This dissertation has been
microfilmed exactly as received 68-7560

BERRY, Sara Shepherd Sweezy, 1940-
COCOA IN WESTERN NIGERIA, 1890-1940. A STUDY OF AN INNOVATION IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY.

The University of Michigan, Ph.D., 1967
Economics, history

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

COCOA IN WESTERN NIGERIA, 1890-1940

A STUDY OF AN INNOVATION IN

A DEVELOPING ECONOMY

by
Sara Shepherd Sweezy Berry

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Michigan
1967

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Wolfgang F. Stolper, Chairman
Professor Elliot J. Berg
Professor Alexander Eckstein
Professor Gloria Marshall

COCOA IN WESTERN NIGERIA, 1890-1940
A STUDY OF AN INNOVATION IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY

by

Sara S. Berry

The history of cocoa production by Yoruba farmers in Western Nigeria is an important example of a successful innovation in a developing economy. By comparing the origin and development of cocoa growing, from 1890 to 1940, in two Yoruba city-states, the present study attempts to explain why Yoruba farmers adopted cocoa in the first place, and how they organized and expanded production of the crop, once they had accepted it. Particular attention is given to the relative importance of economic and non-economic influences on farmers' cocoa growing activities. The conclusions advanced herein are based both on written evidence concerning past economic conditions and historical events in Western Nigeria, and on oral evidence collected through interviews with cocoa farmers, civil servants and clergymen.

Differences in personal background and experience help to explain which individuals in a community first planted cocoa, but not when they planted it. In both of the city-states studied, many of the earliest cocoa planters were either Christian converts or had been influenced by Christians in their decision to experiment with cocoa. There were also a few early planters in each state who had previously encountered successful cocoa farmers while travelling outside their native communities. This evidence suggests that: (a) individuals are more likely to adopt a new productive activity

if they can observe directly that others have profited from it, and (b) some individuals are readier than others to experiment with new means of achieving their goals in life, whether the means be new religious practices or new productive activities.

However, in one of the city-states studied (Ibadan), Christians and travellers adopted cocoa much sooner, after it first became available to them, than they did in the other (Ondo). There is no evidence that differences in their personal backgrounds--i.e., in education, previous occupational experience or social status--explain why individuals in Ibadan responded more quickly to the opportunity to grow cocoa than did individuals in Ondo. Instead, the timing of farmers' decisions to plant cocoa apparently depended on a number of historical developments which affected their economic interests and the alternative opportunities available to them. In the 1890's there were several groups of people in Ibadan society who could effect significant improvements in their economic and social positions by developing new cash crops. The absence of such groups in Ondo, plus the fact that at this time Ondo farmers faced higher prospective returns to more familiar and less risky productive activities, help to explain why cocoa growing developed later there than it did in Ibadan.

Once farmers had begun to grow cocoa, the rate at which they planted additional cocoa trees depended largely on economic considerations. Available data suggests that planting did not respond immediately to changes in the current price of cocoa. In deciding whether to expand their acreage under cocoa, farmers took account of changes in costs as well as in returns to the crop. Also, once they had experienced a period of high net returns to cocoa growing, farmers tended

to remain optimistic about future returns and to continue to plant, even during periods of declining cocoa prices.

Both in Western Nigeria and in other cocoa-producing areas of West Africa, farmers successfully adapted traditional patterns of controlling and using productive resources to the technical and economic requirements of cocoa growing. Although certain features of cocoa production in West Africa--the terms on which cocoa farmers acquire and hold land, the size of productive units, and the mobility of both cocoa farmers and agricultural laborers--are obviously related to traditional practices, they also constitute realistic adjustments to the technical requirements of cocoa production and to available factor supplies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research for this study was financed by a grant from the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Economic Development, and owes much to the unfailing encouragement and helpful advice of Professor Wolfgang F. Stolper, Director of the Center. While carrying out the field work in Nigeria, I enjoyed the hospitality of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, whose Director, Dr. H. M. A. Onitiri, and staff provided every kind of assistance, from clerical help to substantive criticisms of the project. After returning from Nigeria, I held a fellowship from the American Association of University Women, while writing the study.

In the course of my research, I made extensive use of the collections of the Nigerian National Archives in Ibadan, and of the Royal Commonwealth Society Library and the Public Record Office in London. The John Holt Company, in Liverpool, and the librarian at Rhodes House, Oxford, kindly permitted me to consult the Holt Archives and the Niger Company Papers, respectively. I am also grateful to the Secretary of the Ibadan City Council for granting me access to historical records in Mapo Hall, Ibadan; to the family of the late Chief J. Akinpelu Obisesan for permission to read the Obisesan papers in the University of Ibadan Library; and to Reverend E. A. Lijadu of Ondo, who showed me a number of his grandfather's private papers.

It would take too long to enumerate here the many individuals who assisted me in gathering and interpreting material for this study.

I am particularly indebted, however, to Chief J. A. Ayorinde, Principal Cocoa Survey Officer of the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, whose knowledge of the history of cocoa farming in Western Nigeria is probably unequalled, and to Dr. J. B. Webster, of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, whose enthusiasm and advice were most encouraging. The staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources were very helpful in organizing many of my interviews with cocoa farmers. Finally, I must thank the citizens of Ibadan and Ondo, who contributed so much of the information on which this study is based, and my interpreter, Adebayo Adeyanju, who enabled me to collect it.

In writing this study, I have benefitted greatly from the comments and suggestions of Professors Wolfgang F. Stolper, Richard C. Porter, Elliot J. Berg, and my father, Alan R. Sweezy. I am entirely responsible for any errors and for the conclusions advanced herein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

LIST OF TABLES vi

LIST OF CHARTS viii

LIST OF MAPS ix

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. BACKGROUND 10

Social and Economic Effects of the Civil Wars
British Intervention and Changes in the Composition of Trade
The Pax Britannica
British Economic Policies in the Colonial Era
The Agege Planters: An Early Experiment with Cocoa

II. THE EARLY PLANTERS 40

Method
The Personal Backgrounds of the Early Planters
Christianity and Travel
Occupation, Education and Social Status
External Influences on the Early Planters
Conclusions

III. COSTS, RETURNS, AND FARMERS' DECISIONS TO PLANT COCOA 78

Ibadan and Ondo in the 1890's
Techniques of Production
The Cost of Land
Types of Labor Available to Farmers in Ibadan and Ondo
The Opportunity Cost of Family Labor
The Cash Costs of Hired Labor
Returns to Growing Cocoa
Ondo, 1900-1920
Conclusion

Page

IV. THE RATE OF EXPANSION 159

Returns to Cocoa Growing
Costs: Ibadan, 1912-1918
Costs: Ondo, 1920's and 1930's
Conclusion

V. THE ORGANIZATION OF COCOA FARMING IN WEST AFRICA . . 205

Land Tenure
The Scale of Production
Migration

CONCLUSION 252

BIBLIOGRAPHY 258

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Some Major Exports from Lagos in the Nineteenth Century	17
2.	Analysis of Provincial Cocoa Acreages of the Western Region by Years of Planting	43
3.	Some Characteristics of "First Planters" in Ibadan and Ondo	58
4.	Previous Occupations of the First Cocoa Planter in Each Family Interviewed	72
5.	Techniques of Planting Cocoa Employed by "First Family Planters" in Several Communities	88
6.	Land Prices: Ibadan	95
7.	Land Prices: Ondo	105
8.	Cash Costs of Establishing an Acre of Cocoa	107
9.	Labor Required to Establish One Acre of Cocoa	109
10.	Types of Labor Employed on Cocoa Farms in Ibadan	114
11.	Family and Non-Family Labor on Cocoa Farms in Ondo	115
12.	Average Product of Labor Employed in Food Farming on a "Representative Acre"	122
13.	Yields per Acre of Basic Food Crops	123
14.	Prices of Basic Foodstuffs in Local Markets, 1890's	128
15.	Labor Employed Annually on One Acre of Cocoa During Productive Years	132
16.	Costs of Producing One Acre of Cocoa near Lagos and in Ondo in the late 1890's	133
17.	Wage Rates for Unskilled Labor Paid by the Government or by Merchant Firms	137

Table		Page
18.	Annual Returns to Growing Cocoa in the 1890's	141
19.	Cocoa Prices	142
20.	Cocoa Yields	143
21.	Returns to Labor in Various Occupations	150
22.	Acres Planted in Cocoa (Five Year Moving Average)	163
23.	Unit Landed Cost of Cotton Piece Goods Imported into Nigeria	183
24.	Unit Values of Some Major Nigerian Exports, 1910-1920	191
25.	Dates on which Railway and Roads in Cocoa Growing Areas Were Completed	195
26.	Cocoa Price in Ondo	200
27.	Unit Values of Some Major Nigerian Exports, 1921-1938	202
28.	The Size of Cocoa Farms	220
29.	Origins of Non-Family Laborers	228
30.	Dates on which Cocoa Was First Planted in Several Ibadan Villages	242
31.	Dates on which Cocoa Was First Planted in Several Ondo Villages	245

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart		Page
4-A.	Five Year Moving Average of Acres Planted in Cocoa	165
4-B.	Five Year Moving Average of Acres Planted in Cocoa	167
4-C.	Comparison of Trends in Planting and "Real Producer Prices"	171
4-D.	Comparison of Trends in Planting and "Real Producer Prices"	172
4-E.	Cocoa Prices in Nigeria	174
4-F.	Cocoa Prices in Nigeria	175
4-G.	Nigerian Import Prices	178
4-H.	Prices of Staple Foodstuffs in Lagos	179
4-I.	Comparison of Trends in Planting and "Real Producer Prices"	182

LIST OF MAPS

Map		Page
I.	Cocoa Belt of Western Nigeria	12
II.	Ibadan Area	49
III.	Ondo Area	52
IV.	Roads and Railway in Cocoa Growing Areas	194
V.	Distribution and Age of Cocoa Trees in Ibadan Area	240
VI.	Ibadan Villages Where Farmers Were Interviewed	241
VII.	Distribution of Cocoa Trees in Ondo Area	244

INTRODUCTION

The introduction and development of cocoa cultivation in Western Nigeria is a striking example of a successful economic innovation, in the Schumpeterian sense of the term. Cocoa is not indigenous to West Africa; it was brought there from the Americas and did not reach the mainland until the late nineteenth century. By 1921, Nigeria had become Africa's second largest producer of the crop. Both the standard of living and the structure of economic activity in Western Nigeria, where most of the country's cocoa is grown, were profoundly affected by the development of cocoa growing. The early history of the cocoa industry in Western Nigeria offers an excellent opportunity to study the conditions under which producers in a developing economy adopt a new productive activity.

Schumpeter defined an innovation as a commercially successful invention.[1] A producer may be said to innovate when he employs a new technique or markets a new product and earns excess profits by doing so. His profits serve as a signal to other producers that they too may gain from adopting the innovation and, in a perfectly competitive system, more and more producers take up the innovation until the original entrepreneur's excess profits have been bid away. In the process, however, the productive capacity of the economy has been enlarged. Resources have been diverted (in the case of full employment) into producing a good which satisfies more wants than the goods which they formerly produced, or they are so employed as to produce more of the same kinds of goods than they did before. Total output, in short, has grown and, unless the character of the innovation or the structure of

---

[1] Joseph A. Schumpeter, The Theory of Economic Development (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 74.

the society involved prevent all but a tiny minority from enjoying the extra output or the educational effects of the new productive process, the innovation has contributed to the development of the economy.

Schumpeter distinguished the innovator from the inventor, and pointed out that the prospect of excess profits is a necessary incentive to the former. In this way he endeavored to depict innovators as integral parts of the economic system (in the same way as are producers or consumers) since he felt that the continued functioning of that system depended on their actions. In fact, however, Schumpeter does not give a purely economic explanation of their behavior; he argues that persons capable of successfully exploiting a new product or technique will not do so unless they stand to profit from it, but he makes no attempt to explain why some persons are more capable of innovating than others, or what particular characteristics make them so.

Schumpeter's problem--to explain circumstances under which inventions will be used to contribute to the development of an economy--is fundamental to the study of economic development. Most low income economies today are faced with a large array of products and productive processes, already invented in other countries, which they could adopt for themselves to increase the productivity of their country's resources. Theoretically, they could cover ground quickly which today's wealthy economies had to cover slowly by trial and error, inventing new productive methods as they went along. The problem, as Alexander Gerschenkron has expressed it, is to explain why less developed economies so often fail to capitalize on the "advantages of their backwardness."

Some writers regard economic factors as the crucial determinants of producers' decisions to adopt or reject potential innovations. In his book, Transforming Traditional Agriculture, T. W. Schultz cites examples

of successful innovations in both rich and poor countries to support his thesis that profitability is the most important consideration to producers who are trying to decide whether to undertake a new productive activity.

> The rate of acceptance of a new agricultural factor by farmers in a poor community is best explained by the profitability of adopting and using the factor.[2]

Other writers have sought to identify the underlying economic conditions which determine whether an innovation which is profitable in a wealthy, industrial economy will also be profitable in a poorer, less industrialized one. They have suggested that the factor endowments of many poor countries are inappropriate to the techniques developed in industrial economies. For example, labor-saving devices which require large capital inputs may be prohibitively expensive in countries where labor is relatively abundant and cheap but capital is scarce and expensive. Alternatively, market imperfections or factor immobilities may distort the relationship between relative factor scarcities and relative factor prices, so that producers who are guided by the prices they must pay for inputs fail to adopt new productive activities which would in fact make the best use of available resources. Thus aggregate unemployment may coexist with high wages in centers of wage employment because people fail to move to the latter because of ignorance, uncertainty or financial inability to make the change.[3]

Alternatively, if new products or techniques require lumpy investment they may not be adopted because credit facilities are inadequate

---

[2]Theodore W. Schultz, Transforming Traditional Agriculture (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 168.

[3]The standard theoretical statement of the relationships between factor endowments, factor immobilities and economic development is R. S. Eckhaus, "The Factor Proportions Problem in Underdeveloped Areas,"

or the price of capital too high for the potential entrepreneur. Also, if the product in question is itself expensive, or involves economies of scale in production, it may not be produced because the effective market in which the good could be sold is too small, because of low incomes in the domestic market and/or restrictive trade practices abroad.[4] Finally, potential innovators may face a system of distributing the means of production or returns to productive effort in which they as individuals will not receive the profits of their own innovations. In these circumstances they are not likely to expend resources on new productive activities.

From a theoretical viewpoint, any of these factors could influence a producer's decision to innovate; the real question is how they interact, with each other and with the producer's own motives and aspirations, to induce him to alter the pattern of his productive activities. Are individuals more likely to seek new ways of earning extra income when the economic environment beckons, with prospects of easy profits due to rising demand and/or abundant factor supplies, or when falling demand and rising costs threaten to undermine the rewards to producers'

American Economic Review, XLV, 4 (September, 1955). Other writers who have in various ways emphasized conditions of supply as crucial determinants of innovation and development are Hla Myint, "An Interpretation of Economic Backwardness," Oxford Economic Papers, VI, (June, 1954); J. Marcus Fleming, "External Economies and the Doctrine of Balanced Growth," Economic Journal, LXV, 258 (June, 1955); W. A. Lewis, "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor," Manchester School, XXII, 2 (May, 1954) and articles based on Lewis' ideas by G. Ranis and J. C. H. Fei in American Economic Review, LI, 4 (Sept., 1961) and LIII, 3 (June, 1963).

[4] The importance for innovation and development of the size of the market has been stressed by, among others, Ragnar Nurkse, Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958) and Hans W. Singer, "The Distribution of Gains Between Investing and Borrowing Countries," American Economic Review, XL, 2 (May, 1950).

accustomed activities?[5] Or does the impetus for change lie within the individual; do his surroundings serve only to guide and not to initiate change?

Advocates of the latter view, namely, that the key to the dynamics of innovation lies not in the economic context but in the motives and attitudes of individual producers, emphasize the importance for innovation of cultural and personal factors. Albert Hirschmann, for example, has argued that the crucial mechanism necessary to translate plans for economic development into effective action is the ability to make decisions[6]--a faculty which may respond to all kinds of social and political as well as economic influences--and which obviously plays a role in solving non-economic problems too. Everett Hagen and David McClelland both maintain, in somewhat different ways, that economic innovations and developments are merely a special case of social change, which in turn arises from the structure of individual personalities.

According to McClelland, the individuals most likely to exploit new productive activities are those with the greatest "need to achieve." His book, The Achieving Society,[7] is primarily concerned with trying to correlate indices of various societies' economic progress with measurements of their need to achieve, as revealed by themes and

---

[5]H. J. Habakkuk poses this question and explores it in the context of British and American development in American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

[6]Albert O. Hirschman, The Strategy of Economic Development (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1958), chap. i, especially pp. 23-26; and Journeys Toward Progress (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1963), passim.

[7]David McClelland, The Achieving Society (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1961).

attitudes expressed in their folk literature. Hagen accepts the importance of the need for achievement, and attempts to formulate a more systematic explanation of how a group of people develops a need to achieve and therefore a propensity to experiment with new means of extracting wealth from their physical environment.[8] Basically, he suggests, people, whose parents or grandparents have lost the social status and respect once accorded them by their peers, grow up questioning both their parents' authority over them and the authority of the accepted ideas and customs of their society. Such individuals feel free to manipulate their environment in a way unthinkable to accepted and contented members of society, and may therefore find a more satisfying outlet for their energies in achievement than in adherence to traditional activities and values. It is these groups who take the lead in promoting innovation and economic development in their societies.

In trying to explain when and why producers in a poor economy will or will not adopt new productive activities, the student has plenty of hypotheses to choose from, including those we have just listed. What he needs in order to evaluate their relevance is information, both about the economic and cultural backgrounds of producers in poor countries and, if possible, about innovations which have already been adopted in poor countries and the reasons for their success. It is the latter kind of information which I shall attempt to supply in the following pages. The successful innovation which I have chosen to study, namely, cocoa in Western Nigeria, is interesting for several reasons. Not only was it a new crop in West Africa, but its cultivation involved some departures from the traditional agricultural practices of Nigerian farmers. Instead

---

[8] Everett E. Hagen, On the Theory of Social Change (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1962), especially Part III.

of the usual system of bush fallow, in which farmers plant annual crops on a plot of land for a few years, then leave the plot fallow for a considerable period, cocoa required that farmers commit a given piece of land to one crop for thirty years or more. Also, cocoa trees normally take six to seven years to mature; hence the farmer must expend resources on planting and cultivating the crop long before he can expect any return from it. This certainly involved a different pattern of planning and productive activity from that used in cultivating annual crops and, although farmers in Western Nigeria do appear to have planted palm trees in their farms even before they took up cocoa, the palms also grew wild so that people did not have to depend on cultivated palms for palm oil and other produce.

Another reason why cocoa is a good example of an economic innovation is that from the first it was a purely commercial crop. Nigerians themselves do not consume any product of the cocoa tree; hence it played no part in the subsistence economy or in local trade, but involved the farmer in production for overseas markets and for cash incomes from the start. Furthermore, during the first thirty years of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria, the crop spread to different parts of the country at an uneven pace; farmers took it up more readily in some areas than in others. Both the length of its history and the unevenness of its development give us a chance to observe the process of innovation in various stages and, by comparing the reactions and experiences of different groups of farmers, to examine the reasons for its success in more detail than is usually possible in studies of current attempts to introduce innovations in developing economies.

I have divided the study into two parts. The first (Chapters I-III) focuses on the early planters--the individuals or groups of men

who first planted cocoa in their respective communities and who proved, by their example, that growing cocoa was not only technically feasible but also economically rewarding. The main concern of these chapters is to determine what factors best explain the early planters' decision to experiment with a new crop as a means of earning income. Was the crucial factor something in the background or individual experiences of the planters themselves, or did it have to do with the character of the innovation (e.g., the costs of and rewards for adopting it), or the circumstances in which it was presented to them?

Chapter I sketches the structure of Yoruba social and economic life in the nineteenth century and some important changes which occurred therein during this period, and which help to explain how cocoa-growing got started there. I have also included a short section on one of the earliest groups of cocoa farmers in Western Nigeria, who have already been studied by other scholars, but whose possible influence on the development of cocoa in other areas is germane to the present analysis. Chapter II compares the backgrounds of early planters in two of the traditional Yoruba city-states. In one of the states studied, cocoa growing developed about twenty to twenty-five years later than in the other state, and the purpose of this chapter is to see whether this difference in people's readiness to adopt cocoa growing can be attributed to differences in their attitudes or experiences. Chapter III continues the comparison between these two states and analyzes the extent to which differences in the profitability of growing cocoa explain why producers in one state took up cocoa sooner than those in the other.

In the last two chapters, I examine various aspects of the development of cocoa growing after the crop has been introduced to an area. Chapter IV analyzes the rate at which farmers expanded the area under

cocoa, once they had accepted the new crop, and compares my findings on this subject with earlier analyses of short- and long-run supply functions for cocoa. Finally, in Chapter V, I turn to the fact, which many people have observed, that in West Africa, cocoa is generally not grown on plantations, although in other parts of the world it is. Using both my findings for Western Nigeria and other scholars' studies of cocoa farmers elsewhere in West Africa, I have attempted to point out some of the distinctive features of cocoa growing in West Africa, and to suggest reasons why West African farmers have chosen these methods of producing the crop.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

For the Yoruba peoples of Western Nigeria, the nineteenth century was a period of political and social change, resulting from the combined effects of internal political decay and external military and economic pressure.[1] The collapse of the Oyo empire and a growing European interest in the economic and religious life of the Yorubas altered traditional patterns of settlement, production and trade, and laid the groundwork for further economic changes, such as the development of cocoa growing, which occurred during the colonial era. In this chapter, I shall outline the main characteristics of economic activity in nineteenth century Yorubaland and the nature of British influence on the Yoruba economy before 1900. I shall also discuss the cocoa-growing activities of one group of farmers whose influence on the development of cocoa in the rest of Western Nigeria I shall examine in subsequent chapters.

Social and Economic Effects of the Civil Wars

Most Yoruba communities had at one time been subject to the kings of either Oyo or Benin, at least to the extent of owing tribute or military assistance to one or the other. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, Benin seems to have lost its hegemony over the coastal and eastern parts of Yoruba territory. The Oyo empire, unable to control its numerous subordinate kingdoms and weakened by internal dissension,

---

[1] This opening sketch of Yoruba history in the nineteenth century is based on Michael Crowder, The Story of Nigeria (London: Faber and Faber, 1962); Samuel Johnson, History of the Yorubas (Lagos: C. M. S. (Nigeria) Bookshops, 1921); J. F. A. Ajayi and R. Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); unpublished Intelligence Reports in the Nigerian National Archives and the University of Ibadan Library.

collapsed entirely when attacked by Moslem Fulanis, seeking to reform and extend Islam throughout the West African savannahs.

The decline of Benin's power simply meant that its former vassals were left to govern themselves, and the influence of Benin on their customs and institutions gradually weakened. The collapse of Oyo, however, had more positively disruptive effects on the Yorubas. When the Fulanis sacked the capital city of Oyo, in the late 1820's, the entire population of Oyo and its surrounding towns and villages fled south, into the northern fringes of the rain forest belt where the Fulani cavalry could not follow. Their advance forced the Egbas, a Yoruba sub-tribe already living in this area, to move farther south.

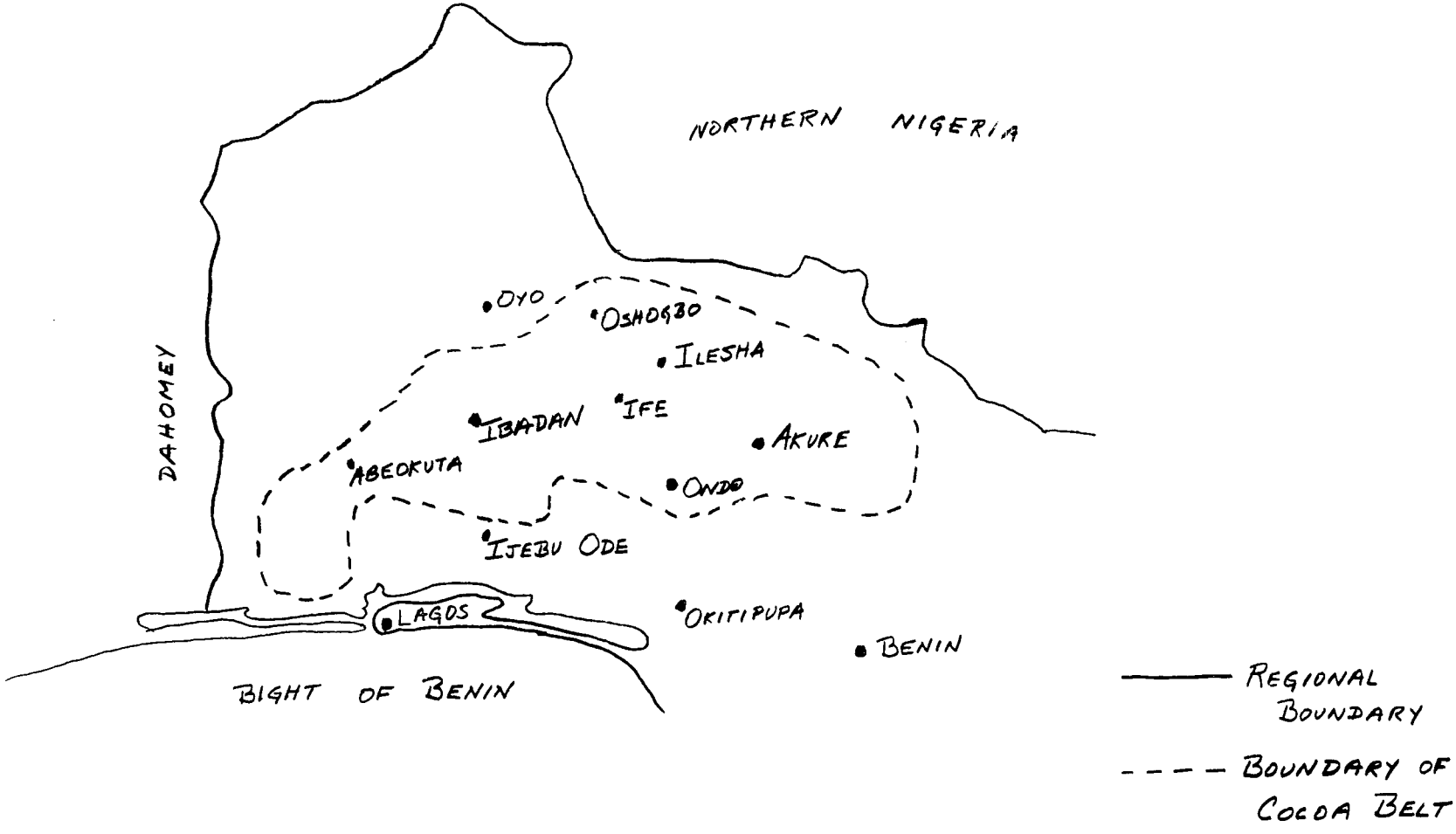
In the course of these migrations both Oyo and Egba villages were broken up, and anyone with arms and a few followers seized food and slaves where he could. In order to protect themselves, the refugees gathered together in large camps; many Oyos convened at Ibadan and the Egbas at Abeokuta. Although the old villages preserved their identity within these camps, setting up their own "quarters" and turning to their former village heads for leadership, the interests of common defense proved stronger than traditional village loyalties, and the camps became permanent settlements under a single administration.

The new towns were organized on a pattern similar to that of older Yoruba towns such as old Oyo or Ondo,[2] which was not affected by the Fulani attack. Settlement followed the same urban orientation with each town surrounded by small farming hamlets where people stayed only long enough to farm, returning to town for festivities, family meetings,

---

[2]On the structure of Yoruba towns, see A. L. Mabogunje, Yoruba Towns (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962) and Peter C. Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law (London: Published for the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research by the Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 50-60.

MAP I. COCOA BELT OF WESTERN NIGERIA



trade and, of course, defense. The administrative organization of the new towns was dominated, however, by the particularistic interests and ties of the old communities. Instead of the traditional Yoruba hierarchy[3] of king, privy councillors and numerous subordinate groups of royal relatives, palace officials, and chiefs, the new towns were governed by councils of chiefs representing the different quarters of the town. In Ibadan, the chiefs were mostly military leaders, although these were so often killed in battle that civilians gradually assumed greater political importance. In both military and civilian spheres, the fluid political situation resulting from the collapse of Oyo, and the ensuing decades of warfare among the Yoruba city-states created new opportunities for able individuals to achieve social status and power. At the same time, the political importance of the family tended, if anything, to increase as new leaders sought to advance the interests of their own families and pass their wealth and titles to their descendants.[4]

Another important change brought about by these upheavals was the disruption of traditional rights to land. Such rights were of various types--usufruct, sovereignty, ownership, etc.--held by various categories of persons--state, family, individual. When the wars forced whole communities off the land they occupied, not only were the claims

---

[3]For general discussions of traditional Yoruba political and administrative institutions, see P. A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria (London, 1926); C. D. Forde, Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria ("Ethnographic Survey of Africa: Western Africa," Part IV; London: International African Institute, 1951); P. C. Lloyd, Local Government in Yoruba Towns (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1958) and Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, pp. 30-50.

[4]According to Johnson, in 1858 the Ibadans decided to alter the traditional Yoruba system of inheritance, whereby when a man died his property passed to his next younger brother. Instead, the leaders of the town declared that "the eldest surviving issue of the founder of a house must succeed as the head of the house . . .", p. 387.

of particular persons to particular areas upset, but the way was opened to the development of new methods of acquiring land and new kinds of rights to hold, use and dispose of it. The importance of these changes for agricultural innovation and expansion will be examined later.

Most historians have held that the chief motive for the nineteenth century wars among the Yoruba states was their need for a new supply of slaves after the Fulani advance cut them off from their traditional sources in the north. However, scholars have suggested more recently that the conflict was fundamentally a political one, in which the various city-states alternately tried to establish an hegemony over the others or to defend themselves from domination by a neighbor. Slave-raiding and the control of trade routes--often the ostensible objectives of a particular campaign--were basically means to the ultimate end of political domination.[5]

Whatever the cause of the wars, one immediate effect on the belligerents was probably to increase the importance of overseas trade to their economies. As far as one can tell from scattered historical evidence, "traditional" Yoruba economic life, although predominantly agricultural, was not confined to subsistence production. Local trade in foodstuffs and handicrafts is a time-honored activity, carried on primarily by women.[6] In addition, long distance trade, both among the peoples of the West African savannah, and across the Sahara with North Africa, pre-dates European exploration of the coast in the fifteenth and

---

[5]Ajayi and Smith, pp. 123-128.

[6]Forde, p. 8; Hugh Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Carey, 1829), p. 58.

sixteenth centuries.[7] Later, the slave trade with the Americans drew upon the services of middlemen in coastal communities,[8] who rounded up or bought slaves in the interior and brought them to the European vessels on the coast.

In exchange for slaves, and some ivory, the Yorubas imported arms, ammunition, and such important consumer goods as salt and cloth. The Yoruba historian, Samuel Johnson, records that, during a prolonged period of scarcity when the roads were closed because of war, a woman bartered her mother for salt and cloth.[9] After trade with the north was disrupted by the Fulani hostilities, the Yorubas depended entirely on imported goods from the south and overseas. The export of slaves from Lagos probably increased during the early decades of the nineteenth century, despite British patrols.[10] The power and wealth of the southern-most Yoruba states grew steadily as a result of their location athwart the routes to the coast.

However, the exigencies of political change and military conflict within Yorubaland did not in themselves effect any major changes in the structure of the economy. Possibly individual towns attached

---

[7]There are several articles on ancient trade routes and patterns in North and West Africa in the Journal of African History, III, 2 (1962). See also P. Morton-Williams, "The Oyo Yoruba and the Atlantic Trade, 1670-1830," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, III, 1 (1964).

[8]Morton-Williams, loc. cit.; Kenneth O. Dike, Trade and Politics in The Niger Delta, 1830-1885 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956); C. W. Newbury, The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961); Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Vols. XI, XII, No. 551, 1842, "Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa"; Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. V, No. 412, 1865, "Report of Select Committee on the State of the British Settlements on the West Coast of Africa" (cited hereinafter as Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1842, and Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1865).

[9]Johnson, p. 453.

[10]Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1842; Newbury, p. 36.

greater importance to agricultural self-sufficiency than they had before the breakup of the Oyo empire, but the organization of agricultural production remained the same. The basic unit of production was the family and its dependents. A wealthy family might have a great many of the latter, either slaves or persons under some kind of obligation to them. The wars altered the volume and direction of trade, but not its composition; slaves remained the major export until pressures from outside began to change the situation.

British Intervention and Changes in the Composition of Trade

Before the nineteenth century, the main occasion for contact between Europeans and West Africans had been the slave trade. Since Europeans did not venture inland in search of slaves, but relied on coastal middlemen, they had almost no direct contact with Yorubas at this time. After 1807, however, the British Government's campaign to abolish the slave trade gradually led to British involvement in the internal affairs, first of the coastal trading communities and, eventually, of the peoples of the West African interior.[11] In Yoruba country, the British intervened partly through direct military and political action--Lagos was conquered in 1852 and became a British colony in 1861--partly through negotiations, ultimately backed by the threat of force, for the protection of "legitimate commerce." Although jealous of their own spheres of influence, on the whole both missionaries and British traders favored and encouraged official intervention.[12]

---

[11] On the history of British intervention in Yoruba affairs during the nineteenth century, see Newbury, passim; Johnson, chaps. xxvi-xxx and xxxiv; George D. Jenkins, Politics in Ibadan (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965), chap. ii.

[12] J. F. A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1965), chap. iv.

The first economic effect of British interference with the slave trade was to encourage the Yorubas to seek alternative ways of procuring imported commodities. Palm produce was the first and, until the development of cocoa, the dominant export good from Western Nigeria, but the Yorubas exported other primary products from time to time, including cotton, rubber and ivory.[13] (See Table 1). Each of these export crops

TABLE 1

SOME MAJOR EXPORTS FROM LAGOS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

	Palm Oil		Cotton		Rubber	
	Tons[a,b]	£/ton[c]	Lbs.[d]	d/lb.[e]	Lbs.[f]	d/lb.[g]
1856	3,884		34,941	(6.3)		
1857	4,942		114,848	(7.8)		
1858	4,612		236,500	(6.9)		
1859	3,730		198,305	(6.8)		
1860	2,752		1,735	(6.2)		
1861	3,865		153,754	(8.5)		
1862	1,763		. .	(17.2)		
1863	4,538		. .	(23.2)		
1864	3,878		. .	(27.5)		
1865	3,800	22.3	433,912	19.0		
1866	6,397	22.4	761,874	15.5		
1867	5,473	. .	796,590	(10.9)		
1868	4,869	37.5	1,029,202	10.5		
1869	5,903	37.0	893,297	12.1		
1870	5,841	34.8	1,508,961	10.0		
1871	5,961	35.5	860,876	8.5		
1872	4,337	31.5	448,366	10.5		
1873	3,208	30.0	. .	(9.0)		
1874	4,610	25.5	. .	(8.0)		
1875	6,009	24.7	. .	(7.4)		
1876	6,641	29.0	. .	(6.2)		
1877	11,016	21.7	. .	(6.3)		
1878	5,133	27.0	. .	(6.1)		
1879	8,231	25.3	. .	(6.3)		
1880	4,988	26.7	. .	(7.0)		

[13] Newbury, p. 57.

TABLE 1--Continued

	Palm Oil		Cotton		Rubber	
	Tons[a,b]	£/ton[c]	Lbs.[d]	d/lb.[e]	Lbs.[f]	d/lb.[g]
1881	6,024	24.4	. .	(6.4)		
1882	8,791	24.9	. .	(6.6)		
1883	6,571	28.4	411,534	(5.8)		
1884	7,942	28.5	530,413	(6.0)		
1885	8,859	24.6	278,850	5.6	534	6.4
1886	10,322	20.6	96,980	5.1	112	22.0
1887	8,354	18.0	121,735	5.5	92	13.8
1888	8,225	14.9	231,484	5.5	567	18.0
1889	7,830	17.0	482,950	5.9	502	13.5
1890	10,669	11.3	358,830	6.0	119	17.6
1891	14,016	18.0	379,300	4.7	104	8.8
1892	8,194	16.8	41,052	4.2	. .	. .
1893	13,576	18.6	71,406	4.6	56	16.5
1894	11,311	16.6	148,946	3.8	5,867	13.6
1895	12,754	16.1	19,851	3.8	5,069,577	13.1
1896	10,514	15.1	1,326	4.3	6,484,363	13.2
1897	6,196	15.8	. .	3.9	4,458,327	15.6
1898	6,277	15.5	70,640	3.3	3,778,266	18.6
1899	10,976	15.3	13,659	3.5	1,993,525	19.8
1900	9,926	19.1	24,080		596,332	19.9

Notes and Sources: Prices are export unit values except for the figures in parentheses which are average prices in the U.K.

[a]1856-1866: Newbury, pp. 58, 211.

[b]1866-1900: Lagos, Bluebooks. One ton = 300 gallons.

[c]Derived from values given in the Bluebooks.

[d]1856-1861: Newbury, p. 58.
1861-1900: Bluebooks.

[e]Export unit values from Bluebooks. U.K. prices from A. Sauerbeck's annual articles on commodity prices in Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LIII (1890) and LXIII (1900).

[f]Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 100, 1900, "Statistical Abstract for the Colonies."

[g]Derived from export values given in ibid.

and was in some sense part of the traditional economy. Both palm and rubber trees grew wild in the rain forest area; labor was the major input to these types of production and the return to labor was immediate. The producer could usually dispose of his wares to a petty trader in his own village if he did not have the means to transport the goods to a town or port. In the case of palm oil, which is consumed domestically, production for export simply involved expanding an existing activity. Palm kernels, though not used by the Yorubas for much except ceremonial purposes, are easily obtained with a little more labor after the oil has been extracted from the fruit. Cotton was also grown traditionally for home use and local trade.[14] Rubber was not consumed domestically, but to produce it one did not need to commit resources to the crop for long periods of time or to wait years for a return as one did with cocoa.

Nevertheless, the production of these goods in significant quantities for overseas export represented a change in the pre-existing pattern of economic activity. Unfortunately we know almost nothing about how this change in the composition of external trade occurred. Since there are no statistics on the volume or value of the slave trade in different parts of West Africa, it is impossible to say whether the growth of so-called "legitimate commerce" represented a net addition to either the income or the import-purchasing power of the Yorubas, compared to the proceeds of the slave trade. Similarly, there is no way of verifying the common assertion that instead of exporting slaves, the African owners put them to work producing palm oil and carrying it to the coast for export. Contemporary sources state that in Ibadan, for example, there were

---

[14] Clapperton, p. 57.

large farms, owned by wealthy or powerful individuals or families and worked by slave labor,[15] but we do not know how early such farms existed or what proportion of the population worked on them at different times.[16]

Similarly, there is little information on who was responsible for effecting the transition from slaves to palm oil and other primary products. Certainly Europeans played no direct role in organizing the development of "legitimate commerce" in the interior. Both during and after the days of the slave trade, European merchants remained on the coast, buying produce brought to them by local middlemen. The Europeans advanced imported goods "on trust"[17] to the African middlemen, who exchanged them first for slaves, later for oil and other commodities in the interior. The oil was actually manufactured (or the slaves captured) by farmers (or warriors) in inland communities, who sold them to the middlemen. Thus, even before the rise of the palm oil trade, there was some degree of specialization between "producers" of goods for export and traders who brought the goods to European buyers on the coast.

Just what motivated the producers of the interior to switch to palm oil, however, is not clear. One author has pointed out that the British campaign against the slave trade made little headway until the 1840's, when increases in the world price for palm products provided an economic incentive for the development of "legitimate commerce,"[18] but

---

[15] Johnson, pp. 325, 643.

[16] Large farms do not necessarily imply large-scale agricultural production. The farms were probably worked by relatives and various types of dependents, including slaves and persons who were indebted to the owner, each of whom had a small plot to work with minimal supervision from the owner or his representatives.

[17] For descriptions of the trust system and relations between European traders and African middlemen and producers, see Dike, pp. 102-104; Newbury, pp. 58-60; Ajayi, pp. 86-87.

[18] Newbury, pp. 42, 60.

this does not tell us how the economic incentive was transmitted to the producers. In the cases of cotton and rubber, which were first exported from Western Nigeria in the 1850's and 1890's respectively, we have a bit more information on the origins of the trade.

The export of cotton was first organized in the 1850's by the Anglican Church Missionary Society, ". . . to see that the production of cotton in Abeokuta was increased without the trust system, and in a way to promote the emergence of an African middle class."[19] Unfortunately, the scheme required the African middlemen to collect and transmit the cotton to England in return for a small fixed commission, and the farmers to wait six to twelve months for their money, which was not paid until after the goods arrived in the U.K. The marketing of cotton in Abeokuta soon reverted to the familiar "trust" system. However, the trade in cotton had been started and it responded enthusiastically to the high prices brought about by the American Civil War.

Less is known about the details of the rubber boom of the 1890's. According to one source, the idea of producing rubber for export was introduced in Lagos by a political prisoner from the Gold Coast who obtained permission from Governor Carter to bring in expert tappers from the Gold Coast to demonstrate their art to the Yorubas.[20] In the interior, rubber tapping seems to have been encouraged by Yoruba traders and merchants from Lagos, who were in regular contact with European and large African exporters. In Okeigbo, a town on the western edge of Ondo territory, rubber-tapping was introduced around 1895, by a Lagosian who

---

[19] Ajayi, p. 85. Cf. S. O. Biobaku, The Egba and Their Neighbors, 1842-1872 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

[20] A. G. Hopkins, An Economic History of Lagos, 1880-1914 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1964), p. 264.

brought his own laborers from Warri and Sapele.[21] In the cases of both rubber and cotton, then, the impetus to produce for overseas markets seems to have come initially from outsiders--missionaries or African traders--but outsiders who were familiar with and willing to participate in the Yorubas' way of life. The European traders, as we have seen, took little initiative in developing interior sources of supply.

Once the idea of producing a new crop for export had been accepted by Yoruba farmers and traders, the quantities which they supplied to European buyers on the coast appear to have been fairly responsive to changes in the world price, although we do not have enough information on changes in import prices or returns to production for domestic markets to make precise estimates of the relationship between quantities exported and the real prices of the export goods. The volume of cotton exported from Lagos rose fivefold during and after the American Civil War, when world supplies were tight; then dwindled later, as the world price declined. (See Table 1.) Later, the boom in rubber exports which followed the introduction of rubber-tapping occurred at a time of rising market prices.

In short, when cocoa was introduced to Western Nigeria, the Yorubas had been long familiar not only with trade <u>per se</u>, but, more particularly, with the production of primary commodities for European markets. They were already importing European goods, such as guns and cloth; they had dealt extensively with the problems of collecting and transporting bulky commodities to the coast; and the middlemen, at least, were accustomed to dealing with European traders. Moreover, both traders and producers had demonstrated their ability to adapt to changes in

---

[21] Interviews with the elders of Okeigbo.

European taste and their readiness to produce new goods for export and to expand the production of these goods in response to increasing market prices.

The Pax Britannica

In the 1890's, the British finally left the coast and started inland to promote peaceful commerce and make sure that the French did not reap the benefits thereof. In 1893, Governor Carter of Lagos travelled inland, accompanied by a small military force, to put an end to the Yoruba wars.[22] The year before, Carter had bombarded the Ijebus to force them to open the roads; in 1893, therefore, he had little difficulty in persuading the other belligerents to lay down their arms, permanently disband their armies, and agree to refer future disputes to the British Governor in Lagos.

Two economic consequences resulted from the peace. All trade routes and potential farmlands were now open to general use; there was no need to locate farms or farming hamlets close to the towns for protection. Immediately trade increased throughout Yorubaland. In Ondo, a contemporary observer recorded that peace brought a flood of traders to the town, whose members threatened already scarce food supplies.[23] The greater freedom of movement which followed the peace probably facilitated the boom in rubber exports of the late 1890's. In the longer run, the cessation of hostilities enabled farmers to cultivate vacant land which was some distance from town. In Ibadan, for example, as cocoa cultivation caught on in the early years of the twentieth century, people could

---

[22] See n. 11 above.

[23] E. M. Lijadu, Diary, February, 1898.

move freely into the uninhabited forests south of the town, where the soil proved excellent for cocoa-growing.

Second, demobilization left a substantial proportion of the adult male population in search of an occupation, both for something to do and to replace plunder as their major source of wealth. Adjusting to peace-time was not always easy for men whose social prestige as well as material prosperity had depended exclusively on their military prowess. The problem was particularly acute in Ibadan which had conquered a number of smaller Yoruba towns and kingdoms earlier in the century and had spent the last sixteen years before 1893 successfully withstanding a coalition of all the other active Yoruba armies. Johnson gives a vivid description of people's reactions to the peace:

> It took the Ibadan rank and file some time to realize the fact that intertribal wars are forever at an end in this country. . . . To be at home with nothing to do was rather irksome for those whose trade was war. Happily most of the important chiefs had huge farms wherein were engaged many of their domestics, and the majority of the men also were farmers, but a good many were warriors pure and simple.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Ibadan never really settled down until after about eighteen months, when the Government of Lagos enlisted two battalions of men for military service in Northern Nigeria. This opening afforded relief to all those ardent spirits whose profession was arms, and with a wonderful celerity they imbibed and assimilated the new method of drill and discipline. . . . Again, the railway undertaking absorbed the energies of many.[24]

Thus, when cocoa was introduced to Ibadan in the 1890's, not only was there plenty of land available to plant it on, but the town was full of ex-warriors, looking for new sources of wealth and power, and accustomed to taking risks in the pursuit of these ends. It was an auspicious moment for establishing a new industry--a point I shall examine more fully in the following chapters.

---

[24] Johnson, pp. 643-44.

British Economic Policies in the Colonial Era

In many respects British administration of the Yoruba states began in 1893, although a formal protectorate was not established until 1900. After 1893, the British had effective final authority in any important public question, although they did not always use it. It would be redundant and largely irrelevant to recapitulate here the general history of British colonial rule in Nigeria.[25] A few words on the colonial government's economic policies are in order, however.

In terms of basic principle, the administrative and economic policies of the British rulers in Nigeria were two sides of the same coin. Both were essentially conservative, seeking to introduce cautious development in a context of well-preserved traditional institutions and practices. Under Lugard's famous administrative system, known as Indirect Rule, the traditional rulers of the indigenous society retained jurisdiction over their subjects but were ultimately responsible to the British administration. The traditional machinery of tax collection, for example, was preserved, but the British determined the amounts to be collected and how the burden was to be distributed among different groups. Similarly, traditional laws and judicial procedures continued to function as long as they did not conflict with British notions of justice and humanity. Trial by ordeal was forbidden and some types of cases had to be tried in British courts. In most of the northern provinces of Nigeria, where the power of traditional rulers was fairly autocratic,

---

[25] On the general history of colonial rule in Nigeria, see Alan Burns, History of Nigeria (5th edition; London: E. Allen and Unwin, 1958); Margery Perham, Native Administration in Nigeria (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) and Lugard: Years of Authority (London: Collins, 1961).

the system worked with little friction,[26] but among the various peoples of southern Nigeria, whose chiefs and elders were more or less responsible to their subjects, Indirect Rule was not an unqualified success.[27]

In the economic sphere, British policy was based on Joseph Chamberlain's doctrine of the "Dual Mandate,"[28] which maintained that the duty of the colonial government was to develop the resources of the colony for the benefit both of its indigenous peoples and of the rest of the world. To implement this policy, the government stressed the development of trade; in one sense, Chamberlain's statement of policy simply gave ideological support to the status quo. Trade would benefit the colony through increased income, either in the hands of the people themselves, or in the hands of the colonial government who would spend it for the people's good. The rest of the world would gain an additional supply of colonial products and an expanding market for their own output. The question of what products a colony should export was left largely in invisible hands. The colony produced whatever its climate, resources and traditional skills permitted; the government's chief concern was to facilitate the flow of these goods to European markets by providing better facilities for transportation, concessions to expatriate trading and mining concerns, and an occasional program of produce inspection or agricultural research.

---

[26] Perham, Native Administration, chap. v and vi; James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1963), p. 51.

[27] Coleman, loc. cit.; Newbury, chap. viii; Jenkins, passim.

[28] Outlined in a speech to the House of Commons in 1895, quoted in Williamson, A Short History of the British Empire (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 233.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine in detail the implications of these policies for the development of the Nigerian economy, although, in Chapter IV, I shall discuss the government's contributions to the development of the cocoa industry before 1940. For the present, I shall simply point out that, however inadequate their limited interpretation of "development" may appear in retrospect, the executors of the Dual Mandate in Nigeria were concerned that it benefit Nigerians as well as Englishmen. They felt that increases in Nigerians' standards of living could only come gradually with the expansion of agriculture and trade, but they were anxious that such increases as did develop should pass into the hands of the indigenous producers, and not be siphoned off through foreign ownership or control of the means of production.[29]

Probably the most important protective measure, both for cocoa growing and for Nigerian economic and political development in general, was the government's land policy. The precise intent of British land policy in Southern Nigeria is difficult to decipher from the accumulation of ordinances, inquiries, official correspondence and court decisions related to the subject, but one major effect is clear: expatriates never acquired the right to use or dispose of any significant amount of land in Nigeria.

> Neither the British Government nor the Royal Niger Company, nor the individualistic traders were tempted to imitate /Leopold's policy in the

---

[29]It is of historical interest to note that the British did make sporadic attempts to increase competition among the foreign trading firms in Nigeria. On June 7, 1900, Sir Ralph Moor, then High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria, wrote a memorandum complaining of the control of Southern Nigerian trade by three foreign firms. He proposed that the government develop an inland transport service available to Africans and Europeans alike, to prevent these three firms from gaining a monopolistic hold on inland trade too. (Great Britain, Public Record Office, Southern Nigeria Correspondence). The Government did operate both river steamers and a motor transport service which fed into the railway, but neither made much money and eventually they were abandoned.

> Congo of granting huge concessions to foreign firms7 . . . . A more rational and humane commercial collaboration was already bringing impressive quantities of palm-oil and palm-kernels to market; collaboration of a similar type was capable of creating the new trades in cocoa and groundnuts and cotton.[30]

The "collaboration" Hancock speaks of might rather be called a division of labor; the expatriates stuck with the import-export business, and left production and internal trade to the Africans. The government provided transportation facilities to all comers.

Actually, the development of what Hancock pictures as a deliberate policy was somewhat haphazard. For many years no outsiders wanted land in Southern Nigeria except for trading stations or mission buildings. Although the early British administrators were not opposed to foreign settlement which would contribute to the development of the country,[31] they adhered to the general principle (implied by the notions of Indirect Rule and the Dual Mandate) that development should not disrupt existing customs and institutions any more than necessary. The Native Lands Acquisition Proclamations of 1900 and 1903 provided that any non-Nigerian who wished to acquire land must obtain the written consent of the High Commissioner of the Protectorate.[32] Presumably, the High Commissioner would see to it that the interests of the "natives" involved were properly looked after. In practice two factors determined the effects of this policy: the "natives'" own reluctance to grant sizable concessions, and the complexity of the traditional systems of land use and tenure.

---

[30] W. K. Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), Vol. 2, Pt. 2, p. 181.

[31] Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, Feb. 1, 1911, in Public Record Office, Southern Nigeria Correspondence. The Government enthusiastically supported a request by the British Cotton Growing Association for 15,000 acres of land near Ibadan in 1904. See below, p. 18.

[32] G. B. A. Coker, Family Property Among the Yorubas (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1958).

The government did not hesitate to press for large concessions which it deemed beneficial to the development of trade. In 1904, the British Cotton Growing Association, a private organization whose plans for encouraging cotton growing in various parts of the empire were considered suitably philanthropic to merit official support, applied for a lease of 15,000 acres of land near Ibadan, to establish a plantation. The British resident at Ibadan put great pressure on the chiefs to agree to the lease; the Governor himself came up from Lagos to urge the BCGA's cause. After months of resistance, the chiefs finally agreed to lease 5000 acres for thirty years at three pence per acre, but the experience was not encouraging to further foreign settlement.[33]

In other cases just the government's stipulation that foreign concessionaires must arrange a purchase or lease with the "owners" of the land was enough to kill a projected plantation. In 1908, Lever Brothers applied for permission to erect palm oil mills in Southern Nigeria and asked for sizable concessions around the mills from which to draw supplies of palm fruit. The government of Southern Nigeria agreed on the condition that the company make the necessary arrangements with every landholder in the concession area.[34] This proved entirely impracticable and eventually the whole scheme was dropped.

In addition to effectively barring the way to foreign settlement, colonial land policy in Nigeria left the settlement of most land disputes to traditional judicial authorities, to be settled in accordance with "native law and custom." Although decisions in traditional courts could always be appealed to British authorities,

---

[33]Ibadan City Council Minutes, 1904, passim (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

[34]Great Britain, Public Record Office, Confidential Print, African No. 1023, "Correspondence Concerning Palm Oil Grants in West Africa," No. 51.

> In fact neither the administrative officers nor the "English" courts seem to have had any effect on customary law; in the case of the former this seems the result of a policy of ostensibly upholding customary law in however muddled a manner . . . . /The High Courts'/ judgments have not influenced the members of customary courts because in most cases they have not seen them--and if they did have them read by the clerk, it is doubtful if their import would be understood.[35]

Thus traditional systems of land use and tenure evolved in accordance with changing local needs rather than foreign rules and concepts--a fact with significant implications for the development of commercial agriculture.

The Agege Planters: An Early Experiment with Cocoa

One of the earliest experiments with cultivated cash crops (as opposed to the collection of forest produce for sale) might not have materialized if the British had interfered more actively in land transactions between Africans. The process of establishing the Colony of Lagos had been haphazard, to say the least--instigated and executed primarily by British traders and naval officers whose consciences were not overburdened with the legal niceties of imperial rule and responsibility.[36] None of them particularly wanted to buy land in the hinterlands of Lagos and it did not occur to them to prevent anyone else from doing so. Consequently, well-to-do Lagosians who wanted to acquire land to establish a country residence or engage in part-time farming were free to use their wealth and influence to this end. Several families began to acquire land in the north of the colony or in southern Egbaland in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the 1890's, some of these people had begun to explore the possibilities of producing cash crops there on a significant scale. The most notable experiments took place in an area known as Agege.

---

[35] Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 26.

[36] Newbury, passim. Cf. Dike, passim, and J. C. Anene, Southern Nigeria in Transition, 1885-1906 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

The history of the Agege planters has already been studied in some detail[37] and will be discussed here only insofar as it bears on the development of cocoa-growing in the rest of Western Nigeria. The Agege planters were mostly African merchants from Lagos whose businesses had suffered from a prolonged decline in the prices of palm produce during the late nineteenth century slump in world trade.[38] These men were accustomed to a high standard of living; they were educated, Christian, and some were second generation businessmen whose families owed their wealth and social position to their economic achievements.[39] As the depression wore on, a number of them began to look for alternative methods of earning income. Some concentrated on the import business, in which their knowledge of and contacts with the interior of Western Nigeria enabled them to compete successfully with European traders.[40] Others turned to the land.

In addition to securing themselves a livelihood by planting traditional food crops, most of these farmers set out to grow cash crops for export. As members of the trading community of Lagos, they were already

---

[37]Especially for its relationship to the African Church movement, by J. B. Webster, African Churches Among the Yoruba, 1888-1922 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); "Agege: Plantations and the African Church," NISER Conference Proceedings (March, 1962); and "The Bible and the Plough," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 1 (December, 1963). Also, A. G. Hopkins of the West African Studies Center, University of Birmingham, is doing a study of the cocoa-growing activities of the Agege planters.

[38]See Table 1. Hopkins believes that this was the main reason for their switch to agriculture.

[39]Cherry Gertzel, John Holt: A British Merchant in West Africa in the Era of Imperialism, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1959), chap. 8; Jean Herskovitz Kopytoff, Preface to Modern Nigeria (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965); Hopkins' forthcoming study. Webster points out that the daughter of one of the Agege planters was the god-daughter of Queen Victoria. Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 1, p. 421.

[40]Gertzel, loc. cit.

familiar with the demands of European markets and also likely to have heard of such ventures as the cocoa and coffee plantations on Fernando Po and the Portuguese islands to the south. A. G. Hopkins has pointed out that the first of these ex-merchants to plant cocoa at Agege got his seeds from Fernando Po. Thus from the start they not only planted familiar commodities, such as cotton, which they knew from past experience could be sold overseas, but also experimented with new crops, such as cocoa, coffee and kola. Webster describes the activities of one of the Agege planters, J. K. Coker:

> In 1893 he planted cotton and coffee, the two crops with which he was familiar . . . . /Later/ he had to experiment with unfamiliar crops, as the market price first of cotton and then of coffee fell to uneconomic levels . . . .
>
> By 1910 Coker had surmounted most of his difficulties. His cocoa and kola were beginning to produce profitably, maize was showing a handsome profit, and palm products were holding steady.[41]

The planters' experiments with cocoa were encouraged by high prices; cocoa sold for between £28 and £49 per ton until the outbreak of World War I. (See Table 19.) We shall reserve a detailed comparison of returns to cocoa growing and earnings in other occupations for Chapter III, but may note here that farmers in other parts of Nigeria later planted cocoa at times when the price was one-half what the Agege planters could earn at the turn of the century. Hence it is not surprising that the Agege planters found it desirable to devote more of their resources to cocoa as time passed.

By the early twentieth century, a number of the planters had large farms of several hundred acres each. (Coker had 2000 acres under cultivation at Agege by the end of World War I.)[42] To operate farms of

---

[41] Webster, N.I.S.E.R. Conference Proceedings (March, 1962), p. 125.

[42] Ibid., p. 126.

this size, the planters had to hire[43] substantial numbers of laborers. In the late 1890's, however, laborers were becoming increasingly scarce, thanks to the attractions of various alternative opportunities, from the rubber boom to the railway. To meet their needs, the planters were forced to recruit workers from distant Yoruba towns and they did so with the aid of a group of missionaries who had only recently begun to operate in Western Nigeria.[44] The history of these missionaries and their relationship to the Agege planters are worth examining in some detail.

We have mentioned that most of the planters were Christian, converted and educated by European missionaries. During the 1880's and 1890's, relations between the European missions and some of their educated African converts began to deteriorate. Early in the nineteenth century, when abolition of the slave trade was the primary practical aim of British evangelical activity in West Africa, the missions sought to "civilize" the Africans through the combined influence of religious and economic development. In the words of a leader of the anti-slavery movement,

> Let missionaries and schoolmasters, the plough and the spade, go together and agriculture will florish; the avenues to legitimate commerce will be opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired; whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity operate as the proximate cause, of this happy change.[45]

The missionaries regarded commerce as the major goal of economic development, but recognized the need to encourage production for exchange as

---

[43] The extended family is not a producing unit in Yoruba society, although for some purposes it may be a consuming one--e.g., for expenditure on houses or the education of one member of the family. A farmer would usually have to remunerate a brother or a cousin for the latter's labor, unless the relative were indebted to the farmer in some way. R. Galletti, K. D. S. Baldwin and I. O. Dina, Nigerian Cocoa Farmers (London: published on behalf of the Nigeria Cocoa Marketing Board by Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 207.

[44] Webster, African Churches, p. 110.

[45] Ajayi, pp. 10-11.

well as market activity itself. They sought to:

> Afford essential assistance to the natives by furnishing them with useful information as to the best mode of cultivation, as to the productions which command a steady market and by introducing the most approved agricultural implements and seeds.[46]

In both economics and religion, their aim was to encourage Africans to become self-sufficient. As soon as Africans could be relied upon to manage their affairs in accordance with the general precepts of free trade and Christian ethics, they should be left to do so by themselves.[47] If, in the process, they set a few hymns to African music, no one was likely to object. The early missionaries were practical as well as paternalistic.

Toward the end of the century, however, a new generation entered the African missions, composed of young men who were both idealistic and impractical.[48] Reared on Darwin and the new science of anthropology, they believed that African culture, like the African race, was distinct from and inferior to the European. Development could not be expected to proceed faster than the pace of natural evolution; teaching the African European ways merely invited him to vice, by undermining the traditional restraints of his own culture without altering his fundamental nature. Europeans must not abandon their efforts to civilize Africa, but they must expect to rule the dark continent for a long time. In practice, the missions continued to preach Christianity and commerce, but they stopped giving responsible positions to Africans, educated or not, and began to discourage the establishment of a self-supporting church under African clergy.

---

[46] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[47] One of the major practical applications of these ideas was to matters of church government. Early evangelists, such as T. F. Buxton, Henry Venn and their supporters in the field, sought to develop autonomous and self-financing churches in West Africa. Ibid., pp. 174-78.

[48] The next two paragraphs are based on Ajayi, loc. cit. and Webster, African Churches.

These new ideas and policies were galling to the educated Christians in Lagos and other centers of early missionary activity in Nigeria. In defending Africans' ability to confront Europeans as equals, these Christians developed a new interest in preserving African culture and institutions. They felt that Christian principles were compatible with African art and family life, and set out to prove it by establishing "African Churches" which adhered to European Christian dogma, but were administratively independent of any of the foreign mission societies.

Most of the Agege planters were involved, to some extent, in the African Church movement, and they communicated their ideas to the laborers on their plantations. Some of the larger planters organized church services and schools for their employees. They also sponsored their own missionaries to the interior who, following the doctrines of the older European missionaries, preached the gospel of "coffee, cocoa, cotton and work as well as the Scriptures."[49]

Webster points out that the African Church missionaries not only could recruit labor for the planters whose financial backing made their evangelistic work possible, but found it useful to do so. Traditional Yoruba religion was largely concerned with problems of life in this world and much of its ritual aimed at improving one's earthly lot by placating the spirits which might be causing misfortunes. Yorubas were accustomed to invoke divine aid in achieving such ends as health, fertility and prosperity.[50] For example, one reason which people often

---

[49] West African Mail, Aug. 28, 1903, quoted in Webster, African Churches, p. 114.

[50] E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1962), chap. xiii, and R. C. Mitchell, "Sickness and Healing in the Separatist Churches," paper presented at a conference on Traditional Background to Medical Practice in Nigeria at the University of Ibadan, April, 1966, (mimeographed).

give for having converted to Christianity is that they were able to have children after appealing to the Christian God. A minister of an independent church in Ondo told the following story of how his grandfather, the first Christian in his family, had become a minister. His great grandfather, an Egba named Lijadu, was childless for many years. He tried appealing to many different deities but without success. Finally, someone told him about Christ, so he decided to try praying to Him. He promised that if a child were born, he would "dash" it to Christ. Soon after that his wife gave birth to a child so, in accordance with his promise, Lijadu sent the boy to the Christian missionaries to be raised and educated by them.[51]

Yorubas also look to their deities for aid in achieving material well-being. Rev. Charles Phillips, working in Ondo, wrote in his diary about a Bible society meeting at which a convert pointed out that the offerings they made in church services were a lot cheaper than the ceremonies which he used to perform for Shango or the Ifa oracle.[52] The sight of Christian converts living in health and prosperity was to a Yoruba a convincing argument for the faith, and the ability to offer people ways to increase their income from farming was an asset to any missionary. Webster suggests that itinerant African Church preachers may have offered villagers either new seeds or opportunities to work and learn on the Agege farms, and thus helped materially to spread cocoa-growing into all parts of Yorubaland, in the course of attracting followers to the new churches.[53] Religion may have contributed to the rise of modern agriculture in Western Nigeria not, as in Reformation Europe, by providing moral

---

[51]Interview with Reverend E. A. Lijadu in Ondo.

[52]C. Phillips, Diary, Oct. 8, 1888 (in the Church Missionary Society Yoruba Mission Papers deposited in the Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan). Cited hereinafter as Phillips, Diary.

[53]Webster, N.I.S.E.R. Conference Proceedings (March, 1962), pp. 127-29.

and theological sanctions for economic achievement, but by advocating a better life through changes in two kinds of activities--religious worship and the achievement of prosperity--which were already associated with each other in traditional Yoruba thought.

The experience of the Agege planters raises two questions about the introduction of cocoa-growing to the rest of Western Nigeria. First, as a matter of historical fact, what role did the Agege planters and the African Church agents whom they sponsored actually play in the development of cocoa in the interior? Did farmers in inland communities set out consciously to imitate the Agege planters? Were African Church missionaries and the laborers employed by Coker and others the principal bearers of cocoa to the interior as Webster hypothesizes, or were there other contacts between the planters and the rest of Yorubaland? To what extent was the spread of cocoa-growing to the interior independent of the planters' influence and efforts?

Second, what conclusions can we draw from information on the Agege planters about the factors which influence a producer's decision to innovate? As we have seen, the Agege planters took up cocoa-growing primarily in r sponse to an unfavorable change in their economic circumstances. Their income from trade failed because of changes in world market conditions beyond their control, so they turned to farming--an alternative occupation with which they, and the society in which they lived, had long been familiar. They did not, however, confine themselves to traditional agricultural products and techniques, but experimented with new marketable commodities, concentrating eventually on those which yielded the most income.

However, the planters' decisions both to try out new products and to stick within a general type of occupation which was traditional to

their society, were clearly affected by non-economic as well as economic factors. Long contact with Europeans, either through trade or actual experience abroad, had made them familiar with and receptive to new ideas and ways of living. They had already adopted European goods, manners, religion and education. Their religious training especially had contributed directly to their interest in seeking new sources of prosperity. Much had already occurred, in short, to loosen their ties with traditional Yoruba culture--a kind of change often considered a necessary prerequisite to innovating behavior.

On the other hand, their decision to turn to agriculture, rather than a less traditional occupation such as manufacturing, was economically sensible as well as traditionally acceptable. The necessary means of production--land, labor, and their own knowledge of foreign and domestic markets and of new cash crops--were readily available. Second, agriculture provided one with at least a subsistence income and thus offered a form of economic security. The rains do not fail in Western Nigeria; they may sometimes be sparse enought to affect cocoa yields adversely, but there is never real famine in the country. As one of the farmers whom I interviewed explained, "Farming is the last resort for every human being." Other sources of income may "fade away"--foreign prices may fall, rendering export crops worthless, or tastes and living conditions may change so that, for example, people no longer have use for the products of traditional craftsmen--but the farmer always has something to live on. In the case of the Agege planters, even if the overseas market for cocoa collapsed, as that for palm products seemed to be doing, they could always survive and probably could count on some extra income from the sale of domestic foodstuffs in local markets.

In other words, the Agege planters responded to the pressure of economic misfortunes in a way which was consistent with "rational" economic behavior, but which also depended on social and cultural influences in their background. In the next two chapters I shall examine the extent to which this generalization applied to other Yorubas' decisions to plant cocoa, as well as the direct influence of Agege on the spread of cocoa to the interior.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY PLANTERS

The Agege planters were not typical of late nineteenth century Yoruba farmers. At that time only a few people in Western Nigeria had had a European education or the experience of trading in international markets, in direct competition with European merchants. Even Christianity had not yet found many adherents among the Yorubas, although missionaries had been working there since the 1840's.[1] The Western influences on the lives of the Agege planters had not only affected their knowledge of and attitude towards new ways of doing things, but also made them vulnerable to some kinds of external events, such as a depression in world markets, which had little direct effect on other Yorubas. As we have seen, both personal background and events beyond their control contributed to the planters' decision to experiment with non-traditional agricultural activities in the late nineteenth century.

These observations raise the further question of whether the first cocoa planters in other parts of Western Nigeria were also unusual and, if so, in what way. Had they had different kinds of experiences from the majority of their compatriots; was there anything in their personal backgrounds to suggest that their attitudes toward life differed from those generally accepted in Yoruba society? Alternatively, can we attribute their willingness to innovate to the influence of external circumstances, such as the depression in international markets which forced some Lagos merchants to find a new means of livelihood? In this chapter and the following one, I shall attempt to answer these questions.

---

[1] Webster, African Churches, p. 97.

Although all of the factors which affected people's decisions to plant cocoa probably acted in an interdependent manner, I have separated the discussion into two parts to simplify the task of exposition. In this chapter I shall look at the early planters themselves and ask how their personal experiences and the social conditions prevailing in their respective communities affected their decision to plant cocoa. In Chapter III, I shall examine the importance of economic factors for their decision.

Method

The evidence to be used in this discussion consists of case studies of the historical development of cocoa farming in two of the traditional Yoruba kingdoms or city-states,[2] supplemented by documentary material on long-term developments in cocoa growing in Western Nigeria as a whole. In choosing two city-states for intensive study, my first aim was to select states in which farmers began to plant cocoa at different times. Thus I hoped to be able, by examining differences in the personal backgrounds of the early planters and in their social and economic environments, to see whether certain kinds of influences, which one might expect to encourage innovation, were in fact present in the community which took up cocoa first and not in the other.

In general, cocoa growing began in the western part of Yorubaland and then gradually spread eastward. In the late 1940's, the Department of Agriculture undertook a comprehensive survey of the cocoa farms in Western Nigeria to determine the extent to which Nigerian trees were

---

[2]These states formed economic as well as political units in Yoruba society. Their governments received tribute from their subjects and undertook expenditures--e.g., on defense--for the common good. Laws regulating production and trade, or the ownership and control of land, were usually uniform within the states but varied among them. Hence these states are convenient units of study for our purposes.

infected with swollen shoot disease.[3] The survey attempted nothing less than to collect information on the location, size, age and health of every plot of cocoa in Western Nigeria. Needless to say, it fell short of this grand design; not only did enumerators fail to observe or report many farms, but their failures were greater in some areas than in others. Nevertheless, the resulting collection of data provided the department with a basis for estimating the number of acres planted in each province of Western Nigeria in different years. These estimates, reproduced in Table 2, give at least a general outline of the pattern of planting in different areas at different times, which confirms the generalization that cocoa spread from west to east.

The city-states which I selected for intensive study are Ibadan, in the western half of the cocoa belt, and Ondo, in the eastern part. Among the states in which cocoa-growing developed fairly early, Ibadan is the farthest from Agege and therefore the most likely to afford independent evidence on the process of introducing cocoa to a new area. Among the areas of later development, Ondo is interesting for several reasons. It was historically isolated from both European influence and the affairs of other Yoruba states, so that in comparing it with Ibadan, one can study the effects of different historical developments in a similar cultural framework. Also it is larger than, for example, the Ekiti kingdoms to the north. To cover a significant portion of the cocoa belt in Ekiti Division, one would have to study several small kingdoms with separate histories.

---

[3]The "Swollen Shoot Virus Disease Survey" was touched off by the discovery that swollen shoot had done widespread damage to cocoa farms in Ghana. It turned out that the Nigerian variety of the disease is less virulent than the Ghanaian; it reduces yield but does not kill the trees. Therefore it has not been necessary to cut out infected trees in Nigeria as it was in Ghana. I learned these facts from Mr. H. Toxopeus, a plant breeder at the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. Hereinafter I shall refer to the survey as "SSVD Survey."

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF PROVINCIAL COCOA ACREAGES
OF THE WESTERN REGION BY
YEARS OF PLANTING

Province	Ibadan	Oyo	Abeokuta	Ijebu	Colony	Ondo	Total for Western Provinces	Running Totals
Year Planted	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acreage
1810								
1846			1				1	1
1884								1
1885			5				5	6
1886			1				1	7
1890	17		11				28	35
1894	1		65				66	101
1895	69		11				80	181
1896			1				1	182
1898	8						8	190
1899	2						2	192
1900	163	1	69		33		266	458
1901	1	12	5				18	476
1902	34	3	133				170	646
1903	26	4	6				36	682
1904	195	23	76		100		394	1,076
1905	357	14	117	3	50		541	1,617
1906	253	44	183	4		3	487	2,104
1907	143	10	99		3		255	2,359
1908	629	92	143	2		3	869	3,228
1909	288	53	99		58	10	509	3,737
1910	1,722	491	367	125	96	89	2,890	6,627
1911	366	68	123		6	39	602	7,229
1912	2,129	289	328	8	7	60	2,821	10,050
1913	591	70	457	14	34	7	1,173	11,223
1914	2,439	275	521	43	23	110	3,412	14,635
1915	5,571	1,114	626	139	93	152	7,705	22,340
1916	3,030	848	579	48	7	92	4,608	26,948
1917	1,461	351	1,012	38	9	60	2,932	29,880
1918	7,439	2,426	1,610	89	564	171	12,302	42,182
1919	3,952	1,380	1,012	258		140	6,749	48,931
1920	15,044	8,889	2,098	314	450	1,001	27,813	76,744
1921	1,804	2,691	1,168	172	1	474	6,326	83,070
1922	4,336	3,090	1,035	201	77	302	9,071	92,141
1923	2,218	2,640	1,083	194	13	492	6,689	98,830

TABLE 2--Continued

Province	Ibadan	Oyo	Abeokuta	Ijebu	Colony	Ondo	Total for Western Provinces	Running Totals
Year Planted	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acr.	Acreage
1924	7,685	4,536	1,867	453	176	1,432	16,181	115,011
1925	14,555	7,982	5,412	1,256	340	2,954	32,630	147,041
1926	10,801	7,701	6,690	1,185	162	3,193	29,808	177,449
1927	10,444	6,801	4,629	1,805	78	3,732	27,653	205,102
1928	17,343	11,193	6,644	2,871	97	5,044	43,303	248,405
1929	8,706	7,359	4,761	2,616	43	5,965	29,578	277,983
1930	21,617	15,261	7,749	2,529	454	26,667	74,634	352,617
1931	6,513	3,905	5,401	1,540	33	23,956	41,535	394,152
1932	9,069	5,947	6,625	1,689	56	25,503	49,387	443,539
1933	5,780	3,135	5,639	1,040	68	25,125	41,394	484,933
1934	6,947	4,257	6,017	1,348	64	27,532	47,383	532,316
1935	8,375	3,909	5,752	1,413	228	29,325	50,673	582,989
1936	8,791	5,450	7,025	1,877	155	30,313	55,722	638,711
1937	5,729	3,376	5,836	1,237	81	27,032	45,133	693,844
1938	5,913	4,254	5,349	1,000	74	29,298	48,950	732,794
1939	4,338	4,288	5,080	1,246	95	26,584	43,220	776,014
1940	3,624	4,020	1,716	1,007	117	25,160	36,443	812,457
1941	3,149	2,022	1,358	270	34	22,404	29,510	841,967
1942	1,964	2,047	1,079	316	4	22,871	28,452	870,419
1943	1,282	1,400	958	259	9	21,987	26,047	896,466
1944	1,217	1,109	877	234	39	24,972	28,488	924,954
1945	732	1,438	1,240	249	23	4,707	8,415	933,369
1946	629	1,796	1,226	234	23	4,856	8,779	942,148
1947	642	1,443	1,189	237	23	4,938	8,493	950,641
1948	557	659	1,149	232	23	4,539	7,190	957,831
1949	555	414	1,179	239	24	4,506	6,930	964,761
1950	52	28				4,565	4,645	969,406
1951	32	3,551		4		743	4,330	973,736
1952	364	143	68	27		1,168	1,770	975,506
1953	192	9	1,722	125	5	1,409	3,462	978,968
1954	1	400	1,609	194		4,505	6,709	985,677
1955	25	59	1,341	500	395	1,061	3,381	989,058
1956	45	269	243	140		962	1,659	990,717
1957	513	347	756	148		2,596	4,360	995,077
1958								
1959								
1960								

Notes and Sources:

Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The table is based on data collected in the Swollen Shoot Virus Disease Survey. Totals include cocoa planted in Benin and Warri Provinces, now part of Midwestern Nigeria.

In Ondo, on the other hand, one could both cover a good-sized area and learn the history fairly thoroughly by compiling evidence on a common tradition from a number of written and oral sources.

Most of the information on the identity and background of early planters in Ibadan and Ondo was collected in interviews with planters' descendants and other individuals familiar with cocoa-growing and/or local history. Since one of the main purposes of this study is to trace the historical and geographical pattern of cocoa planting within each city-state, I made no attempt to interview a random sample of today's cocoa farmers. Instead, I began by collecting information, from colonial archives and local agricultural officers,[4] on areas or families in each state who were important in the early development of cocoa growing, and on the spread of cocoa planting from these focal points to other parts of the state. I then interviewed farmers in these focal families or villages about their own histories, and used this information to select further villages and individuals to interview. In making these further selections, I attempted (1) to track down the earliest cocoa planters in each city-state, and (2) to corroborate (or disprove) the importance of various determinants of the rate and pattern of cocoa planting which seemed important in the first interviews.

The Personal Backgrounds of the Early Planters

Christianity and Travel

In both Ibadan and Ondo the development of cocoa growing followed a common pattern. Initially, a few individuals or small groups of farmers

---

[4] Agricultural officers whose main function is extension work in the field are often natives of the areas in which they work. In such cases, they provided useful information on local customs and history, as well as on the technical problems of cocoa cultivation itself.

planted a few cocoa trees in their family compounds in town or on a small plot in their farms. For the next decade, they tended the trees and, after six or seven years, began to reap enough fruit from them to be worth carrying to a town to sell to a trader or agent of a European firm. As the trees proved not only hardy but also productive, more people began to follow the example of the first planters. After the first experimental period (which lasted about ten to fifteen years in both communities), large numbers of people began both to plant cocoa and to move about in search of more and better land to grow it on than was available to them on their family food farms. During the second and third decades of cocoa growing, inhabitants of both communities established many new farming hamlets on forest land which belonged to the city-state in question, but which had not previously been cultivated. In Ibadan, the initial period of experimentation occurred in the 1890's and the first few years of the twentieth century; in Ondo it lasted roughly from 1912 to the early 1920's, with the exception of a few scattered villages (to be discussed below) where cocoa was first planted before 1912.

Cocoa was introduced to Ibadan around 1890. The first trees are said to have been planted between 1888 and 1890; cocoa beans were first sold in 1892 or 1893.[5] Of the farmers whom I interviewed, those in one village said that the first cocoa was planted there "the year the British fought the Ijebus" (1892); others said "after the wars," which would mean after 1893. During the next decade, increasing numbers of people experimented with the new crop, planting a few trees on their already established farms to see if they would grow and if the beans could

---

[5]Chief J. A. Ayorinde, "Historical Notes on the Introduction and Development of the Cocoa Industry in Western Nigeria," Nigerian Agricultural Journal, Vol. 3, No. 1 (April, 1966), p. 19.

really be sold. In a report on conditions of trade in Ibadan for 1900-01, a British official noted that cocoa was still "experimental" but increasingly cultivated "by Farmers."[6] Later, when the commercial value of the crop had been well demonstrated, farmers began to move to unoccupied land and plant cocoa on a significant scale.

When interviewing cocoa farmers, I tried first to establish who had been the first cocoa planter in a given village and then how he had originally acquired or heard about cocoa. Frequently I discovered that several villages had originally got their cocoa from the same source, either directly (villages A and B both got cocoa from Mr. X) or indirectly (village B got cocoa from village A who got it from Mr. X.) Altogether, I interviewed farmers in thirty-one villages around Ibadan and traced their cocoa to nine different sources. Three of these sources were persons who had travelled to Lagos or beyond, and had seen cocoa grown and marketed during their travels. One of the earliest planters, a Mr. Ogunwole, had served with the French army in Porto Novo, and first encountered cocoa there. After being discharged, he returned to Ibadan, bringing 200 cocoa pods which he had bought near Lagos and which he planted at his village just northeast of Ibadan town. His example apparently encouraged other Ibadanites to try the new crop, and he supplied some with seed.[7]

In Onipe village, fifteen miles south of Ibadan, the elders of the community said that cocoa was first planted there by a sailor whose brother had helped found the village around 1892. (See Map II). He decided to retire from his sailing career and join his brother to farm at

---

[6] In Lagos, Annual Report, 1900-01 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1901).

[7] Ayorinde, p. 19. I also heard about Mr. Ogunwole in several different interviews.

Onipe. He brought cocoa seeds with him, which the villagers thought he had acquired during his travels--"perhaps in Sierra Leone or the Gold Coast." Like Ogunwole, he may have originally seen cocoa in another part of West Africa but picked up the seeds near Lagos on his way home.

The founders of Onipe were Christian converts from Ibadan, who were encouraged to develop their agricultural activities by local agents of the Anglican Church Missionary Society. A Yoruba minister in Ibadan noted in his diary on August 31, 1892,

> Went today with the representative Christians of this place to Onipe a place of about six hours' distance from here to secure good lot of land in the bush for farming, being the chief occupation of our men.[8]

One of the founders, S. Orukotan, is credited by Chief Ayorinde with having first introduced cocoa to Ibadan, along with Mr. Ogunwole.[9] Seven of the villages interviewed traced their cocoa to the founder of another Christian village called Eripa. In both Eripa and Onipe, C.M.S. agents helped the founders of the village obtain land in an unoccupied area where they could farm successfully. In the case of Eripa, the missionaries themselves are said to have supplied the farmers with their first cocoa in 1892.

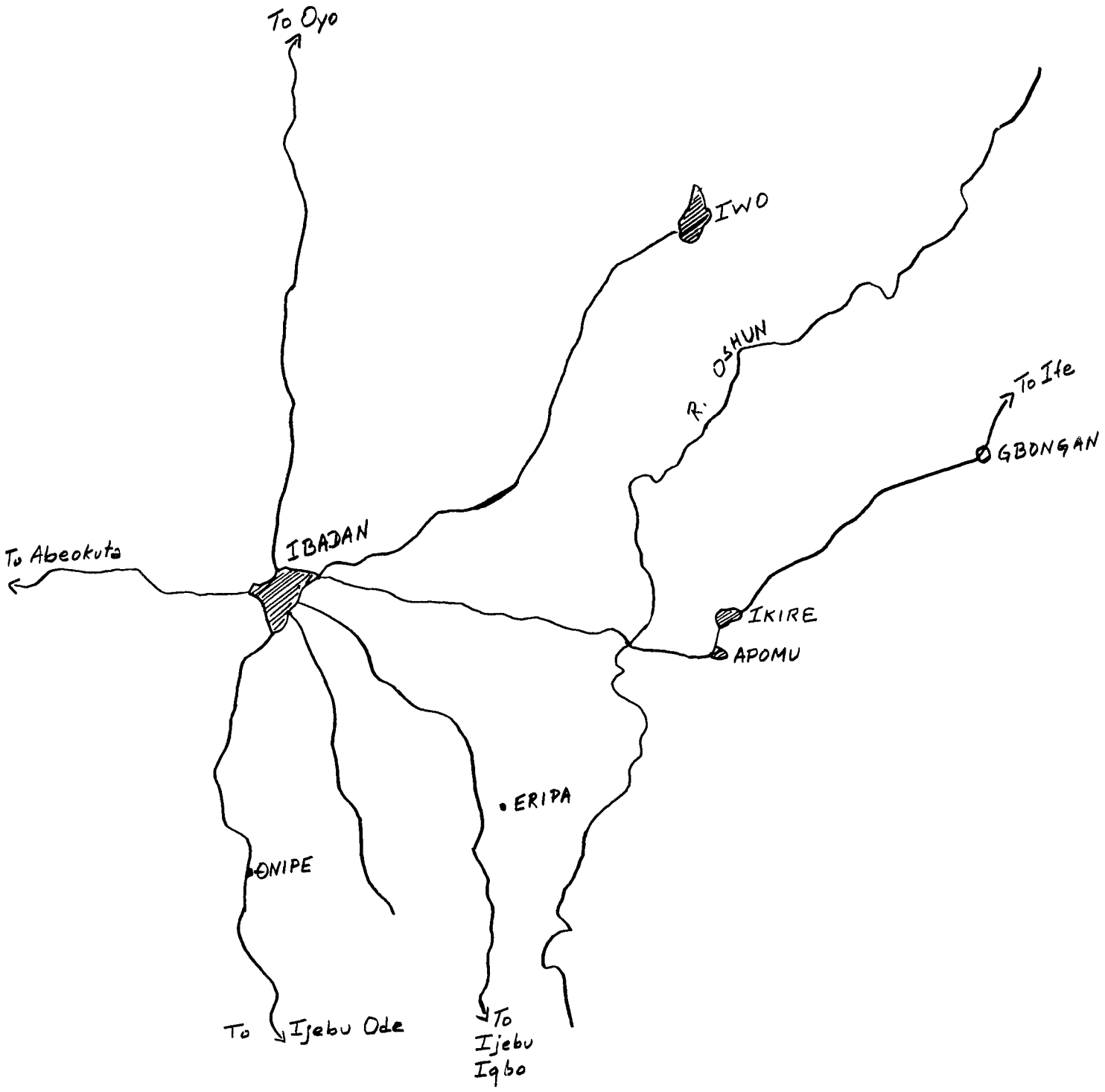
Two large landholding families gave Christians as the original source of their cocoa. One said cocoa was introduced to them by the first Christian convert in their family, F. E. Morakinyo, who had worked for the C.M.S. as a clerk before going into farming around 1902. The other said they learned about cocoa from one of the European ministers of the C.M.S. In both these cases, most of the family's tenants whom I

---

[8] J. Okuseinde, Journal, August 31, 1892 (Church Missionary Society Papers, in Nigerian National Archives).

[9] The evidence which I was able to collect through interviews on S. Orukotan's role in introducing cocoa to various areas around Ibadan was rather confused. Evidently he was an early planter; certainly he was a Christian. Cf. Ayorinde, loc. cit.

MAP II. IBADAN AREA



interviewed said that the first planters in their villages got cocoa from the landlord and thus, indirectly, from the missionaries or their followers.

In other words, in most of the Ibadan villages where I interviewed farmers, the first cocoa planter in the village was, or had originally heard about cocoa from a Christian or someone who had discovered cocoa while travelling outside of Ibadan. The same thing turned out to be true in Ondo. In Ibadan, cocoa was first planted on established farms near the town and later spread out toward the edges of Ibadan territory. In Ondo, the earliest cocoa farms were located on the fringes of the kingdom; later, cocoa planting spread toward the farms near Ondo town. This pattern did not develop for want of cocoa seeds in Ondo town itself. Charles Phillips, a Yoruba clergyman who became an Anglican bishop, introduced Christianity to Ondo in the 1870's. He is also thought to have brought the first cocoa there in the early 1890's.[10]

Although his own diaries do not record this event, they show clearly his interest in improving the material as well as the spiritual lot of his people, especially through new agricultural products. He grew rice on his own land in the 1880's to save the expense of importing it from Lagos or Abeokuta.[11] In January, 1895, he urged Christian converts in an Ondo village "to take up farm work and manufacture of palm oil and planting cocoa and coffee."[12] The following year he "planted some coffee" on his farm and, two years later, the elders of the Ondo church voted "to secure . . . a coffee and cocoa plantation for the church's future support."[13]

---

[10]Interview with Bishop Charles Phillips' son, the Rt. Rev. S. C. Phillips; also Ayorinde, loc. cit.

[11]Ibid.; also Phillips, Diary, July 18, 1888.

[12]Phillips, Diary, Jan. 2, 1898.

[13]E. M. Lijadu, Diary, Apr. 10, 1898.

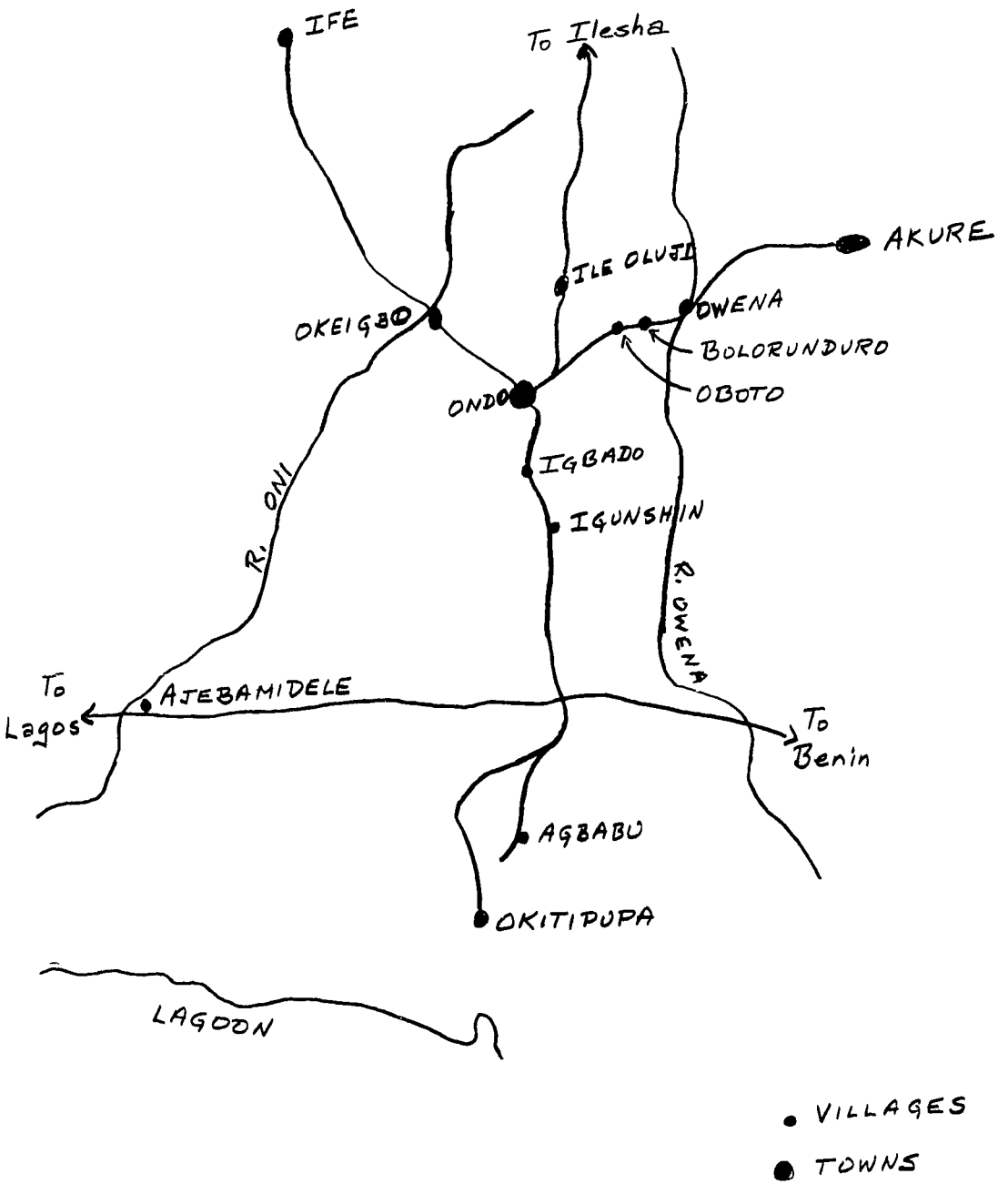
Phillips also actively supported a group of Ondos[14] who, in the late 1890's, established a village south of Ondo on the way to Lagos, where they could farm, trade and experiment with cash crops such as coffee, cocoa and kola. (See Map III). The settlers in this case were Ondos who had lived for some time in Lagos, engaged in various forms of trade. After the wars, they wanted to do something to improve their homeland, "as many Egbas were doing for theirs," so they applied to the king of Ondo for a grant of land where they could combine growing cash crops with trade. The principal village in their settlement was called Ajebamidele, which means "I return home, bringing prosperity." Although the first settlers were not Christian, Phillips became interested in the project and encouraged Christians to settle there. In 1899, he persuaded his brother, a retired schoolteacher from Lagos, to set up a farm there; in 1902, he helped the settlers negotiate long-term rights to the land.

In addition to Ajebamidele, another Ondo border town called Okeigbo was the site of some early cocoa planting. Just before the turn of the century, a hunter from Okeigbo, named Kolajo, encountered cocoa on a farm near Ilesha. He subsequently reported his find to Bishop Phillips who is supposed to have said that if Kolajo planted cocoa, "he and his children would never suffer." Kolajo accordingly obtained a few pods from his friend at Ilesha and planted them in his compound at Okeigbo. Meanwhile, several of the newly converted Christians of Okeigbo left the

---

[14] Phillips, Diary, May 28, Oct. 9 and 12, 1899, and his "Memorandum on General Political Affairs" (C.M.S. Yoruba Mission Papers, Nigerian National Archives); Lijadu, Diary, Nov. 2, 1899. I had interviews with descendants of some of the founders of Ajebamidele. One man showed me family documents concerning the history of the village and the settlers' rights to land there. Information in this paragraph is based on these sources. Cf., Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 132.

MAP III. ONDO AREA



SOURCE: LLOYD, YORUBA LAND LAW, p. 101.

village in search of employment and "enlightenment." They originally sought jobs as laborers on road construction projects around Lagos, but while there they discovered the Agege plantations. Oral tradition does not record whether the Agege planters offered higher wages than the Government or whether working conditions there were more congenial. In any case, the Okeigbo Christians went to work on the Agege farms, where they had ample opportunity to observe the cultivation of new cash crops and the prosperity which accrued to the cultivators. Eventually they returned to Okeigbo and began their own cocoa farms. Others followed them to Agege and returned to become cocoa farmers themselves. By about 1909, Okeigbo farmers had accepted the new crop and many began to plant it.

In the other Ondo villages where I interviewed farmers, no one mentioned Agege explicitly as a source of their early information about cocoa. However, in five of fifteen villages the "first planter" obtained his cocoa either directly from Okeigbo or from a village which had got their cocoa from Okeigbo. Further evidence of the influence of Agege on cocoa planting in Ondo came from an interview with Bishop Phillips' eldest surviving son, who can remember events of the 1890's. He said that, although his father tried to tell people to grow cocoa, "they refused to listen to his advice," and remained unconvinced of the merits of the new crop until migrants began to return from Agege with eye-witness accounts of the profitability of cocoa-growing. This, he maintained, happened "ten to twenty years" after Bishop Phillips first brought cocoa to Ondo.

Christians also took the lead in planting or spreading knowledge about cocoa in the rest of Ondo,[15] although they did not begin to do so until the second decade of the twentieth century. One of the first Ondo men to plant cocoa on a large scale was Daniel Fadashe, who is mentioned in Phillips' Diary as early as 1888, when he was made an elder of the Ondo church.[16] In 1898, he voted in favor of establishing a coffee and cocoa farm to raise money for the church. He did not, however, commit his own resources to these new cash crops until 1912, when he began to grow cocoa near what is now Igunshin village south of Ode Ondo. (See Map III.)

Another man, whom people frequently mentioned as having told their fathers about cocoa or given them their first cocoa seeds, was a Christian Ondo chief, Yegbata Okelola. His background is obscure--some informants said he was a slave trader, others that he had originally been a slave himself--but by the turn of the century he was apparently a prosperous citizen of Ondo, although he had not been born there. He is said to have accompanied Reverend Lijadu to Abeokuta around 1900, to visit the Christian missions there, and to have seen prosperous cocoa farms on his journey. Although he never became a cocoa farmer himself, he planted a few trees in his compound in Ondo and encouraged others to take up the crop for profit.

---

[15]And in other Yoruba states. See the report of a British official's tour through the cocoa-growing areas of Egbaland, in Lagos, Annual Report, 1901-02. A. G. Hopkins found that Christian traders had helped to introduce cocoa to the Ijebu and Ilesha areas. Chief Ayorinde mentions a Christian farmer named Gureje Thompson as the first cocoa planter in Ilesha, and I also encountered references to him as an early planter, in the course of my interviews. It was Gureje Thompson from whom Kolajo of Okeigbo got his first seeds. He had travelled to Lagos and Abeokuta during the wars. Ayorinde, loc. cit.; Johnson, pp. 459, 496, 534-35.

[16]Phillips, Diary, Feb. 17, 1888.

In short, out of nineteen "first planters" investigated in Ondo, fourteen had either travelled outside Ondo or heard about cocoa from someone who had. Eight were encouraged to plant cocoa by Christians and eleven (or 58 per cent of those studied) were themselves Christian, in contrast to Ibadan where the influence of the Christian community has been relatively greater than its numbers, and where only nine (29 per cent) of the first planters studied were actually Christian themselves.

Why should people who had had experience with Christianity or with travel outside their native community have played an important role in introducing cocoa to farmers in the interior of Yorubaland?[17] In the case of Christianity, part of the answer seems to be that certain individuals accept new ideas about how to solve their problems more readily than others. As we pointed out in Chapter I, Yorubas tend to view religious worship as a means to improve one's lot in life, measured in terms of both spiritual and material comfort or blessings.[18] We have seen how Yoruba agents both of the C.M.S. and of the African church sought to make use of this fact in their work: by encouraging their converts to adopt

---

[17]Some of the earliest cocoa planters in Ghana had backgrounds similar to those of the early planters in Ibadan and Ondo. In discussing the Akwapim, who were the pioneers of the Ghanaian cocoa industry, Polly Hill points out that,

> Many Akwapim men already had highly expansible sets of wants, being aware, through education, travel, and contacts with others, of conditions in other parts of the world. Apart from the Akwapim traders and craftsmen . . . , many of whom had originally (themselves or their forebears) been trained by the Basel Mission, there were labourers and carriers, many of whom sought jobs in connexion with the Ashanti wars, on the building from 1898 of the Sekondi railway, or the expanding coastal towns. Ministers of religion, catechists, teachers and prominent Christians generally, were among the most sensitive to the possibilities of the new crops . . . .

Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1963), pp. 168-69.

[18]See chap. i, pp. 36-37 above.

agricultural improvements or learn new skills, they sought to convince believer and unbeliever alike that Christianity brought material as well as spiritual advantages. Christian converts were people, in other words, who had already sought answers to practical problems in new ideas (viz., Christian doctrine and ritual). Hence it is perhaps not surprising that they proved more willing than most to try other novelties which also promised to help improve their condition in life, in this case by increasing their income.

Travel beyond the borders of their native state had, I think a somewhat different and more direct effect on individuals' decisions to plant cocoa. In most cases, the travellers who later became cocoa farmers had in the course of their journeys seen cocoa being cultivated, and probably either witnessed it being sold at a market or European store, or had a chance to observe that the individuals who grew cocoa for sale benefitted by it materially. For these people, it was the opportunity to observe at first hand that cocoa brought cash returns which appears to have convinced them to try it themselves. We shall discuss this point further in considering the Agege planters' influence on the spread of cocoa to the interior.[19]

Occupation, Education and Social Status

The importance of Christianity and foreign travel for individuals' decisions to plant cocoa is emphasized by the fact that, in other respects, early cocoa planters did not have much in common. In addition to collecting information on each early planter's religious background and travels, I also inquired about their occupation, education and social position. My findings are summarized in Table 3.

---

[19] See pp. 73-74 below.

Some of the differences indicated in the table reflect, rather than explain, the fact that cocoa-growing got off to a later start in Ondo than in Ibadan. This is especially true of the occupational experiences of the early planters. We have separated those occupations, such as farming, hunting and traditional crafts, which existed before Nigeria was made a British protectorate, from those which developed afterwards in response to the government's demand for certain services (e.g., clerks or contractors who provided labor for public construction) or to demands arising from expanded foreign trade (e.g., tailors who used sewing machines and imported cloth, and who catered to a growing demand for European-style garments). As Table 3 shows, six of nineteen "first planters" in Ondo had had some experience with a non-traditional occupation before they planted cocoa. In Ibadan, this was true of only three out of thirty-one "first planters."

The difference in education is even more striking; only two first planters in Ibadan could read and write, whereas five of the Ondos were literate and four others had learned to read the Bible in the vernacular. One would expect to find just the opposite, namely that it was the educated farmers who planted cocoa first. The fact that in Ondo we find a relatively large number of educated early planters suggests that education had little to do with farmers' willingness to adopt cocoa. The higher incidence of education in Ondo probably reflects the fact that Christianity was more widely accepted there than it was in Ibadan. Webster suggests that this occurred because the missionary efforts of the African clergymen and C.M.S. agents in the eastern parts of Yorubaland were more effective than those of European missionaries in the western areas. By 1921, for example, there were 44,000 Christian adherents in Ondo district compared to 24,000 in Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomosho combined.[20]

---

[20]Webster, African Churches, pp. 97-98.

TABLE 3

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF "FIRST PLANTERS" IN IBADAN AND ONDO

	Ibadan		Ondo	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
I. Previous Occupation				
A. Traditional				
Farmer	24	77%	10	53%
Hunter	7		1	
Warrior	4		..	
Drummer	1		..	
Blacksmith	1	61%	..	58%
Weaver	2		..	
Trader	3		10	
Other	1		..	
B. Colonial				
Soldier	..		1	
Sailor	1		..	
Clerk	1		1	
Servant in European Household	1	10%	..	32%
Tailor	..		1	
Contractor	..		2	
Laborer	..		1	
II. Education				
None	27	94%	9	47%
Spoke English	2		..	
Literate but no School	1	3%	2	32%
Read Bible in Yoruba	..		4	
Less than Fours Years School	..	3%	..	16%
Four Years School or More	1		3	
Unknown	..		1	5%
III. Titles				
None	26	84%	11	58%
One or More	5	16%	8	42%
Total Number of "First Planters" Investigated	31		19	

Notes: "First planter" means the first man to have planted cocoa in a particular village. The total number of previous occupations exceeds the number of "first planters" investigated because many had engaged in more than one occupation prior to planting cocoa.

The information in Table 3 on the number of first planters who held titles is a bit more difficult to interpret. Generally speaking, a title is a mark of prestige in Yoruba communities. Title holders usually have some kind of public influence or function to perform, ranging from responsibility for affairs in their own households to the position of close advisor to the king. Although families who have held titles in the past are sometimes considered particularly eligible to hold them again, very few titles in either Ibadan or Ondo are heriditary. Generally, to take a title, one must command a following in the town or have earned the respect of the community for his abilities; he must also be able to afford the fees, gifts and ceremonies attached to the title, which have increased over time with expanding production, trade, and incomes.[21]

It does not follow, however, that a higher proportion of the early planters came from the governing classes in Ondo than in Ibadan. Titles in Ibadan were created as individuals or households rose to sufficient prominence to warrant inclusion in the governing council of chiefs. Johnson lists twenty-three titles in describing the Ibadan Town Council in 1893.[22] In 1937, the District Officer counted fifty-two titles and forty mogajis--heads of families who are eligible to succeed to vacant titles.[23] In Ondo, on the other hand, the titles are older and more numerous. P. C. Lloyd estimates that "in the past there probably numbered

---

[21]Johnson, especially pp. 75-78, 132-34; Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, pp. 41-3, 105-10, 281-82; N. A. Fadipe, Sociology of the Yoruba (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of London, 1939); E. N. C. Dickenson, "Intelligence Report on Ibadan Town," Nov. 20, 1937 (in Nigerian National Archives, IBAPROF 3/4); A. F. B. Bridges, "Intelligence Report, Ondo District, Ondo Division, Ondo Province," 1935 (in Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/30172). I had a helpful conversation on the structure and significance of titles in Ondo with the Rt. Rev. T. O. Olufasoye, Bishop of the Gambia.

[22]Johnson, p. 637

[23]Dickenson, passim.

a thousand titled chiefs in Ondo--that is, almost every adult man must have been titled!"[24] The evidence presented in Table 3 is therefore consistent with the notion that early cocoa farmers were not necessarily traditional leaders of society. Even though the proportion of first planters who held titles was greater in Ondo, we cannot conclude that Ondo was significantly different from Ibadan in this respect.

Our study of the personal backgrounds and experiences of early cocoa planters in Ibadan and Ondo indicates that farmers in a "traditional" economy[25] may adopt an innovation even without benefit of much education. The first farmers to experiment with cocoa in different communities had not necessarily had either general schooling nor the knowledge that one might acquire by having engaged in a non-traditional occupation. In fact, farmers in Ibadan responded more quickly to the opportunity to increase their incomes by growing cocoa than did those in Ondo, although few of the Ibadans had had any education or unconventional working experience. The fact that many early planters in Ondo could read or had worked at a "European" trade before they planted cocoa is basically a reflection of the fact that cocoa growing developed later in Ondo, after these other activities had been introduced there, and not an explanation of the Ondos' decision to experiment with a new crop.

It is difficult to make any generalizations about the social position of the early planters. Certainly many of them were not traditional social leaders; on the other hand, there is really no evidence that most of them came from the middle classes of Yoruba society, since we don't know how many had been slaves. I did find, however, that many early

---

[24] Lloyd, p. 106.

[25] I speak of a "traditional" economy in the sense that Schultz speaks of "traditional agriculture." It is an economy in which people produce the same goods by the same methods as their ancestors did.

planters in both Ibadan and Ondo were Christian converts or had been strongly influenced by Christians in their decision to plant cocoa. This fact lends support to the notion that some kinds of people are more receptive to innovations than are others. However, insofar as Ondo Christians responded to the possibility of growing cocoa more slowly than did Ibadan Christians, we must conclude that personal attitudes or experiences are not the only factors which affect people's decisions to adopt an innovation.

External Influences on the Early Planters

External influences can also be important. Although the particular date on which the first man planted the first cocoa seeds in Ibadan soil may have been fortuitous, the fact that a number of people began to experiment with it seriously after 1893 was not. As we noted in Chapter I, the peace treaties of 1893 not only heralded the beginnings of British rule outside Lagos, but in effect released supplies of land and labor for economically productive activity. Yoruba men, freed from their military responsibilities, engaged in various occupations. Some worked as carriers for the British troops engaged in pacifying Northern Nigeria; their previous military experience may have enhanced their usefulness to the British soldiers, as well as their own enthusiasm for the job.[26] Others found employment on the Lagos railway, which reached Ibadan in 1901, or even migrated to the Gold Coast to work on the railway there: ". . . the British administration levied a head tax on laborers sent for service outside the colony and protectorate [of Nigeria]--which produced the surprisingly large sum of £4,222 in 1902, when Yoruba were engaged for work on

[26] Newbury, p. 144; Johnson, p. 644.

the Gold Coast railway."[27] In 1903, the Bale and chiefs of Ibadan informed the Resident that as many as 1000 young men had left Ibadan "without authority . . . to proceed to the Coast to better themselves."[28]

Another source of income was provided by the rubber trade. In the 1890's, the world price of rubber rose from around two shillings eight pence per pound to over four shillings.[29] European traders on the Nigerian coast became interested in developing the rubber trade and passed on enough of the price increase to generate a rush to the forests. Between 1894 and 1895, the quantity of rubber exported from Lagos jumped from 5,000 to 5,000,000 pounds.[30] In his Outlines of Ibadan History, Sir I. B. Akinyele wrote that, in the period 1897-1902, the "trade in rubber was introduced into the town, by which the town became wealthier . . . ."[31] In Ondo, the boom began in 1894 and lasted for the rest of the decade.[32] After 1900, however, exports began to decline as people exhausted the source of untapped trees in their area or the government took steps to restrict tapping in the interests of conservation.[33]

Finally, the ex-warriors of Ibadan could always fall back on agriculture, as Samuel Johnson pointed out.[34] In 1913, an Ibadan chief

---

[27]Newbury, p. 169.

[28]Resident, Ibadan, to Chief Secretary, Lagos, April 4, 1903, "Resident's Letter Book, 1901-03" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

[29]William Woodruff, The Rise of the British Rubber Industry During the Nineteenth Century (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958).

[30]See Table 1.

[31]Sir Isaac B. Akinyele, Outlines of Ibadan History (Lagos: Alebisu Printing Press, 1946), p. 75.

[32]Phillips, Diary, March 30, 1898; E. M. Lijadu, Diary, February, 1898.

[33]Newbury, p. 149; Ibadan City Council Minutes, November 5, 1904 (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

[34]See above, chap. i, p. 24.

who had been sent to London by the government to give evidence to the West African Lands Committee, emphasized the importance of agriculture to the Ibadans after the wars.

> Since they have relinquished war there is nothing remaining for them but their rural lands, agricultural lands, to live upon, and anything that would disturb . . . the ownership of their lands the Ibadan people are against.[35]

Not only was farming an occupation which ex-soldiers could fall back on after 1893, but also there were families in Ibadan who were particularly interested in encouraging people to return to farming. During the wars, traditional claims to land in the vicinity of Ibadan were completely upset. The warriors and refugees who congregated at Ibadan after 1830 were nearly all strangers to the area, and simply took land where they could get it.[36] According to the Bale (head chief) of Ibadan, in 1913:

> Our fathers brought us here. We were fighting . . . and /we/ drove away the people and took their land, and each man now holds his father's land. Each company or head man selected his own farms, lands, and put his followers on the land.[37]

Some squatted on unoccupied land; others conquered existing towns and villages and lived off them.[38] Among the farmers I interviewed, those whose ancestors acquired land before 1890 usually said that they had taken it "from no one during the wars."

---

[35] West African Lands Committee, Minutes of Evidence (Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, 1916), Q 13215. Cited hereinafter as W.A.L.C., Minutes.

[36] For descriptions of the founding of Ibadan, around 1830, see Johnson, pp. 244-46; Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, pp. 51-53; E. N. C. Dickenson, loc. cit.

[37] West African Lands Committee, Papers and Correspondence (Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, 1916), p. 201. Cited hereinafter as W.A.L.C., Papers.

[38] B. Awe, "The Ajele System: A Study of Ibadan Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, III, 1 (December, 1964).

Because these invaders had come from the north, they mostly conquered settlements and acquired land to the north of the town, leaving the dense forests in the south to the hunters who supplied the town with meat. After about 1860, the Ijebus, who lived on the northern edge of the coastal swamps and lagoons and supported themselves by trading, allied themselves with other Yoruba states fighting Ibadan. In times of war, they closed the trade routes through their territory, and harrassed Ibadan from the south.[39] With the bulk of the Ibadan army engaged in the north and east, responsibility for the defense of Ibadan's southern territory fell mostly on the hunters. They not only defended the area against Ijebu raiders, but also acted as guides to Ibadans and strangers seeking to pass through it. Both their intimate knowledge of the terrain and their efforts to protect it strengthened their subsequent claims to control the area.[40]

After 1893, people in search of additional farmland were not only welcomed but actually sought out by hunters anxious to turn themselves into landlords. When asked how their forebears originally acquired land in this area, many of the farmers interviewed said they were invited by the landlord who would be glad of their company in the village and could promise them good land for farming. Later, as people discovered that much of the land which the hunters controlled was good for growing cocoa, they began to ask for plots there. In 1904, the British Resident at Ibadan informed the chiefs that one landholding family had thirty-two

---

[39] Johnson, pp. 337-38.

[40] See, for example, Ibadan District Church Council Farm at Eripa, "Copy of Judgment Delivered by His Honor William Nicoll, Chief Justice of Supreme Court of the Colony of Lagos on Monday the 10th Day of March 1906" (pamphlet). Hereinafter cited as "Copy of Judgment."

settlements on their land.[41] "During the next twelve years the forest south of the Alagutan stream was cleared by cutting and burning until a large portion of it became farmland."[42] In 1917, a British official found "hundreds of farmers" in the area.[43] Later, when another District Officer asked a number of "tenant" farmers their reason for moving to this area: "They invariably replied that they had sought for and obtained land here not because they were unable to obtain land elsewhere but because they could not grow cocoa elsewhere."[44] (His underlining).

In return for "showing" the settler land, the landlord received a small present (usually a bottle or two of gin) and some sort of annual tribute. At first the rewards to the landlord were social as much as economic. The tribute consisted of a nominal amount of cash or produce or occasional service on the landlord's own farm, and served more as a token of the landlord's prior claim to the land than as rent.[45] Having claims to land and the loyalty of many followers was in turn an important source of prestige in Ibadan society. The landowning families disputed vigorously with each other over the right to allocate farms and collect tribute in various areas, and British administrators in Ibadan spent a good deal of time investigating rival claims and trying to settle

---

[41] Resident's Statement to the Ibadan Council, Nov. 23, 1904, quoted in a report by the District Officer of Ibadan to the Resident of Oyo Province in 1916 (in Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 3/1181, Vol. 1).

[42] Report by the District Officer, Ibadan, September 3, 1929 (in Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 3/1181, Vol. 1).

[43] Report by the District Officer, Ibadan, April 14, 1917 (in Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 3/1181, Vol. 1).

[44] Memorandum by the Assistant District Officer, Ibadan, October 14, 1930 (in Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 3/1181, Vol. 1).

[45] See chap. iii, pp. 98-99.

disputes. The diary of Chief J. A. Obisesan, whose family controlled the largest holding in the area, is filled with references to land disputes on which he obviously felt the family's reputation and position in Ibadan society depended. In 1933, he complained that the decision in one of his family's disputes deprived both landlords not only of their "ownership right" over the land but also of their "authority in the usual way over the farmers."[46]

In fact, the leaders of Ibadan society did not perceive the advantages of being a landlord until after cocoa had become the economic mainstay of the area. Thus, at the turn of the century, the Ibadan chiefs, who had won their power through military prowess and captured wealth, and whose prestige in Ibadan society was assured, felt no need to compete with the hunters or challenge their claims to land. As late as 1913, the Bale of Ibadan assured a British official that there was no reason for landowners to consult the Bale and chiefs before giving out portions of their land. "As this had not been so in the past we beg you would kindly not press it."[47] Only later, when the southern forests had turned out to contain most of the best cocoa land in Ibadan, did the chiefs protest that all Ibadan land belonged to the people, "by right of conquest," and its revenues should go to the representatives of the whole community. Compare the letter just quoted to the outrage of the Bale and three other chiefs, expressed in a letter to the Resident of the Province, October 26, 1936: "Worst of all hundreds of the descendants of these warriors are now tenants to Aperin family horrible, who would dare attempt such

---

[46]Chief J. Akinpelu Obisesan, Diary, July 25, 1937 (deposited in the University of Ibadan Library). Hereinafter cited as Obisesan, Diary.

[47]The Bale of Ibadan to the Resident, Ibadan, November 10, 1915, "Bale's Letter Book, 1915-17" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

awful and cruel usurpation when we were not under the British protection, the family would be blown off in an hour . . ."[48]

Nevertheless, the main argument which the landlords used to attract settlers in the early days was that they could offer good farmland. It was to the landlords' interest to encourage expanded agricultural activity and this fact, combined with the existence after 1893 of a large group of ex-warriors in search of new occupations, created a situation in which one might expect people to be receptive to agricultural innovations.

In Ondo, on the other hand, the nineteenth century history of the kingdom, and therefore the social and economic pressures at work in the 1890's, were different from those in Ibadan. For one thing, Ondo was geographically more isolated than Ibadan, so that outside influences were slower to reach Ondo. Missionaries first entered Ibadan in 1851, Ondo in 1873. By 1901, the Lagos railway reached Ibadan, bringing European merchants with imported goods to sell or exchange for produce. African traders from Lagos had already moved into Ibadan in anticipation of the railway. In 1900, some 400 "strangers" from Lagos and Egba and Ijebu country had settled in Ibadan to take advantage of the new opportunities for trade.[49]

Ondo never had a railway. When the government did finally build a motor road to provide mechanized transport for Ondo produce, they linked it up to the railway at Oshogbo, seventy miles northwest of Ondo, in an attempt to bolster the Railway Department's sagging finances.

---

[48]Judicial Council of Ibadan to Senior Resident, Oyo, Oct. 26, 1936 (in Nigerian National Archives, IBAPROF 3/0718). Similar sentiments are expressed in Akinyele, loc. cit.

[49]Lagos, Annual Report, 1900-01.

The resulting reduction in transportation costs was not even enough to tempt the European firms, who waited to move into Ondo until 1927, when a direct route to Lagos was finally opened through the port of Agbabu. Finally, although British officialdom reached Ibadan, Ondo, and other interior towns at about the same time, British rule in Ondo was much more casual than it was in places near Lagos or along the railway. Until 1915, Ondo was administered by a Travelling or District Commissioner who came through periodically to see that the roads were being kept clear and to settle any disputes that people chose to submit to him. When Ondo Province was constituted, in 1915, the Ondo chiefs refused to grant or lease town land on which to build provincial headquarters.[50] The British did not even bother to argue, but chose the much smaller town of Akure which welcomed the new source of income and prestige.

On the other hand, Ondo was not entirely isolated from the economic developments of the nineteenth century. Like other Yorubas, Ondos had dealt in the slave trade and were forced by abolition to develop alternative exports. When Ibadan's supply routes through Egba and Ijebu territory were closed during periods of active warfare, Ibadan traders took the roundabout route through Ife and Ondo.[51] In its early attempts to negotiate peace in the interior, the Lagos government sent emissaries by the same route. After 1893, traders and immigrants flocked to Ondo to take advantage of the large concentration of population already there. A contemporary observer blamed rising food prices on the influx of traders in 1893; in subsequent years, the "rubber trade turned the

---

[50] Conversations with agricultural officers and residents of Ondo. Also Resident's Annual Report, 1921 (in Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/03996).

[51] Johnson, p. 452.

attention of farmers from the soil to itself" and food continued to be scarce.[52] In short, the Ondos were familiar with long-distance trade, and responsive to opportunities to increase their earnings by producing new goods for export. It is a bit surprising, therefore, that they were so much slower than other Yorubas to experiment with the possibility of cocoa as a cash crop, even if widespread production had to await the development of adequate transportation facilities.

The Pax Britannica brought an influx of traders to Ondo, but it did not immediately disrupt the occupations of the townspeople themselves as it did in Ibadan. Ondo was never really involved in the nineteenth century Yoruba wars. During an internal conflict which occurred sometime in the middle of the century, the victorious party drove out their opponents only with the aid of soldiers from another town. When the latter returned to their own affairs, the rebels were unable to maintain control of the town and the exiles returned with the assistance of a British officer who was exploring the area.[53] Ondo never maintained a regular army.

Consequently, there was no substantial group of men in Ondo, accustomed to wealth and its accompanying prestige, who suddenly found themselves without an occupation in 1893. People continued their traditional occupations and may even have made a little more money doing so, as the volume of trade picked up. Contemporaries' comments on "the neglect of agriculture since the rubber industry was introduced"[54]

---

[52]Lijadu, Diary, February, 1898.

[53]Various versions of these events are recorded in A. F. B. Bridges, "Intelligence Report on Ondo"; S. O. Bada, Iwe Itan Ondo (Ondo: Igbehin Adun Press, 1940); Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 100. I heard others in the course of my interviews.

[54]Phillips, Diary, Mar. 30, 1898.

suggest that the profits to be gained by gathering rubber were greater than those people were accustomed to earn by, say, making palm oil or growing foodstuffs to sell in the market. Certainly Ondos had little incentive to devote resources to an untried crop which would yield no appreciable return for seven years, at a time when unexpectedly large gains could be had immediately from trees already standing in the forests.

Also, there was no group in Ondo comparable to the Ibadan landlords, who were anxious to improve their economic and social position by attracting settlers to their land. In Ondo all land in the state traditionally belonged to the king, as representative of the Ondo people.[55] Any Ondo could use any piece of Ondo land; he needed only the nominal permission of the king. A chief or village head might, as a matter of convenience, "show" people farms in a particular area, but he had no right to collect rent or tribute from the farmers. The king received annual tribute from all his subjects, but neither the amount paid nor the obligation to pay it had any relation to the subject's use of land. This system had existed for centuries in Ondo and the mild civil struggles of the mid-nineteenth century did nothing to disrupt it. Neither hunters nor anyone else could become landlords because they had no claim to land they did not work themselves. Hence there was no one who had a vested interest in encouraging people to settle and establish farms or plantations on the uncultivated land in Ondo.

In fact, many Ondos thought of trade or employment outside their own town or village rather than of farming as the chief means of acquiring wealth. When asked why they or their forebears had decided to go into

---

[55] See below, chap. iii, pp. 100-101.

farming, informants in Ibadan answered simply "to feed the children" or "to live," looking painfully surprised at the stupidity of the question. In Ondo, on the other hand, men frequently stated that they took up farming when they became too old to carry on a more active profession. Out of fifty-six men who were the first in their own families to plant cocoa, twenty-six had not been engaged in farming before they began to grow cocoa. Eight of these specifically mentioned a desire to retire from more active pursuits as their reason for turning to agriculture.

The end of the wars opened the roads not only to traders from other parts of Nigeria, but also to Ondos who wished to migrate in search of work. In 1902, the Ondo evangelist, E. M. Lijadu, went to the port town of Siluko, "attracted hither by our Ondo converts who are recently migrating by twos and threes into this district in search of work!"[56] He notes that most of the Ondos there worked on timber concessions controlled by European firms. Other Ondo emigrants pursued a variety of occupations. Some traded in local produce, imported goods, or both. Others became artisans, practicing new kinds of crafts introduced by Europeans, or contractors, who recruited and supervised gangs of laborers for public works or timber cutting. Table 4, showing previous occupations for first planters in their own families, indicates even more strikingly than Table 3 the extent to which Ondos had (and Ibadans had not) engaged in non-traditional occupations before planting cocoa. Fifty per cent of the Ondos studied had had some such experience compared to only seven per cent of the Ibadans. It was the emigrants who, returning to Ondo after a period of employment in Agege and other parts of Nigeria, touched off the first serious cultivation of cocoa there.

---

[56] Lijadu, Diary, Nov. 20-26, 1902.

TABLE 4

PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS OF THE FIRST COCOA PLANTER IN EACH FAMILY INTERVIEWED

	Ibadan		Ondo	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
I. Traditional				
Farmer	60	80%	30	56%
Hunter	12		1	
Warrior	10		..	
Drummer	3		..	
Blacksmith	2	47%	..	35%
Weaver	2		1	
Trader	4		17	
Other	2		..	
II. Colonial				
Soldier	1		1	
Sailor	1		..	
Clerk	1		4	
Agent for European Firm	..		2	
Servant in European Household	1	7%	..	48%
Tailor	..		5	
Carpenter	..		4	
Sawyer	..		1	
Rubber Tapper	..		1	
Contractor	..		2	
Timber Contractor	..		2	
Policeman	1		1	
Laborer	..		5	
Total Number of "First Family Planters" Investigated	75		54	

Conclusions

The fact that the Agege plantations directly influenced cocoa growing in Ondo but not in Ibadan is as much a symptom as an explanation of the fact that cocoa was cultivated earlier in Ibadan. We have seen that the earliest planters in both communities had certain experiences in common, which apparently affected their willingness to experiment with cocoa. Many of them were either practicing Christians or had been influenced in their decision to plant cocoa by Christian missionaries or converts. Their interest in Christianity seems to have been associated with a general willingness to experiment with new means of achieving such goals as wealth and influence. Also, a number of the early planters in both Ibadan and Ondo had previously travelled outside their native communities and, in the process, had observed the benefits to be obtained by growing cocoa. In other respects, such as occupational experience, education and social status, the early planters in Ibadan were often unlike those of Ondo, but there is no reason to believe that these differences explain why one group adopted cocoa more quickly than the other.

The answer to the question why cocoa was developed earlier in Ibadan than in Ondo lies, at least partly, in the different circumstances surrounding the two groups of early planters. Partly because of social and economic changes brought about by the civil wars and partly because of its location, there were several groups in Ibadan--ex-warriors, landlords and traders--who were actively seeking new opportunities to increase their income at the time cocoa was introduced to the area. They did not need the example of the Agege planters to persuade them to try out the new crop. In Ondo, however, where none of these groups existed, farmers needed an emphatic demonstration that cocoa was positively advantageous before they would experiment with it. Such a demonstration was provided,

in part, by the example of laborers from the Agege plantations.

In addition to their direct influence on cocoa growing in parts of the interior, the Agege planters' experiments with crops such as cocoa foreshadowed, in some respects, the activities of early planters in other Yoruba communities. The Agege planters turned to commercial agriculture both because of changing external circumstances, which forced them to look for new sources of income, and because of their personal backgrounds and experiences, which led them to try to adapt foreign economic activities[57] to their needs, as they had already adapted foreign manners, language and religious ideas. Similarly, the early planters in Ibadan took up cocoa both in response to changes in their environment and because they had had individual experiences which predisposed them to use new approaches to solving old problems. In Ondo, where external pressures were lacking, even the Christians were slower to perceive the advantages of cocoa and to act on their perception.

Do these findings offer empirical support for any of the general theories of innovation in developing economies which we mentioned in the Introduction? Unfortunately, we do not have enough information on the personalities or family lives of the early planters to test David McClelland's hypotheses about the psychological motives for innovation. We can, however, say something about the kinds of personal experience which seem conducive to change.

Everett Hagen argues, in The Theory of Social Change, that a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for social change is the emergence in a society of "creative personalities," who regard the

---

[57] In addition to planting new crops introduced from abroad, they organized their farms along the lines of European plantations. Webster, N.I.S.E.R. Conference Proceedings (March, 1962), passim.

world around them as subject to their analysis and manipulation, and who seek to escape or control their anxieties through achievement.[58] He suggests that creative personalities emerge when a group in the society loses "status respect," which appears to mean the respect previously accorded to them by the rest of society because of their position or role in that society. Because they have lost the respect of their peers, adults feel frustrated and communicate to their children the sense that all is not right, that the parents' values and customs are not necessarily good and hence their authority is suspect. The children, in turn, develop anxieties about their role in life which they may seek to allay by trying to alter their environment. Hagen cites several historical examples of groups which have suffered a loss of "status respect" and turned to achievement and innovation as a consequence; among them are the dissenters in 17th century England, the samurai in Tokugawa Japan, and the Old Believers of Russia. Can the Christian cocoa farmers of 19th century Yorubaland be considered another example illustrating Hagen's thesis?

On balance, I think not. Aside from the logical difficulty of Hagen's argument, which postulates social change (loss of "status respect") to explain the emergence of the preconditions for social change, it offers no clear basis for predicting whether individuals will respond positively or negatively to a loss of "status respect." If Yoruba Christians were criticized or persecuted for their beliefs, they might simply have retreated into greater conservatism--a possibility which Hagen admits for any society. In any case, Hagen envisions the development of a creative personality as a process requiring two or more generations to complete--an hypothesis which would fit the Agege

---

[58] Hagen, chap. vii.

planters perhaps, but not men such as Moses Akinwamide of Okeigbo, who threw his idols in the river in 1898, and returned from Agege to become an independent cocoa farmer within the next decade.

Our evidence is consistent, however, with another of Hagen's arguments, namely, that change in personality is not a sufficient condition for economic development. He maintains that a creative personality will become an innovator only if there exist "models" available to him indicating that economic innovation leads to social power. As previously mentioned, a demonstration that cocoa-growing could lead to wealth would probably be a sufficiently convincing "model" for a Yoruba farmer. In Western Nigeria, people had to go outside their native community to find the model; insofar as opportunities for outside contact and observation of successful cocoa-growers reached Ibadan sooner and, after 1893, faster than Ondo, we would expect cocoa to catch on more quickly in the former.

More generally, our findings do not support the idea that the personality or attitudes of the individual are the crucial determinant of innovation. Rather, people's willingness to experiment with new productive activities appears to depend on the situation in which they find themselves, as well as on their individual characters. Yoruba farmers apparently adopted cocoa more quickly when they were threatened with the loss of their occupation than when they were merely offered an opportunity to increase their earnings. This suggests that, in some cases, pressure or compulsion may be more favorable to economic innovation than the opening up of favorable opportunities.

In the next chapter, I shall ask to what extent this generalization applies to the economic factors which influenced farmers' decisions to grow cocoa. In the words of Professor Habakkuk, "are entrepreneurs

more likely to adopt new methods when they are under pressure, either because factor-supplies are scarce or because markets are tight, or when factor-supplies and market prospects are favorable to expansion of capacity?"[59] To answer these questions, we must examine not only the general state of factor supplies and product markets in Western Nigeria but also the mechanisms by which individual producers receive informations about these general conditions.

---

[59]Habakkuk, p. 2.

CHAPTER III

COSTS, RETURNS, AND FARMERS' DECISIONS TO PLANT COCOA

In Chapter II, I discussed some of the social and cultural factors which affected the early planters' decisions to grow cocoa; now, I wish to turn to the economics of that decision. In conventional economic theory, profits play a central role in explaining producers' decisions about what and how much to produce. Information about market conditions and factor supplies is transmitted to the individual producer through the price system, and he decides whether to produce a particular good on the basis of the net income he expects to receive from it. Schumpeter's analysis of innovation is based on conventional theory; essentially, he argues that not everyone will perceive the potential profitability of a new good, but that the man who first produces it is he who does expect to profit from it.[1]

Students of economic development are much concerned with the question to what extent conventional theory applies to producers in the poorer economies of the world. Economists are beginning to collect quite a bit of evidence that producers in such economies do decide how much of various goods to produce on the basis of prices and profits.[2] Recently, T. W. Schultz has extended this argument to include producers' decisions to accept or reject new productive activities or, as he calls them, "new factors of production."

---

[1] Schumpeter, chap. iii, *passim*.

[2] An important recent contribution to the literature on African farmers' responsiveness to price is E. R. Dean, *The Supply Responses of African Farmers* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1966). See also W. O. Jones, "Economic Man in Africa," *Stanford Food Research Institute Studies*, I, 2 (May, 1960), and the articles on cocoa discussed below in chap. iv.

> Economic growth from the agricultural sector of a poor country depends predominantly upon the availability and price of modern (non-traditional) agricultural factors . . . . When /suppliers/ succeed in producing and distributing these factors cheaply, investment in agriculture becomes profitable, and this then sets the stage for farmers to accept modern factors and learn how best to use them.[3]

Schultz attaches so much importance to profits that he tends to discount other considerations which might affect producers' attitudes toward a new productive activity.

> Since differences in profitability are a strong explanatory variable, it is not necessary to appeal to differences in personality, education, and social environment.[4]

This conclusion may apply to the rate at which American farmers for example adopted hybrid varieties of corn,[5] but I am not sure it is equally appropriate to the early history of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria. As I have tried to show in Chapter II, differences in personality and social environment, if not in education, do seem to have affected Yoruba farmers' willingness to experiment with cocoa. For this particular innovation, then, it will be necessary to reexamine Schultz's conclusion about the relative importance of profitability for farmers' decisions to plant a new crop.

---

[3] Schultz, p. 145.

[4] Ibid., p. 164.

[5] One of the studies which Schultz cites in support of his hypothesis is Zvi Griliches' analysis of interstate differences in the rate at which farmers replaced open pollinated with hybrid corn in the United States. Griliches concludes that one can explain these differences largely by the "difference in the absolute profitability of the shift over from open pollinated to hybrid varieties." (quoted in Schultz, p. 163). Actually, neither Griliches nor Schultz advances any reason why one should expect this result nor discusses its significance. As long as an innovation is profitable, why should producers delay adopting it any longer than is necessary for technical reasons? What difference does the absolute profitability make for his decision whether or not to adopt the innovation (note that Griliches is not explaining why farmers chose one out of a possible variety of innovations but why they did or did not respond to one innovation)? One suspects that some other factor is operating here which Griliches has failed to specify--possibly because it is not quantifiable and therefore not amenable to his method of analysis.

In trying to assess the importance of profits to early planters in Ibadan and Ondo, I shall also touch on a more fundamental issue--namely, the nature of the relationship between profitability and innovation. As Schumpeter pointed out, people do not always perceive the potential profitability of a new economic activity, and some are quicker to perceive it than others. If I can throw some light on how Yoruba farmers came to realize that cocoa could be profitable and how they reacted to that realization, I will in turn be able to comment on Professor Habakkuk's question of what kinds of economic circumstances are most favorable to innovation.

Since I am dealing with events which occurred over 50 years ago, I obviously could not go directly to the early planters and get them to reconstruct their reactions to the possibility of growing cocoa. Instead, I have adopted a more indirect method and tried to show how differences in profitability were related to differences in the timing of farmers' decisions to plant cocoa. The discussion in this chapter is divided into two unequal sections. The first considers whether or not cocoa growing was more profitable in Ibadan than in Ondo in the 1890's, when cocoa seeds were first made available in both places. This section is very long, since it is necessary to explain how and on what terms farmers could acquire land and labor, if the reader is to follow a discussion of what they cost. The second section takes up the question of whether there were any changes in the profitability of growing cocoa in Ondo around 1910 which might explain why Ondo farmers began to plant cocoa during the decade before 1920.

With cocoa, as with many agricultural products, the basic time sequence of production is biologically determined, but the combination of inputs or techniques of production actually employed may vary

considerably from one area, or society, to another. Cocoa beans, which are used in the manufacture of chocolate, grow in oval-shaped pods, four to six inches long, which are found on the trunk and lower branches of the cocoa tree (Theobroma cacao L.).[6] The tree grows in lowland tropical forests, usually in areas where the annual rainfall exceeds fifty inches. The amount of rainfall necessary varies, however, with the type of soil in which the trees are planted. Also the distribution of rainfall during the year is important--for a given annual total rainfall, areas with a long dry season are less suitable than those in which the rainfall is more evenly distributed over the year.[7]

Different varieties of cocoa mature at different rates. Before the late 1950's, nearly all the cocoa grown in Western Nigeria was of the Amelonado type which yields a small amount of fruit three to four years after it has been planted, but does not begin to bear enough to cover annual costs of weeding and harvesting until the trees are six or seven years old. An individual tree may yield increasing amounts of cocoa up to thirty years of age and continue to produce significant amounts for some time thereafter. In the densely planted plots typical of Western Nigeria, however, yield per acre tends to reach a peak between seventeen and twenty-two years after planting and to decline afterwards, as weaker trees die or suffer declining yields.[8]

---

[6]D. H. Urquhart, Cocoa (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955), p. 7.

[7]Ibid., p. 19; J. O. Adejuwon, "Crop-Climate Relationship: The Example of Cocoa in Western Nigeria," Nigerian Geographical Journal, V (June, 1962).

[8]Western Nigeria, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Tree Crop Planting Projects (Ibadan: Western Nigeria Government Printer, 1965?), p. 15. According to this source, the rate of increase or decrease in the yield of a plot of cocoa may exceed 10% per annum.

For the West African farmer using Amelonado seeds, the main problem involved in producing cocoa is to provide the necessary inputs for six or seven years before the trees begin to yield a significant return. Most of these inputs--viz., land, labor, and a couple of simple tools such as hoes and machetes[9]--were already familiar to Nigerian farmers. Although later experimentation has shown that other inputs, such as insecticides or cement drying floors, may be used profitably to increase cocoa yields or improve the quality of the marketed beans, these inputs were not necessary to the successful cultivation of the crop, especially during the early decades when the average age of the trees was young and pests had not yet firmly established themselves in the cocoa-growing areas of West Africa. Farmers could concentrate on the problem of getting through the seven-year gestation period without also having to learn to use strange or complicated means of production.

The main problem which farmers faced in establishing their cocoa farms was providing sufficient labor. The busy season in cocoa farming overlaps with the period when food farms in Western Nigeria require a lot of labor, so that farmers could not grow cocoa at times when they would otherwise have been idle.

> Farm labour as a whole swings from a low point in the months from December to February, when there is not much to be done except burn and clear the bush for the new season's food farms and gather in the last of the previous season's root crops, to a tremendous peak in the months from June to August, when the weeding of the cocoa farms, the weeding of the food farms, and the harvesting of the early maize and yams all compete for labour.[10]

---

[9]See, for example, Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 293.

[10]Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 304. The authors found, in an intensive study of productive activities in six villages, that 32 per cent of the year's labor on food farms and 49 per cent of that on cocoa farms fell during June, July and August (pp. 304-306, 668.)

Fortunately, there are no significant economies of scale involved in West African cocoa farming.[11] The main operations--clearing land, planting seeds or seedlings, weeding, harvesting the pods, breaking them open and fermenting and drying the beans--must all be performed by hand. Clearing and weeding should be partial, since cocoa needs shade and some ground cover helps to preserve moisture in the soil and to prevent erosion.[12] Machinery is of little use in achieving this end. Similarly, harvesting and breaking open the pods are delicate tasks, best performed by hand, and the traditional method of fermenting cocoa by placing it in a heap covered with banana leaves, is still the cheapest technique known. In short, there is no reason why a large number of laborers working a big tract of land can produce cocoa more efficiently than a single worker on a small plot.

This fact was extremely important to the development of cocoa growing by large numbers of smallholders in West Africa, because it meant that a farmer could plant a small plot of cocoa, devoting part of his time to working it and the rest to growing food for himself and his family until the cocoa began to yield a significant return.[13] He could then plant another cocoa plot using the proceeds from the first plot either to maintain himself while he worked on the second, or to hire laborers to assist him with both cocoa plots and his food farm. How he chose to employ the proceeds of his first plot would depend on local

---

[11] See, for example, C. D. Forde and R. Scott, The Native Economies of Nigeria, Vol. I of The Economics of a Tropical Dependency, Margery Perham ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1946-1948), p. 81.

[12] Urquhart, pp. 102-103.

[13] The fact that there are no significant economies of scale in cocoa farming explains not only how cocoa got started in West Africa, but also how farmers organized their cocoa farms as the industry expanded. This point is discussed more fully in chap. v.

conditions, such as the supply of labor, or on whether he wished to specialize only in cocoa, or continue with food crops as well. I shall discuss actual cases in the section below on labor costs in Ibadan and Ondo.

Since it does not take a "lumpy" investment to establish a cocoa farm, it did not take a capitalist class (or public credit institutions prepared to offer funds to small producers on soft terms) to establish a cocoa industry in Nigeria. Both for this reason and because cocoa did not require too radical a departure from traditional agricultural practices, cocoa growing in Nigeria was not confined to a small group of wealthy and Westernized individuals, such as the Agege planters, but could spread to large numbers of uneducated farmers with no accumulated wealth. Even so, the obstacles to successful cocoa growing were considerable, as we know from the gradual pace at which Nigerian production increased and from the fact that some farmers took up the crop later than did others. To what extent can we measure these obstacles in terms of costs and returns?

Ibadan and Ondo in the 1890's

Techniques of Production

Since the determinants of net returns to cocoa growing varied, historically, from one part of Nigeria to another, there is no point in trying to discuss costs and returns for Western Nigeria as a whole. Instead, we may proceed directly to compare costs and returns to cocoa growing in the areas for which we have some information--Ibadan and Ondo. As we shall see, there is no particular reason to think that the physical inputs required to achieve a given output of cocoa were significantly greater in Ondo than in Ibadan during the early decades of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria.

Both Ibadan and Ondo lie in the cocoa belt of Western Nigeria and there is not much difference between them in soil or climate. According to a detailed survey of soils in central Western Nigeria, 42.6 per cent of the soil in the Ibadan area is "good" or "fairly good" for cocoa. In Ondo the proportion is 45.4 per cent.[14] Average annual rainfall is somewhat higher in Ondo, but probably not enough to have significant effects on cocoa yields. Temperature does not vary much from one part of the cocoa belt to another.[15] In short, there is no reason to think that early planters enjoyed significantly higher yields in one community than in the other because of better soils or climatic conditions.

The evidence I collected in interviews suggests that farmers in both areas used the same varieties of cocoa and the same techniques of planting and cultivating it. There were two varieties of cocoa seed available to early planters in Nigeria: Amelonado, an "Amazonian" type originally from the forests of the Upper Amazon River, and another, rather heterogeneous strain, from Trinidad.[16] Amelonado is well adapted to heavy forest; the Trinidad variety on the other hand is highly domesticated and requires more careful cultivation than the Amelonado. They are easily distinguished by the color of their pods: Amelonado is green, turning yellow when ripe, whereas the Trinidad variety is dark red. Evidence suggests that the Amelonado variety came to Nigeria from Fernando Po, where Spanish colonists had established plantations in the mid-nineteenth

---

[14] A. J. Smyth and R. F. Montgomery, Soils and Land Use in Central Western Nigeria (Ibadan: The Government Printer, 1962), pp. 216, 244. Cf. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 162.

[15] Smyth and Montgomery, pp. 3-5.

[16] Urquhart, pp. 14-16.

century.[17] The Spanish planters found it impossible to recruit labor among the indigenous population of the island, so they hired workers from the mainland instead. Some of these workers, in addition to traders and other travellers with contacts on Fernando Po, probably carried Amelonado seeds to various parts of the mainland during the later decades of the nineteenth century. Early plantations of cocoa brought from Fernando Po were evidently widely scattered along the West African coast--as far apart as Calabar in Eastern Nigeria and Akropong in Ghana. There is no reason to believe, therefore, that this variety of seed was more readily available in one part of Nigeria than in another before 1900.

The Trinidad variety, on the other hand, was apparently introduced to Nigeria through the Botanical Gardens established by the British administration near Lagos in 1888. Early planters in both Ibadan and Ondo got seeds from these Gardens. Both of the early planters mentioned by Chief Ayorinde acquired their seeds there, although they may have seen cocoa elsewhere. Descendants of one of the founders of Ajebamidele in Ondo thought their father had obtained various seeds (coffee and kola as well as cocoa) at the Botanical Gardens; Bishop Phillips' son also mentioned the Gardens as the source of his father's cocoa seeds. Finally, insofar as farmers in the interior did acquire cocoa from Agege, they probably acquired some of the Trinidad strain. The Botanical Gardens exchanged seeds and information with Agege planters as early as

---

[17] I had several helpful conversations on the origins of different varieties of West African cocoa with Mr. H. Toxopeus of the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. On the spread of cocoa from Fernando Po to the mainland, see Ayorinde, p. 18; K. M. Buchanan and J. C. Pugh, Land and People in Nigeria (London: University of London Press, 1955), p. 149; Mary Kingsley, Travels in West Africa (London: Macmillan, 1897), pp. 52ff.; Allan McPhee, The Economic Revolution in British West Africa (London: George Routledge and Son, 1926), pp. 40-44.

1895,[18] and red-podded trees are still to be found on old farms there.

This evidence, plus the fact that Amelonado became the predominant variety of cocoa planted in Western Nigeria, suggest that both varieties were available to farmers in both Ibadan and Ondo around the turn of the century. Because Amelonado proved easier to cultivate successfully, farmers eventually planted it throughout Western Nigeria, in preference to the Trinidad variety. However, there is no reason to think that early farmers enjoyed lower costs in one area than in another because they planted Amelonado rather than the other kind.

In addition to using similar varieties of seed, most early planters in Ibadan and Ondo appear to have used similar techniques of production.[19] (See Table 5) Usually seeds were planted on land which had already been cleared and planted with food crops. The trees were randomly spaced and close together--three to six feet apart. Farmers continued to grow food among the trees for two to three years, after which time they stopped intercropping and began to weed the cocoa plot, two to four times each year. Except for one community south of Ondo,[20] where cocoa was introduced around 1912 by a Christian chief from Ondo and where both his descendants and other farmers said that all the early planters

---

[18] On August 12, 1899, the Assistant Curator of the Botanical Gardens at Ebute Metta wrote in the Lagos Gazette that "In 1895 we obtained some cocoa pods from Captain Davies' plantation (this gentleman owns the best and largest cocoa plantation in this Colony) for sowing." Davies was the first of the Agege planters to grow cocoa, according to A. G. Hopkins.

[19] The material in this paragraph is based primarily on my own interviews with cocoa farmers and observations of their farms. Cf. Forde and Scott, pp. 92-98; Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, pp. 183-84, and reports on a cocoa farm which the Department of Agriculture borrowed from its Nigerian owner for experimental purposes, 1913 to 1918, in the Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture for these years.

[20] Igunshin. See Maps III and VII.

TABLE 5

TECHNIQUES OF PLANTING COCOA EMPLOYED BY "FIRST FAMILY PLANTERS" IN SEVERAL COMMUNITIES

	Ibadan	Ondo	Total
Number of Informants	9	18	27
Planting Material			
Seeds or purchased seedlings	9	14	23
Seedlings grown in farmer's own nursery		4	4
Unknown			
Location			
Among yam heaps	9	10	19
In ground specially prepared for cocoa		4	4
Unknown		4	4
Spacing			
Three feet	6	6	12
Three - six feet	2	6	8
More than six feet		5	5
Unknown	1	1	2

Source: Interviews

of the village started their cocoa in nurseries, farmers did not use nurseries until the 1950's, except to replace dead young trees in the main plots.

Once the trees began to yield, the pods were picked off, broken open, and the beans taken to market in various states of wetness. The Department of Agriculture did not begin seriously to demonstrate proper techniques of drying and fermenting cocoa beans until the 1920's, although farmers' organizations in, e.g., Ibadan had made some attempt to disseminate such information before then. In the 1920's, the Department's campaign to improve the condition of marketed Nigerian cocoa, and to insure that farmers received a higher price for high quality beans, began almost as soon in Ondo as in Ibadan and was equally successful in both places.[21]

In short, there were no apparent differences in the physical inputs which farmers used to produce a given quantity of cocoa which might have made cocoa growing cheaper or more profitable to farmers in Ibadan than to those in Ondo at the time cocoa was introduced to Western Nigeria. Consequently, we must look for possible differences in the prices which farmers paid for productive factors or received for their cocoa to explain why some planted cocoa sooner than others.

The Cost of Land

Under the methods of production described above, cocoa is produced primarily with land and labor. Seed is a minor cost and farmers used no equipment other than the hoes and machetes which they already employed for cultivating food crops. I shall take up the cost of land in this section, and of labor in succeeding sections.

---

[21] Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports.

Only 24 per cent of the land in Western Nigeria which is suitable for growing cocoa is actually planted in the crop.[22] In one sense, then, the supply of land is still abundant relative to cocoa growers' demand for it. In practice, however, individual farmers are rarely free to plant cocoa wherever they like. Most land in Western Nigeria is owned by someone--an individual, a family or a community. The rights which an owner will extend to persons wishing to farm his land, and the compensation he expects in return, depend on local custom and the relationship between owner and tenant, as well as on the scarcity of good cocoa land in the area.[23]

In Ibadan, most "owners" of land are families, although improvements on the land, such as cocoa trees, belong solely to the individual who made them.[24] As we have seen, the predominance of family rights to land in Ibadan arose out of the manner in which the town was founded: warriors and their followers gathered there in the interests of self-preservation. They joined forces to ward off common enemies, but each

---

[22] Smyth and Montgomery, p. 205.

[23] The definitive study of customary laws and practices relating to the acquisition, use and disposal of land among the Yorubas of Western Nigeria is Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law. Useful information for the present study was also found in H. L. Ward Price, Land Tenure in the Yoruba Provinces (Lagos: The Government Printer, 1939); A. L. Mabogunje, "Some Comments on Land Tenure in Egba Division, Western Nigeria," Africa (July, 1961); C. W. Rowling, Report on Land Tenure in Ondo Province (Ibadan: Western Nigeria Government Printer, 1951). The unpublished Draft Report, Minutes of Evidence, and Papers and Correspondence submitted to the West African Lands Committee in 1912 and 1913 contain basic information on land tenure and land law in Southern Nigeria during the early period of colonial rule. Two other important sources are G. B. A. Coker, Family Property Among the Yorubas, and T. O. Elias, Nigerian Land Law and Custom (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951). Since they deal mainly with the evolution of laws through the decisions of the British High Court system in Nigeria, they were less relevant to this study than the materials mentioned above.

[24] Ward Price, pp. 47, 72; W.A.L.C., Papers, pp. 201-202, and Minutes, Q 11005.

maintained a jealous watch over his own family's position and prerogatives within Ibadan society, including their exclusive right to the land they had seized when they settled there. Although in the 1930's, the Ibadan chiefs tried to argue (and more than one unsuspecting District Officer believed)[25] that, according to Yoruba custom, all Ibadan land should be vested in them as representatives of the Ibadan people, it is quite clear that this "custom" never applied in Ibadan until cocoa had been planted extensively there.

In 1907, the British Resident at Ibadan declared that under Yoruba land law, "Land belongs to the community collectively and is vested in the Chief who distributes it amongst households and families as required."[26] This may have been true in other parts of Yorubaland, but statements by Ibadans themselves indicate that it was not a very accurate picture of the situation in their community. In a letter to a British official dated November 10, 1915, Bale Shittu of Ibadan objected to the idea that a landowner must consult the Bale before giving out part of his land.[27] Shittu's predecessor explained

---

[25] In 1930, the District Officer in Ibadan reported to the Senior Resident of Oyo Province that some farmers "have assumed the title or roll [sic] of Landlords." He urged that they be told that they held their farms "only at the pleasure of the Bale and Council." Three years later, the Resident of Ibadan declared that "No family can have a sphere of influence. It is either family property, and if so must be a reasonable size; or it is not; and if the latter, the Council must administer it. The Aperin and Sanni, and other cases are not guides in this matter but are all wrong." (Correspondence in Nigerian National Archives, IBAPROF/3 0718). The Aperins and the Sannis were the families of two of the hunters who established large personal domains in the forests south of Ibadan town during the late nineteenth century.

[26] C. H. Elgee, "Memorandum on Yoruba Land Laws," "Resident's Letter and Minute Books" (Nigerian National Archives, IBAPROF 3/10).

[27] See chap. ii, p. 66 above.

to the Resident of Ibadan, in 1913, that "I, as Bale, have no lands; I have my family lands only. I have no control over lands except to settle disputes."[28] On the other hand, the son of a hunter turned landlord said that his father had given land to many people, including a couple of chiefs, who in turn recognized him as their "head" and, after his death, continued to render service to the "sons of their benefactors."[29]

Resident Elgee seems to have confused rights to use and dispose of lands with the power to settle disputes between families or individuals over these rights. The chiefs of Ibadan, like those of most other Yoruba city-states, were always the final court of appeal in disputes, as one of the educated members of the Ibadan Council explained to the Resident in 1904, "The custom of our country is if people make any dispute over land . . . the Bale and Chiefs divide it equally /among the disputants/."[30] Theoretically the chiefs could dispose of "unoccupied" land--i.e., land which did not fall under the jurisdiction of any family. In fact, however, they made little attempt to exercise or guard this prerogative, as is evident from the ease with which the hunters gained recognition of their right to dispose of large areas of forest land--areas much larger than

---

[28] W.A.L.C., Papers, p. 202.

[29] Ibid., p. 203. Evidence submitted by Frederick Morakinyo, a Christian and one of the early cocoa planters in Ibadan. According to various of my informants, a number of farmers, both landlords and tenants, first planted cocoa for themselves at Morakinyo's suggestion, or following his example. Cf. W.A.L.C., Minutes, Q7607, 10980, 12152.

[30] Ibadan City Council Minutes, August 8, 1904 (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan). In 1914, the Bale described such a case in a letter to the District Officer: the defendant "has been in occupation so many years ago that plaintiff and defendant take equal portions of the land in dispute." "Bale's Letter Book, 1914-1915" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan). See also, W.A.L.C., Minutes, Q 7520, 7521.

what they and their families could cultivate personally.[31]

Although the British administrators in Ibadan did not discover the extent to which people were settling on the hunters' lands until 1917 and after, the hunters' rights to their land were implicitly recognized by the Lagos Supreme Court as early as 1906. The disputed land in this case had been occupied for about twenty years by a group of Christians, who had been "shown" land[32] there by a representative of the hunter (Agbakin) who claimed jurisdiction over the area. Another hunter was now advancing a similar claim. The judge declared that "merely using a forest as a field for hunting . . . does not confer on the person using, i.e., the person hunting in the forest, sole possession of the forest, or ownership of it." It was necessary to determine "who was the person who first beneficially occupied (i.e., farmed) this land . . . ." (My italics.) Since it was the Christians who had actually cultivated the land, the judge might logically have concluded that they were the owners. Instead, he declared that the owner was the Agbakin, who had never farmed the land himself but had assumed the right to give others permission to do so,

> There is no doubt that it was the Agbakin through his people (the Christians) who first occupied this land. The Christians and the people who have come here through the Christians are the only people who have ever beneficially occupied this land . . . . So that

---

[31] W.A.L.C., Minutes, Q 10989, et. seq. In the early years of the twentieth century, the chiefs were extremely reluctant to lease land in Ibadan, even when they were asked to do so. In 1902, the Bale and Chiefs announced to the Resident that they would not lease land to anyone, pointing out that they had given land to the Government on which to build the Residency and the Railway and they did not see why the Government wanted other people to have to pay rent. Acting Resident, Ibadan, to Chief Secretary, Lagos, March 19, 1902, "Resident's Letter Book, 1901-1903" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan). See also the discussion of land leased to the British Cotton Growing Association in chap. i above.

[32] Traditionally, one could usually acquire land for planting food crops without paying anything to the owner, beyond a ceremonial bottle of gin. One had only to ask the owner's permission and he, in turn, would show the applicant where he could plant.

according to the Native Law and Custom, Agbakin has been the first man to occupy and take possession of this land, is the owner of this land.[33]

The family system of control over land in Ibadan affected the terms on which an individual could acquire land for planting cocoa outside his own family's plots. With one exception, all of the witnesses who testified before the West African Lands Committee concerning land transactions in Ibadan denied that land could be sold there.[34] The farmers I interviewed, who included both large landholders and their tenants, expressed similar views. Five of the landholding families interviewed were descended from hunters; the sixth had been a follower of an Ibadan chief and had set out to build himself a landed domain at the advice of his master, when the latter became Bale of Ibadan. The tenants usually stated that they had been "given" land or permission to farm by the landlord, although some members of the largest landholding family were said to have "sold" portions of their land for large sums.

In fact, in most of the transactions described, the tenant paid some sort of compensation to the landholder but none of them had really bought land in the sense of having acquired exclusive rights to use and alienate it. Traditionally, when a man was shown land on which to farm he made a present to the individual who showed it to him. As Table 6 indicates, in the past this initial present usually consisted of drinks or kola nuts, although sometimes it took the form of a cash

---

[33] "Copy of Judgment," p. 5.

[34] W.A.L.C., Minutes, Q 11975, 12157, 13236, 13248, 14861.

TABLE 6

LAND PRICES: IBADAN

Initial Payment

Date on which Land Acquired	None or Drinks	£1 to £2	£2 to £5	More than £5	Unknown
Before 1902	20	1		1(a)	1
1902-1914	7	1	2		
After 1907	2		3(a)		
1914-1925	3				1
After 1925				1	
Unknown	10				3
Total	42	2	5	2	5

Annual Payment

	None	In Kind	5s	10s	£1	£1 - £5	More than £5
Before 1902	10	3	5(a)	3(a)	3(b)	2(b)	1(a)
1902-1914	4		7	1(a)	2(a)	3(c)	
After 1907	1	2					
1914-1925	2	5	1(a)				
After 1925			1		1		
Unknown		1	4(a)	4(d)	1(a)	3(b)	
Total	17	11	18	8	7	8	1

TABLE 6--Continued

Relation of Annual Payment to Size of Farm

Total Acres Under Cocoa	None	In Kind	5s	10s	£1	£1 - £5	More than £5
2.3							1(a)
4.7	1						
5.3					1		
6					1		
8	1(e)						
10			1				
12			2				
15				1			1(a)
17			1				
20	1(e)			1(a)			1(a)
More than 25	2		1	1(a)			

Notes:

(a) One of the "informants" who mentioned paying this amount was a village--i.e., the whole village paid the amount indicated for the land, rather than just one individual.

(b) Two of the "informants" were villages.

(c) Three of the "informants" were villages.

(d) Four of the "informants" were villages.

(e) Informant was the landlord.

Source:

Interviews with 54 informants. The number of observations in each part of the table is greater than the number of informants because, in some cases, informants or their fathers had acquired several pieces of land under different terms. Thus, if a man had acquired three cocoa plots, made an initial payment of drinks for each, and paid ishakole of 5s for one, 10s for another and, for the third, contributed something to a village ishakole of £2, his holdings would be recorded only once under "Initial Payment" but three separate times under "Annual Payment."

payment.[35] In time, as the demand for good cocoa land brought settlers flocking to the hunters' domains south of town, the initial present tended to increase in value. In a review of several land disputes in the area, written in 1930, a District Officer reported that the landholders involved had "given" out plots of land for amounts ranging from £5 to £50 each.[36]

The British worried about this creeping commercialism and its damaging effects on the stability of traditional social and economic life among the Yorubas. As an Egba witness explained to the anxious West African Lands Committee, however, the tendency for land to acquire a price was not an artificial development introduced by outsiders to deprive the unsuspecting Yorubas of their rightful heritage.

> It has come about naturally by process of development. Anciently you would almost beg people to come and live with you. A man settles in a forest, say, with his children; it is to his interest to try to get as many as possible to stay with him. Later on the community has grown and others have come. They do not give up land for nothing. They say "You bring a bottle of gin or some little present." After that the community becomes very important. Good roads are made, trading is flourishing, and people begin to think "You cannot have it free; you must pay something.". . . where there are good roads or where the soil is very fertile and there is a stream near it you cannot expect to get it for nothing.[37]

Descendants of the Ibadan hunters gave me similar accounts of the way in which their families had acquired tenants.

---

[35]Cash payments for land around the beginning of this century are also mentioned in a letter from the Acting Resident, Ibadan, to the Chief Secretary, Lagos, December 30, 1901, "Resident's Letter Book, 1901-1903" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan); Lagos Gazette, February 7, 1903; and "Copy of Judgment."

[36]Memorandum by the Assistant District Officer, Ibadan, October 14, 1930 (Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 3/1181, Vol. 1.) On May 5, 1930, Chief J. A. Obisesan recorded in his diary that the family had received £20 as "compensation" for a farm.

[37]W.A.L.C., Minutes, Q 13126.

In Ibadan, unlike Egbaland where outright sales were common by 1913, even a large initial present did not usually constitute a purchase. The landlord retained the sole right to dispose of the land and could reclaim it if the tenant abandoned it, although he could not evict a tenant or the tenant's children except for antisocial behavior.[38] In recognition of the landlord's continuing rights, the tenant made an additional payment, known as ishakole, to the landlord each year.

Ishakole is not really a rent in the economic sense of the word. It is primarily a token or acknowledgement of the landholder's ultimate claim to the property. The amount of the payment often does not change over long periods of time, even though the productivity of the land does. In Table 6, the annual payments are classified according to the time at which the land was first acquired for growing cocoa; the amount has in most cases remained constant ever since, although there were a few exceptions. Most of the tenants I interviewed said that they paid five shillings ishakole annually, regardless of the size or productivity of their farms.[39] In the case of levies of several pounds which are paid by the village as a whole, individual tenants may contribute to the total according to their ability to pay, but the total itself bears no necessary relation to the economic resources of the village. Instead, variations in village totals tend to be associated with differences in population rather than with differences in area under cultivation or in output.

The concept of ishakole also carries with it an overtone of social subordination to the landlord. This is suggested, for example, in the

---

[38] Ibid., Q 14861.

[39] In 1918, the Aperin family submitted a list of its Ijebu tenants to the District Officer. Each tenant, of whom there were over 50, paid ishakole of five shillings. J. A. Obisesan to District Officer, 1918 (Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 4/5/12).

statement of F. E. Morakinyo to the West African Lands Committee, quoted on page 92 above. Morakinyo said that his father attached no particular terms to the land he gave out but the "tenants willingly rendered him any help they thought right." For example, "they helped us when we put up our father's house." Another hunter's son, Chief J. Akinpelu Obisesan, who played a major role in organizing the cooperative movement among Yoruba cocoa farmers after 1934, refers frequently in his diary to services rendered him by his family's tenants. These ranged from hospitality offered him when he visited their villages to cash contributions to his family's festivities or labor on his own cocoa farms.[40] He in turn felt responsible to them, personally and administratively.

> Some of the Aperins (Obisesan's family) believe stupidly that they are to govern and are not prepared to respect the dignity and personality of the men under their feudal authority . . . .[41]

> /Today I/ acted in my dual capacity as landlord and administrator or justice of peace in my domain and settled petty matters between the Eriolopa people . . . .[42]

The family system of landholding in Ibadan also affected the way in which improvements on the land, such as permanent crops, were treated as realizable capital assets. In all Yoruba communities, people distinguish land from man-made improvements thereon; the latter are considered to be the personal property of the individual(s) who made them.[43] In Ibadan, a cocoa farmer may, if he wishes, realize his investment in the cocoa trees by "pawning" them to someone in return for a cash loan. The creditor has the right to harvest the cocoa and keep the proceeds for

---

[40] Obisesan, Diary, January 1, 1921; April 19, 1930; September 7, 1932.

[41] Ibid., October 9, 1932.

[42] Ibid., June 28, 1935.

[43] Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, pp. 13, 82, 310, and discussions of individual communities.

himself until the borrower repays the loan, but he has no claim to the land on which the trees are planted.[44] The borrower may never repay the loan, in which case the transaction is effectively a sale, although the borrower's descendants may, theoretically, redeem the trees if they can produce evidence of the original loan. However, the transaction is not called a sale so that the creditor may not use it to claim ownership of the land, which continues to belong to the debtor's family (or to his landlord's family) and can only be alienated with the consent of every interested relative.

In Ondo, the distribution of rights to land and the terms on which farmland is available to individuals are somewhat different from the family system which prevails in Ibadan. All Ondo land is considered to belong to the people of Ondo, who are represented for this purpose by their king, the Oshemawe. According to P. C. Lloyd, many Ondos deny that family land exists in rural areas:

> By this they do not mean to deny the right of a man to continue to farm where his father farmed, but they wish to emphasize that a man

---

[44] Ibid., pp. 309-321. The practice is apparently a development of the twentieth century, although the idea of pawning is much older in Yorubaland. Traditionally, it was individuals rather than permanent crops which were pawned. (See chap. v below.) In 1913, a witness before the West African Lands Committee stated that a man could offer his farm as security for a debt but that this did not give the creditor the right to collect any of the produce on the farm. Instead, if the borrower defaulted the creditor had to appeal to the local authorities who would apply "pressure" to get the borrower to repay. One method was to place an aged man or woman in the debtor's compound. The debtor immediately became responsible for maintaining the old person; if the latter died in his house, the debtor and his family could be held responsible and prosecuted for murder. Faced with these problems the debtor's family usually paid the debt promptly.

This particular witness was referring only to short-term loans and may simply have been avoiding the question of pawning permanent crops. However, cocoa was really the first permanent crop which could be treated this way in Western Nigeria so the practice may not have been common in 1913. Minutes, Q 7538-7563.

> is not confined to farming where his father and grandfathers farmed, and that past cultivation of a piece of land gives no permanent rights in the land.[45]

A family may continue to use a piece of land as long as they like and may divide it among themselves any way they wish. However, "the descent group has, theoretically, no power to alienate its land to non-members . . . ."[46]

These generalizations are supported both by available written sources and by my own investigations. In 1913, the District Commissioner of Ondo interviewed the Oshemawe concerning rights to land in Ondo. At first the Oshemawe stated that there was "individual ownership" of land, but then apparently contradicted himself by asserting that all land belonged to the Oshemawe, even when individuals were using it. He went on to explain that an Ondo man could only obtain unoccupied rural land by permission of the Oshemawe but, once he began to use a piece of land, no one could deprive him of it.[47] In general,

> As the head is to a man's body, so is the Oshemawe to the Ondos, what belongs to a man's hand or foot belongs to the head--what belongs to the head belongs to the foot or hand--but the head is the most honorable portion and directs the remainder of the body.[48]

The relationship between families' rights to land and those of the Oshemawe was illustrated dramatically in one village I visited, where a furious argument broke out when I inquired how the first settler there had acquired his land. Personal privacy is practically unknown in Nigeria, and I rarely interviewed anyone alone. In the towns, several members of the informant's household usually gathered to hear and

---

[45] Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 111.

[46] Ibid., p. 130.

[47] W.A.L.C., Papers, p. 209.

[48] Idem.

contribute to the discussion; in the villages, interviews were always public affairs. On this occasion perhaps 100 people were assembled in the market--a covered one with cement floors of which the people were justly proud. An old man had been selected to answer my questions about the general history of the village; subsequently I planned to interview relatives or descendants of the earliest cocoa planters there. No one disputed the name of the founder or the fact that he had first settled on this spot sometime between 1901 and 1917, but when the spokesman said that the founder had obtained his land by squatting on it, he was immediately assailed by two factions. One claimed that the founder must have had the Oshemawe's permission to settle there; another maintained that he had got the land from the head of a neighboring village who "owned" the area.

After considerable argument, the opinion prevailed that I should not depart without "writing something down," so they offered a compromise which did not clarify much. Later, however, when I interviewed individual planters' descendants, they stated that their fathers had acquired land from the neighbor who, in turn, had received the Oshemawe's permission to settle there and to act as the Oshemawe's representative in the area, showing land to would-be settlers. These individual interviews occurred in front of the same people, but no one objected to this statement of the situation.

An important result of the somewhat public nature of rights to land in Ondo is that individuals or families have never acquired large tracts of land to be used for social or economic gain, as they did in Ibadan. In interviews with fifty-four informants, I learned that they or their fathers had all acquired land for growing cocoa without paying anything for it. Thirteen of them had planted cocoa on land inherited

from relatives or granted them by close friends; thirty-seven had been given land by the Oshemawe or someone representing him; the other four simply stated that they had planted on "Ondo land," meaning that as natives of Ondo they had as much right to the land as anyone. Moreover, as more than one informant explained, "the system of ishakole does not exist in Ondo." There is no basis on which one Ondo could demand ishakole from another, since neither has any superior claim to land which he is not personally cultivating. The Oshemawe receives annual tribute from all of his subjects, in the form of produce, cash or labor, but this is in no sense a rent for the land they occupy. Theoretically, the Oshemawe can collect ishakole from non-Ondos as a token of the fact that Ondo land does not and never can belong to them, though they may use it with his permission, but in practice he has not often exercised this right.[49]

Before cocoa began to have an impact on the economic life of Ondo, the notion of buying and selling land was so foreign to people's thinking that it was not even viewed with alarm. In 1913, the Oshemawe assumed that anyone who would want to sell land must be in desperate straits:

> . . . if a man is in distress he can sell his land--I have never seen such a case--if a man wants to sell his land he ought to see me first in order to see what help can be given.[50]

---

[49] Ipaiye, one of the founders of Ajebamidele, tried unsuccessfully to claim the right to receive rents from strangers who had settled in the vicinity. On this occasion (1913) the Oshemawe asserted his superior authority and did collect the rent. (Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 132.) Recently there has been some attempt to get all non-Ondos to pay rent regularly, in order to provide the courts with a criterion for determining title to land. Many of the Oshemawe's local "representatives" (i.e., village heads) have refused to carry out these instructions, however, possibly because they would prefer not to reaffirm the Oshemawe's rights over land which they have administered, in practice, for some time.

[50] W.A.L.C., Papers, p. 209.

Since then, of course, people have come to recognize the value of cocoa trees and, as in Ibadan and elsewhere, to treat them as individual property. In Ibadan, as we have seen, cocoa trees have become an important form of collateral on which to borrow money, and an Ibadan may realize his investment in a cocoa farm, without upsetting his family's claim to the land on which it stands, by pawning the trees. In Ondo, on the other hand, where families have no particular stake in asserting a perpetual claim to a given piece of land, cocoa trees are sold outright. Seven of my fifty-four informants had bought some cocoa trees, or inherited trees which their fathers had purchased, in addition to planting their own. Others stated that cocoa trees could be bought and sold, although they had not done so personally.[51]

Tables 6 and 7 summarize the information collected in my interviews concerning the cost of acquiring land for planting cocoa in Ibadan and Ondo. In both communities a farmer could always start planting cocoa on his family's land without paying anything for it. In most cases, however, people found that either they could not get enough land in their family's holdings,[52] or there was land better suited to cocoa growing in some other part of their "country." To get land outside his own family's farms, an Ibadan usually had to pay something, whereas an Ondo did not.

---

[51] Other investigators have observed this practice also. Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, pp. 128-129, 311; C. W. Rowling, Land Tenure in Ondo Province.

[52] Most cocoa farmers continue to grow some food crops, as a form of security, even when they could earn higher returns by putting all their land into cocoa. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 275. I observed the same thing while interviewing farmers. Such behavior is not necessarily irrational in an economic sense. Basically it represents investing part of one's resources in a sure, if low yielding, source of income rather than putting everything into assets with high yields and high risks. (Both the yield and the market price of cocoa are subject to considerable fluctuations from one year to the next.)

TABLE 7

LAND PRICES--ONDO

Initial Payment

Date on which Land Acquired	None	Drinks	£1-9	£10-29	£30-49	More than £50
Before 1900	3					
1901-1917	9	1				
1918-1925	10	1				
1926-1939	8	5				
1940's*					1	1
1950's*				2	2	3
	30	7	. .	2	3	4

*Sizable cash payments are always for established cocoa plots, not for vacant land.

Annual Payment

Traditionally, Ondos do not pay any rent or tribute for farmland since it belongs to the entire Ondo state, represented in the person of the Oshemawe (king). In recent years, however, as cocoa lands have started to become scarce and disputes more frequent, some people have begun to collect ishakole (really, tribute from users of the land) from "strangers." In some villages this means non-Ondos (Oboto); in others, people who are not natives of the village (Okeigbo) or not related to the head chief of the village (Igbado). The amount paid also varies. In some places it is the customary 5s from each farmer (Igbado); in others, some stipulated amount of cocoa (Okeigbo).

Source: Interviews with 54 informants.

In the early decades of cocoa growing in Ibadan, however, these payments were not large--the initial payment might be merely a bottle or two of gin and the annual payment a few yams or five shillings in cash. Land was a cost to the early cocoa planter in Ibadan, but not a large one. In Ondo it was free.

Types of Labor Available to Farmers in Ibadan and Ondo

The cost of land being so low, labor, the other major input into the operation and establishment of a cocoa farm, constitutes the principal cost to the cocoa grower. According to Galletti, et. al, almost 100 per cent of the total annual cost of production on Nigerian cocoa farms is devoted to labor during the years when the trees are in bearing; while the farm is being established, the proportion of labor cost in total cost is between 72 per cent and 92 per cent. (See Table 8).

Cocoa farmers in Western Nigeria use both family and hired labor and appear to have done so for a long time. Before the advent of the British, slavery was a well established institution in Yorubaland. Slaves were acquired by purchase or capture and usually employed as farm laborers. It is commonly believed that British efforts to discourage the external slave trade in the nineteenth century tended to increase the use of slaves domestically; instead of exporting the slaves, their owners used them to produce alternative export goods such as palm oil.[53] As the British moved inland in the 1890's, they did their best to discourage domestic slavery. In 1901, slave trading was made illegal and persons born after that date in Southern Nigeria were considered free by the colonial regime.[54]

---

[53]Newbury, p. 42; Ajayi, p. 84; Great Britain, Report, 1842, Q 2455.

[54]Lagos, Annual Report, 1901-02.

TABLE 8

CASH COSTS OF ESTABLISHING AN ACRE OF COCOA

	Ayorinde[a]		Agege[b]		Ibadan	Ekiti
	Shillings per acre	Labor as per cent of total cost	Shillings per acre	Labor as per cent of total cost	Shillings per acre	Shillings per acre
1900-1920	55.3					
Land	4.5					
Clearing, seed and planting	11.2	91.9%				
Weeding (5 yrs.)	39.6					
1920-1930	192.8					
Land	24.0					
Clearing, seed and planting	16.8	87.5%				
Weeding	152.0					
1930-1935	350.3					
Land	72.0					
Clearing, seed and planting	32.0	79.4%				
Weeding	246.3					
1935-1940	571.6					
Land	80.0					
Clearing, seed and planting	35.6	86.0%				
Weeding	456.0					

TABLE 8--Continued

	Ayorinde[a]		Agege[b]		Ibadan	Ekiti
	Shillings per acre	Labor as per cent of total cost	Shillings per acre	Labor as per cent of total cost	Shillings per acre	Shillings per acre
					(b) (c)	
1938			598.0		55.0/376.3	
Land			168.0[d]		. .	
Clearing, seed and planting			40.0		55.0/ 56.3	
Weeding			390.0	71.9%	(e)/320.0	
1951-1952	1,356.0					2,025.0
Land	128.0					. .
Clearing, seed and planting	88.0	90.6 %				240.0
Weeding	1,140.0					1,785.0

Notes:

(a) Farmers' statements.

(b) Department of Agriculture files and Cocoa Marketing Commission, 1938.

(c) Estimate made by Ibadan Cooperative Marketing Union.

(d) Includes buildings and equipment .

(e) Cost of weeding covered by food crops planted among the young trees.

Source: Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 391. These figures represent only those costs requiring a cash outlay and do not include the value of the farmer's own or his family's labor.

TABLE 9

LABOR REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH ONE ACRE OF COCOA (MAN-DAYS/ACRE)

	Total	Per Annum (deducting value of food crops planted among trees)	Per Annum (not deducting food crops)
1. Ibadan Area, 1938[a]			
Clearing	82		
Maintenance (4 yrs.)	..		
Total	82	20.5	
2. Abeokuta area, 1938[b]			
Clearing	48		
Maintenance--year 1 (intercropping)	60		
Year 2 (intercropping)	46 2/3		
Year 3 (3 weedings)	32		
Year 4 (3 weedings)	32		
Year 5 (2 weedings)	21 1/3		
	240 (101)[c]	20.2[c]	48
3. Ife area, 1938[d]			
Clearing	92		
Weeding--year 1	30		
Year 2	30		
Year 3	60		
Year 4	60		
	272 (152)[c]	38.0[c]	68
4. Other[e]			
All operations--"as low as"	189		
5. Ayorinde village, Ibadan area, 1951/52[f]			
Clearing	14.4		
Weeding, 5 yrs.	190.0		
	204.4		40.9

TABLE 9--Continued

LABOR REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH ONE ACRE OF COCOA (MAN-DAYS/ACRE)

	Total	Per Annum (deducting value of food crops planted among trees)	Per Annum (not deducting food crops)
6. Ghana--cocoa planted on an established food farm[g]			
All operations (10 yrs.)	240		24
7. Ghana--cocoa planted in heavy forest, 1950[h]			
Clearing	30		
Planting	20		
Weeding (6 yrs.)	106		
	156		26

Notes and Sources:

a. Forde and Scott, p. 113.

b. Ibid., p. 114.

c. The value of the food interplanted with the cocoa trees during the first two years was sufficient to cover the cost of the first three years maintenance.

d. Forde and Scott, p. 92. The estimates were supplied by an official of the cooperative union at Ife and are "perhaps generous" according to the authors.

e. Ibid., p. 94.

f. Calculated from cash costs cited in Table 8, using data on the labor time required for clearing from Galletti, Baldwin, and Dina, p. 391.

g. Urquhart, p. 236.

h. Ibid., p. 238.

It is difficult to tell how rapidly the institution declined after the establishment of British rule, especially since slaves were considered socially inferior to free men and people are therefore reluctant to admit nowadays that their ancestors were slaves. The peace of 1893 cut off the Yorubas' principal supply of slaves--viz., other Yorubas captured in battle. Without continual fresh supplies, the number of slaves in a community would tend to decline in time through self-redemption or intermarriage with freeborn citizens. (The children of a free man and a slave woman were considered free.)[55] Slaves were usually given their own plots of land from which to support themselves, so that enterprising individuals could raise their own ransom, especially with the introduction of cash crops such as cocoa. Also, increasing opportunities for wage employment may have encouraged slaves to run away. A British officer commented in 1901, that "Slaves have made themselves scarce in Egba since the Railway ran its 200 yards of English land through the country."[56] To keep slaves at home, owners may have had to offer them better conditions of service, such as more land of their own, which would in turn have facilitated self-redemption. By the 1920's, the British felt that domestic slavery had been pretty well eradicated in Western Nigeria. The District Officer at Ibadan asserted as much in his Annual Report to the government in Lagos in 1921.[57] The reflections of a citizen of Ibadan at this time suggest that the institution was on the decline, although not entirely defunct. He noted that his own family's "personal retainers are going one by one" and wondered who would replace

---

[55]Forde, p. 26.

[56]Lagos, Annual Reports, 1901-1902.

[57]Oyo Province, Annual Report, (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/06027.)

them "in this age of freedom and enlightenment" without wars or slave-raids.[58] In the 1890's, however, when Ibadans first undertook the cultivation of cocoa, there was undoubtedly still a considerable supply of slave labor in the community.[59]

In addition to their wives, children and slaves, Yoruba farmers traditionally could draw on two other sources of labor. One was a system known as iwofa, which is usually translated "pawn" in English. In order to raise money for trade or family expenses, a man could "pawn" himself, or one of his children, in exchange for a cash loan. Ordinarily this meant that he agreed to perform a certain amount of work at regular intervals for his creditor until the loan was paid off, although sometimes, especially when a child was pawned, the pawn or iwofa lived with the creditor and worked for him all the time. The services performed constituted the interest on the loan. When the borrower repaid the loan, the iwofa was under no further obligation to serve the lender; however, his labor on the lender's farm did not count toward repayment of the principal.

Yorubas emphasize the difference between iwofas and slaves.

> In fine an Iwofa differs from a slave in that a slave must live with his master, an Iwofa in his own house. A slave can be compelled to work for his master every day, an Iwofa for a limited amount . . . . A slave can be punished, an Iwofa cannot be. A slave has lost his independence and political rights, an Iwofa retains both . . . . In fine an Iwofa can come and go as he likes, a slave cannot.[60]

---

[58] Obisesan, Diary, February 16, 1921.

[59] Johnson, p. 643.

[60] Ibid., p. 128. In some cases the iwofa may cultivate part of his own farm for his creditor so that he need never set foot on the creditor's land. Oni of Ife, "Iwofa," Odu, Journal of Yoruba and Related Studies, no. 3, pp. 16-18.

Although the British declared the practice illegal, pawning continued to be an important source of labor in Yorubaland long after slavery had disappeared. In 1930, for example, J. A. Obisesan recorded in his diary four loans of between £12 and £15 each which he made to individuals under the iwofa system. Eighteen per cent of the farmers whom I interviewed in Ibadan stated that they or their fathers had used iwofas on their cocoa farms. (See Table 10)

In addition to employing slaves or iwofas on their farms, residents of a village sometimes combined forces to assist one another with heavy work such as clearing land for planting or building a house. There are apparently two forms of such mutual assistance: owe which is non-recurrent help, usually offered to a newcomer in a village to help him get started,[61] and aro which involves an association, often among men of the same age, who may call on each other for assistance in their farm work at various times. Both these systems depend closely on the personal and social relations between the individuals involved:

> . . . the amount of /owe/ given is usually dependent on . . . the conviviality of the new-comer since his presence in the village . . . . His relationship, his sense of humor, capacity for work as well as his sense of honesty, being usually watched and assessed can make or mar and influence the amount of sympathetic assistance he can receive in his new surrounding.
>
> If the man proves himself to be sociable apart from his being a hard but unselfish worker, he soon makes friends from amongst his age groups and with whom he can join in Aro (mutual aid) both for working his farm as well as the farms of his other colleagues.[62]

Probably owe and aro were not used much by farmers who wanted to extend their farms beyond what they could work themselves, although they may

---

[61] Chief J. A. Ayorinde, "Western Nigeria Village Social Organization" Part II, (mimeograph), p. 3. Cf. Fadipe, Sociology of the Yoruba.

[62] Ayorinde, "Western Nigeria Village Social Organization," p. 3.

TABLE 10

TYPES OF LABOR EMPLOYED ON COCOA FARMS IN IBADAN

Date of First Planting	Family	Family & Iwofa	Iwofa	Wage & Iwofa	Wage	Wage & Family
1892-1904	6	2	1	1	4	. .
1904-1914	4	3	. .	2	8	3
1914-1925	. .	1	. .	. .	7	8
After 1925	. .	. .	. .	. .	1	. .
Unknown	2	. .	. .	. .	2	2
Total	12	6	1	3	22	13

	No Wage Labor	Some Wage Labor
1892-1904	9	5
1904-1914	7	13
1914-1925	1	15
After 1925	. .	1
Unknown	2	4
Total	19	38

Source: Interviews with 54 informants.

TABLE 11

FAMILY AND NON-FAMILY LABOR ON COCOA FARMS IN ONDO

I. Family vs. Non-Family	Family Only	Family & Non-Family	Non-Family Only
Before 1912	1	3[a]	3
1912-1920	4	7	10
1920's	1	5[b]	14
Later	1	0	4
Total	7	15	31 = 53

II. Type of Non-Family	Casual Only	Casual & Seasonal	Seasonal Only
Before 1912	1	2	2
1912-1920	2	1	14
1920's	2	1	16
Later	2	0	2

Notes:

Casual labor is labor hired by the job; seasonal labor is hired annually for periods ranging from six to eleven months and helps with all tasks on the farm. Seasonal laborers live with their employer, receive food and shelter while they do so, and are paid a lump sum wage in cash after the cocoa crop is sold. Casual laborers are paid when they complete the particular job for which they were hired.

a. Each of these families received help on their farms from "servants"; only two actually hired laborers in addition to their servants. The servants may have been slaves or they may have been iwofas.

b. One of these families (in which the first cocoa planter was a woman) mentioned having used iwofas to work on their farm.

Source: Interviews with 53 informants.

have helped early planters to get started. Of all the people I interviewed in both Ibadan and Ondo, only the farmers in one village near Ibadan mentioned these forms of labor and then only as things of the past.

None of the kinds of labor mentioned so far involves hiring labor for a cash wage. Today, over 50% of the labor employed in growing and harvesting cocoa in Western Nigeria is supplied by hired workers, many of whom come from other parts of Nigeria to work on the cocoa farms.[63] It is impossible to measure the way in which the proportion of hired to total labor employed in cocoa production has changed over time, but there is evidence that cocoa farmers used some hired labor almost from the start. The Agege planters, of course, hired labor before the turn of the century, and the practice seems to have spread quite early to Abeokuta, where some of the Agege planters had family ties. At a meeting with the Governor in 1903, the Secretary of the Agricultural Society of Abeokuta reported that the farmers' main problems were "labour and price"--what was needed to make agriculture profitable again was some substitute for the slave labor used in the past.[64] During a tour of the cocoa growing areas of Egbaland in 1901, however, a British forestry officer reported that although slaves were becoming scarce, farmers could not compete with European wages and were therefore forced to fall back on iwofa to supplement their own labor.[65]

I was not able to find any written evidence about when farmers first began to use hired labor in Ibadan and Ondo. From the farmers

---

[63] Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 668.

[64] Lagos Gazette, December 5, 1903.

[65] Lagos, Annual Report, 1901-02.

whom I interviewed, however, I gathered that some of the earliest cocoa planters in Ibadan had used hired labor but that the practice did not become common until later. In Table 10, I have tabulated the information I collected from fifty-seven individuals concerning the type of labor employed by the first planter in each of their families. The term "family" here refers to wives and children only. Practically every farmer works on his cocoa farm himself; the table indicates only labor used in addition to the farmer's own.

It was easier to get clear answers to the question of what type of labor was employed than it was to ascertain when different types were used. A few people specified that their forebears had used family labor at first, hired labor later; others were equally insistent that the family had always used hired labor since the introduction of cocoa to their area. Most people, however, were not sure just when their families first used hired labor, so that the date on which a family first planted cocoa may not accurately reflect the time at which they began to use a particular type of labor. This may be especially true of the families who only mentioned wage labor. It is quite possible that many of them received help from members of the family also but failed to mention it, or that they worked their first plots alone and did not hire workers until later when they began to increase the size of their farms. Also some families may at one time have used slave labor but preferred not to mention this fact to a foreigner.

Table 11 summarizes information on the types of labor employed by early cocoa planters in Ondo. Since almost none of the Ondo informants mentioned iwofas, I have simply distinguished "family" from "non-family" labor--the latter refers to hired workers, with a few exceptions. The greater proportion of hired labor in Ondo may be due partly to the

fact that the Ondos had not been involved in the nineteenth century tribal wars and therefore had not accumulated such a large slave population as had the Ibadans. This hypothesis in turn raises the question of whether the small supply of slave labor in Ondo served to inhibit the introduction of cocoa to this area. Were costs of production lower because of a relatively cheap labor supply in Ibadan and if so did this factor help to encourage the earlier development of cocoa there?

The Opportunity Cost of Family Labor

The answer to this question depends on the relationship between the costs of hired and non-hired labor in the two communities. The cost to the farmer of using his own or his family's labor is primarily an opportunity cost. They could be producing something else for home consumption or for sale and, in principle, we can measure the cost of their labor in terms of the returns they might have earned by doing so. Whether or not farmers actually did reduce their output of other goods in order to grow cocoa would not affect the value they placed on their own labor unless they were previously "underemployed," in the sense that they could not have increased their earnings at all by working longer hours. In view of the opportunities in nineteenth century Yorubaland for production both for local and foreign markets,[66] it seems unlikely that many farmers were really underemployed. Hence it is reasonable to assume, for purposes of calculation, that they valued their leisure at least as much as the alternative output they might have produced with their leisure time.

Of the types of non-hired labor described in the previous section, that supplied by slaves or through mutual aid may also be valued

---

[66] See above, chap. i.

in terms of opportunity cost. It is impossible to measure the cost of iwofas since the term of service, and therefore the rate of return on the farmer's loan, is not fixed but depends on the iwofa's ability or desire to repay the principal.[67] Hired labor, on the other hand, requires a regular cash outlay and therefore raises problems of finance. I shall deal with it separately from family labor.

To measure the opportunity cost of the farmer's own labor, we need to know what he could earn by producing other crops or engaging in some other occupation. The relevant alternatives were food farming, primary export goods and various crafts. General labor was probably not an attractive alternative to independent farming. As the figures in Tables 17 and 21 indicate, wages paid to laborers in this period were rarely greater than a shilling a day, whereas one could usually earn more growing foodstuffs to sell in the market.[68]

Information on earnings in different occupations is not readily available. There is some official data on wages which the government paid to various kinds of craftsmen, but it is not clear whether these

---

[67] My confidence in much of the material I collected in interviews rests on the fact that frequently the details vouchsafed by one informant were subsequently confirmed, either by other informants whom I interviewed at different times and in different places, or by documentary evidence. Usually such details concerned the activities of a particular individual but sometimes they involved quantitative information, such as the information I collected on the time it took to transport goods from Ibadan and Ondo to Lagos before mechanized transport was available. In the case of interest rates, however, this did not happen. Different sources on the rate of interest "customary" in Yoruba society vary enormously. R. E. Dennett told the West African Lands Committee that money lent was to be paid back double "but there is no limit to the time." (Minutes, Q 11433) According to the Oni of Ife, on the other hand, "the accepted rate of interest in Yoruba land is 20% per annum." (Odu, Journal of Yoruba and Related Studies, no. 3) Other sources give rates of 80% (Forde and Scott, p. 114.), or from 60% to 300% (Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 509.) In other words, there is not even any indirect evidence on the likely cost of iwofa labor, such as would be provided by a customary rate of interest which the terms of an iwofa's service might be designed to approximate.

[68] Cf. pp. 128-130.

wages were uniform throughout Southern Nigeria or whether the figures given in the Bluebooks refer only to Lagos. Hence one cannot even say whether artisans' wages were higher in Ibadan or in Ondo in the 1890's, let alone whether they were greater or less than returns to farming.

It is also difficult to measure returns to labor engaged in producing export goods, such as palm oil or rubber, since there is little information on the physical productivity of labor in these pursuits.[69] Relatively speaking, Ondos probably earned less than Ibadans did for such goods; they both sold to the same market--European firms in Lagos--and transportation from Ondo was more expensive. My informants stated unanimously that, before the advent of road and rail transport, it took three days to headload goods from Ibadan to Lagos, whereas the trip from Ondo to Lagos was three days by headload plus three days by canoe. Measured in terms of returns to export goods other than cocoa, the opportunity cost of labor was probably lower in Ondo than in Ibadan, although we cannot say how much lower.

In the case of food farming, however, returns to labor appear to have been higher in Ondo. The evidence for this conclusion, which I shall present in some detail, cannot be used to prove arithmetically that labor costs were higher and therefore cocoa growing less profitable in Ondo than in Ibadan, before 1900. It merely suggests that, ceteris paribus, farmers in Ondo had less to gain by planting cocoa in the 1890's than had the Ibadans.

Data on the physical productivity of labor in food farming is scanty. The best sources of historical information on this subject are unpublished "Assessment Reports," compiled by British District

---

[69] Presumably cotton was not a very attractive alternative to cocoa in the 1890's; exports were generally low in this period. See Table 1.

Officers for purposes of taxation. In these reports the District Officers generally gave the yield per acre of various crops and a rough minimum estimate of the acreage cultivated by a man and one wife. (The government usually bent over backwards to avoid over-taxing farmers, probably to reduce popular opposition to the taxes.) They made no attempt to calculate the total number of hours or man-days actually devoted to the production of foodstuffs over the course of a year. The only information on this point is that provided in Galletti, Baldwin and Dina's study of Nigerian cocoa farmers in the early 1950's. The authors give yields per acre of principal food crops in eight villages. They also give, for the same eight villages, the hours which farmers expended per acre on the production of all food crops combined. By dividing the yield of each crop by the total number of hours per acre we can derive a crude measure of man-hour production on a representative acre of food crops--e.g., one man-hour produces: x lbs. yam + y lbs. cassava + z lbs. maize. The results are shown in Table 12.

Galletti, Baldwin and Dina's figures for the yield per acre of various food crops are on the whole somewhat lower than those cited in earlier documents. (See Table 13). For example, farmers produced more than 6,000 lbs. of yams per acre in only two of the eight villages which they studied, whereas, in the 1920's and 1930's, most observers estimated that the average farmer harvested between 7,000 and 12,000 lbs. of yams per acre. In general, the villages where Galletti, Baldwin and Dina found the lowest yields for yam and maize are in areas where cocoa has been grown for a long time. Uncultivated land is scarce and fallow periods short, in these areas, and some people have migrated from them in search of better and more abundant land on which to grow

TABLE 12

AVERAGE PRODUCT OF LABOR EMPLOYED IN FOOD FARMING
ON A "REPRESENTATIVE ACRE"

	Column 1.	Column 2.		
	Total Hours Worked Per Acre[a]	Yam + Cassava + Maize (lbs. per man-hr.)[b]		
Ibesse	143	11.03	12.45	1.27
Mamu	409	2.72	10.03	0.76
Ajia	591	3.30	0.64	0.56
Olosun	421	9.23	3.21	1.76
Gbongan	147	25.77	39.67	4.18
Oshu	370	16.22	1.73	3.46
Owena	624	12.66	2.50	0.86
Isho	148	23.36	4.01	2.55

Notes and Sources:

a. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 307.

b. Calculated by dividing each column of Table 13, section II by the hours worked per acre on all food crops (Col. 1). The average output per man-hour per acre is thus expressed as a composite yield of three crops. This procedure was necessary because figures are not available on the number of hours worked on each crop separately.

TABLE 13

YIELDS PER ACRE OF BASIC FOOD CROPS

I. Miscellaneous Sources	Yam	Cassava	Maize
Western Provinces (1930)[a]	3 tons	Up to 5 tons	1000 lbs.
Western Provinces (1940)[b]	7000 to 12000 lbs.		
Oyo Province (1940)[c]	9000 lbs.		
Owo Division, Ondo Province (1928)[d]	5400 to 9000 lbs.		2000 lbs.
Owo Division, one farm (1928-30)[e]	6000 lbs. net		1600 lbs.
Owo Division, one village (1928-30)[f]	6000 lbs. net		1400 lbs.
Benin (1928)[g]	5306 lbs.		1020 lbs.
Moor Plantation, 1911[h]			897 lbs.
1912-14			1265.7 lbs. (two crops)
1920	3.8 to 12.1 tons		
1922-25	7921 lbs.		1992 lbs.
1926-29	7582 lbs.		2016 lbs.
II. Eight Villages (Galletti, et. al.)[i]			
Ibesse (Abeokuta)	1578 lbs.	1781 lbs.	182 lbs.
Mamu (Ijebu)	1112	4102	311
Ajia (Ibadan)	1952	378	331
Olosun (Ibadan)	3888	1353	741

TABLE 13--Continued

II. Eight Villages (Galletti, et. al.)[i]	Yam	Cassava	Maize
Gbongan (Ibadan)	3789	5832	614
Oshu (Oyo)	6005	641	1282
Owena (Ondo)	7903	1560	536
Isho (Ondo)	3458	593	378

Notes and Sources:

a. O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, West African Agriculture (Cambridge: University Press, 1933), pp. 135, 149, 150.

b. Forde and Scott, p. 82, n. 1.

c. Idem.

d. "Assessment Report, Owo Division, Ondo Province," 1928 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/21546).

e. Forde and Scott, p. 82. Net of 3000 lbs. allowance for seed and wastage.

f. Ibid., p. 83.

g. "Assessment Report, Benin Division, Benin Province," 1928 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/09125).

h. Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports. Figures for 1922-25 and 1926-29 are for plots treated with green manure.

i. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 330. Figures do not make any allowance for seed.

both food crops and cocoa.[70] Those remaining in the area have put increasing emphasis on cassava, which does relatively well on poor soils. In the old cocoa areas, between forty per cent and ninety per cent of the acres under food crops were planted in cassava, whereas cassava occupied less than twenty five per cent of the food farms in Ondo Province, where cocoa was planted more recently.[71]

It is difficult to judge whether or not returns to labor in food farming were also higher in earlier decades. C. D. Forde quotes one estimate, made by the Department of Agriculture sometime before World War II, that it took about forty man-days per annum to produce an acre of yams.[72] Yields recorded by the Department of Agriculture on ordinary farms ranged from 7000 to 12000 lbs. of yams per acre,[73] implying a gross return to labor of between 175 and 300 lbs. per man-day. If farmers worked eight hours per day,[74] returns per man-hour would be between 22

---

[70]Several of my informants in the Ibadan area mentioned cases of people who had migrated eastwards, to Ife or Ondo, in search of good cocoa land in the last ten years. The same point is made in C. A. P. Takes, "Socio-economic Factors Affecting Agricultural Productivity in some villages of Oshun Division (Western Region)," NISER Preliminary Report (mimeographed), February, 1963.

[71]"Manioc can produce an economic crop on soils so depleted by repeated cultivation that they have become unsuitable for other production . . ." W. O. Jones, Manioc in Africa (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 16. The increasing use of cassava indicates the growing scarcity of land in the "old" cocoa areas of Western Nigeria. See ibid., p. 255.

[72]Forde and Scott, p. 82. Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, quote a much higher figure (150 to 240 man-days per acre) but their own survey data suggests that farmers spend less time on all food crops combined. See Table 12.

[73]Ibid., p. 82, n. 1.

[74]This may be a fairly accurate average. Johnson says that farmers usually worked "from 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with intervals for meals." (p. 118). On the advice of an agricultural officer in the Ondo area, I held most of my interviews there during the hottest part of the

and 37.5 lbs. These figures are certainly higher than those given in the Galletti study for old cocoa areas, such as Ajia, where the average farmer produced 3.3 lbs. of yams plus 0.6 lb. each of maize and cassava per hour. On the other hand, they are not very different from Galletti, Baldwin and Dina's figures for the newer cocoa areas, such as Gbongan (near Ife) or the Ondo villages. This evidence suggests that the average productivity of labor in food farming may have been higher in the old part of the cocoa belt around the turn of the century than it was in the 1950's. At least, there is no evidence that physical returns to labor were lower on food farms around Ibadan than on those in Ondo in the early years of the century, since there was abundant fallow land in both areas at that time.

We must therefore turn to the prices farmers could get for their food crops in local markets for evidence on differences in the opportunity cost of farmers' labor in the two areas. We have first-hand evidence on food prices in the 1890's only for Ondo; there is no way to compare them directly with Ibadan prices at the same time. According to E. M. Lijadu, food prices in Ondo rose steadily during the 1890's for several reasons.[75] In 1891, a fire destroyed part of Ondo town and a good deal of the newly harvested crops along with it. The following year, the Ondos became involved in a war with a neighboring tribe and neglected to plant

---

day, around 1:00 p.m. During the growing season, farmers work from 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. till around noon; eat and rest in the middle of the day, and then return to their fields from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. when it is cooler. Hence people were most likely to be available at midday.

[75]The rest of this paragraph is based on a letter from E. M. Lijadu to the Finance Committee of the C. M. S. Yoruba Mission in February, 1898, explaining why he and his fellow agents in Ondo should get a larger living allowance than they were then receiving. He based his argument on the rising cost of living in Ondo, caused by a prolonged shortage of foodstuffs. Lijadu, Diary.

as much as usual. In 1893, peace and the opening of the roads brought an influx of traders to Ondo, who greatly increased the local demand for foodstuffs. After 1894, the "rubber trade turned the attention of farmers from the soil to itself." By February, 1898, when Lijadu wrote, the price of yams in Ondo was almost three times the price in Lagos. (See Table 14).

Unfortunately the prices of foodstuffs in Lagos[76] cannot be used as a basis for estimating food prices in Ibadan, since there is no reason to believe that Ibadan farmers then produced food for the Lagos market. Ibadan is some ninety miles inland from Lagos and there is no river to provide cheap transport between the two cities. Before the railway was built, goods had to be headloaded from one to the other and it is unlikely that Lagos would have imported food by this expensive route when it could draw on water-borne supplies from the northern part of the Colony and from southern Egba and Ijebu territories. In 1901, a British official estimated that some 250 canoes carried goods between Lagos and an interior market up river from the lagoon. They carried yams, plantains, maize, bananas, cocoa, palm oil and palm kernels to Lagos. He also estimated that about 1000 logs were floated down this river to Lagos every month.[77] The comparison between food prices in Lagos and Ondo merely helps to indicate that prices in Ondo were unusually high at this time, considering that Lagos did have to rely on foodstuffs brought in

---

[76] Lagos, Bluebooks. The Bluebooks do not give any information on how these figures were obtained; evidently, since a wide range of prices is usually given for any one commodity, the figures were designed only to give an approximate order of magnitude. Even so, we do not know whether the figures quoted were collected through any sort of systematic survey of actual market transactions or even whether new inquiries were made at regular intervals. There is no point, therefore, in trying to use this data for anything but a very rough indication of the general level of prices in a particular period.

[77] Lagos, Annual Report, 1900-1901.

TABLE 14

PRICES OF BASIC FOODSTUFFS IN LOCAL MARKETS, 1890's

	Lagos	Ondo
1891-97		
Yam	12/6 to £1/4/0 for 120	
Maize	2/6 per bu., 1891-95	
	7/0 per bu., 1896-97	
Cassava	50s per ton	
1898		
		Feb.
Yam	10/6 to £1 for 120	30s to 60s for 120
Maize	n.a.	1s for approx. 122 lbs. or 102 s/ton
Cassava	50s/ton	n.a.
Fowl	6½d each	9d each
		Sept.
Yam		24s to 30s for 120
Maize		no change

Sources:

Lagos, Bluebooks.
C. Phillips, Diary, Mar., 1898.
E. M. Lijadu, Diary, 1898.

from some distance by canoe, whereas the Ondo farms began at the edge of the town and there was no shortage of fertile land in the area.

The only relevant evidence we have on returns to food farming in Ibadan at this time is the fact that increasing numbers of people apparently turned to agriculture after the wars. As an Ibadan chief explained to the West African Lands Committee, "since they /the Ibadans/ have relinquished war there is nothing remaining for them but their rural lands, to live upon . . . ."[78] Ceteris paribus, one would expect food prices to have been lower in Ibadan than in Ondo during the 1890's, although we have no direct evidence that other things were all equal. It is interesting to note, however, that Ibadan apparently never had trouble feeding its large population, even during the wars. An Ijebu who was captured by the Ibadans in 1881, when Ibadan was involved simultaneously in wars with almost all the other Yoruba states, returned home shortly thereafter with the astonishing news that "Ibadan, which was reported to be on its last leg and on the verge of starvation, was actually revelling in plenty such as they /the Ijebus/ never enjoyed at home! The farmers had no outlet for their produce whilst the Ijebus, who are nearly all traders were sorely in need of foodstuffs."[79]

After 1901, when the railway reached Ibadan, Ibadan farmers faced the additional option of producing maize for export. We know that the Agege planters had found this a profitable undertaking.[80] In 1904, the Chief Secretary to the Governor in Lagos wrote to the Resident of Ibadan asking him to encourage farmers to grow maize. "One firm in Lagos is

---

[78] W.A.L.C., Minutes, Q 13215.

[79] Johnson, p. 451.

[80] Webster, NISER Conference Proceedings, (March, 1962), p. 125.

prepared to buy to any extent at twenty shillings a ton Ibadan and thirty shillings Lagos."[81] In other words, the price that firms were offering for maize in Ibadan in 1904 was one-fifth the price consumers paid in Ondo in 1898, if Lijadu's figures are correct. Moreover, if the ten shilling differential between the Lagos and the Ibadan prices is typical of this period, we may take Lagos food prices as generous estimates of those in Ibadan, at least after the opening of the railway.

In short, available evidence indicates that in the 1890's, returns to food farming in Ondo were high, because local market prices were high. Rising prices were, in turn, largely a consequence of the rubber boom, which offered Ondos a means of earning cash income without the waiting and uncertainty involved in growing cocoa.[82] During the 1890's, then, the opportunity cost of using their own labor to plant cocoa instead of growing food crops or gathering rubber may well have seemed higher to farmers in Ondo than to farmers in Ibadan, where labor was relatively abundant after the wars.

Before I proceed to discuss the cost of hiring labor to work on a cocoa farm, it may be useful to summarize the information presented so far on costs of land and family labor. For farmers who did not use hired workers, these two items account for most of the cost of producing cocoa, and are the chief sources of differences between production

---

[81] Chief Secretary, Lagos, to Resident, Ibadan, March 5, 1904, in "Resident's Letter Book, 1903-05" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

[82] Since no one grew cocoa in Ondo at this time, farmers there could not be certain whether it would be profitable or not.

costs in Ibadan and Ondo. Seed and equipment were minor items, especially in the early days when farmers used no equipment other than the hoes and machetes already employed in other kinds of farm work.

In Table 16, I have made some rough estimates of the relative importance of land and labor in the total cost of producing cocoa in the two areas. If we assume that all labor on cocoa farms in the 1890's was provided by the farmer or his immediate family--i.e., that it should be valued in terms of opportunity cost--and measure opportunity cost in terms of returns to labor in food farming, the cost of establishing and maintaining one acre of cocoa was considerably higher in Ondo than in Ibadan.[83] To calculate these costs, I began with the estimate quoted on page 125 above, that it takes 40 man-days to cultivate one acre of yams. Tables 9 and 15 give estimates of the labor time required to establish and maintain an acre of cocoa, and Table 13 an estimate of the yield of an acre of yams. Using these figures, I have expressed the labor cost of cultivating an acre of cocoa in terms of the yams which could have been produced instead.

For instance, to establish an acre of cocoa requires somewhere between eighty and 150 man-days of labor during the first five years, net of the labor which is offset by the value of the food crops grown along with the cocoa during the first couple of years. If this labor were employed in producing yams, it could cultivate between two and 3.75 acres, which would yield on the average 6000 lbs. net or 2000 yams each. During the period 1898 to 1902, 120 yams cost anywhere from 10/6 to 20/- in Lagos, according to the Bluebooks. At this rate, 2000 yams would have been worth 175 to 334 shillings. Thus, for a farmer who could sell his

---

[83] Assuming that food prices in Ibadan were no higher than those in Lagos.

TABLE 15

LABOR EMPLOYED ANNUALLY ON ONE ACRE OF COCOA DURING PRODUCTIVE YEARS (MAN-DAYS)

1. Ibadan area, 1938[a]	Weeding		20	
	Harvesting and transport		23	
	Total		43	
2. Abeokuta area, 1938[b]	Weeding		12	
	Harvesting		21.3	
	Total		33.3	
3. Abeokuta area, 1938[c]	Weeding			23
	Picking pods	3		
	Breaking pods	2		
	Transport from field to village for drying	1		
	Drying	3		
		9 x three harvestings		27
	Total			50
4. Abeokuta area, 1938[c]	Weeding			24
	Picking pods	4		
	Breaking pods	2		
	Transport for drying	2		
	Drying	7		
		15 x four harvestings		60
	Total			84
5. Department of Agriculture,[d] 1941	Weeding		10 to 34	
	Harvesting		70 to 86	
	Total		80 to 120	
6. Eight villages, 1951-52[e]	Weeding		159 man-hrs.	
	Harvesting		52 man-hrs.	
	Total		211	

Notes and Sources: (a) Forde and Scott, p. 113. (b) Ibid., p. 114.
(c) Ibid., p. 115. Each set of figures refers to one farm only.
(d) Ibid., p. 96. (e) Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 671.

TABLE 16

COSTS OF PRODUCING ONE ACRE OF COCOA NEAR LAGOS AND IN ONDO IN THE LATE 1890's[a] (SHILLINGS)

		"Near Lagos"	Ondo
Establishment (5 years)			
Land[b]		25 to 125	0
Labor - [c]	80 man-days per acre	350 to 668	1000
	150 man-days per acre	655 to 1252	1875
Operation (bearing years)			
Land		5s	0
Labor - [d]	30 man-days per acre	313 to 246	375
	50 man-days per acre	201 to 401	600
	80 man-days per acre	350 to 668	1000

Notes and Sources:

a. Assuming all labor is provided by the farmer and his family.

b. Up to £5 initial payment plus 5s ishakole for 5 years in Ibadan. See Tables 6 and 7.

c. We assume one acre yams requires 40 man-days labor. Labor inputs to cocoa are given in Table 9 ; yam yields per acre in Table 13; yam prices in Table 14. Calculations are explained in the text, pp. 131, 134.

d. See Tables 13, 14 and 15.

yams at Lagos prices, an acre of cocoa would cost between 350 and 668 shillings (at 120 yams for 10/6) during the first five years; or from 655 to 1252 shillings (at 120 yams for 20/-). In Ondo, on the other hand, at Lijadu's price of 5 yams for 1/3, the same acre of cocoa would cost between 1000 and 1875 shillings to establish.

I used similar procedures to estimate annual operating costs during the years when the trees were in bearing; the results, shown in Table 16, indicate that the difference in labor costs between the two areas was probably greater than the difference in the cost of acquiring land. Since land prices were low when cocoa was first introduced to Ibadan and Ondo, the cost of labor was the major item which farmers had to set against potential returns in deciding whether to plant the new crop. On balance, therefore, the total cost of establishing and maintaining a cocoa farm with family labor was probably higher in Ondo.

The Cash Costs of Hired Labor

So far our discussion of the cost of growing cocoa in different areas has proceeded on the assumption that all of the labor on early cocoa farms was supplied by the farmer and his family. In fact, some farmers have used hired labor for a long time, although it is difficult to attach a date to the beginning of this practice in inland communities. Is there any reason to think that farmers found it more economical to use hired rather than family labor on their cocoa plots or that the use of hired labor would affect the relative costs of producing cocoa in different areas?

We have already quoted evidence to show that farmers near Lagos found it difficult to compete with European wages (of nine pence to one

shilling per day) around the turn of the century.[84] According to the Bluebooks these rates had been in effect in Lagos throughout the 1890's. Although the British probably hired more people in Lagos than in interior towns before 1900, there is no reason to believe that wage rates were lower in the interior. In Ibadan especially, a number of people found employment on the railway or as porters for the British soldiers and officials who were pacifying the country in preparation for setting up the Protectorate. From 1896 to 1901, the going rate for common laborers on the railway was a shilling a day, and Rev. C. Phillips had to offer the same rate to get men from Ibadan to build a house for him in Ondo in 1896. (See Table 17).

Even if the wages actually paid to farm laborers were lower than this--e.g., in 1905, the Bluebook states that "native farmers" paid £7/4 to £9 per annum, "European planters " £12--it does not follow that hired workers offered a cheap source of labor to Yoruba cocoa farmers. Wages were only part of the cost of hiring labor to work on one's cocoa farm. In the case of seasonal labor, it was customary for the employer to provide food and lodging for the workers while they were engaged in his service. Also, there was the problem of financing payments to hired labor during the six or seven years before the young trees began to yield much return. During the first two or three years after the cocoa trees were planted, farmers grew food crops among them. By providing shade for the young trees, the food crops helped protect nutrients in the soil, avoid erosion and suppress weeds.[85] The labor engaged to weed the cocoa plot automatically tended the food crops as well and could be paid out of

---

[84] See p. 116 above.

[85] Urquhart, pp. 67, 74, 102-03.

the proceeds of the latter. According to Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, farmers spend anywhere from ninety to 500 hours weeding an acre of cocoa each year.[86] Other estimates suggest between twenty and sixty man-days per acre per annum.[87] If an acre of land yielded 6000 lbs. net of yams, this would mean a return to labor of between twelve and sixty-seven lbs. per man-hour, or 100 to 300 lbs. per man-day. These amounts would certainly have been sufficient to cover the cost of laborers' wages if the figures in Table 17 are at all representative of wage rates actually paid. Indeed, when asked whether the yield of food crops interplanted with young cocoa trees covered the costs of caring for the trees, farmers have usually replied in the affirmative.[88]

After two or three years, however, it is no longer feasible to grow foodstuffs among the cocoa trees, and for the next two to four years, farmers must find some other means of paying hired labor. Presumably the same problem exists for labor employed to clear land initially and to plant cocoa. In 1938, an agricultural officer in the Abeokuta area estimated that farmers incurred an annual cost of about £1 in interest payments on capital borrowed to meet wage bills of £1/5.[89] Whether capital costs were this high forty years earlier is hard to say, but indirect evidence suggests that they were.

For one thing, farmers tended not to use much hired labor until they had successfully established a plot or two of cocoa trees. There are several pieces of evidence to support this point. One is the testimony of farmers themselves that they or their fathers began with small plots of cocoa which they could cultivate in addition to their regular

---

[86] Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 671.

[87] Forde and Scott, pp. 95-96, 113-15; see Table 14.

[88] Ibid., p. 113.

[89] Forde and Scott, p. 114.

TABLE 17

WAGE RATES FOR UNSKILLED LABOR PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT OR BY MERCHANT FIRMS

	Lagos	Abeokuta	Ibadan	Ilesha	Ondo	Forcados	Northern Nigeria
1896					1 s/day[f] (builder)		
1896-1901	1 s/day[a] (railway)						
1901		1 s/day[b] (transport) 9 d/day (general)	9 d/day[c] (transport)				
1902			£1/6/0 per month[c] (road overseer)				
1903			9 d/day[c] (railway) £24 to 54[c] per annum (clerk)			1 s/day[h] + food (general) 2 to 3 s/day[h] + food (foreman)	
1905							9 d/day[a] (transport) 9 d/day[a] (general, PWD) 1s/day[a] (headman, PWD) 6 d/day[a] (railway)
1908							
1914			1 s/day[d] (roads) 25 to 30 s/month[d] (police)				
1920-1921				1 s/day[e] (farm)	£2 to £2/2/0 per month[g] (timber concessions)		

TABLE 17--Continued

WAGE RATES FOR UNSKILLED LABOR
PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT OR BY
MERCHANT FIRMS

Notes and Sources:

a. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Cd. 2325, 1904, "Papers Relating to the Construction of Railways in Sierra Leone, Lagos and the Gold Coast" and Cd. 2787, 1905, "Correspondence Relating to Railway Construction in Nigeria."

b. Lagos, Annual Report, 1901-1902.

c. Correspondence in "Resident's Letter Book, 1901-1903" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

d. Correspondence in "Bale's Letter Book, 1915-1917" (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

e. Oyo Province, Annual Report, 1921 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/06027).

f. Phillips, Diary, November 23, 1896.

g. Ondo Division, "Native Court Judgment Book, 1924" (Nigerian National Archives, ONDODIV 7/3).

h. Lagos Gazette, January, 1903.

food farms and waited until the first plot began to yield some income before planting others. In one village south of Ibadan, an informant explained that at first farmers planted "small cocoa" and waited for it to grow. When it proved successful, they planted more and cut down their production of foodstuffs. Now, this particular village is no longer self-sufficient in food but has to rely on supplies from outside the cocoa belt.

The very fact that cocoa growing developed earlier in Ibadan, where there was a large supply of slave labor in the 1890's, than in Ondo, where slaves were scarcer, lends support to the hypothesis that farmers did not use hired labor when they first planted cocoa. Even after the turn of the century, when peace and increasing opportunities to earn cash incomes from agriculture or government employment began to undermine the system of domestic slavery, it was probably easier for men to retain the services of their former slaves than for those who had never owned slaves to hire workers. One could give an ex-slave land or the social benefits of one's protection and patronage, in return for the right to pay him when convenient.

In this context it is interesting to note that some of the first Ondos to begin to plant cocoa in outlying communities around the turn of the century did own large numbers of slaves. Ipaiye, one of the founders of Ajebamidele, had been a slave trader at one time and still had slaves of his own when he took up farming at Ajebamidele. According to his son, he had so many that the members of different tribes among his slaves formed their own little tribal associations, each with its own headman who was responsible for organizing the work of his group. Ipaiye gave them their own land, which they helped each other to work according to the aro system. "That was his method of paying

them." Kolajo, the first man to plant cocoa at Okeigbo, was also described as a "big man" with many dependents, whose resources were such that he "never had to borrow money" or at least never pawned cocoa trees to raise cash.

Other Ondos, who did not own slaves and who wanted to hire laborers to help establish their cocoa farms, may have had to accumulate some capital first in order to finance the undertaking. A number of the farmers whom I interviewed in Ondo said that they or their fathers used savings from previous occupations to establish their cocoa farms, whereas no one in Ibadan mentioned such a thing. In other words, the high cost of hiring labor in Ondo may have deterred some people from planting cocoa until they had first accumulated some funds from another source.

Returns to Growing Cocoa

So far, I have said nothing about the prices farmers could expect to receive for their cocoa in Ibadan and Ondo. There is no information on prices actually paid for cocoa in interior markets before 1900, chiefly because very little cocoa was actually purchased then, even in Ibadan. We are forced, therefore, to assume that farmers received the Lagos price less the cost of transporting the cocoa to Lagos, less middlemen's profits.

Table 18 compares hypothetical annual returns to growing cocoa in Lagos and Ondo. The calculations use the opportunity costs of labor shown in Table 16 and the market price of cocoa in Lagos,[90] and make no allowance for transport costs or middlemen's profits. The figures for Ondo suggest that, given what farmers could expect to earn by producing

---

[90]The market price in Lagos is probably the price paid by European merchants in Lagos, although the Bluebooks are not specific on this point. It is always lower than the export unit value.

TABLE 18

ANNUAL RETURNS TO GROWING COCOA IN THE 1890's (SHILLINGS)

	When price is Minimum		Maximum
1. Lagos			
Gross receipts per acre[a]	250	to	437.5
Cost: Minimum 19[b] + 201[c] = 220			
Maximum 69 + 401 = 470			
Net Returns per acre (no transport)			
with minimum costs	30	to	217.5
with maximum costs	-220	to	- 32.5
2. Ondo[a]			
Gross receipts per acre[a]	250	to	437.5
Cost: Minimum 50[b] + 600[c] = 650			
Maximum 93.8 + 600 = 693.8			
Net returns per acre (no transport)			
with minimum costs	-400	to	-212.5
with maximum costs	-493.8	to	-256.2
3. Ondo			
Gross receipts per acre[d]	375	to	656.2
Cost: Minimum 650			
Maximum 693.8			
Net return per acre (no transport)			
with minimum cost	-275	to	6.2
with maximum cost	-318.8	to	-37.5

Notes and Sources:

a. Assuming cocoa yields average 1000 lbs. per acre and the price is between 3 and 5.2 pence per lb. (See Table 18).

b. Total cost as shown in Table 16 spread evenly over twenty years which is assumed to be the average life of the trees. Actually, it is the period during which they are likely to yield 1000 lbs/A.

c. Assuming an average annual labor input of 50 man-days per acre. See Tables 15 and 16.

d. Assuming cocoa yields 1500 lbs. per acre and that the price is 3 to 5.2 pence per lb. as before. There is evidence that cocoa yields were sometimes this high in earlier years. Presumably, however, such yields would occur only under favorable conditions. A farmer could not count on such returns, yet, in Ondo, he would need them to break even at the maximum price.

TABLE 19

COCOA PRICES

	Export Unit Value (Lagos) £/ton[a]	Lagos Market Price[b] £/ton	"Ibadan" (£/ton)
1890	52.1	. .	
1	49.0	30	
2	56.3	30	
3	. .	28	
4	. .	28	
5	. .	28 to 37	
6	. .	28 to 37	
7	. .	28 to 37	
8	. .	28 to 37	
9	. .	49	
1900	52	28 to 37	
1	50	49	
2	44	49	
3	44	49	
4	38	. .	
5	34	. .	
6	36	. .	
7	52	. .	
8	36	. .	
9	32	. .	
1910	34	. .	
11	38	. .	
12	38	. .	
13	44	23/10[c]; 18 to 30[d]	
14	30	. .	
15	30	. .	
16[f]	39.5 to 44 (Dec.)	25.6 (Dec.)	24/2;20/7(FAQ)
17[f]	. .	21	15/5 (Dec.)

Notes and Sources:

a. Lagos Gazette and Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, "Statistical Abstracts for the Colonies."

b. Lagos, Bluebooks.

c. Figure supplied by John Holt Company for "pre-war" price. District Officer, Ibadan, to Resident, Oyo, Jan. 22, 1919 (Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 4/7, 101/1918).

d. Figure supplied by G. B. Ollivant Company for Oyo. G. B. Ollivant Co. to Resident, Oyo, Nov. 29, 1918 (Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 4/7, 101/1918).

e. Price at Okitipupa. "District Commissioner's Office Journal," 1903-12 (Nigerian National Archives, ONDODIV 8/1).

f. All data for 1916 and 1917 from Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette.

TABLE 20

COCOA YIELDS (LBS. PER ACRE)

Date	Yield	Source
1912	1300 to 3250	2 to 5 lbs. per tree x 650 trees per acre. Figures taken from W. H. Johnson, Cocoa: It's Cultivation and Preparation (London: J. Murray, 1912), p. 163, and "Assessment Report, Owode District, Abeokuta Province," 1930 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/27483).
1913-18	950	O. T. Faulkner and J. R. Mackie, West African Agriculture (Cambridge University Press, 1940), p. 108.
1922	261 to 319	Nigeria. Department of Agriculture, Bulletin.
1925	362	Refers to Agege. Ibid.
1926	339	Idem.
1926-27	1904	"Assessment Report, Otta District, Abeokuta Province," 1926/7 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/20629).
Before 1930	1000 to 1300	Faulkner and Mackie, p. 108.
1938	500	Forde and Scott, p. 256.
1938	900	Ibid., pp. 87-88.
1938	448 to 672	Ibid., pp. 95, 113-115.
1951-52	227 to 397	Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, pp. 675-76.

foodstuffs for the local market,[91] it was probably not worth their while to plant cocoa at this time. Even under the most favorable assumptions about yields and labor requirements, an Ondo farmer could barely expect to break even; obviously the additional cost of transporting the crop to Lagos would be prohibitive. In Ibadan, on the other hand, the farmer's chances of earning a profit were better. If we assume that the average carrier could headload sixty pounds of cocoa to Lagos in three days, the cost of transporting 1000 lbs. (or the yield of one acre) would have been about 37.5 shillings.[92] Thus, when the Lagos price of cocoa was greater than three pence per pound, the Ibadan farmer might reasonably expect to profit from the crop, unless he had had to devote a great deal of labor to his farm.

Once again, I must emphasize that these calculations serve not to measure actual costs and returns, but rather to indicate that, compared with alternative means of earning income, cocoa was likely to have been more attractive in Ibadan than in Ondo during the 1890's. In addition, Ibadans probably enjoyed a greater supply of slave labor at this time; hence, an Ibadan farmer who did not wish to spend much of his own time growing cocoa might have been able to get labor to work his farm more cheaply than could his counterpart in Ondo, who would have had to hire laborers. In these circumstances, the fact that Ibadans began to grow cocoa, at least experimentally, in the 1890's, whereas the Ondos did not, suggests that farmers are likely to reject a new crop if they

---

[91] Probably returns to tapping rubber were higher, since one of the main reasons for the high food prices in Ondo seems to have been that people were devoting a great deal of time to gathering rubber. See above, p. 130.

[92] If carriers received 9 pence per day (see Table 17), the cost of headloading 1000 lbs. for three days is:

$$\frac{1000}{60} \text{ lbs. per day} \times 3 \text{ days} \times 9 \text{ pence} = 37.5 \text{ shillings.}$$

do not expect to profit from it. It does not prove, however, that farmers will accept an innovation simply because it is profitable.

Ondo, 1900-1920

So far, our analysis of costs and returns to growing cocoa suggests that producers in Ibadan began to grow cocoa earlier than those in Ondo partly because the chances of earning a profit on it appeared greater in Ibadan at the time when cocoa was first introduced to Western Nigeria. If profit be the major criterion by which producers decide whether to adopt an innovation, one would also expect to find that farmers in Ondo began to plant cocoa as soon as it became profitable for them to do so. Is there any evidence that this is, in fact, what happened?

Except for early experiments in the outlying settlements of Okeigbo and Ajebamidele, Ondo farmers did not begin to grow cocoa until after 1910.[93] In general the period from about 1912 to 1920 was similar in Ondo to the 1890's in Ibadan. In 1912, a prominent Ondo Christian, D. Fadashe, who had known about cocoa for some time, established a cocoa farm about ten miles south of Ondo near what is now Igunshin. Other farmers began to experiment with the crop at about the same time; cocoa seeds were brought into a number of established villages and planted in small quantities by a few farmers. After 1920, when the results of the first planters' efforts were plain to all their neighbors, increasing numbers of people took up cocoa growing and, by the mid-1920's, were beginning to found new settlements in parts of Ondo territory where the soil was particularly well suited to cocoa. This second stage in the development of cocoa growing in Ondo corresponded to the pattern of expansion in Ibadan where, during the first twenty years of this century,

---

[93] See above, chap. ii, p. 50.

hundreds of new farming hamlets were established on good cocoa land in the forests south of town.

Why did Ondos choose to start experimenting with cocoa in the second decade of the twentieth century? There is no evidence that any change had occurred by this time in the system of acquiring farmland in Ondo, or the terms on which it was available. The opportunity cost of farmers' labor may have fallen somewhat just after 1900, as the rubber boom subsided and people had more time to produce a surplus of foodstuffs. New opportunities for gain were not long in presenting themselves, however. During the first fifteen years of the century, labor became increasingly scarce, especially in Lagos and areas near the railway. Farmers in Egbaland, who had taken up cocoa in the 1890's, were reported in 1902 to be using little hired labor since they could not compete with European wages.[94] In commenting on the costs of extending the railway north of Ibadan, the High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria noted that "more labour is now needed in this country for economic purposes than was ever the case before" and that it was not always easy to hire workers since individuals could farm on their own and count on a good market for their produce.[95] The scarcity of labor continually plagued the Agege planters, some of whom resorted to waylaying trainloads of workers bound for Lagos or for other plantations and trying to lure the men to their own farms.[96]

---

[94]Lagos, Annual Report, 1901-1902. See above, n. 65.

[95]Macgregor to Chamberlain, December 23, 1901, in Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Cd. 2787, 1905, "Correspondence Relating to Railway Construction in Nigeria."

[96]This detail was supplied by Dr. J. B. Webster of the University of Ibadan.

The scarcity of labor is reflected to some extent in available data on the average wages earned in various trades. (See Table 21.) According to the official Bluebooks, the wages paid by the government to artisans and laborers remained roughly constant for a period of twenty years prior to 1908. At that time, however, some artisans' wages began to rise, suggesting that the demand for skilled labor was increasing in relation to the supply. To be sure, skilled trades, for which only properly trained persons would qualify, did not represent practical alternatives to the average unskilled farmer in Ondo. The prospect of good earnings for skilled workers in centers of European activity may, however, have attracted Ondos willing to take risks or to experiment with new activities in order to increase their earnings, thus diverting them from experimentation with cocoa. This hypothesis is consistent with the evidence presented in Chapter II on the number of Ondo cocoa farmers who had worked at some other trade, often migrating from Ondo to do so, before they planted cocoa.

In addition to government jobs, some Ondos began to go into the timber business at this time. A number of European firms and some Ondo chiefs as well acquired timber concessions in the forests around Ondo during the early years of the century and hired local contractors to work them. One of the first important "land" disputes to come before the British authorities in Ondo involved a question of various chiefs' rights to receive royalties from timber concessionnaires.[97] The dispute first broke out in 1913. By 1920, there were seventeen separate concessions in Ondo District.[98] However, the price of timber did not begin to rise until after 1910 (see Table 24) or at about the same time as Ondo farmers

---

[97] Bridges, "Intelligence Report, Ondo District."

[98] Nigeria, Trade Report, 1923.

began to plant cocoa. There is no reason to believe that Ondos delayed experimenting with cocoa because they preferred to become timber contractors. It is interesting to note that D. Fadashe, the Ondo Christian who started to plant cocoa at Igunshin in 1912, turned to cocoa after he had tried to establish a timber contracting business and had failed.

The prices of other export commodities, except for rubber, were generally buoyant in this period, offering producers further attractive alternatives to cocoa.[99] Unfortunately, we have no evidence on local food prices in Ondo at this time. We can, however, attempt a rough comparison between returns to labor from cocoa, from palm oil,[100] and from employment in various trades in Lagos to indicate the relative attractions of these alternatives to Ondo farmers during the first two decades of this century.

In calculating the returns from cocoa and palm oil for the years 1900 to 1915, I used prices quoted in the Bluebooks which appear to represent average prices paid for these commodities by the export firms in Lagos. From 1917 on, prices are definitely those paid in Lagos.[101] I have not allowed for transport costs in these calculations, because both cocoa and palm oil had to be transported to Lagos in the same way,

---

[99] See Table 24, chap. iv.

[100] We have not tried to estimate returns to other export goods for various reasons. Palm kernels, which are picked out of the pulp after the oil has been extracted from the fruit and cracked before they are exported, are handled entirely by women. Since women rarely cultivate cocoa themselves, although they may own cocoa farms which they have purchased or inherited, producing palm kernels for export is not in practice an alternative to growing cocoa. There is no information on the costs of collecting wild rubber which was, in any case, declining in importance at the time Ondos began to grow cocoa. Few people in Yoruba country had yet begun to cultivate rubber for export. Similarly, we have no data on the costs of timber contracting. Cotton, the other cash crop exported from Western Nigeria at this time, is not grown much in Ondo.

[101] Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette, December, 1917.

and there is no reason to expect that costs were proportionately higher for one of the two commodities. It is quite possible, however, that middlemen's profits were higher for cocoa. Since very little cocoa was actually exported from Ondo at this time, presumably there were not yet many middlemen competing for the Ondo cocoa crop who would tend to bid down one another's profits. For the same reason, the average farmer in Ondo was probably quite ignorant of the going Lagos price of cocoa and therefore unable to judge what he should receive for it in Ondo. In other words, there may have been a premium on transporting one's own cocoa to Lagos and selling directly to the exporter there. Insofar as this was the case, the figures shown in Table 21 overstate the relative attractiveness of cocoa to the small Ondo farmer, who possessed neither the wherewithal nor the experience and initiative to organize his own transport and become his own marketing agent.

For those Ondos who were prepared to get themselves or their produce to Lagos to earn money, however, cocoa should have been a relatively attractive means of doing so. Even assuming that the farmer spent more than ninety man-days per annum on each acre of cocoa, the return to cocoa was equivalent to or better than the returns one could earn by producing palm oil or as an artisan of some sort. Most of the available sources suggest that farmers actually spent less time on their cocoa farms, in which case they might earn up to two to three times as much as they could from other pursuits. Moreover, there is nothing in these figures to suggest that the relative advantages of cocoa suddenly increased around 1910, when the first Ondo farmers began to plant cocoa.

The figures in Table 21 do not show, conclusively, that the Ondos's decision to experiment with cocoa was not related to profits.

TABLE 21

RETURNS TO LABOR IN VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS (SHILLINGS/MAN-DAY)

	Gross Returns per Man-day[a]		Selected Daily Wage Rates[b]				
	Cocoa	Palm Oil	Carpenter and Mason	Blacksmith	Tailor	Engine Driver	Laborer[c]
1900	2/8 - 8/4	2/0 - 2/4	1/6 - 4/6	1/6 - 4/6	1/6 - 3/0	. .	0/9 - 1/6
1901	4/9 - 11/0	2/0 - 2/4	1/6 - 4/6	1/6 - 4/6	1/6 - 3/0	. .	0/9 - 1/6
1902	4/9 - 11/0	2/0 - 2/4	1/6 - 4/6	1/6 - 4/6	1/6 - 3/0	. .	0/9 - 1/3
1903	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
1904	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
1905	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
1906	3/2 - 12/6	2/10 - 3/6	1/6 - 4/0	1/8 - 4/0	. .	. .	0/9 - 1/0
1907	3/2 - 7/4	2/10 - 3/6	1/6 - 4/0	1/8 - 4/0	. .	. .	0/9 - 1/0
1908	3/2 - 7/4	2/10 - 3/6	2/3 - 4/0	. .	2/9	2/0 - 4/0	0/9 - 1/0
1909	3/2 - 8/4	2/4 - 3/6	2/3 - 4/6	2/6 - 5/0	2/9	2/0 - 4/6	0/9 - 1/0
1910	3/5 - 8/10	3/0 - 4/0	2/6 - 5/0	3/0 - 5/0	2/9	2/6 - 5/0	0/6 - 1/0
1911	3/9 - 8/7	3/10	2/6 - 5/0	3/0 - 5/0	2/9	2/6 - 5/0	0/6 - 1/0
1912	4/1 - 9/5	4/0	2/6 - 5/0	3/0 - 5/0	2/9	2/6 - 5/0	0/6 - 1/0
1913	3/2 - 9/5	3/11	2/6 - 5/0	3/0 - 5/0	2/9	2/6 - 5/0	0/6 - 1/0
1914	1/4 - 9/5	3/6	2/6 - 5/0	3/0 - 5/0	2/9	2/6 - 5/0	0/6 - 1/0
1915[d]	2/3 - 12/6	2/3 - 3/8	2/6 - 5/0	3/0 - 5/0	2/9	2/6 - 5/0	0/6 - 1/0
1916[d]			. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
1917[d]	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
1918[d]	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
1919	1/7 - 3/9	. .	4/0	3/0	. .	. .	1/0
1920	. .	. .	4/6	4/6	. .	4/0	2/9

Notes and Sources:

a. Lagos market price, given in Bluebooks, multiplied by yield per man-day. The cocoa yield per man-day was calculated by dividing a yield per acre of 1000 lbs. (see p. 144) by labor inputs of 40, 60 and 92 man-days per acre (see Table 15). For palm oil a figure of 2 gallons per man-day (hard oil) was used, from an unpublished report by A.F.B. Bridges, written in 1935. (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/17696).

b. Lagos, Bluebooks.

c. "Predial labor." After 1906, there was a separate category of laborer listed under "Trades" for which rates were slightly higher than those given for "predial labor."

d. Data not published during these years.

If, in fact, local food prices remained high during the first decade of twentieth century and then dropped, one might argue that a decrease in the opportunity cost of farmers' labor increased the profitability of growing cocoa in Ondo sufficiently to encourage some farmers to try it. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for or against this conclusion. I can only observe that a number of Ondos did apparently seek their fortunes away from home around the turn of the century, often learning a new craft to do so. If high returns to labor in traditional agricultural activities were not sufficient to keep some Ondos at home, one would not expect them to discourage other Ondos from experimenting with a new crop which apparently offered even higher returns to effort than those obtainable in Lagos.

If there is no evidence of a decrease in the opportunity cost of farmers' labor in Ondo at the time they began to experiment with cocoa, perhaps it was a change in the cost of hired labor which served to increase prospective returns to cocoa growing. According to the Bluebooks, laborers working on "Native farms" in Southern Nigeria received between four and six pence a day in 1905; six pence a day between 1906 and 1910, and between six pence and one shilling after 1911. As is usual with Bluebook data, we do not know how the government arrived at these figures or what part(s) of Southern Nigeria they actually refer to. Were wage rates fairly constant among different areas or are the Bluebook figures averages of a wide range of rates? Scattered evidence on wages paid in particular locations at various times suggests that the wages of unskilled workers did not vary much from one part of Western Nigeria to another. (See Table 20). Nothing in the history of Ondo at that time indicates that wages might have fallen there while they remained constant or rose slightly in other areas. On the contrary, one would expect them

to have risen slightly in Ondo, as both European firms and African enterpreneurs began to get into the timber business and to employ large numbers of laborers therein. In short, there is no reason to attribute Ondos' early experiments with cocoa after 1912 to an increase in the profitability of growing cocoa at that time.

Conclusion

The evidence advanced in this chapter on the relationship between Yoruba farmers' decisions to plant cocoa for the first time and the returns they could expect to earn from the crop is not conclusive. The chances of making a profit by growing cocoa were apparently greater in Ibadan than in Ondo in the 1890's, which suggests that expected profits did have a positive effect on farmers' decisions to plant. However, we cannot show that farmers in Ondo started experimenting with cocoa in the period 1912-1920 because their chances of making a profit on the crop improved at that time. In fact, after 1900, returns to labor were probably greater in cocoa growing than in other occupations, but a number of Ondos apparently preferred the other occupations, and tended to invest what funds they had in, e.g., timber contracting rather than in cocoa.

In both Ibadan and Ondo, the successful introduction of cocoa seems to have depended on a combination of circumstances rather than on expected returns alone. We pointed out in the previous chapter that within a community, the individuals who took the lead in planting cocoa had had certain personal experiences in common--to wit, either they were Christians or strongly influenced by Christian missionaries, or they had had an opportunity, while travelling outside their native community, to observe cocoa being grown and sold. The fact that Christians played an important role in introducing cocoa to different communities suggests

that, although certain types of individuals are more receptive than others to new ways of solving practical problems, the existence of a group of receptive individuals in a community is not enough to insure that that community will adopt every economic innovation presented to it.

Our analysis in the present chapter indicates that expected profit is also a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the adoption of an innovation such as cocoa. As far as we can tell from available evidence, farmers in Ondo did not take up growing cocoa as soon as it became relatively profitable for them to do so, but only after a few individuals who either had observed cocoa farming somewhere else (e.g., as migrant laborers at Agege) or, like D. Fadashe, had tried other occupations and failed, demonstrated that it could be done. When these people began to make money from their cocoa farms, their neighbors began to follow their example. Apparently they had to see for themselves that those who planted cocoa got rich by doing so, before they would attempt it themselves. It might be objectively true that growing cocoa was a profitable undertaking, but the mere statement of this fact did not convince people to commit resources to a project which would not yield anything for years. Thus, Reverend Phillips' efforts to introduce cocoa growing in the 1890's were in vain. On the other hand, in communities such as Okeigbo or Ajebamidele, where some residents had travelled to Lagos and seen cocoa farmers getting rich before the turn of the century, cocoa growing developed earlier than in the rest of Ondo.

The fact that Ondo farmers, including the Christians, waited to experiment with cocoa until returning travellers began to demonstrate its advantages can be fully understood only in the context of the previous history of the kingdom. On the whole, there were few changes in the traditional pattern of social and economic life in Ondo during the

nineteenth century. Neither tribal warfare nor the changing character of Yorubas' political and economic relations with Europeans affected Ondo much until after 1893. Even then, the forces of change were permissive rather than compulsive. At first, the opening of the roads in 1893 tended to lead people out of Ondo in search of "enlightenment"[102] and opportunity rather than to bring new influences in. When new opportunties for earning income were introduced, people naturally turned first to those involving the least uncertainty, such as rubber or expanded production of traditional foodstuffs. They ignored more dubious possibilities for gain, such as cocoa, until their own adverse fortunes or someone else's success gave them a positive incentive to experiment.

In Ibadan, there was no lag between the time when cocoa was profitable and the time farmers started to experiment with it. The earliest planters were also either Christians or travellers who had encountered the crop elsewhere, but both kinds of individuals started planting at the same time, so that we cannot distinguish between the two types of experience or the ways in which they affected farmers' decisions to plant cocoa. The social and economic environment in which they lived was, however, very different from that which prevailed in Ondo in the 1890's. Not only had some Ibadans, such as Mr. Ogunwole or the first planter in Onipe village, apparently left home earlier than Ondos did, but Ibadan itself was the scene of a number of changes in the nineteenth

---

[102] Yorubas often use the term "enlightenment" to refer both to a wider knowledge of people and ideas and to changes in custom and fortune which they associate with knowledge and education. Chief Obisesan was often critical of the white man's attitude toward Africans (and, specifically, of some of the British administration's policies in Nigeria), but in his diary, he speaks of "this age of freedom and enlightenment" in connection with the decline of slavery in Yorubaland after the British stopped the wars. Feb. 16, 1921. Ipaiye's son told me that his father (a pagan) had planted cash crops at Ajebamidele "because he was enlightened."

century, which affected the organization of people's economic and social activities.

Some of these changes probably contributed to making cocoa a profitable crop at the time it was introduced to Ibadan. In particular, one might argue that the presence in Ibadan after 1893, of a large number of jobless ex-warriors helped to reduce the opportunity cost of labor there and thus encouraged people to try growing cocoa by increasing the potential profitability of doing so relative to other pursuits. This line of reasoning would tend to support the idea that producers are more likely to adopt new methods when economic conditions are favorable--when productive factors are abundant and market prospects good. Such a conclusion is, I think, misleading.

There is a difference between a man who has a rug pulled out from under his feet and one who is offered the opportunity to replace the one he is standing on with one which is thicker and more richly colored. Most of the free, and some of the enslaved, adult men in Ibadan lived by fighting in the nineteenth century. War was their skill as well as their bread; through their military exploits they gained admiration and power as well as material possessions. In 1893, their whole way of life was abruptly denied them. The Pax Britannica was not just a period of rest and reorganization at home, such as they had previously enjoyed between campaigns, but a permanent rupture with the old order. They were forced to find new occupations to satisfy a wide range of needs, including social status and political power, as well as material necessities. Insofar as wealth was already a recognized source of power in Ibadan society, these men had every reason not simply to look for an alternative occupation but to find the most lucrative one.

Also, as we saw in Chapter II, the migrations and wars of the nineteenth century had contributed to the emergence of a group of landholding families in Ibadan who, in order to cement their own social as well as economic position in the town, encouraged others to settle on their land and develop its agricultural potential. Finally, both the location of Ibadan and its political importance in the rest of Yorubaland brought it into closer contact with the British and therefore with foreign markets after 1893. By 1896, everyone knew that the railway was coming to Ibadan and African traders from Lagos began to set up shops in Ibadan in anticipation of it, although the European merchants waited until it was completed in 1901. Thus within a few years of the introduction of cocoa to Ibadan, exporters or their agents were beginning to purchase it in Ibadan itself. In Ondo this was not to occur for almost thirty years.

The trouble with trying to fit all of the factors responsible for a producer's decision to adopt an innovation into the mold of economic analysis is that it is too easy to miss the point. One tends to look only at those variables which can be easily quantified, rather than taking into account the wide variety of social forces and individual experiences which affect most decisions. In the present case, such an approach would lead us to the conclusion that Yoruba farmers decided to plant cocoa when conditions were favorable--i.e., when it became economically easy to do so--although we might have to admit that the slowness of farmers' response in Ondo was something of "a puzzle."[103] In fact, producers in Ibadan adopted

---

[103]After explaining that it is often too expensive for small farmers in a traditional economy to search for new productive factors on their own, Schultz cites one exception to his general arguement. "Why many of the farmers who own and are responsible for the operation of very large farms, especially in some parts of South America, do not engage successfully in this search for modern agricultural factors is a puzzle." P. 174. It certainly is if one is trying to explain people's decisions about what productive activities to engage in solely in terms of profitability.

cocoa readily in part because they were pushed into it, by the needs of the ex-warriors and the encouragement of landlords and traders. In Ondo, on the other hand, where there was no pressure on people to change their occupation and where the decision to plant cocoa generally meant giving up either an assured source of income, such as growing foodstuffs, or the enjoyment of leisure time for uncertain future wealth, people were slower both to perceive the relative advantages of cocoa and to plant it.

CHAPTER IV

THE RATE OF EXPANSION

Once cocoa had been established in a community in Western Nigeria--i.e., once the early planters had demonstrated to their compatriots that farmers could earn cash income by growing cocoa, even on a very small scale--many people besides the early planters began to cultivate the new crop. The rate at which farmers expanded the acreage under cocoa, and therefore the potential future output of the crop, has already been studied to some extent by economists interested in estimating supply functions for cocoa.[1] Most of these studies have dealt with Ghana, and have been handicapped in their attempts to estimate the effect of prices on cocoa plantings by the fact that there is no data on acres planted in Ghana. To remedy this defect, the authors have assumed that current output depends, in part, on past plantings which, in turn, depended on past cocoa prices. They have then made various estimates of the relationship between current output and past prices.

The first estimates were made in 1948, by Peter Ady. She found a significant and positive relationship between the quantity of cocoa exported in a given year and the real price of cocoa nine years earlier.[2] R. M. Stern criticized Miss Ady's model on the grounds that if the price of cocoa in year t-9 determines the acres planted in t-9, it determines

---

[1] Peter Ady, "Trends in Cocoa Production in British West Africa," Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, II (1940); Merrill J. Bateman, "Aggregate and Regional Supply Functions for Ghanaian Cocoa, 1946-1962," Journal of Farm Economics, XLVII, 2 (May, 1965); Robert M. Stern, "The Determinants of Cocoa Supply in West Africa," in I. G. Stewart and H. W. Ord, eds., African Primary Products and International Trade (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965).

[2] Ady, Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, II, pp. 395-96.

the change in bearing acres in year t and, therefore, the change in (not the level of) cocoa output in year t. He regressed the change in current output on the real price in t-8 and the change in the current price of cocoa, and obtained a significant coefficient for the change in current price but not for the lagged price.[3]

Recently, M. J. Bateman, using a more elaborate model which incorporated climatic variables, coffee prices, and more complex assumptions about the relationship between current cocoa output and past plantings, concluded that changes in current output were significantly related to lagged cocoa prices, in the period 1946-1962. Interestingly, he found that this relationship held within different regions of the Ghanaian cocoa belt, but that there were considerable differences between regions in the way current output responded to lagged prices. He concluded that one could not estimate a meaningful aggregate cocoa supply function for all Ghana.[4]

Although Bateman questions Miss Ady's results, on the grounds that her model suffers from "a serious misspecification error,"[5] his basic conclusion agrees with hers, namely, that changes in the current output of cocoa are significantly related to past prices but not to current prices. Stern's results are, of course, just the opposite of Bateman's and Miss Ady's. The differences and similarities between the three studies are instructive, not because they shed much light on the relationship between cocoa price, acres planted and changes in future cocoa output, but because

---

[3]Stern, "Determinants of Cocoa Supply," p. 69. The only significant coefficients were for the period prior to the end of the second world war.

[4]Bateman, Journal of Farm Economics, XLVII, 2, p. 399.

[5]Ibid., p. 384.

they illustrate how difficult it is to explain changes in variables which one cannot observe.

Bateman's efforts to specify a number of relevant variables and to examine different regions of Ghana separately is certainly a step toward greater realism. But his finding that changes in cocoa output in the post-war years were associated with lagged cocoa prices does not prove that the price eight years ago determined acres planted eight years ago or that, therefore, it determined the number of acres coming into bearing in the current year and, hence, the change in current output. The relationship between current output and bearing acres, for example, may depend on various factors which Bateman does not specify, such as changes in costs of production, changes in the current prices of alternative crops, or changes in the treatment of bearing acres for pests and diseases.[6] Similar objections could be raised to the assumed relationships between acres planted and acres coming into bearing eight years later, or between current price and acres planted. To analyze the effect of cocoa prices on cocoa plantings we need, at the minimum, some information on both the variables involved.

Fortunately, such information does exist for Nigeria. Using five year moving averages of acres planted and export unit values deflated by an index of import prices, Stern found a positive correlation between plantings and the current "real price" of cocoa for Nigeria during the period 1919/20 to 1944/45. The regression results were "highly significant and perhaps remarkably so."[7] Stern feels that one really should

---

[6] Bateman asserts, in a footnote, that changes in costs of production have been directly related to changes in the cocoa price, but does not elaborate on the point. (p. 386, n. 7). I do not know enough about the situation in Ghana to evaluate his statement; it certainly would not apply to Nigeria. See below, pp. 199-201.

[7] Stern, "Determinants of Cocoa Supply," p. 66.

have data on annual plantings in order to test the relationship adequately and, consequently, offers his conclusions as somewhat tentative ones. His scepticism turns out to be justified, although for a different reason.

The figures which Stern used on annual cocoa plantings are given in Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, Nigerian Cocoa Farmers. They are five year moving averages, derived from the original SSVD Survey carried out by the Western Nigeria Department of Agriculture in the late 1940's.[8] Largely through ignorance, the Department's staff omitted large areas of recently planted cocoa in Ondo Province. When the error was discovered, Ondo was re-surveyed in the early 1950's. The results of the second survey have recently been made available by the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.[9]

As I pointed out in Chapter II, the data from the second survey are themselves subject to a considerable margin of error. The enumerators usually measured the acreage of a given plot of cocoa by pacing around it and then estimating the area enclosed by the perimeter they had measured. Often they had to avoid letting the farmers know what they were doing in order not to be taken for tax assessors;[10] consequently, their estimates of acreage cannot have been very exact. Another problem was that there is no way to measure the age of a cocoa tree by looking at it. The enumerators had to rely on the farmers' own recollections of when they had planted their trees, and may have picked dates with round numbers to approximate answers such as "about twenty years ago" or "when X was Bale (head chief) of the state." Thus the annual acreages shown in Table 2

---

[8] See above, chap. ii, pp. 41-42.

[9] Results of the re-survey are shown in Tables 2 and 22.

[10] Information on the practical difficulties of conducting the SSVD Survey was supplied by Chief J. A. Ayorinde, now Chief Cocoa Survey Officer in the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, who was involved in the survey from its beginning.

TABLE 22

ACRES PLANTED IN COCOA (FIVE YEAR MOVING AVERAGE)

	Ibadan	Ondo	Western Nigeria
1900	41.6		92.8
1901	45.2		98.4
1902	83.8		176.8
1903	122.6		231.8
1904	173.0		305.6
1905	194.8		322.6
1906	315.4		509.2
1907	334.0		532.2
1908	607.0		1,002.0
1909	629.6		1,025.0
1910	1,026.8	40.2	1,538.2
1911	1,019.2	41.0	1,599.0
1912	1,449.4	61.0	2,179.6
1913	2,219.2	73.6	3,122.6
1914	2,752.0	84.2	3,943.8
1915	2,618.4	84.2	3,966.0
1916	3,988.0	117.0	6,191.8
1917	4,290.6	123.0	6,859.2
1918	6,185.2	292.8	10,880.8
1919	5,940.0	369.2	11,224.4
1920	6,515.0	417.6	12,452.2
1921	5,470.8	581.8	11,329.6
1922	6,217.5	740.2	13,216.0
1923	6,119.6	1,130.8	14,159.4
1924	7,919.0	1,674.6	18,875.8
1925	9,140.6	2,360.6	22,592.2
1926	12,165.6	3,271.0	29,915.0
1927	12,369.8	4,177.6	32,594.4
1928	13,782.2	8,920.2	40,995.2
1929	12,924.6	13,072.8	43,340.6
1930	12,649.6	17,427.0	47,687.4
1931	10,337.0	21,443.2	47,285.6
1932	9,985.2	25,756.6	50,866.6
1933	7,336.8	26,288.2	46,074.4
1934	7,792.4	27,559.6	48,911.8
1935	7,122.4	27,865.4	48,061.0
1936	7,151.0	28,700.0	49,572.2
1937	6,629.2	28,510.4	48,739.6
1938	5,679.0	27,677.4	45,893.6
1939	4,550.6	26,095.6	40,651.2
1940	3,797.6	25,243.4	37,315.0

Source: Western Nigeria, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

tend to be high in years numbered 5, 10, 15, etc.

Because of these uncertainties, one cannot take year-to-year fluctuations in the data as accurate indications of short-term changes in acres planted. They do however provide us with some idea of the trend of plantings--i.e., of investment in productive capacity--over the long run.[11] In order to compare the trend shown by the re-survey figures with those taken from Nigerian Cocoa Farmers, I converted the former to a five year moving average and plotted both series in Chart 4-A.[12] The two series correspond quite closely up until 1928, but diverge thereafter. The data from Nigerian Cocoa Farmers tend to decline after 1928, as one might expect since prices dropped fairly steadily during the depression of the 1930's and the early years of World War II. (See Chart 4-E.) The re-survey series, however, indicates a sustained boom in cocoa plantings for almost a decade after 1928. According to these figures, annual plantings continued to rise through 1932, then levelled off at a fairly high rate

---

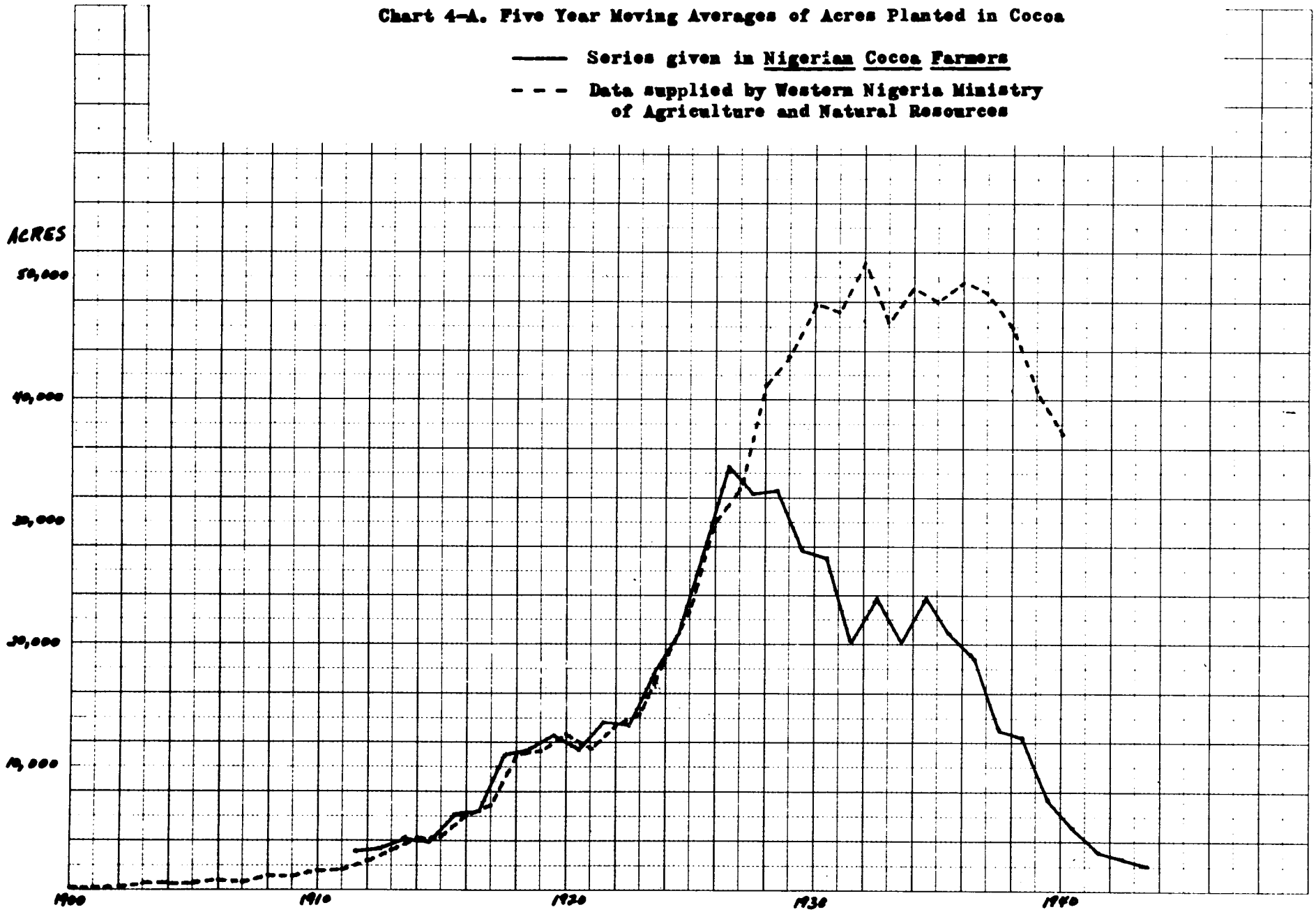
[11] The general pattern of expansion indicated by these figures is borne out by scattered information on changes in output in different parts of Western Nigeria. According to the Department of Agriculture, output in the Ibadan area rose from 1000 to 2500 tons between 1910 and 1915. Annual Report, 1915. By 1924, 24,250 tons were railed from stations in Ibadan Division.Oyo Province, Annual Report, 1924 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/12723, vol. II). Thereafter, data on the quantity of cocoa railed from Ibadan cannot be used to indicate trends in output, since an increasing proportion of the crop was being taken to Lagos by private lorries. In Ondo, output was around 200 tons in the mid-1920's, rose to 2000 tons in 1931-32 (reflecting the beginning of the planting boom in the mid-twenties), and reached 10,000 tons in 1936 as the extensive plantings of the late '20's and early '30's began to bear fruit. These figures refer to quantities of cocoa purchased by European firms in Okitipupa and Ondo. Ondo Province, Annual Reports (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874).

[12] If, as we suggested above, enumerators did tend to favor years numbered 5, 10, etc., in approximating planting dates, the five year moving average is appropriate for eliminating resulting distortions in the data.

Chart 4-A. Five Year Moving Averages of Acres Planted in Cocoa

——— Series given in Nigerian Cocoa Farmers

- - - Data supplied by Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources



until the late 1930's when they finally began to decline. On the basis of Chart 4-A, then, it appears that the trend of aggregate plantings was not so closely related to the trend of "real" cocoa prices as Stern's findings indicate.

The chief source of the difference between our two series is the fact that the re-survey covered later plantings in Ondo Province more completely than did the original survey data reported in Nigerian Cocoa Farmers. In Chart 4-B, I plotted five year moving averages of acres planted in Ibadan Province, which represents the pattern of plantings in most of the "old" cocoa areas, and in Ondo Province. The latter is clearly responsible for the continued rise in aggregate planting after 1928. Thus, in order to explain the long-run trend of acres planted in cocoa, it will be necessary to examine separately developments in different parts of the cocoa belt.

One possible explanation for regional differences in the trend of cocoa plantings is that prices which farmers actually received for their cocoa were different in different areas. Most cocoa farmers in Western Nigeria did not carry their produce to Lagos themselves;[13] they sold it to middlemen either at their farms or in a nearby village or town. These middlemen in turn often sold to other middlemen in larger buying centers; by the time the cocoa reached Lagos, it had travelled some distance and had usually passed through a number of hands. The difference between the price paid by exporting firms in Lagos and the price received by a farmer in the interior would depend on the cost of transporting cocoa from his area to Lagos, the number of intermediaries involved in collecting and

---

[13] On the system of marketing cocoa in Nigeria before 1940, see Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Cmd. 5845, 1938, "Report of the Commission on the Marketing of West African Cocoa"; P. T. Bauer, West African Trade (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), chap. 16; Forde and Scott, pp. 98-99.

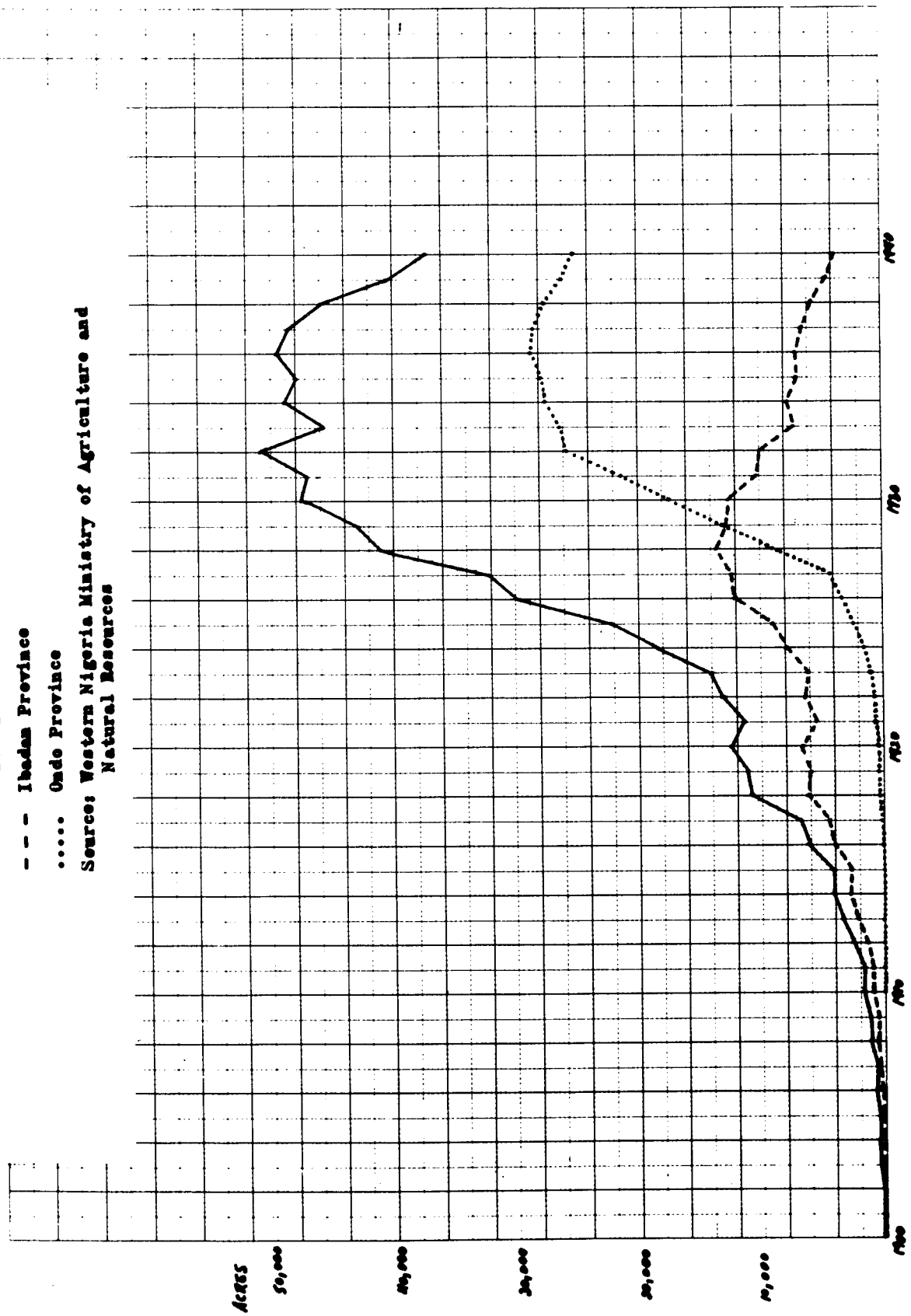


Chart 4-B. Five Year Moving Averages of Acres Planted in Cocoa

—— All Western Nigeria, including Benin and Warri Provinces

- - - Ibadan Province

..... Ondo Province

Source: Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

transporting it, and the degree of competition between intermediaries at each stage of the collection process. Since some areas were more remote than others from roads, markets or the railway, the prices received by farmers may have varied considerably from one area to another.

Alternatively, costs of producing cocoa, or prices of alternative types of output, may have varied from one area to another. Thus, farmers in Ondo might not have altered their plantings in response to a given change in price in the same way as did farmers in Egba or Ibadan. In this discussion, I shall consider the effects on cocoa plantings of changes in both costs and returns to growing cocoa. To simplify the exposition, I shall consider costs and returns separately, discussing first, how trends in acres planted were related to trends in the real price of cocoa and, second, to what extent trends in planting may be explained by changes in the cost of producing cocoa and in returns to alternative occupations. I shall continue to focus on Ibadan and Ondo, as representative of the "old" and "new" cocoa areas respectively.

I have carried the discussion of trends in cocoa plantings only up to 1940, for two reasons. For one thing, there is virtually no data on acres planted in different provinces after the early 1940's. Several observers have suggested on the basis of export volume that the total acreage shown in Table 2 for 1958 is too low by as much as 100,000 acres[14]; no one knows how this extra margin should be divided among provinces or just when it was planted. Hence it would be difficult to extend the provincial analysis much beyond 1940. Second, in 1942, the

---

[14]Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Tree Crop Planting Projects, p. 1. Cf., U.N., F.A.O., Agricultural Development in Nigeria, 1964-1980 (Jan., 1965), p. B-3.

marketing of Nigerian cocoa was taken over by the wartime West African Produce Control Board; after the war, public marketing boards were set up in Nigeria to handle the marketing of export commodities. The policies of the Marketing Boards and their effects on planting and production of Nigeria's export crops is a complex subject, which has already received considerable attention in the literature and adequate treatment of which would require another study the length of this one. Consequently, I shall not pursue the subject here, but shall confine the analysis to the development of the cocoa industry before the advent of publicly controlled marketing.

This does not mean that the discussion will be confined to private decisions and the effects of uncontrolled market forces. Although colonial governments' outlays on programs to expand output and encourage more productive use of resources seem small in comparison with the large public investment programs which most developing countries undertake today, the successes and failures of some of these early development programs can provide useful information to governments now engaged in similar efforts. In the case of cocoa in Western Nigeria, although the British administration did almost nothing to get the crop started in Nigeria, beyond distributing a few seeds, once it was established the government began to take an active interest in helping it along. During the period we are investigating, the government sought to encourage cocoa production in two ways: by providing public overhead facilities (chiefly transportation) to reduce producers' costs and by organizing agricultural extension programs to improve the quality and therefore the market value of Nigerian cocoa. In this chapter I shall consider the effects of public policies on planting and production of cocoa, as well as the influence of market forces.

Returns to Cocoa Growing

If costs of production and returns to alternative occupations remained constant, one would expect the trend in cocoa plantings to correspond to the trend in the real value of the price farmers received for their cocoa--i.e., the cocoa price ex-farm deflated by an index of prices of the goods which farmers consume. Since there is no data, either on the prices which farmers actually received for their cocoa, or on farmers' budgets and prices of the domestic goods therein, one must find reasonable substitutes for these prices. The usual practice is to measure cocoa prices by the unit value of cocoa exports and to deflate it by an index of the unit values of imported consumer goods.

Charts 4-C and 4-D show a five year moving average of the simple terms of trade plotted against the acreage data from Nigerian Cocoa Farmers and against acreage series from the re-survey respectively. These charts illustrate the point that the more comprehensive re-survey data on plantings do not correspond so closely to price movements, after 1918, as do the acreage figures from Nigerian Cocoa Farmers. In chart 4-C, acres and prices move together consistently, except in the period before 1918 (a fact which Stern notes but does not try to explain).[15] In Chart 4-D however, they move in the same direction only in the periods 1923-27 and 1937-40; the rest of the time they move in opposite directions.

One possible explantation for Chart 4-D is that the prices used did not accurately reflect the "real" prices which Nigerian producers received for their cocoa. Stern used the unit value of cocoa exported annually from Nigeria, deflated by an index of import prices in Ghana.

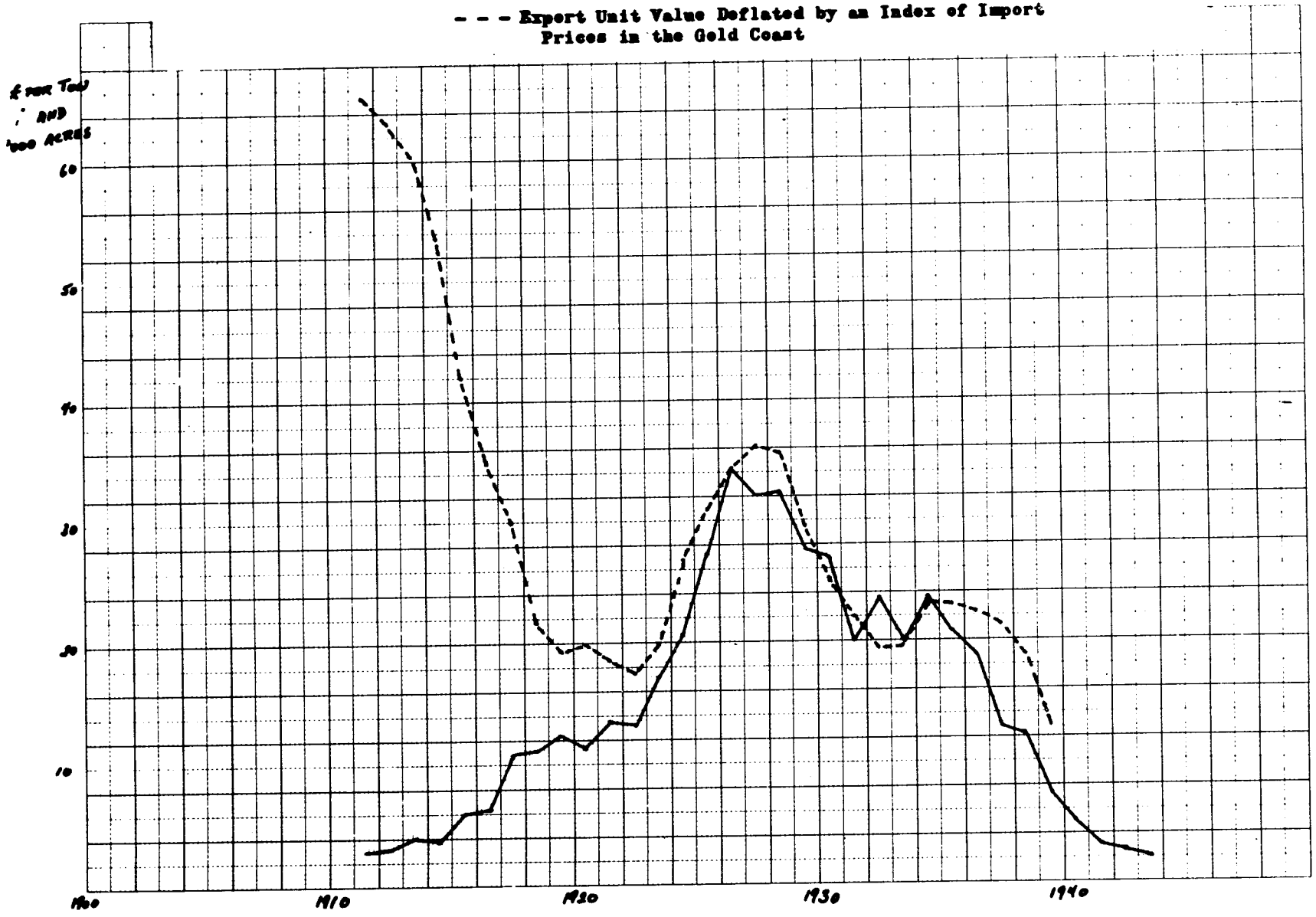
---

[15]Stern, p. 66. I shall discuss this point in more detail below.

Chart 4-C. Comparison of Trends in Planting and "Real Producer Price"

—— Acreage Series from Nigerian Cocoa Farmers

- - - Export Unit Value Deflated by an Index of Import Prices in the Gold Coast



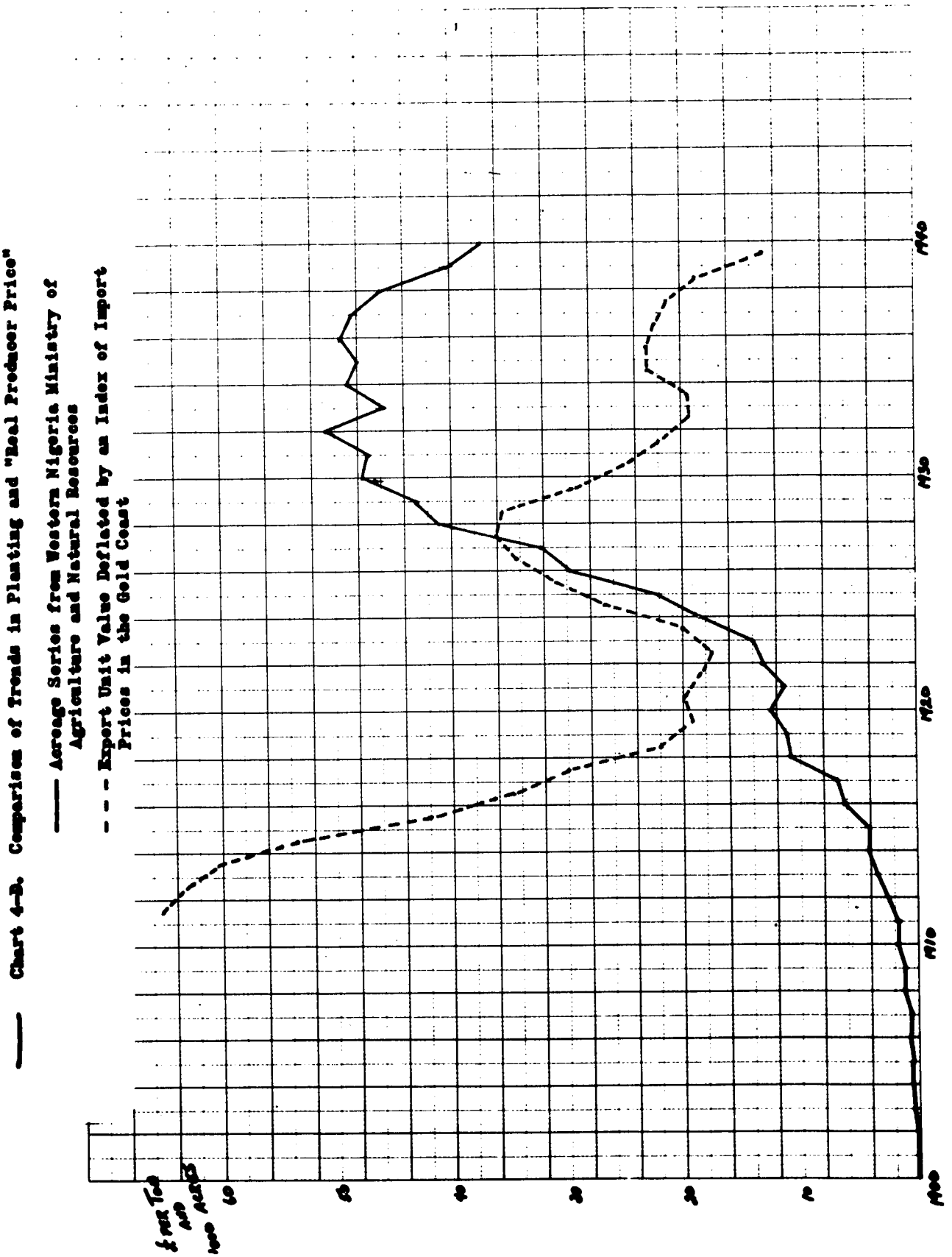


Chart 4-B. Comparison of Trends in Planting and "Real Producer Price"

—— Acreage Series from Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

- - - Export Unit Value Deflated by an Index of Import Prices in the Gold Coast

In fact, of course, farmers may have received a relatively small and varying proportion of the export unit value of their cocoa. Also, if Nigerian farmers did not spend a large proportion of their income on imported goods, the real value of their earnings would not have been significantly affected by changes in import prices. Even if one accepts the import price deflator as the best available, it may be that both retail prices and consumer tastes differed between Ghana and Nigeria, so that either the unit values of Ghanaian imports or the relative weights assigned to different commodities in the index may not reflect the real value of cash income to the Nigerian farmer. Let us consider each of these objections in turn.

Chart 4-E shows the unit values of cocoa exported from Nigeria in the crop years 1908-09 to 1939-40, and the prices which exporting firms were paying in Lagos in the same period for cocoa of "fair average quality" (FAQ). On the whole the course of wholesale prices in Lagos followed that of export unit values quite closely, although in some years the Lagos price underwent a greater change than did the export unit value. Data on the pattern of cocoa prices in the interior is less abundant. However, such information as we have suggests that, although the level of prices was lower in Ibadan than in Lagos, and lower still in more remote towns such as Ilesha and Ondo, interior prices tended to move in the same direction as the Lagos price. (See Chart 4-F). Consequently, movements in wholesale prices probably would not correspond more closely to changes in acreage planted than do changes in the export unit value.[16]

---

[16] It is, of course, possible that there was a considerable difference between the price paid by European merchants in urban centers and the price actually received by farmers from middlemen who collected produce in the villages or at the farms. In 1918, for example, a British official in Oshogbo reported that European firms were paying about £7 per ton for cocoa during April, but that toward the end of the month "native buyers" had been offering £12/10/0. There is not enough information on such differences to enable us to allow for them systematically, but all conclusions based on official price data should be used with caution.

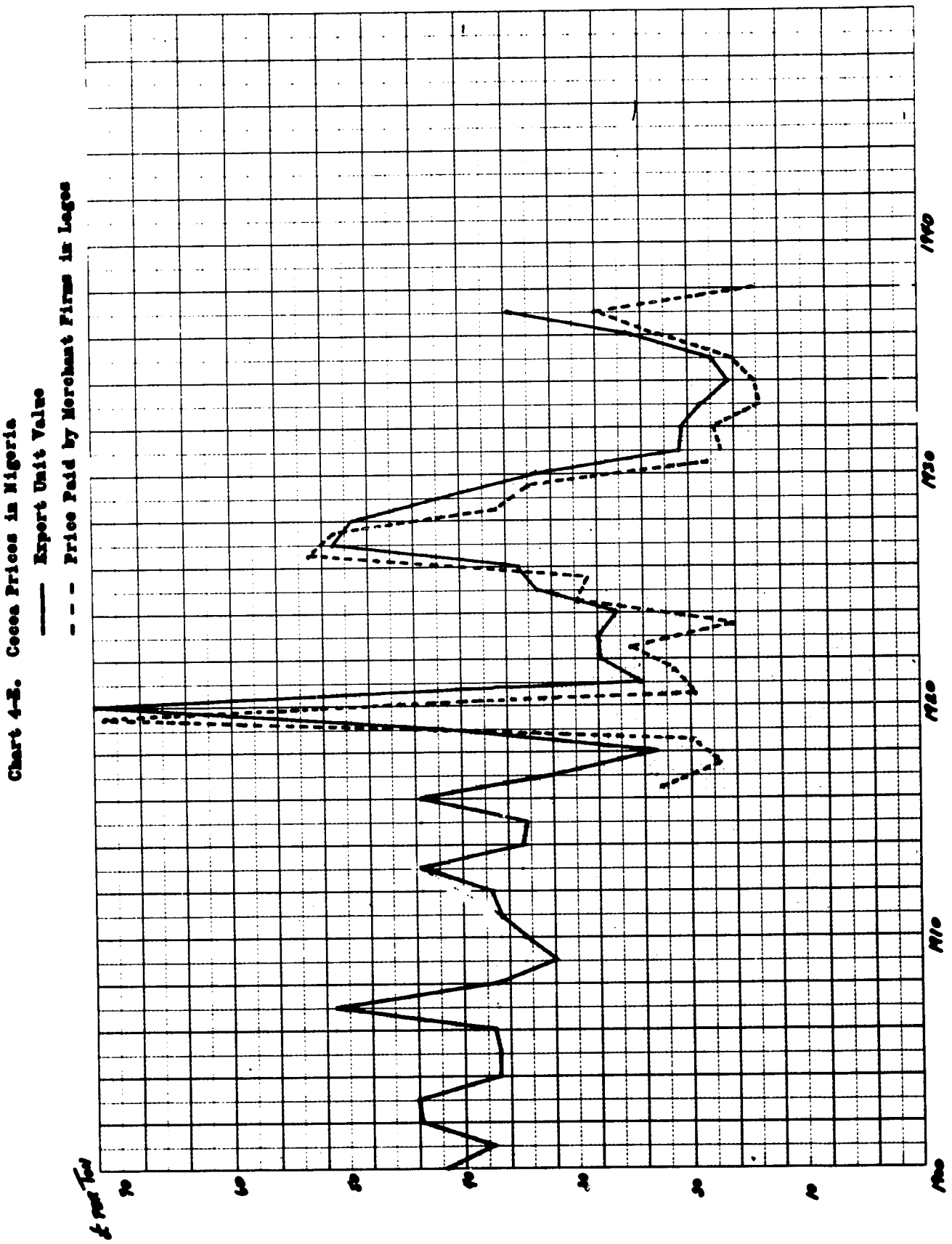


Chart 4-E. Cocoa Prices in Nigeria

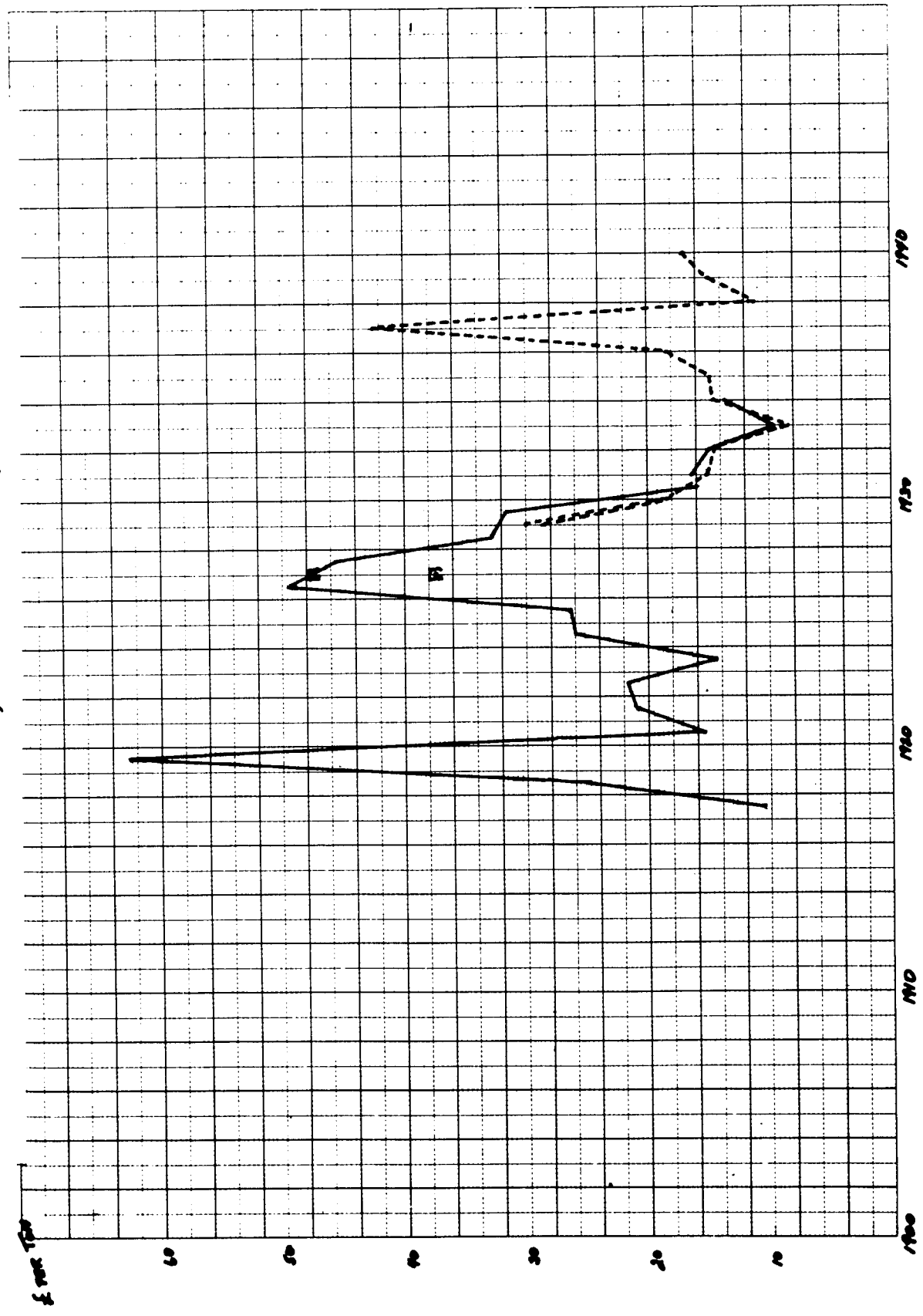
——— Export Unit Value

- - - Price Paid by Merchant Firms in Lagos

Chart 44F. Cocoa Prices in Nigeria

—— Price Paid by Merchant Firms in Ibadan

- - - Price Paid by Merchant Firms in Ondo



The practice of deflating export prices by an index of unit values of imported consumer goods is usually defended on the grounds that the desire for imported consumer goods constituted the producers' main incentive for earning additional cash income.[17] Actually we do not know what proportion of their earnings Nigerian farmers spent on imported goods, or how this proportion has changed over time. Internal trade in locally produced commodities existed before cocoa was introduced to Western Nigeria and continues to flourish.[18] Two of the major "luxury" goods which cocoa farmers have consumed for some time are houses and education.[19] Except for galvanized iron sheets for roofing, and some cement, the houses were generally built of local materials. Most schools were operated by Christian missions; although they undoubtedly spent a certain amount on imports (including school supplies and provisions for the staff), they also purchased local goods. In short, it seems unlikely that farmers spent increments in their incomes arising from the production of cocoa entirely on imported goods.

Nevertheless, for our purposes, it is not unreasonable to use import prices to measure changes in the real price of cocoa. Even if farmers did not spend all of their additional earnings from cocoa on imported goods, there is no doubt that imports were an important incentive to cocoa growers. In Ondo, I interviewed a man who had left Ondo in 1910 and worked as a tailor, first at Ilesha and, later, at Ibadan. He explained that when he left Ondo, all the houses had thatched roofs, but

---

[17] See, for example, Bauer, pp. 30, 306, 309-10, 333.

[18] See above, chap. i.

[19] Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, pp. 467-69; Bridges, "Intelligence Report on Ondo," 1935; Oyo Province, Annual Reports, 1922, 1925 and 1936 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/12723).

when he returned, in 1926, many roofs were iron. People told him they got the money to buy iron roofs from cocoa, so my informant decided to plant cocoa himself. During the 1920's and 1930's, trading firms in Ibadan and Ondo reported that sales of imported consumer goods increased when cocoa prices rose.[20] In 1922, the British Resident of Oyo Province reported that people were short of cash because of the slump in trade, but they had invested the profits accumulated during the post-war boom in facilities for future increases in trade.

> In the big cocoa and kernel centers such as Ibadan, Ede, Oshogbo, Ilesha and Ife there has been a remarkable increase in the number of new and well built stores and houses with corrugated iron roofs.[21]

Imported goods were undoubtedly important to Yoruba cocoa farmers, if not the sole objects of their expenditures.

Another reason for using import prices to deflate the price of cocoa is suggested by Chart 4-H, in which I have plotted available data on food prices in Lagos. Broadly speaking, the prices of staple foodstuffs followed a pattern similar to that of the import prices shown in Chart 4-G, although yam prices appear to have lagged behind import prices by two to three years. We do not know, of course, how closely the trend of food prices in interior towns followed that in Lagos, or how accurate the official information on Lagos prices was. Given such data as is available, however, there is no reason to think that using import prices as a deflator gives a seriously misleading picture of the trend of real cocoa prices between 1910 and 1940.

Finally, we come to the question of which import prices to use in deflating the price of cocoa. One could, of course, construct an index of

---

[20] Oyo Province, Annual Reports, 1922-1929, 1936 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/09723 and CSO 26/12723, vols. I-VII, XIII); Ondo Province, Annual Reports, 1924 and 1926 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vols. IV and VI).

[21] Oyo Province, Annual Report, 1922 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/09723).

Chart 4-G. Nigerian Import Prices

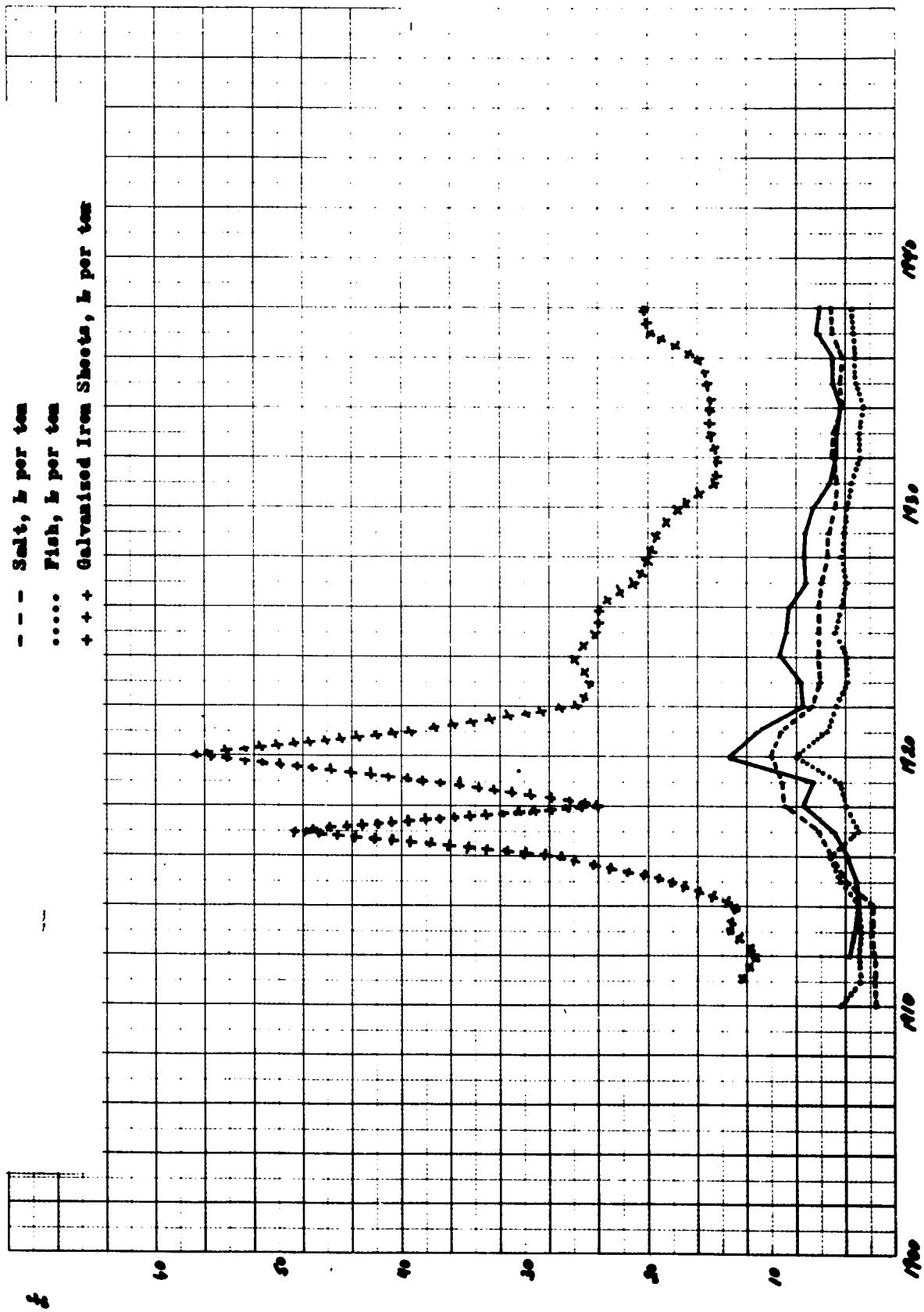
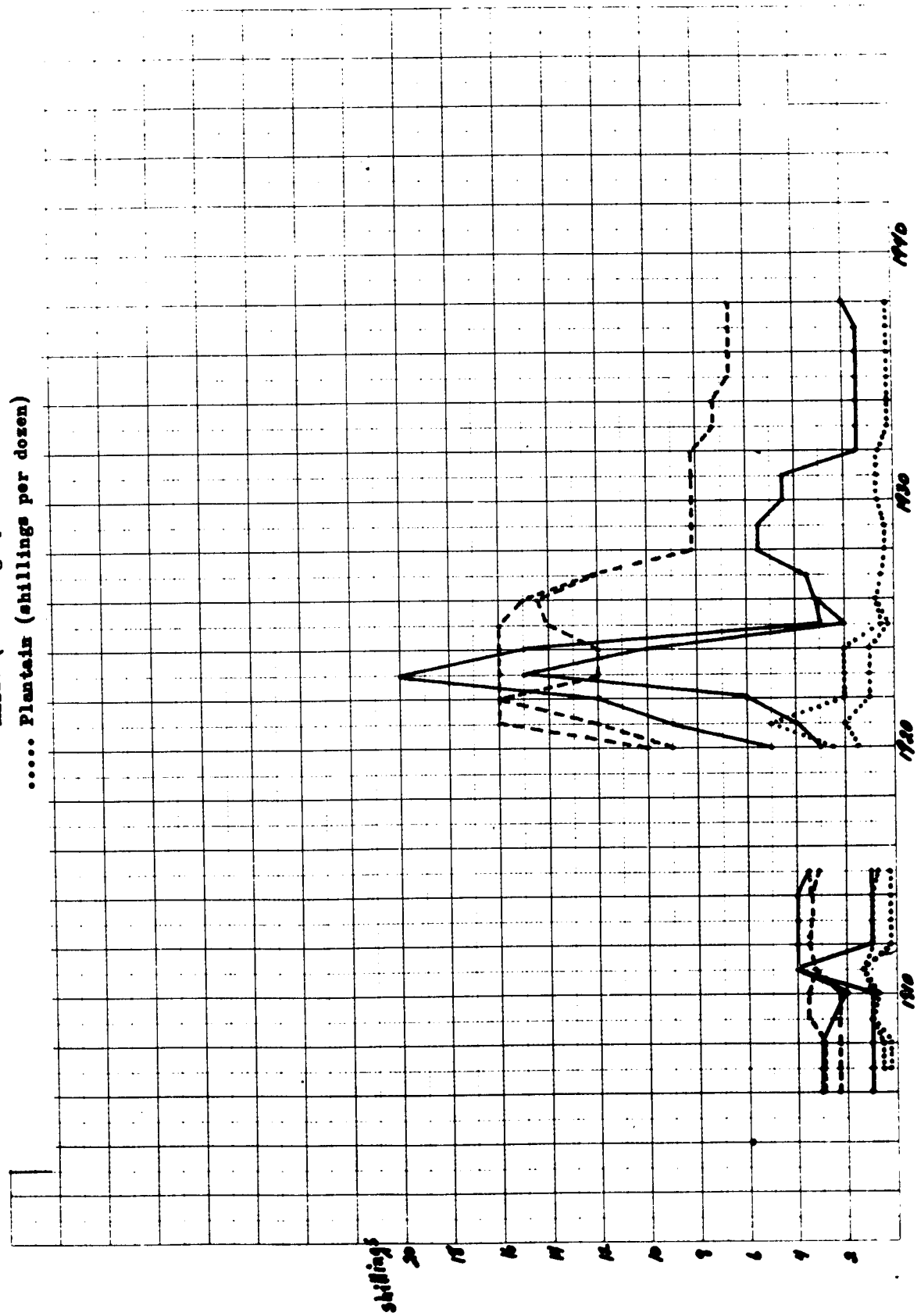


Chart 4-H. Prices of Staple Foodstuffs in Lagos

—— Yam (shillings per dozen)

– – – Maize (shillings per hundredweight)

..... Plantain (shillings per dozen)



unit values of consumer goods imported into Nigeria, weighting each price by the share of its commodity in the total value of imported consumer goods. Such an index, however, might be unsatisfactory for several reasons. Nigerian import data are not broken down by region or province of destination. Thus the per cent of consumer expenditures on imports which was devoted to, say, galvanized iron sheets may have been much higher among the relatively prosperous Yoruba cocoa farmers than among other farmers in other parts of Nigeria. In this case, the proportion of galvanized iron sheets in the total import bill would significantly understate the weight of the price of iron sheets in cocoa farmers' budgets. Unfortunately no studies of farmers' budgets were made until the 1950's, by which time patterns of consumption may have changed considerably from those of earlier decades. Moreover, the family budgets compiled for Nigerian Cocoa Farmers in 1951-52 are probably not even representative of cocoa farmers' spending patterns in recent years since cocoa prices rose temporarily to unprecedented heights in 1951-52, creating windfall gains and unusually high rates of saving.[22]

A simpler approach is suggested by P. T. Bauer in his study West African Trade. Bauer calculated producer terms of trade (for producers of cocoa, groundnuts, palm oil and palm kernels) from 1935-37 to 1951 using an index of the landed cost of imported cotton piece goods.[23] Cotton piece goods made up twenty-six per cent of the total value of Nigerian imports in the period 1912 to 1940.[24] Moreover, as is suggested by Chart 4-G, the price of cotton piece goods did not change much relative to the

---

[22]Galletti, Baldwin and Dina. The 187 families whose budgets were studied in detail saved, on the average, 40.6% of their total disposable incomes in 1951-52 (p. 462).

[23]Bauer, pp. 410-424.

[24]Calculated from trade statistics in Bluebooks.

prices of other basic consumer imports before 1940, except during World War I when the value of galvanized iron sheets rose sharply due to wartime shortages. Consequently, cotton piece goods may serve as a representative imported consumer good for purposes of deflating producer prices.

The Lagos price of cocoa deflated by an index of the unit landed cost of cotton piece goods is shown in Chart 4-I and Table 23, both on an annual basis and as a five year moving average, for comparison with the five year moving average of acres planted. Measured in this way, the real producer price of cocoa in Lagos is not very closely associated with the pattern of plantings. The five year moving averages of acres and prices move in opposite directions in the periods 1918-19 to 1922-23 and 1927-28 to 1933, or in ten of the eighteen years for which we have continuous data on both series. As we explained above, the annual data on acres planted are probably not very reliable indicators of year-to-year changes, but the divergent movements of the annual real price and acreage series before 1919 and in the late 1920's and early 1930's are also striking, and suggest that the relationship between plantings and real price is not especially close.

Actually, the pattern of plantings in Ibadan Province, shown in Chart 4-B, does correspond fairly closely to movements in the real price. The rate of planting was fairly constant between 1918 and 1923, during which time the price in Chart 4-I fell slightly; planting increased steadily from 1923 to 1928, as did price; and both declined from 1928 to 1933. Between 1933 and 1936, the real price recovered somewhat and the rate of planting levelled off. In Ondo, on the other hand, the long-term trend in acres planted bore little relationship to changes in the Lagos price deflated by the landed cost of cotton piece goods. The only possible relationship one might discern between the rate of planting in

Chart 4-I. Comparison of Trends in Planting and Real Producer Price

——— Acreage Series from Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

- - - Price Paid in Lagos Deflated by an Index of the Unit Landed Cost of Cotton Piece Goods

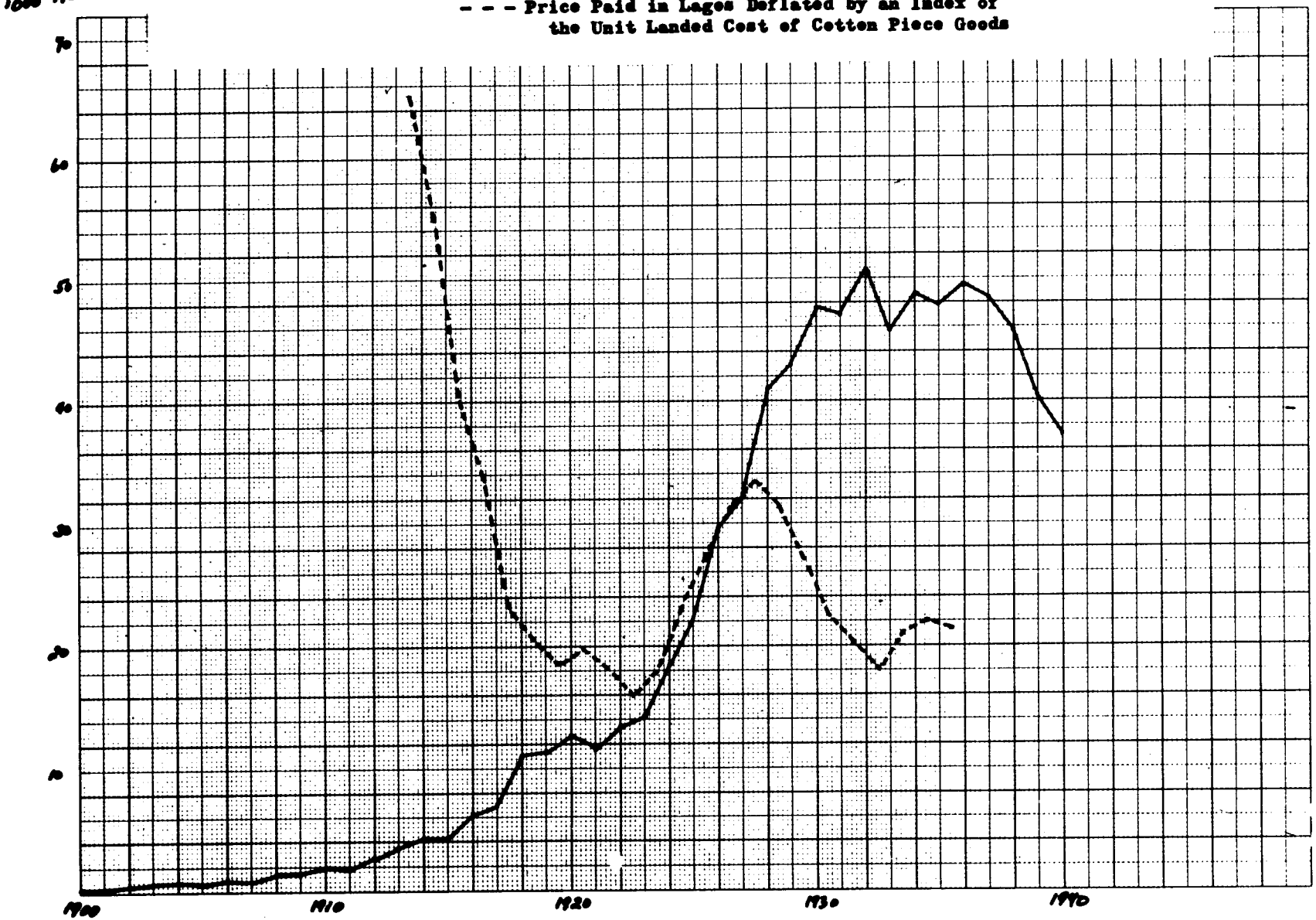


TABLE 23

UNIT LANDED COST OF COTTON PIECE GOODS IMPORTED INTO NIGERIA

	Shillings per square yard	Index (1938=100)
1912	3.84	62
1913	3.40	55
1914	3.24	52
1915	3.28	53
1916	4.12	66
1917	5.08	82
1918	7.54	122
1919	6.78	109
1920	13.64	220
1921	11.42	184
1922	7.74	125
1923	7.84	126
1924	9.14	147
1925	8.92	144
1926	8.72	141
1927	7.52	121
1928	7.72	124
1929	7.56	122
1930	6.84	110
1931	5.44	88
1932	4.94	80
1933	4.92	79
1934	4.60	74
1935	5.14	83
1936	5.28	85
1937	6.36	103
1938	6.20	100

Source: Calculated from Bluebooks.

Ondo lagged four years behind changes in the Lagos price; Ondo farmers began to respond to the price rise of 1923-28 in 1927 and continued to plant cocoa trees at an increasing rate until 1932. The difficulties with this hypothesis are: (1) that it does not explain why planting in Ondo should have continued to rise, albeit gradually, until 1936, and (2) that there is no apparent economic or social reason why Ondo cocoa farmers should base their current decision to expand productive capacity on the price of cocoa four years ago. Anyway, as we shall see below, one can explain the trend of planting in Ondo quite satisfactorily in other terms.

Costs: Ibadan, 1912-1918

Before we turn to this subject, there is one other aspect of the long-term expansion of the Nigerian cocoa industry which deserves some attention--viz, the apparent discrepancy between changes in the price of output and in the rate of investment in productive capacity before 1918. The real price of cocoa, measured both by Stern's method and by ours, fell sharply between 1912 and 1918; the number of acres planted rose each year. Is there any evidence either that costs of production were declining during this period in the "old" cocoa areas or that the prices received by farmers in the interior did not change in the same way as did prices paid in Lagos?

Written records of local economic conditions in Western Nigeria are scarce for the second decade of the twentieth century, compared both to earlier and later periods, for a couple of reasons. First, the administration of Nigeria was completely reorganized between 1912 and 1914, when Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated to form a single protectorate administered from Lagos. During these years, British political officers in Nigeria were largely occupied in preparations for the

change and probably had little time to spend gathering information on local economic conditions. Amalgamation was followed immediately by World War I when, in the interests of economy, administrative staffs in the British colonies were reduced to a minimum. The government in Nigeria was so short-handed that it did not even publish the usual detailed tables of imports, exports and other basic indicators of economic and social development.

On the basis of the scanty information which does exist we can offer only tentative conclusions. There is some evidence, however, that the price which exporting firms paid for cocoa rose in Ibadan relative to Lagos during the period 1912-1918. In 1913, the price paid by firms in Lagos for cocoa ranged between £37 and £42 per ton, in Ibadan between £18 and £30, leaving a differential of between £19 and £12 per ton. (See Table 19). In 1917, the highest differential recorded was £11.7. In other words, either transport costs fell during this period, or competition among cocoa buyers in Lagos increased (and hence traders' margins fell) relative to competition among buyers in Ibadan.

Unfortunately we do not know how railway rates changed in this period. Private motor transport, which later threatened to undermine the railway's finances altogether,[25] was not yet widespread. The District Officer's reports on Ibadan in the early 1920's record the beginnings of private lorry transport in that area; at that time, the lorry owners

---

[25]The problem of how to compete with private lorry transport plagued the Railway Department during the late 1920's and 1930's. For discussions of this subject, see G. Walker, Traffic and Transport in Nigeria (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1959) and R. J. Harrison Church, Railways of West Africa (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1943). Reports and correspondence on road versus railway competition may be found in Nigeria, Legislative Council, Sessional Papers, No. 31 of 1933, and "Correspondence Concerning Railway Freight on Cocoa" (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/16570).

appear to have been competing with the government motor transport service from interior towns to the railway, rather than with the railway itself.[26] But for the present, it must remain an open question whether the reduction in the difference between cocoa prices in Lagos and Ibadan resulted from a decrease in the cost of railway freight.

In the case of market structure, competition apparently increased among some of the large expatriate trading firms toward the end of the war. After the war broke out in 1914, the German firms of G. L. Gaiser and Messrs. Witt and Busch were forced to withdraw from Nigeria. In 1913, Gaiser alone had shipped thirty-four per cent of the palm kernels and forty-one per cent of the palm oil exported from Nigeria[27] so their departure left a substantial share of the market to be divided among their competitors. The result was apparently an increase in competition among the remaining firms--in 1915, the Secretary of the Niger Company complained that when the war broke out, competitors had forced the Company to "pay up" for all produce.[28] In the next three years, all exporting firms suffered from a shortage of shipping space and presumably had little incentive to compete vigorously for produce they couldn't get out of the country. By 1918, however, with the end of the war in sight, competitive pressures began to build up once more. Both the Niger Company and John Holt and Company felt threatened by the expansionist aims of Lever Brothers,[29] which in fact bought a controlling share of the Niger Company's

---

[26] Oyo Province, Annual Reports, 1921 and 1922 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/06027 and CSO 26/09723).

[27] A. G. Hopkins, An Economic History of Lagos, 1880-1914 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1964), p. 424, n. 1.

[28] Trigge to the Earl of Scarborough, Sept. 15, 1915, in Niger Company Papers, vol. 2 (Rhodes House, Oxford).

[29] Niger Company Papers, vols. 2, 9, 16 passim; also Holt Archives, Series II, Box 5, Files 1, 2, 5 passim.

stock in 1920. Hence there may have been a tendency for firms to pay higher prices, relative to those they received for produce, in 1918 and 1919 than they had earlier. There is nothing to indicate, however, whether this tendency was stronger in Lagos than in interior Yoruba towns.

Although prices in Ibadan do not appear to have fallen as far as those in Lagos between 1912 and 1918, they did decrease. We have, therefore, still to explain why plantings rose. Two other factors could have influenced returns to cocoa growing and therefore the rate of planting in this period--namely, changes in input prices and new techniques of production. The major change in production techniques which occurred before 1940 was the adoption of improved methods of fermenting and drying cocoa beans to prepare them for market. The introduction of such methods was a pet project of the Nigerian Department of Agriculture almost from the date of its formation (1909), and one which appealed to Nigerians interested in developing the cocoa industry and other commercial crops. In 1914, L. L. Ricketts, a "native Agricultural Instructor" in the Department, toured the Western Provinces demonstrating improved methods of cultivating and preparing cocoa for market.[30] In 1916, the Department demonstrated proper methods of fermentation at Ibadan to an audience of farmers recruited for the occasion by the Ibadan Agricultural Society.[31]

The Ibadan Agricultural Society was organized in 1903[32] by a group of Ibadan farmers who were interested in promoting the cultivation of cash crops. A number of the members were apparently Christians,[33]

---

[30]Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1914.

[31]Ibid., 1916.

[32]"Resident's Letter Book, 1903-1905," March 5, 1904 (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

[33]G. D. Jenkins, Politics in Ibadan (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1965), chap. vi. Out of twenty-two members in

and they received encouragement and support from both Christian clergymen and the Ibadan Town Council, which at that time consisted of the British Resident, the ten or twelve most important chiefs in Ibadan and a couple of non-voting but educated Christians who helped mediate between the chiefs and the Government. The Council granted twenty-five acres of land to the Ibadan Agricultural Society on which to plant cash crops and, by October, 1904, the provincial government had advanced them a total of £200 to finance their efforts. On October 22, however, the Resident announced that no more funds could be made available to support the farm. The Society would have to "sell the cotton and cocoa grown thereon, and thus to reimburse to such an extent as might be possible the Provincial Funds . . . ."[34] In spite of this set-back, the Society continued to exist,[35] although the chiefs who had been members dropped out after 1912.[36] Its main functions were apparently to experiment with new crops and methods of cultivation and to disseminate information about successful innovations to other Ibadan farmers. Consequently the Society became the natural center of the government's proper fermentation campaign in its early stages.[37]

1910-11, nine were Christians, including three C.M.S. agents. The following discussion of the Ibadan Agricultural Society is based on material in Jenkins' thesis and the Ibadan Town Council Minutes, and my own conversations with farmers and with Chief Ayorinde of the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

[34]Ibadan Town Council Minutes, Oct. 22, 1904 (in files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

[35]By 1914, it had started another farm on which it grew kola and European vegetables as well as more familiar food crops and export goods. Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports, 1914-1919.

[36]Jenkins, chap. vi.

[37]In 1916, the Society began selling its own well fermented cocoa.

The new methods of fermenting and drying cocoa advocated by the Department of Agriculture and the Ibadan Agricultural Society consisted essentially of performing these operations more carefully[38]--i.e., with a greater expenditure of labor--than farmers had been wont to do. Proper fermentation and drying were not, in other words, cost-reducing innovations; unless the buyers were prepared to pay more for properly fermented cocoa, it was not worth the farmers' while to prepare it. In 1916, the Ibadan Agricultural Society sold about 100 tons of fermented cocoa to John Holt and Company at a premium of £3/10/0 per ton,[39] but after the war the price of unfermented cocoa rose sufficiently to discourage even the Society from continuing its efforts.[40] Fermentation did not catch on among the majority of farmers until the mid-1920's, when the Department of Agriculture organized cooperative fermenting houses where the farmers could bring their beans to be fermented and be assured of receiving a premium for the fermented cocoa.[41] Thus, there is no reason to think that

---

[38]The method consisted of piling the beans on banana leaves which were then folded over the heap to cover it. The beans are turned and mixed a couple of times during the process of fermentation which takes six or seven days.

[39]Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1916.

[40]In 1919, the Director of Agriculture for Southern Nigeria wrote "Members of the Society who produce cocoa continue to express their dissatisfaction with the premium given by certain Firms for fair fermented cocoa; in the season 1919-20 this premium was 7s6d per cwt., with the maximum price from these merchants for FAQ at 70s. It is not considered by members that this premium, of less than 11 per cent, compensates them for the loss and extra trouble of fermentation, especially as other Firms and 'contractors' were giving 72s and 75s per cwt. as the maximum prices for cocoa of any grade." Annual Report, 1919.

[41]The cooperative fermentaries ultimately proved successful--a fact which resulted in their demise since most farmers took up fermenting on their own. A history of the cooperative movement in Western Nigeria, of which the fermentaries were one of the early stages, is currently being prepared by Mr. Adeyeye, Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Ibadan.

a significant number of Ibadan farmers actually received constant or rising average returns to growing cocoa in the period 1912 to 1918 because they were switching to better methods of fermentation.

Was there, then, a drop in input prices in the "old" cocoa areas which reduced the cost of establishing new cocoa farms or increased present and therefore expected future earnings from cocoa? There is no direct evidence of such a drop. In Ibadan, people apparently moved into the forests south and east of town in order to plant cocoa all during the first twenty or twenty-five years of the century,[42] so there is no reason to believe that payments associated with the use of land declined during these years, although they may not have risen much until after the area was thoroughly settled. Labor was evidently in short supply both before and after the war,[43] but we have no first-hand information on conditions during the war. However, the prices of export commodities other than cocoa also fell during this period because of shipping and storage difficulties.

Table 24 shows the unit values of cocoa and of four other exports from Western Nigeria, between 1910 and 1920. Except for 1916-1918, the price of palm kernels (the most important of the four alternative commodities in terms of the total value exported) moved in the same direction as that of cocoa; over the decade as a whole, the price of palm

---

[42] See above, chap. ii, pp. 64-65.

[43] In 1910, the head of the newly formed Southern Nigeria Department of Agriculture complained that cocoa farmers in Western Nigeria did not space their trees at regular intervals or weed and prune them properly. He conceded that "the main difficulty however seems to be that of obtaining labor . . ." The following year, another agricultural expert toured cocoa farms in the Western Provinces and reported that "nearly all these farmers complained that the scarcity of labor prevented their giving better attention to the requirements of their crops." Annual Reports, 1910 and 1911. Also, see below, n. 47.

TABLE 24

UNIT VALUES OF SOME MAJOR NIGERIAN EXPORTS, 1910-1920

	Palm Kernels (£/ton)	Cotton (£/cwt)	Rubber (£/ton)	Mahogany Logs (£)	Cocoa (£/ton)
I. Unit Values					
1910	14.1	3.6	265	3.9	34.6
1911	14.5	3.3	185	4.1	36.8
1912	15.2	2.6	176	5.0	37.5
1913	17.8	2.8	176	5.5	43.5
1914	15.8	3.0	234	5.6	34.8
1915	11.0	2.3	154	7.0	34.4
1916	10.8	3.6	86	7.5	43.8
1917	13.9	5.0	82	5.7	32.2
1918	15.9	7.3	125	7.1	23.0
1919	22.8	8.0	110	13.7	41.5
1920	27.6	11.0	116	14.3	71.9

Source: Bluebooks.

kernels fell slightly relative to that of cocoa. The price of rubber declined steadily with the exception of one year, until almost the end of the war when it recovered slightly. Cotton and timber both increased in value for at least part of the period, but cotton, which always earned a lower return than cocoa, was grown only in those parts of Western Nigeria unsuitable for cocoa, and most of the timber came from Ondo Province where cocoa was not yet widely cultivated. Thus, for farmers in the "old" cocoa areas, where the crop was well established before 1910, the opportunity cost of labor, measured in terms of potential returns to the production of other export goods, probably fell during these years. Moreover, there is no evidence that returns to growing food crops were any more attractive than those to producing various commodities for export. By 1917, the District Officer in Ibadan was complaining of "a growing tendency to neglect foodstuffs in favor of cocoa" in the southeastern

part of Ibadan Division.[44] Apparently, Ibadan farmers were by this time sufficiently convinced of the continuing future profitability of cocoa, relative to other crops and forest products, to go right on planting, even during a few years of declining prices.

This conclusion corresponds to Polly Hill's findings concerning the expectations and investment decisions of another group of West African cocoa farmers. On the basis of extensive research in southern Ghana, Miss Hill has emphasized "the remarkable long-sightedness of the migrant cocoa-farmers, who would not stop planting existing lands, or making future plans for the planting of newly acquired lands, just because the cocoa price seemed low during a run of years . . ."[45] She found that increases in the price of cocoa were "instantly reflected in increased purchases of land."[46] The rate of planting, on the other hand, may have depended on other factors, such as the availability of family and other types of labor which did not have to be remunerated in cash.[47]

Similarly, cocoa farmers in Western Nigeria did not necessarily stop planting because of a drop in the current price of cocoa. In Ibadan, before 1918, people could usually acquire land without large initial cash payments, so that a drop in the market price of cocoa need not have interrupted the move into the good cocoa areas southeast of town. Moreover, insofar as real prices of other export goods also fell in this period, farmers and their families may have been willing to take time away from the

---

[44]Ibadan Division, Annual Report, 1917 (Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 4/6/355/1917).

[45]Polly Hill, "A Plea for Indigenous Economics," Economic Development and Cultural Change, XV, 1 (October, 1966), p. 14.

[46]Polly Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 183. (Her underlining).

[47]Ibid., p. 188.

production of, say, palm produce to plant more cocoa against higher prices in the future. Farmers who had learned to think of cocoa as a source of gain over a long period of time,[48] may just not have paid much attention to short-run changes in the current price of cocoa when they decided how much to invest in trees in a given year.

Costs: Ondo, 1920's and 1930's

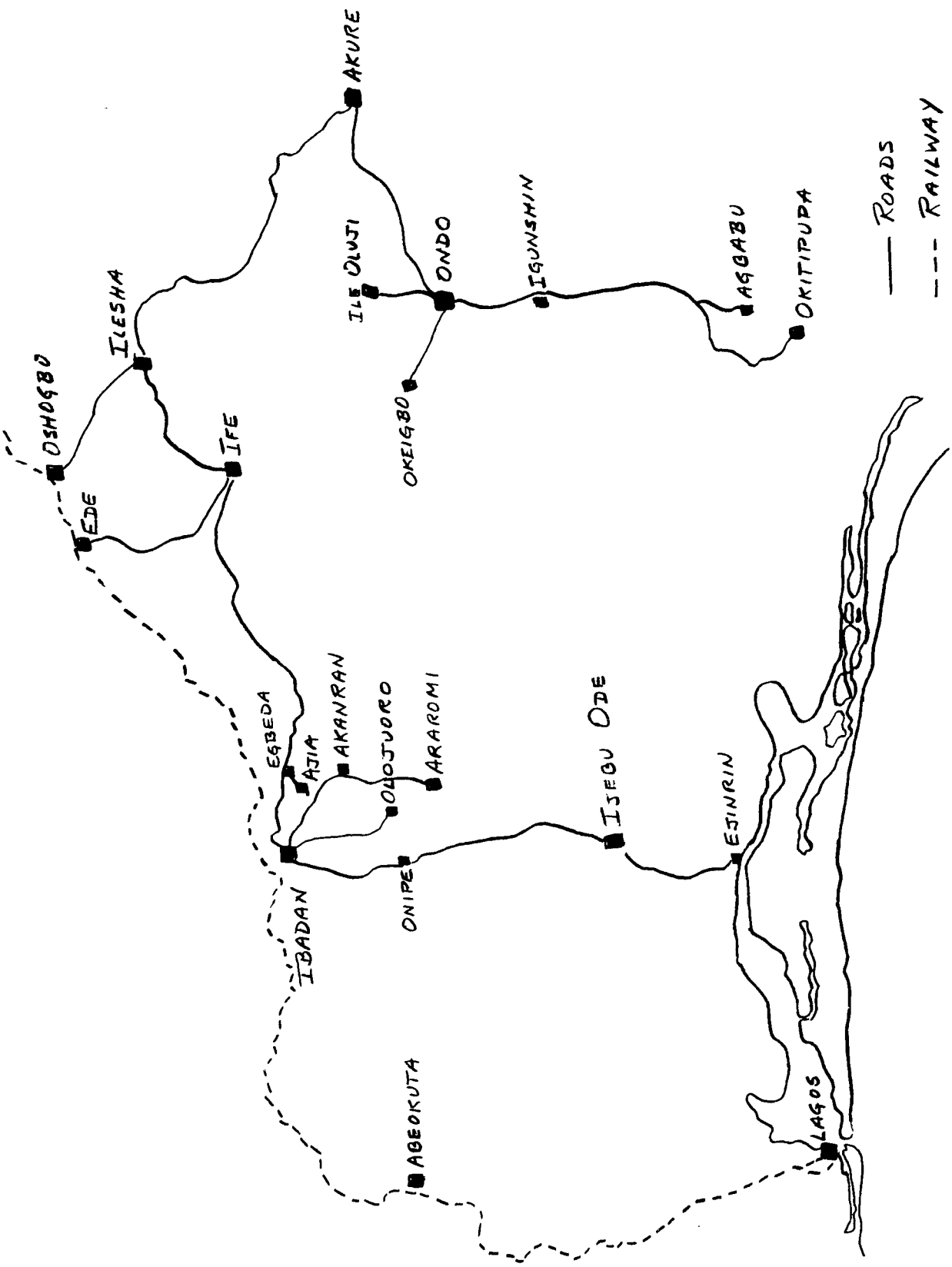
In Ondo, as in Ibadan, the early planters did not wait to experiment with cocoa until the government had provided their area with facilities for transporting produce to the coast. Such facilities proved important, however, for the development of widespread cocoa cultivation. As far as the government was concerned, expansion of the cocoa industry was only a by-product of the railway. The British built the Lagos railway (which reached Ibadan in 1901, Kano in 1912) for strategic and commercial reasons, but at a time when "commerce" meant palm produce and cotton, rather than the cocoa and groundnuts which were later to comprise a major share of the railway's traffic. Once the railway was built through Yoruba country, the government concentrated on constructing motorable feeder roads to link the railway with administrative headquarters and major centers of population, rather than to important areas of cocoa cultivation. (See Map IV and Table 25).

When the government did finally take steps to develop roads for evacuating cocoa, it was in response to the demands of the cocoa farmers themselves, who supplied most of the necessary labor. In 1917, the Ibadan Agricultural Society asked the government to build roads to the

---

[48] Nearly all the farmers interviewed in both Ibadan and Ondo said that they or their fathers had planted cocoa in order "to make money" or "to get rich." Twenty-five per cent of those interviewed in Ondo and about 32% in Ibadan gave additional and somewhat more complex reasons such as: (1) that cocoa would bring wealth in the future, (2) that it was more profitable than other crops or (3) so that they could afford to educate their children.

MAP II. ROADS AND RAILWAY IN COCOA GROWING AREAS



"large cocoa plantations near Akanran and elsewhere."[49] The government was short of engineers and hence unable to comply with the Society's request. After the war, the Society renewed its plea, pointing out that the "greatly increased cost of labor has augmented seriously the expenses of the transport of produce such as cocoa from the farm to the buyer."[50] In 1921, the District Officer reported:

> The people in all parts of the Province are clamoring for more motor roads but it is useless to attempt anything further until the engineer arrives.[51]

TABLE 25

DATES ON WHICH RAILWAY AND ROADS IN COCOA GROWING AREAS WERE COMPLETED

	Route	Date Opened for Traffic
Railway:	Lagos--Ibadan	1901
	Ibadan--Oshogbo	1907
Roads:	Oshogbo--Ilesha	1909
	Ede--Ife	1911
	Ibadan--Ijebu Ode--Ejinrin	1915
	Ilesha--Akure	1918
	Ibadan--Ife--Ilesha	1919
	Akure--Ondo	1919
	Ondo--Okeigbo	1923
	Ileoluji--the Ondo-Akure road	1925
	Ondo--Agbabu	1927 (Dec.)
	Ibadan--Akanran	1926
	Ibadan--Olojuoro	1929
	Egbeda--Ajia	1929
	Akanran--Araromi	1936

Notes and Sources: Based on Oyo and Ondo Provincial Annual Reports in the Nigerian National Archives. Roads mentioned are shown on Map IV.

---

[49] Ibadan Division, Annual Report, 1917. (Nigerian National Archives, OYOPROF 4/6, 355/1917).

[50] Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1919.

[51] Oyo Province, Annual Report, 1921 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/06027).

Finally, in the 1920's, the government did begin to construct motorable roads into the major cocoa areas south and east of Ibadan town, in order to increase the volume of traffic on the railway.

Similar considerations determined the pattern of road-building in Ondo. The first motorable road in Ondo linked Ondo town with the provincial capital, Akure, in 1919.[52] From Akure motor vehicles could transport goods to the railway at Oshogbo where they would be shipped down to Lagos. Thus, to transport goods from Ondo southwest to Lagos--154 miles by road today--one had to go thirty-two miles east to Akure, sixty-eight miles northwest to Oshogbo, and thence, 182 miles by rail to Lagos--a total journey of 282 miles. The anomalies in this situation were obvious even to the government and, as cocoa cultivation began to spread in Ondo, steps were taken to remedy the situation. In 1923, the Ondo Native Authority built ten miles of road from Ondo to Okeigbo. Eventually, the District Officer pointed out in his Annual Report, this road would extend all the way to Ife, which was linked by road to the railway at Ede, thus knocking thirty miles off the journey from Ondo to the railway.[53]

Whether the Ife Native Authority failed to seize this golden opportunity to open up motor traffic with Ondo, or someone within the Ondo Native Authority protested, we do not know. In all events, by 1924, the local authorities had apparently reconsidered and decided that to go south one might indeed try going south. By the end of the year, they had laid out nineteen miles of road toward Agbabu and cheap canoe transport on the lagoon.[54] To be sure, the Agbabu road was not built in a day. In

---

[52]Nigeria, Bluebook, 1919.

[53]Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1923 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vol. III).

[54]The rest of this paragraph is based on material in the Ondo Provincial Annual Reports for the years 1924-1927 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vols. IV - VII).

1925, the District Officer reported that it was nearly finished; in anticipation of this event, the people of Ileoluji, north of Ondo town, were putting in their own road to join the new highway. In 1926, however, a marine expert from Lagos objected that Okitipupa, rather than Agbabu, should be the terminus of the road, since it offered much better port facilities. For the better part of two years the whole project hung fire while officials argued over whether to extend the road to Okitipupa and, if so, whether to complete the spur to Agbabu, which was already half built. Finally, it was decided to build roads to both Agbabu and Okitipupa and, in December, 1927, the Agbabu road was opened to traffic.

The introduction of mechanized transport facilities to Ondo coincided with two other favorable developments in the cocoa market. One was the spectacular rise in price which occurred in the mid-1920's; the other, the cooperative fermenting houses which enabled farmers all over Western Nigeria to take advantage of the premia for properly fermented cocoa, which rose as high as £6 per ton in the late 1920's.[55] Cooperative fermenting houses were introduced to Ondo almost as early as they were to other communities in Western Nigeria, although at the time, the Ondo cocoa industry was still in its infancy. (In 1924, when the first three houses were built in Ondo Province, firms at Okitipupa bought only seventy-four tons of cocoa which was presumably most of the output

---

[55] Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports, 1920-1929. Cf. R. H. Green and S. H. Hymer, "Cocoa in the Gold Coast: A Study in the Relations between African Farmers and Agricultural Experts," Journal of Economic History, XXVI, 3 (September, 1966). The authors state that in Ghana schemes to promote proper fermenting of cocoa were unsuccessful because the Department of Agriculture failed to insure that farmers actually received a premium for well fermented beans.

in Ondo and Benin Provinces combined.[56] The first houses were apparently built at the request of local farmers who,[57] like some of the early planters in Ibadan, were anxious to develop the industry and make use of improved methods of production. These first houses were built at Okeigbo, Igunshin and Bolorunduro. (See Map III).

As we have already seen,[58] Okeigbo was one of the earliest sites of cocoa cultivation in the Ondo kingdom; Igunshin was where Daniel Fadashe, one of the first Christians in Ondo town to experiment with cocoa, started his farm in 1912. Bolorunduro was founded around 1920 by Christians from Oboto village who were looking for additional land. Their leader had begun growing cocoa around 1918, after being advised to do so by an Ondo clergyman named Rev. Adeyemi, and having visited the established cocoa farms at Okeigbo. Farmers in Bolorunduro later joined the Ondo Farmers' Association which Rev. Adeyemi and Fadashe organized in the early 1920's.[59] Like the Ibadan Agricultural Society, the Ondo Farmers' Association sought to encourage the development of commercial agriculture in Yorubaland, both by educating farmers concerning new crops and techniques of production, and by urging the government to develop transport facilities and to help in educating the farmers. Eventually, both the Ibadan and Ondo organizations sponsored schemes for marketing

---

[56] Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1924 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vol. IV).

[57] Senior Superintendent of Agriculture to Director of Agriculture, Ibadan, March, 1925, in "Produce Inspection and Grading of Cocoa" (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/50480).

[58] Chap. ii, pp. 51-53.

[59] I was not able to find any written records of the activities of the Ondo Farmers' Association. The following discussion is based on interviews with descendants of Adeyemi, Fadashe and other early members of the Association and with Mr. S. O. Babalola of the Akure Cooperative Union.

cocoa cooperatively, in order to help farmers secure better prices for their cocoa. Thus, some of the people--especially Christians--who had helped to introduce cocoa to Yoruba communities in the first place continued to play an active part in developing better methods of cultivation and marketing, once the crop itself had been accepted by farmers.

The effects on returns to growing cocoa in Ondo of rising prices and reduced transport costs are summarized in Table 26. In the early 1920's, according to the District Officer, the price which Ondo farmers obtained for cocoa averaged around £8 per ton.[60] The Director of Agriculture in Southern Nigeria stressed the need for better transport facilities to develop the industry.

> To our knowledge there are areas of cocoa in this region [i.e., Ondo Province] which are harvested in some years and not in others, according to the price, or according to whether any travelling middleman goes round them.[61]

In 1925 and 1926, the price in Lagos rose to about £30 per ton for FAQ; if the cocoa was well fermented and dried, farmers could earn, on the average, £5 more per ton. This meant that the price in Ondo rose to £16 or £18 for FAQ, and more people could afford the lorry fare to Oshogbo, especially those who took their cocoa to the cooperative fermenting houses, which arranged for bulk transport to the railway. Then, in 1927, the price took another great leap forward and, in December, the road was opened to Agbabu, cutting transport costs by anywhere from £4 to £8 per ton and raising the price in Ondo to almost £50.

---

[60] Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1926 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vol. VI).

[61] Comments by the Director of Agriculture on a Memorandum by the General Manager of the Railway, February 13, 1926 in "Correspondence Concerning Railway Freight on Cocoa" (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/16570).

TABLE 26

COCOA PRICE IN ONDO (£ PER TON)

Crop Year	FAQ	Good Fermented
1920-21		
1921-22	about £8[a]	. .
1922-23		
1923-24	3.7[b]	. .
1924-25	16.5[c]	22.0[h]
1925-26	17.7[d]	. .
1926-27	42.0[d]	. .
1927-28	43.4 - 47.9[e]	. .
1928-29	28.6[f]	30.6[i]
1929-30	. .	. .
1930-31	16.7[g]	19.3[j]
1931-32	. .	. .
1932-33	. .	19.9[k]

Notes and Sources:

a. Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1926 (CSO 26/11874, Vol. VI).

b. Lagos price, £16.2, minus transport cost from Ondo, £12.5. Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette; Walker, Traffic and Transport in Nigeria; "Correspondence Concerning Railway Freight on Cocoa" (CSO 26/16570).

c. Lagos price minus average of transport costs from Okeigbo, Igunshin and Bolorunduro to Lagos. Transport costs from Okeigbo and Bolorunduro equal lorry fares to Ilesha plus price differential between Ilesha and Lagos. Transport cost from Igunshin equals cost of headloading to Okitipupa plus price differential between Okitipupa and Lagos. Data from Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette, "File on Grading and Inspection of Produce" (CSO 26/50480), and Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1925.

d. Lagos price minus transport cost from Ondo. Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette and Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1926 (CSO 26/11874), Vol. VI).

e. Lagos price minus transport cost from Ondo. Walker; "Correspondence Concerning Railway Freight on Cocoa" (CSO 26/16570); Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1927 (CSO 26/11874, Vol. VII).

f. Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1929 (CSO 26/11874, Vol. IX).

g. Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette.

h. FAQ plus average premium at Ilesha of £5.5. "File on Grading and Inspection of Produce" (CSO 26/50480).

i. FAQ plus average premium at Ondo of £2. Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1929 (CSO 26/11874, Vol. IX).

j. Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1931 (CSO 26/11874, Vol. XI).

k. Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1933 (CSO 26/11874, Vol. XIII).

The effect of these developments on the economy of Ondo was considerable. Farmers who had left their cocoa to rot on the trees a few years earlier now rushed to plant more trees. European merchant firms set up branches in Ondo itself to purchase cocoa and palm kernels and dispense imported goods to the nouveaux riches.[62] The Department of Agriculture, which had previously felt itself in the vanguard of cocoa development in Ondo, now complained that the cooperative fermentaries were losing business--due to "the simple fact that when a man who has been used to getting £20 a ton for his cocoa is suddenly offered £50 a ton, he begins to regard a premium of £5 . . . as much less important than he did before."[63]

Despite the depression, the boom in cocoa planting, begun in the late 1920's, continued into the early 1930's. The rate of planting rose only gradually after 1932, but did not begin to decline until the second price slump of 1937. The cocoa farmers of Ondo Province seem to have reacted to the depression in much the same way as farmers in Ibadan and other "old" cocoa areas did to the price decline of 1912-1918. Ondo farmers had seen during the 1920's how lucrative cocoa could be, compared to other crops. Moreover, since the prices of other cash crops fell too in the early 1930's (see Table 27), cocoa remained a relatively attractive source of income. The supply of cheap hired labor available to cocoa farmers may have increased as other opportunities dwindled. In 1931, for example, firms in Ondo bought a larger volume of palm kernels than they had the previous year, although the price was at an all-time low. The district manager of the United Africa Company thought the reason might be that the timber concessions had been forced to close down,

---

[62] Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1927 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vol. VII).

[63] Nigeria, Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1926.

releasing a considerable amount of labor.[64] Also, it was apparently in the 1930's that people began to migrate into the cocoa belt from other parts of Nigeria in search of work.[65] Thus, with permanently cheaper transportation cocoa remained sufficiently attractive, even with the low prices of the 1930's, for farmers to continue to invest in it for the future.

TABLE 27

UNIT VALUES OF SOME MAJOR NIGERIAN EXPORTS, 1921-1938

	Palm Kernels (£/ton)	Cotton (£/cwt)	Rubber (£/ton)	Mahogany Logs (£)
I. Unit Values				
1921	14.1	3.2	112	13.9
1922	15.7	4.6	115	14.4
1923	16.8	6.3	99	14.5
1924	17.6	8.2	100	. .
1925	18.1	6.0	114	15.0
1926	17.8	1.0	128	13.9
1927	17.2	3.3	129	14.5
1928	17.9	4.7	71	14.1
1929	17.0	5.1	83	14.1
1930	14.1	3.9	69	13.6
1931	8.4	2.2	39	11.8
1932	8.7	2.2	37	7.9
1933	7.3	2.2	33	7.8
1934	5.5	2.5	28	7.9
1935	7.1	2.7	30	. .
1936	9.4	2.5	41	. .
1937	10.8	2.6	49	. .
1938	6.9	1.9	43	. .

Source: Bluebooks.

---

[64] Ondo Province, Annual Report, 1931 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, vol. XI).

[65] Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 206; A. L. Mabogunje, Changing Patterns of Rural Settlement and Rural Economy in Egba Division, South-western Nigeria. This point was also brought out in my own interviews.

Conclusion

As far as we can tell from available data on cocoa plantings and prices in Nigeria, there was no simple relationship between the current price of output and the rate at which farmers decided to plant new trees, at least before 1940. Instead, as one might expect, the rate of planting was affected by a number of economic variables, including past as well as current prices of cocoa, costs of establishing cocoa farms and returns to alternative productive activities.

Because of these other considerations, farmers sometimes continued to plant cocoa trees, even though the market price of cocoa beans was falling. In Ibadan, in the period 1912-1918, and later in Ondo, during the early 1930's, market prices of other goods were falling also; hence, farmers had little to gain by diverting land and labor from cocoa to other crops. Also, in Ondo, the development of modern facilities for transportation effected a substantial increase in net returns to cocoa, so that farmers continued to benefit from the crop and therefore to plant new trees, even after the market price began to decline. Finally, the experience of having earned large cash returns from cocoa during periods of high market prices apparently led farmers to expect more large returns in the future--or at least to feel that the possibility of high prices in the future was sufficiently valuable to offset the cost of expanding productive capacity now and the risk that the price might not rise again, after all.

As for the role of the public sector in developing the cocoa industry, it appears that the British administration in Nigeria engaged in a couple of successful programs to this end, once cocoa growing was generally accepted among farmers. By building first the railway and, later, a network of motorable roads in Western Nigeria, the government greatly reduced the cost of transporting cocoa to the coast, which in

turn undoubtedly increased the volume of investment and output in the industry. Also, the Department of Agriculture organized a successful campaign to improve the quality of Nigerian cocoa beans by teaching farmers how to ferment and dry them, and by seeing to it that they received a higher price for properly prepared beans. However, as A. O. Hirschman has pointed out in other contexts, public decision-making is a two-way street; often the most successful government measures to aid economic development start as responses to public demands for action.[66] In Western Nigeria, the British did not start to build feeder roads or cooperative fermentaries until groups of enterprising Africans had not only established cocoa cultivation in most Yoruba communities, but had actually asked the government to supply these particular services in order to further the development of their industry.

In general, the evidence presented in this chapter supports the thesis that Nigerian cocoa farmers decided to invest in additional cocoa trees in an economically rational manner. Several scholars have already advanced this thesis on the basis of statistical analyses of data on trends in prices, output and plantings. However, the results of these analyses have not been unambiguous. One can make a more convincing case for the economic responsiveness and rationality of the Nigerian cocoa farmer by going beyond official data on prices and acres planted to examine the historical and institutional context in which cocoa growing developed. Only in this way is it possible to develop a meaningful interpretation of the scanty quantitative information which is available.

---

[66] Hirschman, Strategy of Economic Development, especially chap. iii, and Journeys Toward Progress, passim.

CHAPTER V

THE ORGANIZATION OF COCOA FARMING IN WEST AFRICA

As I have suggested at various points in the preceding chapters, West African farmers organize the production of cocoa in a distinctive manner, which is quite different from cocoa growing in other parts of the world.[1] There are very few large plantations in West Africa; instead, most cocoa is grown on family farms, often only a few acres in extent, which are worked by the farmer and his immediate family or a few hired laborers. Farmers' holdings tend to be fragmented. Even farmers who have only a few acres of cocoa frequently hold several different plots which may lie miles apart. Partly because their holdings are scattered, cocoa farmers often do not supervise their laborers very closely. Distant farms are left in the care of trusted relatives or laborers, who often work them on a share-cropping basis and rarely see their employers. Finally, in many parts of West Africa, both farmers and laborers are extremely mobile. Farmers migrate in search of good cocoa land; laborers travel long distances to work on cocoa farms, often covering several hundred miles each year between their homelands and the cocoa growing areas.

---

[1]The information about West African cocoa farmers, which is summarized in this paragraph and the following one, is documented later in the chapter. In writing this chapter, I have relied heavily on the following sources, in addition to my own findings for Western Nigeria: W. H. Beckett, Akokoaso; A Survey of A Gold Coast Village (London: published for the London School of Economics and Political Science by P. Lund, Humphries, 1944); M. Dupire, "Planteurs autochtones et étrangers en Basse-Côte d'Ivoire orientale," Études Éburnéennes, VIII (1960); P. Hill, The Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer (London: Oxford University Press, 1956) and Migrant Cocoa Farmers ; A. J. F. Köbben, "Le Planteur Noir," Études Éburnéennes, V (1956); and Claude Meillassoux, Anthropologie Économique des Gouro de Côte d'Ivoire (Paris: Mouton, 1964).

There are, to be sure, local variations in the general pattern of cocoa farming just described. Methods of acquiring and using land vary from one community or tribe to another, as do systems of recruiting and remunerating labor. Some groups of farmers are much less mobile than others. And, as various observers have pointed out,[2] it is difficult to generalize about the size of cocoa farmers' holdings. In most West African communities, one can find individuals with less than an acre of cocoa living side by side with farmers who hold more than 100 acres. Nevertheless, in many respects cocoa farmers in different parts of West Africa are more like each other than they are like cocoa growers (or other commercial farmers) in other parts of the world.

That cocoa production in West Africa exhibits certain distinctive features is undoubtedly related to the fact that cocoa growing was developed there primarily by Africans, rather than by immigrants who tend to import their own systems of agricultural organization and adapt them to local ecological conditions.[3] One can point to a number of traditional West African practices and social institutions which have influenced farmers' methods of mobilizing and employing resources in the production of cocoa. It is also true, however, that farmers have adapted traditional agricultural practices to the economic requirements of producing cocoa. In some respects, cocoa growing succeeded in West Africa because it fit into traditional patterns of production; at the same time, cocoa was an innovation, and farmers have shown considerable

---

[2]Especially Polly Hill. See Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 19, n. 1.

[3]As did the French who established cocoa and coffee plantations in parts of the Ivory Coast. European efforts to start plantations in Nigeria were not successful. See below, p. 233.

enterprise and imagination in taking advantage of the opportunities for gain which were afforded them by the new crop.

I think it is important to stress this point. There is an understandable but unfortunate tendency, among civil servants and economists concerned with increasing the pace of development in low income societies, to assume that if an activity or institution is traditional, it cannot be progressive. The author of one well-known source on cocoa stated this assumption quite baldly:

> . . . when it is recalled that over and above these handicaps /of small fragmented holdings/ there are educational, social, and cultural retarding factors, as well as the traditional peasant inertia and indifference, the magnitude of the problem of modernizing African peasant cacao production becomes evident.[4]

Others, who would recognize the inaccuracies in this statement, may nevertheless help to perpetuate the underlying assumption by overemphasizing the "traditional" character of cash crops such as cocoa. Hla Myint argues, for example, that West African economies were able to expand their output of cocoa, because they had large reserves of "unused hinterland" and "underemployed or surplus labor," which had hitherto had no market for "its potential increase in output."[5] Cocoa "did not require a radical departure from the methods of subsistence agriculture and could therefore be readily grafted on to the traditional economy."[6] Even Myint's caveat to the policy makers that "the fact that peasant export production has not shown any technical improvements in the past does not mean that it is inherently incapable of improvement if adequate

---

[4] UN, FAO, Commodity Series Bulletin No. 27, Cacao, p. 19.

[5] Hla Myint, The Economics of the Developing Countries (London: Hutchinson, 1964), pp. 42-43.

[6] Ibid., p. 40.

resources are ploughed back into it"[7] underlines his contention that cocoa did nothing to change the traditional pattern of West African economic activity in the past. By arguing that "the expansion of peasant export production" involved only quantitative changes in the traditional economy, Myint implies that African producers are not capable by themselves of altering the structure of their economic activities.

In this chapter, I would like to examine more carefully than Myint and others have done, some of the interactions between traditional patterns of economic activity in West Africa and the opportunities offered by the introduction of cocoa. To do so, I shall discuss three aspects of the organization of cocoa farming in West Africa, each of which illustrates, in a different way, how farmers combined enterprise and tradition to develop the new crop. In order to test the generality of my observations, I shall compare my own findings for Western Nigeria with other studies of cocoa farmers in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The first section, on land tenure, will attempt to show that traditional laws and customs are not always inflexible, but may be adapted to the needs of new productive activities without completely disrupting established rights and interests. In the second section, I shall argue that what looks like an economically backward system resulting from a non-Western culture--namely, the prevalence of small plots of cocoa worked by comparatively unsupervised laborers--may represent an efficient use of available resources for productive ends. Finally, I shall discuss the relevance, for Nigeria, of Polly Hill's hypothesis that in West Africa migration was essential to the rapid development of cocoa growing. In earlier chapters I have argued that differences in external circumstances may help to explain when and why farmers decided to take up

---

[7] Ibid., p. 52.

cocoa growing. The relationship between migration and cocoa farming illustrates how such differences may also affect the way farmers organize the production of cocoa.

Land Tenure

In many parts of West Africa, land was traditionally regarded as belonging to a community of people--a family, a village or a state--rather than to the individuals within it.[8] In 1913, a Nigerian chief told the West African Lands Committee: "I conceive that land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless members are unborn."[9] In practice, one might expect that communal ownership of land would offer serious obstacles to the development of commercial agriculture.[10] In some areas, for example, farmers did not even use the same piece of land for any length of time; cultivable land was reallocated periodically among the members of the community. In others, an individual might use the same piece of land during his lifetime, but he could not establish sufficient control over the land he had worked to

---

[8]The subject of land tenure in Africa has, of course, been discussed by many different writers in many contexts, and it is quite beyond the scope of this study to attempt any comprehensive or systematic review of the subject. Good general discussions of African land tenure may be found in T. O. Elias, The Nature of African Customary Law (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956); C. K. Meek, Land Law and Custom in the Colonies (London: Oxford University Press, 1949); Lord Hailey, An African Survey (London: Oxford University Press, 1939). Daniel Biebuyck, ed., African Agrarian Systems (London: published for the International African Institute by Oxford University Press, 1963) contains a useful collection of case studies on land tenure and agriculture.

[9]Quoted in Elias, p. 162.

[10]Such an argument has been advanced in, for example, P. T. Bauer and B. S. Yamey, Economics of Underdeveloped Countries (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957), pp. 51-52, and UN, FAO, Agricultural Development in Nigeria, 1964-1980 (1965), chapter on land tenure.

bequeath it to his children. One would not expect a farmer to devote resources to making improvements on a piece of land, if he or his heirs could not enjoy the benefits of these improvements.

Another feature of communal ownership of land was that land could not be alienated or disposed of unless the interests of all members of the community were consulted. If ancestors and future generations constituted members of the community, one would expect it to be virtually impossible for a community ever to dispose of any of its territory. In such circumstances, enterprising farmers who wanted extra land for planting cash crops might find it difficult or impossible to acquire. Actually, communal land ownership has not proved to be incompatible with the development of cash crops in West Africa.

In most areas, farmers who sought extra land for planting cocoa did, in fact, acquire it on various terms, ranging from a presumptive right to use land belonging to one's own community, to outright purchase. In Ondo, for example, traditionally any farmer could cultivate any piece of Ondo land which was not being used by someone else. Since there was plenty of land available when the Ondos took up cocoa growing, farmers simply moved into the untilled areas with good soil, and took what they needed. There was no reason to pay anything for the land because no Ondo--not even the Oshemawe--had a superior claim to vacant Ondo land.[11]

At the other extreme were the Akwapim of Southern Ghana who purchased farm land in the neighboring state of Akim Abuakwa. The Akwapim were among the earliest and most dynamic cocoa farmers in West Africa. In her pioneering study of these farmers,[12] Polly Hill points out that they began very early to purchase large tracts of land from the

---

[11] See above, chap. iii, pp. 100-101.

[12] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers.

chiefs of Akim Abuakwa. Although the natives of Akim Abuakwa were not in the habit of buying and selling land among themselves, the chiefs were permitted, under the customary laws of their state, to sell uncultivated land in their domains in order to repay public debts.

> The greatest practical obstacle encountered by these chiefs was not squeamishness about the propriety of selling land of which they were the mere custodians, for if their people became restive about the extent of the sales, they were always easily pacified with a proportion of the proceeds, but uncertainty about boundaries.[13]

Miss Hill cites evidence that sales of land had occurred in the area as early as the 1860's.[14] Although sales were probably infrequent before the Akwapim began to buy large tracts for cocoa growing, the idea of selling land was well established before then. The Akwapim farmers simply took advantage of this fact.

In other communities, landholders have been more concerned with retaining ultimate control of their land than were the sub-chiefs of Akim Abuakwa. Chapter II above described how the hunters of Ibadan sought to build up their social as well as their economic position by collecting tenants or followers on their lands. In return for an initial present, (which tended to increase as cocoa production expanded) and annual payments (ishakole) of varying amounts, the farmer acquired the right to use a piece of land for an indefinite period, and even to bequeath the use of it to his heirs. He could not dispose of the land, however, except by leaving it to his descendants.

Ibadan tenants owed their landlords social and political support as well as ishakole; in turn, the landlords often acted as chiefs or local administrators in their domains.[15] Similar arrangements were made

---

[13] Ibid., p. 139.

[14] Ibid., pp. 138, 240.

[15] See above, chap. iii, p. 99.

by other landholding groups in West Africa, such as the Ndenie Agni of southern Ivory Coast and the Ashanti in central Ghana, who granted rather than sold land to strangers.[16] The strangers were, in turn, expected to behave like members of the community, accepting its laws and paying tribute to its chiefs. "By the generous encouragement of settlers and strangers . . . the followers of a chief were increased in number and his wealth also thereby directly increased . . ."[17] Since the rain forest areas of West Africa were not densely populated when cocoa was introduced there, labor rather than land was often the scarce factor of production, and families or chiefs, who controlled more land than they and their followers could work, welcomed outsiders who would join the community and contribute to its productive potential. At least one tribe--the Guro of central Ivory Coast--carried this reasoning so far that they gave land for permanent crops to strangers more readily than to members of their own community.

Historically, the Guro were an agricultural people, producing mostly food crops for their own consumption.[18] They carried on some trade, chiefly with northern savannah peoples, but only because the latter sent middlemen to them. Food farming was organized by the lineage; within a lineage, an individual's authority over land corresponded to his authority

---

[16] Köbben, pp. 148-49. In this chapter the term "stranger" will be used to denote someone from another state or tribe than the individual or group in question. It should be noted, however, that many Africans apply the term to anyone not a member of their own lineage or clan. In discussing strangers in southern Ivory Coast, Marguerite Dupire points out that to the indigenous inhabitants of the regions she studied, a "stranger" is not just a Ghanaian or Togolese but, and more importantly, someone from another tribe, whether or not he is from the Ivory Coast (pp. 20-21).

[17] R. S. Rattray, quoted in Köbben, p. 149.

[18] Meillassoux, passim.

over other members of the lineage.[19] Traditionally, young men were supposed to work for their elders. They were not given plots of land to cultivate individually, but were assigned specific tasks to perform on the lineage's farms; thus, at the end of the season, a young man could not claim the produce of a particular plot as his, but had to accept the share of the total harvest allotted to him by the head of the family. As men married and established families, their status in the lineage increased and eventually, they received their own land and the right to command the labor of their children and grandchildren. When the Guro began to plant cocoa and coffee, in the early 1950's, the elders wanted to cultivate these crops in the traditional manner; hence young men did not at first receive their own plots from the head of their lineage but worked on his.

In some areas, the desire to keep young Guro men in the village eventually outweighed the fear of giving them more economic autonomy, and the elders have allotted plots to their juniors for permanent crops. Elsewhere, however, the elders have clung to the family system with the result that many young men are leaving their native villages. In order to maintain the labor force (or increase it, as the case may be) the elders have granted or "sold" land to strangers. Meillassoux cites a number of cases in which the strangers made a sizable initial present for the land and believed themselves quit of further obligations.[20] When their cocoa

---

[19] Meillassoux, chap. x.

[20] Ibid., pp. 338-44. Sometimes, Guro chiefs "sold" land which belonged to another village. When the unsuspecting stranger farmer began to harvest his crops, he was beseiged with demands for a share both from the seller and from the actual owners of the land. In her study of stranger farmers in southern Ivory Coast, M. Dupire points out that often the stranger can avoid paying anything to anyone for years, while the indigenes wrangle over jurisdictional problems.

and coffee trees began to bear, however, the Guro began asking for additional annual payments, denying that they ever sold the land outright. Since the advent of permanent crops is fairly recent in this area, these issues are still being worked out in the courts. Meillassoux suggests that the Guro may eventually adopt a solution to the problem which is widely practiced in other parts of Ivory Coast and in Ghana--the abusa system, which we shall discuss below.

In general, then, families or communities with ample supplies of land suitable for cocoa or other permanent crops have welcomed "strangers" who wanted to establish plantations. As we have seen, families in various Yoruba states and chiefs in Akim Abuakwa benefitted from the planters' labor by exacting a sizable initial payment for the right to use (and, in Akim Abuakwa, to dispose of) a piece of land. In other areas, landholders collected "rent" in the form of annual payments, once the trees began to bear fruit.[21] In many parts of Ghana and Ivory Coast, these payments consisted of one third of the crop--a system known as abusa, which is a Twi word meaning one third.[22] Abusa tenants are to be found throughout the cocoa growing areas of Ghana and among many tribes of the Ivory Coast, including the Abe, Agni and Guro. In most of these areas, people have also distributed land to strangers on

---

[21] To some extent the difference between initial and annual payments is nominal, since the initial payment is often made in installments after the trees have begun to yield. However, such payments cease when the user of the land has paid an agreed total; annual payments theoretically continue as long as he uses the land.

[22] For discussions of the word abusa, and systems of hiring labor and leasing land related to it, see Hill, The Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer, chap. i, and Dupire, passim. References to abusa laborers and tenants in Ghana and the Ivory Coast may also be found in Köbben, Meillassoux, and Beckett.

other terms. So far as we know, the abusa system is not practiced in Western Nigeria.[23]

It is difficult to say why there are no abusa tenants in Western Nigeria or why some strangers became abusa tenants and some acquired land on other terms in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, but several possible reasons come to mind. For one thing, the concept of abusa antedates coffee and cocoa among the Akan peoples, who are spread over large parts of both Ghana and the Ivory Coast.[24] In Akim Abuakwa, for example, custom held that "one third of 'whatever came out of the land' went to the Omanhene" (the head of the state).[25] The rule supposedly applied to all manner of natural resources, including game, gold, and tree products such as palm oil and rubber, although it is not clear how regularly the rule was observed. Since the idea of giving the chief one third of the land's produce was already familiar, perhaps the system of abusa tenancy "originated as a convenient means for the stool of granting cocoa farming rights to strangers,"[26] presumably, that is, for chiefs who did not want to sell stool lands outright.

In the Ivory Coast, some groups of immigrants have been more willing than others to become abusa tenants, apparently for financial reasons. Marguerite Dupire found that most Dioula immigrants, who usually began planting cocoa with funds they had accumulated as traders,

---

[23]Cocoa farmers in Nigeria do frequently employ caretakers to look after already established farms (either because the owner lives too far away to supervise them or because he is engaged in some other occupation). These caretakers may be remunerated with a share of the crop--farmers who mentioned this system to me usually said that the caretaker received half of the yield. Cf., Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 275.

[24]Dupire, p. 34.

[25]Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 147.

[26]Hill, Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer, p. 16; cf. Migrant Cocoa Farmers, pp. 158-59.

preferred to buy land outright if they could not obtain it for a nominal sum in the traditional manner. On the other hand, the Baoule, who left profitless farms in the savannahs to seek better land in the forests, could only afford to start plantations by becoming abusa tenants.[27]

Finally, Polly Hill has pointed out that many abusa tenants began as abusa laborers, who harvested the cocoa or coffee on already established farms, in return for one third of the crop. After employing a laborer for several years, a farmer might permit him to plant trees of his own, in return for a third of the future output of the trees. Thus, individual farmers may have used abusa tenancy to collect rents from strangers for land which theoretically belonged to the stool. In Western Nigeria, on the other hand, where the abusa concept was not traditional, where historically there have been very few stranger farmers involved in planting cocoa, and where families' rights to collect rents from strangers on their lands have usually been recognized, the system never developed.

Like the sales of land in Akim Abuakwa, or "leases" in Ibadan, the abusa system was an attempt to distribute land to people who would use it productively without upsetting the traditional rights of the original landholding group. It provided landholders with a share of the increased productivity of their land as well as preserving their ultimate claim to it and, at the same time, offered a convenient financial arrangement to the stranger farmer starting on a shoestring.

Once a farmer had planted trees, they were considered his personal property, even though he did not own the land they stood on. In Ondo, a farmer could sell his cocoa trees at any time, thus realizing in liquid form the value of his investment. In Ibadan, where families

---

[27]Dupire, chap. iii.

were anxious to preserve control over their lands, tenants could not sell trees outright, but could pawn them in return for cash loans. In practice, people who pawned their trees frequently chose not to repay the principal, in which case the transaction was effectively a sale.[28] Farmers in Ghana and the Ivory Coast have also sold and pawned their cocoa trees. Two variations of these transactions involved the ubiquitous concept of abusa. The Ndenie Agni, for example, who granted land to strangers for planting cocoa, allowed the strangers to sell their trees. However, they had to pay one third of the proceeds to the local Agni chief, to signify that the land belonged to the Agni.[29] In parts of Ghana, where land was freely bought and sold, trees were often pawned for specified periods of time, after which the debtor automatically redeemed them. In such a transaction, one third of the proceeds was used to pay the laborer, one third was considered interest on the loan, and one third was counted toward repayment of the principal.[30] In other words, since farmers could sell their cocoa farms outright, they apparently pawned them only when they wanted to borrow money for a short time; accordingly, the terms of the agreement insured that the debtor will be able to redeem his farm in a few years.

At the beginning of this section, I mentioned several features of traditional African systems of land tenure which might hinder the development of commercial farming. In the case of cocoa and other tree crops, however, most communities in West Africa have managed to adapt their landholding concepts and practices to accommodate planters' requirements. By alienating the right to use land, rather than the

---

[28] See above, chap. iii, p. 104.

[29] Kobben, p. 153.

[30] Hill, Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer, pp. 50-51.

land itself, and by distinguishing land from improvements thereon, numerous West African communities have managed to reconcile the interests of landholding groups with the needs of enterprising individual planters, and thus to permit the successful development of permanent cash crops.

The Scale of Production

The typical West African cocoa farmer is often described as a "smallholder" who owns a couple of acres of cocoa trees, which he maintains and harvests with his own and his family's labor. Some observers have pointed out that this description is not universally applicable.[31] Citing examples of cocoa farmers with large holdings of up to 100 acres or more, they suggest that many cocoa farmers may operate on a larger scale than is commonly realized. In the absence of comprehensive censuses of the agricultural population in the cocoa-producing areas of West Africa, generalizations about the size of cocoa farms must be tentative. Even if it turns out that many cocoa farms are very small, however, it does not necessarily follow that they are economically inefficient. Given the factor supplies available to West African cocoa farmers, and the technical requirements of cocoa growing, one can argue that small farms may often have represented an efficient use of available resources.

An important source of confusion about the size of cocoa farms in West Africa is the difference between a farm, in the sense of a continuous plot of cocoa, and a farmer's holdings. Using data from the Swollen Shoot Virus Disease Survey on the holdings of 14,937 farmers, Baldwin found that the average Yoruba cocoa farmer had 3.51 acres of

---

[31] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 19.

cocoa.[32] Because of the form in which the data were available, however, he had to assume that each farmer held plots in only one village. "If a farmer held plots outside /the village/ area these were treated as belonging to another farmer owing to the virtual impossibility of discovering them without direct personal enquiries." Thus, his figures for the "size of cocoa farmers" probably understate the average size of individual farmers' holdings, although they give an accurate picture of the size of the individual plots worked by farmers and their laborers. The average number of acres per plot in this sample was 2.11. (See Table 28).

Baldwin also pointed out that "the averages for each area . . . conceal the widest variations in the total acreages under cocoa per farmer."[34] For all the areas he studied, fifty-five per cent of the farmers owned less than 2.5 acres of cocoa (or nineteen per cent of the total area under cocoa), whereas 10.5 per cent of the farmers owned forty-one per cent of the acreage in individual holdings ranging from 7.5 to 200 acres. Again, the significance of these figures is somewhat obscure since often the names of "absentee landlords . . . appear to have been entered in the records instead of the names of the actual owners (sic)."[35] If the records really did list the name of the

---

[32] K. D. S. Baldwin, "Analysis of the Cocoa Survey Records for Certain Selected Areas of the Western Region," Jan. 21, 1952 (unpublished paper in files containing the basic material for Nigerian Cocoa Farmers, deposited with the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research).

[33] Ibid., p. 8.

[34] Ibid., p. 7.

[35] Ibid., p. 5.

TABLE 28

THE SIZE OF COCOA FARMS

I. Akwapim Purchases[a]

Purchaser	Total Area (acres)	Number of Original Purchasers	Number of Farmers in 1959	Sizes of Original Strips (acres)	Sizes of Farmers' Holdings in 1959 (acres)
Companies					
A	439	19	86	10 to 106	2.5 to ?
B	990	8	. .	66 to 274	. .
C	596	34	41	10 to 49	. .
D	560	12	61	10 to 174	1.0 to 84
E	759	6	34	? to 224	. .
Families					
Kofi Pare	1152		137		13 farmers own over 20 A each
Omenako	486		92		12 farmers own over 10 A each
Boah	163		19		4 farmers own over 10 A each
Akropong	380		27		. .
Kofi Botchway	294		25		2 to 154
Aburi/Dome	62.5		19		1 to 10.8

TABLE 28--Continued

II. Average Farms in Various Parts of Ghana[b]

Date and Place of Survey	Average Number of Acres per Farm	Average Number of Acres per Farmer
1925, Gold Coast	1.7	2.2 (trees in bearing)
1928, Akim-Ashanti	1.4	2.4
1932-35, Akokoaso	2.5	7.3 (all trees)
1934, Trans-Volta	4.2	5.9
1934, Kwahu	5.2	6.8
1938-39, Suhum-Kibi*	16.7	16.7
1938-39, Koforidua	6.6	7.9

*Many migrant Akwapim farmers settled here.

III. Average Farms in Various Parts of Nigeria[c]

Date and Place of Survey	Average Number of Acres per Farm	Average Number of Acres per Farmer
Ibadan District	1.85	3.59
Olojuoro Road	2.15	3.83
Ajia	1.39	3.02
Gbongan	2.42	4.21
Abeokuta District	2.05	2.44
Otta	1.77	2.08
Ilaro	2.95	3.35

TABLE 28--Continued

III. Average Farms in Various Parts of Nigeria[c]

Date and Place of Survey	Average Number of Acres per Farm	Average Number of Acres per Farmer
Ilesha District	1.71	5.16
Ile-Igbo	1.41	4.27
Ondo Road	1.85	6.98
Oshu	1.33	3.42
Ibokun	2.22	6.20
Akure District	2.97	3.93
Owena	5.07	6.51
Ondo	1.66	2.49
Ado-Ani	3.54	4.61
Ute	5.62	6.74
Ekiti	1.34	1.66
All Areas	2.11	3.51

IV. Distribution of Farmers by Size of Holding in Several Ivory Coast Villages[d]

Village	0 to 2 ha.	2 to 5 ha.	5 to 10 ha.	10 to 25 ha.	25+ ha.
Rubino:*					
Abe	13%	26%	32%	23%	6%
Baoule	4	35	39	19	3
Dioula	. .	50	30	20	. .

*Figures broken down by tribe.

TABLE 28--Continued

IV. Distribution of Farmers by Size of Holding in Several Ivory Coast Villages[d]

Village	0 to 2 ha.	2 to 5 ha.	5 to 10 ha.	10 to 25 ha.	25+ ha.
Ayame Canton	33	32	18.5	13	3.5
Adaou	14	38	28	16	4
Ayenouan	14.5	41.5	24	18	2

Sources:

a. Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, pp. 53, 65, 68, 69, 71, and Appendices to chap. iii, passim.

b. Beckett, pp. 66-67.

c. Baldwin, pp. 10-12.

d. Dupire, pp. 94, 186.

landlord, rather than that of the man who planted the trees, Baldwin is right that this gives a misleading idea of the size of cocoa farmers' holdings. It is difficult to believe, however, that farmers would attribute the ownership of the trees to the landlord. If in fact these "absentee landlords" were individuals who had pawned their trees to creditors or had left them in charge of a caretaker, then they are not landlords at all but the "actual owners" for whom Baldwin is seeking. If that is the case, the above figures may indicate accurately the distribution of cocoa holdings among individuals.

In southern Ghana, Polly Hill found that native Akim farmers cultivated cocoa on plots which were typically between one half and three acres in extent. Most farmers owned between three and six plots.[36] Stranger farmers, on the other hand, owned and usually cultivated much larger areas. Companies of migrant farmers bought tracts ranging from fifty to 3000 acres in size, which were divided into strips, each owned by an individual member of the company, for purposes of cultivation. "A representative square-mile land might contain twenty or thirty strips, of a minimum width of (say) 48 yards and a mile or more long. . . ."[37] However, strip sizes vary widely. Moreover, as her maps show, individuals' strips were often further subdivided between the owner's children or for re-sale, so that the plots actually cultivated by farmers may have been smaller than the 17.5 acres contained in a typical strip.

In sample surveys of small areas in the Ivory Coast, about half of the planters were found to hold less than five hectares (about eleven

---

[36] Hill, "Three Types of Southern Ghanaian Cocoa Farmer," in Biebuyck, p. 215. Cf. Beckett, pp. 66-68.

[37] Hill, "Three Types of Southern Ghanaian Cocoa Farmer," pp. 203-04.

acres) of coffee and/or cocoa.[38] Stranger farmers tended to hold larger farms than did indigenous planters, although there are cases of very large Agni planters whose farms are organized in some respects like European-owned plantations.

> Ces grosses exploitations, lorsqu'elles sont bien gérées, savent combiner les avantages de la technique et de la législation occidentale avec les méthodes traditionelles de travail adaptées aux besoins locaux: mécanisation partielle, main-d'oeuvre permanente et saisonière, poly-culture, coopération, titre foncier, vont de pair avec le maintien de la collaboration familiale et du travail à la tâche à l'interieur d'un système de rémunération périodique, qui semble devoir donner, dans l'état actuel de la situation, de meilleurs résultats qu'un type d'organisation strictement européen.[39]

Thus, although both the size of cocoa plots and the acreage held by individual cocoa farmers varies widely in all of the areas mentioned, there are few African planters who own and operate plantations, covering hundreds of acres, such as one finds in other cocoa growing parts of the world.[40] West African cocoa farmers' holdings, even if extensive, are generally not continuous but are divided into a number of plots, sometimes located quite far apart. The farms are worked by relatively independent laborers, who are responsible for all of the work on a given plot and, usually, grow their own foodstuffs on a bit of the employer's land. If the laborers are not relatives of the farmer, or the farms are too far apart for the farmer to check up regularly on the work there, the farmer usually entrusts the supervision of his farm to a relative who lives nearby. However, the relative's chief function is to see that

---

[38] See Table 28.

[39] Dupire, p. 193.

[40] Information in this paragraph is based on Hill, Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer, chaps. i-iii, and Migrant Cocoa Farmers, pp. 187-90; Dupire, pp. 29-43, 95-137, 190-203; Meillassoux, chap. xiii; Köbben, pp. 82ff; Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, pp. 206-11; and my own observations in Western Nigeria.

the farmer is not cheated; the laborers organize their work as they like.

In terms of organization, then, if not ownership, most West African cocoa farms consist of small, largely independent units. Why have farmers chosen to organize their cocoa growing activities in this way? The discussion in the preceding section on land tenure suggests that farmers have not eschewed large scale production because they were unable to acquire large tracts of land. In some areas, individuals or groups have acquired relatively extensive tracts, but have not chosen to develop them as unified plantations.[41] The Ibadan hunters, for instance, conceivably could have followed the Agege example and organized portions of their territory into large estates worked by hired labor. Instead, they granted portions of land to independent settlers, in return for some form of compensation; the settlers, in turn, often divided their portions among relatives and friends, and made no attempt to develop large continuous plots of cocoa. Similarly, the Akwapim companies evidently made no attempt to organize large farms on their lands, but divided them among the purchasers who, in turn, often subdivided their portions among relatives or subsequent purchasers. The farm maps in P. Hill's book[42] show clearly that each farmer planted cocoa in successive small plots which, especially in the case of the "family lands," were not necessarily contiguous. In other areas, such as Akim Abuakwa, Ashanti or the Agni states in the Ivory Coast, chiefs preferred to increase their wealth by selling or leasing portions of their territories to strangers, rather than by developing large plantations of cocoa or coffee for themselves. In many cases, then, the main obstacle to developing plantation agriculture was not the difficulty of acquiring large enough pieces of land.

---

[41] The Agege planters were a notable exception. See chap. i above.

[42] Migrant Cocoa Farmers, appendices to chaps. ii and iii.

Nor was it, apparently, a problem of labor immobility.

> It is customary for the economist to regard labour as being somewhat immobile within countries and very immobile between countries. These assumptions are not, however, valid in the conditions of tropical Africa and in West Africa labour displays a very high degree of geographical mobility. There cannot be many countries in the world in which migrant labour is as important as it is in the Ghanaian economy.[43]

In Western Nigeria, Ibadans may have been reluctant to work for other Ibadans, instead of planting a few trees on a bit of their own families' lands, but Ekitis and other Yorubas were apparently happy to travel to Ibadan or Agege each year to pick up some extra cash by working for cocoa farmers there. Later, as more Yoruba communities began to cultivate cocoa for themselves, workers from other parts of Nigeria migrated into the cocoa belt each year, supplying labor on both old and new cocoa farms.[44]

These developments are indicated, roughly, in Table 29. Most of my informants in Ibadan said that their families began to plant cocoa before 1914, whereas most of the Ondos interviewed started after that date. In both communities, the proportion of early planters who employed local labor was fairly low--twenty-three per cent in Ibadan, nineteen per cent in Ondo. However, only thirty-two per cent of the early planters in Ibadan had used non-Yoruba labor, compared to sixty per cent of the early planters in Ondo. Instead, the Ibadans had hired more

---

[43] W. Birmingham, I. Neustadt and E. N. Omaboe, eds., A Study of Contemporary Ghana, Vol. I--The Economy of Ghana (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 131.

[44] Others have also noted the importance of migrant labor in the cocoa belt of Western Nigeria. "At present, the reserves of casual labor drawn upon by the cocoa farmers are composed largely of migrant workers who enter the cocoa district at the harvesting seasons and return to their own homes . . . when the picking and fermenting of the cocoa are ended." (Forde and Scott, p. 252.) By 1951-52, it was estimated that 25% of the labor on small cocoa farms was performed by hired laborers; on larger farms, hired labor did 50% of the work. (Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 580).

TABLE 29

ORIGINS OF NON-FAMILY LABORERS

Ibadan

Date when Cocoa First Planted	Ibadan	Other Yoruba	Non-Yoruba	Total
1892-1904	3	9	3	15
1904-1914	5	6	7	18
1914-1925	3	3	3	9
Unknown	. .	3	2	5
Total (%)	11 (23)	21 (45)	15 (32)	47

Ondo

Date When Cocoa First Planted	Ondo	Other Yoruba	Non-Yoruba	Total
Before 1912	4	4	4	12
1912-1920	3	3	21	27
1920-1930	6	6	11	23
Total (%)	13 (21)	13 (21)	36 (58)	62

Sources: Interviews with 34 informants in Ibadan and 40 informants in Ondo. Figures shown in the table represent number of informants who mentioned using labor from each area of origin. Several informants used labor from more than one area.

labor from other Yoruba states than had the Ondos: forty-five per cent of the early planters in Ibadan were said to have used other Yoruba laborers, compared to twenty-one in Ondo. In other words, from the earliest years of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria, farmers have employed migrant workers on their farms. As more and more Yorubas took up cocoa growing for themselves, laborers came from farther afield to work on their farms.

Migrant labor has played an important role in other cocoa-growing areas of West Africa. The migrant farmers of Akwapim often employed migrant laborers from other states or tribes.[45] The Baoule planters in southern Ivory Coast recruited laborers, often relatives, from their homelands; these laborers worked without compensation during the season, but were given a "present" when they returned to their homes after the harvest.[46] Ghanaian farmers who have not travelled outside their own states to plant cocoa, also employ migrant workers on their farms.[47] In the Ivory Coast, the Agni do not work for one another, except within families, but hire Mossi laborers from Upper Volta on their farms.[48] These practices apparently date as far back as cocoa and coffee cultivation in these areas. Mossi workers began to migrate into Ghana and Ivory Coast in 1896, when the French imposed taxes on them.[49]

---

[45] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, pp. 187, 190, 213-14.

[46] Dupire, pp. 127-30.

[47] Hill, Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer, pp. 13, 17, 24, 26, 30, 37; Beckett, p. 5; Birmingham, Neustadt and Omaboe, pp. 99, 104, 239.

[48] Kobben, p. 85.

[49] E. P. Skinner, "Labor Migration Among the Mossi," in H. Kuper, ed., Urbanization and Migration in West Africa (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1965), p. 62.

The Agni began to plant cocoa around 1916, and appear to have hired migrant workers from the start.[50] In short, there is no evidence that physical immobility of workers has restricted West African cocoa farmers to small scale production relying primarily on family labor.

West African farmers appear to have grown cocoa on small, scattered plots worked by relatively unsupervised laborers mainly for financial and technical reasons. Although migrant labor moved readily enough to cocoa growing areas, it does not follow that farmers found such labor cheap. On the contrary, in Nigeria at any rate, labor was relatively expensive around the turn of the century. Both the Agege planters and Egba farmers complained of the difficulty of competing with European wages.[51] Farmers found it particularly difficult to finance cash payments to laborers before their cocoa farms began to bear. Consequently, they usually began by planting a small plot of cocoa which they and their families could tend, in addition to growing enough food to maintain themselves. Later, when the trees began to yield, the farmer could use his profits to hire laborers to establish more plots of cocoa.

Polly Hill reports that the migrant farmers of Southern Ghana also expanded their farms gradually, hiring laborers only after they could pay their wages from the proceeds of established farms.

> . . . although nearly all Akwapim farmers who own large farms, of (say) twenty acres or more, employ labourers (sometimes a great many of them) and although many quite small farmers do likewise (an element of prestige being involved), it is important to note that systematic large-scale employment of farm laborers marked the second, not the first, stage of the developing capitalistic process.[52]

---

[50] Kobben, p. 87.

[51] See above, chap. iii, p. 137.

[52] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 187.

> . . . the point under emphasis is that the launching of the migration depended mainly on the farmers' personal efforts and was not associated with the development of new, or large-scale, systems of farm-labour employment.[53] (My underlining).

As in the case of Nigerian cocoa farmers, the main reason for not hiring labor until one had an established farm seems to have been financial. ". . . in the early days the ordinary Akwapim farmer spent all that he had on the purchase of land and on unavoidable items such as seed-pods."[54] Given the farmers' decision to buy land in advance of their needs, it follows that they were not likely to have funds left for hiring laborers to establish their cocoa farms.[55]

Financial considerations affected not only the timing of farmers' decisions to hire labor, but the terms on which workers were employed. In many areas, the extended family provided farmers with a supply of labor that did not have to be remunerated in cash at all. Both the Dioula and the Baoule farmers who established cocoa or coffee farms in southern Ivory Coast used "seasonal family laborers" who migrated to their relatives' farms each year.[56] Such workers received no compensation other than a "present" at the end of the season (which could presumably take the form most convenient to the planter), and the hope that after a few years of faithful service, the worker could count on his farmer relative to help him obtain his own plot of land in the forest belt.

---

[53] Ibid., p. 188.

[54] Idem.

[55] Why the Akwapim and other migrant farmers chose to put most of their capital into land rather than using some of it to hire labor is a complex question, affected by the farmers' attitudes on a number of things. Apparently, they dislike holding cash balances, even for short periods of time, and regard land as a reliable store of value. See Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, pp. 183-185.

[56] Dupire, pp. 101-137, passim.

When a farmer had exhausted the resources of his lineage, he could employ other laborers on an abusa basis. It is interesting to note that Dioula planters, who were usually well supplied with funds from various commercial activities other than cocoa-growing, preferred to supplement family labor with workers hired for a cash wage, whom they considered more profitable and easier to supervise than abusa laborers. The Baoule, on the other hand, who lived by farming alone, could not afford real wage laborers and had to employ abusa workers. In short, farmers with limited financial resources could usually afford to hire laborers only after they had established a cocoa farm and then, often on terms which left the laborers relatively free from supervision. The result was that many farmers established a series of small plots, which were not always contigous and each of which was worked by an independent laborer or two.

Fortunately, the technical requirements of cocoa cultivation were entirely compatible with this piecemeal pattern of development. There is little to be gained by producing cocoa on a large scale, under West African conditions. In experiments conducted by the Western Region Production Development Board in the early 1950's,

> it was found that in the virgin savannah bush 100 man-days per acre were needed to clear and stump the land before tractors could operate, while the farms could be prepared for cultivation by the native method with as little as 20 man-days of work.[57]

Amelonado cocoa does best when the trees are planted close together on partially cleared land, so that shade trees are left standing and the soil is not disturbed much. Given these requirements, there is no advantage in using machinery either to clear land or to cultivate the farm after the trees have been planted.[58] There is no reason to believe that

---

[57] Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, pp. 152-53.

[58] See above, chap. iii, p. 82. Also, Galletti, Baldwin and Dina, p. 191, and P. S. Hammond, "Agronomy," in J. Brian Wills, ed., Agriculture and Land Use in Ghana (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 255.

farmers or laborers would plant, weed or pluck cocoa more efficiently if they were organized into large groups under some form of central management; in fact, most early attempts to organize European-run plantations in Western Nigeria are said to have failed because they could not attract or keep enough labor.[59]

Similarly, most of the recent government schemes for increasing the productivity of resources in cocoa growing do not require prior consolidation of land holdings. During the 1950's, the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources made considerable progress in getting Nigerian farmers to adopt new varieties of cocoa and insecticides. The Ministry is now working on schemes for the rehabilitation and replanting of old, low-yielding farms, which will require considerable skilled supervision and on-the-job training of farmers. However, large-scale production is not involved:

> In any one year no farmer will receive financial assistance (either in cash or kind) for the replanting of more than one acre. . . .[60]

Not only does cocoa grow successfully on small, independently worked or managed farms, but historically such a pattern may have represented the best possible use of available resources. Most of the cocoa growing areas of West Africa are characterized by low hills and valleys with "striking contrasts between fertile clays and clay loams on the hill tops and upper slopes and the sandy or concretionary soils of the lower slopes."[61] Cocoa tends to do best on the upper slopes, where the

---

[59] G. C. Dudgeon to Colonial Office, May 22, 1906, in Great Britain, Public Record Office, Confidential Print, African No. 785, "Correspondence Concerning Botanical and Forestry Matters in British Tropical Colonies and Protectorates in Africa."

[60] Western Nigeria, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Tree Crop Planting Projects, p. 22.

[61] Buchanan and Pugh, p. 38.

soil has a high clay content. Because of the uneven topography of the area and variations in the underlying rock, there are not many large continuous tracts of soil which are well suited to cocoa. In their study of soils in the cocoa belt of Western Nigeria, Montgomery and Smyth pointed out that:

> Since parent rock and degree of slope change frequently over short distances . . . there is a correspondingly frequent change in soil morphology, so that individual series rarely occupy more than a few acres at any one site.[62]

Thus, if farmers sought to plant cocoa on only the soils best suited to the crop, they would have to plant on small scattered plots.

There is little evidence that farmers actually tested the soil before planting cocoa or selected only the best spots for establishing their early farms. In practice, farmers probably planted larger blocks of land, without regard to variations in the soil, and simply abandoned patches of trees which did poorly.[63] Thus, in some areas, the observed "fragmentation" of cocoa plots may have been a result of natural selection rather than the effect of traditional patterns of land tenure.

In short, there is some evidence that the tendency of many West African farmers to grow cocoa on scattered (and often small) plots of land, aided either by members of their immediate families or by largely independent laborers, resident on or near the plots they work, represents an efficient response to the technical requirements of cocoa growing and the productive and financial resources available to West African farmers. In this respect, it is interesting to compare developments in Nigeria and Ghana with those in part of the Ivory Coast, where people took up cocoa much later than in Ghana or Nigeria, at a

---

[62] Smyth and Montgomery, pp. 44-45.

[63] Hammond, p. 253; Smyth and Montgomery, p. 218.

time when the government was prepared to supply seed, equipment and credit to help people modernize their farms.[64]

In the administrative cercle of Bouafle, where the majority of farmers did not begin to plant cocoa until 1950, the earliest African planters were Dioula migrant farmers and some Guro chiefs or lineage heads, who had been made local administrators under the colonial regime. The French authorities had hoped to develop the country's exports by recruiting the inhabitants for forced labor (on roads or European-owned plantations) and requiring them to pay annual taxes in cash. In fact, according to Meillassoux, most Guro farmers found the government's demands so onerous that they devoted their energies to hiding from the authorities rather than planting cocoa and coffee to earn the cash income necessary to pay their taxes.

The Dioula migrants and the Guro chiefs, however, enjoyed exemption from taxes and forced labor. The Dioula were able to hold on to the funds which they had accumulated through trading and to use them to acquire land suitable for coffee and cocoa. The Guro chiefs received a share of the taxes collected in their villages or districts, and were also empowered to select the individuals, among the people under their jurisdiction, who must report for forced labor. Thus they were in a position both to hire laborers themselves, and to exempt their own junior relatives from public service, keeping them to work on the family lands.

> Disposant d'argent et d'une main d'oeuvre familiale presque intacte, parfois même de travailleurs recrutés, les 'notables' furent en mesure d'entreprendre les premieres plantations, comme l'attestent l'âge et l'appropriation des plantations figurant aux cadastres . . . .[65]

---

[64] The next two paragraphs are based on Meillassoux, pp. 315-17.

[65] Ibid., p. 316.

These early planters used their financial resources to plant fairly large areas in permanent crops, although, as in Ghana and Nigeria, they were not necessarily continuous tracts.[66] The rest of the population did not begin to plant coffee or cocoa until forced labor had been abolished and taxes reduced. Then, even though the government was providing some credit to small farmers to help them establish farms, the Guro planted mostly on small scattered plots worked by family labor. Thus, in the Cercle de Bouafle, as in the other areas I have mentioned, farmers did not begin to plant tree crops until they were reasonably sure they could profit from them. When they did begin to plant, those with greater financial resources (or a larger pool of dependent labor to draw on) accumulated larger total holdings of cocoa and coffee, but they organized their farms in much the same way as other West African cocoa growers have done.

Migration

Both in Ghana and in the Ivory Coast, some of the earliest and most enterprising groups of cocoa farmers were migrants--people who left their homes and moved, usually to other states, in order to find suitable land for planting cocoa or coffee. Although the migrants retained ties with their homelands, often building large family houses there or sending their children home to school, they usually lived near their farms, along with their wives and children, who helped with the farm work.[68]

---

[66] Ibid., pp. 319, 329-31, 341. Meillassoux cites an example of one Guro chief who planted 30.5 hectares in a period of ten years.

[67] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 1; Dupire, pp. 107-108, 113, 117, 120-21.

[68] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 235.

The Akwapim of southern Ghana began to establish plantations in the forests north of their state, in the 1890's. Their example was soon followed by other groups, including Krobo, Shai and Ga farmers. After 1918, the advent of lorry transport enabled the migrants to purchase land at greater distances from their home towns; during the 1920's, as land shortages began to develop in areas close to home, "the more enterprising Akwapim, Krobo, Shai and Ga farmers . . . started 'to buy land forward' (as they sometimes themselves put it) at a greatly increased rate, in more distant areas, whence they travelled by lorry or train."[69] To some extent, this migration still continues.

In the Ivory Coast, the earliest group of migrant planters, the Dioula, came from north of the cocoa belt, and were followed by other savannah peoples. The Dioula began to establish plantations in southern Ivory Coast around 1916; nowadays, migrant planters predominate in some of the areas which they "opened up." Miss Dupire found that strangers outnumbered indigenous inhabitants in the Abe village of Rubino[70] and the Agni canton of Assouba. In Rubino, the strangers' plantations were considerably more extensive than those of the Abe; in Assouba,

> Des quatre villages agni qui se partageaient la forêt de la province d'Assouba après la conquête du pays, nous sommes passés aujourd'hui à vingt agglomérations, presque toutes étrangères, à part deux campements agni. Ce n'est pas sans amertume et agressivité que les autochtones en prennent conscience: 'Il n'y a plus de terre, disent-ils, nous sommes envahis par les étrangers.'[71]

---

[69] Dupire, pp. 91-94.

[70] Ibid., p. 178.

[71] Hill, Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 169, n. 1. See also, Economic Development and Cultural Change, XV, (October, 1966), p. 14, and "Social Factors in Cocoa Farming," in Wills, p. 280.

On the basis of this accumulated evidence, Polly Hill has suggested that "the rapid expansion of cocoa growing always involves migration."[72] In Nigeria, however, cocoa has been planted almost entirely by Yorubas on Yoruba territory. Yorubas have not migrated to lands occupied by other peoples, nor have strangers established cocoa plantations in Yorubaland. However, the Yorubas have evidently managed to develop an extensive cocoa industry on their own soil; Nigeria is the second largest cocoa producing country in West Africa. Does the Nigerian case constitute a significant exception to Miss Hill's rule?

In a brief discussion of the Nigerian case, Miss Hill qualifies somewhat her notion of "migration" as a necessary ingredient in the rapid development of cocoa growing.

> Perhaps resembling the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, the Akwapim had what may be termed a 'mobile agricultural outlook'; they were accustomed, unlike the Akim, to erecting temporary habitations as farming outposts of the home town. . . .
>
> Owing to the Yoruba habit of building huts for temporary residence in farming areas, these town-dwelling farmers may provide an exception to the suggested rule that in West African conditions the rapid expansion of cocoa-growing always involves migration.[73]

We are left, then, with two related questions about the development of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria. Did the expansion of the Nigerian cocoa industry involve migration in any way and, second, in what sense is a "mobile agricultural outlook" necessary to the development of cocoa cultivation?

Although Yoruba farmers did not migrate to non-Yoruba areas to grow cocoa, and until after World War II, rarely established plantations outside their own states, they did move to certain sparsely inhabited

---

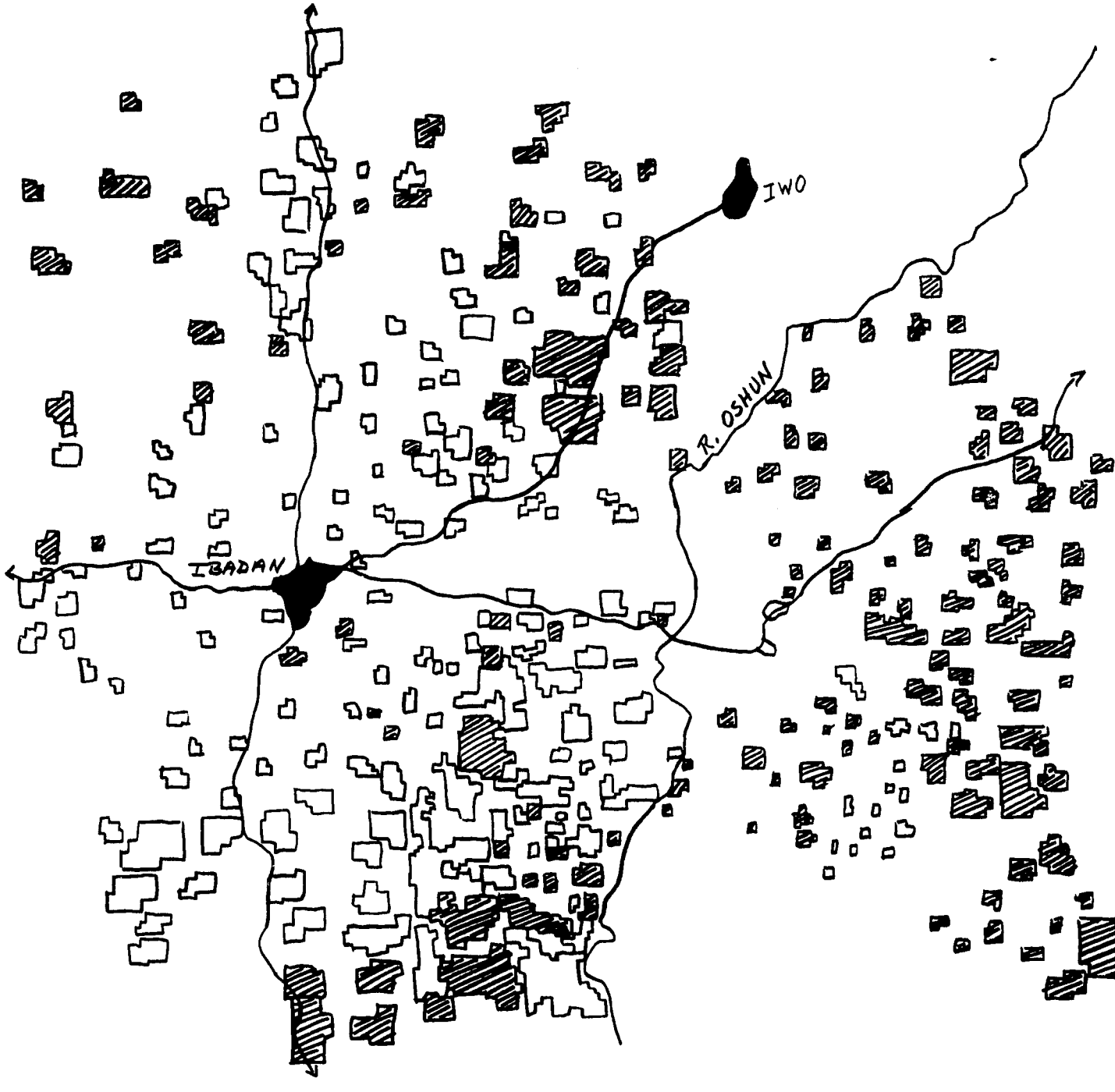
[72] Migrant Cocoa Farmers, p. 169.

[73] See above, chap. ii, pp. 64-65.

areas within their own states for the purpose of planting cocoa. We can trace this process in some detail in Ibadan and Ondo. Map V, drawn by the Cocoa Survey Section of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, is based on the Swollen Shoot Virus Disease Survey of the late 1940's and re-surveys up to 1952. It shows that before 1931, most of the cocoa in Ibadan was planted south and east of the town, within a radius of twenty miles or less, although there were also a number of plantations on the northeastern edge of town and strung out along the Oyo road to the north for ten or fifteen miles. During the 1930's, most new cocoa farms were established east and north of the older cocoa areas. Although some of these farms were as much as thirty-five miles from Ibadan, they were not necessarily established by farmers from Ibadan town; many probably belonged to farmers from nearby, independent towns such as Ikire, Apomu, Iwo or Gbongan.

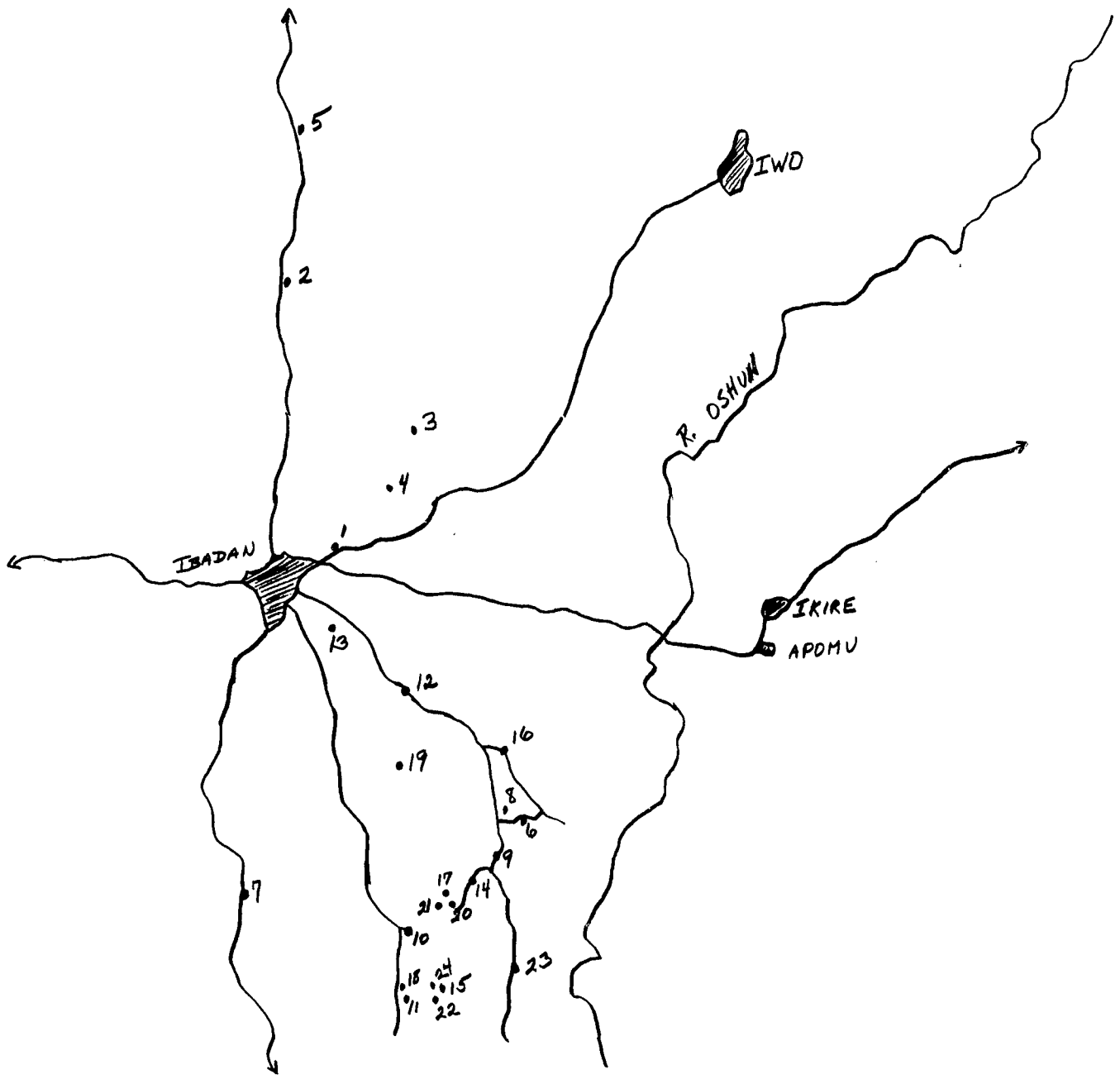
In the course of my interviews, I obtained further information on the temporal and geographical pattern of cocoa plantings in Ibadan. During the nineteenth century, most Ibadan farms were located north of town and many farmers first planted cocoa on their families' food farms, subsequently moving south where they could obtain more and better land for growing cocoa. I did no extensive fieldwork in the cocoa areas north of town, but informants now living in villages south of town frequently mentioned that their forebears had originally planted cocoa farther north, on land which had been in the family for a couple of generations. (See Map VI and Table 30). Either because the family holdings were too small or because the land was "no good for cocoa," Ibadan farmers began around the turn of the century to move south into the largely uninhabited forests where much of the land was well suited to cocoa. We have already seen how, by 1920, hundreds of farmers had obtained

MAP V. DISTRIBUTION AND AGE OF COCOA TREES IN IBADAN AREA



SOURCE: COCOA SURVEY SECTION, WESTERN NIGERIA MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MAP VI. IBADAN VILLAGES WHERE FARMERS WERE INTERVIEWED



TOWNS

•5 VILLAGES (SEE TABLE 30)

TABLE 30

DATES ON WHICH COCOA WAS FIRST PLANTED IN SEVERAL IBADAN VILLAGES

Date	Village	Number on Map VI
	North of town:	
Before 1892	Agbakin	1
1890's	Otun-Agbakin	2
ca 1900	Arun	3
Before 1907	Kute	4
1907-1910	Iroko	5
	South of town:	
1892	Eripa	6
1890's	Onipe	7
1890's (after Eripa)	Isokun	8
1890's (after Isokun)	Gbedun	9
1901-1902	Olojuoro	10
1901-1902	Ayorinde	11
ca 1904	Idi-osi	12
ca 1905	Ogbere	13
ca 1905	Alabidun	14
1904-1907	Alagutan	15
1907-1910	Olorunda	16
1907-1910	Onimo	17
1907-1910	Akinboade	18
1907-1910	Laogun	19
1910-1912	Aladun	20
1910-1912	Abulega	21
1911	Ajugbono	22
1914	Araromi	23
1915	Amodu Afunsho	24

land from ex-hunters in order to establish cocoa plantations.[74] By the 1930's, according to my informants, there was little vacant land left in the area. In general, then, Ibadans moved farther away from town as they expanded their cocoa holdings.

In Ondo, most of the cocoa has been planted northeast of town, although there is some to the south as well. Map VII shows the density of cocoa trees in different parts of the Ondo area, as of 1952. For information on the time pattern of plantings, it was necessary to rely entirely on interviews and occasional documentary sources. As far as I could tell, cocoa spread from some of the earliest farms, at Okeigbo and Ajebamidele, to Ondo itself. Early Ondo planters first planted cocoa south and east of town (e.g., at Igunshin, Bagbe, Lemosho and Fagbo), but expansion in that direction was inhibited by the government, who established large forest reserves in southern Ondo around 1920.[75] Hence, after 1920, farmers began to move northeast toward the Owena River. During the 1920's new villages were founded every couple of years along the Ondo-Akure Road. (See Table 31). Thus, in Ondo, as well as in Ibadan, farmers planted cocoa and established farming hamlets at some distance from the town, although in Ondo they seem to have done so from the earliest days of cocoa growing.

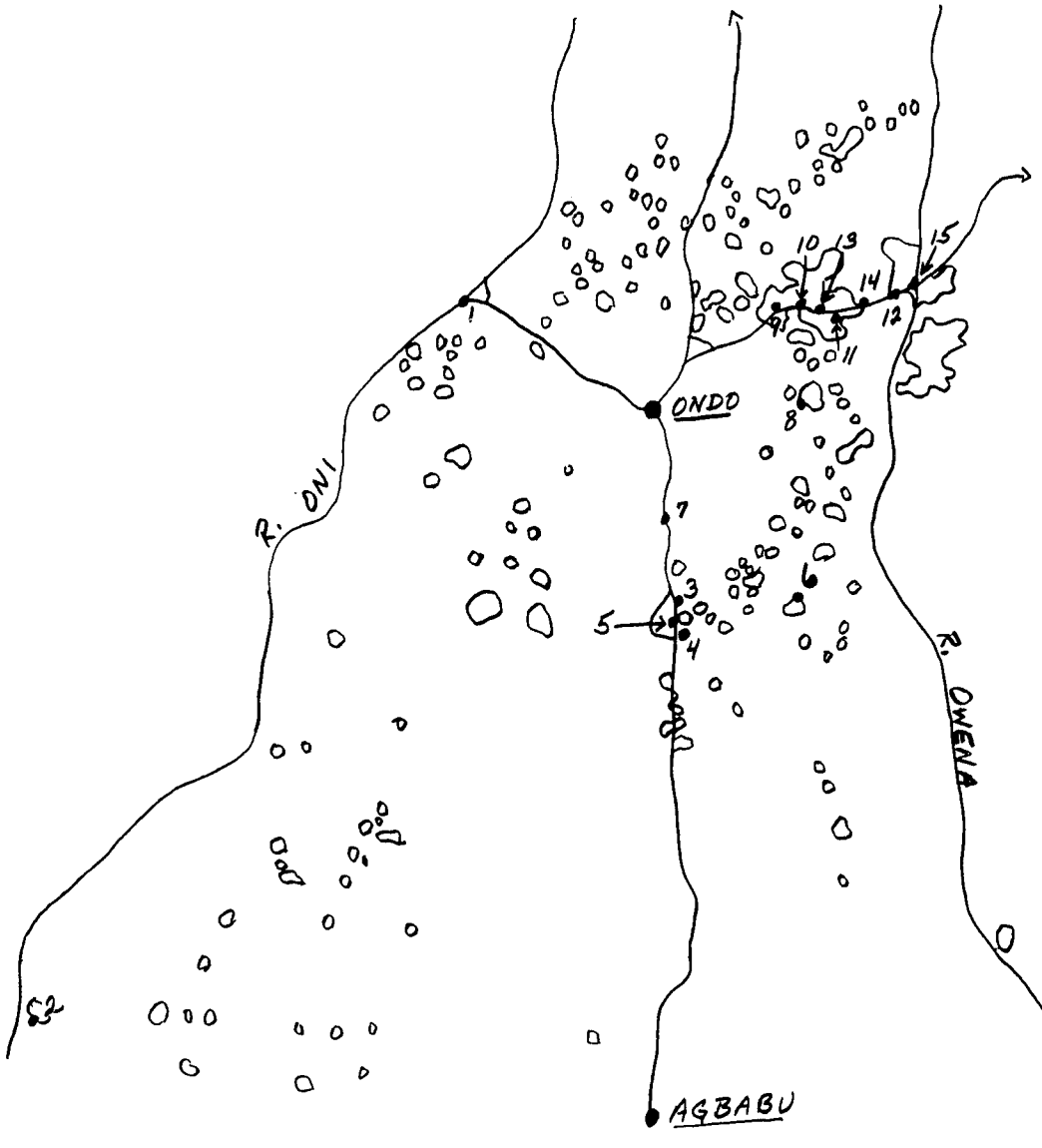
In some of the other Yoruba states, the introduction of cocoa growing also produced sizable movements of people within the state's borders. Using the records of the Swollen Shoot Survey and results of his own fieldwork, Prof. A. L. Mabogunje has traced the temporal and geographical spread of cocoa in Egba Division. The earliest cocoa farms were established

---

[74] Ondo Province, Annual Reports, 1923-25 (Nigerian National Archives, CSO 26/11874, Vols. III-V).

[75] A. L. Mabogunje, The Changing Pattern of Rural Settlement and Rural Economy in Egba Division, South-Western Nigeria (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of London, 1958).

MAP VII. DISTRIBUTION OF COCOA TREES IN ONDO AREA



○ AREAS PLANTED IN COCOA

•5 VILLAGES

SOURCE: COCOA SURVEY SECTION, WESTERN NIGERIA MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

TABLE 31

DATES ON WHICH COCOA WAS FIRST PLANTED IN SEVERAL ONDO VILLAGES

Date	Village	Number on Map VII
	West of town:	
1898	Okeigbo	1
	South of town:	
1909	Ajebamidele	2
1905-1906	Bagbe	3
1912	Igunshin	4
ca 1914	Ogun	5
1901-1917[a]	Lemosho	6
1901-1917[a]	Igbado	7
	East of town:	
1901-1917[a]	Fagbo	8
1918	Oboto	9
ca 1920	Bolorunduro	10
1922	Wasimi	11
1922	Ago-Ileshi	12
1926	Adegbulu's Camp	13
1926	Obun-Ondo	14
1926	Owena	15

Notes:

a. In these villages, farmers said the first cocoa was planted there during the reign of Oshemawe Tewogboye I, which lasted from 1901 to 1917. I am inclined to think that in most cases the actual date falls toward the end of this period, although in Fagbo it may have been earlier.

around Otta, on the southern edge of Egba Division, near Agege. Farmers had begun to move northeast from Abeokuta toward the end of the nineteenth century, into a forest area which had been uncultivated for fifty years, because of Ibadan raids, and "had thus become thickly forested and ideal for cocoa growing."[76] As cocoa became popular, more and more people moved into this area. As early as 1901, a British Forestry Officer found numerous cocoa farms between Asha, in the eastern part of the Division, and Ilogbo (south of Abeokuta, near Otta) and also around Okenla on the railroad.[77] The development of the northeastern part of the Division continued into the 1920's. Planting slowed down in Egbaland during the depression of the 1930's and the war, but, as prices soared in the late '40's and early '50's, farmers began planting cocoa northwest of Abeokuta, on land which had not been developed before. Similarly, in Ijebu, much of which lies south of the forest belt, "there has been a rush to acquire land in the forested north of the kingdom which is ideal for cocoa."[78]

Historically, then, the expansion of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria involved considerable movement of farmers seeking more and better land for growing cocoa. Before the second world war, however, most of this movement took place within the borders of the different city-states; even the advent of rail and lorry transport had no immediate effect on the distance farmers usually travelled to establish new cocoa farms. Out of fifty-six families, for whom I obtained such information in Ibadan, seven had farms outside Ibadan; in Ondo I found only three in fifty-five families.

---

[76] Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 230.

[77] Lagos, Annual Report, 1901-02.

[78] Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law, p. 142.

Moreover, many farmers moved only once. Unlike Akwapim cocoa farmers who often bought land in several places ahead of their actual needs, and spent most of their time travelling from one farm to another to supervise their relatives and laborers, Yoruba farmers tended to settle down, once they had found a good piece of land for planting cocoa. Table 32 summarizes the information I was able to collect on the number of places in which families had established cocoa farms. In Ibadan, twenty-three informants (forty-one per cent of those interviewed) said that they and their fathers had planted cocoa in only one place; in Ondo, the proportion was even higher--thirty-seven families or sixty-seven per cent of those interviewed. This is not to say that these

TABLE 32

NUMBER OF PLACES WHERE EARLY PLANTERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS ESTABLISHED COCOA FARMS

	One	Two	Three	Four	Total
Ibadan	23	25	7	1	56
of which, number outside Ibadan		4	3	. .	7
Ondo	37	14	4	. .	55
of which number outside Ondo		3	. .	. .	3

Sources: Interviews with fifty-six informants in Ibadan and fifty-five in Ondo.

families had never expanded their original farms or held only one plot of cocoa. On the contrary, most farmers in Western Nigeria hold several plots which they or their fathers planted over a number of years. However, their plots tend to lie close enough to one or two villages[79] so that they can be cultivated by someone living in the village and walking to the farms each day.

When Yoruba farmers do have farms in more than one place, they usually establish a relative or close friend in each place to look after the farms; the owner visits his farms periodically to supervise the work in much the same way as do migrant farmers in other parts of West Africa. Like the Dioula in Ivory Coast, some Yorubas carry on other occupations in town, leaving the management of their farms almost entirely in the hands of relatives. The career of Chief J. A. Obisesan, who eventually became President of the Western Nigeria Cooperative Union, illustrates this practice.[80] Obisesan was educated and took his first job as a clerk with the Government Railway Department. In 1914, he became a cocoa buyer in Ibadan. For almost twenty years, he engaged in various trading activities, buying produce and selling imported goods, both as the agent of different European firms and independently. Throughout this period, he owned a number of cocoa farms in different villages, some of which he inherited and some he planted himself. He visited them occasionally, but they were run by his "representatives" and worked by hired laborers, iwofa, or his tenants who discharged some of their obligations to him by working on his farms. Not until he was forced out of business during the depression, however, did he actually live on any of his farms or become interested in

---

[79] Only 7% of the families interviewed in Ondo and 14% of those in Ibadan had farms in more than two places. See Table 32.

[80] Based on Chief Obisesan's Diary and interviews with members of his family.

organizing farmers' cooperatives.

During the first half century of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria, the expansion of the industry involved a limited amount of migration; farmers moved readily to areas suitable for cocoa within their own states, but once established in one or two places with good cocoa land, they tended to remain there. There is no evidence that Yoruba cocoa farmers acquired land "forward" as some did in Southern Ghana, in the 1920's.[81] In fact, very few acquired land outside their own states until the boom in world prices which followed World War II. Finally, no important group of stranger farmers spurred the development of cocoa planting in Yoruba territory.[82] On the basis of these facts, what can we say about Polly Hill's hypothesis that the rapid development of cocoa growing involves migration or, at least, farmers with a "mobile agricultural outlook?"

If, by a "mobile agricultural outlook," one means that farmers are willing to move in order to farm, such an outlook is a pre-condition for the development of cocoa growing only if there is no good cocoa land where the farmers are already living. Yoruba farmers did not migrate over long distances or into foreign territory in order to plant cocoa because, in the early years, they did not have to; there was plenty of good land available within their own states. If, on the other hand, a "mobile agricultural outlook" implies that farmers are accustomed to moving regularly in the course of their farming, one

---

[81] The Ibadan landlords nearly all staked out claims to areas of uninhabited forest which far exceeded their "needs," but they did this, by and large, before people began to plant cocoa in the area.

[82] Why some of the migrant laborers who worked in the Nigerian cocoa belt never evolved into planters is not entirely clear, since they have proved extremely enterprising in other occupations, notably the Hausa in long-distance trade, and the Ibos in a wide variety of commercial activities.

might argue that traditional Yoruba agriculture was particularly well suited to the needs of cocoa cultivation. The Yorubas had long been accustomed to establish hamlets near their outlying farms and to live there for periods long enough to accomplish the necessary tasks of cultivation. Growing cocoa required only an extension of this pattern of agricultural activity--farmers built hamlets farther from town, and stayed there for longer periods of time. In this sense, the Western Nigerian case might be considered to substantiate Miss Hill's hypothesis.

On a more general level, the relationship between migration and cocoa farming in Western Nigeria illustrates the argument, advanced in the earlier chapters of this study, that people's economic decisions and activities depend upon the circumstances in which they find themselves, as well as on their own predilections. The very fact that they did not have to leave home to plant cocoa--to live among strangers whose language and customs were unfamiliar and who might, like the Agni, decide to alter the terms on which stranger tenants held their land or trees--helped to shape the Yorubas' approach to cocoa farming. Yoruba cocoa farmers could continue to participate in the social and political life of their native communities, and evidence suggests that they devoted quite a bit of time to such activities. Even in town, Chief Obisesan often left his shop in the care of an assistant and spent his time conferring with relatives, friends and civil servants about land disputes, chieftancy questions or other civic affairs. Among other landholding families whom I interviewed, it appeared that often the tasks of supervising the family's farms and tenants were delegated to a younger son who was sent to live in the villages. The elder members of the family pursued other occupations

similar to Chief Obisesan's in town. In short, the Yorubas did not often devote themselves so completely to their productive activities as, say, the Akwapim or the Dioula; they did not become quite such single-minded capitalists, and hence did not expand their cocoa plantations so rapidly as did the Akwapim.

To put the matter in a slightly different way, the mobility of Yoruba cocoa farmers (and perhaps that of other West African migrant planters and laborers) was related to their extensive methods of cultivation which, in turn, represented an adjustment to their economic environment in which land was plentiful, labor relatively scarce. Given other factor endowments, other methods of organizing cocoa production might have been preferable. In a densely populated area, plantations organized around a stable and stationary labor force would probably be more efficient than a system under which farmers and their laborers try to cultivate as much territory as possible. Migration and cocoa growing are both common features of West African economic life; cocoa flourishes in the soil and climate of parts of West Africa and migration often constitutes an effective means of combining available resources for productive ends in this part of the world.[83] Insofar as they have been historically associated, it appears not that migration has been necessary to the rapid and effective development of cocoa production, but that those people who have migrated to "foreign" lands in order to plant cocoa have become some of the most dynamic of cocoa farmers, partly because of their position as strangers in the communities where they established their cocoa farms.

---

[83] Cf. E. J. Berg, "The Economics of the Migrant Labor System," in H. Kuper, ed., Urbanization and Migration in West Africa, especially pp. 173-76.

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in this study on the origins and development of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria supports a rather eclectic view of the process of innovation in a developing economy. By the time cocoa was introduced to Western Nigeria, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Yorubas had already demonstrated their ability to adapt their commercial and productive activities to changes in foreign demand. As Britain intensified her efforts to suppress the slave trade and European demand for oils and oilseeds increased, the Yorubas began to substitute palm oil for slaves as their major export commodity. By the end of the century, Yoruba traders were thoroughly accustomed to collecting bulky agricultural commodities in the interior in exchange for imported consumer goods, and to transporting them to the coast. At the same time, internal political and military struggles had disrupted established patterns of settlement, land ownership, and productive activity. When, in the 1890's, the pax Britannica forced the Yoruba armies to disband, it created a sudden surplus of labor actively seeking lucrative employment. Since the ex-warriors found uncultivated land and access to foreign markets readily available, one might expect them to welcome new opportunities to grow crops for export.

In order to identify more precisely the individual attitudes and social and economic conditions which led people to experiment with cocoa, I compared the development of cocoa growing in two Yoruba city-states, Ibadan and Ondo. In both communities, some of the first individuals to experiment with cocoa were Christians (or people sympathetic to the missionaries) and men who had travelled outside

their native communities. There was no evidence that the early planters were better educated than their compatriots or that they came from any particular social or economic group. Apparently the travellers took up cocoa because they had seen people elsewhere getting rich by growing it. The Christians, on the other hand, seem to have been people who were willing to experiment with new means to familiar ends, such as health and prosperity. They had already adopted a new religion for this purpose, and were ready to try a new crop as well, especially when it was recommended to them by their spiritual leaders. However, Christians and travellers in Ibadan began to plant cocoa twenty to twenty-five years earlier than did the same types of people in Ondo. Apparently personal attitudes and experiences were not the only factors which led people to adopt an innovation.

There seem to have been several reasons for the earlier development of cocoa growing in Ibadan. For one thing, there were several groups of people in Ibadan at the end of the nineteenth century who stood to gain from the development of cash crops. Ibadan had been much more involved than Ondo in the Yoruba wars of the nineteenth century. After the peace of 1893, the town was filled with ex-warriors looking for new ways to occupy their time and build up their fortunes. Also, families' rights to land were not yet clearly defined in the outlying parts of Ibadan territory. Consequently, enterprising hunters who knew the terrain better than did the townspeople and chiefs, were able to establish sizable landed domains for themselves. With their encouragement, Ibadans began to move into the forests south of town to try their luck at farming. Finally, Ibadan was more closely connected than Ondo with the expanding commercial activity which accompanied the pax Britannica. In the late 1890's, African traders began to flock to

Ibadan from Lagos, anticipating the railway. It was to their interest, as well as to that of the hunters and ex-warriors, to encourage the cultivation of new crops which could be sold to European merchants for high prices.

Second, there is some evidence that cocoa may have been more profitable in Ibadan than in Ondo around the turn of the century. Actual data on costs and returns to growing cocoa is almost non-existent for this period. However, contemporaries' observations suggest that the increase in commercial activity after 1893 put more of a strain on the productive capacity of Ondo than on that of Ibadan. Food supplies became scarce, and prices rose accordingly, as traders flocked to the town and the inhabitants became involved in collecting and selling wild rubber, which was available in abundance in the Ondo forests. Compared to growing food for the local market, or gathering rubber for export, the Ondos apparently found the unfamiliar cocoa a doubtful and unattractive proposition.

To summarize, my findings about early cocoa planters in Ibadan and Ondo suggest that some individuals are more likely to adopt an innovation than are others, either because of some previous experience with it (in the case of the travellers) or because their attitudes and personalities incline them toward new ways of achieving their objectives, which seems to explain why Christians were so interested in cocoa. On the other hand, differences in individual experiences and attitudes are not sufficient to explain why some communities in Western Nigeria took up cocoa earlier than others. Early planters in Ibadan were apparently affected by a number of historical developments which increased both their readiness to experiment with new productive activities and the benefits which they expected to receive from them. Having been already

deprived of their major occupation, fighting, the Ibadans had little to lose by risking their time and resources on an untried crop. In addition, returns to more familiar occupations were probably not so high in Ibadan as they were in Ondo. Hence, the Ibadans were quicker to plant cocoa and, therefore, to discover exactly how profitable it could be.

The importance of both economic and non-economic influences on farmers' decisions to take up cocoa growing may also be illustrated by the beginnings of cocoa growing in Ondo. Ondos began to experiment with cocoa during the period 1912 to 1920, although there is no evidence that the profitability of growing cocoa was increasing in Ondo at this time. The rubber boom, and presumably local food prices, subsided after 1900. In Lagos, returns to cocoa farmers were noticeably higher after 1900, than returns to palm oil producers or various types of artisans. Moreover, the price of timber, another important export good produced in Ondo, rose steadily from 1910 to 1920, or just when the Ondos were beginning to experiment with cocoa. Apparently, then, profitability is not the only factor which explains when and why farmers first adopt an innovation. Without the social and economic pressures which affected people in Ibadan around the 1890's, the Ondos were much slower to perceive the potential profitability of cocoa and take steps to benefit from it.

Once the early planters in a community had demonstrated that cocoa could be produced there profitably, the uncertainty involved in growing cocoa diminished and many people began to plant it. The rate at which Yoruba farmers expanded their acreage under cocoa depended more directly on economic considerations than did their initial decision to experiment with it. Between 1910 and 1940, the trend of acres planted in different areas appears to have responded to changes in the net return

to growing cocoa. Thus, the real boom in cocoa planting in Ondo began in the late 1920's, when improved transportation facilities helped reduce the cost of conveying farmers' produce to the coast. However, the farmers' response, especially to falling cocoa prices, was often a slow one. In Ibadan, farmers continued to plant cocoa during the period 1912-1918, when the price was falling; the Ondos did likewise in the early 1930's. Once farmers had decided to accept cocoa, they were evidently prepared to take a long view of prospective benefits from the crop, and hence did not revise their expectations about future returns on the basis of a few years of falling cocoa prices.

Finally, both the Yorubas of Western Nigeria and other groups of cocoa farmers, in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, have shown considerable imagination and flexibility in solving problems raised by the introduction of cocoa. When necessary, they have been willing to travel long distances to find land suitable for cocoa or to work on others' cocoa farms. Many communities have managed to adapt traditional customs (e.g., with respect to land tenure) to the needs of cocoa farmers, without destroying established rights and interests. In addition, farmers have taken advantage of the fact that cocoa need not be produced on a large scale to develop the crop successfully within the limitations imposed by the productive and financial resources available to them.

In examining the early history of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria, the expansion of cocoa plantings up to 1940, and the methods used by West African farmers to mobilize and employ productive resources in cocoa farming, we have seen that cocoa farmers have generally been aware of economic incentives and scarcities, and have responded to them in a rational manner. The fact that their cocoa growing activities have also been influenced by social and institutional developments

does not in any way detract from this conclusion. Any program for increasing the productive capacity of an economy must begin with the resources available in that economy. As Schumpeter pointed out, in The Theory of Economic Development, innovation is essentially the combination of existing productive resources in new ways. But the availability and the capabilities of productive resources--especially human resources--are affected by the social as well as the physical environment in which they exist. Economic development must, therefore, take place within the historical and institutional framework of particular societies. The history of cocoa growing in Western Nigeria affords, to all who are interested in the nature of the development process, an example of the way in which producers in a "traditional" economy have successfully used innovations to increase their productive capacity, within the context of established interests, customs and institutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Ajayi, J. F. A. Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1965.

Ajayi, J. F. A., and Smith, R. Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964.

Akinyele, Sir Isaac B. Outlines of Ibadan History. Lagos: Alebisu Printing Press, 1946.

Anene, J. C. Southern Nigeria in Transition, 1885-1906. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.

Bada, S. O. Iwe Itan Ondo. Ondo: Igbehin Adun Press, 1940.

Bauer, P. T. West African Trade. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963. (First published in 1954: Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.)

Bauer, P. T., and Yamey, B. S. Economics of Underdeveloped Countries. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957.

Beckett, W. H. Akokoaso: A Survey of a Gold Coast Village. (London School of Economics and Political Science, "Monographs on Social Anthropology," No. 10.) London: Percy Lund, Humphries, 1944.

Biebuyck, Daniel (ed.). African Agrarian Systems. London: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford University Press, 1963.

Biobaku, Saburi O. The Egba and Their Neighbors, 1842-1872. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.

Birmingham, W., Neustadt, I., and Omaboe, E. N. (eds.). A Study of Contemporary Ghana. Vol. I: The Economy of Ghana. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1966.

Brokensha, David. Social Change in Larteh, Ghana. ("Oxford Monographs on Social Anthropology.") Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

Buchanan, Keith M., and Pugh, J. C. Land and People in Nigeria. London: University Press, 1955.

Burns, Alan. History of Nigeria. 5th ed. London: E. Allen and Unwin, 1958.

Clapperton, Hugh. Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Carey, 1829.

Coker, G. B. A. Family Property Among the Yorubas. London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1958.

Coleman, James S. Nigeria: Background to Nationalism. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1963.

Crowder, Michael. The Story of Nigeria. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.

Dean, Edwin R. The Supply Responses of African Farmers. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1966.

Dike, Kenneth Onwuka. Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

Elgee, C. H. The Evolution of Ibadan. Lagos: The Government Printer, 1914.

Elias, Tasim Oluwole. Nigerian Land Law and Custom. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.

_____. The Nature of African Customary Law. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956.

Faulkner, O. T., and Mackie, J. R. West African Agriculture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933.

Forde, C. Daryll. Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria. ("Ethnographic Survey of Africa: Western Africa," Part IV.) London: International African Institute, 1951.

Forde, C. Daryll, and Scott, Richenda. The Native Economies of Nigeria. Vol. I of The Economics of a Tropical Dependency. Edited by Margery Perham. London: Faber and Faber, 1946-1948.

Galletti, R., Baldwin, K. D. S., and Dina, I. O. Nigerian Cocoa Farmers. London: published on behalf of the Nigeria Cocoa Marketing Board by Oxford University Press, 1956.

Habakkuk, H. J. American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962.

Hagen, Everett E. On the Theory of Social Change. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1962.

Hailey, Lord. An African Survey. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

Hancock, Sir W. K. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs. Vol. II, Part 2. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Hill, Polly. Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

_____. The Gold Coast Cocoa Farmer. London: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Hirschman, Albert O. Journeys Toward Progress: Studies of Economic Policy-Making in Latin America. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1963.

_____. The Strategy of Economic Development. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1958.

Idowu, E. Bolaji. Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1962.

Johnson, Samuel. History of the Yorubas. Lagos: C.M.S. (Nigeria) Bookshops, 1921.

Johnson, W. H. Cocoa: Its Cultivation and Preparation. London: J. Murray, 1912.

Jones, W. O. Manioc in Africa. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959.

Kingsley, Mary. Travels in West Africa. London: Macmillan, 1897.

Kopytoff, Jean Herskovitz. Preface to Modern Nigeria. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965.

Kuper, Hilda (ed.). Urbanization and Migration in West Africa. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1965.

Lloyd, Peter C. Yoruba Land Law. London: Published for the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research by the Oxford University Press, 1962.

Mabogunje, A. L. Yoruba Towns. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962.

McClelland, David C. The Achieving Society. Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1961.

McPhee, Allan. The Economic Revolution in British West Africa. London: George Routledge and Son, 1926.

Meek, C. K. Land Law and Custom in the Colonies. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Meillassoux, Claude. Anthropologie Économique des Gouro de Côte d'Ivoire. Paris: Mouton, 1964.

Myint, Hla. The Economics of the Developing Countries. London: Hutchinson, 1964.

Newbury, C. W. The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Nurkse, Ragnar. Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Perham, Margery. Lugard: The Years of Authority. London: Collins, 1961.

_____. Native Administration in Nigeria. London: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Rowling, C. W. Report on Land Tenure in Ondo Province. Ibadan: Western Nigeria Government Printer, 1951.

Schultz, Theodore W. Transforming Traditional Agriculture. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1964.

Schumpeter, Joseph A. The Theory of Economic Development. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1934.

Smyth, A. J., and Montgomery, R. F. Soils and Land Use in Central Western Nigeria. Ibadan: The Government Printer, 1962.

Stewart, Ian G., and Ord, H. W. (eds.). African Primary Products in International Trade. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965.

Talbot, Percy Amaury. The Peoples of Southern Nigeria. 4 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

Urquhart, D. H. Cocoa. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955.

Walker, Gilbert J. Traffic and Transport in Nigeria. London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1959.

Ward Price, H. L. Land Tenure in the Yoruba Provinces. Lagos: The Government Printer, 1939.

Webster, James Bertin. African Churches Among the Yoruba, 1888-1922. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

Williamson, J. A. A Short History of the British Empire. London: Macmillan, 1922.

Wills, J. Brian (ed.). Agriculture and Land Use in Ghana. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Woodruff, William. The Rise of the British Rubber Industry During the Nineteenth Century. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958.

Articles

Adejuwon, J. O. "Crop-Climate Relationship: The Example of Cocoa in Western Nigeria," Nigerian Geographical Journal, V (June, 1962), pp. 21-32.

Ady, Peter. "Trends in Cocoa Production in British West Africa," Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, II (1940), pp. 389-404.

Awe, B. "The Ajele System: A Study of Ibadan Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, III, 1 (December, 1964), pp. 47-60.

Ayorinde, Chief J. A. "Historical Notes on the Introduction of the Cocoa Industry in Western Nigeria," Nigerian Agricultural Journal, III, 1 (April, 1966), pp. 18-23.

Dupire, Marguerite. "Planteurs autochtones et étrangers en Basse-Côte d'Ivoire orientale," Études Éburnéennes, VIII (1960), pp. 7-237.

Eckhaus, R. S. "The Factor Proportions Problem in Underdeveloped Areas," American Economic Review, XLV, 4 (September, 1955), pp. 539-565.

Goddard, S. "Town-Farm Relationships in Yorubaland," Africa, XXV, 1 (January, 1965), pp. 21-29.

Green, R. H., and Hymer, S. H. "Cocoa in the Gold Coast: A Study in the Relations between African Farmers and Agricultural Experts," Journal of Economic History, XXVI, 3 (September, 1966), pp. 299-319.

Hill, Polly. "A Plea for Indigenous Economics," Economic Development and Cultural Change, XV, 1 (October, 1966), pp. 10-20.

Jones, W. O. "Economic Man in Africa," Stanford Food Research Institute Studies, I, 2 (May, 1960).

Köbben, A. J. F. "Le Planteur Noir," Etudes Éburnéennes, V (1956), pp. 7-190.

Lewis, W. A. "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor," Manchester School, XXII, 2 (May, 1954), pp. 139-191.

Lloyd, Peter C. "Cocoa, Politics and the Yoruba Middle Class," West Africa, January 17, 1953.

_____. "Traditional Political System of the Yoruba," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, X, 4 (Winter, 1954), pp. 366-384.

Mabogunje, A. L. "Some Comments on Land Tenure in Egba Division, Western Nigeria," Africa, XXXI, 3 (July, 1961), pp. 258-269.

Morton-Williams, P. "The Oyo Yoruba and the Atlantic Trade, 1670-1830," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, III, 1 (1964), pp. 25-46.

Myint, Hla. "An Interpretation of Economic Backwardness," Oxford Economic Papers, VI, 2 (June, 1954), pp. 132-163.

Oni of Ife. "Iwofa," Odu, Journal of Yoruba and Related Studies, No. 3, pp. 16-18.

Ranis, Gustav, and Fei, John C. "A Theory of Economic Development," American Economic Review, LI, 4 (September, 1961), pp. 533-558.

_____. "Innovation, Capital Accumulation and Economic Development," American Economic Review, LIII, 3 (June, 1963), pp. 283-313.

Singer, Hans W. "The Distribution of Gains Between Investing and Borrowing Countries," American Economic Review, XL, 2 (May, 1950), pp. 473-487.

Webster, James Bertin. "Agege: Plantations and the African Church," Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research Conference Proceedings (March, 1962), pp. 124-130.

_____. "The Bible and the Plough," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 4 (December, 1963), pp. 418-434.

Dissertations

Church, R. J. Harrison. Railways of West Africa. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1943.

Fadipe, N. A. Sociology of the Yoruba. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1939.

Gertzel, Cherry. John Holt: A British Merchant in West Africa in the Era of Imperialism. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1959.

Hopkins, Anthony G. An Economic History of Lagos, 1880-1914. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1964.

Jenkins, George D. Politics in Ibadan. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965.

Lloyd, Peter C. Local Government in Yoruba Towns. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1958.

Mabogunje, Akin L. Changing Patterns of Rural Settlement and Rural Economy in Egba Division, Southwestern Nigeria. Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London, 1958.

Official Publications

Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Vols. XI-XII, No. 551 (1842). "Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa."

Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Vol. V, No. 412 (1865). "Report of Select Committee on the State of the British Settlements on the West Coast of Africa."

Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. (1890-1916). "Statistical Abstracts for the Colonies."

Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers, Vol. LVI. Cd. 2325. 1905. "Papers relating to the Construction of Railways in Sierra Leone, Lagos, and Gold Coast."

Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers. Vol. LXXVIII. Cd. 2787. 1905. "Correspondence relating to Railway Construction in Nigeria."

Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers. Vol. IX. Cmd. 5845. 1938. "Report of the Commission on the Marketing of West African Cocoa."

Lagos. Annual Reports. 1900-1903.

Lagos. Bluebooks. 1863-1905.

Lagos Gazette. 1886-1906.

Nigeria. Bluebooks. 1914-1938.

Nigeria. Department of Agriculture. Annual Reports. 1910-1940.

Nigeria. Legislative Council. Sessional Papers. No. 31 of 1933.

Southern Nigeria. Bluebooks. 1908-1913.

Trade Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette. 1917-1931.

United Nations. Food and Agriculture Organization. Agricultural Development in Nigeria, 1964-1980. January, 1965.

United Nations. Food and Agriculture Organization. Commodity Series Bulletin No. 27. Cacao. November, 1955.

West African Lands Committee. Minutes of Evidence and Papers and Correspondence. Printed for the use of the Colonial Office, 1916.

Western Nigeria. Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Tree Crop Planting Projects. Ibadan: Western Nigeria Government Printer, 1965 (?).

Unpublished Material

Nigerian National Archives

"Assessment Reports, Benin Division, Benin Province." 1923 and 1928. (CSO 26/09125).

"Assessment Report, Ekiti Division, Ondo Province." 1929-1930. (CSO 26/51597).

"Assessment Report on Ibadan Town." 1920. (OYOPROF 4/8 324/1919).

"Assessment Report, Otta District, Abeokuta Province." 1926-27. (CSO 26/20629).

"Assessment Report, Owo Division of Ondo Province." 1928. (CSO 26/21546).

"Assessment Report, Owode District, Abeokuta Province." 1930. (CSO 26/27483).

Bovell-Jones, T. "Intelligence Report, Idanre District, Ondo Province." 1934. (CSO 26/30052).

Bridges, A. F. B. "Intelligence Report, Ondo District, Ondo Division, Ondo Province." 1935. (CSO 26/30172).

_____. "Report on the Oil Palm Survey, Ibo, Ibibio and Cross River Areas." 1938. (CSO 26/17696).

"Correspondence Concerning Railway Freight on Cocoa." (CSO 26/16570).

Dickenson, E. N. C. "Intelligence Report on Ibadan Town." November 20, 1937. (IBAPROF 3/4).

"District Commissioner's Office Journal, 1903-1912." (ONDODIV 8/1).

"Emigration of Okeigbo people of Ife descent into Ife territory, 1930-1933." (OYOPROF 3/644).

Ibadan. "Resident's Letter and Minute Books." (IBAPROF 3/10).

Ibadan Division, Annual Report. 1917. (OYOPROF 4/6/355/1917).

"Intelligence Report, Ekiti Division, Akure District." 1934. (CSO 26/30014).

"Intelligence Report, Owo and Ifon Districts, Owo Division, Ondo Province." 1935. (CSO 26/29956).

Okuseinde, J. Journals, 1866-79, 1892. Church Missionary Society Yoruba Mission Papers.

"Old Records Concerning Ikale Affairs, 1905-1908." (ONDOPROF 1/4).

"Ondo Civil Record Book, 1923-1926." (ONDODIV 7/4).

Ondo Division. "Native Court Judgment Book, 1924." (ONDODIV 7/3).

Ondo Province. Annual Reports. 1921-1940. (CSO 26/03996, CSO 26/11874, Vols. I-XV).

Oyo Province. Annual Reports. 1921-1938. (CSO 26/06027, CSO 26/09723, CSO 26/12723, Vols. I-XIV).

Phillips, Charles. Diaries and Papers, 1885-1905. Church Missionary Society Yoruba Mission Papers.

"Produce Inspection and Grading of Cocoa." (CSO 26/50480).

Untitled materials on land disputes in the Ibadan area. (OYOPROF 4/5/12; OYOPROF 3/1181, Vols. 1-3; IBAPROF 3/0718).

Mapo Hall, Ibadan

"Bale's Letter Books, 1914-1917." (In files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

Ibadan Town Council Minutes, 1903-1905, 1912. (In files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

"Resident's Letter Books, 1901-1905." (In files at Mapo Hall, Ibadan).

Public Record Office, London

Confidential Print. African No. 785. "Correspondence Concerning Botanical and Forestry Matters in British Tropical Countries and Protectorates in Africa."

Confidential Print, African No. 1023. "Correspondence Concerning Palm Oil Grants in West Africa."

Nigeria Correspondence, 1912-1914.

Southern Nigeria Correspondence, 1900-1913.

Private Papers

Holt Archives. (In offices of the John Holt Company, Liverpool).

Lijadu, E. M. Diary, 1898-1916. (Unpublished manuscript in the possession of Reverend E. A. Lijadu in Ondo).

Niger Company Papers. 16 vols. (In Rhodes House Library, Rhodes House, Oxford).

Obisesan, J. Akinpelu. Diary, 1920-1940. (Unpublished manuscript in the University of Ibadan Library).

Other

Ayorinde, Chief J. A. "Western Nigeria Village Social Organization." (Mimeographed).

Baldwin, K. D. S. "Analysis of the Cocoa Survey Records for Certain Selected Areas of the Western Region." January 21, 1952. Unpublished paper in files containing the basic material for Nigerian Cocoa Farmers, deposited with the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Ibadan District Council Church Farm at Eripa. "Copy of Judgment Delivered by His Honour William Nicoll, Chief Justice of Supreme Court of the Colony of Lagos on Monday the 10th Day of March 1906." (Pamphlet).

"Intelligence Report, Ikire District, Ibadan Division." (1934).

"Intelligence Reports, Iwo District, Ibadan Division." (1934 and 1939).

Mitchell, Robert C. "Sickness and Healing in the Separatist Churches." Paper presented at a Conference on Traditional Background to Medical Practice in Nigeria at the University of Ibadan, April, 1966. (Mimeographed).

Takes, C. A. P. "Socio-economic Factors Affecting Agricultural Productivity in some villages of Oshun Division (Western Region)." Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research Preliminary Report, Febrary, 1963. (Mimeographed).

Western Nigeria. Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Cocoa Survey Section. Original Records of the Swollen Shoot Virus Disease Survey, 1944-1949, and Re-Surveys, 1951-1952. (Unpublished).