

Discrimination in an Urban Setting: The Experience of Ijebu Settlers in Colonial Ibadan, 1893-1960

Saheed Aderinto

History is the memory of human group experience ... It is the events recorded in history that have generated all the emotions, all the values, the ideas, that make life meaningful, that have given men something to live for, struggle over, die for. Historical events have created all the basic human groupings-countries, religions, classes-and all the loyalties that attached to these.¹

The Ibadan speak of the Ijebu not as "*alejo*"; strangers and guests to be accorded generous hospitality in the cultural expectation that such action is reciprocal and pleasurable, but as "*ajeji*"; strangers who "eat in two places" make of hospitality a one way street, or do not reciprocate at all.²

Introduction

The Ijebu, a Yoruba sub-group whose legendary home is at Ijebu Ode are Ibadan southwestern neighbours³. The history of their settlement in Ibadan can be dated back to the founding of the state in 1830. In fact, they were one of the groups that settled at the place that later became Ibadan after the destruction of Owu about 1825 and the sacking and displacement of the Egba-Gbagura and their villages. Other Yoruba sub ethnic groups that were instructional to the founding of Ibadan include the Egba, the Ife, the Oyo-Yoruba etc.⁴ Between 1830 and 1893, the Oyo-Yoruba, one of the major sections of the town, through war, diplomacy and politics

dominated the affairs of the town and laid down the principle of its citizenship. As variegated as the principle of citizenship of the town was, the Ijebu, the Egba, the Ife, the Ekiti etc were to be treated as strangers.⁵

In a related work, carried out on the 19th century origin of discrimination against Ijebu settlers in colonial Ibadan a lot of things have been discovered.⁶ Factually, the conceptualization of citizenship in pre-colonial Ibadan and the unpalatable relations between the state and the Ijebu Kingdom during the 19th century Yoruba warfare had profound effect in molded pattern of relations between Ibadan host and Ijebu strangers during the period under examination. It is obvious that analysis of inter-group relations during colonial rule is grossly inadequate without a critical understanding of developments before the imposition of alien rule. The establishment of colonial rule preserved old differences and provided new platform which molded inter-group relations.⁷

How did the establishment of colonial rule intensify old differences between the Ijebu and their Ibadan host? The imposition of colonial rule and the incorporation of the town into the vortex of capitalism facilitated greater influx of Ijebu who migrated to the town to partake in the new economic opportunities put in place by colonialism. This coupled with other outstanding aspects of social change reverberated in the relations and allowed the hatred and antipathy to be adequately entrenched. The need to maximize the economic opportunities created by the imposition of colonial rule coupled with the challenges of living in urban centers created a platform which heightened the inflated nature of relations between the Ibadan and the Ijebu elements during the period under examination. Although without official data, the Ijebu were most populous non-native settlers in colonial Ibadan.⁸ Their population continued to increase throughout the colonial period. The remarkable success of early migrant was attributed as a major catalyst for the unprecedented increase in the population of the Ijebu migrants. As we are going to see in the latter part of the work, the establishment of new residential districts was based on far reaching factors which facilitated

the influx of the Ijebu who amongst the Yoruba are regarded as the most "business minded."

Academic research on the relations between the Ijebu and their Ibadan host has been given adequate attention.⁹ However, none has discussed discrimination as a single academic subject of inquiry. Most of them either made passing comments or references to discrimination as aspect of relations or as part of urban study of segregation.¹⁰ In this work, I focus entirely on discrimination, understanding that it is an aspect of relations. Also, for critical understanding of the nature and dynamics of issues at stake, I build on and expand the existing literature by subdividing the aspects of discrimination to show that it reflected in all spheres of relations. This approach enhances our understanding of the degree of the institutionalization, a theme that has not been adequately echoed in existing work. Also, this study discusses several aspects of discrimination, which have been left unidentified in earlier works, and those that have not been adequately placed within the appropriate all embracing and comprehensive context of intra ethnic discrimination: the Ijebu stranger and the Ibadan host example.

The Ijebu Enclave and the Politics of "Infrastructural Alienation"

One of the distinctive aspects of colonial urban inter-relations was the development of ethnic enclaves, tribal unions and paraphernalia of migrant or settlers identification. Social engineering amongst migrant urban settlers was predominantly informed by the desire to develop social, economic and political mechanism, which were *sine qua non* to the realities or challenges of urban lifestyle and working in a "foreign land".¹¹ While the origin and development of ethnic or tribal unions and enclaves sometimes had its initiative from migrant urban settlers, who share similar cultural and historical backgrounds, there were occasions the colonial government regulations assisted in their formation. In this connection was the policy of segregating the native from the strangers. This policy which blossomed in the establishment of strangers

quarters and tribal unions in virtually all the major urban centers of the country was also a pivotal factor in the origin of ethnic/tribal politics that was adequately pronounced during the post Second World War independent struggle.¹² While Kano played host to the first stranger quarters otherwise called *sabogari*, in 1913, that of Ibadan that was established in 1916 was presumably the second.¹³ Before the termination of colonial rule in 1960 virtually all urban centers in Nigeria have their own stranger quarters.

Aside the Hausa and Nupe enclaves in Ibadan, another prominent non-native settler community was the one that belonged to the Ijebu. The origin and growth of the Ijebu stranger quarter and those of the Hausa and Nupe are different. The Ijebu enclave at Oke Ado and Oke Bola did not emerge as a result of the desire of the colonial government to segregate the Ijebu elements in the town. The Ijebu only took the opportunity of the government's policy of decongesting the metropolis by buying land and erecting buildings in that part of the city.¹⁴ Many Ijebu migrants in the 1930s, 40s and 50s preferred to live in Oke Ado and Oke Bola as a result of the natural tendency of urban migrants to leave closer to their "country people".

While the Ijebu took up the challenge of developing that part of the city, the colonial government scheme of decongesting the metropolis appealed little to the natives who were traditionally obliged to live with their extended family relations in the densely populated compounds of Oje, Bere, Yemetu Oja Iba and etc. By the late 1940, the character of Oke Ado had risen to the position of a purely Ijebu enclave both in population and property holdings.¹⁵

The significant position which the Ijebu enclave of Oke Ado and Oke Bola occupied, was that it provided for the first time during the colonial period, the opportunity for people of similar cultural and historical background to live together in the same geographical area. During the 1930s and 1940s, many Ijebu who had been living in the metropolis relocated to the new enclave when it was obvious that it was gradually developing into an Ijebu enclave. Some of these people relocated to the

enclave to "flee" from the numerous accusation and undue hatred which they faced by living amongst the indigene to a place where land was relatively available as against the crowded metropolis.¹⁶

New comers of Ijebu origin naturally settled in the enclave. Also, a sizeable percentage of literate Ijebu who migrated into the town and took up jobs with the colonial government were obliged to reside in parts of the city where new modern buildings that suited their status was available. Mabogunje's description of the new architecture of Oke Ado and Oke Bola informed one of the reasons why the educated and rich Ijebu migrant were delighted to settle at the enclave.¹⁷

Like most ethnic enclaves in colonial Nigeria, the Ijebu residents of Oke Ado and Oke Bola accused the Ibadan Native Authority of deliberately refusing to develop the area on account of the ill feelings they had for people of Ijebu descent.¹⁸ The Authority was also reprimanded for not providing basic amenities for the people of Oke Ado under the pretence that the area was not part of the metropolis where most indigenes resided. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s several petitions were sent to the Ibadan Native Authority concerning the provision of basic amenities and security. The *Southern Nigeria Defender*, a newspaper that was hitherto published in Warri but by 1946 moved to Ibadan was at the arrowhead of the agitation against the perceived discrimination against the residents of Oke Ado. The print media's agitation was summed up in the accusation that the Ibadan Native Authority deliberately refused to provide basic amenities for the Ijebu enclave. Some of the basic amenities that were not available in Oke Ado as at 1950 include dispensary and antenatal clinic.¹⁹ There was only one standpipe of water supply for the inhabitants of the whole area.²⁰ Similarly, there was no public latrine in the area, while the slaughter slab constructed were not put into use.²¹ A petitioner depicted the situation thus:

Oke Ado with its ever-increasing population waits anxiously for the implementation of the official promise made to it for the provision of those amenities, which

she is, dire need. As the day rolls on, people look out expecting to see when and where work would begin. We are aware that work of construction of dispensary with antenatal attached must take some time. We are also aware that the provision of stand-pipe in the really Native areas as distinct from Ijebu Bye Pass requires some planning. That is why we issue this reminder in that necessary preliminaries should be taken on hand without any further delay. Talking of Oke Ado, amenities also reminds us of a report about a slaughter slab long since erected and which has never been used. It is somewhere at the back of Doctor Akeji and along Ijebu Bye-Pass. Whoever was responsible for it's erection did a fine piece of job for the people, but why it had not been used beats us hollow. It looks like a case of inexplicable forgetfulness.²²

Aside, the inadequate infrastructural facilities palaver, another very remarkable issue that occupied the concern of Ijebu settlers at Oke Ado was the problem of security and the activities of prostitutes who turned that part of the city into a haven for their activities. The activities of robbers and miscreants were reported by the print media as threat to security of life and property. October 28, 1950 issue of *Southern Nigeria Defender* with a headline "Thieves at Oke Ado" reported the situation in this manner:

Thieves appear to have found a place at Oke Ado where they could visit without any encumbrances and without the fear of being caught. They have therefore being making regular visit and poor people there have being losing their property including sheep, goats, turkeys, fowls and even dogs. One sheep thief was rounded up a few days ago in broad day light with three sheep belonging to some other owners and some fowls. The sheep were roped together and were being led away as if the thief was the real owner and although, when caught by the Oke Ado Market site, no policeman could be got nearby to whom to hand the thief over.

In Another related report, the editorial of the same newspaper depicted the situation of security in Oke Ado:

Early last week, news went around Oke Ado that burglars had threaten to raid the area during the week. People took every precaution but nothing was reported and it was thought the news might be unfounded or that the threat to carry out a raid was abandoned. People are thinking about it differently, now since daylight raid held burglary activities during this week. Houses in some parts of Oke Ado had been visited. All cases padlocked or rimlocked on door were reported broken or forced to open and wearing appeals and other domestic utensils that are easy to carry away were reported removed.²³

In summarizing the poor state of the enclave, an observer wrote "...frankly speaking, this quarter does not enjoy anything at all, in spite of the fact that the inhabitants pay taxes."²⁴

The way the print media portrayed the situation was informed by what was regarded as earlier mentioned the prejudiced nature of government's disposition to the welfare of Ijebu enclave of Oke Ado and Oke Bola. Between, the late 1940s and the early 1950s, the newspaper reported the inadequacies of basic amenities in Oke Ado and Oke Bola alone. It was only on rare occasion that the daily identified the problems of social amenities as a general problem of the entire Ibadan Township.²⁵ A painstaking look at the minutes of the meetings of Ibadan Native Authority during the 1940s and the 1950s show that virtually all parts of the town sent petitions to the government on poor state of amenities. There were petitions from all sections of the town, including Bere, Oje, Yemetu, Foko etc which apart from being close to Mapo Hill, the seat of the Native Authority were also the indigenes areas where most natives lived.²⁶ Social problems such as the activities of robbers, pickpockets who were fondly called *Jaguda* and other people of questionable behaviour and character were popular phenomena that were prominent during and after the second World War, (1939-1945). T.N Tamuno's analysis

of crime in Ibadan in the 1940s provides a clue into the complicated nature of the incidence in areas such as Lebanon Street and Ogunpa where Europeans and other non Africans had their investments.²⁷ As I have shown in another work, prostitutes in Ibadan like in other urban centres were labeled "undesirables" because of their presumed role in the promotion of social menace of venereal diseases and crime.²⁸ Inadequate social amenities and other related urban based social questions were general problems accentuated by the imposition of capitalist values and other outstanding aspects of socio cultural changes.

The situation in the Ijebu enclaves was therefore not too spectacular. However, it is noteworthy that the hatred and antipathy, which existed, between the Ibadan and the Ijebu was the factor that molded the reports about the provision of facilities in that part of the town. Oral history from the resident of Oke Ado and Oke Bola during colonial rule shows that the government's disposition to the provision to the welfare facilities in the Ijebu enclaves was informed by the presupposition that the part of the town was "far" from the metropolis and the seat of administration. Some of my informants told me that the reasons the agitation for the provision of amenities were more pronounced in the Ijebu enclave was that the section of the town had large number of literate, majority of who constituted the middle class civil servants of the colonial government.²⁹ It is important to state that prominent Nigerian nationalist and politician late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who was also an Ijebu man has his resident situated in the Ijebu enclave. The social and educational status of Oke Ado and Oke Bola might have influenced the popularization of that part of the city as the "education headquarter"³⁰ of the Ibadan. Popular educational institutions in that part of the town up till 1946 include the Ibadan Boys High School, the Nuril Islamic College, St. Patrick's, R. C. M, St. Theresa's College for Girls, the Commercial Institute, UMC and the Kudeti Girls.³¹

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the resident of Ijebu enclave used the *Southern Nigeria Defender* to protest against

alleged geographical and infrastructural discrimination. Most if not all the reporters were Ijebu.³² The printing house was also located at Oke Ado. Other Ibadan based newspapers such as *The New Times of Nigeria*, *The Western Echo*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Morning Star* etc during the same period did not report stories related to the problems of that section of the town. When these two newspaper reported stories related to social questions, they depicted them as the general social problems affecting the town and not the problems that were confined to one particular section of the town or the other.

Factually, the one sided nature of the stories we read about the poor state of the Ijebu enclave does not exonerate the Ibadan Native Authority from the allegations of the infrastructure alienation. As we shall see in the remaining part of this work, the repugnance and grudge for the Ijebu reflected in all aspects of relations with their host. It was not impossible for the Ibadan to have deliberately secluded that part of the city from receiving its own share of public amenities. There was tendency for the Ibadan to have carried out policies that amounted to the deprivation of the enclave since as we are going to see, the marginalization of the Ijebu reflected in the politics of the town.

The Mapping of Ijebu in the Colonial Economy of Ibadan

Economic tension remained one of the most influential factors that placed the Ijebu on the discriminatory agenda of the Ibadan. The first set of Ijebu settlers in pre-colonial Ibadan had been able to establish significant economic status in the town. The imposition of colonial rule in 1893 and the incorporation of the town Ibadan into the vortex of colonial capitalism added new dynamics to the exacerbated relations between these two categories of people. In the first place, pax Britannica paved the way for the migration of more Ijebu who moved into the town to partake from the new economic structure put in place by colonialism. The position of Ibadan as a significant colonial urban centre took a commendable status in 1917 when Lord Lugard passed the Township Ordinance.³³ Through the township ordinance; the town

became one of the eighteenth (18) Second Class Townships while Lagos by the virtue of several factors was the only First Class Township in colonial Nigeria.³⁴

The Ibadan Township Area was located in parts of the southwestern and southeastern part of the town. It encompassed part of what later became known as the New Reservation or Jericho, the Railway Station, Iyaganku, Iddo gate and Lebanon Street. It was conceived to be autonomous in administration, and like all other townships, the Ibadan Township laid down some sections of the township, which were to be developed into significant economic base of the town. Some sections of the town were also to be developed as purely of European enclaves.³⁵ The significance of the Township Ordinance was that it destroyed the pre colonial traditional system of acquisition of land and substituted it with allocation of land on lease. The new system of acquisition of land involved a process of competition in which aliens with more money were able to have more control than the indigenes.³⁶ The area, which witnessed the highest degree of tension, was *Gbagi*. Apart from the Syrians and Lebanese, the Ijebu were the most economically active amongst the non-European aliens in the city. The degree at which the Ijebu acquired land in Ibadan created acrimonies and resentments. There were instances when families and compound heads refused to sell land to Ijebu on account that if the Ijebu's "land hunger" was not controlled the control of the town might slip out of the hand of the natives.³⁷ The new business districts of *Gbagi* consistently served as platform for discrimination against the Ijebu who the Ibadan was said to have treated with suspicion in terms of lease of land. Ijebu land seekers and owners in the major business districts had to adjust to the new situation which exemplified in the need to satisfy the government by paying the necessary taxes and respecting regulation laid by the government. To the people, the Ijebu constituted a group whose wealth by the virtue of their opportunity to settle and do business in the city had to be checked.³⁸

The major problems of the Ijebu in the 1930s included amongst others: the fear that those who had invested in landed

property especially in Oke Ado, Oke Bola and Agbokojo might be forced to leave the town and the owner of shops in Amunigun and Agbeni might forfeit them. The fear of expulsion was unfounded. This was probably attributed to the increasing influence of the educated Ijebu indigenes resident in the town. The Ijebu responded to the expulsion hysteria by being contended with issues related with their economic survival and refused to intervene in local Ibadan politics.

Apart from the land acquisition and possession palaver, the Ibadan for two other reasons resented the Ijebu. The first owed to the implications of the imbalances in the new economy: indigenes were pushed to the farms while strangers controlled trade. The Ijebu were part of the groups that enjoyed economic dominance. Consequently, they employed indigenes as agents and sold on credits to them. There were always allegations of fraud and exploitation, allegations, which promoted conflicts and suspicion. Secondly, the Ibadan resented the attitudes of Ijebu to work, lifestyle, spending and investments.⁴⁰ There were contrasts between both. To the Ibadan, work easily merged with pleasure. The Ijebu, however, shared the virtues of hard work with the Lebano-Syrians. Whilst the Ibadan believed that the worth of money was in spending, the Ijebu believed it was in investment. To the Ibadan, people who had money should spend it to acquire honor, a process that involved spending money to build followings and clientship. On the other hand, the Ijebu attitude could be likened to the puritanical way of life in the 16th and 17th century Europe. The puritan avoiding women and alcohol; and spent their profits either in business, landed property or the education of their children.¹⁴ The fact that the Ijebu often suffered *Ibe* (angular stomatis), a disease that is closely related to poor feeding further entrench Ibadan hatred of their way.⁴² This is the Lyrics of the song composed by the Ibadan to demonstrate their apathy of Ijebu's spending pattern:

Àrùn mèta lo n ba òjèbù ja:

Ìbè kènu

Ìbò nidii

Ká -ròwò-ká-le ná an⁴³

Ijebu are afflicted with three disease:

angular stomatis

Ibon in the anus

Stinginess

Another very potent factor in the economic resentment against the Ijebu settlers in colonial Ibadan was the issue of currency counterfeiting. The role of the Ijebu in currency counterfeiting in colonial Nigeria need to be explained beyond the reference to their proximity to the coast than the Awori or the Ilaje, who were not known for counterfeiting. According to Ayodeji Olukoju, the preponderance of the Ijebu in currency counterfeiting is explicable in terms of their world-view or societal aspirations. The Ijebu placed a high premium on accumulation of material wealth. Counterfeiting was therefore seen as a very good way of getting rich at the earliest possible time.⁴⁴ Counterfeiting by the Ijebu may also be interpreted as a form of economic warfare against or resistance to the colonial economic order. The Ijebu coiners were not likely to see their action as the government saw it, that is, as economic sabotage, which undermined the colonial currency system. They most likely perceived it as a legitimate means of accumulating wealth within the situation created by the colonial order.⁴⁵ Hence, Ijebu exploits could and did enjoy some popular approbation as indicated in a Yoruba song "*Ohun gbogbo n Ijebu nse o: Ijebu ñ sowò, Ijebu ñ somo.*"⁴⁶ (Literally, "Ijebu 'create' all things, including money and children). The Yoruba expression "*se owo*," in this sense denotes counterfeiting rather than making money" in the ordinary business sense.⁴⁷ Throughout the colonial period, the preponderance of currency counterfeiting amongst the Ijebu created a lot of tension and suspicion in economic relations between them and their Ibadan host. Ibadan traders were said to have exercised caution when collecting money from the Ijebu. They even used a lot of derogatory words to qualify their economic transactions with them. Statements such as "*ká ñtafiiti, owò òjèbù*"⁴⁸ meaning; "counterfeit: Ijebu's money" indicated Ibadan's fair of the authenticity of money they received from Ijebu. While it was

apparent that these particular saying had its root in the position which Ijebu occupies as the major accusers in counterfeit coinage in Southern Nigeria, the general application of the statement left little to be appreciated. This is because this statement later became identified with anything that is bad or of low quality.⁴⁹ Fake or substandard goods and services were readily and generally regarded as "*kontafiti: owo*" Ijebu irrespective of the involvement of Ijebu.⁵⁰

The Ijebu and the Ibadan Configuration of Deviance

Also, discrimination took the dimension of labelling of some social character of the Ijebu as "deviant" behaviour. To identify Ijebu as a "deviant" was to believe that some of their social attitude departs from "conventional" norms of society. What constitutes "convention" or "tradition" was not only relative but also determined predominantly by the labelling agent i.e. the Ibadan. Deviancy therefore involved the process of labelling of some behaviour as "good" or bad". This precise description of "deviant" behaviour and "convention" was the factor that determined some of the ways the Ibadan saw Ijebu social behaviour and attitude. Ijebu's social way of life was considered "bad" because it departs from what the Ibadan considered "good". Ibadan in their understanding of general ways of life of the Ijebu would say "*Ijèbù Òdà*" i.e. "Ijebu is not good". The idea of identifying some attitude as "good" or bad" was one of echoed themes in the discourse of the discrimination against Ijebu settlers in colonial Ibadan. Deviancy therefore best explains why the host felt it was wrong for the Ijebu to persistently refuse to spend their money on politics or on ceremonials. Also the fact that the Ijebu were known for their dexterity in business was enough for the Ibadan to identify them as people with "questionable" character or behavior.

In the preceding section, we saw the disparity between the ideology of the Ibadan and the Ijebu in terms of investment. What we read in that section coincides with what Ibadan considered being "good" way of spending money and how they condemned the Ijebu understanding of how money could

be best spent. Again, the Ibadan saw the Ijebu man as stingy to the extent that he would not even yield to the praises of singers and drummers. There was a saying which goes thus "*Árise ni Ì m̀niliu d' Òkè-Ádo*"⁵¹ meaning "it is poverty that makes a drummer to go to Oke Ado". This particular saying is pregnant with meaning and should not be analyzed literally alone. It denotes that a drummer/praise singer who could not make money in the metropolis will equally not be successful going to Oke Ado, because the Ijebu will never yield to his praise singings by "spraying" him money. The Ijebu are therefore seen as a group that is so "block-headed" to appreciate or be moved by the praises of singer/drummers. This character, the Ibadan believes, boiled down to the fact that the Ijebu are very conscious of their spending and would always consider the financial return of a token which they spend.

To an Ibadan man, an Ijebu man was very dangerous individual to deal with. The Ibadan saw the Ijebu as "ritualist" who could inflict them with dangerous spiritual ailments if care was not taken. It was therefore generally embraced that any Ibadan who dealt with Ijebu must be very cautious or else he had him or her self to blame. The origin of prejudiced statements such as "*Ijebu abeeyan? Bo o ba ri ejo, to o r 'Ijebu, pa Ijebu ki o fi ejo sile*:"⁵² meaning "Ijebu or a human being? If you come across an Ijebu and a snake, kill the Ijebu and allow the snake to go" presupposed that the Ijebu was more dangerous than a snake. The origins of some of these misguided and calamitous presupposition about the character of the Ijebu are shrouded in obscurity. A likely suggestion is that they might have evolved during the period of military and economic rivalries between the Ibadan and the Ijebu before the British incursion. Similarly, the role which the Ijebu played as major suppliers of ammunition to the Ijaye and its allies during the Ibadan-Ijaye war (1860-62) and Ekitiparapo confederacy and other belligerents in the sixteen years war (1876-1893) could have informed the coinage of such sayings. The fact that the Ijebu were well reputed for sale of ammunition must have made them to be seen as people who do not value life and

who are so dangerous that putting them to death was the best alternative if sighted.

Perhaps, the most celebrated period which showcased the highest degree of social ideological disparity between the Ijebu and their Ibadan host was the period of the celebration of *Òkèèbádán* festival. The festival, which is celebrated annually by the Ibadan, is characterized by a lot of moral laxity and excesses, which are exemplified in the songs that are chanted. A sizeable percentage of the songs, which were basically of loose morality, were dedicated to the Ijebu:

Eyin Ìjèbù bi eyin òyá
Epòn Ijebu woru-woru?
Obo Ijebu bi ikeemu

Meaning

Ijebu's teeth, like that of grasscutter
 Ijebu's scrotum like jingling toy
 Ijebu's cunt is like a cup

Some influential Ijebu protested against these misguided songs about sexuality. In an open letter to the *Olubadan* of Ibadan on the *Oke Badan* festival and the ways Ijebu were verbally treated, late Chief Obafemi Awolowo condemned the high degree of verbal licentiousness that is conventionally known with the festival and the dedication of some of songs to Ijebu elements. A reporter of the *Southern Nigeria Defender* in summarizing Awolowo's letter of March 9, 1946 wrote:

Mr. Obafemi Awolowo, Barrister at Law has called the attention to the taut songs and abuses the people pour on the Ijebu section of the community. These offensive songs and abuses do not make for amity between peoples and it is a credit to the Ijebu that in spite of the insult and provocative manners in which they have been treated during Eba Odan celebrations, they had not lost their heads, but borne the insult with dignity, silence and patience.

The Ijebu in Ibadan Politics

The Ijebu receive the lowest degree of grudgingness in the realm of politics in colonial Ibadan. As suggested by Toyin Falola, the Ijebu perhaps did not interfere in the local politics of the town because of the fear of expulsion. In stead, they interacted with one another, especially on Sundays when they had the time to exchange visits.⁵⁴ The only period when the involvement of Ijebu in the local governance of Ibadan created acrimony was during the struggle for the appointment of a new *otun* Balogun in 1941. Under the Ibadan traditional method of promotion, the *Osi* Balogun would automatically have to be promoted to the *Otun*, being the next position to which he was the most qualified candidate by the seniority rule. Apart from this laid down rule, the *Olubadan* and council did in fact proposed *Osi* Balogun Folarin Solaja "who on grounds of personal ability as well as seniority had an outstanding claim".⁵⁵ Chief Folarin was a descendant of Sodeinde, the Ijebu warrior who was confirmed with the title of Balogun Elesin, Lord of Calvary by the Ibadan in recognition of his contribution to the victory of the Ibadan at the Kutuje war (1862-1864). Unfortunately, in spite of his contribution to the success of Ibadan military exploits, he was not promoted beyond the rank until his death on April 16, 1880.⁵⁶

The proposal for the appointment of Balogun Folarin Solaja as the *Otun* Balogun was marred with a public opposition and outrage built and fueled by his colleagues and the anti Ijebu elements. He was accused of being an Ijebu man, un-patriotic to Ibadan citizens, selfish, close-fisted and un-sociable. He was also accused of loaning money to the Ijebu, instead of Ibadan, and of being miserly. In short, he was called an "*Ìjèbù gidi*" i.e "a true Ijebu", a very derogatory term which implied greed and selfishness. Qualities that were socially and politically unacceptable.⁵⁷ So strong was the opposition against him that unions and groups who were hitherto opposed to one another sank their differences in order to destroy him. The main fear was that if Balogun Folarin's appointment was not disallowed, he could eventually become the *Olubadan*. Anti Ijebu elements

in Ibadan felt that it was "sacrilegious" for an Ijebu man to become the Baale. In spite of his defense, which to a very reasonable extent was convincing, Chief Solaja was eventually dropped for a junior Chief.⁵⁸ This imbroglio did not escape the social dexterity of the Ibadan in terms of depicting occurrences in songs for the purpose of demonstrating their displeasure. The most notable of such songs went thus:

E so f' Alakè⁵⁹
E so f' Awùjalè⁶⁰
Ki won ò wa mù folárin lo
Áwa ò nì lè sin Ìjèbù⁶¹

Tell the Alake
 Tell the Awujale
 They should come and take Folarin
 We cannot afford to serve Ijebu.

Presumably, one of the major consequences of the above-depicted scenario was the refusal to honor people of Ijebu origin with honorary chieftaincy titles. This took place at the time when some Ijebu started demonstrating interest in traditional politics of the town. the preponderance of the development reflected in a saying, which goes thus, *Ìjèbù ti ò joyè, yìò de ilu rẹ*,⁶² i.e. "an Ijebu that want chieftaincy title will get to his town."

Perhaps, the most outstanding reaction to the political unfriendliness, which the Ijebu received from their Ibadan host, was best demonstrated by the activities of the Native Settlers Union. The Native Settlers Union was the union of educated Ijebu settlers in colonial Ibadan. In reaction to the unfair treatment that the Ijebu received in Ibadan, the union was at the arrowhead of the agitation for the removal of the northern reaches of the old Ibadan empire, known subsequently as Osun Division from control of Ibadan during the Salami Agbaje crises.⁶³ The involvement of Native Settlers Union in the Salami Agbaje crises of 1950 could also be seen as a relation of the unjust treatment that Chief Folarin Solaja received during the political crises of 1941. Chief Salam Agbaje like Chief Solaja was accused of not being an Ibadan man, exploitation of the

poor, and misconduct in administration of his court.⁶⁴

A development that would have ended the political segregation of the Ijebu in Ibadan was the introduction of a modern system of democracy to western region in 1952. The local Government Law of 1953 made provision for the appointment of councilors on the basis of wards in the city.⁶⁵ However, the appointment of councilors was restricted to the "son of the soil" alone while all non Ibadan, Ijebu inclusive never had the opportunity of being appointed into any of the wards in the city. Oke Ado, being an Ijebu enclave could not even produce an Ijebu man as councilors due to the overwhelming influence of the Ibadan Native Authority.⁶⁶

Ta-n máála...? (Who knows the Demarcation, Boundary Disputes and Discrimination)

Tussle over boundary is as old as human existence. Specifically, in Yorubaland claims are laid to boundary demarcation through oral tradition handed from one generation to another.⁶⁷ The colonial administrators, recognizing the importance of boundary not really in the interest of the people, but for their selfish purpose of dividing Yorubaland into districts, divisions and provinces for economic exploitation, took steps to establish demarcations between the land owed by the Ibadan and that of the Ijebu.

In spite of this boundary disputes, most importantly, the Ibadan-Ijebu example remained the most controversial during the period under consideration.⁶⁸ One of the reasons for this was the imperfection of the various maps issued after a lot of commissioned surveys of the boundary between the Ijebu province and Ibadan Division. Of greater important, was the need to maximize and harness resources which came through the introduction of cocoa plantation.⁶⁹ Ibadan and its adjoining villages were popular centres of agricultural production of cocoa.⁷⁰ The earliest demarcation between the land owed by the Ibadan and the Ijebu was carried out in 1895. Chief of Ibadan and Ijebu Ode carried out the demarcation in conjunction with Captain Bower, the first Resident and

Traveling Commissioner for the interior of Yorubaland.⁷¹

After the demarcation had been carried out, the land between the boundaries were left uncultivated until the emergence of Ibadan as a very important town for cocoa production in 1906. The first major crises on boundary took place in 1915 when some Ijebu farmers abducted some Ibadan farmers who were found farming on the land that belong to them. The Ibadan was however not lax in retaliating.⁷² The retaliation of the Ibadan took a form of well-organized raids sponsored by prominent members of the town. The most popular of such raids were the ones sponsored by Chief Obisesan, an educated Christian and Chief Motosh, the Baale of Araromi. These raids led to a lot of incursions into Ijebu Igbo land, south of the imaginary lines marked on the 1911 map and far into a place near Oshun River. The prominent Omiyale family was also accused of sponsoring several raids at the Odo Osun Boundary of Ibadan and Ijebu Ode.⁷³ On the other hand, the Ijebu claimants of land were described as acting like "Native Authority Police", threatening to arrest Ibadan trespassers.⁷⁴ Similarly, Ijebu farmers were accused of granting land to Ibadan farmers only to lay claim to it after the Ibadan farmers must have succeeded in growing a plantation. The involvement of local Chief in the boundary disputes was engineered by the need to collect tributes from farmers cultivating on land on either side.⁷⁵

Colonial documents on this subject are replete with a lot of petitions from the Ibadan and the Ijebu farmers of the Araromi and Mamu-Abeku boundaries. The need to resolve this crisis led to the visit of the Resident of Ijebu Province, Captain Burroughs to Ibadan in 1920. After a lot of consultations with the chiefs from both sides, a decision that an Ibadan who wished to lay claim to any land owed by the Ijebu does that after ratification from the Awujale of Ijebu Ode was reached.⁷⁶ The aftermath of this decision was the increase in the level at which claimants appeared in various courts to justify their claims to farmland.

Boundary disputes aggravated the tension-soaked nature of discontentment between the Ijebu and their Ibadan host.

The Ibadan saw the need to go to Ijebu Ode before he could farm on the land he believed to belong to his forefather as embarrassing. Ibadan who had hitherto given lands to some Ijebu in the city threatened to reassert their ownership of the land. In 1935 rumors flitted the town that all the Ijebu elements in Ibadan will be ejected from the town. The magnitude of this matter created panic about the status of Ijebu in Ibadan and their presumed ejection from the town. This situation caught attention of Ward Price, the Resident of Oyo Province:

If any Ibadan man is to be evicted from his cultivated farm in Ijebu province, there will probably be an outcry here, about it; but if evicted without compensation, I am sure there will be trouble; and the Ijebu in Ibadan Division, all of whom could easily be proved to be "illegal" occupants of the land will be molested by the Ibadan.

Reaction and Counter-reaction: Ijebu Responses to Discrimination

At one point or the other in the course of this study, we have seen some ways the Ijebu reacted to Ibadan's condemnation of their ideologies about life. However, the aspects of the reaction, which we have not seen, are the ones related to reaction through abusive statements and songs. Noticeably, a spectacular character of the Ibadan is the habit of depicting all events in statements and most importantly songs. The Ibadan are reputed for "mouth making" and painting of their relations with people in abusive manners that are kept in proverbs, statements and songs. One interesting fact about the reactions of Ijebu to abusive songs that were dedicated to them was that they also composed theirs. The hatred and antipathy in terms of abusive words was therefore mutual. The Ijebu saw Ibadan as illiterate who had no other job aside "meat selling". Thus the saying by the Ijebu that "*eran ni Ìbádán áń tá*" ⁷⁸ i.e "it is meat that Ibadan sell". The ridiculing of Ibadan with this type of statement saw credence in the large number of Ijebu who constituted the literate middle class and worked at the colonial

bureaucratic government of Ibadan. As earlier pointed out, the literate class of the Ijebu who had the power of the pen were not lax in using the print media as an instrument of condemning some of the attitude of the Native Authority. The Ijebu were always obliged to tell the Ibadan that they could boast of many literate than the Ibadan who detested education but preferred to sell "meat".

Again, the Ijebu recognized themselves as hardworking people whose wealth the Ibadan were afraid of. Conversely, the Ijebu painted the Ibadan as lazy people who were accustomed to sapping the rich ones among them. Ijebu illustrated this presupposition in words like "*babá ni n ki ò*"⁷⁹ "Baba said I should greet you". This statement suggests that the preoccupation of the Ibadan is moving from one rich man to another begging for money. Also, the Ijebu saw Ibadan youth as lazy boys who were easily used as instrument of political and social disturbances. The most popular saying to this effect was, *Ìjá igbòrò lárùn⁸⁰ Ibádán*, meaning "Ibadan's disease is street fighting. Abusive statements related to the way the Ibadan and the Ijebu saw each other are inexhaustible. Fact, which remains clear, is that the host and the strangers found one or two things wrong or bad about each other's character though the Ijebu being at a disadvantage because of their status as strangers.

Making a Sense of the Paradox in Host/Stranger Relations

Arguably, intra-ethnic discrimination; a case of Ijebu settlers in colonial Ibadan was one of the most phenomenal in Nigeria during the period we are reviewing. The point being made here is that two categories of people who share similar cultural and historical background so disliked each other to the extent that they would not see what is good in each other's behaviour. While it is appropriate to emphasise that their relations were filled with hatred, we cannot jettison the high degree of paradox that was also noticed. How do we explain hatred and antipathy, which did not generate into violence and destruction of lives and property? Of course, it is a truism that

the colonial state put in place the needed social and political structures, which allowed tranquility to take place. Also, ejecting the Ijebu from Ibadan would have been impossible since it was going to undermine colonial administrative machinery of law and order; a prerequisite to a colonial domination and exploitation. This probably accounted for the inability of the Ibadan to eject the Ijebu.

In this connection, a 1916 episode is worth emphasizing. The increasing influence of the Ijebu in the acquisition of land metamorphosed into a minor crisis in that year. The principal chiefs of the town refused to ratify the leases already granted by the colonial government. There were even speculations that all strangers will be ejected from the city. The response of the British government to the impending crisis took the dimension of staging troops at the residence of the principal chiefs in the city. The threat that the soldiers would open fire in the event of the attempt by the chiefs to implement their deportation scheme must have made the chiefs to abandon the plan. It is obvious that the Ijebu throughout the colonial period had to respond to the ejection hysteria through one way or the other.

The host and strangers have lived with each other for decades and had learned to accommodate one another. Some Ijebu residents in Ibadan had their forefathers born and bred in the town. Some descendants of the earliest settlers who had been integrated into the Ibadan community received lower degree of hatred. This category of Ijebu settlers does not see themselves as Ijebu. Some of the Ijebu residents at Isale Ijebu and Oke Ado could recount a lot of stories related to their relations with the Ibadan. Accommodation of group differences was one of the ways relations were preserved. This probably accounted for why in spite of the vicissitude of ideological disparity and discrepancy between these two categories of people; crises in the form of physical confrontation did not take place. Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in this connection opined that violence did not take place partly because "the Ijebu bore all the insult with dignity and silence."⁸¹ Even when physical confrontation or violence took place; they remained inter-personal between an Ibadan and Ijebu and did not

escalate into a situation that got the entire Ibadan people and the Ijebu elements involved.

In most urban areas in Nigeria, migrants male who were not married before migrating traditionally traveled home to pick up wives who they brought to the city after all marriage rites had been completed. As colonial urban centres developed into places of greater economic opportunity and the idea of working in the cities to meet marriage demand at home increased on one hand, on the other hand, the countryside's absorption into the capitalist economy was exemplified in what can summarily be called "monetization of marriage and bride price racket". The incidence of monetization of marriage through high price was noticed virtually amongst all the ethnic groups in the county. It is on record that one of the social issues which the 1937 Conference of Yoruba Chiefs deliberated on was the adoption of uniform amount as bride price in all Yorubaland.⁸² This was imperative due to the notoriety involved in the high cost of marriage, which it was estimated to be between 100 and 150 pounds in Ijebu Igbo in 1953.⁸³

What was the effect of what we call "masculinity and bride price hysteria"⁸⁴ in the relations between the Ibadan and Ijebu? In this first place, the above-depicted social effect of capitalism and urbanization on marriage also affected Ijebu male migrant as some of them in order to "circumvent" the financial burden of marrying at home picked up Ibadan women as wives. Findings during my fieldwork revealed that some men who got married to Ibadan women did that because of the difficulty of raising the resources which could take care of "going home" to pick a wife.⁸⁵ Such marriage although occasioned by condemnation by parents of the bride, persistence and pressure were said to have gone a long way in putting marriage agenda on the desired track. Colonial urban marriages was also relatively easier to contract since the bride-groom-to-be was an active member of the society and would have her own share of the economy most important if she is permanent resident. The same, applied to parents who as active members of the urban society and economy had the tendency of demanding lower

compared to their counterparts in the villages who depended on the proceed of urban male dwellers.

Also, in spite of the penetration of western and oriental values concerning marriage the traditional pre-colonial practice of betrothal took place. Madam Anik, the Dele Solu compound recalled how her father betrothed her to an Ijebu man because of the economic friendship between the former and the latter.

In those days, people could give out their daughters to their business partners. They used this to cement economic relations with people who they had traded with for several years and could trust. Trust is very important when marriage is contracted in this manner. My father married me to Okunowo, an Ijebu man from Oru because they traded with each other for more than twenty years. I left Okunowo's house and got married to an Ibadan man because of his death shortly after our marriage.

Undisputedly, social and or sexual character of people varies from time to time and place to place. Individual differences and peculiarities also have to be considered. These and other factors will prevent us from adequately apprehending reasons why inter-marriages amongst hostile groups took place. Although without official and reliable data, the most prominent intra-ethnic marriage in Ibadan was the one between Ijebu and their Ibadan host. One of the major paradoxes of relations between the Ijebu and their Ibadan host was therefore intra ethnic marriage. We can argue that intermarriages had its own contribution in preserving peace amongst hostile groups. The degree at which inter-marriages took place between the Ibadan and the Ijebu might have led to saying such as *Ìbádán loko Ìjẹ̀bù*.⁸⁶ "Ibadan is Ijebu's husband".

If intermarriage and other models were discernable in the promotion of peace between the host and the strangers, the fact which remained important is that as earlier mentioned, discrimination is an aspect and a product of inter-group relation. The argument here is that the host and stranger did not leave in isolation and without the influence of each other. The Ijebu and their Ibadan host attended the same school,

visited the same markets, sometimes belonged to same occupations organizations, work for the same colonial government. In fact the avenues for relations are uncountable. The fact that the Ijebu had the opportunity of interacting more with their host placed them on the Ibadan mapping of hatred and apathy, which was chiefly exemplified more in suspicion and unpalatable statements.

Conclusion

19th century remained a watershed in the history of inter-groups relations in Yorubaland. The outcome of developments during this period metamorphosed into new forms of social, political and economic relations during the colonial period of Nigerian history. Patterns of relations, which emerged after the establishment of colonial rule preserved the old differences and incorporated new ones. Continuity and change are therefore important parameters in the measurement of the impact of colonial rule on inter-groups relations.

This study has been able to show that discrimination is not solely a national, religious racial etc, phenomenon. Elements of feelings of resentments exist within groups, which share similar historical experience and indeed background. It is noteworthy that accommodation of individual group differences was a very important factor that prevented violence and the ejection of strangers by the host. While discrimination took the dimension of some actions such as limiting the access of the Ijebu to some economic opportunities in terms of access to land and political power in terms of the 1941 Folarin chieftaincy palaver, it nevertheless reflected more in abusive words, songs and sayings. Some of these abusive words and sayings were either products of political and economic tussle or observation about the general social behaviour of the Ijebu and vice versa.

Ethnocentrism is deleterious to the emergence of a Nigerian state of genuine unity because it gives room for undue suspicion and mutual distrust. People hold their hatred for others principally because of feelings that cannot be authenticated or

established. Notable aspect of relations between one group and the other is therefore the feelings that one group is "bad" and the other is "good". Groups should learn to accommodate one another in spite of discrepancies in religious, ideological, cultural background and outlook.

Endnotes

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 - 10 For relevant reference to discrimination against Ijebu settlers in colonial Ibadan see in D.R Aronson, *Cultural Stability*, Toyin Falola *Politics and Economy*, chapter 7, E. A Ayandele, *The Ijebu*, chapter three. On how the entire Yoruba people saw the Ijebu in terms of business acumen see, KWJ Post and G.D Jenkins *The Price of Liberty: Personality and Politics in Colonial Nigeria* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973 p34, p. T Bauer *West African Trade* London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1954 pp39-40. On segregation see O. A. Adeboye, "Intra-ethnic Segregation: A case of Ijebu Settlers in colonial Ibadan" in Laurent Fourchard and Olawale Albert (eds) *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities Since the 19th century* (Ibadan and Paris: IFRA and KARTHALA, 2003) PP 301-319
 - 11 See amongst others J.D Barkan (et al) "Hometown Voluntary Associations, Local Development and the Emergence of Civil Society in Western Nigeria" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1991 pp475-580, Rex Hony and Stanley Okafor (eds) *Hometown Associations and Indigenous Knowledge in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Sam Bookman Publishers, 1998), G. O. Olusanya, "The Sabongari System in Northern Nigeria", *Nigeria Magazine* No 94 September 1967 pp242-247 etc
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 - 18 Southern Nigeria Defender, hereafter (SND) "Our Interest in Ibadan" 22 August, 1950 p2
 - 19 SND "Oke Ado Waits" 1 May, 1950 p2
 - 20 SND "One Stand Pipe for Oke Ado" 28 March, 1950 p2
 - 21 SND "Market for Oke Ado" 28 May, 1950 p2
 - 22 SND "Oke Ado" p2
 - 23 SND "Thieves at Ibadan" 28 October, 1950 p2
 - 24 SND "Bad Condition of Oke Ado" 18 July, 1946 p3
 - 25 This can be appreciated by going through all the issues of the newspaper between 1946 and 1954.
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 - 27 T. N. Tamuno *The Police in Modern Nigeria 1861-1965: Origins, Development and Role* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970) 106-107 For illuminating details on the phenomenon of crime in colonial Ibadan see NAI Simple List of Oyo Provincial Papers: Oyo Prof: "Pickpockets and Burglars in Oyo Province" 1935-1956, NAI, Iba Div 1/1 File NO 186 "Robber at Ibadan", 1930-1953 etc.
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From Citizens to Strangers: British Rule and the Transformation of Yoruba Migrants' Identity in Kano, C. 1913-1953

Rasheed Olaniyi

Introduction

British rule was premised on the logic of dualism, stereotyping and fragmentation of the colonised. The pre-colonial pattern of inter-group relations and mutual exchange of peoples were distorted by the British rule, which emphasised on ethnic segregation, dichotomies in the realm of citizenship and administration of justice. This paper demonstrates how British rule altered the patterns of inter-group that guaranteed mutual exchange of people across cultural frontiers. British rule produced a regime of dichotomy in the realm of citizenship among people and communities that had interacted for several centuries. The dualism of citizenship persisted for the purpose of maintaining law and order but equally to ensure uninterrupted exploitation of the colonised. In most cases, the 'indigenes' and the 'strangers or native aliens,' were fragmented in different forms of economic sectors and modes of taxation. Indeed, British rule created unequal citizens, "indigenes and alien natives," which heightened the suspicion of domination and marginalisation and created enabling environment for ethnic conflicts among Nigerians. According to Mamdani, the colonial state was a bifurcated one with decentralised despotism and dualism in the realm of citizenship.¹ The organisation and reorganisation of the colonial state was in response to the overriding question of what was referred to as "native question": how can a tiny and foreign minority rule over an indigenous majority?"²