

THE DECLINE OF THE CROSS RIVER  
AS A COMMERCIAL HIGHWAY IN  
SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

### THE DECLINE OF THE CROSS RIVER AS A COMMERCIAL HIGHWAY IN SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA

By  
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The major purpose of this thesis is to examine the main causes of the decline of the Cross River waterway and its ports for commercial purposes in South Eastern Nigeria. Within this context, it is intended to determine whether the major factors underlying the decline of that waterway were purely physical and geographic or they were social and political. In other words, the aim of the study is to test and ascertain whether such causes were natural or man made, and also whether such causes were related or unrelated to the cause-and-effect conditions which generally follow developments in a developing and expanding region.

The study first traces the historical development of the Cross River waterway and its ports in the wake of European contacts and international trade between West Africa and Europe and America dating back to the early 17th century. This area's prominence lasted well into the early 20th century. After the First World War, the area steadily declined in commercial importance and conditions became so deplorable that by early 1960s, it was but a ghost region of the former Eastern Nigeria.



The hotly debated question among the natives of the Cross River basin was whether the decline of the area was due to social and political reasons or just a function of natural factors.

Two hypotheses are tested and those are:

- (1) whether the locational, site and physical characteristics hitherto responsible for the prominence of the area had since changed for the worse; and
- (2) whether political and social actions taken by the controlling authorities were responsible for such a decline.

Drawing from analysis of available statistical tables, graphs and diagrams and opinions of experts, the two hypotheses are examined. It was discovered that those geographical and physical factors such as site, locational and physical characteristics which had hitherto made the area strategically important in commerce have not declined in their role. If anything, they have become more prominent in making that zone important from transportation and commercial standpoint. Rather the misfortunes of the Cross River waterway and its ports were the outcomes of a series of political directives dating back from the British Colonial governments and worsened by the political decisions of the Nigerian indigenous governments.

The study traces the decision to connect the coal mines at Enugu to Port Carcourt and not Calabar, even when it cost more to deepen and open the waterway from Port Harcourt to the sea as the beginning of such actions. The removal of the administrative headquarters of the country from Calabar to Lagos and the later decision to develop the ports of Lagos and Port Harcourt for ocean shipping

while neglecting Calabar port all indicate the biased nature of those political decisions. The government of the former Eastern Nigeria worsened the situation by economic neglect of the area, reversal of the flow of traffic north-south to east-west to help Port Harcourt and the use of the Regional Marketing Board to enhance the use of Port Harcourt at the expense of Calabar. All helped to ruin the Cross River and its ocean port of Calabar.

In conclusion, the reasons for the decline of the area are found to be more political and social than geographic and physical. This knowledge thus raises the hope that the current efforts to reactivate the Cross River basin and waterway for economic and general commercial purposes will, all things considered, yield reasonable dividends for the future.

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A COMMERCIAL HIGHWAY IN  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	THE PROBLEM. . . . .	1
	Introduction. . . . .	1
	Problem Definition. . . . .	5
	Objectives of the Study . . . . .	7
	Scope of the Study. . . . .	8
	Assumptions . . . . .	8
	Hypotheses . . . . .	9
	Justification of the Study. . . . .	9
	Tools of Analysis and Methodology . . . . .	10
	Plan of the Study . . . . .	11
II	THE GEOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL COMMERICAL BACKGROUND TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS RIVER. . . . .	12
	Geography . . . . .	12
	Location Factors . . . . .	16
	Physical Advantages. . . . .	18
	Pre-Colonial Inland Trade . . . . .	20
	Pre-Colonial International Trade. . . . .	22
	Slave Trade. . . . .	23
	The Rise of Legitimate Trade . . . . .	25
	Palm Oil . . . . .	26
	Colonial Trade . . . . .	29
III	THE DECLINE OF THE CROSS RIVER AS A MAJOR COMMERICAL HIGHWAY . . . . .	34
IV	FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMMERCIAL DECLINE OF THE CROSS RIVER WATERWAY. . . . .	46
V	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	70
	Appendix . . . . .	77
	Bibliography. . . . .	87

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Cross River Transport Information. . . . .	19
2	Slaves Exported from Calabar in Liverpool Ships. . . . .	24
3	Exports of Palm Oil to United Kingdom (Selected Years) . . . . .	28
4	Total Tonnage Handled at Various Selected Nigerian Ports (000 tons). . . . .	32
5	Port Traffic in the 1930s (Selected Years and Ports) (000 tons). . . . .	40
6	Shipment by Various Ports (Selected Years) (000 tons) . . . . .	42
7	Secondary Schools in Eastern Nigeria . . . . .	65
A.1	Plantations and Estates. . . . .	77
A.2	Large Estate Concentrations. . . . .	78
A.3a	Forest Reserve Distribution. . . . .	79
A.3b	Summary. . . . .	80
A.4	Foreign Trade Cargo Handled at Nigerian Ports--Cargo Loaded. . . . .	81
A.5	Palm Oil Passed for Export . . . . .	82
A.6	Palm Kernel Passed for Export. . . . .	82
A.7	Capital Expenditure on Roads 1957-63 . . . . .	83
A.8	Road Development . . . . .	83
A.9	Palm Produce Export and Prices . . . . .	84



Table		Page
A.10	Location of Industries 1962-63. . . . .	84
A.11	Tonnage of Cargo Shipped Coastwise--Cargo Loaded. . . . .	85
A.12	General Cargo Handled From 1955-56 to 1972-73 (All Ports) (Metric Tonne). . . . .	86

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Nigeria Showing Location of South Eastern Nigeria. . .	2
2	Political Divisions of South Eastern State of Nigeria . . . . .	4
3	Main Physiographic Regions of South Eastern Nigeria. .	14
4	Ports of the Cross River . . . . .	17
5	Proximal Location of Ports in Southern Nigeria . . . .	48
6	Nigeria Transportation . . . . .	56

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

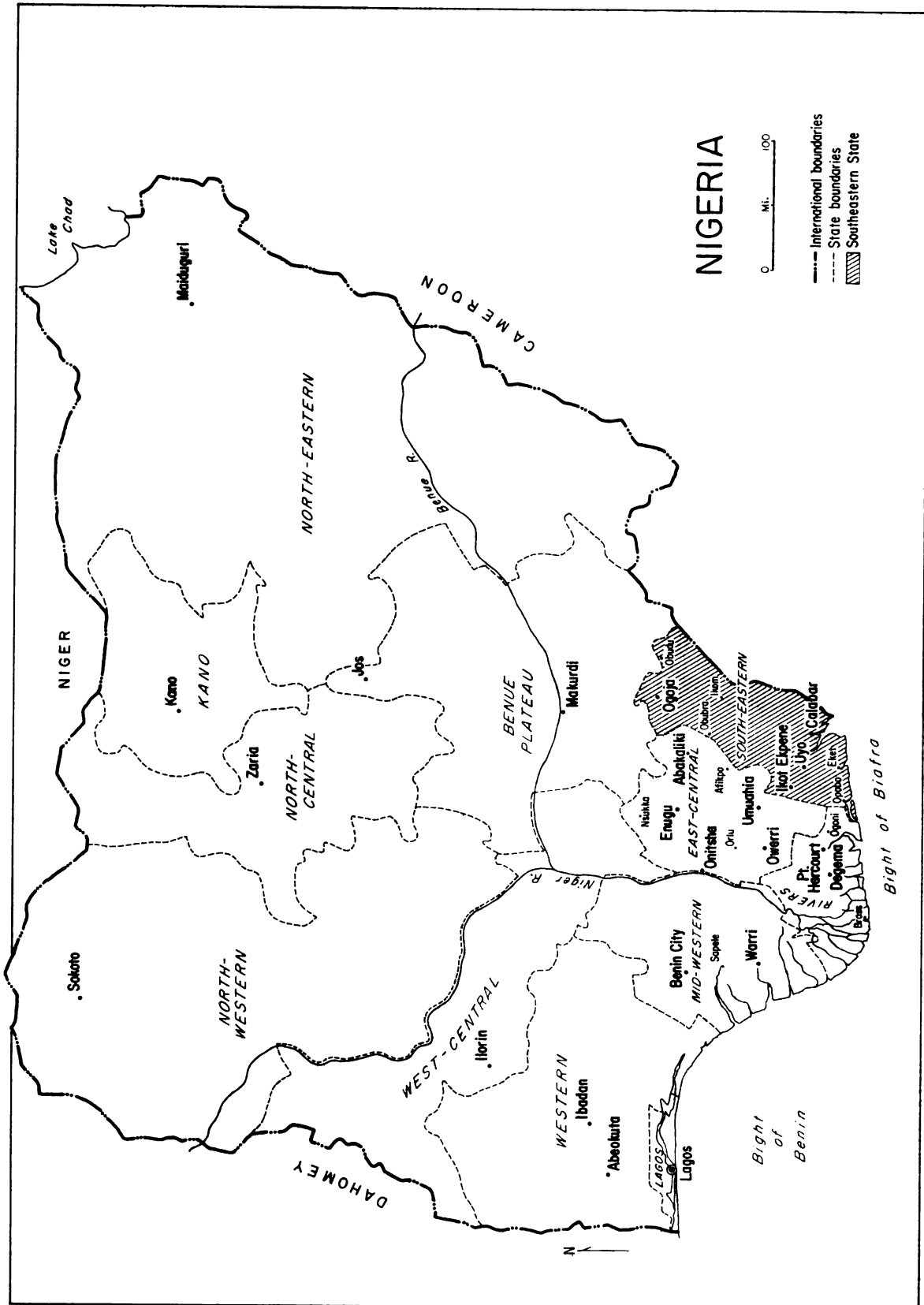
The earliest European contact with West Africa dates back to the Fifteenth Century.<sup>1</sup> This contact was mostly spurred by trade because, according to Dike,<sup>2</sup> the whole history of modern West Africa is one of five centuries of trade with European nations. Possibly out of the desire to procure and control trade among other reasons, several groups of adventurers--religious, commercial, military--political and settler elements have come to Africa. While the early contacts were with the coastal natives, certain ocean terminals offered better facilities for shipping and trade than the rest. In particular, in the area now known as Nigeria, the town of Lagos on the Lagos Lagoon; Akassa, Brass and Bonny in the Niger Delta and Calabar on the Cross River had in time gained great commercial importance.

These early contacts led to the introduction of slave trade across the sea of African natives--the unfortunate victims of the nefarious triangular economic deals linking Africa, Europe and America.

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<sup>1</sup>The Portuguese came around 1450 to 1460 before even the Treaty of Tordessilas in 1494. See J. W. Blake: European Beginnings in West Africa, London, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Dike, Kenneth O. Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1956.



In this trade, both the Cross River waterway and the Port of Calabar played a leading role. With its official abolition in 1807, greater attention was paid to what came to be called "legitimate" trade.<sup>3</sup> Palm oil, and later palm kernel, came to be the principal articles of exports from the Bights of Benin and Biafra. Indeed, the importance of palm oil exports from the area lent the area the name of Oil Rivers Protectorate.

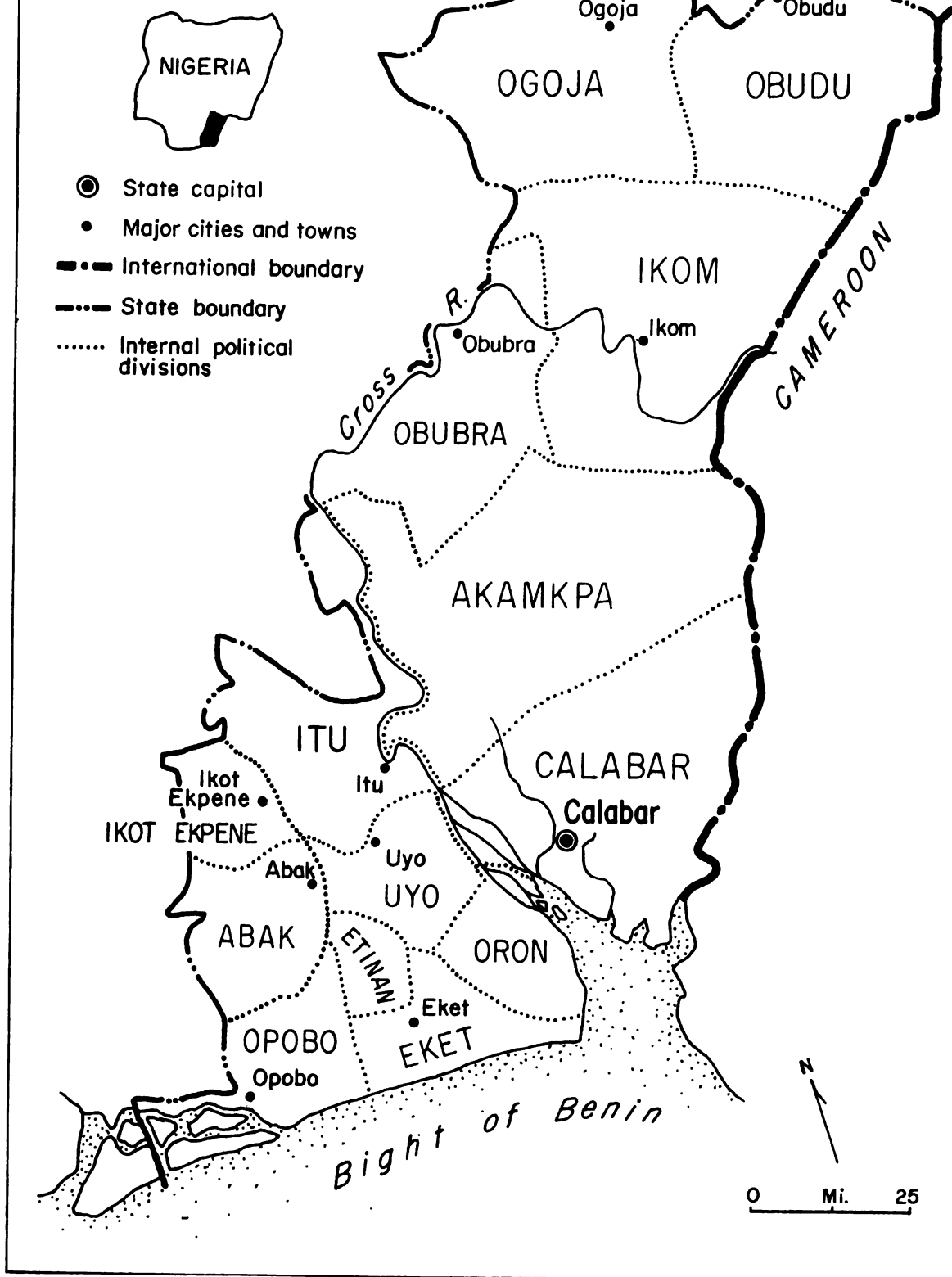
By the 1830s palm oil trade had made both the Cross River and the port city of Calabar famous. This export commodity was shipped down from the hinterlands of Old Ogoja Province, Old Calabar Province and parts of Old Owerri Province to the Port of Calabar. The period between 1885 and 1920 made the Cross River a busy commercial highway. Indeed, exports via Calabar port constituted a major part of the total Nigerian exports up to and including the First World War years.

Between 1920 and 1966 the Cross River and the Port of Calabar passed through three stages into complete decadence. Directly after the First World War a period of stagnation sets in. During and after the Second World War, from 1939 to 1954, the area passed through a critical stage in which major economic shifts were being made by traders to areas west of Calabar. Between 1954 and 1966, Calabar and the Cross River declined to a point where the port city was nothing but a ghost town. Little, if any, of the export-import trade then passed through the Cross River waterway anymore. The contrast between the Cross River waterway and Calabar port in 1860 and 1960 must have been heartbreaking to a centenarian.

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<sup>3</sup>Dike, K. O., op. cit., pp. 48-49.

# POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF THE SOUTHEASTERN STATE OF NIGERIA





What is involved in this study is the rise and fall in the commercial activities of a region of Nigeria. Quite varied reasons--relevant and irrelevant--have been offered in trying to explain the decline of the Cross River waterway and its ports. Some have been based on physical factors of geography, such as: location, site, proximity to rich and busy areas. These are the usual factors involved in analysis of location of business activities. Other reasons offered are purely economic, while the rest are either social and political or else associated with a philosophy of development. This study intends to examine these reasons with a view to unravelling those which principally underlie the decline of the Cross River waterway and its ports.

#### Problem Definition

A study conducted on the factors responsible for the emergence and later decline of the Niger Delta ports<sup>4</sup> has generally attributed the reasons to such geographical factors as locational advantages, site advantages and change of economic activities. The Udo-Ogundana thesis has treated the problems of the rise and fall of these regions as an evolutionary process inherent in economic development of a developing nation. This treatment upholds the "survival-of-the-fittest" argument. The thesis also accepts competition as a potent weapon for selection of economic activities and their locations.

On the other hand, the peoples of the Cross River area have accused the government of the former Eastern Nigeria with deliberate

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<sup>4</sup>Udo, Reuben K. and Ogundana, Babafemi. "Factors Influencing the Fortunes of Ports in the Niger Delta," Scottish Geographical Magazine, No. 82, 1966, pp. 169-183.

economic sabotage of their area through calculated neglect and diversion of activities to other areas but theirs.<sup>5</sup> Whether there is enough substance in this allegation depends on ability to isolate the geographic and normal economic factors from the events leading to the decline of the Cross River waterway, its inland ports and the seaport of Calabar. The problem is to distinguish between the sets of purely physical geographic factors and of socio-political factors and to determine which set has contributed more to the decline of the Cross River waterway and its ports. It is firmly held that a region rises into prominence because of specific advantages it enjoys--physical, social and economic. Its fall must be due to the decline of those factors either by comparison to other more superior nearby regions or a decline which is absolute. In either case, the decline must be a function of changed situations for the worse.

This study intends to classify those factors, geographic and physical, economic, social and political, which contribute to the decline of the Cross River waterway for commercial purposes. This will enable facts to be isolated from fictions. A knowledge gained in this way will prove or disprove the evolution theory held by some geographers<sup>6</sup> with respect to the rise and fall of the Cross River region. How far the dynamic factors which make for specific changes in the fortunes or misfortunes of the Cross River waterway are due to chance or to deliberate decisions of socio-political authorities would be revealed in this study.

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<sup>5</sup> Aye, E. U. Old Calabar Through the Centuries, Calabar, 1967, and Latham, A. J. H. Old Calabar 1600-1891, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1973. (Epilogue 1891-1971).

<sup>6</sup> Udo-Ogundana, op. cit.

### Objectives of the Study

This study is expected to throw light on the thorny question of whether geographical factors by themselves are capable of causing regional decline in the absence of nongeographic reasons. In general, the question is on the power of geographical advantages as factors in the location of economic activities. What happens when locational, natural endowments, site and physical characteristics and relative economic advantages change for the worse? What part do changes in social and political fortunes of a region play in the promotion or retardation of the region?

Specifically, these theories must be examined with reference to the Cross River inland ports and the seaport of Calabar in the commercial history of Nigeria. Since diverse reasons have been offered in explanation of the decline of that region's trade, a proper knowledge will:

1. Place facts in their proper perspective so as to enable wild and unsubstantiated allegations to be isolated from the truths as they are.
2. Offer opportunities for people to know the facts and thereby disabuse their minds of the oft-repeated allegations against the former government of the area if the allegations are untrue.
3. Offer the present government proper tools on which to base their decisions in the current effort to reactivate the Cross River waterway and the economic development and rehabilitation of the area generally and Calabar port in particular.
4. Help test the theories of geography on locational analysis and the conventional factors affecting such location of economic activities.

### Scope of the Study

This study is confined to the commercial fortunes and misfortunes of the Cross River waterway, its inland ports and the seaport of Calabar in the context of South Eastern Nigeria, (usually known as Eastern Nigeria). The area involved is that zone west of the Cameroon Mountains and east of the Niger River, but covering the two contiguous Old Calabar and Ogoja provinces. Specifically, the area of study will relate to the Cross River basin,<sup>7</sup> to the South Eastern Nigeria and references to places outside the area will only serve historical connections or illustrative purposes. Facts and figures will be drawn from available sources--commercial, historical, etc. to strengthen discussions.

### Assumption

In this study it is assumed that causes of the rise and later the decline of the Cross River waterway for commercial purposes are mainly physical, economic and socio-political.

1. For the study of the Cross River waterway, the river ports of the waterway would be included as major areas of the study.
2. It is intended that the usual factors in geography--location and site--believed to be responsible for the rise and fall of locations for economic activity purposes will be examined with respect to the Cross River waterway and its ports.

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<sup>7</sup>R. K. Udo differentiated between Cross River District and Cross River plain or basis, the latter including the former. See Journal of Tropical Geography, No. 1066, Singapore, 1965, pp. 65-72.

3. It is assumed here that if the rise and fall of the Cross River waterway were evolutionary, nothing done currently to revive its commercial importance would succeed in restoring the area to the regional commercial greatness.

### Hypotheses

The major hypotheses to be tested in this study are:

1. That the advantages--locational, site and physical characteristics as well as proximity to the rich productive hinterlands which hitherto made the Cross River waterway commercially important are no longer prevailing and hence the decline of that waterway and the region.
2. That the major problems of the area--the economic and social decline--are mainly due to political factors rather than to geographical or economic circumstances.

### Justification of the Study

This study deals with the commercial operations of the Cross River waterway and its terminal port of Calabar in the context of the former Eastern Nigerian economy. This choice is based on the fact that:

1. Fairly adequate facts as are relatively available are up to date and handy to facilitate analysis.
2. It is one of the parts of the former Eastern Nigeria where economic decline had been outstanding over the years.
3. It is an area occupied principally by the then minority ethnic groups in the former Eastern Nigeria.

4. It is the area where the controversies of state creation were very pronounced and where the regional government was accused of deliberate economic sabotage for political reasons.
5. A test of the major factors which are accountable for the decline of that region will make it easy to determine which factors were mostly responsible for that region's decline.
6. Only on such grounds can proper knowledge be obtained such that either the former regional government is exonerated or blamed, based on factual evidences.
7. This study should also offer one more opportunity of testing the theoretical factors of geography which generally affect location of major economic activities, in this instance, inland and ocean shipping and foreign trade.

#### Tools of Analysis and Methodology

Most of the analysis in this study will make use of statistical tables, graphs and diagrams along with expert opinions of practical people to draw the necessary conclusions. The gaps likely to exist in the available information where conclusions may not be supported by empirical evidence will be filled by theoretical arguments where available. Deductive analysis will be used in combination with the interpretation of available data and standard theses in the field, to explain the factors responsible for the decline of the Cross River waterway and its terminal ocean port of Calabar. In most cases, the conclusions may be based more on qualitative than quantitative analysis, unless sufficient explanatory data exist to make such analysis sufficiently quantitative.



### Plan of the Study

Chapter II of this study will explore the geographic and historical background to the importance of the Cross River as a great commercial highway in South Eastern Nigeria.

Chapter III will examine and analyze the decline of the Cross River as a commercial highway along with its ocean port of Calabar between 1920 and 1966. This should involve the comparison of traffic volumes before and after the World War I years on the Cross River.

Chapter IV analyzes the major factors responsible for the decline of the Cross River waterway for commercial purposes of the former Eastern Region. Here tests will be made of geographic factors affecting location of economic activities and even the political factor of power possession and its use.

Chapter V contains the major summaries and conclusions on the factors affecting the rise and decline of the Cross River. Which factors are and which are not positively contributing to the decline of the Cross River region. Major statements on the role of the factors will be made in this chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GEOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL COMMERCIAL BACKGROUND TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS RIVER

#### Geography

For the purpose of this study, the area designated as South Eastern Nigeria will cover and include that whole administrative part of Nigeria formerly known as Eastern Nigeria, but which is today made up of three contiguous states--South Eastern, East Central and Rivers.<sup>8</sup> The area is bounded on the west by the River Niger, on the east by the Cameroon Republic and the north by the Benue-Plateau State and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean at the Bight of Biafra. The land area is 29,484 square miles and has a population estimated at 17.5 million by 1973.

The chief physiographic distinction of this area lies in its predominantly level plainlands, which are well watered by a number of rivers flowing into the sea. The coastal plains with their peculiar soil types derived from relatively undisturbed young sediment of the Cretaceous and Tertiary periods, which have been eroded to form extensive plains, only slightly incised by river action.<sup>9</sup> The presence

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<sup>8</sup>Created by the military decree of 1967. See Federal Gazette, May 27, 1967. For circumstances of the decree and the Nigerian Civil War, see Akpan, N.U. The Struggle for Secession--1966-1970, Frank Cass, London, 1971.

<sup>9</sup>Geological Survey Reports, Bulletin Nos. 6 and 8, Nigerian Government, Lagos, 1925.

of younger sediments within the crystalline or metamorphic blocks has resulted in the occurrence of mineral fuels like lignite and coal of the East Central State, oil and natural gas of the Rivers and the South Eastern States.<sup>10</sup>

The physiographic features of the area show a gradual slow ascent from the Niger Delta in the southwest to the Cameroon Mountains in the east and northeast, interrupted by a series of steplike scoops running through the center of the region. Indeed, South Eastern Nigeria thus has five major geographical zones running from northeast to southwest:

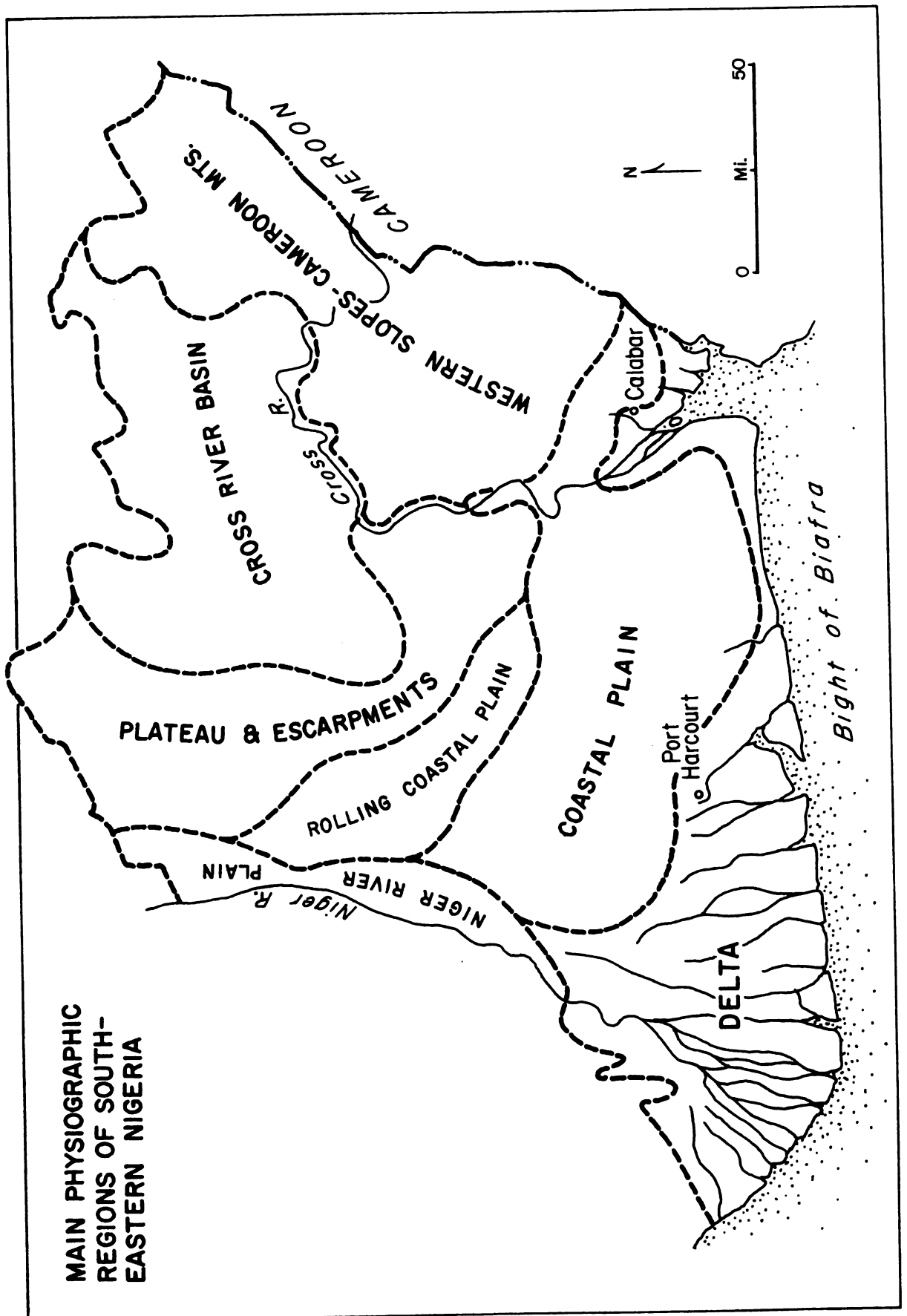
1. The Western Spurs of the Cameroon Mountains.
2. The Cross River Basin
3. The Plateau and Escarpment Zone of the East Central State
4. The Coastal Plains of Onitsha, Owerri, Uyo and Annang Provinces and Port Harcourt areas.
5. The River Plains and Deltas of the Niger and Lower Cross River basin areas.<sup>11</sup> (Figure 3, Map)

The climate here, like most of Nigeria, is controlled by the forces of the Northeast and Southwest trade winds. The former is responsible for the dry season and the latter the rainy season. The mean annual temperature is around 80° F and the mean rainfall annually is over 200 m.m., graduated in intensity north to south with the coastal areas having

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<sup>10</sup> Karmon, Yehuda. A Geography of Settlement in Eastern Nigeria. Jerusalem, 1966, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Classified by Karmon, Yehuda, op. cit., see also Oduah, S.O. Geography of the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria, Cambridge University, 1966, p. 136.



the heaviest.<sup>12</sup> The drainage system can be classified into three:

1. The Niger River and Delta system.
2. The Cross River system.
3. The independent streams.

The Cross River rises in the Cameroon Mountains and flows northwest until it meets the Anyim River. There it turns southwest toward the Enyong Creek from where it flows southeast to the sea, some thirty-five miles from the port city of Calabar. The Cross River plain is well watered and bordered by the very rich agricultural lands of the entire southeastern Nigeria. The area covers Ikom, Obubra, Akamkpa, Itu, Calabar and Oron Divisions and are close in proximity to such divisions as Abakaliki, Afikpo and Bende in East Central State as well as Uyo and Ikot Kepene Divisions of the present South Eastern State. The Cross River thus forms the major drainage system of the eastern part of the South Eastern Nigeria. Udo<sup>13</sup> noted that

"The Cross River has been the main connecting unit between this region and the outside world. The slave traders, the missionaries and later the political agents of the British Government reached the region by way of the Cross River."

The major question now is: What factors made the Cross River such a major transportation and communications artery to so vast an area covering the borders of Western Cameroon to the Igbo areas of Abakaliki, Afikpo and Bende Divisions as well as the Ogoja—Obudu down to Calabar

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<sup>12</sup>Meteorological Report, Enugu, 1964.

<sup>13</sup>Udo, Reuben K. "The Cross River District of Eastern Nigeria," Journal of Tropical Geography, op. cit.

Division? What were the relationships of this river waterway and its ports to the internal and external commercial activities of these areas? To understand the importance of the Cross River waterway and its ports in the context of Nigeria's early commerce is to analyze these factors which gave rise to the importance of this river way.

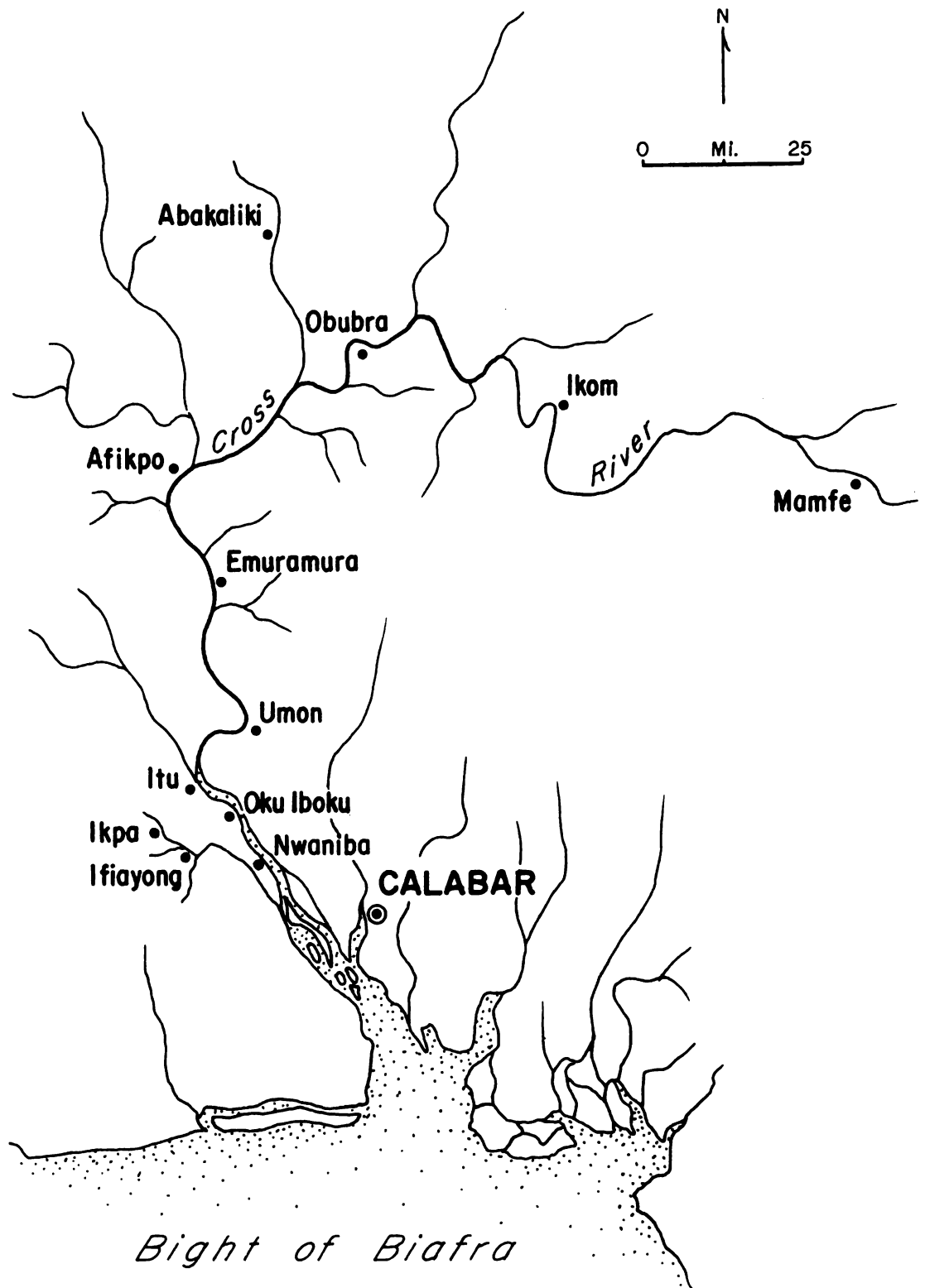
Location Factors.—The major reason for the most immediate importance of the Cross River and its inland and ocean ports was locational.<sup>14</sup> Most of the early European trade with Nigerian natives was concentrated at river port entrances linking the hinterlands with the ocean. In Nigeria, apart from the Niger Delta and the Lagos Lagoon, the other major seaport connection with the hinterland by the waterway to the sea was Calabar on the Cross River. Initially, early shipping trade with the Nigerian natives was at the coastal towns and ports which acted as intermediaries between the European traders and the inland natives who invariably produced the major articles of trade.

The strategic location of the Cross River within the rich areas producing the trade cargoes made the river a major highway. From Calabar up to Itu (50 miles up the river) a large inland market for food, oil palm and kernels and salves (during the slave days) had developed. At this confluence of the Cross River and Enyong Creek--the meeting point of the peoples of Umon, Afikpo, Ibibio and Efiks of Enyong Creek--a large market for all types of local commodities as well as imported goods had developed at Okopedi and the water side. Further up the Cross River, some 105 miles from Calabar, are the adjacent towns of

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<sup>14</sup>Udo, Reuben K. and Ogundana, Babafemi, op. cit.



**PORTS OF THE CROSS RIVER**

Afikpo, Ediba and Itigidi, which became river ports on their own right for the movement of produce from the hinterland peoples.

Obubra, 136 miles from Calabar is the natural port of that area, covering Ogada, Ofombunga, Ofumatam, Awakande and areas near Apiapum. These are rich agricultural areas noted for their yams and cocoyams. Ikom and Mamfe, 44 and 128 miles, respectively, from Obubra are ports covering the large rich districts of Ikom, Nsofang and the Western Cameroun borders. Details of the peoples and life style there was sketched by Patridge.<sup>15</sup> Thus the locational advantages enjoyed by the Cross River and its inland and ocean ports are relative to the rich borderlands and the products for which it offered means of transportation for trade purposes (see Figure 4, Map).

Physical Advantages.--At a time when there were no roads nor rail lines, the Cross River offered natural advantages for transportation purposes. Dugout wooden canoes, rafts and later launches made travelling and the carriage of commodities easy. The river is navigable all the year round to Itu, only navigable between May and November between Itu and Afikpo and up to Ikom between June and October, whereas traffic to Mamfe is only possible between July and October.<sup>16</sup> Details of the physical characteristics of the waterway and traffic possibilities are outlined in Table 1.

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<sup>15</sup> Charles Patridge. The Cross River Natives. Hutchinson and Co., London, 1905.

<sup>16</sup> Netherlands Engineering Consultants. Development of the Ports of Nigeria 1970-1990, The Hague, 1971, pp. 10-11.

Table 1. Cross River Transportation Information.

Ports	Distance From Calabar (Miles)	Maximum Depth at High Water (Feet)	Navigable Periods	Maximum Dimension of Convoys (Feet)
Calabar	0	25-30	All year	No limit
Oku Iboku	39	20-25	All year	650 x 75
Itu	50	15-20	May-Nov.	650 x 75
Afikpo	103	25	May-Oct.	450 x 65
Ediba	105	30	May-Oct.	450 x 65
Itighidi	105	30	May-Oct.	450 x 65
Obubra	136	30	June-Oct.	250 x 65
Ikom	183	35	June-Oct.	250 x 65
Mamfe	264	35	June-Oct.	250 x 65

Source: NEDECO, pp. V, 10-11, 1971.

Initially, traffic was based on canoes for which depth of water was no serious hinderance and traffic was undisturbed all the year round between the upper country and the coastal areas of the Cross River. Even the early European traders had boats which were by modern standards small, but since they were restricted to the coastal areas while the middle men alone penetrated the hinterlands, the traffic was never disturbed by physical factors except hostilities which arose from intertribal and inter-community conflicts on the river way.

The Cross River has one major advantage again in respect of its land borders and types of soil. The flood plains have low silting rate and, but for this, the absence of artificial channel clearance would have led to the closure of the waterway altogether. The only problem between Oku-Iboku and Itu is the tidal flow and ebb on which navigators

must depend to regulate their transportation. The mangrove swamps around the Calabar river area simply do not extend to the upper reaches of the river and hence the problems of dredging are not so acutely felt. The solid land by the waterways assisted the development of landing stages and river ports as well as inland markets for collecting and distribution of goods down to Calabar or the hinterlands.

The seaward approaches into Calabar and hence the hinterlands through the Cross River had been most favorable for the trade of the area. The navigation channel to Calabar has a length of about 42 miles marked with buoys and beacons. Silting here is indeed minimal since "dredging has never been carried out and the channel profile seems to change only little as far as the depth is concerned."<sup>17</sup> This compares with ports like Lagos and Port Harcourt where very costly dredging is annually maintained.<sup>18</sup> Thus, from the seaward approach and the landward approach the Cross River offered a unique waterway for transportation purposes. It is well located by rich and productive hinterlands. It is mostly navigable for most parts of its course, and that for most months of the year. Inside the river course are good inland ports acting as collecting and distribution centers for exports and imports of the area.

#### Pre-Colonial Inland Trade

The peoples who lived around and on the borders of the Cross River basin had been holding some commercial intercourse before the coming of

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<sup>17</sup> NEDECO, op. cit., p. 1-19.

<sup>18</sup> Nigerian Ports Authority Annual Reports 1958-1959 and 1969-1970.

the Europeans and colonialism to that part of the world. Even though the picture painted by early European reporters and writers about the Cross River area was one of "primitive" and "savage" headhunters, very reliable evidence indicated that the Europeans met well-ordered societies with laws and cultures distinctly their own.<sup>19</sup> It would appear that as a result of soil types, characteristics of the peoples and their orientations, different localities specialized in certain economic activities and trade naturally arose among the different ethnic groups or clans.

The Igbos around Aro-Chuku were famed for their Long Juju as an oracle and fertility spirit.<sup>20</sup> To the west of the Cross River were the Ibibios--the home of the palm oil and palm kernel which became the greatest article of external trade after the slave trade abolition.<sup>21</sup> The riverurine peoples specialized in fishing and salt making from the salt water of the coastal swamps. The bulk of the yams are produced around Afikpo, Obubra, Ugep, Ikom and Abakaliki and Ogoja where rice is richly produced.

Canoe traffic on the Cross River assisted the exchange of products from each area. Indeed, the yams from Obubra and Afikpo were exchanged with palm oil at Itu, Oku Iboku, Ifianyong and Ikpa markets as well as

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<sup>19</sup>Ekundare, R. Olufemi. An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960. Africana Publishing Co., New York 1973, pp. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup>Daryll Forde and G. I. Jones. The Ibo and Ibibio-Speaking Peoples of South Eastern Nigeria, London 1962, p. 52. See also Dike, op. cit., pp. 37-41.

<sup>21</sup>Anne Martin. The Oil Palm Economy of the Ibibio Farmer, (Ibadan, 1956).

to the down river settlements around Calabar. In return shrimps, fish, salt and prawn were sent inland where petty traders helped to distribute them farther inland.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, during the 19th century, a pattern seems to develop whereby particular places specialized in the production of certain durable items. Pottery was made in Afikpo,<sup>23</sup> canoes were constructed at Emuramura,<sup>24</sup> raffia cloth at Ikot Ekpene and metal work by itinerant blacksmiths, mostly Ibibios and Igbos.<sup>25</sup> To the east of the Cross River the people--the Ejaghams lived mostly by themselves and appeared to be self sufficient.<sup>26</sup>

#### The Pre-Colonial International Trade

European adventurers reached west Africa in the middle of the 15th century. Contact with Africa were mostly with the coastal settlers who thereafter acted as middlemen between the Europeans and the hinterland African people. According to Dike<sup>27</sup> trade fluctuated with European policies and demands such that while gold was the main quest between the 15th and 16th centuries, slave trade predominated during the 17th

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<sup>22</sup>Forde and Jones, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>23</sup>S. and P. Ottenberg. "Afikpo Markets" in P. Bohannon and G. Dalton (ed.), Markets in Africa, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1962, p. 121.

<sup>24</sup>Revd. H. Goldie, Calabar and Its Mission, Edinburgh and London, 1901, p. 340.

<sup>25</sup>Jones, Trading States, p. 13, Waddel, Journal, Vol. 8, p. 77, March 22, 1851.

<sup>26</sup>Latham, A. J. H., Old Calabar 1600-1891, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1973, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup>Dike, K. O. Trade and Politics in Niger Delta, Oxford 1956, p. 1.

and 18th centuries. Calabar on the estuary of the Cross River was one of the many coastal markets where the wares of the hinterlands and the Europeans were traded through the coastal middlemen. Apparently, there is no accurate record of when the first European trade came to the port city of Calabar, and hence the Cross River.<sup>28</sup> What is known is that the first European traders to those parts were the Portuguese whom the natives called "Boriki."<sup>29</sup>

Slave Trade.--Among the first and documented articles of trade from Calabar port and indeed from the Cross River area were slaves, taken to West Indian Islands by 1668.<sup>30</sup> Calabar became a major West African slave market thereafter while the Cross River became the major highway for this nefarious trade. Sub-markets up the Cross River were established at Itu, Afikpo, Obubra, Abakaliki, Ikom and Ogoja areas where the middlemen bought slaves for onward shipment through the Cross River to Calabar.

According to Latham the number of slaves handled at Calabar through the Cross River route averaged annually over 2,000 between 1752 and 1799 (Table 2). These estimates were made from different sources and must include some undercounting. Moreover, these estimates do not include those shipped away by other European traders or other British traders not based in Liverpool. Whatever the case, the figures

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<sup>28</sup>Latham, A. J. H. op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>29</sup>E. N. Amaku. Edikot Nwed Mbuk, Vol. II.

<sup>30</sup>Latham quotes John Watts, an English sailor, who reported in that year of entering Cross River with their ship to take on slave cargo, op. cit., p. 17.

indicate that Calabar and, for that matter, the Cross River area were major slave markets.

Table 2. Slaves Exported  
from Calabar in  
Liverpool Ships

Year	Ships	Slaves
1752	8	3,130
1771	11	3,250
1784	11	4,200
1785	8	31,50
1786	13	5,150
1787	7	2,360
1798	6	2,473
1799	6	2,275

During the two hundred years that the Calabar people were selling slaves to the European slave dealers how were they able to obtain the slaves? According to Latham<sup>31</sup> the development of a powerful internal marketing system which was able to channel slaves from the hinterlands to the coast originated from the Aro Long Juju.<sup>32</sup> Situated at Aro Chuku in Bende Division of what is now the East Central State, the oracle was used by the priests for judgments in matters of some disputes. Fees and fines were exacted in slaves believed to have been devoured by the oracle. The slaves were hidden and later sold. From those points they

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<sup>31</sup>Latham, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>32</sup>G. I. Jones. "Who Are the Aro?" Nigerian Field, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1939, pp. 100-103.



were taken to the slave markets and sold to dealers who delivered them to Calabar merchants. Where the Long Juju was not the origin, inter-tribal wars and raids provided victims--(war prisoners) for sale to the slave dealers in the hinterland.

When, however, slave trade was officially abolished by the Act of Westminster of 1807, it required the British naval patrols and forces to effect compliance. In most cases, as in Calabar, cash rewards were needed to persuade slave merchants to give up the trade. The sum of 2,000 Spanish dollars<sup>33</sup> was paid annually for five years to Calabar chiefs to persuade them to enter into a treaty in 1841 in order to put an end to the nefarious trade.

#### The Rise of Legitimate Trade

The vacuum created by the abolition of slave trade was filled by what came to be "legitimate" trade. Local exports of palm oil and kernel, monkeys, ivory, elephant tusks, camwood and other dyes as well as other commodities were exchanged for European textile cloths, spinets, and household furniture. Aye<sup>34</sup> even noted that some of the ships' captains exported yams to England--1,000 yams were sold to Captain Savage, 6,000 to Captain Hughes. But, of all the export goods, palm oil, according to Dike,<sup>35</sup> was the one factor in the trade expansion between Nigeria and Europe by the 1860s.

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<sup>33</sup>Latham, op. cit., p. 22, valued at £416 13s 4d per year.

<sup>34</sup>E. U. Aye, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup>Dike, Kenneth O., op. cit.

Palm Oil.--By the 1850s, Liverpool merchants were important oil traders in Old Calabar and Latham<sup>36</sup> holds that James Penny and Jonas Bold were the first Liverpool firms to trade in palm oil at Calabar and the Cross River area. The Calabar traders were the middlemen who controlled trade on the Cross River from the interior and cited as the go-between for the European traders on the one side and export producers of the interior on the other. Udo and Ogundana<sup>37</sup> noted that,

" . . .in the early days of shipping along the Nigerian Coast (that is beginning from the period of the slave trade) and indeed up to the end of the nineteenth century local kins like Peppel of Bonny, Jaja of Opobo and Eyo Honesty of Calabar held jurisdiction over the waters within their kingdoms. European vessels could only trade in such areas with the permission of the local overlord and even then the trade was confined to the coast towns."

The restrictions placed on the areas of trade of the European traders forced them to house their wares on board their boats anchored outside the wharf. The European merchants lived and slept on these floating warehouses later called the supercargoes.<sup>38</sup> For want of capital to handle the expanding trade, the Calabar middlemen could not cope with such demands. A system was then developed by the European traders by which the European traders trusted the local traders with a considerable amount of goods in exchange for an equivalent value of slaves or palm

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<sup>36</sup>Latham, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>37</sup>Udo, Reuben K. and Ogundana, B. "Factors Influencing the Fortunes of Ports in the Niger Delta," op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>38</sup>Dike, op. cit., pp. 88-89; Latham, op. cit., p. 58.

oil to be delivered by a specified date.<sup>39</sup> The goods in trust might consist of gunpowder, cloth, iron goods, utensils and alcohol in various forms.

Nair<sup>40</sup> noted that the profit made by the Calabar middlemen and the Europeans were "scandalously high." Europeans inflated prices and exaggerated the values of goods they handed to the Calabar middlemen. The Calabar middlemen, on the other hand, paid ridiculously low prices in the hinterland markets even though they sold the European wares at higher prices. Trade thus benefitted the European traders and the Calabar middlemen at the expense of the interior producer and consumer. These types of profits helped to promote the trade all the more.

Latham noted that in quantity terms, Old Calabar exported 700-800 tons of oil per annum in the last years of the legitimate slave trade.<sup>41</sup> From the calculations of Latham the contribution to the oil export through Calabar are sketched out in Table 3. At the same time, the West African total exports of oil are calculated by both Latham<sup>42</sup> and Ekundare<sup>43</sup> and are shown along in Table 3. Apparently some reliable records were kept for Calabar for most of the years which may be absent from the West African trading area. What is important, however, is

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<sup>39</sup>Kannen, K. Nair. Politics and Society in South Eastern Nigeria 1941-1906, Frank Cass, London, 1972, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup>Op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., pp. 65-66.

<sup>42</sup>Op. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Op. cit., p. 51.

that the Cross River continued to be a large trading area both in the slave trade as well as in the palm oil trading days.

Table 3. Exports of Palm Oil to United Kingdom (Selected Years).

Year	From West Africa <sup>a</sup> (cwt)	From West Africa <sup>b</sup> (tons)	From Old Calabar <sup>c</sup> (tons)
1821	n.a.	5,124	2,000
1828	n.a.	6,328	2,000
1833	266,990	13,345	5,000
1847	469,348	23,467	5,217
1848	499,719	24,986	4,634
1849	475,364	23,768	2,782
1850	434,450	21,722	4,260
1851	n.a.	29,224	2,838
1855	n.a.	n.a.	4,090
1864	n.a.	n.a.	4,500
1871	n.a.	n.a.	6,000
1875	n.a.	n.a.	5,085
1883	n.a.	n.a.	7,365
1887	n.a.	n.a.	7,000

<sup>a</sup>Ekundare

<sup>b</sup>Latham

<sup>c</sup>Latham

The strategic position of the port of Calabar and the Cross River waterway in these trades cannot be overemphasized. Not only did the waterway make traffic easier, but large inland markets--Oku Iboku, Itu, Umon, Afikpo, Itighidi, Obubra, Ikom, Nsofang and Mamfe up the Cross River made the collection and delivering of both internal trade

commodities as well as export and import articles possible. Without this waterway in the era when there were no motor roads or rail systems, such elaborate trade systems would have been almost impossible.

### Colonial Trade

European trade in the Cross River and, indeed, throughout West Africa, was characterized by international competition and excessive rivalries. The British government's interest in the trade is revealed by the complaints made by their nationals against the Portuguese, the French and the Dutch. Most of the British firms were chartered to carry out such trade and British protection was always available in case of need. The suppression of slave trade exercises led to consular appointments to supervise the areas and make them safe for legitimate trade. One of such appointed for the Bight of Biafra was stationed at Fernando Po. When the treaties of friendships signed with different coastal chiefs degenerated into treaties of protection, the coastal areas became protectorate of the British Crown.<sup>44</sup>

By 1899 British government withdrew the charter granted to the Royal Niger Company to administer and trade in Northern Nigeria since 1886. By proclaiming Northern Nigeria a protectorate in 1900, formal British rule was instituted. The Oil Rivers and Lagos were unified in 1906 as the colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. The complete unification of both North and South into a single nation of Nigeria was accomplished in 1914. Some developments in transportation included the institution

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<sup>44</sup> Sir Alan Burns, History of Nigeria.

of government marine services in 1905 for Cross River where three motor launches were used in the services. Railroads were built between Enugu and Port Harcourt between 1913 and 1920. Government withdrew from most of the inland water marine services and "transferred to Elder Dempster Lines the services on the Cross River between Itu and Ikom. These services were used by the company during high water, but the government retained control during the low water season."<sup>45</sup>

In terms of commercial activities, most British firms established at Calabar and maintained trading depots on the main inland markets up the Cross River between 1885 and 1940. As Latham noted, the "establishment of European trading stations at the main stations" up the Cross River tended to weaken the position of the Calabar middlemen. On the other hand, it enhanced the production and wealth of the people up the Cross River areas. Initially European traders were not allowed to build on Calabar soil. But after the constitution of the Mission Station at Calabar, traders established their factors on the waterfront of Calabar. Such names as "Matilda," "Southsea," "Ivy," and "Millerio" are reminders of those hulks on the river.<sup>46</sup>

The erection of the Consulate and government departments--the Police, Judiciary and Administration--around the turn of the last century helped most foreign firms to establish on Calabar soil as well as on the inland markets on the Cross River. Nair<sup>47</sup> noted that even

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<sup>45</sup>Ekundare, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>46</sup>Aye, E. U., op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

with the absence of specific figures on the Cross River trade, the general trend of the national trade and that of the Oil Rivers in 1880s and 1890s went together. Indeed, H. H. Johnston who went to Calabar about 1886 noted that,

"Old Calabar in those times was sufficiently prosperous and the firms trading there sufficiently enlightened not only to maintain for their employees well built, bright, well furnished, but to support a first class doctor, who rose in time to be Principal Medical Officer of the Protectorate."<sup>48</sup>

At this point in time, the British government's policy was directed at stopping the French and German expansion into their trading areas. Where peaceful penetrations were not possible due to native resistance, punitive expeditions were conducted to extend British trading interests.<sup>49</sup> To protect the trade, military posts were established at Unwana, Obubra, Obukun, Ediba and Aro Chuku in Bende Division. The Calabar monopoly of the Cross River trade was reduced by the introduction of silver coins, the regular shipping up and down the Cross River, the entry of new competitors on the area trade and the introduction of stated prices on commodities. These advantages led the European firms to establish upstream.

The firms of George Miller Brothers, G. B. Ollivant, the African Association, etc. built up trading stations at Oku Iboku, Itu, Umon,

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<sup>48</sup>Quoted in Nair, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>49</sup>Nair, op. cit., note the Aro Expedition of 1901-1902 as examples.

Ediba, Obubra, Ikom and Mamfe. Traffic on the Cross River continued to be of interest to both the United Africa Company and John Holt whose trading depots maintained the buying of export crops into the early 1950s. Apart from the British, the French and Levantine firms traded on the Cross River and made the waterway a very busy route indeed.

Despite the opening of the Port Harcourt-Enugu railroad in 1916, trade on the Cross River to Calabar port continued to be significant. For example, ocean shipping between 1912 and 1933 showed the following distributions in respect of export tons (Table 4). Calabar, Burutu and, to an extent, Degema were the only ports which showed consistent growth over those years. And, since Calabar export trade depended on the Cross River route for all its external export commodities, the Cross River trade must have been important. Notice should be taken again that the difference by 1932 and 1933 between what Port Harcourt and Calabar handled respectively showed very slight difference inspite of the heavy dependence by design of Port Harcourt on the Northern Nigeria produce.

Table 4. Total Tonnage Handled at Various Selected Nigerian Ports (000).

Year	Sapele	Koko	Warri	Burutu	PH	Calabar	Degema
1912	22	40	61	117	---	89	22
1913	25	46	48	137	---	86	27
1914	20	31	45	135	---	73	25
1932	45	29	70	141	129	103	48
1933	33	21	65	170	111	108	50

Source: Trade Statistical Abstract, Lagos, Nigeria.



Thus, the Cross River waterway not only helped to unify the spatially far flung areas around the Cross River, it also made the transportation of bulky export produce possible.<sup>50</sup> This makes for a cheaper mode of transportation and given technological advantages of barges and lighterage services, it became possible for the agricultural products of the hinterlands of the Cross River area to enter internal and international trade at a time when roads and rails were not available.

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<sup>50</sup>For details of the economic advantages of inland waterways see Don Edward Bierman. "The Function of the Oder River as an Artery of Transportation," Ph. D. Thesis, Michigan State University, 1970.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE DECLINE OF THE CROSS RIVER AS A MAJOR COMMERCIAL HIGHWAY

For purposes of definition, the decline of the Cross River commercial route must be distinguished from the decline of the commercial role of the Calabar middlemen.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, such a decline in the commercial importance of the Cross River waterway must be linked with the international trade importance of the port of Calabar for, as history has shown, the glories of the Cross River trade route have been always linked with the importance of Calabar port. This situation may be linked to the economic fortunes of the Cross River basin and its environs, since increased activities of the Cross River basin may, for certain reasons, make the river waterway important.

The accounts of the decline in the commercial importance of Calabar by most history writers have focused on the loss of trade by Calabar middlemen. During the slave trade and the introduction of legitimate trade period Calabar traders acted as middlemen between European traders on the coast and producers and consumers in the

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<sup>51</sup>Most writers about Calabar trade deal with the middlemen functions of the Calabar people and their eventual decline. See Aye, Dike, Latham and Nair on this matter.

hinterlands. Nair<sup>52</sup> offered six reasons for the decline of that middlemen role of Calabar traders. Aye<sup>53</sup> while acknowledging these factors tended to blame the ruin of Calabar on such forces as exodus of Calabar teachers elsewhere, witchcraft and other social qualities of the Calabar people. Indeed, he is one of those who blame the ruins of Calabar on political factors.

The decline of Calabar middlemen functions in local and international trade ought not imply the ruin of Calabar as a seaport. Aye<sup>54</sup> rightly disagrees with the view that the decline of Calabar port is due to its locational isolation. It was the "geographic position with its overseas gateway that made it once commercially important."<sup>55</sup> It is meanwhile difficult to believe that the earlier locational advantage had diminished over time.

Observers had agreed that Calabar seaport and the Cross River waterway had declined. Latham,<sup>56</sup> Nair,<sup>57</sup> and Aye,<sup>58</sup> among others, noted

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<sup>52</sup>Kannan K. Nair, op. cit., pp. 252-256. The reasons included the introduction of silver coins to replace barter system, the opening of hinterland to European traders, the introduction of barge service up the Cross River by European trading firms, the licensing system which later restricted Calabar traders to Calabar market and the hostilities of German government at the Cameroon borders are among the factors.

<sup>53</sup>Aye, E. U., op. cit.

<sup>54</sup>Aye, E. U., op. cit.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Latham, op. cit.

<sup>57</sup>Nair, K.K., op. cit.

<sup>58</sup>Aye, E. U., op. cit.

the commercial and political decadence of this port city and the waterway it commands. Latham noted that "only a brief outline of the decline in Old Calabar's importance can be indicated."<sup>59</sup> Aye fully describes the plight of the old city under the caption of "Bleak Days" and the picture so painted is sorrowful. It only remains here to sketch out some stages by which this waterway and its terminal port declined.

Latham noted briefly that,

" . . .until 1900, Old Calabar was headquarters of the Niger Coast Protectorate, and then headquarters of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, which followed. Renamed Calabar in 1904, its future as an administrative center was ruined by the amalgamation of Southern Nigeria and Lagos in 1906--the latter becoming the new seat of government."<sup>60</sup>

Nair stated that the most important factor with long term consequences was the transport and communications factor.<sup>61</sup> A tussel had developed within the colonial government's decision process as to the possibility of connecting the port of Calabar with the hinterlands by roads and rail transport system. The railway line decision was the one big factor leading to the neglect of Calabar. At this point it was decided to connect the rail line from the Enugu coal mines to Port Harcourt rather than to Calabar. Why was the decision so made and on what principles?

As Nair<sup>62</sup> noted, "Calabar harbor was still superior to most others at the beginning of the present century" and was described as the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>61</sup> Nair, op. cit., p. 255.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

"finest port on the Bight of Biafra until the Lagos Bar was removed."

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Nigeria<sup>63</sup> in his report, noted of Calabar port,

" . . .the approach to the river has no definite bar, but a series of flats with a least depth in the seaward channel of 18 feet."

The same report noted also that,

" . . .at one time the seat of the Government of Southern Nigeria, Calabar has since lost much of its importance as a center of the administration, though it still retains all its activity from a commercial point of view."<sup>64</sup>

It was the same report which stated that "in 1907, when dredging operations were first started (in respect of Lagos port) the draught limit for the port was 9 feet: today it is 21 feet while the depth of water on the bar is 24 feet L.W.O.S.T."<sup>65</sup> This clearly showed the comparative superiority of Calabar over Lagos as a port. Even when Port Harcourt is compared, the same report noted that Calabar has a channel width of 4 miles below the port, but about half a mile at the port area, whereas Port Harcourt had a channel width of 500-800 feet.

Quite a number of geographers have made it appear that the choice of Port Harcourt was because of its deep water berthing and its connection

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<sup>63</sup>The Nigeria Handbook, Government Printer, Lagos, 1924, p. 75.

<sup>64</sup>The Nigeria Handbook, 1923, op. cit.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

with the heavily populated areas of the East Central State. Apparently, however, nobody has had time to examine the dredging problems of the 41 mile channel between Port Harcourt and the sea. It is, however, on record that while Port Harcourt channel had been kept open with continuous costly dredging, Calabar channel had never once been dredged.<sup>66</sup> This must be why Nair noted on the decision to abandon Calabar that "it could not have been Calabar as a port which discouraged the railway builders."<sup>67</sup>

It was Aye, himself a Calabar man, who remarked that "Old Calabar unlike Port Harcourt which was a European built town, was purely of native origin."<sup>68</sup> Port Harcourt, which was the chosen town, was built with equipment transported from England to the Port of Calabar and moved along the Cross River through Itu, Ikot Ekpene and Aba to the town site. Cross River peoples--Efiks, Ibibios and the Anangs were conscripted to carry the iron bars on their heads on foot to Port Harcourt from Itu on the Cross River.<sup>69</sup> Evidently because of the pains taken by Mr. Harcourt in constructing the new town, the British government was willing to reward his labor with port and railroad development no matter what the cost turned out to be.

The decline of Calabar port and hence the Cross River waterway is sketched by Aye<sup>70</sup> thus:

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<sup>66</sup>Nigerian Ports Authority Annual Reports 1959-60 and 1969-70 and Inland Waterways Hydrographic Reports.

<sup>67</sup>Op cit, p. 260.

<sup>68</sup>Op cit, p. 129.

<sup>69</sup>Recounted by some of the chiefs and elders in Itu and Uyo Division.

<sup>70</sup>Aye, op. cit.

"The thirties of this century may be described as a period of stagnation, but not of general retrogression. By the late forties Calabar had entered on a period more critical than any since the disaster of the thirties and although it emerged from its ordeal, it was henceforth quite definitely on the down grade."

This means that Calabar started its decline after the First World War and the period 1920-1939 marked the period of stagnation. For at that time, road construction was undertaken to such an extent that, as Nair remarked,

". . .the trade that came from the district at the back of the Enyong Creek near the new station of Ikot Ekpene did not, as it should have done,<sup>71</sup> come to Calabar but went down to Eket, Egwanga and Bonny. In fact, this factor was to make Ibibio land look outwards to Ikot Ekpene, Aba and Onitsha as cultural and commercial centers."<sup>72</sup>

The stagnation of Calabar port for trade purposes at this period was more a function of all efforts to divert this unusual river traffic to the newly created port at Port Harcourt. There was little to distinguish the port traffic of Calabar from Port Harcourt at this time even though Calabar carried the bulk of the South Eastern trade traffic before 1920-39.

The diversion at this time tended to place the traffic on the Cross River and Calabar at a stable level. This is because, despite the diversion of traffic to Port Harcourt, stations on the Cross River ports

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<sup>71</sup>Ikot Ekpene is 21 miles by road from Itu and 71 miles from Calabar while it is over 100 miles from Bonny.

<sup>72</sup>Nair, op. cit., p. 260.





were still maintained and what was left naturally went to Calabar.

Over the years this level of traffic continued to move to Calabar via the Cross River with little or no real variations (Table 5).

Table 5. Port Traffic in the 1930s (Selected Years and Ports) (000 tons).

Year	Lagos	Sapele	Warri	Burutu	Calabar	PH
1932	484	45	70	141	103	129
1933	448	33	65	170	108	111

Source: Nigeria Trade Abstracts

Even though traffic on Port Harcourt and Calabar did not vary substantially due to each port maintaining control of its immediate hinterland traffic, Port Harcourt controlled exports and imports from the Northern States as well as the Onitsha and Owerri provinces and the Rivers area. Calabar thus continued as the natural outlet for the export products of and imports for the Cross River basin. Naturally those areas appeared to have been their natural zones of transport control (see Figure 1).

The war years between 1940-1945 and the immediate post war period were to bring to Calabar more problems. This is the critical period in which Aye describes the long downward move of the Cross River and Calabar ports' commercial life. In particular the early 1950s saw the increasing Nigerian responsibility running the affairs of the country. Prior to 1950 the Legislative Council depended on not elected but appointed representatives of major communities for governmental purposes. In 1951, the Nigerian Constitution had adopted the adult suffrage and

party politics. Seats to the National Parliament no more depended on selected communities but on the representation of all peoples of the nation. The definite control of the different arms of government by Nigerians on the basis of parties and interest created difficulties for areas where differences of opinions existed.

As a result of the creation of the autonomous Nigerian Ports Authority in 1954 to take care of Lagos and Port Harcourt, other ports were seriously neglected. At the same time, four Commodity Marketing Boards (Cocoa, Palm Produce, Groundnuts and Cotton) were created, but were later replaced by "all purpose" Regional Marketing Boards in 1954.<sup>73</sup> These boards were empowered to control the purchase, storage, evacuation to ports, shipment and disposal in the world markets of the regions controlled produce. The Regional boards decided the producer prices for different stations and types of produce in the region. The boards also advised their buying agents by which transport channels the produce was to be transported and to which port outlets it was to be delivered. Udo and Ogundana<sup>74</sup> admit that these marketing boards maintained a policy "to channel most of the traffic to the ports of Lagos and Port Harcourt which are the best equipped" by the Ports Authority which decided to neglect other ports.

Calabar port and, indeed, the Cross River waterway lost most of its natural traffic by this device which had nothing to consider about distances and costs from production centers to the sea. So, what

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<sup>73</sup>R. K. Udo and B. Ogundana. op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

natural traffic was left in the 1930s and 1940s did not substantially increase due to the new political actions of the new marketing boards of the 1950s (Table 6). Even before the takeover of such produce buying and shipment by the Regional Marketing Boards, the British firms--the United Africa Company and John Holt which dealt in these produce marketing controlled the transportation routes for these produce. The United Africa Company owned the port of Burutu and the installations while John Holt owned Warri. These companies directed their agents to their ports only and even influenced the import hinterland by controlling the distribution of the foreign imported goods for their customers.

Table 6. Shipments by Various Ports (Selected Years) (000 Tons).

Year	Lagos	Sapele	Warri	Burutu	Calabar	PH	Dagema
1942	1,273	71	63	144	110	380	63
1943	1,252	79	56	140	114	376	27
1952	1,727	162	52	103	148	507	74
1953	1,763	249	66	110	171	683	83

Source: Nigerian Trade Statistical Abstract.

Based on these factors, the trade on the Cross River and the port of Calabar did not grow as it should, but continued to weaken in the commercial importance. Thus, Weigand<sup>75</sup> must be right when he concluded that "human factors predominate in port geography," since ports have

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<sup>75</sup>Weigand, G. G. "Some Elements in the Study of Port Geography," Geographical Review, Vol. 48, 1958, p. 194.

been founded and have evolved despite physical obstacles when economic and political expediency were of overriding importance. Little wonder that the Nigerian government is prepared to maintain Lagos and Port Harcourt and neglect Calabar despite the high costs of doing so.

Between 1955 and 1967 (the latter year marking the outbreak of the Civil War in Nigeria) the Cross River ports and Calabar faced complete decline commercially. The effects of the takeover of export produce marketing by Regional Marketing Boards forced large companies to withdraw from retail trade altogether. In particular, when the Marketing Boards secured the legal rights to appoint licensed buying agents, they refused to appoint these firms which themselves saw opportunities for less profit levels than they had enjoyed before. On this score the major firms found Calabar no more a profitable place to operate and ceased operations. Their trading stations at Cross River stations like Oku Iboku, Itu, Umon, Ediba, Apiapum, Obubra, Ikom and Mamfe were closed down. The United Africa Company moved its Eastern headquarters off Calabar and John Holt, Kings-Way and a host of other firms followed.

It was at this time that the government of the Eastern Region embarked on road transportation development. The Premier<sup>76</sup> had in 1955 just returned from economic missions overseas. What followed was a government sponsored series of developments in agriculture, industry, education and transportation.<sup>77</sup> The pattern of development was such

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<sup>76</sup> Azikiwe Nnamdi and Ojukwu, L. P. (later Sir Odumegwu, footnote 76). Economic Mission to Europe and America, Government Printer (1955) Enugu.

<sup>77</sup> Eastern Nigeria Development Programme, Government Printer, Enugu, 1955-60 and 1962-68.

that the areas close to the Cross River and Old Ogoja and Calabar provinces received little or no major shares. For example, the Cross River basin was devoted to the position of raw material and agricultural zone (see Table A.1 in the Appendix). Road development was such that they ran East-West across the Cross River rather than North-South to Calabar. By 1964, not a single industry was sited at the Old Ogoja and Calabar provinces. Health and educational amenities were rather concentrated elsewhere than in this Cross River basin.

What followed was the exodus of commercial firms. With this came economic depression. This is the period which Aye has described as "Bleak Days" in his book. Because of reduced commercial activities (Table A.4) unemployment set in. Poverty gripped the people and the inevitable resort was migration to Aba, Port Harcourt, Umuahia, Enugu and other ports of Nigeria. That area bordering the Cross River took on the look of a ghost land. Except the numerous plantations and estates developed in the available open lands (Tables A.2 and A.3a and A.3b) the area fell completely out of the economic wheel. The whole area became the producer of raw materials and food for the industries and cities located outside the Cross River area.

To ensure that the water way would not be of any commercial significance, the major roads linking these places of plantations and estates ran east-west, thus isolating the Cross River waterway and its ocean port, Calabar, more and more. All these roads never crossed the Cross River by solid bridges, but by pontoons. Ikom, Ogoja and Obudu were connected to Abakaliki and Enugu. Ediba and Itigidi were connected by pontoon to Afikpo and Abakaliki to link Enugu or Umuahia. The Western Calabar district was linked by a pontoon road to Ikot-Okpura,

Arochuku and Umuahia. No efforts were made to link Itu to Calabar, nor was it deemed necessary to link Calabar with roads to Ikom, Obubra, Umon and even Ediba. Even when it was found to be shorter to transport produce via Calabar it still became necessary to ensure their shipment at Port Harcourt.

The overall efforts of all these were to depress the area, cause out-migration of its people, retard progress and reduce the area to one of ghost estates. Except for the numerous plantations which employed more people from outside the Cross River basin area than the natives of the area,<sup>77</sup> nothing of any economic importance in terms of modern industrialization, health and education, transportation catering for the general well-being of the people were done for the area. Thus what started out in 1905 as mere choice of another seaport by the government apparently turned out to set the path for economic neglect and general depression of the Cross River commerce and industry by successive governments.

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<sup>77</sup> ENDC Progress Report, 1955-63.

## CHAPTER IV

### FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMMERCIAL DECLINE OF THE CROSS RIVER WATERWAY

In the previous chapters of this study, the historical developments in the rise and decline of the Cross River waterway had been traced. The climax was reached during the decade preceding the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70. During that period, both the Cross River inland ports, trading stations and the ocean terminal port of Calabar had become ghost areas. In this chapter efforts will be made to understand the real factors--economic, geographical, political and social--which caused the ruin of the area. A number of hypotheses will be tested and some literature opinions examined here.

The first hypothesis is that the advantages--locational, site and physical characteristics as well as proximity to the rich productive hinterlands which hitherto made the Cross River commercially important are no more prevailing and hence the decline of the waterway and the area.<sup>78</sup>

The Cross River waterway became prominent in internal and international commerce because of its locational advantages--proximity to rich hinterlands, all season ocean port, physical characteristics conducive to transportation development and the attitude to economic activities of

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<sup>78</sup>See Hypotheses--Chapter I.

its diverse peoples. Most writers have tended to blame the decline of this region only on the rise of Port Harcourt as a seaport and a railway terminal.<sup>79</sup> This claim can be partly refuted from two major grounds. Firstly, the sources of traffic on the Cross River to Calabar differ from the source of traffic to Port Harcourt on the Bonny seaway. Secondly, this refutation can be best tested by considering the natural physical advantages of both areas.

Writing on "port location and port spatial competition" of most Nigerian ports, Ogundana<sup>80</sup> noted the potential area of influence of Calabar port to be significantly different from that of Port Harcourt (see Figure 5). The distance advantage of the Cross River and Calabar port from Port Harcourt is such that the Cross River could naturally have continued to draw its traffic from its area of influence without hinderance from Port Harcourt, rail line or no rail lines. In fact, Ogundana noted:<sup>81</sup>

"In eastern Nigeria, it is found that as much of the area is nearer to Calabar as to Port Harcourt. If each unit area had a given constant traffic potential, the possible traffic generation of Calabar's proximal area would thus be as large as that of Port Harcourt."

Even when the concentric circles of the diagram are taken as the guide, Calabar still has a superior sphere of influence than Port Harcourt.

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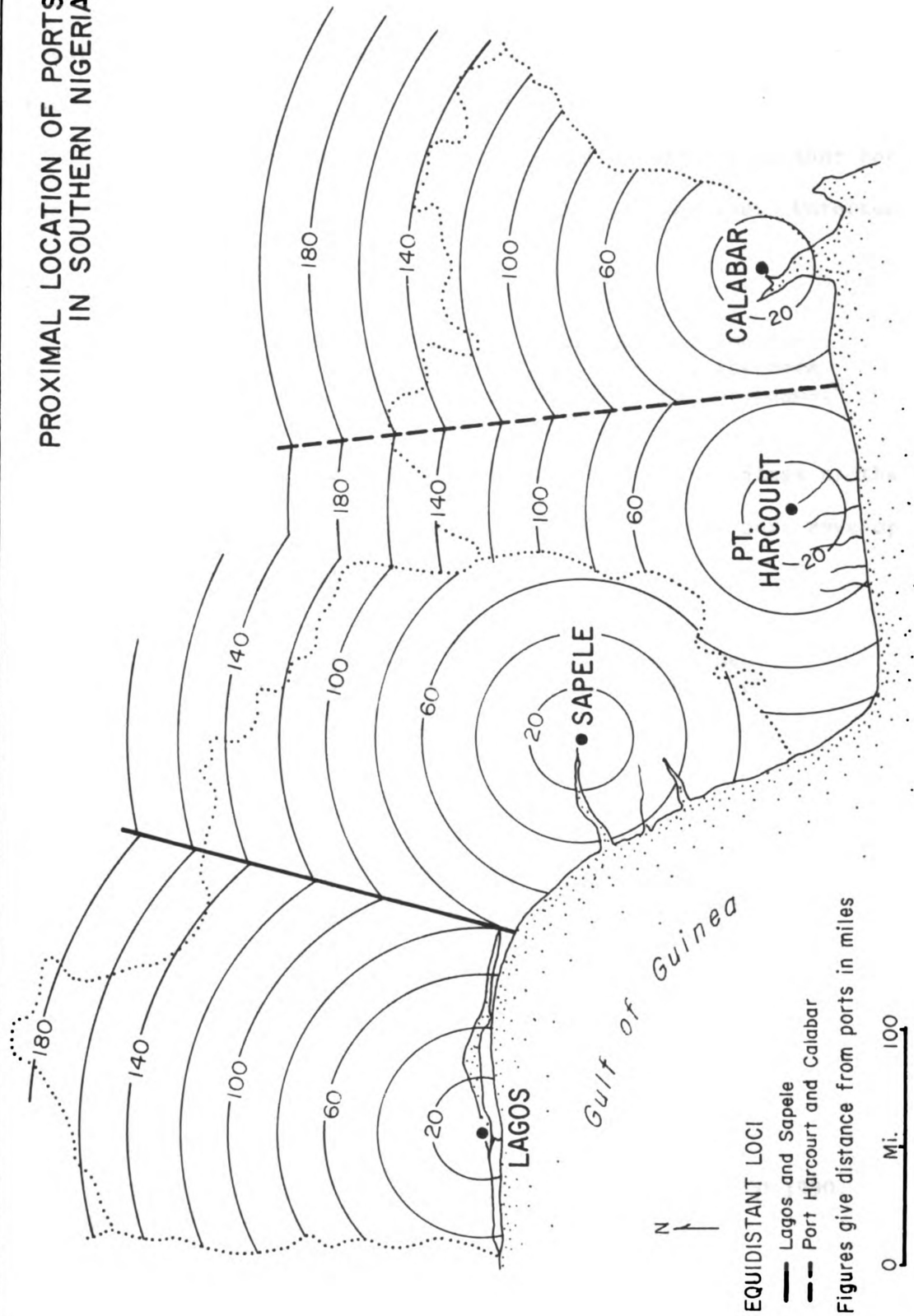
<sup>79</sup> Aye (1967), Nair (1972), Latham (1973), Ogundana (1966).

<sup>80</sup> "The Location Factor in Changing Seaport Significance in Nigeria," Nigerian Geographical Journal, 1966.

<sup>81</sup> Ogundana, op. cit.



# PROXIMAL LOCATION OF PORTS IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA



Indeed, Port Harcourt was intended for services to the Northern States and parts of the East Central State. Calabar port and the Cross River serve the natural areas of the Cross River basin.

The question is, have the locational advantages of Calabar port diminished over the years? The answer is in the negative. Unfortunately, Ogundana noted:<sup>82</sup>

"In relation to northern Nigeria, if Calabar is considered as a possible outlet for northern Nigeria, its area of distance advantage is much smaller than that of Lagos."

This type of statement does not agree with the findings of the Netherlands Engineering Consultants, appointed to study port developments in Nigeria, which concluded that:

"The extension to the North of Calabar's hinterland (which is only served by road) would appear to be a most logical development."<sup>83</sup>

It also added that:

"For Makurdi and all Northern regions, the Makurdi-Calabar line provides a reduction in railway distance to the sea of 25.5 miles compared with Port Harcourt. For Kaduna and the areas to the North of it, the planned lines also result in a shorter railway distance of 17.5 miles compared with Lagos."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Ogundana, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>83</sup>NEDECO, Developments of the Ports of Nigeria, 1970-1990, The Hague, 1971, p. 57.

<sup>84</sup>Loc. cit., p. 58.

Evidently, the problem is not a function of the locational disadvantages of Calabar port or the Cross River waterway. Rather it is a function of the port continuing to "function in its natural situation without technological improvement"<sup>85</sup> when its "competitors were selected as foci of transport improvements in Southern Nigeria."<sup>86</sup> Since fortunes of the Cross River are inextricably bound with Calabar, the fall of one must be the fall of the other. In the context of this study, the locational advantage of the area is not impaired by time or space whatsoever.

Another advantage of the Cross River and its ocean terminal port was its proximity to rich hinterlands. The major question here is whether these proximities to rich hinterlands advantages had diminished over time. The main occupations of the Cross River basin and environs had been mostly production of agricultural and forest products. Except for the 17th-19th century slave trade, the popular trade commodities of the area had been agricultural products. Palm oil, and kernels, rubber, timber, cocoa and piassava had always been sold to European traders. Have these been reduced in quantity over time? The current information does not seem to indicate that.

Initially, these products came from wild and uncultivated plantations. Over time, both private individuals and firms, as well as governments, have opened up plantations of cocoa, oil palms, rubber and also increased forest reserves (see Tables A.1, A.2, A.3a and A.3b). No less than a total of 3,000,000 acres had been devoted to plantation

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<sup>85</sup>Ogundana, op. cit.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

agriculture on cash crops in the Cross River area.<sup>87</sup> The greatest portion of these were owned and operated by the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation--a government owned institution. Under the tree crop rehabilitation scheme,<sup>88</sup> farmers were able to replace the wild trees--oil palms, rubber, cocoa, etc. with cultivated species given by the government and planted with government supplies and technical advice. More forest reserves were expanded throughout the Cross River area.

On the basis of the above developments, production was increased several times over in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, the former Eastern Nigeria was responsible for about 85 percent of all exported palm oil and about 46 percent of all exported palm kernels of Nigeria per year (Tables A.5 and A.6) between 1954/55 and 1960/61. The same increasing trend is noted for cocoa, rubber and timber. Of these regional volumes, some 90 percent of timber, 60 percent of palm oil and kernels and over 45 percent of all cocoa came from the Old Calabar and Ogoja provinces.<sup>89</sup> But when the export by seaport route is examined, nearly all were routed through Port Harcourt, at greater costs than could have been possible via Cross River waterway and Calabar port. Evidently, Ogundana was right when he remarked:

"Besides the conditions of connecting transport, various institutional factors influence the routing of commodities and affect the choice of competing outlets. The Nigerian marketing boards and the large commercial firms, which

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<sup>87</sup> Ministry of Information, Statistical Division, Enugu.

<sup>88</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Enugu, 1962/63 Annual Report.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

control a large proportion of the export and import commodities, respectively, influence the routing of these commodities."<sup>90</sup>

To the question whether the proximity of the Cross River waterway to the rich hinterlands have changed, the answer is in the negative. In fact, if anything, production of the commodities on which the trade depends had increased over time. Thus the issue is not changing economic conditions of the surrounding areas to the riverway but the directives which control the routing of these commodities to ports outside their natural routing system.

Another major question here is whether the site and physical characteristics of the Cross River waterway have worsened over the years. By itself the distance in time between 1900 and 1960 is substantial. But when the Cross River waterway is compared with other waterways, there must be a lot of difference. For with increased use of land at the Upper Course of the Cross River, natural agents as is the case in other rivers, have increased the deposition and building of sand bars. The waterway, like other rivers, would have been kept constantly open by dredging where it tends to be too narrow and shallow. For example, dredging between Oku Iboku and Itu and Afikpo to Ediba where sand bars are becoming powerful would have improved the greater part of the waterway during the greater part of the year. Unfortunately, while these hydrographic surveys and channel maintenance are carried out on other rivers,<sup>91</sup> the Inland Waterways Departments had tended to neglect the Cross River altogether.

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<sup>90</sup>Ogundana, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>91</sup>Inland Waterways Department, Annual Reports, Lagos (Various issues).

At Calabar port, the oceanward approach had demonstrated some of the best features of low silting activities. By 1907 and even by 1923, the Nigeria Handbook<sup>92</sup> had reported of Calabar port that:

"The approach to the river has no definite bar, but a series of long flats with a least depth in the seaward channel of 18 feet. At the entrance the river is about 11 miles wide but gradually narrows as one approaches the Calabar Beach. Four miles below the limits of the port where the width is reduced to half a mile."

The report noted also that the least depth of water is found on nearing the anchorage off the town where on the Duke Town crossing one meets with 15 feet L.W.O.S.T. Note was also taken that the rise of water was 10 feet additional during spring and 8 feet at deep tide.

At the same time, the report<sup>93</sup> showed that by 1907, when dredging operations were first started at Lagos port, the draught limit for Lagos port was 9 feet. By 1923, it was 21 feet as a result of the dredging and the depth was 24 feet L.W.O.S.T. Dredging was required to make Lagos port servicable. The same process was needed for Port Harcourt to make for depths of between 12 feet and 20 feet L.W.O.S.T. So once again, it was not the natural factors but the man-made decisions which discriminated against the Cross River which led to the ruin of the area.

Thirteen years after the 1923 report, Lagos would boast of draught limit of 25 feet.<sup>94</sup> Port Harcourt could also be assured of 19 feet but

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<sup>92</sup>Published by the Chief Secretary of the Government, Lagos, p. 75.

<sup>93</sup>Nigeria Handbook (1923), p. 74.

<sup>94</sup>Nigeria Handbook, (1936).

Calabar had the least depth of 15 feet L.W.O.S.T. at the Duke Town crossing. Twenty six years later (1959)<sup>95</sup> Lagos and Port Harcourt, cared for by the government corporation--the Nigerian ports authority, improved their minimum depths. The Lagos channel depths were:

Commodore and Pool Channels	27 Feet M.L.W.O.S.T.
Apapa Channel	27 Feet M.L.W.O.S.T.
Customs Channel	26 Feet M.L.W.O.S.T.

Port Harcourt had 21 feet M.L.W.O.S.T. Calabar, not under the control and care of the Nigerian Ports authority had 13 feet M.L.W.O.S.T. at Duke Town crossing.

In 1970, some sixty three years after the start of dredging at Lagos and fifty-seven years after such operations at Port Harcourt, apart from provisions of extra shipping amenities, Calabar had a maximum recommended draught limit of 19 feet 6 inches of the channel and minimum depth of 12 feet on Duke Town Crossing.<sup>96</sup> At Lagos harbour the following channel depths were announced:

Harbour Entrances	30 Feet
Commodore and Pool No. 2 Channel	27 Feet
Apapa Channel	27 Feet
Customs Channel	26 Feet

In short, between 1907 and 1970, Calabar port's minimum depth had shrunk from the original 18 feet L.W.O.S.T. to 12 feet or what works out as about 1 inch every year. On the other hand, the least depth of water

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<sup>95</sup> Nigerian Ports Authority, Annual Report, 1958/59, Lagos.

<sup>96</sup> Nigerian Ports Authority, 1970.

in Lagos had expanded from 9 feet to 26 feet L.W.O.S.T. and for Port Harcourt from 12 feet to 19 feet M.L.W.O.S.T.<sup>97</sup>

When the amount of cubical capacity of dredging materials<sup>98</sup> removed from the water in respect of both Lagos and Port Harcourt are weighed against the absence of dredging in Calabar or Cross River channel, for that matter, one can easily see which of these ports have had superior site and physical characteristics. Indeed, the site and physical characteristics of the Cross River waterway and for Calabar port have not diminished significantly over the years. What has created the apparent superiority of Port Harcourt and Lagos over Calabar is the human decision factor.

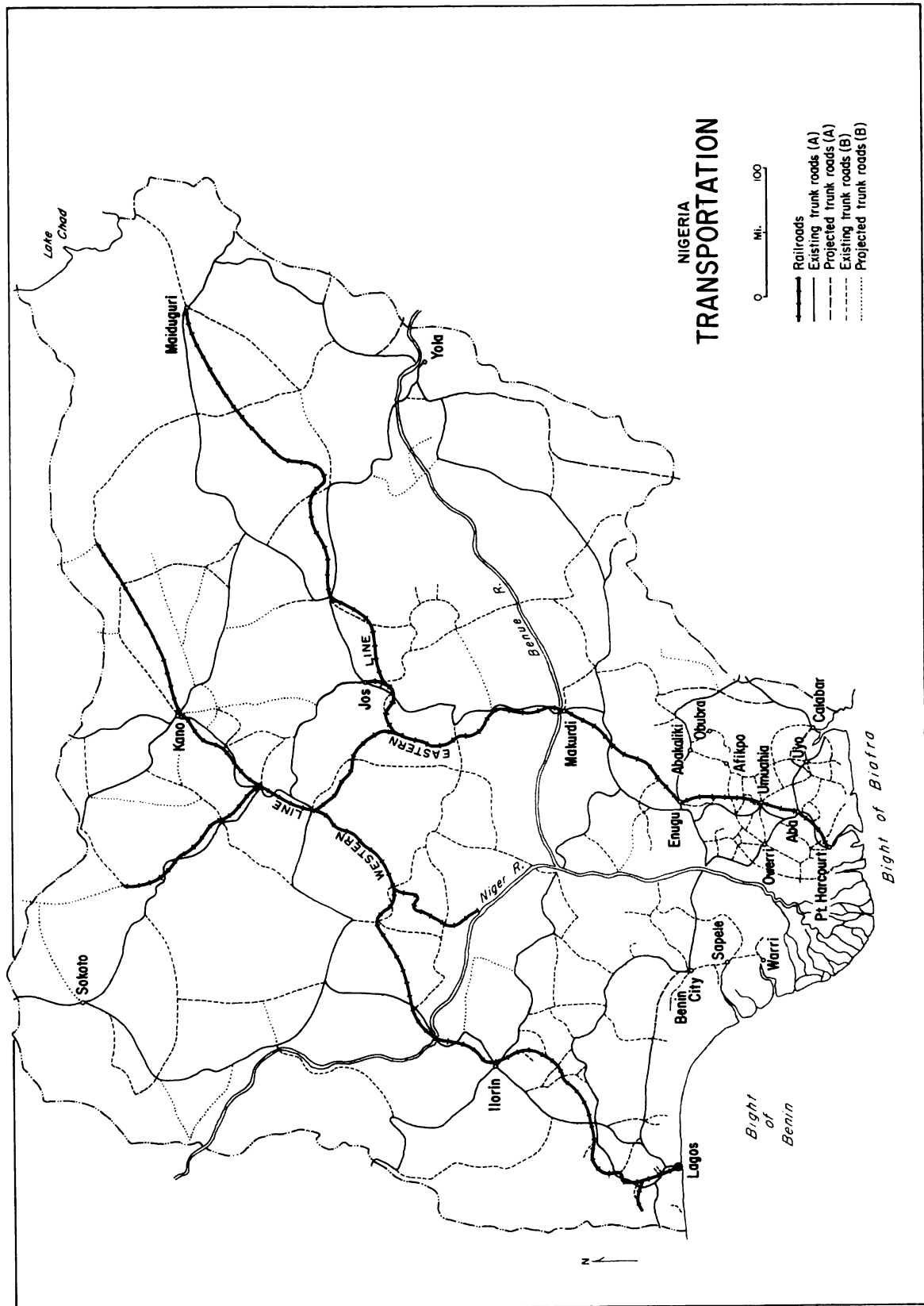
Another major aspect of the locational and pattern of inland network system is the development of transport. When the seasonal nature of transportation on the Cross River is accounted as a major disadvantage (when compared with other traffic alternatives) it is pertinent to see the land features of the Cross River basin in determining their suitability for development. Between 1957/58 and 1962/63, the government of the former Eastern Nigeria spent over N2 million yearly on road work (Table A.7). Of that much expenditure the mileage of roads distributed throughout the region showed a complete bias against the Old Calabar and Ogoja provinces (Table A.8).

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 1964.

<sup>98</sup> These capacities of dredging materials are reported in the Annual Reports of the Nigerian Ports Authority. No details of costs are, however, available. Some 1,433,600 cubic yards from Port Harcourt in 1963/64. None was dredged in Calabar.





The Cross River area had 13 percent of the region's tarred Trunk A road, 22 percent tarred Trunk B road, 100 percent of dirt roads (Trunk A Gravel) and nearly 40 percent of Trunk B's despite its relative smaller land area in the region (Table A.8). A careful examination showed that the only roads were directed to the plantations on the Cross River area and ran east-west to join the industrialized cities outside the Cross River area and with direct connections to Port Harcourt. Indeed, no efforts were made to run the roads north-south of the Cross River basin.<sup>99</sup> This raised the question of the topography of the Cross River Basin and its suitability for road development connecting Calabar. For many years nobody thought of this possibility. The important consideration appeared to have been roads needed to transport export products from the Cross River Basin to Port Harcourt. Crossing of the Cross River at Ikot Okpora to Aro-Chunku and Umuahia (some forty miles from Calabar to Ikot Okpora) made that transportation distance too long when Port Harcourt was the destination. The same is true of Itigidi, Obubra, and Ikom pontoon crossings.

It was not until the creation of the South Eastern State within the twelve-state structure of Nigeria that the north-south roads connecting Calabar port with the Cross River Basin was completed. As a result of these decision, the following roads are planned<sup>100</sup> and some are being built:

1. Ikom Calabar Road
2. Obubra Calabar Road

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<sup>99</sup>Eastern Nigeria Development Plans 1955-60 and 1962-68, Enugu.

<sup>100</sup>1970-74 Development Plan.

3. Itu        Calabar Road
4. Biase     Calabar Road
5. Ogoja     Ikom - Calabar Extension

Since most of these are within shorter distances from Calabar port than from Port Harcourt, all-the-year round transportation system may be expected to supplement the water transport which may be maintained for most part of the year.

According to the present government of South Eastern Nigeria, the Ministry of Information<sup>101</sup> reported that:

"The Government, aware of the state's transport and commercial problems, launched the South Eastern State Coastal Transport Company (SESCOT) later renamed Cross River Lines Limited, to counter these problems."

Under this scheme a fleet of boats was acquired by that company to supplement the efforts of Elder Dempster Agencies in Calabar and the major towns in the Northern Divisions are now served by SESCOT buses. Why were these developments possible? The answer is because there was a government based at Calabar which understood the needs of the area. No physical impediments were possible to overcome the desire to serve the area.

Another side of the possible change of inherent advantages which helped the early development of the area was the attitude of the Cross River people and their neighbour towards economic activities and the profit motive. In those periods, the peoples of the area were as eager as ever before to pursue economic gains. They farmed more

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<sup>101</sup>This is Nigeria's South East. Calabar, 1972, p. 49.

and produced more export crops though they seemed to receive less for their labour (Table A.9). By 1960, the farmers of the Cross River area were exporting their food stuffs to the Cameroons and Fernando Po where prices were better. The government of the former Eastern Nigeria complained that such action was bound to increase the price of food in the region and banned such export of food. Rather the farmers were asked to produce more despite falling incomes. Indeed, they were to produce more cheap food for the industrial workers of the other areas of the region. When the incomes were not worth the labour, most of them, especially the school leavers, migrated to the urban industrial towns, like Onitsha, Aba, Enugu, and Port Harcourt.

At this period, too, most if not all, of the industries were located outside the Cross River region (see Table A.10). It is believed it took foreign investors much time to convince the government of the former Eastern Nigeria of the necessity to locate industries in the Cross River area. The present Calabar Cement Company at Calabar and the Calabar Veneer and Plywood Factory were established in 1964 and 1965, respectively, after much pressure from the foreign investors and only because the industries were material-oriented.<sup>102</sup> Despite these problems, employees were mostly from outside the Cross River area by deliberate government quota policy.

Thus to the question raised in the hypothesis whether the decline of the Cross River waterway was due to the absence of those geographic and locational advantages which hitherto helped that area to rise into

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<sup>102</sup> Ministry of Information, South Eastern State, Calabar, 1972.

commercial prominence, the answer is that the hypothesis is not proved true. In terms of port and waterway location in close proximity to rich hinterlands, in terms of physical characteristics of the waterway, the chances of developing good land transport and the attitude of the peoples of the area to economically gainful activities, nothing had naturally changed. The problems were imposed on the area by forces not internal to their system. And most of these impositions were not economical when alternative costs of using the Cross River waterway and area are compared.

The next hypothesis is that the major problem of the Cross River area--the economic and social decline of the waterway and the ocean port--were mainly due to political factors than geographic and normal economic circumstances.

Latham writing of Calabar and its depressed state stated:

"During the forties and fifties, Calabar remained a back-water, and the political wranglings of the post-independence era of the sixties only made matters worse. Because Calabar chose to back the Action Group<sup>103</sup> rather than the N.C.N.C.<sup>104</sup> she was largely excluded from the latter's economic policy."<sup>105</sup>

Aye went at length to recreate the story of the agitation of the people of the Cross River area for a separate state of their own within the

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<sup>103</sup> Political Party then in control of Western Nigeria.

<sup>104</sup> National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons later National Council of Nigerian Citizens when Western Cameroons joined Southern Cameroon to form one nation instead of being in Nigeria. That party controlled the Eastern Nigerian government.

<sup>105</sup> Latham, op. cit., p. 150.

Federation of Nigeria. This was to be carved out of the former Eastern Nigeria. According to Aye, the decline of Calabar was partly political because "it supported the Action Group Party in 1957 and when the N.C. N.C. was finally the governing party its development had to be ignored."<sup>106</sup> His story of the separate state--the Calabar-Ogoja-River State--agitation is sufficiently detailed.<sup>107</sup> It appears that with the declaration of Independence in 1960, things were bound to be worse for the minority areas.

Aye gave the graphic impression of what took place thus:

"The first five years of independence confirmed the fears of the minorities and Calabar suffered greatly; this had its supreme expression when the firms closed down without any economic substitutes, with the consequent unemployment and the speeding up of immigration of substantial number of the citizens."<sup>108</sup>

What Aye summed up above for the port city of Calabar was equally true for all of the Cross River area. Itu, Oku Iboku, Umon, Obubra, and even Ikom--river ports and trading stations on the Cross River became semi-ghost towns. Unemployment and immigration were part and parcel of the situation.

The question is: taking the allegation about government's economic sabotage of the Cross River basin by itself, were these events

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<sup>106</sup>Aye, op. cit.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 176-180. The separate state was demanded so that the minority peoples could run their affairs outside the control of the former Eastern Nigerian government.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

due to political actions? To what extent can one isolate the political from the pure economic and geographical factors? To understand and to answer these searching questions, some details of governmental actions between 1905 and 1967 must be diagnosed. Without going into too many historical details, the general trend in governmental decisions and actions must be analysed.

According to Nair<sup>109</sup> the decision in 1905 by the colonial government to connect the railroad to Port Harcourt instead of Calabar was more political than economic. Walter Egerton, commenting on the recommendations of Sir Ralph Moore for a railroad to link Enugu to Calabar, confessed that the turning down of the recommendation was a grievous error since "the country behind Itu was one of the richest in the protectorate and the bulk of its products rots on the ground owing to want of transport."<sup>110</sup> Instead, Port Harcourt was chosen as the ocean terminal of the rail line for the transportation of the coal trade from the Udi, Enugu, and Iva mines.

A careful analysis has convinced most researchers in this area that since Mr. Harcourt had already laboured so much to create what Aye<sup>111</sup> termed a "European built town" as opposed to a "purely native town," he had to be rewarded. He had spent most of his time in this part of South Eastern Nigeria and had created a model city. His recommendations were considered weighty enough to the colonial government as to the direction of the rail line to Port Harcourt as an ocean terminus.

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<sup>109</sup>Nair, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>110</sup>Egerton, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>111</sup>Aye, op. cit., p. 138.

Despite the contrary recommendations of Walter Egerton who was not an engineer and city planner, government could not change its mind.

The same situation is noted in the removal of the capital of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate from Calabar to Lagos. Lagos was a crown colony ceded to the Crown by King Dosumu of Lagos in 1861, ten years after the British bombardment of the place in the war with King Kosoko.<sup>112</sup> Though many writers<sup>113</sup> believe the making of Lagos the capital city had something to do with the efforts to suppress slave trade, the more plausible belief is that the government in London believed that the colony of Lagos was a bona fide property purchased by the Crown. Hence, the decision to remove the capital from Calabar to Lagos, and to develop the seaport and connect it with the railine to the hinterland. If these decisions were not political, it is difficult to accept what else would have been. Thus, the removal of the administrative headquarters from Calabar and the decision to refuse its connection by rail to the hinterland had no basis in economics and geography. These were purely political.

Whatever else was done by the colonial government to spite the Cross River waterway was little compared with the later and recent actions taken by the recent Nigerian governments. In 1954, the Nigerian Ports Authority was created to take care of the major port development throughout the country. That public corporation singled out Lagos and Port Harcourt for development. Between 1955 and 1960, the Nigerian government spent

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<sup>112</sup>Burns, Sir Alan. History of Nigeria.

<sup>113</sup>J. F. Ade Ajayi; and Robert Smith. Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century. J. D. Fage, Slavery and Slave Trade.



over N5,276,000<sup>114</sup> in respect of Lagos ports, N6,500,000<sup>115</sup> in respect of Port Harcourt port and with additional expenses on waterway developments for some midwestern areas, the total estimates stood at N20,428,000.<sup>116</sup> Not a penny of this went to the development of Calabar port of the Cross River inland waterways.

During the 1962-68 Development Programme period,<sup>117</sup> all funds were committed to the development of Lagos and Apapa. Estimates were made for inland waterways and port developments which stood at over N51.1 million. None of these once again went to the development of the Cross River waterway or the Calabar port. One can compare this state of affairs with the policy statements in the Development Bulletin which states that, "The river and creek system of Nigeria provides a potentially cheap and extensive network of communications."<sup>118</sup> Even with this, the Cross River waterway had no part in that "Potentially cheap and extensive network of communications." Since no reasons were given for the neglect of a really rich area like the Cross River and since these events were at a time that the Federal Government was controlled by a coalition of one of the parties not supported in the Cross River area, one has to examine the situation critically.

Within Eastern Nigeria itself, the actions of the government gave the peoples of the Cross River area little consolation nor confidence. The development of roads which ran east-west to support the transportation

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Federal Government Development Programme, 1962-68, p. 23.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

of produce from the numerous plantations to Port Harcourt was considered nothing short of exploitation. For, despite the spread of the numerous plantations in this area, social amenities were not developed. Of the total of 238 secondary schools in Eastern Nigeria by 1965 (Table 7) only 16 percent were in the Cross River area. Indeed, Ogoja and Obudu divisions had only one each. The effect was that the parents who could at all afford children's education had to send their children to such schools outside their division and generally to urbanized areas outside the Cross River area.

Table 7. Secondary Schools in Eastern Nigeria.

Area	No. of Schools	Percent
Calabar	5	2.1
Ogoja	4	1.7
Uyo	21	8.8
Annang	9	3.4
Cross River Area	39	16.4
Region	238	100.0

Source: Aye, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

When it is noticed that the bulk of the foreign exchange earners the export crops are produced from the numerous plantations opened in the Cross River area (Tables A.1 and A.2), and forest reserves (Tables A.3a and A.3b), one can understand the anxiety of the people there on the question of allocation and siting of industries. By 1963, not one industry was sited in the Cross River area (Table A.10). In fact, some of these industries depended on raw materials drawn from the Cross River

area. For example, the proposed Palm Kernel crushing industry at Aro Ndizugu was to be located in an area not noted for the production of the kernels. The bulk of the products for the industry was to come from the Cross River area. Decisions like these were more political than economic since industries were sited in areas outside the raw material zone even when it was not more economical to do so.

The Marketing Boards forced the transportation of produce to ports of their choice, even when produce had to be transported farther than necessary to reach the ports. The continual transportation of the palm oil and kernels of the Cross River area in Itu, Ediba, Umon, Obubra, Uyo, Ikot Ikpenne, etc., via Port Harcourt instead of Calabar is an example of such policies. Indeed, Ogundana noted that "the differential spatial pricing of commodities instituted by the marketing boards sometimes conditions the routing of commodities. An example is the case of Port Harcourt, and Opobo, the price of Palm oil was higher in Port Harcourt than in Opobo, because Port Harcourt was designated as the terminal port."<sup>119</sup> The result of that practice was that traffic which otherwise might have been routed to Opobo was diverted to Port Harcourt to take advantage of the higher statutory price. What was true for Opobo was true for Calabar in comparison with Port Harcourt. How far this type of decision was influenced by a purely economic or geographical factor can only be imagined.

The Premier of Eastern Nigeria was reported to have told a political rally at Calabar in 1963 that:

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<sup>119</sup>Ogundana. The Location Factor in Changing Seaport Significance in Nigeria, p. 83.

" . . .if you do not vote for me, I don't vote for you."<sup>120</sup>

Strong as this statement might have been, it tended to reflect on the policy followed by the Eastern Government when the people of the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers areas opted for the Action Group and rejected the ruling party in Eastern Nigeria. The agitation for a separate state was a major issue which if carried through would have reduced the area of influence of the Eastern Nigerian N.C.N.C.--controlled government. Virtually all the Cross River area would have been completely removed from the Eastern region. Such a thought would have made matters irreconcilable between the government and the State-hungry group in the Cross River area.

One would have believed that the government should have done something to court the friendship of the people of the area. Not so at all. For, if there were such conciliatory moves, the spread of amenities would have shown it. The location of secondary schools and colleges in the region did not reflect the principle of need. The Old Ogoja and Calabar provinces had the least.<sup>121</sup> In fact, of the 33 teacher training colleges in the region, Obudu, Ogoja, and Obubra divisions had one each while Ikom had none at all.<sup>122</sup>

While it may be difficult to remove purely economic and geographical factors from some of the decisions of the government, it is not impossible to see cases of glaring politically-motivated decisions. The removal of administrative headquarters from Calabar was political. The

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<sup>120</sup>Aye, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>121</sup>Eastern Nigeria Statistical Information on Education, Enugu, 1965.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

decision to link the Enugu by rail to Port Harcourt was political. The decision by the government owned Nigerian Ports Authority to discriminate against the port of Calabar and the Cross River inland waterway while developing the ports of Lagos and Port Harcourt along with other inland waterways was purely political. The spread of amenities to parts of the former Eastern Nigeria with some bias against the Cross River area cannot be defended on economic or geographical grounds. The location of medical, educational, and industrial facilities in a biased pattern only savoured of politics.

If the above decisions contained some economic considerations, even however minute, the decision of the Eastern Nigeria Marketing Board to price export commodities in such a way that only Port Harcourt would attract them against the other ports must be seen in the context of noneconomic reasons. When specific directives were given to produce buying agents to export only through Port Harcourt even when other ports would have been nearer cannot be an economic thinking. The decision to develop roads only in an east-west direction to connect the numerous plantations of the Cross River basin to Port Harcourt must be anything but an economic decision.

It is these series of government decisions which were so well timed that their total impact paralyzed the economic life of the Cross River waterway and its ocean terminal port. Consequent on these decisions, the Cross River and the port of Calabar had never been dredged since 1907 to date. No government funds had been used to develop the ocean and river ports. Consequently, the area became depressed and came into the economic wheel of the nation indirectly. Poverty,

unemployment and general outmigration followed. As to the question whether the factors most responsible for the depression of the area were mostly political, the hypothesis has been proved true.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study attempts to discover and diagnose those factors which were directly and indirectly responsible for the decline of the Cross River waterway and its terminal ocean port of Calabar between 1920 and 1967.<sup>123</sup> To appreciate the importance of the Cross River waterway and its role in the commerce of what later came to be known as Eastern Nigeria, a historical sketch was necessary. This history went back to the early Portugese contacts with Calabar port and the Cross River around the 15th century. The role of this waterway was found to be significant in the promotion of trade between the then Eastern Nigeria and the European traders.

Such a role was found to be important before, during and after what came to be two and a half centuries of slave trade across the atlantic Ocean. When legitimate trade was restored, the Cross River waterway continued its major commercial role. Between the Niger Delta and the Cross River areas, that portion of Nigeria which became the primary palm oil market of West Africa, took on the popular name of "The Oil Rivers." Even the British traders induced their government to adopt political actions to protect their newfound markets, by certain treaties with the native rulers. The whole area was later declared the

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<sup>123</sup>The Cross River and the Port of Calabar had always been individisible in terms of economic fortunes.

Oil Rivers Protectorate. The seat of government was later moved from the former Spanish island of Fernando Po to Calabar from where the Southern area of Nigeria was administered between 1886 and 1906. The administrative headquarters was in 1906 moved to Lagos when the country was amalgamated. Thereafter, the port of Calabar and the Cross River waterway began a systematic decline which ended up in a total depression in the 1960s.

The main theme of the study was based on the hypotheses: whether the major factors responsible for the decline of the Cross River waterway and its ocean terminal port were due to purely geographical and economic factors often inherent in evolutions of development, or whether the decline was the function of political and social factors, that is, man-made conditions.

A careful analysis on the basis of geographic and economic considerations were centered on:

- (a) the locational advantages of the Cross River waterway.
- (b) the physical characteristics of the waterway--seaward approach channels, landward approach channels, and proximity to busy and rich hinterlands.
- (c) the attitude of the peoples of the Cross River basin to gainful economic activities in the past and later on.

The study discovered that in terms of location, the Cross River waterway is unique and its locational advantages had not diminished over the centuries. Indeed, its location gave it greater advantages over Port Harcourt with respect to the movement of export products from the Cross River basin. The same locational advantage made the Cross River waterway



and the port of Calabar superior to both Lagos and Port Harcourt with railroad connections.<sup>124</sup> As far as transportation of export produce from the northeastern section of Nigeria is concerned, the NEDECO Report<sup>125</sup> concluded thus:

"For Makurdi and all more northern regions, the Makurdi Calabar line provided a reduction in railway distance to the sea of 25.5 miles compared with Port Harcourt. For Kaduna and areas to the North of it, the planned line also results in a shorter railway distance of 17.5 miles compared with Lagos."

As far as physical characteristics are concerned, the Cross River waterway was discovered to be still superior than either Lagos or Port Harcourt. By 1907, the lowest draught limit for Lagos was 9 feet when it was 18 feet at Calabar. By 1970 the lowest permissible draught limit of water at Calabar was 13 feet excluding the rise of water by 10 feet at spring tide, despite absence of dredging. In Lagos and Port Harcourt, with yearly dredging exercises, the depths of over 20 and 27 feet are artificially maintained. Thus, both the seaward approach and the port area of Calabar and the Cross River waterway generally have shown the lowest level of annual silting among the country's waterways.

Even assuming that the present port site at Calabar does not have adequate land space for warehouses and storages, appropriate shifts would have been made to a more convenient area within the general port

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<sup>124</sup> NEDECO Report, Op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

area.<sup>126</sup> Again allowing seasonal traffic on the Cross River water, the disadvantage<sup>127</sup> would have been minimized by appropriate road transport networks to Calabar port. But these disadvantages were not more exaggerated since the same problems of physical nature are evident in almost all Nigerian ports. Thus, in terms of physical characteristics, the Cross River waterway and the port of Calabar were in no way inferior. Nair,<sup>128</sup> in a comparative study remarked that:

"The Calabar harbour was still superior to most at the beginning of the present century. It was described as the finest port on the Bight of Benin<sup>129</sup> until Lagos bar was removed."

On the attitude of the peoples of the Cross River Basin to gainful economic activities, the study revealed increased production of agricultural, forestry, fishery products. Their attitudes did not change for the worse. Rather, increased agricultural activities were noticed until producer prices paid to farmers tended to discourage most of them from further production. Indeed the younger generations of farmers had to reduce production or else abandon the farms. This was at the instance of the government-owned Regional Marketing Board's pricing policies on agricultural produce. Thus the continued appreciation of profit motive by the people made the Cross River waterway

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<sup>126</sup>As recommended in NEDECO Report.

<sup>127</sup>The St. Lawrence Seaway is navigable for some months of the year. During the months of traffic closure, commodities are stockpiled. Very little disadvantage is encountered by this system if heavier volumes are carried during the spring, summer and fall months, so in Nigeria the seasonality of export products could be used to similar advantage.

<sup>128</sup>Nair, op. cit., p. 258.

<sup>129</sup>Should have read Biafra here.

still lie close to a rich and busy hinterland which should foster its trade activities.

The overall conclusion of the first hypothesis was that the decline of the Cross River waterway was not a function of changes in its inherent physical factors or economic circumstances. That hypothesis was proved to be untrue.

On the second hypothesis whether the decline was due to political and social factors, it was necessary to trace governmental decisions dating back to 1906. The removal of the administrative headquarters of Southern Nigeria from Calabar to Lagos was more a political question than an economic one since Lagos was then a Crown Colony ceded to the British government in 1861. The British were proud to run the country from their "own property" than from the native city of Calabar.

When it became necessary to connect the Enugu coal mines to the sea in 1913, the decision was in favour of Port Harcourt. Here again, Port Harcourt was the "European town" of Mr. Harcourt and was necessary to spend more funds to make a success of Mr. Harcourt's town planning skills. Even when it meant more dredging to the open sea at Port Harcourt than at Calabar, the odds were against a choice of Calabar. Despite the recommendations of Sir Ralph Moore for connecting Calabar to Enugu-coal mine, the decision was for Port Harcourt. It was left for Sir Walter Egerton to confess later that:

"...the administration now knew that the country behind the Itu was one of the richest in the Protectorate. The bulk of its products rots on the ground for lack of transport."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Nair, op. cit.

The Ministry of Public Works in Enugu decided to run all roads east-west of the Cross River basin to connect it to the sprawling agricultural estates and to the chosen port of Port Harcourt. The Eastern Nigeria marketing board adopted a commodity policy which made Port Harcourt the most favored port of the region for export produce sales and evacuation purposes. Indeed, it is believed that the pricing differential was such that areas nearest Calabar found it profitable to move their export produce to Port Harcourt, still farther away.

In 1954, the inauguration of the Nigerian Ports Authority to develop and cater for Nigerian ports, decided to adopt and develop only Lagos and Port Harcourt initially. It was not until after ten years that the Delta ports was included for developing, thanks to the creation of the Midwestern Region at that time (see Table A.10). All that time Calabar was sadly neglected and discriminated against when millions of Nigerian Naira were pumped in to develop Lagos and Port Harcourt and later the Delta ports. It is difficult to imagine that such a decision was based on economics or sound management of the nation. It was after the creation of the South Eastern State with Calabar as its capital that the port of Calabar complex was included as the responsibility of the Nigerian ports authority for development purposes (Table A.12).

As Ogundana<sup>131</sup> noted, it was impossible for the port of Calabar (and indeed the Cross River waterway) to be expected to function so effectively without technological innovations, when its competitors

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<sup>131</sup>Ogundana, op. cit.

were selected for development. Indeed, all waterways and ports of Nigeria have physical problems. At the turn of the century, Calabar port and the Cross River was naturally in a more favorable position for commercial purposes. A series of decisions beginning from 1906 had tended to discriminate against the Cross River waterway and its terminal ocean port of Calabar. Its rivals were by these decisions placed artificially at special advantages.

Thus to the question whether the decline of the Cross River waterway and its ocean port of Calabar was due to geographic and economic factors or due to political factors, the answer is that physical factors applied equally to all waterways of Nigeria, but political decisions have discriminated against the Cross River waterway. The factors were thus more of a political nature than pure economic and geographical ones.

## **APPENDIX**

Table A.1. Plantations and Estates.

Major Concentration	Area	Division of Location	Ownership
Cattle Ranch	40 sq. Miles	Obudu-Ogoja	Government
Oil Palm	6,239 acres	Kwa Falls-Akamkpa	Government
Oil Palm	11,754 acres	Calabar-Calabar	Government
Oil Palm	2,000 acres	Eket-Eket	Government
Oil Palm	12,000 acres	Biase-Akamkpa	Government
Oil Palm	n.a.	Nsadop-Ogoja	Government
Oil Palm	6,852 acres	Calabar-Calabar	Private Firm
Rubber	11,758 acres	Oban-Akamkpa	Government
Rubber	n.a.	Biakpan-Akamkpa	Government
Rubber	3,816 acres	Ikot Mbo-Akamkpa	Private Firm
Rubber	21,061 acres	Calabar-Calabar	Private Firm
Cocoa	4,053 acres	Abia-Ikom-Ikom	Government
Cocoa	2,406 acres	Bendeghe Ayuk-Ikom-Ikom	Government
Cocoa	4,707 acres	Obokum-Ikom-Ikom	Government
Cocoa	3,000 acres	Obubra-Obubra	Government
Tobacco	n.a.	Ogoja-Ogoja	Government
Food Crops	n.a.	Oku Iboku-Itu	Government

Source: Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation, Annual Report, 1963 and in the First Decade 1955-64.

Table A.2. Large Estate Concentrations.

Political Divisions	No. of Estates	Areas of Land	Types of Activities	Project Ownership
		(Acres)		
Akamkpa	5	51,058	Oil palms Rubber	Government Private
Calabar	3	22,422	Oil palms Rubber	Government Private
Ikom	3	11,166	Cocoa	Government
Ogoja	2	n.a.	Tobacco Oil palms	Government
Obudu	1	25,600	Cattle	Government
Obubra	1	3,000	Cocoa	Government
Eket	1	2,000	Oil palm	Government
Itu	2	n.a.	Food crops Oil palm	Government Private

Source: E.N.D.C. Reports (See Source of Table A.1).



Table A.3a. Forest Reserve Distribution.

Division	Forest Reserve	Area in Square Miles
Calabar	Ekinta River	42
Calabar/Akamkpa	Oban Group	1,445
Calabar/Itu	Uwet Odot	110
Ikom	Afi River	148
Ikom	Cross River South	135
Ikom	Cross River North	50
Ikom/Obudu	Okwangwo	181
Obubra	Ukpong River	121
Obubra	Agoi	18
Obudu	Boshi	16
Obudu	Boshi Extension	26
Itu	Lower Enyong	11
Ogoja	Yahe	6
Ogoja	Ikirigon	2
Ogoja	Gabu	2
Ikot Ekpene	Ogu/Itu	2
Ikot Ekpene	Obot Ndon	1
Eket/Oron	Stubbs Creek	120
Akamkpa/Itu	Umon Ndeachi	42
Total		2,478

Source: South Eastern State Ministry of Information, 1972.

Table A.3b. Summary.

Divisions	No. of Reserves	Total Areas (Square Miles)
Calabar	1	1,597 42
Calabar/Others	2	1,555
Ikom	3	514 333
Ikom/Others	1	181
Akamkpa/Others	2	1,487
Obudu	2	42
Obudu/Others	1	181
Ikot Ekpene	2	3
Itu/Others	3	152
Ogoja	3	10
Obubra	2	139
Eket/Oron	1	120

Source: South Eastern State Ministry of Information, 1972.

Table A.4

## FOREIGN TRADE CARGO HANDLED AT NIGERIAN PORTS - CARGO LOADED

Period	Total	Lagos	MID-WESTERN STATES				EASTERN STATES				Thousand tons
			Burutu	Warri	Sapele (a)	Port Harcourt	Bonny	Calabar	Degema	Okrika	
1957	1,883	907	86	37	244	413	---	128	68	---	
1958	2,307	995	109	34	230	749	---	113	77	---	
1959	2,706	1,142	65	53	293	950	---	127	76	---	
1960	2,779	955	81	51	346	1,190	---	95	61	---	
1961	4,549	1,159	68	56	363	817	1,939	97	50	---	
1962	5,551	1,118	68	83	312	521	3,316	97	36	---	
1963	6,095	1,217	88	98	386	499	3,686	83	38	---	
1964	8,214	1,253	62	96	455	553	5,676	89	30	---	
1965	14,475	1,418	154	88	395	546	11,755	91	28	---	
1966	18,080	1,276	64	87	367	458	15,396	165	24	243	
1967*	19,857	1,396	2,493	22	181	31	15,684	10	4	36	
1968	9,200	1,867	4,746	24	254	---	2,309	---	---	---	
1969	28,447	1,524	8,715	21	321	---	17,842	24	---	---	
1970	52,705	1,394	11,128	56	233	26	37,344	2,522	---	---	
1971	75,469	1,024	13,138	29	252	212	57,429	3,387	---	---	

## FOREIGN TRADE CARGO HANDLED AT NIGERIAN PORTS - CARGO UNLOADED

Period	Total	Lagos	MID-WESTERN STATES				EASTERN STATES				Thousand tons
			Burutu	Warri	Sapele (a)	Port Harcourt	Bonny	Calabar	Degema	Okrika	
1957	2,193	1,455	73	49	77	466	---	49	4	---	
1958	2,280	1,63	47	50	53	447	---	46	4	---	
1959	2,532	1,779	62	57	64	522	---	43	5	---	
1960	2,689	1,943	50	54	83	524	---	30	5	---	
1961	3,029	2,168	39	54	79	658	---	29	2	---	
1962	2,937	2,088	20	33	48	731	---	18	1	---	
1963	2,957	2,090	27	39	36	751	---	14	-	---	
1964	3,324	2,371	77	38	32	725	---	11	-	---	
1965	3,588	2,568	70	60	36	624	---	10	-	---	
1966	2,513	1,727	47	103	22	601	---	12	1	---	
1967	2,188	1,979	15	61	31	100	---	2	-	---	
1968	2,788	2,613	6	157	13	---	---	---	-	---	
1969	3,227	2,940	55	215	17	---	---	---	-	---	
1970	3,635	3,276	10	217	44	68	---	20	-	---	
1971	4,622	3,817	---	375	51	365	---	13	-	---	

Source: Federal Office of Statistics

Notes: 1. Excluding Coastwise Cargo.

2. Tonnage figures are expressed either deadweight or volumetrically according to how the cargo is reported in ships' manifests and charged freight.

(a) Included Koko from 1959.

\* Include estimates supplemented by the export figures from the exporters of Crude Petroleum from 1967.

Table A.5. Palm Oil Passed for Export.

Year	Tonnages Passed : Federation of Nigeria	Tonnages Passed : Eastern Nigeria	Percentages Passed : Eastern Nigeria to Federation
1954/55	214,534	180,000	84.3
1955/56	201,751	172,983	85.7
1956/57	182,825	164,226	89.8
1957/58	191,425	167,751	87.1
1958/59	202,531	177,016	87.4
1959/60	207,956	178,333	85.8
1960/61	190,542	169,719	89.1

Source: Ministry of Agriculture: Produce Inspection Division,  
Annual Reports.

Table A.6. Palm Kernel Passed for Export.

Year	Tonnages Passed : Federation of Nigeria	Tonnages Passed : Eastern Nigeria	Percentages Passed : Eastern Nigeria to Federation
1954/55	439,887	204,129	46.4
1955/56	429,083	202,448	47.2
1956/57	445,671	206,266	46.3
1957/58	401,185	192,444	47.9
1958/59	451,090	210,950	46.7
1959/60	413,583	209,037	50.5
1960/61	407,518	198,775	48.8

Source: Ministry of Agriculture: Produce Inspection Division,  
Annual Reports.

Table A.7. Capital  
Expenditure  
on Roads 1957-63.

Year	Amount
1957/58	N2,132,970
1958/59	N1,652,640
1959/60	N2,219,940
1960/61	N2,192,242
1961/62	N5,056,664
1962/63	N3,072,962

Source: Distribution of  
Amenities in  
Eastern Nigeria,  
Official Document,  
No. 20 of 1963.

Table A.8. Road Development.<sup>1</sup>

Provinces	Trunk A (Miles)			Trunk B (Miles)		
	Tarred	Gravel <sup>2</sup>	Total	Tarred	Gravel <sup>2</sup>	Total
Ogoja	1 1/2	66	67 1/2	28 1/2	129 1/2	158
Calabar	5 1/2	84 1/2	90	39	20	59
Annang	32 3/4	---	32 3/4	52 1/4	15 1/2	67 3/4
Uyo	30 1/4	---	30 1/4	71 1/2	124 3/4	196 1/4
Sub-Total (a)	70	150.5	220.5	191.25	289.75	481
Regional (b)	536	150.5	687	877 3/4	737.25	1615
Percent (a) of (b)	13	100	32.1	21.8	39.3	29.8

<sup>1</sup>Excludes community maintained roads.

<sup>2</sup>Includes earth.

Source: Distribution of Amenities, p. 141.

Table A.9. Palm Produce Export and Prices.

Year	Palm Kernels				Palm Oil	
	Purchased For Export (Tons)	Basic Producer Prices \$ Per Ton			Purchased For Export (Tons)	Basic Producer Prices Dollar Per Ton <sup>a</sup> (East)
		North	West	East		
1953	433,584	68	68	68	224,214	116
1954	462,399	68	68	68	216,449	100
1955	418,002	60	60	60	196,860	86
1956	465,652	62	62	62	190,792	86
1957	411,898	62	62	62	176,706	86
1958	460,720	62	60	58	190,167	80
1959	428,450	62	60	58	190,705	80
1960	422,067	62	60	58	189,148	80

<sup>a</sup> Grade I.

Note: In the Northern and Western Regions actual payments to producers are reduced through the operation of Sales of Produce (Taxation) Ordinance by \$2 per ton on palm kernels and palm oil. For the Eastern Region, the prices shown are those paid to producers; the Board pays the Produce Purchase Tax of \$4 per ton on palm kernels and \$8 per ton on palm oil.

Source: Barclays Bank D.C.O. Nigeria, An Economic Survey, Lagos, 1961, p. 14.

Table A.10. Location of Industries 1962-63.

Location	No. of Industries	Capital Invested
Port Harcourt	9	\$11,080,000
Enugu	6	\$ 3,500,000
Nkalagu	1	\$ 8,200,000
Onitsha	2	\$ 6,068,000
Umuahia	2	\$ 3,588,000
Aba	1	\$ 2,142,000

Source: Distribution of Amenities in Eastern Nigeria.

Table A.11. Tonnage of Cargo Shipped Coastwise—Cargo Loaded (Thousand Tons).

Period	Total	Lagos	Mid-Western States			Port Harcourt	Eastern States			
			Burutu	Warri	Sapele (b)		Bonny	Calabar	Degema	Orika
1957	431	104	31	24	21	245		2	4	—
1958	368	116	12	32	15	189		3	1	—
1959	342	120	42	18	16	143		2	1	—
1960	422	126	34	30	48	152		23	9	—
1961	282	113	11	12	14	128		4	—	—
1962	292	80	8	6	38	189		6	3	—
1963	202	86	—	—	12	101		3	—	—
1964	220	66	2	—	1	144		7	—	—
1965	322	88	—	—	2	165		8	—	59
1966	1,136	35	2	1	—	131		2	—	965
1967 <sup>a</sup>	210	38	1	1	1	7		1	1	160
1968	103	100	2	—	—	—		—	—	—
1969	113	99	—	—	—	—		14	—	—
1970	512	200	—	1	16	284		11	—	—
1971	524	47	—	5	—	464		7	—	—

Tonnage of Cargo Shipped Coastwise—Cargo Unloaded

1957	399	335	23	3	11	16		10	1	—
1958	307	448	19	2	1	25		11	1	—
1959	302	258	7	2	2	27		5	1	—
1960	332	182	19	11	18	88		13	1	—
1961	158	131	12	1	3	7		3	1	—
1962	243	176	8	8	10	38		3	—	—
1963	166	118	3	4	4	40		2	—	—
1964	182	143	7	1	2	27		2	—	—
1965	215	159	21	3	—	29		3	—	—
1966	800	759	22	3	1	11		4	—	—
1967	546	524	10	3	6	2		1	—	—
1968	65	6	3	19	37	—		—	—	—
1969	191	30	6	37	66	—		51	—	—
1970	589	414	6	32	65	39		43	—	—
1971	1,128	944	1	47	84	12		40	—	—

Source: Federal Office of Statistics.

Notes: 1. Figures exclude cargo handled at non-Customs ports.

2. Only cargo carried by ocean-going ships is included.

(a) Figures for 1959 and earlier years include Opobo which was closed as a port in January, 1950.

(b) Includes Koko from 1959.

Table A.12. General Cargo Handled From 1955-56 to 1972-73 (All Ports) (Metric Tonne).

Year	Lagos Ports Complex			Port Harcourt Ports Complex			Delta Ports Complex			Calabar Port			All Ports Complexes Combined		
	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total
1955-56	799,862	544,981	1,344,843	277,941	235,221	513,162	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,077,803	780,202	1,858,005
1956-57	900,275	651,960	1,552,235	336,928	255,507	592,435	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,237,203	907,467	2,144,670
1957-58	855,927	559,870	1,415,797	360,142	228,105	588,247	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,216,069	787,975	2,004,044
1958-59	901,477	749,977	1,651,454	368,393	320,510	688,903	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,269,870	1,070,487	2,340,357
1959-60	1,043,103	684,655	1,727,758	421,482	282,729	704,211	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,464,585	967,384	2,431,969
1960-61	1,107,029	615,524	1,722,553	445,160	298,689	743,849	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,552,189	914,213	2,466,402
1961-62	1,029,081	821,185	1,850,266	444,013	400,301	844,314	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,473,094	1,221,486	2,694,580
1962-63	909,167	762,072	1,671,239	498,871	391,234	890,105	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,408,038	1,153,306	2,561,344
1963-64	964,447	920,560	1,885,007	484,980	450,135	935,115	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,449,427	1,370,695	2,820,122
1964-65	967,139	1,038,944	2,006,083	447,370	380,779	828,149	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,414,509	1,419,723	2,831,232
1965-66	1,038,292	1,130,504	2,168,796	477,679	409,800	887,479	13,866	131	13,997	--	--	--	1,529,837	1,540,435	3,070,272
1966-67	997,031	1,094,723	2,091,754	483,815	292,060	775,875	2,990	546	3,536	--	--	--	1,483,836	1,387,329	2,871,165
1967-68	1,137,254	1,436,676	2,573,930	--	--	--	777	106	883	--	--	--	1,138,031	1,436,782	2,574,813
1968-69	1,052,180	1,496,208	2,548,388	--	--	--	6,813	--	6,813	--	--	--	1,058,993	1,496,208	2,555,201
1969-70	1,349,981	1,290,713	2,640,694	79,829	23,553	103,374	35,597	3,274	38,870	44,026	25,947	69,973	1,509,433	1,343,478	2,852,911
1970-71	2,168,132	1,135,439	3,303,571	326,202	54,178	380,380	284,701	78,126	362,827	34,262	57,579	91,841	2,813,297	1,325,322	4,138,619
1971-72	2,578,780	813,178	3,391,958	617,032	110,075	727,107	372,053	27,309	399,362	20,188	60,528	80,715	3,588,053	1,011,090	4,599,143
1972-73	2,202,363	734,283	2,936,646	478,390	172,174	650,564	204,376	27,165	231,541	15,220	41,290	56,510	2,900,349	974,912	3,875,261

Source: Nigerian Port Authority, Lagos.



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