cocoa”⁵⁹ after being driven from their plantation. The cases of Madam Musitura and Tanimomo, and Omotoso and Okesopin community were not isolation.⁶⁰ Throughout the period under examination, plantation with cocoa bearing trees, not uncultivated farm land which were in abundant caused conflict. Rivalry over farm land was simply a pretext for conflict over cocoa. In addition, the epileptic character of the colonial economy accentuated by such devastating global crises as the Great Depression and the two world wars, and the unstable prices of cocoa in the world market, intensified conflict as farmers worked hard to partake from the gains of imperial capitalism while protecting their investments against individuals and groups eyeing them.⁶¹

Two methods of conflict prosecution, namely—peaceful and violent—adopted by the farmers and chiefs represented continuity and change in indigenous method of seeking redress and justice. In the peaceful method, farmers registered their grievances through petition writing introduced by the colonialists. In the 1920s and 1930s, they were assisted by certified letter writers (the so-called quasi lawyers) who adopted conventional tone of plead, argument, and persuasion in helping the farmers to establish their right over cocoa farms.⁶² Farmers also published petitions in the leading newspapers in order to educate and solicit the

Table 1. A sample of disputed cocoa plantation

Farmers	Number of Cocoa Trees
J. Abimbola	3000
'Nadi	5400
Isaac Fagbesan	2000
Aje	1000
Sankonaike	1000
Total	12,400

Source: Collated from NAI, Ijebu Prof., J. 27/Vol. II.

support of the public.⁶³ Petitions throw considerable light into the identity of the farmers, the history of the farm being disputed and occasionally, the value of cocoa trees. Although written primarily for seeking attention of the authorities in conflict resolution, petitions constitute a useful body of information for researching Nigeria's colonial encounter.⁶⁴ By the 1940s, some farmers were able to hire professional lawyers to complement the quasi-legal help offered by letter-writers. Legal profession according to Omoniyi Adewoye did not gain strong footing in Ibadan (as in other Yoruba towns) until the 1930s because people preferred to settle their conflicts out of court.⁶⁵ The volume and depth of petitions written by legal firms (like Akinloye, Odumosu & Cole Solicitors) surpassed those of the letters writers.⁶⁶ The use of lawyers represented a milestone in the history of cocoa conflict in that it demonstrated the farmers' awareness that they could improve their chances of seeking justice at the court. Adewoye has points out that conflict over cocoa farm fueled the legal profession in Ibadan.⁶⁷

Violent methods of conflict prosecution took the form of verbal and physical assault.⁶⁸ Farmers cursed one another as they relate factual and doctored histories of contested cocoa farms. Disputants took curse (*epe*) seriously since it invoked diabolical spirits of the gods and goddess.⁶⁹ Verbal assaults—such as, *Se 'le baba re de bi?* (Does this land belong to your father?)—preceded the violent because they provoked anger, which then degenerated into physical assault.⁷⁰ Even the chiefs who represented the interest of their native authorities and people made pronouncements capable of leading to armed conflict. The Awujale according to a colonial officer claimed ownership of the entire, "Ibadan southern reserve and the whole of land up to [i] jebu gate (Ibadan) including the [i]jebu quarters in Ibadan town itself."⁷¹ It is impossible to establish if the Awujale actually made this statement. However, it was not uncommon for chiefs and farmers to make controversial statements, capable of eliciting armed conflict in order to legitimize their claim to cocoa farms. The dynamics of conflicts also showcased continuity in pre-colonial culture of prosecution of violence. Although the chiefs were prohibited from keeping "war boys" after the imposition of colonial rule, the 1920s and 1930s saw the reincarnation of precolonial culture of "private armies." Some of the prominent chiefs like Omotoso according to colonial officers maintained "gangs" who were used for driving claimant from lands. The gangs also served as "security agent" ensuring that rival groups did not work on contested farm.

The police were regularly accused of supporting the native authority they worked for despite the fact that their primary responsible was to maintain peace.⁷² To solve the problem of "police bias" the District Officer of Ibadan recommended that "Olopa [native authority police] should be changed at frequent interval."⁷³ The police were also physically attacked by thugs and raiders. In one instance, Orimolusi sent some policemen to a disputed farm at Alagunta, a hamlet under his jurisdiction. But instead of arresting the accused Ibadan "trouble-makers," the police themselves were arrested bitten and taken to Ibadan.⁷⁴ Community heads even maintained private "prisons" in contravention of colonial law and tried several cases without the consent of the native authority or the monarchs of Ibadan and Ijebu. The existence of multiple authorities complicated conflict resolution as groups vied to uphold or reject judgments made by chiefs who acted under various authoritative capacities as head of families, communities, lineages, and towns.

Conflict was also prosecuted with supernatural powers—oral history gives insight into the deployment of various forms of charms (*ogun*). Charms (like *awo moju* meaning “to overlook”) were believed to have the potency to discourage rivals from claiming a cocoa farm. Supernatural “landmines” were also placed on farms to kill trespassers. Known locally as *ile yi yan*, “landmines” were considered the most potent of all charms because it served as a deterrent by killing instantly. People also attributed unexplainable deaths within the family or other misfortunes to disputes over a cocoa farm.⁷⁵ Rumors about death and misfortune fed into prevailing cultural logic, and recognition of the power of the unseen in mediating relations. One may never be able to effectively assess the role of supernatural powers in conflicts because of poor documentation. Yet they illuminate the history of anxiety and danger and are indeed useful source of history if properly interpreted. As historians of other colonial sites have shown, stories of vampires and rumors of unfathomable death significantly impacted people's perception of danger which influenced some major events that historians write about.⁷⁶

Conflict affected cultivation of food crops since most farmers grew both food and cash crops on their farms. As previously mentioned, one of the major demographic impacts of cocoa economy was the migration of people from the towns into the deep forest where they set up permanent settlements. Unlike the traditional farm hamlets which served as temporary abode during planting and harvesting seasons, the new settlements served as permanent abode because cocoa farms were usually far from the town.⁷⁷ In addition, the labor requirement, fear of theft, and incessant conflict compelled most farmers to live close to their investment and source of livelihood. Conflict occasionally forced an entire farming settlement to relocate temporarily to the town. In an on-the-spot assessment of conflict, a native police authority reported to his superiors that “about 200 women and children holding sheep, goats and fowls respectively were met amidst the jungle coming down to Ijebu Igbo fearing that Ibadan people might come to fight and loot their hamlets.”⁷⁸

Arbitration and Conflict Resolution: The Limits of Colonial Power

It was in the best interest of the colonialists to ensure that the colonies witness peace and tranquility in order to enhance exploitation of their human and material resources. The British did not intervene in every conflict, whether inter-personal or intergroup. They were mostly concerned with those that had strong impact on public order and the colonial treasury. The colonialists took the cocoa conflict seriously because as earlier stated, incessant raids on farms affected the amount of cocoa sent to Lagos. For instance in April 1933, the Governor of Nigeria was compelled to send a delegation to some troubled farms due to reported decline in cocoa sent to Lagos.⁷⁹ Conflict also affected the native authority treasury as farmers found it difficult to sell enough cocoa to pay their tribute tax. If the British could not find a lasting solution to the problem, it was because, as earlier stated, they did not acknowledge that the Ibadan and Ijebu were not fighting over land, but over cocoa.

Boundary delimitation was the first approach adopted by the British to resolve conflict. Two years after the first conflict broke out in 1909, Captain Humphery, the Acting Resident of Ibadan and District Officer Neal of Epe made a new provincial boundary at Apata Olowe without the consent of Ibadan

chiefs.⁸⁰ While the Ijebu preferred this new boundary, the Ibadan wanted Mamu, the old one established by Captain Bower.⁸¹ The significance of this adjustment should be considered beyond the division it created among the rival groups. In fact, it laid a wrong precedent for addressing the problem in that colonial officers after Captain Humphrey felt that they could solve the problem by simply adjusting and readjusting the boundary in order to satisfy both the Ibadan and Ijebu. Between 1911 and 1930 at least four major provincial boundary adjustments were carried out. Boundary adjustment posed two major interrelated problems: First, it reconfigured existing patron-client relations. After each boundary adjustment, farmers suddenly discovered their farms had been administratively and geographically grouped under a new town or native authority. Second, the reconfiguration of clientship also meant that the terms of land use had to be renegotiated. This was evident in the case of Aderinola of Ijebu Ode whose farm became part of the Ibadan division after the 1927 demarcation. Omotoso, his new "landlord", imposed new tribute of ten pounds which he contested. In his petition to the Resident of Ijebu Ode, he claimed he preferred his old landlord to Omotoso and asked for the possibility of paying his tribute tax to the Ijebu native treasury, even though his farm was administratively under Ibadan division.⁸² Carefully read, Aderinola was attempting to enlist the support of the Resident Officer against Omotoso by emphasizing his willingness to pay his tribute tax to Ijebu native authority.

When it became apparent that the Ibadan and the Ijebu would not collectively agree on various demarcation made between 1909 and 1930, the British resolved to impose colonial autocracy by implementing the new "the Inter-Tribal Boundaries Settlement Ordinance of 1933 (IBSO)."⁸³ Section A of the Ordinance, completely disempowered the chiefs and farmers and made the colonialists the final umpire in boundary resolution:

It is not necessary that all or any of the parties should not consent to the settlement of a boundary dispute under the provisions of this Ordinance nor is any written submission (such as is required by the Arbitration Ordinance) required. When the Resident in charge of the Province has signified his approval, the District Officer has statutory authority to hold the inquiry and can do so irrespective of the wishes or objections of any one.⁸⁴

Various sections of the Ordinance empowered the District Officer not to recognize any previous rulings by the Native, Provincial and even Supreme Courts. He was only answerable to the Resident Officer of his province and Governor of Nigeria. The Ordinance was expected to reduce litigation and counter-litigation which increased administrative work and intensified conflict among the rival farmers and their landlords on the one hand, and the chiefs and the colonial officers on the other. Litigation also encouraged corruption and created significant administrative confusion. For instance, native and provincial courts were trying cases outside their jurisdictions. In addition, it was not unusual for native courts to overturn cases already decided at the provincial courts and vice-versa. By passing the IBSO the British believed they could unilaterally and autocratically put an end to the cocoa conflict; but they were proved wrong two years later. The Ordinance failed because it did not address the cardinal question of "ownership" of cocoa farm. The colonialists could only intervene in a disputed farm that came

to their attention, and most cases were determined by various “courts” and chiefs acting under multiple and contradictory authorities. In addition, the IBSO did not criminalize the intervention of the native courts or other agencies in conflict resolution. It only entrusted the District Officer with discretionary power to recognize or disregard preexisting court rulings.

In the 1950s, colonial officers suggested that the Ibadan and Ijebu monarchs be held accountable for any crises. “One possible solution,” the Resident Officer of Ijebu Ode wrote, “is that His Honour [Governor of Nigeria] should direct that the Orimolusi [King of Ijebu Igbo] . . . and the appropriate chief on the Ibadan side, should be bound over to keep the peace and be informed categorically that his Honour will hold them personally responsible for any act of lawlessness which occurred.”⁸⁵ This suggestion was not adopted, probably because it was made in the era of decolonization when arbitrary colonial power was gradually overtaken by political self-determination. It would have been possible to punish or hold the chiefs responsible for crisis in the early decades of colonial rule when district and provincial officers had the power to remove and exile them even without approval from Lagos.

Aside the numerous boundary adjustments, cases were also resolved in various courts: native, land, provincial and even supreme. Some family heads and junior chiefs maintained private “court” which served as the first port of call for redress. It would appear that cases were brought to the native authority and provincial courts only when they could not be amicably resolved by the junior chiefs and head of families. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of family head “courts.” It would appear that the “courts” were quite successful in reducing conflict. Administration of justice was informed by the size, the ethnicity of the claimant, and the history of “ownership” of cocoa plantation.⁸⁶ It also involved a lot of compromise. For instance, instead of losing his farm, Oduwole of Ijebu resolved to allow Adekunle, his Ibadan “landholder” to harvest his entire cocoa in 1942.⁸⁷ This case was decided at the “court” of Baale (head) of Araromi community—it did not reach the native authority of either Ibadan or Ijebu. In other instances, some farmers simply allowed rivals to have a portion of the disputed land. In 1943, Filani of Ibadan divided his cocoa farm into two in order to please Adewusi who claimed to have left the farm furlough with “little cocoa trees” ten years earlier. Filani in his defense did not deny seeing some budding cocoa plants when the farm was allocated to him around 1932.⁸⁸ He however claimed to have cleared the entire farm before planting new cocoa.⁸⁹ What seems interesting in the method of conflict resolution is the extent in which farmers were willing to share their income or pay more tributes instead of losing their entire investment. Yet, some families simply emigrated to Ondo and Ife divisions, abandoning and losing their entire investment.⁹⁰ This method of compromise seems to have started around the late 1940s and encouraged by the Ondo land tenure culture which did not involve the payment of *isakole*.

Conclusion

This article complements the historiography of cocoa and socio-economic transformation in southwestern Nigeria by examining the conflict between Ibadan and Ijebu. I posit that land could not have been the main source of conflict if the people did not fight over large uncultivated forest areas which were not

scarce throughout the period under examination. Land featured almost wholly in the narrative of conflict because it was on it that cocoa farms were erected. The conflict could not be permanently resolved partly because the cost of erecting cocoa farms increased attachment to land. Even more, cocoa was a profitable cash crop that both the rich and the poor could invest in. The cocoa conflict demonstrated the limits of colonial power in mediating in the crisis that negatively impacted colonial treasury. But more importantly, it tells much about the creativity of the farmers and indigenous agency in responding to a crisis in order to maximize the gains of colonial capitalism. As entrepreneurs, the farmers fought to defend their investment, while the chiefs supported their “tenant” farmers and subjects in order to retain the legitimacy of indigenous agency and extract tribute. Symbiotic and antagonistic relationships existed between the chiefs and the farmers on the one hand, and the colonial masters on the other hand because conflict affected them politically and economically.

Conflict over land and boundary was legion in various parts of Africa during and after the demise of imperial rule. While some took on an international dimension because of the failure of the imperial powers to effectively determine the limits of their spheres of influence, others were mainly domestic (inter and intra-ethnic) within a specific country. The case we have engaged is intra-ethnic in character. It is also inter-provincial because the boundary being disputed defined the jurisdiction of two provinces (Oyo and Ijebu). Unlike several African land and boundary conflict caused by war and displacement, famine and deforestation, overpopulation, pressure on land and its resources, and other nature and human-induced calamities, the case under examination was cocoa-induced. The Ibadan and the Ijebu did not fight to acquire land for growing food crops; neither did they worry about the immediate and future impact of the conflict on its availability for their incoming generation. Rather, they fought over land that contained cocoa, a cash crop that reconfigured the character of Yoruba demography and unleashed significant socio-economic and political transformation.

Endnotes

Versions of the paper were presented at the “International Conference on Global Conflicts, Local Solutions,” Kennesaw State University, Georgia on April 21, 2012, and at the “IAS/IFRA-Nigeria Distinguished Personality Lecture Series,” University of Ibadan, Nigeria on June 6, 2012. I thank participants at these gatherings for their useful comments and suggestions. My appreciation also goes to the anonymous reviewers and editor of *Journal of Social History* for their suggestions which helped to improve the quality of this paper. I thank Mr. Joseph of the University of Ibadan’s Geography Department for making the map included in this study. Address correspondence to: Saheed Aderinto, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28786. Email: saderinto@email.wcu.edu.

1. National Archives Ibadan (NAI hereafter), Ibadan Prof., 56 Vol. II, “Resident of Ijebu Province to Civil Secretary Western Region,” October 10, 1953.

2. The words “Ibadan” and “Ijebu” refer to both the people and their territories. Ijebu Ode and Ijebu Igbo, two major Ijebu towns form the basis of this study. For general history of Ibadan and Ijebu see among others, E. A. Ayandele, *The Ijebu of Yorubaland, 1850–1950: Politics, Economy and Society* (Ibadan, 1992); Toyin Falola, *Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893–1945* (Lagos, 1989); Toyin Falola, *The Political Economy of a Pre-colonial African State: Ibadan, 1830-1900* (Ile-Ife, 1984); G.O. Ogunremi, ed., *Ibadan: A Historical, Cultural and Socio-economic Study of An African City* (Lagos, 2000); and Ruth Watson,

"Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan" (*Ijo Igboro Larun Ibadan*): *Chieftaincy and Civic Culture in a Yoruba City* (Athens, 2003).

3. R. Galletti, K. D. S. Baldwin and I. O. Dina, *Nigerian Cocoa Farmers* (London, 1956); and J.A. Ayorinde, "Historical Notes on the Use of Cocoa Industry in Western Nigeria," *Nigerian Agricultural Journal* 3 (1965): 18–23. See the following works on cocoa and socio-cultural transformation in southwestern Nigeria by Sara Berry: "Christianity and the Rise of Cocoa Growing in Ibadan and Ondo," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4 (1968): 439–51; *Migrant Farmers and Land Tenure in the Nigerian Cocoa Belt* (Wisconsin, 1971); "Cocoa and Economic Development in Western Nigeria," in *Growth and Development of the Nigerian Economy*, eds. C. Eicher and C. Liedholm (East Lansing MI, 1970), 16–29; *Cocoa, Custom and Socioeconomic Change in Rural Western Nigeria* (Oxford, 1975); and "The Concept of Innovation and the History of Cocoa Farming in Western Nigeria," *Journal of African History* 15 (1974): 83–95.

4. Berry, "The Concept of Innovation," 86.

5. Here I am concerned with "domestic" or "inter and intra-ethnic" not "international" boundary/land dispute. See among others, Emmanuel M. Mbah, *Land/Boundary Conflict in Africa: The Case of Former British Colonial Bamenda, Present-Day North-West Province of the Republic of Cameroon, 1916–1996* (Lewiston, 2008); Laurel Rose, *The Politics of Harmony: Land Dispute Strategies in Swaziland* (Cambridge, 1992); Rongxing Guo, *The Land and Maritime Boundary Disputes of Africa* (New York, 2009); Carl Gosta Widstrand, ed., *African Boundary Problems* (Uppsala, 1969); and Paul Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju, eds., *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (Edinburg, 1996).

6. See the following for references to conflict between the Ibadan and the Ijebu during the precolonial period. Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate* (London, 1921, reproduced 1961), 612–13, 616–18, 450–54; Toyin Falola, "Warfare and Trade Relations between Ibadan and the Ijebu in the Nineteenth Century," in *Warfare and Diplomacy in Precolonial Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Robert Smith*, eds. Toyin Falola and Robin Law (Madison, 1992), 26–30; Falola, *The Political Economy of a Pre-colonial African State*, 15–18; Bolanle Awe, "Militarism and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Country: The Ibadan Example," *Journal of African History* 14 (1973): 65–77. The literature on the nineteenth century Yoruba war is vast. See among others, Adeagbo Akinjogbin, ed., *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793–1893* (Ibadan, 1998); S.A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893: Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapo* (New York, 1971); J.F. Ade Ajayi and R. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1964); Toyin Falola and G.O. Oguntomisin, *The Military in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics* (Ile Ife, 1984); and R.C.C. Law, "The Chronology of the Yoruba Wars of Early Nineteenth Century: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* 2 (1970): 212–22.

7. All the colonial files were labeled variously as "boundary dispute between Ibadan and Ijebu" and "Ibadan-Ijebu boundary Dispute."

8. Interviews for this study were collected during the months of May and June 2005. My respondents included the descendants of Aperin, the "founder" of some of the disputed forest land. I thank Chief Omotoso, the Baale of Araromi for granting a useful interview and helping to identify notable boundaries and other physical features used for boundary delimitation.

9. See the following works by Berry, "Christianity and the Rise of Cocoa," 439–51; *Migrant Farmers*; "The Concept of Innovation," 83–95; "Cocoa and Economic Development," 16–29; and *Cocoa, Custom and Socioeconomic Change*.

10. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina's, work on Nigerian Cocoa Farmers was published in 1956. However, it is not a historical work *per se*, but social-science oriented survey sponsored by the colonial government. Galletti, Baldwin, and *Nigerian Cocoa Farmers*.

11. Berry, *Cocoa, Custom and Socioeconomic Change*, 8.

12. See the following work by Ezekiel Walker, "Structural Change, the Oil Boom and the Cocoa Economy of Southwestern Nigeria, 1973–1980s," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38 (2000): 71–87; "Happy Days are Here Again: Cocoa Farmers, Middlemen Traders and the Structural Adjustment Program Southwestern Nigeria, 1986–1990s," *Africa Today* 47 (2000): 151–69; "The Changing Patterns of Labor Relations in the Cocoa Farming Belt of Southwestern Nigeria, 1950s to 1990s," *African Economic History* 28 (2001): 123–40; "The Establishment of the Cocoa Cash Crop Industry in Ibadan, 1893–1945: A Case Study in the Incorporation of Ibadan into the World Capitalist Economy," (M.A thesis, University of Ibadan, 1980).

13. Ayodeji Olukoju, "Confronting the Combines: Producers' and Traders' Militancy in Western Nigeria, 1934–1939," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 9 (2000):49–69; A.G. Hopkins, "Innovation in a Colonial Context: African Origins of the Nigerian Cocoa-farming Industry, 1880–1920," in *The Imperial Impact: Studies in the Economic History of Africa and India*, eds. Clive Dewey and Anthony G. Hopkins (London, 1978), 83–96.

14. Walker, "Happy Days are Here Again"; and Walker, "The Changing Patterns of Labor Relations."

15. The literature on indirect rule and native authority in Ibadan and Ijebu is vast. See among others, Tunde Oduwobi, *Ijebu Under Colonial Rule, 1892–1960: An Administrative and Political Analysis* (Lagos, 2004); Ayandele, *The Ijebu of Yorubaland*, chapters 2 to 6; and Falola, *Politics and Economy in Ibadan*.

16. Tunde Oduwobi, "Deposed Rulers under the Colonial Regime in Nigeria: The Careers of Akarigbo Oyebajo and Awujale Adenuga," *Cahiers d'Études africaines* XLIII (2003): 553–71; and Olufunke Adeboye, "Iku Ya J'esin': Politically Motivated Suicide, Social Honor and Chieftaincy Politics in Early Colonial Ibadan," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 42 (2007): 189–225.

17. Files on the conflict (more than two dozen) can be found in the Oyo, Ibadan and Ijebu provincial papers deposited at the National Archives, Ibadan.

18. There is no reference to cocoa conflict in Watson's highly important book on political crisis in colonial Ibadan. See Watson, "*Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan*."

19. Olufunke Adeboye, "Intra-Ethnic Segregation in Colonial Ibadan: The Case of Ijebu Settlers," in *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities Since the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Laurent Fourchard and Isaac Olawale Albert (Ibadan, 2003), 303–19; Dan R. Aronson, *The City is Our Farm: Seven Migrant Ijebu Yoruba Families* (Boston, 1978), 28; Falola, *Politics and Economy in Ibadan*, 274–75, 335; Saheed Aderinto, "Discrimination in an Urban Setting: The Experience of Ijebu Settlers in Colonial Ibadan, 1893–1960," in *Inter-group Relations in Nigeria during the 19th & 20th Centuries*, eds. Olayemi Akinwumi, Okpeh O. Okpeh Jr and Gwamna D. Je'adayibe (Makurdi, 2006), 356–86; and Saheed Aderinto, "Ijebu a b'eyan. . .?" ("Ijebu or a human being. . .?"): Nineteenth Century Origin of Discrimination against Ijebu Strangers in colonial Ibadan, Nigeria," in *Minorities and the State in Africa*, eds. Chima J. Korieh and Michael Mbanaso (New York, 2010), 143–68.

20. Aronson, *The City is Our Farm*, 30–31.

21. Falola, *Politics and Economy in Ibadan*, 275–76, and 335–36.

22. *Ibid.*, 276.

23. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, 610; Toyin Falola, "Warfare and Trade Relations between Ibadan and the Ijebu in the Nineteenth Century," in *Warfare and Diplomacy in Precolonial Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Robert Smith*, eds. Toyin Falola and Robin Law (Madison, 1992), 26–30.

24. For more on trade and economic relations in the era of warfare, see Awe, "Militarism and Economic Development," 65–77; and Falola, *The Political Economy*, chapters three, four and five.

25. NAI, Ijebu Prof., J27/1923 Vol. II, "Senior Resident Oyo Province to the Secretary of Southern Provinces," January 9, 1920.

26. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Aboke Statement," November 10, 1926; "Motosho Statement," November 10, 1926; and "Bale Ogunjobi Ikolaba Statement," November 10, 1926.

27. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Statement by Bale Ogunjobi Ikolabi," November 10, 1926.

28. See Ijebu account, NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Jacob Shobile's Statement," September 7, 1926; and Bello's Statement, September 7, 1926.

29. For details on the career of Bower in Yorubaland, see S. Ademola Ajayi, "Bower's Tower: A Historical Monument in Ibadan," in *Ibadan*, ed. Ogunremi (Lagos, 2000), 69–83.

30. NAI, Ijebu Prof., J27/1923 Vol. II, "Senior Resident Oyo Province to The Secretary of Southern Provinces," January 9, 1920.

31. *Ibid.*

32. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Senior Resident Oyo Province to the Secretary Southern Provinces," August 5, 1926.

33. Oyo Prof. 815/1, "Senior Resident Officer of Oyo Province to the Secretary of Southern Provinces," August 5, 1926.

34. Berry, "Christianity and the Rise of Cocoa," 440–42.

35. *Ibid.*, 442–43.

36. Berry, *Cocoa, Custom and Socioeconomic Change*, 51.

37. Falola, *Politics and Economy in Ibadan*, 104.

38. Walker, "The Establishment of the Cocoa Cash Crop Industry in Ibadan," 64.

39. Berry, "Cocoa and Economic Development," 221.

40. Hopkins, "Innovation in a Colonial Context," 83–96; and Berry, "The Concept of Innovation," 83–95.

41. Land tenure culture in Yorubaland is not homogenous. In Ondo for instance, people did not pay *isakole* (tribute) even during the colonial era. Representative readings on Yoruba land culture and law include, P.C. Lloyd, *Yoruba Land Law* (London, 1962); G.B.A. Coker, *Family Property Among the Yoruba* (London, 1966); Teslim Elias, *Nigerian Land Law and Custom* (London, 1951); H.L. Ward Price, *Land Tenure in Yoruba Province* (Lagos, 1939); and C.W. Rowling, *Land Tenure in Ijebu Province* (Ibadan, 1956).

42. Falola, *The Political Economy of a Pre-colonial African State*, 50.

43. NAI, J.27/1923 Vol. II, "Minutes taken on a Commission of Enquiry on the Ibadan-Ijebu Boundary on March 23, 1936."

44. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Assistant District Officer Ibadan to District Officer," April 19, 1926.
45. *Ibid.*, 22.
46. Oyo Prof. 815/1, "Letters to the Chiefs of Ibadan."
47. NAI, Ijebu Prof., 1728 Vol. I, "Ijebu Ibadan Boundary; Settlement of Disputes, Mr Leslie's Report," 1953.
48. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Boundary Dispute."
49. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Petition," August 22, 1933.
50. Yoruba land tenure culture or system is really complicated. It varies from region to region and determined by a host of historical antecedents. See the various citations on land tenure in this paper.
51. NAI, Prof., J. 27/1923 Vol.II, "Awujale to the Resident Officer, Ijebu Ode," April 24, 1930.
52. Dare Oguntomisin, "Refugees in Nineteenth Century Yorubaland," in *War and Peace*, ed. Akinjogbin (Ibadan, 1998), 381–98.
53. See Bolanle Awe, "Ibadan: Its Early Beginning", in *The City of Ibadan*, eds. P.C Lloyd, A.L. Mabogunje and Bolanle Awe (Cambridge, 1967), 22. A fuller discussion of Ijebu's isolationism can be found in Ayandele, *The Ijebu of Yorubaland*, 1–32.
54. Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Senior Resident Officer of Oyo Province to the Secretary of Southern Provinces," August 5, 1926.
55. NAI, Ijebu Prof., J395/Vol.II, "Resident Ijebu Province to Resident of Oyo Province," August 22, 1933.
56. NAI, Ijebu Prof., J 397/Vol. 4/475, "Ibadan Farmers in Ijebu Farm," July 20, 1936.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. NAI, Oyo Prof., 676 Vols. I and II, "System of Land Tenure in the Yoruba Province: Investigation into and report on," 1932.
60. NAI Ibadan Div. 1 \ 1, 1357/Vol. II, "Ibadan Ijebu Boundary, Matters affecting," 1932.
61. On the impact of the Great Depression on the Nigerian economy, see Moses E. Ochonu, *Colonial Meltdown: Northern Nigeria in the Great Depression* (Athens, 2009).
62. Segun Yerokun, "Modern Legal System in Ibadan," in *Ibadan*, ed. Ogunremi (Lagos, 2000) 250–54.
63. Akede Eko, "Ibadan-Ijebu Boundary Dispute," December 5, 1931; and Akede Eko, "Ibadan Ijebu Boundary Dispute," December 12, 1931.
64. For petition letters as historical data, see Chima Korieh, "May It Please Your Honor': Letters of Petition as Historical Evidence in an African Colonial Context," *History in Africa: A Journal of Methods* 37 (2010): 83–106.
65. Omoniyi Adewoye, "Legal Practice in Ibadan, 1904–1960," *Journal of Legal Pluralism* 24 (1986): 62–63.
66. NAI, Ibadan Prof., 56, "Ago-Owu-Ijebu Boundary Dispute," October 10, 1953.

67. Adewoye, "Legal Practice in Ibadan," 63–64. The role of lawyers in land dispute in colonial Yorubaland is a possible area of research. The story of Lagos seems well documented but little is known about the protectorate.
68. Oral Interview, Pa Adisa Oloyede, Akanran Ibadan. June 16, 2005.
69. Oral Interview, Chief Omotoso, Baale Araromi. May 16, 2005.
70. Oral Interview, Pa Adisa Oloyede. June 16, 2005.
71. NAI, Oyo Prof 815/1, "Appendix A."
72. NAI, Ibadan Prof., 56 Vol. II, "Orimolusi of Ijebu Igbo to the Commissioner of Police, Western Region," October 14, 1953.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Oral Interview, Pa Rabiola Oloare, Akanran Ibadan. May 16, 2005.
76. Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, 2000).
77. Berry, "Christianity and the Rise of Cocoa," 439–51.
78. NAI, Ibadan Prof., I, 169, "N.A Police Office to the Assistant Captain of Police," October 8, 1953.
79. NAI, Ijebu Prof., J22/1923, "Ibadan Ijebu Boundary Disputes," June 21, 1932.
80. NAI, Oyo Prof., 815/1, "Arbitration Award in the Ijebu-Ibadan Boundary Settlement," January 18, 1927.
81. Ibid.
82. NAI, J395/Vol.II, "Petition by Aderinole," August 22, 1933.
83. NAI, Ijebu Prof., 1–10, C. 11, "Inter Tribal Boundary Ordinance 1933." A similar ordinance was also enforced in other parts of the British Empire. See, Emmanuel Mbah, "Disruptive Colonial Boundaries and Attempts to Resolve Land/Boundary Dispute in the Grassland of Bamenda, Cameroon," *African Journal of Conflict Resolution* 9 (2009):22–26.
84. NAI, Ijebu Prof., 1–10, C. 11.
85. NAI, Ibadan Prof., 56 Vol. II, "Resident Officer of Ijebu Ode to the Honourable, Civil Secretary, Western Region," October 10, 1953.
86. I arrived at this conclusion by closely examining the petitions and rulings in the documents cited in various sections of this study.
87. NAI, J395/Vol.II, "Ibadan-Ijebu Dispute, Investigation into," May 1943.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Oral Interview, Chief Adelaja. May 16, 2005.