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SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN POLITICAL TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY

by Omolade Adejuyigbe

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Modern geography is concerned with the processes and patterns of the spatial or territorial organization of different physical and human features on the earth surface. When the study is about a particular type of feature e.g. inselbergs, landuse types or social service centres the geographer's interest is in the location of the elements of the distribution with respect to each other called the spatial structure of the feature or phenomeno (Atler et. al. 1971, p. 60).

One of the human features of interest to geographers is the system of territorial units into which the earth has been divided. Political geography is that branch of the geographical discipline which concerns itself with the study of the processes of establishment and the patterns or the spatial structure of the system of territorial units. The objective of the field is to understand the reasons for the particular and peculiar limits of territorial units and the factors aiding the continued existence of each one whether economic, sociological, or political. In short, the principal objective of political geography can be regarded as the study of the evolution and cohesion of territorial units. Since the most easily recognisable territorial units are the political units political geographers have focussed attention on politically organised areas such as independent states and their sub-divisions into major and minor administrative units. By studying the evolution and cohesion of existing political units political geographers are able to identify the principles and factors governing the territorial organization of society. Consequently, they are in a position to give advice on the creation or establishment of new territorial or political units. The role of political geographers in this respect has been noted by Hartshorne (1950, p. 129):

If plans are being made for the construction of an entirely new state area, or for major territorial alterations in an existing one, one is forced to attempt some prediction of the capacity of such projected organization to function effectively as a unit. Political geographers will be able to claim superior competence in attempting predictions in such cases only if they have established a high degree of understanding of the reasons why present or past state-areas have or have not functioned effectively.

Apart from studies of the evolution and cohesion of existing political units political geographers have also examined the mutual effects between environmental factors and political decision. Thus some scholars in the field have examined environmental factors affecting the international stature of political units whilst others have studied the physical and social factors affecting voting patterns at elections to legislative houses at both local, state or national levels (Kish, 1953, McPhail, 1971, Johnston, 1977). The effect of governmental policies in creating area differentiation in particular features has also been of interest to some political geographers (Prescott 1974). However, it appears to me that the studies in environmental and political interaction do not usually lead to the general field of geography and they have not produced any principles necessary for understanding the processes and patterns of territorial organization of society. Indeed, the views once expressed by Prescott (1959) about electoral geography can be generalised for all studies of environmental and political interactions: "in all these studies geography (i.e. environmental factors) is used to explain electoral patterns, the flow of ideas is always away from geography and their logical continuation would seem to be in the fields of social and political science. There is little evidence of a return flow of explanatory or stimulating ideas which will help in the

study of the state's geography". The point here is that studies in political geography should generate some ideas and principles relevant to some of the other branches of the geographical discipline.

These brief comments on the objectives of political geography provide the background against which to view this inaugural lecture of the chair of political geography in the University of Ife. In choosing the topic *Social Considera-tion in Political Territorial Organization of Society,* I intend to highlight the general principles derived from studies of the evolution, organisation and cohesion of political units and discuss their applicability to the solution of relevant problems in this country. To this end the rest of the lecture is divided into five parts, namely:

(i)   Basic Units for political territorial organization.

(ii)   Social considerations in the merger of the basic units.

(iii)   Social considerations encouraging separation from established political units.

(iv)   Social considerations in the delimitation of the boundaries of political units.

(v)   Relevance to Nigeria.

I.   BASIC UNITS FOR POLITICAL TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Three attributes are common to all political units: a territory, population, and a government responsible for legislation and law enforcement. The first two of these are important for the territorial structure of political units. In particular, there must be some people claiming a territory which they want to have constituted into a separate political unit. In view of this, the main point in considering

basic units for political territorial organization is the relevant unit which has exclusive claim to some territory. In this regard the following non-political territorial units might be considered: individuals, communities, and ethnic nations or language units.

All over the world individuals lay exclusive claim to territories. The area claimed by a person is usually that in which he has some interest based on the fact that it contains something considered valuable by the individual (Helm, 1965). The particular thing or feature on the territory is one which the claimant cannot, or does not wish, to move or relocate to another territory. Among features in this category are:

(i) abode or residence where the person stays at night and where the weak or sick associates of the individual spend most of their time;

(ii) sites for scarce resources such as plants, crops, and minerals on which the claimant depends for food or essential tools;

(iii) water points or streams on which the claimant depends for household water supply, or for water for animals and plants, or in some cases, for water-based resources (e.g. fishes);

(iv) graves of departed associates — relatives, friends etc;

(v) worshipping centres or other points of religious significance due to the presence there of symbols of religious importance.

The implication of the foregoing is that individuals lay exclusive claim to territory in order to protect their interests in the natural or self-made resources in particular areas. Consequently, a person who establishes exclusive claims over a territory reserves the right to evict any other person who

may damage the objects of his interest in the area (Bishop, 1970).

Although an individual may lay exclusive claims to some areas it is recognised that, all over the world, there are some territories set aside for the joint use of a number of people within a given locality. Furthermore, in some parts of the world, the individual is thought to have only rights of use whilst the rights of disposal are reserved to the larger group to which he belongs. For these reasons it is not usual to make individual territorial units the basis of political territorial organization even though it may be necessary to respect such units in the delimitation and demorcation of the boundaries of political units.

Apart from individuals, exclusive claim to territory may also be made by groups of people living within particular localities (Williams, 1968). In each locality where such claims are made there would be some areas which are used together by all members of the group e.g., water-points, religious sites, hunting or grazing grounds (Gulliver, 1971). Such areas or features would be jointly owned and protected by all members of the group who would restrict access to members. However, where there is no joint use individual members would lay exclusive claim and restrict acces by other people including those from within the same community. This latter category of private exclusiveness includes all territorial claims to land for abode, farming, the gathering of scarce natural resources such as fruit, roots, minerals etc. and in some cases certain types of game.

In cases of territorial claims by individual members the group has the responsibility of protecting the interests of all its members. Where the areas claimed by all the members are not contiguous the groups would protect all the intervening territories provided no other recognised groups have rights over them. Such territories would be availa-

ble for the future expansion of the members or for allocation to new members by the leaders of the group.

Since the group has responsibility for defending its members it also regulate their behaviour with outsiders and settles disputes arising from it. Thus resolution of boundary problems and the consequent final determination of the limits of the territory are the responsibilties of the group. The type of relationship involved is well summarised by the following views of Elias and Lloyd:

> ... the real unit of land-holding is the family; and ... the ascription of ownership of land to the community or the village is only accurate if viewed as a social aggregate" (Elias, 1953, p. 91).

> The community retains reversionary rights over all the land of its members which becomes abandoned for lack of heirs. With land held by descent groups reversion is conceivable only if the whole group becomes extinct, or, as in the past was more likely, was driven from the town for rebellion" (Lloyd, 1962, p. 66).

> The boundaries of the kingdom were the oba's boundaries and any dispute over them lay between the two obas concerned and not between neighbouring subordinate towns of each kingdom" (Lloyd, 1962, p. 49).

Apart from common ownership of a territory, members of a group would have a focal point which serves as their headquarters where they meet and interact socially, economically and politically. For these reasons the members always desire to promote the development of their focal point. To this end they contribute to the development of facilities like educational, medical and religious institutions there. A group of people like that described above having common ownership rights in some territories, common traditions and allegiance to the same leadership

can be described as a primary community (Adejuyigbe, 1978 (a) p. 181).

Members of a primary community prefer that the entire community should be administered together. The leaders of the community urge a single administration because division of the territory would mean loss of territory to them and a reduction in their areas of influence. The ordinary citizens want a single administration because separation from the community focal point would lead to their being forced to owe allegiance to another community whilst losing touch with the leaders of their unit. In either case there is a desire to protect interests in the developments and other benefits in all parts of the community's territory. These attitudes are well reflected by the views of Ikorodu community in support of their demand that they all be grouped together under one administration:

> This demand... would bring about the rectification of a situation whereby taxes paid by people in one area is used for the welfare of yet another people in a different area. Furthermore, it would bring about not only the recovery of land and property belonging to Ikorodu people but now lying outside, and keeping them with the rightful owners, but also the recovery of the integral part of Ikorodu which forms parts of its economic resources (B A C, 1976, II, p. 9).

The implication of the above discussion is that the primary community needs to be taken into account in political territorial organization of a society.

Another type of non-political territorial unit is the ethnic nation comprising people and primary communities which speak mutually intelligible dialects or a common language. Usually, the members of an ethnic nation live in contiguous territory and share many cultural attributes.

For this reason it is sometimes considered that ethnic nations are appropriate basic units for political territorial organization. For example, there have been suggestions that the constituent states of the Nigerian Federation should be based on ethnic nations (Awolowo, 1966 pp. 89 - 105; Adejuyigbe 1967 & 1968). Outside Nigeria ethnic nations or language units have been the bases of political organization in such places as India, U.S.S.R., and Canada.

While ethnic nations have been the bases of political organization in some countries it is also to be realised that there are many ethnic nations or language units split between two or more political units. For example the Germans, French and Arabs are found in many political units. In Nigeria the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Nupe are found in many states. The important point here is that there are no demands or suggestions for the merger of the different units into one political unit. Indeed, on the contrary, the tendency in Nigeria is to ask for the further sub-division of some of the units. When demands for further sub-divisions are made the assumption appears to be that the exercise would lead to the grouping together of those primary communities which share some other common characteristics beside language. This suggests that ethnic nations are not universally accepted as the basic units to be grouped together in the territorial organization of society.

The discussion so far shows that all three units considered, individuals, communities, and ethnic nations, are important in political territorial organization. However, as previously explained, individual territorial units are not normally adopted as basic units for the organization of political units and ethnic nations are not universally acceptable. In other words only primary communities are generally adopted as basic units in political territorial organization. This is to say that primary communities can be grouped together on the basis of some common characteristics to form large or higher order political units. At the lower levels, as far as possible, a primary community should be in one political unit and should not be split between two or more political territories.

II. SOCIAL CONSIDERATION IN THE MERGER OF THE BASIC UNITS TO ESTABLISH POLITICAL UNITS

Political units may either evolve as a result of local development and policies or the demands of the population within an area, or alternatively, they may be created by people who are foreign to the area at the time of the establishment. Therefore, going by their origin two types of political units may be recognised: *the evolved political unit and the Created Political Unit.* The main difference between the evolved and the created political unit is the consideration given to the primary communities in the establishment of the former whereas such community consideration may be absent in the case of the latter.

Evolved political units may be sovereign states or **intra-state sub-divisions.** In the latter case, the authority for the formal establishment may be vested in the Government but the demands for such units would start from within the communities in the various sections of the state. The created political units may also be sovereign states or intra-state sub-divisions. Where they are intra-state units the sub-divisions would be made by the Government on the **basis of criteria and factors laid down by it. The units** emerging from such creation may not reflect local feelings. Indeed, it is not unusual for some communities to the arbitrarily split between two or more units or for some incompatible elements to be grouped together. There is also the possibility that the communities which constitute a created **political unit (at both national or sub-national levels) may**

lack a common focal point or some common values or institutions which will constitute rallying points for them.

Establishment of Evolved Political Units: As already explained, evolved political units are distinguished by the consideration given to the primary communities. This is because such units owe their origin to local movements, demands and policies. The considerations in their evolution are therefore those which encourage communities to come together to form political units and the factors which influence the selection of communities which they would join.

The social considerations which encourage communities to seek political co-operation with others may be listed as economic, cultural, security and political. Economic considerations may induce communities to seek political co-operation with others they would join to form a political unit be it at the sovereign state level or at intra-state level. The economic considerations may be one of two types. Where some essential resources are lacking, preference would be for a co-operation with neighbouring community with those resources. Usually such relationships start as purely commercial interactions but if the unit with the resources refuses to co-operate force may be used. As a result of such force, some communities may seek co-operation with others at the same or similar levels of economic development. This is particularly the case where an existing unit has a far more developed section and the less developed areas wish to separate to constitute a separate political unit. For example demands for a Middle Belt State in Nigeria in the 1950's were justified partly on the grounds that the areas to be in it were less economically developed than the rest of the then Northern Region (Adejuyigbe, 1967).

Cultural considerations may induce co-operation between communities which may later join to form a separate political unit. This is more so where there are other cultures competing with that cherished by the communities. Such cultural considerations may be a common language which the communities want to develop or a common religious outlook which they want to preserve. Religious considerations were particularly important in the evolution of Ireland (Alexander, 1957, pp. 119 - 120) whilst language considerations were important in the evolution of other states in Europe, particularly those established from the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I (Fitzgerald 1945, pp. 117 - 119) & 129 - 138). Religious and language considerations have been important in political territorial organization of the Indian sub-continent since the late 1940's (Alexander, 1957, pp. 364 - 375).

Inability to resist a real or potential enemy may induce communities to come together to form a political unit which would perform specific functions particularly as regards external relations and defence whilst individual units conduct their own internal affairs. The best documented example of this is Switzerland which was formed by communities around Lake Lucerne in the Alps in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (East, 1950, p. 248).

Political considerations can be strong inducements to some communities to come together to establish a political unit. For example, the desire to increase the international stature of each of the units may force them to come together. On the other hand the desire by a unit to have greater military influence may encourage it to seek association with others. Thus many communities in erstwhile colonial countries agree to stay together for political reasons. For example, it has been suggsted that the different communities in Nigeria agreed to stay together because it was the only means of ensuring independence from Britain and also because such a policy would increase the international stature of the units and allow for desired internal changes

(Prescott, 1958; Adejuyigbe, 1967).

Establishment of Created Political Units: Where the political units are created as a result of non-local factors the considerations for their   establishment are substantially different from those enumerated above.   Indeed, those who create or urge the creation of political units in areas in which they are not resident do so for many purposes the most important of which are: (a) economic importance of the area; (b) strategic importance of the area; (c) political expediency; (d) ease of administration of the area or the larger unit to which it belongs.

The creation of colonial territories was influenced largely by real or imagined economic potentials of the area being claimed by each party. The economic potentials may be the resources in the area, or the possible use of the area as a route to other economically important areas. Alternatively, units may be created on economic grounds by independent states. Usually in such cases the rationale is that the creation of such units will encourage economic development. This was one of the reasons given by the Federal Military Government in support of the creation of 19 states in Nigeria in February 1976 (Nigeria, 1976, p. 9).

Some colonial territories were created because of the strategic importance of the areas. This is the possibility of their being bases for local defence or part of a global defence system. One of the best examples was the British base at Gilbraltar (Pounds, 1963, pp. 337 - 338).

Other political units are created because of political expediency.   On the international scene the examples of this are the buffer states which are small political units between larger ones and which owe their origins to guarantees by the larger ones (Pounds, 1963, p. 53). At the intrastate level units may be created out of political expediency. However, in the latter case, it may be difficult to differen-

tiate such units from those created because of ease of administration.

The need to solve administrative problems is sometimes the main reason for the creation of some political units. Such problems may arise from the structural composition of the population or that of accessibility between the capital and the various parts of the unit. The structural composition may create problems for the administration in that it may be difficult to formulate general policies for the entire area mainly because of significant socio-cultural differences.   In such a case a large area may be divided into two or more each of which will be administered as a separate political unit. The creation of internal administrative units in colonial territories was particularly influenced by this consideration. Another important factor is the accessibility between the capital and different parts of the unit. Where such accessibility is difficult a unit may be sub-divided so that parts of it will be constituted into separate units with their own capitals and administration which would be easily accessible to them. Sometimes the separation is not complete in that the new units may be made subordinate to the original one. Thus in colonial Nigeria a large unit may be sub-divided into Districts supervised by junior political officers (Assistant District Officers). The District Officers were still responsible to the Divisional officers. The creation of political units because of administrative considerations is not restricted to the colonial situation. In the local government reforms of 1971 in Western Nigeria some units were based on political considerations (Adejuyigbe 1972, p. 412).

III. SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS ENCOURAGING SEPARATION FROM ESTABLISHED POLITICAL UNITS

The discussion so far has emphasised the establishment of political units by the merger of non-political territorial

units. However, there could be demands by communities in existing political units for separation and constitution of their home areas into new states or local government areas. The social considerations giving rise to such demands may be identified as follows: economic neglect; social neglect; cultural domination; and political domination.

Natural resource endowments varies from one area to another with the result in fairly large political units there may be marked difference in the distributions of minerals, environmental factors favourable to high-value agricultural products, manufacturing and so on. The marked differences may be reflected in the economic resources available to people in different communities. This will lead to complaints particularly where the Government has encouraged the development of the high-value products e.g. exploitation of minerals or cultivation of particular crops. Notwithstanding the fact that Government policies may be justified there may be complaints by the less endowed communities that their lack of development is due to indifference on the part of the Government. Such complaints could lead to demands for separation particularly where the Government is dominated by people from the better developed areas.

Complaints of economic neglect and the subsequent demands for separation from the old Regions of Nigeria are among the best examples of this situation. In the then Northern Region the Hausa - Fulani areas were more productive of the high-value agricultural products (Groundnuts, livestock and cotton) on which the Regional Government depended for most of its revenue. The Government encouraged the improvement of such crops. The Middle-Belt area which did not produce those products complained and asked for separate existence. Similarly in the old Western Region, cocoa, the high-value agricultural product of the Region, was produced almost exclusively in the homeland of the Yoruba who were dominant in the Regional Government. That Government encouraged the cultivation of cocoa. Communities in Benin and Delta Provinces which did not produce cocoa complained of economic neglect and demanded separation from the Region (Adejuyigbe, 1967).

Another type of complaint which gives rise to demands for new units concerns the distribution of revenue and opportunities among different hierarchies of political units in the same sovereign state. In situation where a higher level of Government gives grants to lower levels partly on the principle of equality of the different units the more populous ones will receive less grants per head of their population than the smaller ones. For example, in the 1976-77 financial year part of the Federal grant to each of the 19 states was based on equality of states with each one receiving N2,631,000.00. The share per head of population varied from 45 kobo in Kano State to more than two naira in Niger State (Table 1). Thus the share per head in Niger State was nearly five times that in Kano State and more than four times that in Oyo State. This situation is often unacceptable to many in the larger units even though such people may agree with the principle of distribution. Consequently, the solution sometimes suggested is that the larger units should also be sub-divided. For example, some of the people who, between 1967 and 1976, urged that the larger of the 12 states in Nigeria should be split into many units did so for this reason. Typical of their view was that of Akinyede (1970) who stated that "the disparity and injustice which occurs in every instance in which states are given parity of treatment, e.g. in the award of social and economic amenities and benefits, by the Federal Government will be reduced if the big or vast states are broken up".

TABLE I: NIGERIA: STATE SHARE OF THE DISTRIBUTABLE
POOL ON EQUALITY BASIS 1976-77 EXPRESSED PER CAPITA

State		Population 1963 (!000)	Share (N 000)	Share Per Capital (N)
1.	Kano	5,775	2,631.	0.45
2.	Oyo	5,209	2,631,	0.50
3.	Sokoto	4,539	2,631.	0.57
4.	Kaduna	4,098	2.631.	0.64
5.	Imo	3,707	2.631	0.71
6.	Anambra	3,571	2.631	0.74
7.	Cross River	3,534	2.631	0.74
8.	Borno	2.952	2.631	0.89
9.	Ondo	2.728	2.631	0.96
10.	Congola	2,651	2.631	0.99
11.	Bendel	2,533	2.631	1.04
12.	Bauchi	2,431	2.631	1.08
13.	Benue	2,427	2.631	1.08
14.	Plateau	2,017	2,631.	1.30
15.	Kwara	1,714	2.631.	1.54
16.	Rivers	1,585	2.631.	1.64
17.	Ogun	1,551	2.631.	1.70
18.	Lagos	1,444	2.631.	1.82
19.	Niger	1,195	2.631.	2.20

Complaints about the distribution of social amenities like educational and health institutions, water supply and road improvement have sometimes led to demands for separate political units particularly at the Local Government level. The pattern of distribution about which people complain might be due to normal sequential development whereby the provision of certain facilities have to start somewhere and progress to other areas. Moreover, there is the general pattern whereby some facilities are located in central places in order to make them accessible to all the areas they are to serve. Over a period these policies may mean that certain high order facilities like secondary schools, hospitals, electricity and pipe-borne water are concentrated in only few places, usually the administrative headquarters. The areas which lack the facilities may complain and demand separate political units. This is well illustrated by the demands for maintaining separate Local Government units in the former Western State in 1971. For example, the people of Eruwa were of the view that records showed that "during the time of the defunct Ibarapa District Council, there was no peaceful agreement between Eruwa and Igboora and this continued until the Ibarapa East Provisional Authority was created. There were now tremendous improvements in medical, health, works and road projects including market constructions and financial administration" (Nigeria, Western State, 1971 p. 108.).

There may be marked cultural differences among the communities in a political unit. The effect of this on demands for separation will depend on the size of the dominant culture as well as the sizes and distribution around the dominant one of the other cultural groups in the unit. The possible situation may be stated as follows: (Fig. 1)

(1) Where there are two or more communities but one of them is dominant whilst none of the others is large enough to stand on its own.

(2) Where there are many communities of which one is dominant whilst one or more of the others is also large enough to constitute a separate political unit.

(3) Where there are many communities of which none is dominant but there are some which can stand on their own.

(4) Where there are many communities of which none is able to stand on its own.

The first situation needs to be considered in two ways. First where the others are scattered round the dominant one such that it is difficult for them to come together; and second where the others are contiguously located. In the first situation each of the others may be satisfied with being absorbed into the main community. In the second situation the small ones may jointly demand separation from the dominant one. In such a case they may demand to be constituted into a separate independent political unit or more commonly that the existing unit be turned to a Federation in which they would jointly form the constituent units. In the case of intra-state units the dissatisfied communities may jointly demand separation to form an independent sub-national unit.

In the second and third situation, each of the large ones may demand constitution into a separate unit whilst the smaller ones will have to choose which of the units thus created they would join.

In the fourth situation, two possibilities may be examined. First, where a grouping of some of the communities would produce a unit which can stand on its own, and second, where only by all the communities staying together can there be a political unit which can stand on its own. In the first situation there will be a tendency for the units which can be grouped together to co-operate in the affairs of the political unit. If their co-operation does not yield results satisfactory to them they may join to demand a separate unit. Their co-operation may yield unsatisfactory results because other units formed by co-operating
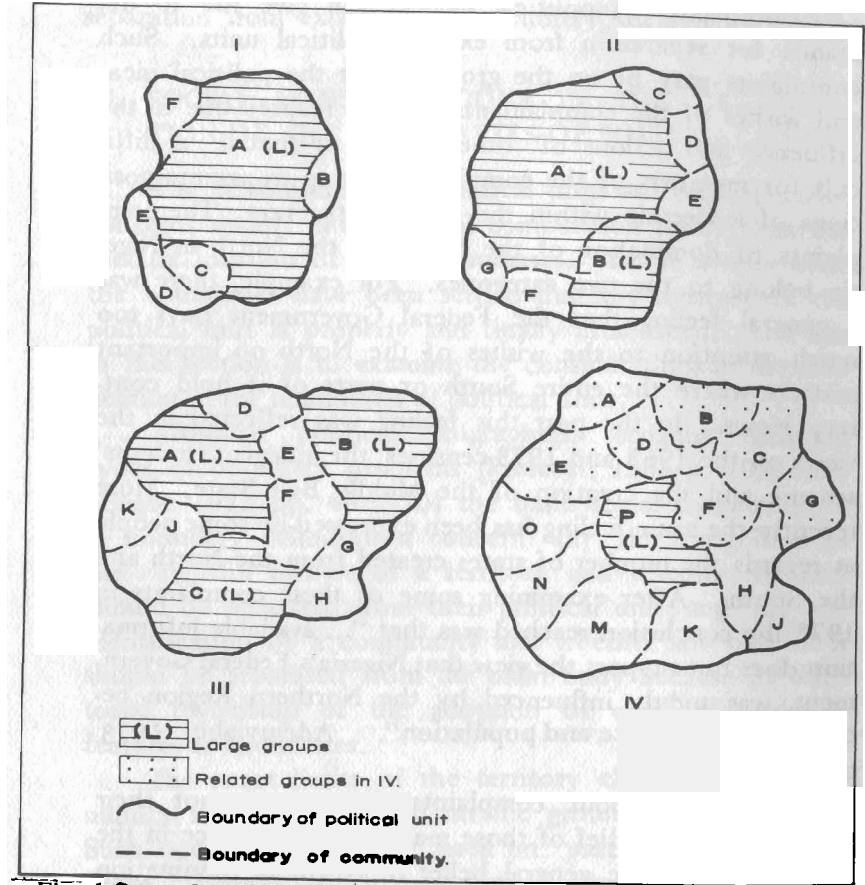
Fig. 1 *Some Possible Combinations of Cultural Groups in a Political Unit.*

communities may have greater influence in the affairs of the political unit concerned.

Complaints of political neglect can give rise to demands for separation from existing political units. Such complaints may be on the grounds that the political ideas and wishes of the complainants are not realised due to the influence and actions of other groups or that it is difficult for members of the complaining group to assume positions of leadership within the existing structure. The complaints of domination of the South by the North in Nigeria belong to the two categories. For example, there was a general feeling that the Federal Government pays too much attention to the wishes of the North on important matters where the entire South or parts of it hold contrary views. In the past this feeling was reflected in the views on the 1963 and 1973 censuses, the indegent students' scheme and the creation of the Middle Belt State. More recently the same feeling has been expressed by some people as regards the number of states created from the North and the South. After examining some of these complaints in 1973 the conclusion reached was that "... available information does not support the view that Nigeria's Federal Government was unduly influenced by the Northern Region because of its great size and population". Adejuyigbe, 1973 p. 171).

The point about complaints, however, is not their validity but the belief of those making them. Hence in the case of Nigeria the general belief of Northern domination led many Southerners to suggest that the North should be sub-divided (Nigeria, 1966). These demands were among the reasons for the re-organizations of states in 1967 and 1976. It is to be noted, though, that, as observed in an appraisal of the 19 - states, "the creation of the 19 states has not removed the alleged domination by the North, rather it has increased it" (Adejuyigbe 1979(a) p. 204).

Although complaints of political neglect at other levels may not be similarly valid they still influenced demands for separation from existing political units (Adejuyigbe, 1968).

IV. SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DELIMITATION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF POLITICAL UNITS

The establishment of political units as discussed above concerns mainly their general composition rather than the specific location of their boundaries. Yet it is only after the boundaries have been settled that the territory of the political unit is properly and finally established. The aim in this section is to examine the considerations in the delineation of the boundaries of political units.

Although political geographers recognise different types of boundary problems (Prescott, 1965 p. 109; Adejuyigbe 1975 pp. 69 - 70) the basic social considerations in boundary delimitation concern (a) the recognition of the rightful owners of a territory and whether the area should be separated from their political unit; and (b) the identification of a community and whether any part of it should be separated from the main body because of territorial ownership or the adoption of easily recognisable features as boundaries.

The exact limits of the territory claimed by a community is usually justified on the grounds of occupation. Such occupation may be based on past or current possessions. Usually, the first person or community to occupy a territory lays claim to it. However, there may be disagreement on the first occupants of a territory. This is partly due to the fact that there is no agreement on the type of use which constitutes territorial occupation. For example, territorial claims have been made on the fact that the person/community concerned used the area as: (a) hunting grounds at some time in the past; (b) stopping

place during migration to other areas; (c) base at a time in the past but which was later deserted either voluntarily or during a war; (d) agriculture and residence.

Problems arise when there is some difference between the earlier and the present occupants. Usually the present occupants would insist that they did not meet anyone in the territory and that they were the first occupants. The resolution of such problems needs to take account of the definition of occupation. According to Nigerian courts, occupation can only be justified if the claimant had settlement, crops or other practical evidence of staying there or using an area. For example, in one case a High Court Judge (Odumosu, 1970), observed and adjudged as follows:

> There is in fact no evidence that the plaintiff or his people occupied the land in dispute, and the only evidence of use is that of some Emure hunters hunting on the land. "... there is, on the other hand, abundant evidence of occupation by the Supare people. The plaintiff does not dispute the fact that Supare people and their tenants have their farms all over the land in dispute, that on these farms are cocoa trees, kolanut trees and palm trees, and that the defendants have churches and schools on the land... The plaintiff (Emure)... has failed to prove exlusive possession; and his attempts to prove exercise of rights of ownership have met with failure... On the other hand the defendant (i.e. Supare) has led abundant evidence in proof of his, community's use and occupation of the land, of exclusive possession of it, and of the exercise of rights of ownership.

However, the courts do not appear to have any definite opinion on the length of time allowed a person or community who has vacated a plot before he can lose his rights. Therefore, people can lay claims to territory effectively utilised for only a short time and then abandoned for a long period thereafter. For example, people had laid claims to places where they stopped to take care of sick companions in the course of their journeys to distant places (See Adejuyigbe, 1975 pp 33 - 38).

Another problem concerns the identification of the members of a community. The common view is that the members of a community consist of all the founders and their descendants, tenants and adopted members. A community may therefore lay claim to a territory on any of the following grounds: (a) that the occupant is a direct descendant of someone from the claimant community; (b) the occupant is its tenant or adopted member.

The claims may be challenged by people within the affected area or by outsiders. People within the area being claimed may accept their ancestry in the community but point out that they had changed because of developments which may be internal conflict within the community or allegiance developed as a result of disturbance caused by attacks by outside forces. Another community may also challenge the claims on the grounds that the first occupant owed allegiance to them either because he was adopted by them or he was a tenant given permission to settle in the area by the disputant community.

Problems may also arise where the occupants of an area have dual loyalty to two communities. This usually occurs in areas affected by war. There are two possibilities. First the control of an entire settlement may change from one community to another. The first community may insist on regaining control of the lost settlement and receive the support of the pre-crisis population. The second possibility is that the conquering community might have established a base there through its own members who settled in it. The latter group would retain their loyalty to the conquering community and oppose merger with the original group. Dual loyalty may also exist where members

of a settlement were scattered as a result of war during which each party sought refuge with, and developed loyalities to, different communities. After the hostilities the different sections might retain the in-war loyalities whilst laying claim to their pre-war territories (see for example, Adejuyigbe, 1975 pp. 128 159). In such a situation it will not be easy to decide the grouping of the settlement and sections concerned (Fig. 2).

The discussion so far emphasizes the point that a community comprises two elements; the territory and the people. Furthermore, the point has been made that either of two principles may be advocated in the delimitation of political boundaries. These are the principles of territoriality and community affinity. The principle of territoriality states that a community should have administrative control of the territory which belongs to it, whilst, according to the principle of community affinity a political unit should coincide with existing social and cultural units (Adejuyigbe 1978, p. 210).

In most cases it is easy to comply with these two principles because either the recognised owners of the territory occupy it or the users do not object to the administrative grouping with the owners. However, in cases where the users are from an adjacent community they may desire being placed in the same political unit as their own community (Fig. 3). If that wish were granted it would mean separating the area occupied by them from the rightful owners of the territory. There would therefore be conflict between the principles of territoriality and community affinity. There is therefore need to decide which of the two principles should prevail in case of such conflict.

The principle of territoriality is widely accepted throughout the world in the sense that once the limits of a political unit have been decided all those within the area are subject to the control of the political unit concerned. How-
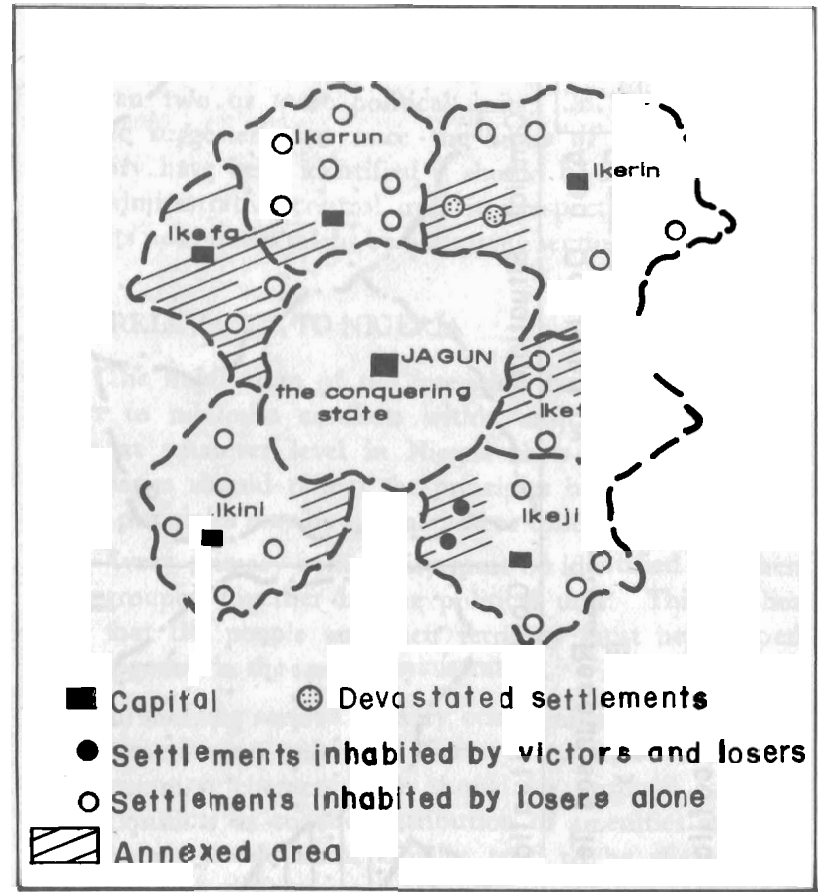

Fig. 2 Possible Patterns of Territorial Annexation (after Adejuyigbe, 1975 p. 129)
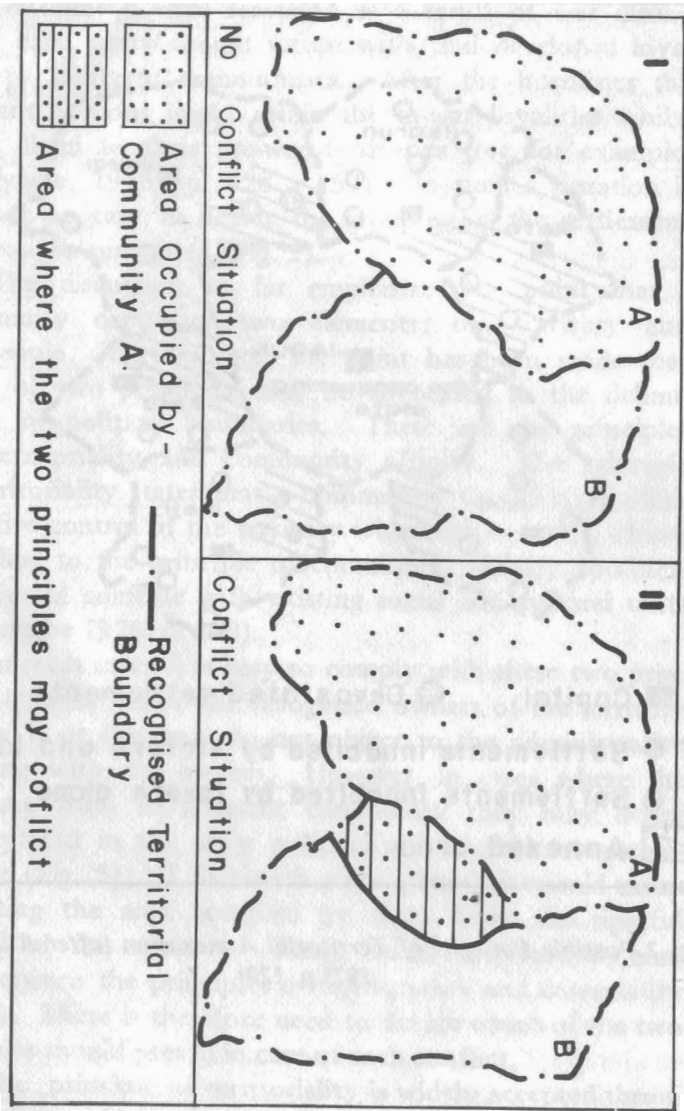
Fig. 3 Conflict between the Principles of Affinity and Territoriality (After Adejuyigbe 1978 (b), p. 212)

ever, there is also the fact that the most persistent demands for boundary adjustments between political units are those aimed at uniting cultural units which have been divided between two or more political units. In view of this it can be suggested that once the limits of a community's territory have been identified it should be allowed to exercise administrative control over it irrespective of the fact that its neighbours might be occupying sections of it.

V. RELEVANCE TO NIGERIA

The implication of the foregoing discussions is that in order to minimise conflicts within and between political units at whatever level in Nigeria their composition and boundaries should reflect the principles highlighted earlier. These principles may be summarised as follows:

1. Every primary community must be identified and then grouped together in one political unit. This implies that the people and their territory must be grouped together in the same administration.

2. In merging various primary communities to form Local Government units and States only those who share common characteristics should be grouped together. Conflicts as to the distribution of amenities and economic development usually tend to be aligned with cultural differences. Therefore, cultural differences should be minimised in any political unit.

3. In order to avoid cultural domination and the resultant complaints and demands for new units the composition of units with many primary communities or cultural groups should be such that no one is in a position to dominate the other. Also no large community or groups of related communities should be in a unit where it is a minority because if this hap-

pens the people **concerned might** demand separation and the constitution of their areas into separate units at the appropriate level.

4. The principle of territoriality should be followed in the delimitation of the boundaries or political units. According to this principle a piece of territory should be grouped in the same political units as its identified traditional owner — the Land Use Decree notwithstanding.

5. In determining the community with traditional rights over a piece of territory the principle of first effective occupant should be followed. However, Government should pass necessary legislation defining clearly the type of use to be established for effective occupation to be proved. Furthermore, there should be legislation on the length of period for which a territory can be left unused before the claimant loses claims to it. Such legislation should define clearly the circumstances in which a piece of territory can be regarded as unused.

The application of these principles would lead to the solution of the problems being encountered with political territorial organization in Nigeria. Hitherto, political territorial organization had been carried out without adequate account being taken of the social considerations and the need to meet desired societal objectives for the establishment of political units.

The lack of clearly-stated, and generally accepted principles for the establishment of different types of political units in this country has given room for suggestions for the adoption of colonial administrative units for present day purposes (Enahoro, 1974; Rufai 1977; Adama, 1980; Definone, 1980; Iheanecho 1980; Obasaju, 1980; &

Ugwu, 1980). Those making such suggestions overlook the fact that colonial units such as Divisions and Provinces were not legislative units. Rather they were supervisory areas under different levels of colonial political officers. For example, Provinces were the supervisory areas under residents. The Provinces were constituted by grouping together the traditional political units or Native Authority areas as they were then called. The Native Authority areas in a Province were determined on the basis of accessibility to the Provincial headquarters which was the base for the Resident. The Native Authority areas in a Province may be further grouped into Divisions under political officers responsible to the Resident. In other words, the unit of political territorial organization was the Native Authority Area which had at its core a primary community. Alterations in Provincial structure usually affected the transfer of entire Native Authorities rather than sections of them.

The point to note from the above short account of Province is that they were created to perform specific supervisory functions. They were not legislative units. They were not regarded as territorially inviolable as they were reorganized many times. It is necessary to emphasize this in these days when many knowledgeable Nigerians suggest that the Provinces should be the basis for state organization in present day Nigeria. States will perform functions different from Provinces. What is more, those who make such suggestions will have to indicate which set of Provinces they want–1926, 1946, 1954, 1956, or 1960 and justify their choices.

The inappropriateness of Provinces per se as basic units for major political territorial organization or the constituent states in Nigeria should be clear from the demands for separation from the present states which are based largely on the old Provinces (Nig. 4). For example, the
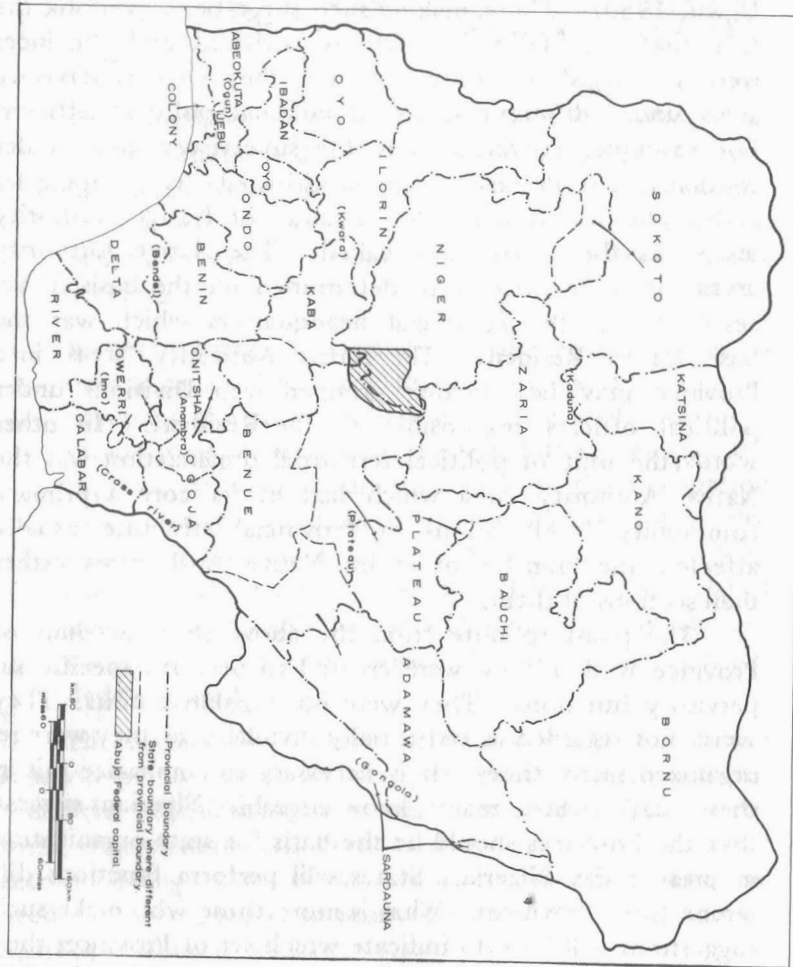
Ijo in Delta Province have demanded transfer from Bendel State to Rivers State (B A C, 1976 II, 44 - 48). The Igbo speaking peoples in both Benin and Delta Provinces are asking for a separate state of their own (Ebigwei, 1980; Nnadi, 1980 & Osadebay, 1980). Some sections of Rivers Province, now Rivers State, want to be constituted into a separate Port Harcourt State (Igiri, 1980, Lawson, 1980). Parts of the old Calabar Province desire to join sections of old Ogoja Province to separate from the present Cross River State and leave the remaining areas of old Calabar Province as another State (New Nigerian, 1980). It has even been suggested that the Ekiti Area of old Ondo Province, should be constituted into a separate State distinct from the present Ondo State (Alabi, 1980). These examples (Fig. 5), which are not exhaustive show quite clearly that there is no strong attachment to the Provinces *per se*. The units to which people are strongly attached are smaller than the Provinces. Such units are the primary communities discussed in the earlier parts of this lecture.

The almost total disregard of primary communities in the creation of the present nineteen states partly explains the current series of demands for new states in the country. The set of criteria adopted for the creation of the states were as follows (Nigeria, 1975, p. 39):

(1) That no one state should be in a position to dominate or control the central government
(2) Each state should form one compact geographical area
(3) Administrative convenience, the facts of history and the wishes of the people
(4) Each state must be in a position to discharge effectively the functions allocated to Regional Government
(5) The need to bring government nearer the people

(6) Even development

(7) The need to preserve our Federal structure of government

(8) The need to maintain peace and harmony within the Federation

(9) The need to minimise minority problems in Nigeria

It was of course, possible under these conditions to take account of the primary communities. In particular the last principle could be interpreted to take care of primary communities. However, the consideration of the Panel was at the level of the ethnic nation as shown by their view that "to minimise the problems of the minorities we wish to be guided by the principle that no state will be so as to make one ethnic group dominant over all other groups combined". (Nigeria 1975, p. 45). Even then this principle was not strictly applied because, as analysed elsewhere, (Adejuyigbe 1979 (a) p. 207) in some of the states one ethnic nation is still dominant over all others e.g. Kwara, Bendel and Borno.

As in the case of the general structural composition of states the delimitation of present inter-state boundaries did not pay adequate attention to principles which would make such boundaries acceptable. In 1976, shortly after the creation of the 19 states, the Federal Military Government set up a commission to examine inter-state boundary problems. Unfortunately, many of the recommendations of the commission could not have been acceptable to the affected communities. For example in one case, the Obotme Arochukwu boundary between Imo and Cross River States, where the two communities were in dispute over a piece of territory the commission recommended the adoption of the official boundary "in the interest of people" (B A C 1976, II, 39). In other cases demands to make inter-state boundaries coincide with inter-community ones were rejected because the alternations would involve changing from an
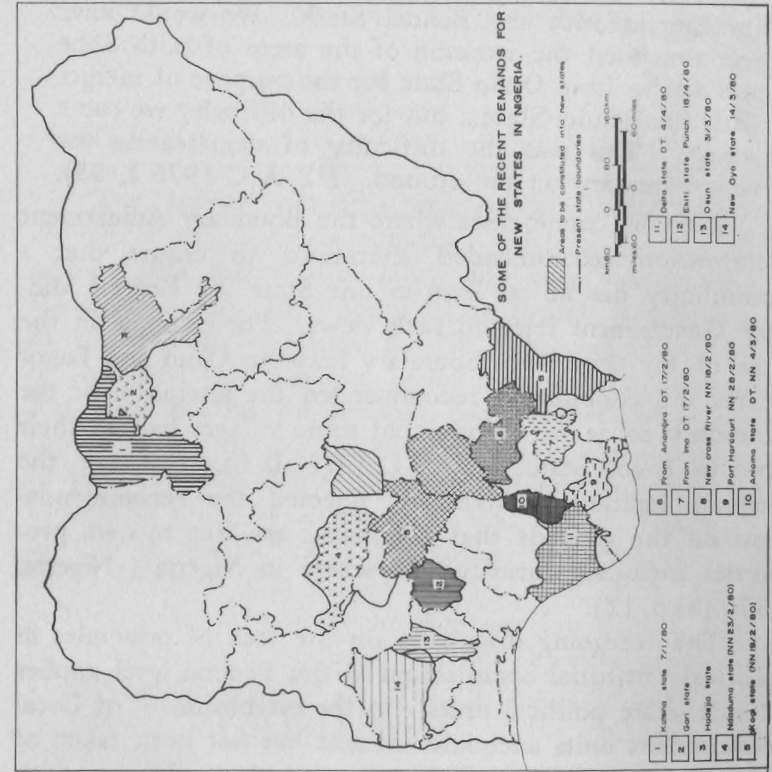

Fig. 5 Some of the Post-1976 Demands for New States.

easily recognisable feature to other forms of boundaries. For example, in the case of the Sobe-Ijagba request for transfer from Ondo to Bendel State the commission reported that:

There was no doubt that the wish of the majority was for merger with the Bendel State. We would have recommended the excision of the areas of both Sobe and Ijagba from Ondo State for the purpose of merger with the Bendel State... but for the difficulty we came across. This was the difficulty of demarcating the new boundary on the ground. (B A C 1976 I, 53).

Even in some cases where the Boundary Adjustment Commission recommended alterations to ensure that a community has all its land in one State the Federal Military Government rejected such views. For example in the case of the Omu-Ketu boundary between Ogun and Lagos States the commission recommended the alteration of the boundary so as to ensure that some villages had all their land in Lagos State. (B A C 1976, II 6). However, the Federal Military Government rejected the recommendation on the grounds that "Nigerians are free to own properties including farmland anywhere in Nigeria (Nigeria, 1976 (b) p. 13).

The foregoing discussion on the lack of principles in political territorial organization at the Federal level applies to intra-state political units. In the establishment of Local Government units adequate account has not been taken of primary communities. This was particularly the case with the re-organization of 1976 when, in order to meet the criteria set by the Federal Militrary Government, many communities were merged. In many cases the resultant units did not coincide with existing socio-economic communities of interest (Adejuyigbe, 1979 (b). In other units some Local Government Areas were not contiguous. For example, in Ondo State neither the Idanre-Ifedore nor

the Ifesowapo Local Government was made up of contiguous areas (Fig. 6). Where people have not been satisfied with the units they have demanded the creation of separate ones for their areas. However, unless the on-going re-organization in many states is based on acceptable principles there will be no end to demands for new Local Government units.

CONCLUSION

The human society is organised into social territorial groups or primary communities. Each of these primary communities has a focal point and accepted a common leadership. Also, they prefer to be treated as a single unit in relationships to outsiders. In particular they wish to be administered together under one political authority. For these reasons the primary communities should be regarded as the smallest indivisible unit in the organization of political units whose legislatures have power to control everything done by all those resident in them. The point of view in this lecture is that unless the members and the entire territory of a community are included in the same political unit there would be demands for such an ideal to be attained. It is suggested that an objective examination of demand for transfer of territory from one political unit to another should take account of the following social considerations:

(a) Relationships between the people in the affected area and others in the political unit in which it is presently located. In particular there should be detailed examinations of complaints of economic and cultural neglect, denial of social services and amenities, lack of adequate representation in government decision-making institutions etc.
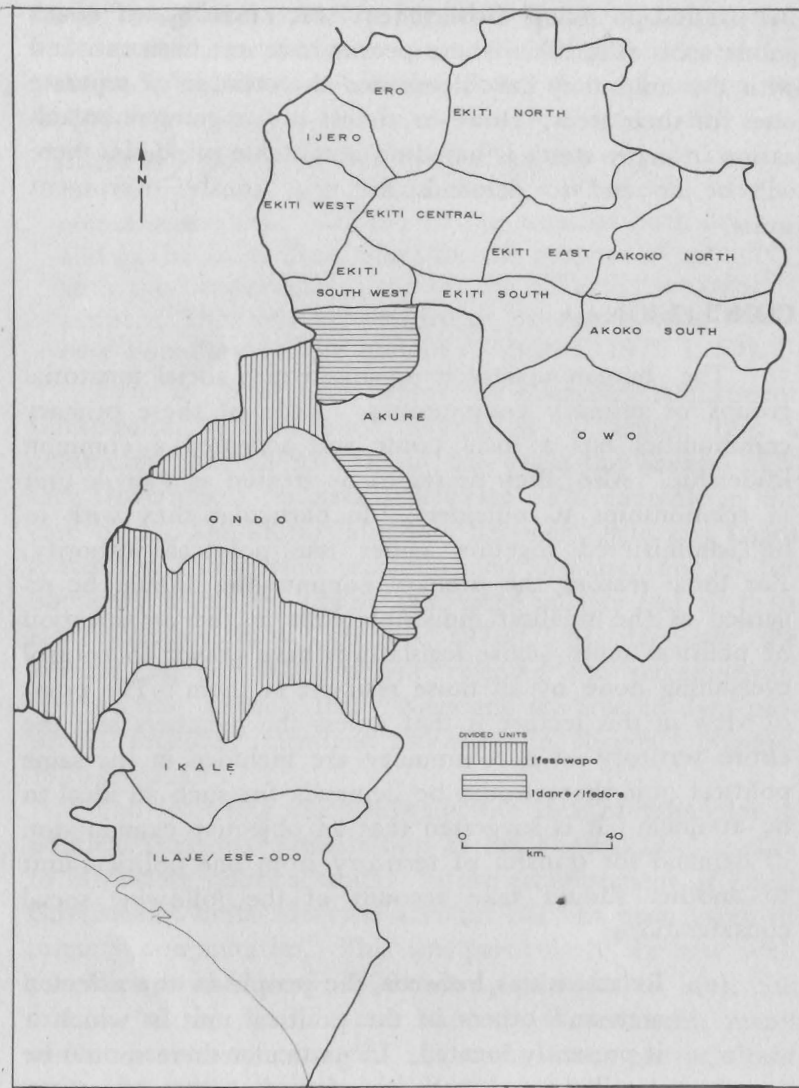
Fig. 6 Local Government Units in Ondo State, 1976.

(b) The relationships with the communities in the unit to be joined, particular attention being paid to prospects of improving areas of complaint against present units.

The type of study involved cannot be undertaken by adhoc boundary adjustment commissions like the Nasir Commission on Nigeria's Inter-State boundaries discussed earlier. It is for this and other reasons that it has been suggested (Adejuyigbe 1978, (c) that there should be Boundary Research Commissions at state and Federal levels in Nigeria. The Boundary Research Commissions would comprise geographers and interested scholars in related fields -- history, anthropology and law--and would investigate details of transfer of territory and /or community from one state to another or for adjustment of inter-community boundaries in each state. The reports would be submitted to the relevant Governments which shall regard them as technical reports and vary them as they may think fit. For the avoidance of any doubt I hereby repeat this suggestion for the establishment of Boundary Research Commissions at State and Federal levels in this country.

As for the creation of new Local Government units or States in this country an important consideration should be the extent to which new units will not have the defects of existing ones and thereby lead to demands for separation in the future. With respect to the creation of States account ought to be taken of the following considerations;

(1) The objectives of State creation, bearing in mind the functions allocated to States in the 1979 Constitution.

(2) Whether, while abiding by constitutional provisions, some of the reasons for the demands for new States could not be taken care of through

appropriate **policies on the distribution** of revenue and opportunities to the States by the Federal Government e.g. the demands from the present Kano State (Adamu, 1980), and from Oyo State (Amobanye, 1980; Ogunniyi, 1980; and *Daily Times*. 1980).

(3) The criteria for merging primary communities together to form States. In this regard it would have to be noted that old administrative systems are inappropriate as has been discussed above and that complaints of economic, social, and political neglect tend to be associated with cultural differences in existing States. Therefore it would be better to merge primary communities together on the basis of shared cultural traits.

(4) The need to ensure that in any State no community or combination of related communities is in a position to dominate others and hence generate resentment against itself thereby giving rise to demands for separation.

(5) The potential funds for the services of the State bearing in mind the cost of maintaining necessary political, professional and administrative personnel for the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, the civil service and the parastatals. etc.

(6) The qualified manpower likely to be needed as against that likely to be available for the services of the State.

(7) The balance of funds for development after allowance has been made for the administrative costs.

(8) Whether potential for both economic and socio-

cultural development will be greater in the proposed States as against the present, one bearing in mind the funds available for development and the opportunities for cultural development in the existing and the proposed State.

There is need for detailed studies by political and social geographers, economists, and other social scientists in order to get the necessary information about each and every demand for new States in this country. More importantly, there is need for an agreement on the set of criteria for the creation of States. Such set of criteria could be got from consideration of research findings and recommendations at a National Conference or Seminar devoted to that purpose and to be attended by policy makers and other interested parties. The set of criteria and the studies on individual demands for new states should be available to the National and State Assemblies before they take decisions on the creation of any new States or on the general reorganization of States in this country.

I am aware that a major constraint in the implementation of these suggestions is the identification of a study group which will carry out the studies in an objective and academic manner as well as an acceptable venue for the suggested national conference. It is in these regards that I wish to suggest that the Faculty of Social Science of this University has the necessary machinery for these roles if the Governments provide the funds. The Public Projects Study Group of the Faculty consists of academic staff in all fields necessary for the type of study I have suggested. The Group is in a position to produce findings of excellent academic standards devoid of partisan bias. Furthermore, the Faculty Seminar Committee has over the years organised Conferences and Workshops on important national issues and will therefore be able to organise a National Conference on

Criteria for Creation of **States in Nigeria.** All we need to implement any of both of these is the financial support from the Federal Government and other interested agencies.

Whether or not such funds are available for the Faculty to perform these public services it is our intention in the Department of Geography of this University to continue our research and studies of the various factors affecting the evolution, organization, and cohesion of different levels of political units in this country and elsewhere in the world.

I should like to end this inaugural lecture by acknowledging the cordial working atmosphere which I have enjoyed in the Department of Geography. My colleagues, most particularly Prof. G.J.A. Ojo, Prof. Oladipo Adejuwon and late Prof. Babafemi Ogundana, helped in discussing my ideas in their formative stages. All other colleagues have been most co-operative in any assignment I have had since I joined the Department. I have benefitted from the comments of Professors Ojo and Adejuwon and Drs. Osunade and Musisi-Nkambwe as well as the co-operation of Dr. (Mrs.) J.O. Abiodun and Dr. L.K. Jeje. It is to this excellent team of colleagues that I should like to dedicate this lecture.

Thank you for listening.

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