

YORUBA DRESS: A SYSTEMIC CASE STUDY OF FIVE  
GENERATIONS OF A LAGOS FAMILY

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This is to certify that the  
thesis entitled

YORUBA DRESS: A SYSTEMIC CASE STUDY OF  
FIVE GENERATIONS OF A LAGOS FAMILY

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Betty M. Wass

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Major professor

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ABSTRACT

YORUBA DRESS: A SYSTEMIC CASE STUDY OF  
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by

Betty M. Wass

This study is an analysis of the dress of five generations of a Yoruba family in Lagos, Nigeria, from 1900 to 1974. Dress is viewed as a near environment which reflects human responses to larger environmental systems. Although scholars generally agree that dress is a nonverbal element in the communications system of a culture, few have studied the particular messages that may be conveyed by dress. Dress is conceptualized herein as a part of material culture which functioned over time within a systemic whole by differentiating individuals and groups according to social roles and self-concepts.

Dress served to link individuals of the research population represented by social structural characteristics of age, sex, religion, marital status, and education and occupation to the socio-cultural-temporal setting: Lagos, the Yoruba ethnic group, their social class designation, and the time period. The majority of the population were categorized as educated "new" elite, were Christian, had the maximum amount of education offered in the country, and were in professional occupations. Time was divided corresponding to three prevailing climates of opinion: 1900 to 1939 was defined as a period

of low nationalistic sentiment; 1940 to 1959: rising nationalistic sentiment; and 1960 to 1974: post-independence.

Six hundred and seven photographs from the collection of 1,000 of the family under study were selected for examination because complete ensembles of dress were visible in them. A framework for organizing the primary data concerning dress was adopted from methodology for analysis of languages. The framework directed attention to identifying forms or items of dress basic to compositions of items, to establishing compositions which appear to be acceptable within the culture satisfying social, aesthetic, and moral prescriptions, and to revealing environmental constraints influencing combinations of items found in compositions. A semantic component of analysis pertained to meanings of dress related to social roles and self-concepts.

Items combined most frequently were depicted as modes of dress. Western modes (contrasted to traditional) predominated as the dress worn by the population over the three time periods but use of traditional Yoruba dress increased in each period. The largest amount of traditional dress seen in any decade appeared in the years immediately preceding independence.

Social role groupings within the population differed in their use of traditional dress. Women continually wore more traditional dress than did men. From the first to the second period, males increased their use of traditional dress more than did females, however, suggesting greater change in either male roles or self-concepts. In the third period a garment which is neither western nor

traditional but an assimilation of cultural differences is a popular fashion for men. A significant increase in use of traditional dress over the three periods was found for persons over age sixteen, for those who had at least the maximum amount of education available in Nigeria, and for adults who were photographed at special occasions. Western dress continually predominated as the dress of children.

The findings of the study suggest that dress provides a focal point for further studies in perception, assimilation, and other communicative functions as a linkage within and between systems.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The function of dress as a component in the network of communications of human systems and subsystems is the concern of this study. Dress<sup>1</sup> is a visible symbol in an environment of symbols created by man. As a person's dress is highly visible and easily manipulated, it is the most intimate form in an individual's repertoire of tangible, relatively permanent, nonverbal elements of communication--an integral part of the total communication process. The communicative properties of dress develop within social, ethnic, and temporal contexts where dress becomes a stimulus for invoking certain associations, notions, and ideas.

Two psychologists, Bush and London, in an analysis of early psychological, sociological, and anthropological theories concerning dress conclude that, "Most theorists . . . believe that the most essential function of clothing has been that of differentiation, certainly in all graphically communicating societies"<sup>2</sup> (1960:360).

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<sup>1</sup>Dress is operationally defined as materials which are used to cover and adorn the body involving not only garments but cosmetics, jewelry, and other body ornamentation such as hairstyles or body modifications of tattooing and scarification. Clothing is defined more narrowly as the garments which are temporarily added to the body. The idea is basically expressed in Roach & Eicher 1965:1.

<sup>2</sup>Dress may be equally as important, if not more so, as a medium of communication in societies that rely on non-written communication.

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Dress as a differentiating symbol may provide structural information which integrates individuals or groups of individuals with the man-made environments of political, social, and economic systems. Dress may also serve to establish and maintain boundaries around groups of individuals representing variations of status, power, and role. Members of a group have a feeling of a "we" solidarity as opposed to non-members who are recognized as "they." Insofar as dress defines social structural boundaries, it may influence human interaction by visibly separating groups from one another. Increased understanding of the differentiating function of dress contributes to knowledge of the linkages between individuals and the systems of the society of which they are a part.

Boundaries between human groups are seldom stable; they are in a process of continuous change in response to changing internal and external conditions. Dress may be a significant indicator defining boundaries of groups at a particular time and may also indicate shifts in group boundaries or individual memberships over time.

The purpose of this study is to analyze communicative properties of dress which indicate linkages of persons or groups while separating them from others. The extent to which dress has differentiated persons according to universal criteria within both western and non-western societies over time has not been well-documented. This study includes the investigation of both synchronic and diachronic dimensions of forms as well as meanings related to the

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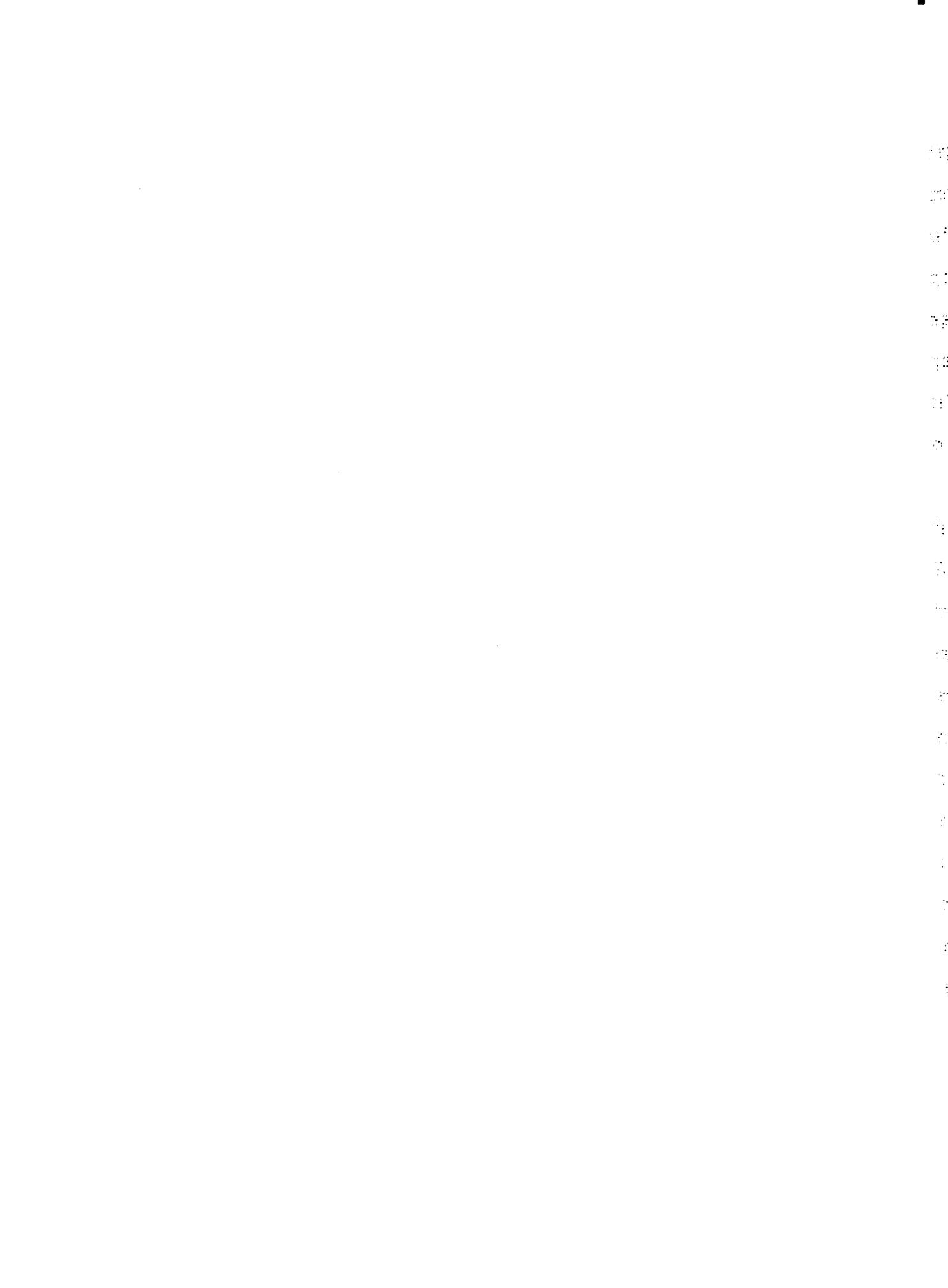
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differentiation of groups within an African society. The purpose of the study is reinforced by the proposition that

An adequate ethnographic description of the culture . . . of a particular society presupposes a detailed analysis of the communications system and of the culturally defined situations in which all relevant distinctions in that system occur (Conklin 1962:119).

Dress is a facet in the communications system of a culture. In order to elucidate the importance of dress as a communicative medium in all cultures, there is a need for a methodological approach that produces valid and reliable results. This study also concerns developing such a methodology.

Three procedural approaches are incorporated in the study. Explanations of dress as it changes over time are linked to changes in spatial and temporal contexts in which dress occurs; therefore, consideration of historical influences is necessary. The population of the study represents a distinctive sub-group within a larger ethnic group. Similarities and contrasts between the population and the larger group are delineated by the case study approach. Finally, the data concerning the dress of the population is analyzed within a framework adapted from linguistic methodology. Like most non-vocal communication, interpretations of behavior related to clothing are made through verbal symbols. The inseparability of verbal and non-verbal elements in communication has led researchers to apply techniques

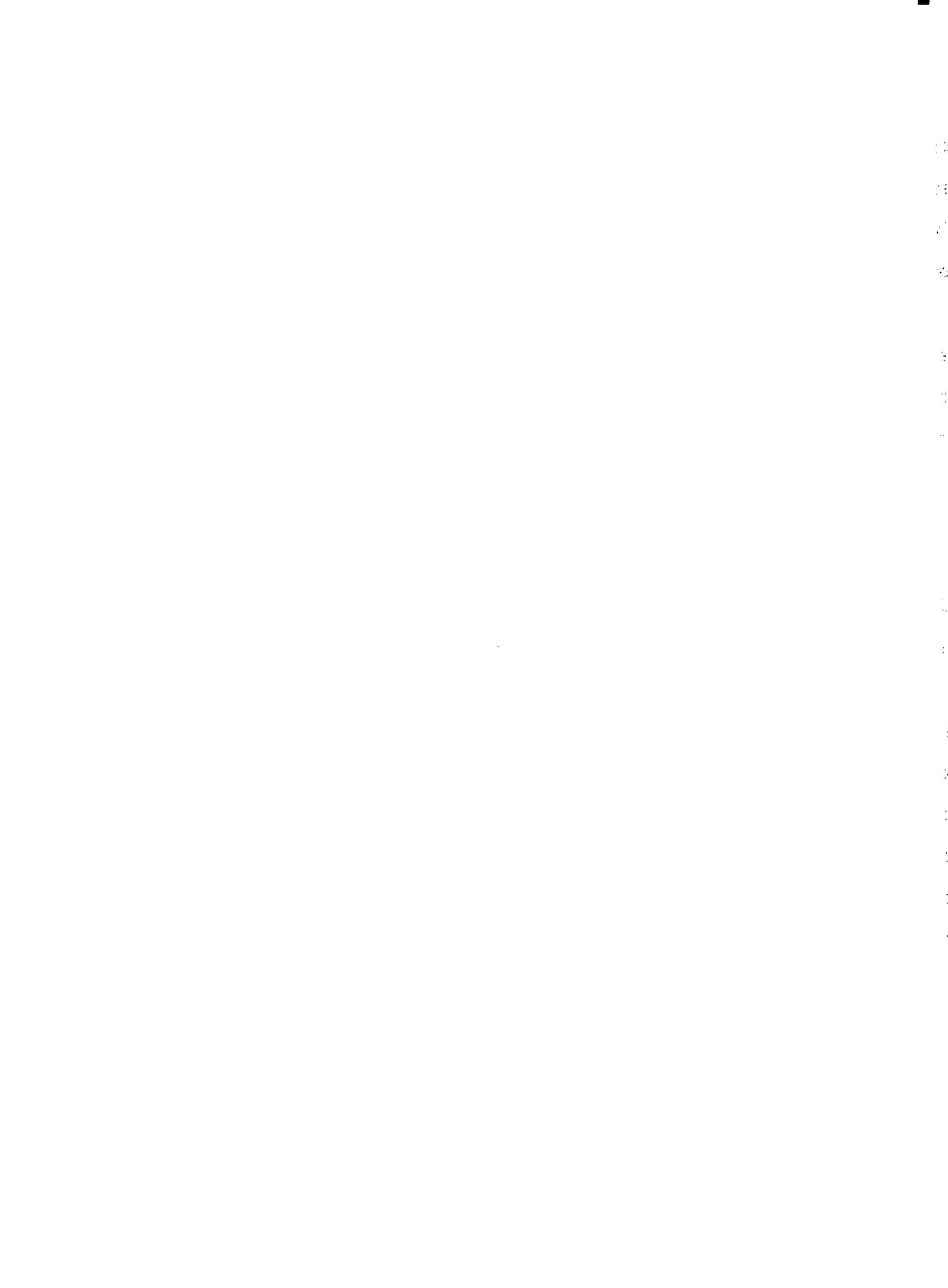


of language analysis to the study of nonverbal dimensions.<sup>1</sup> The approach is being tested for the methodological contribution it may have for studies of dress. In the large body of material called history of costume, forms of dress rather than meanings of dress have been the general foci of research. The methods of collecting and interpreting data are seldom evident. While dress is not thought to be analogous to a language in that a rigorous grammar can be discovered, the framework directs the search of data toward greater objectivity.

The specific focus of the study is the dress of five generations of a Yoruba family in Lagos, Nigeria, covering a time period from 1900 to 1974. Emphasis on an actual family illustrates a reality that differs from generalized description. Although the population is limited, the extended family and its behavior associated with dress merits study concerning the extent to which a family reflects social and cultural influences. As a subsystem within the larger totality of society, the family is interrelated with other subsystems such as the economic, political, and religious spheres. Reciprocity occurs in that the family is shaped by society for the most part yet it retains a primary role in socializing the individual to the society (Quilling 1970:26). Homogeneity is expected among extended family members partially because several members of an extended family frequently share responsibilities in socializing younger members in African cultures, a duty that is assumed mainly

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<sup>1</sup>See Ray L. Birdwhistell, Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body motion Communication (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970) and; E. T. Hall, "A System for the Notation of Proxemic Behavior," American Anthropologist, 65 (October 1963), 1003-1026,



by parents in western nuclear families. Furthermore, by studying an extended family, the population of the research is increased while a broad range of common characteristics in the group is retained.

As part of the process of socialization in the family, ideals of appearance and conventions of dress are instilled in the individual. Conventions serve as rules restricting behavior related to dress. Rules concerning appearance

are assimilated over time together with other rules of thought and behavior, and though they have received less analytical scrutiny, they are as 'real' as rules of kinship, of land tenure, or spatial interaction, or any other rules of social communication (Kuper 1973:349).

Such rules are learned within the social system, the family being a unit in a larger system.

The descriptive information gained from this study is valuable in itself. No chronological history of African dress has been written. Books about African dress usually concern the dress of diverse peoples at vaguely specified times with emphasis on forms of unusual dress such as that used for rituals and ceremonies. A sequence of non-ritual dress forms with concomitant meanings attached to the forms over time has not been studied. The period of time is also important because Africa is a continent that has been extensively subjected to forces of change during the past eighty years. Historian Quentin Bell asserted that fashion in costume is for the student of social change what the fruit fly is for the geneticist.

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the deceptive force of inertia which overlays and obscures most other manifestations of human activity is reduced to a minimum (Bell 1948:12).

Changes seen in forms and meanings of the dress of the group selected for study may support a common premise that dress serves universally as an indicator which differentiates groups and individuals according to changing norms, values, and attitudes. "Since the social order proceeds through time, clothing, a material facility, may reflect change or stability in the society's nonmaterial aspects" (Roach and Eicher 1965:2).

### Hypotheses

Bush and London propose hypotheses as an outcome of their review of theories concerning dress. Two are:

Differences in modes of dress within a particular society are indicative of differences in social roles and self-concepts of members of that society.

Changes in fundamental or enduring modes of dress in a society are indicative of changes in the social roles and self-concepts of members of that society (1960:361).

Bush and London argue that their hypotheses are empirical statements which may be justified by empirical research. They assert that justification for hypotheses about dress has depended upon face validity rather than extensive empirical validation. There are still few empirical studies to support or refute their claim.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Morrison and Holden urge empirical investigation of variations of the same hypotheses in their conclusions to a theoretical paper concerning dress as a sign influencing the allocation of rewards for certain roles and statuses. See Denton E. Morrison and Carlin Paige Holden, "The Burning Bra: The American Breast Fetish and Women's Liberation," Deviance and Change, ed. by Peter K. Manning (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971).



The Bush and London hypotheses were selected for investigation in this study because in both hypotheses the claim is made that modes of dress differentiate members of a society. That is, dress serves to communicate group interrelationships with social, political, and economic systems as observers make associations between the dress of persons and their social and psychological features. Differentiation in social roles and self-concepts indicated by dress is viewed synchronically in the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis deals with the diachronic perspective.

Although individual self-concepts cannot be assessed from the historical data of the study, evidence exists which suggests changing group self-concepts held over time as links to the social and political systems changed. For purposes of the study, self-concept is being defined as a shared appraisal of the self which is indicated by attitudes and overt behaviors of the group in which individuals are members.

### Review of Literature

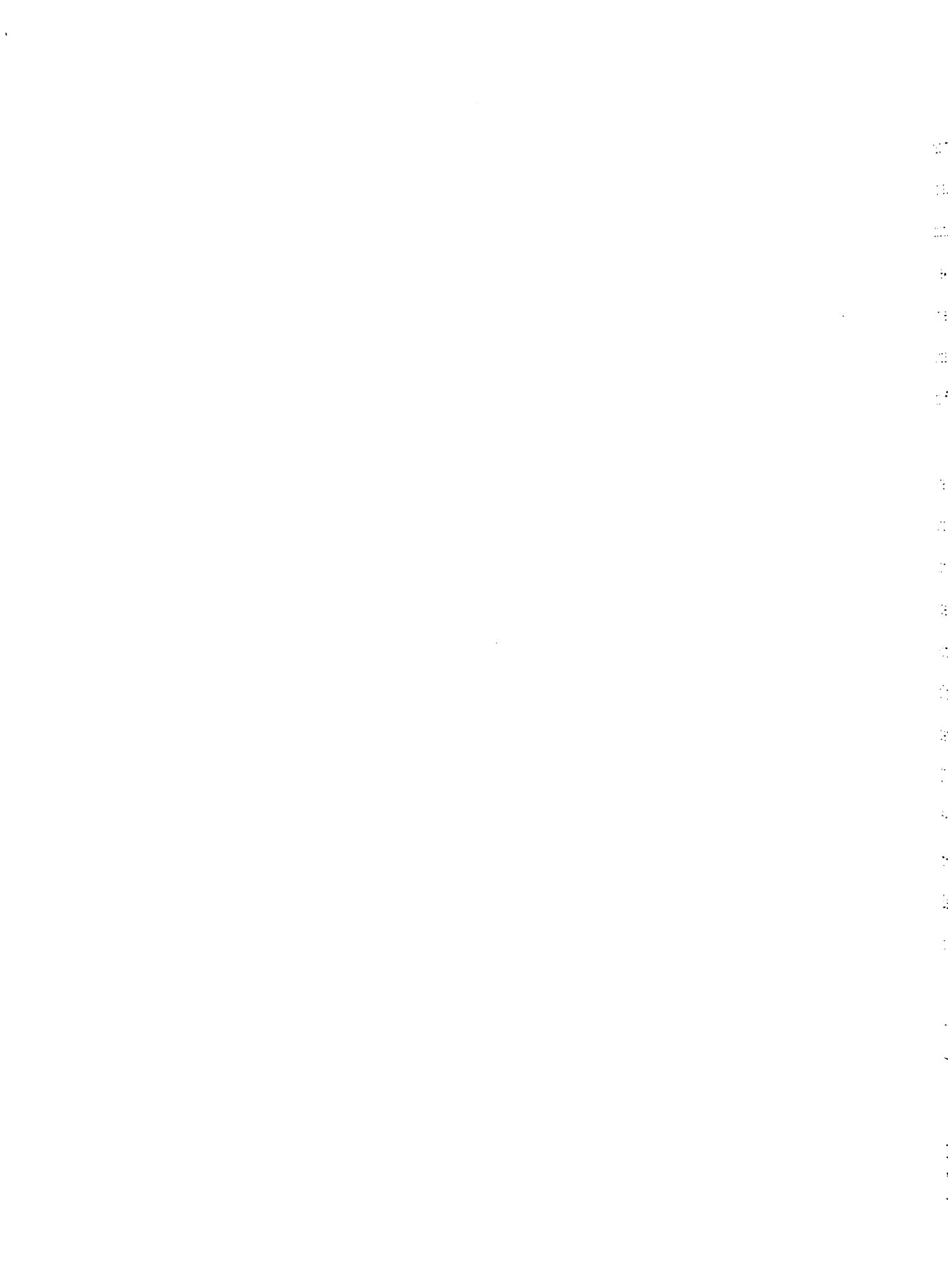
In recent years, considerable interest has been generated concerning the area of behavior called nonverbal communication. Among dimensions of nonverbal communication, dress is included as an artifactual or object component. However, "The exact role of appearance and dress in the total system of nonverbal communication is still unknown" (Knapp 1972:85).

As dress is considered a component of a total communications system, a few linguists have been interested in analogies between



dress and language. They have enlisted approaches for studying personal appearance, including dress, that are comparable to those used in analyzing the structure of languages. The work of Bogatyrev (1971), Barthes (1967), and Faris (1972) which represent these approaches will be discussed. In addition, the schematic approach of Hillestad (1974) to a theoretical analysis of dress as nonverbal communication synthesizes views of contemporary scholars in the field of nonverbal communication.

Bogatyrev, a structural linguist, founder and active member of Prague and Moscow linguistic circles in the early twentieth century, analyzed folk costume for its semantic function as a sign-carrier within the communications system of Moravian Slovakia. According to Bogatyrev, costume signs must be learned just as languages must be learned. Due to learned associations, clothing functions to link individual wearers with subgroups within the society. The associations evolve from patterned regularities in behavior which may be more or less unconsciously practiced. For example, through folk costumes differences are indicated in occupational, religious, age, and marital statuses. Functions with moral, magical, sexual, aesthetic, and nationalistic overtones are also served by the folk costume. He stated that clothing which satisfied mere physical need does not exist and that which exists symbolizes values and attitudes that are most important to the society. Bogatyrev emphasized that clothing is functional in the folk society in terms of expressing what must be expressed to maintain the social order. He also believed that folk costume



had many features that were not shared by urban dress as the latter is subject to rapid fashion change whereas the tendency for folk costume is not to change. Bogatyrev represents a functionalist view of dress maintaining that dress serves a communicative purpose in expressing social roles. Recent scholars posit functions of urban dress which correspond with those Bogatyrev attributed only to folk costume.<sup>1</sup>

Barthes extends the concepts of langue and parole<sup>2</sup> which are fundamental to linguistics to embrace all the systems of signs and refers to dress as an example. Langue is the language system concerning structural relations which exist collectively with all speakers of a language whereas parole is the act of speech, the actual expressions of individuals. Within Barthes "garment system," clothes written about in a fashion magazine represent a systematized set of signs and rules in their pure state comparable to langue. Clothes which are photographed on a model gain aspects of parole from inclusion of the person, while clothes which are worn illustrate parole as individual ways of wearing clothes are represented. Barthes refers, as an illustration of parole, to degrees of cleanliness or wear, personal quirks, and free associations of pieces of clothing.

Barthes applies a postulate from verbal communication to nonverbal communication asserting that individualized expressions

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<sup>1</sup>See Roach & Eicher (1965) and Rosencranz (1972).

<sup>2</sup>Langue and parole were conceptualized by Ferdinand de Saussure, Cours de Linguistique Generale (Paris: Payot). Trans. Wade Baskin, Course in General Linguistics (New York: Philosophical Lib., 1958).

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may be contained within a system of signs and rules. Therefore, deviations from a system do not indicate that the system is not shared collectively but that individual interpretation and expression may be contained within a system of dress usage that is collectively understood.

Faris documents body painting as an art form among the Nuba from the Sudan. He follows a transformational and generative grammar linguistic approach in analyzing the production and identification of elements of body art. In contrast to the previous linguistic approach which emphasized functions, he searched for rules for generating graphic sets of designs. Nuba body art was not found to be semantic in the sense of having deep symbolic meaning but was done primarily to satisfy aesthetic ideals of the society. As aesthetic constraints became apparent in the production of designs, it was possible to record a syntax and a morphology for generating and describing the representations. Faris stresses that even though an art tradition is aesthetically motivated, the context in which it occurs is important. Such cultural traditions cannot be thoroughly understood apart from the class structure and the means of production of a society. Sources of inspiration for designs, materials used, and social rules surrounding the tradition reveal congruence between social structure and the manifestations in personal art. Faris did not find social structural identification encompassed within the graphics applied to the bodies of the Nuba but did find that forms follow predictable sequences dictated by aesthetic choices.



Hillestad examines theories concerning nonverbal communication for their applicability to a schema for analysis of communicative aspects of dress. Two main statements gleaned from theoretical foundations of the schema are: (1) the use of dress to communicate messages involves a communication process with basic components such as source, receiver, message, and channel, and (2) the process is carried out within a socio-cultural system. Within the socio-cultural system, a hierarchy of elements of dress are identifiable which Hillestad calls articles, dress, and appearance. Articles of clothing and adornment may comprise units referred to as dress. Dress is further combined with other expressions of nonverbal behavior to constitute appearance. All three levels are forms which function as message-carriers intersected by time and space in the schema. Dress, as a symbolic aspect of a message, has the potential for conveying thoughts, ideas, or information according to rules of sequence and composition.

Form, space, and time are identified by Hillestad (1974:291) as variables which operate as a channel for communicating messages. Source and receiver components are analyzed according to their relationships to the socio-cultural system in regard to communication skills, attitudes, values, level of knowledge, and position within the system.

Hillestad incorporates the consideration of change related to time and space in a schema for analysis of dress. The message of a form varies depending upon temporal and spatial context. In

addition, expression and interpretation of a message is inter-related with social and psychological variables of individuals.

The authors of the reviewed works have seen dress as an element subjected to social prescriptions within a systemic whole. Dress is rule-governed within a socio-cultural and temporal context. The linguistic literature establishes a base for the specific hypotheses of this study. The rule-governed nature of dress implies that modes exist and that the socially prescriptive nature of modes worn by individuals links them to specific groups. Members of the groups differentiated by dress represent common social roles and self-concepts. As communication involves sets of signs which must be learned, the modes which differentiate groups are understood by those who have learned how roles and self-concepts of a particular society are conveyed. While the hypotheses are universally applicable, illustrations of them are specific to a society. Thus the designation of socio-cultural and temporal context is an integral aspect of behavior related to dress.

#### Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

An inter-disciplinary approach is employed in analyzing the data of this study. Theory and methodology from cultural anthropology, sociology, history, and linguistics have served as inspiration for procedures. The researcher has not gone into the detail of the methodology of each of the above disciplines but has incorporated aspects of each discipline for the perspective of a human ecologist.



An ecological framework underlies the approach of the study. The family and their associates who comprise the population are defined as organisms within an environment. Independent of the family of the study is the urban setting of the natural environment and the social-political forces of the man-built environment imposed upon the family. Clothing is a sub-category of environment, more specifically near-environment, which functions as a dependent adapting and integrating mechanism responding to the character of the independent natural and man-built environments. As a dependent variable, clothing communicates organisms' responses to the larger environmental systems. Clothing reflects human responses to systemic stability and change and, in turn, differentiates individual responses which further influence human behavior. Interaction between human groups is expected to be a reaction stemming from identification of roles and self-concepts of others which is facilitated through clothing. Therefore, clothing serves as a feedback mechanism reflecting an individual's response to the state of a system and influencing the direction of further participation in the system by linking the individual with particular groups. This study is an assessment of the extent to which clothing differentiated groups within a particular system over time.

Concepts borrowed from linguistics proved especially helpful as guides for organizing the primary data concerning dress. The linguistics concepts which provided direction for the bulk of the analysis of the primary data are elaborated on below regarding the manner in which they were interpreted for purposes of the study.

A basic assumption in the analysis of languages is that a language is a set of internalized principles which enable speakers of a language to exchange ideas by means of speech sounds. Principles or rules are defined as regularities in the structure of a language. Throughout linguistic analysis, emphasis is placed on discovering "regularities that underlie linguistic data, on recognizing pattern and structure" (Langacker 1972:1-3). Researchers of nonverbal communication share an identical objective. The search for patterns or regularities is basic to the general aims of scientific inquiry; therefore, it is a primary objective shared by researchers of verbal and nonverbal communication.

In the search for patterns in language, theorists posit the structure of language in terms of three major components: a syntactic component, a phonological component and a semantic component (Chomsky 1965:16). The syntactic component according to Chomsky is viewed as the base of a language. It is composed of a set of rules and a corpus of items called morphemes or formatives used as elements in phrases or sentences. Combinations of items arranged according to rules will produce well-formed sentences in the judgment of a native speaker. The phonological component concerns the acoustical manifestation of the sentences. The semantic component provides the meaningful interpretation of these sentences. All three components are interrelated, however, making it difficult to isolate one component from the others. Rules may be found to explain the relationships of elements of each component; they summarize the linguistic knowledge of the native speaker of a language.



A conceptual framework for the analysis of dress was adapted from the linguistic components. Fundamental to a language is sound. Sound is divided into discrete units called phonemes. The basic building block of syntax is the morpheme manifested as a string of one or more phonemes. The concept, morpheme, is useful in denoting the aspects of dress that are the concern of this study. The morpheme is further defined as the smallest sound/meaning correspondence in the structure of a language. A morpheme, for the most part, cannot be divided without destroying sound/meaning correspondence. As a working hypothesis, it is assumed that single clothing items are the "morphemes" of clothing analysis. Like morphemes, single garments if disassembled are no longer interpretable in the same light as "clothing." Each clothing item can be divided into smaller units of manifestation such as a sleeve, collar, or hem but the units become details which, by themselves, are not clothing. However, the details may be meaningful in themselves as they are identified more specifically as style of sleeve and style of collar or even chemical composition of fiber from which they are fabricated. They do not, however, satisfy the criteria for items which are classifiable in a category called "clothing." Rather than having minimal sound/meaning correspondence, clothing items have minimal visual/meaning correspondence. Language depends primarily on an acoustic channel whereas manifestations of clothing are received mainly through a visual channel.

An inventory of morphemes with information about how the morphemes may be combined into more complex structures is called

(9) 100-

more 90-

more 80-

all 70-

more 60-

more 50-

more 40-

more 30-

more 20-

more 10-

more 0-

a lexicon. As stated earlier, the lexicon is part of the syntactic structure. Linguists aim to list in a lexicon all lexical items contained in a language but, in reality, the available data are usually much less comprehensive. Nevertheless, a researcher works toward identifying rules within the data. Syntax, simply defined, is the body of rules or principles for combining morphemes to form grammatical utterances (Langacker 1967:10). When rules of syntax are violated, speakers of a particular language will recognize the combinations of morphemes as ungrammatical.

The conceptual framework for analysis of dress is modeled from syntactical and semantic components in language analysis. All of the clothing items or forms visibly apparent in the data of the study are listed in a lexicon of dress. Information concerning associations relating to the use of each item is also included. As an example, association between a garment and sex of its wearer is a distinction found universally. As individual clothing items are used together in combinations, the associational information elucidates principles of use restriction to the extent that there may be limits upon combining items with differing associations. Items which are combined most frequently following associational conventions are depicted as modes of dress, female and male modes being two types.

Combinations of items of dress seen frequently are expected to represent compositions which satisfy a group's social, aesthetic, and moral conventions more or less comparably to combinations of morphemes that are judged to be grammatical. Patterned regularities



in dress are subject to environmental constraints just as rules of syntax reveal limitations in the occurrence of language elements as they are dependent upon environmental conditions. For example, a particular item of dress may never be combined with certain other items or other items will be seen only on certain occasions.

A semantic representation evolves when the viewer of the visual image of a composition of items of dress, a near environment, links the image with other observed environmental conditions. By association, the ensemble in conjunction with its larger environment serve as stimuli to activate meanings developed from past experiences with similar stimuli. Generally a speaker of a language learns morphemes and their meanings or semantic representations concomitently. Linguists are not at this time able to say

. . . what kind of information must be associated with a morpheme for it to have a certain meaning as opposed to all other possible meanings. It is clear, however, that morphemes do have semantic representations of some kind and that the pairing of a semantic representation and a phonological representation in a morpheme is in most cases fully arbitrary or conventional (Langacker 1967:81).

Meaning is the "core of communication" (Southworth 1974:186) yet it is the most elusive component for analysis. Techniques for studying semantics have not been rigorously formalized. One classic philosophical view of meaning allies meaning with use (Wittgenstein 1953), a view that has heuristic value for the study of dress. In summarizing two types of use related to dress, Hillestad (1974:278) discusses concrete and abstract levels. At the concrete level, facts pertaining to physical, visual, and utilitarian qualities are gleaned directly by the human organism. In this study, interest



centers on the abstract level where meaning develops from symbolic use of dress.

The use of dress to differentiate between the sexes, to identify persons in certain occupational roles, to symbolize the occurrence of various ceremonies in life, and other ways which are generally understood among aggregates of persons, prompt the creation of meaning at a relatively basic abstract level. Higher levels of abstract meaning occur when the inferences based on the use of dress become intricately compounded (Hillestad 1974:279).

Thus the context in which an item is found operationalizes the concept of use of dress. The social roles expressed by the individual wearers of garments and the space and time in which garments are worn are contextual features of use. The meanings that were in the mind of a wearer of a garment in the early part of the century cannot be probed at this time, of course. It must be assumed that wearers had an understanding of the conventions of their culture and that quantitative evidence reveals accepted uses. Behavior related to dress is learned by a member of a culture as he observes the behavior of others and, from his observations, constructs a set of rules which serve him as a guide to use of clothing within the cultural setting. Because meanings for individuals become intricately compounded, neither meanings of words nor meanings of dress can be fully determined.

#### Overview

The study is organized into two main sections. First, the temporal, spatial, and social context of the family is presented. The extended family group is compared to the larger ethnic group



of which they are members. Second, the dress of the population is analyzed within a conceptual framework to identify forms or items basic to compositions of items, to establish compositions of items which appear to be acceptable within the culture, to reveal environmental constraints influencing combinations of items found in compositions, and to synthesize the historical and social contextual facts with the output of dress.

The hypotheses of the study are integrated with the content at all stages of the research. Modes of dress, the first concept critical to the hypotheses, are the combinations of items of dress most frequently seen on the population of the study. Modes are derived by first identifying all lexical items or forms seen on the population and then searching for combinations of items that indicate accepted uses within the culture, the syntactical component. Differences in modes of dress are determined synchronically and diachronically by quantitative evidence. Changes in modes of dress are interpreted as changes in lexical forms found in modal compositions in differing periods of time.

Social roles and self-concepts, the second focal point of the hypotheses, are investigated in the semantic section as indicators of the meanings of a composition of dress. Criteria such as age, sex, and religion describe individual roles which are part of the social environmental context of dress. Self-concepts are allied with values, and overt behaviors of a social grouping in which the family is a sub-group. Differences in social roles and self-concepts are viewed within one generation and between

generations by qualitative documentation of facts. Changes in social roles and self-concepts are conceptualized for the group as changes reflected in differing relationships for members of various status groups over time. In the summary chapter the organism-environment interrelationships over time are synthesized. The extent to which differences and changes in modes of dress reflect the family group differences and changes in social roles and self-concepts concomitant with states of the larger system is summarized.

## CHAPTER II

### PROCEDURE

A purpose of this study was to trace forms and meanings of dress as they accompany social change primarily through analysis of the dress of five generations of a Yoruba family, their friends and acquaintances. An outsider to a culture can observe forms of dress but the perception of someone who is a member of a culture or who is very well-acquainted with the culture is necessary for interpretation of meanings of dress. The study was designed with the objective of developing a methodology which would enable an outsider to gain insightful understanding of the dress of a particular culture and provide a model for objectifying researchers' interpretations of the dress of other cultures. The researcher does not claim to have encapsulated more than a segment of particular meanings that have been associated with Yoruba dress, but has focussed on meaningful differentiation of groups through dress within the society.

#### Selection of Family

The choice of the family who are the focus of the study was determined by practical conditions. Nigeria was selected as the geographic area of interest based on assurance that there would be access to personal contacts and information because of prior



affiliations of faculty from Michigan State University with Nigerian institutions. After considering various alternate means of gathering data, the particular family from Lagos was chosen for a number of reasons. First, they were known to have an extensive photographic collection spanning a period of time that encompasses a complete era of colonial and post-colonial changes in the country. The documentation of facts by the photographs would present visual evidence that could not be duplicated by verbal description. Comparable representations would also be difficult to duplicate visually because Nigerian newspapers do not feature photographs until the late 1930's and photographs from the beginning of the century in books are sparse. Thus, early photographs are generally available only in personal collections. The photographs also proved to be a hedge against memory loss and a stimulus to further description.

Secondly, the family was amenable to having a researcher live with them, had housing that could accommodate the researcher at the time of the field work, and were willing to cooperate as interviewees. The family were known to be among the educated elite of Nigeria, a fact which provides a parallel to historic costume studies as history of costume has been traditionally a history of the dress of the upper classes. A sampling of their photographs was obtained by the researcher before the field work to verify if they would be usable. While forms of dress could easily be described from the photographs, it was obvious that knowledge about social identification of individuals pictured was necessary for an accurate assessment of cultural meanings of dress. The field work made it possible to have access to

a much larger collection of photographs, to discuss meanings of dress with family members and their friends, and to observe contemporary fashions.

Because of visa restrictions and financial limitations the field work was done in six weeks between May and July, 1974. While a longer period of time would be a more desirable condition for research, the focus on the photographs and a partially structured interview schedule accompanied by the strong interest of the key informant made it possible to gather an ample amount of data.

#### Collection of Contextual and Social Structural Data

The research combines a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. Sections are descriptive; others are an investigation of relationships. The methodology will be presented as it applies to a series of procedural objectives derived from the major purpose. Definitions used in each objective will be covered after the statement of the objective.

#### Temporal and Social Setting

An understanding of dress is dependent upon an understanding of the context in which it occurs. Bush and London have hypothesized a relationship between differences or changes in modes of dress and differences or changes in social roles of members of a society. Changes in social roles of members of a society are interdependent with societal changes as a whole. Lagos is the capital of an area that has been extensively subjected to forces of change during the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Differences in modes of dress and changes in modes of dress to be seen in context must be seen in the light of general social change in Nigeria. Context is defined as the temporal, geographical, and socio-cultural setting of the study. Objectives one and two relate to defining context. They are as follows:

- Objective (1) To survey the historical background of Yorubaland which includes the introduction of various types of dress.
- Objective (2) To describe the social setting of Lagos which precedes and coincides with the period of residence of the informant family, 1850-1974.

The historical background and setting of the dress of the Yoruba people of Lagos was established through a library search of secondary sources including books, periodicals, and dissertations. Descriptive accounts concerning the political, economic, religious and social climate of Yorubaland from the beginning of recorded West African history was reviewed for implications to dress.

The contents of Lagos newspapers dating from 1899 in the National Library, Lagos, and the Michigan State University library were surveyed for all references to dress. Advertisements, columns of household hints, reports of social events, and occasional editorials were fruitful sources within the newspapers for information about dress. One year's issues of weekly papers were read for each decade of their publication. Issues from two months or more of dailies were read. The search was limited by the unavailability of a few issues. Included in the survey were the following:



<u>Dates of Issues</u>	<u>Type of Paper</u>	<u>Name of Paper</u>
All of 1899	Weekly	Lagos Standard
All of 1909	Weekly	Lagos Standard
Apr.-Dec., 1918, All of 1919	Weekly	Lagos Standard
All of 1919	Weekly	Nigerian Pioneer
All of 1929	Weekly	Nigerian Pioneer
All of 1933	Weekly	Nigerian Pioneer
Jan.-June, 1944	Daily	West African Pilot
Jan.-Apr., 1954	Daily	Nigeria Tribune
Jan.-Apr., 1954	Weekly	The Truth (Moslem)
Jan.-Feb., 1959	Daily	Daily Service
Jan.-June, 1964	Daily	West African Pilot
Jan.-Feb., 1974	Daily	Daily Times

As a result of the survey of the social and political context of the study, the time period concomitant with the photographs, 1900 to 1974, was divided into three periods corresponding to political sentiments of the time. Political change was selected as the indicator for social change as the review of the historical literature about the area asserts that both social and economic changes have been largely dependent upon the political climate. The period from 1900 to 1939 was characterized as one of low nationalistic sentiment. The succeeding period, 1940 to 1959, was one of continually increasing nationalistic fervor. The last period, 1960 to 1974, follows the date when Nigeria became an independent nation.

### Social Structural Data

The population of the study are the subjects pictured in the collection of photographs of one extended family, an urbanized,

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educated, Christian, Yoruba family. Procedural objectives three and four pertain to collecting information about the population.

Objective (3) To describe the social structural characteristics of the total population of the study.

Objective (4) To write a social structural description of the informant family group.

The total population consists of 607 photographic representations of members of the extended family, their friends and acquaintances. These were selected from a larger collection of approximately 1,000 photographs because they met the criteria that full bodies were shown, clothing features were clearly distinguishable, and the pose was not duplicated in another photo previously included in the analysis. However, the dearth of photographs from the first three decades necessitated inclusion of all that were available from that time regardless of their fulfillment of the first two criteria. No identical representations of any person were counted more than once. The number of photographs which were analyzed from each of the eight decades is as follows:

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Number of Photos of Individuals</u>
1900-09	7
1910-19	43
1920-29	14
1930-39	46
1940-49	54
1950-59	194
1960-69	160
1970-74	89

After decades were collapsed into three periods corresponding to political climate of the times, one hundred ten subjects of the

photographic population were in the first period, 248 in the second, and 249 in the third.

Information about social roles, i.e., sex, age, marital status, religion, education and occupation, of the population of the study was collected in interviews with informants who are family members. A brief form recording social role data was completed for each member of the immediate family who form the nucleus of the research population (see Appendix B). The inquiries into social structural characteristics often led to reminiscences about family members which were recorded on tape when possible. When informants were uncertain about biographical facts, their reliability was checked with more elderly family members. Two books, a magazine, and newspaper articles contained some additional biographical material about individuals belonging to the family. The data pertaining to immediate family members is organized into a chapter in the form of a case study in which they are compared to the general Yoruba population of Lagos.

The immediate informant family constituted a sub-group of the total population seen in the photographs. Of the total population, 181 representations are poses of thirty members who were named by the key informant as belonging to her immediate family. Persons included were her children, her husband, her brothers and sisters, her parents, their brother and sisters, her parents' parents, her mother's mother's parents, and her father's father's father. Cousins and affinal relatives were recognized as part of the extended family but were not designated as immediate family.



One hundred twenty five poses were of this segment of the family coded as "other family" for purposes of the research. Of the remaining poses, 299 were of non-family members and two were unknown. Thus 306 of approximately half of the representations were family members. Immediate family, other family, and non-family members were included in the analysis.

(a) Sex and Age.--Sixty percent (366) of the subjects in the population are female. In age, the subjects were divided into four categories: (1) those under age ten, (2) age 10 to 15, (3) age 16 to 39, and (4) over 40. The key informant was able to determine quickly the age of most family members as all years of birth were known by her or by relatives of her parents' generation. The age of non-family members, if not known, was approximated jointly by informants and the researcher considering indicators such as the particular occasion, the fashions worn, and general physical appearance of the subject. Number of subjects in each age group are as follows:

Under 10	132
10 to 15	48
16 to 39	278
over 40	149

(b) Religion.--Religious affiliation was known for 58.6 percent (356) of the subjects. Twenty four or less than 4 percent of the total group were Moslem. The rest were identified as Christians. No one was characterized as a follower of an indigenous religion.



(c) Education, Occupation, and Social Class.--The level of education was known for 55 percent (335) of the population. Opportunities for education varied considerably from the beginning to the end of the period studied. To standardize the amounts of education of members of different generations, educational attainment was denoted as (1) less than the maximum amount offered in the country at the time, (2) the maximum offered in the country at the time, and (3) beyond the maximum offered in the country. Another category termed "does not apply" was included for children who were still in school at the time the research was conducted or for individuals who died before completing their education. Numbers of subjects in each category were: unknown = 272, less than maximum amount = 14, maximum amount = 128, more than maximum = 90, and does not apply = 103.

Following the procedure of Smythe and Smythe (1960) occupations were categorized as (1) common laborers and agricultural workers, (2) artisans and technical workers, trade unionists, minor civil service workers, elementary and secondary teachers, practical nurses, and (3) professionals, substantial business entrepreneurs, and high public office holders. Other categories were included for those with no occupations, those for whom the question was not applicable such as children, and those with no occupations. The similarity of occupational categories to social class rankings reflects the overlay of a western framework. The Yoruba sociologist, Fadipe, noted that formal education brought the partial emergence of a middle class to a society which had previously been separated only



as common people and aristocracy (Fadipe 1970:324). Persons with no education would usually hold the occupations in category one. Some education, special skill or training, would, at least in 1960, assure a person of an occupation of the second type. Completion of a "good" secondary education or more is required of the third level (Smythe & Smythe 1960:75).

Contemporary scholars prefer to speak of Nigerian social structure in terms of the elite versus the masses.<sup>1</sup> Smythe and Smythe who searched for distinctions in the upper levels found that lines between levels are difficult to draw but varying degrees of prestige among Nigerians recognized as elite led them to define two elites:

(1) the broad, general category of persons engaged in positions requiring at least secondary education or involving considerable prestige (e.g. clerks, secondary school teachers, natural rulers), and (2) the most select upper-level elite . . . (1960:102).

Among their top-level elite were those included in occupational category three of this study. Members of the current generations who occupy occupational category two would usually not be considered among the elite but, due to the earlier close correspondence between education and occupational prestige, the educated members of the first generations who were in positions such as civil servants were among the Nigerian elite.

Wives and children were said to share the status of the husband and father (Smythe & Smythe 1960:5). Occasionally, however,

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<sup>1</sup>See for example, P. C. Lloyd, ed., The New Elites of Tropical Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), and; Hugh H. and Mabel M. Smythe, The New Nigerian Elite (Stanford: University Press, 1960).

some very successful women traders may establish the status of their family (Izzett 1961:306).

The frequency count of pictures of subjects in each occupational group is as follows:

Laborers	17
Artisans and technical workers	100
Professionals	144
No occupation	--
Occupation unknown	237
Does not apply	<u>109</u>
Total	607

The occupations of nearly 43 percent of the population were known. Of those, 55 percent were in the professional and business group.

Because there has been a close correspondence between levels of education and occupational attainment, the two categories were collapsed to increase the information available for data analysis. Educational level was known or was not applicable for 335 subjects. Type of occupation was known for 370 subjects. Collapsing the data from educational and occupational ranks increased the number of subjects in the known group to 424 or nearly seventy percent of the population. Five classes of subjects were derived from combining the information. Among these, there is a class of subjects for whom both the amount of education and occupation are unknown. Of the remaining classes, those whose education or occupation are known are divided with amount of education stated first and occupation second as seen in Table 2.1 with numbers of persons in each class. Other education/occupation combinations are possible but do not exist in the data. For example, no subject who had completed



**TABLE 2.1.--Number of Persons from Study Population in Educational/Occupational Classes.**

Class	Amount of Formal Education	Type of Occupation	Number of Persons
0	Unknown	Unknown	183
1	Unknown Less than maximum offered Less than maximum offered	Unskilled Unknown Unskilled	20
2	Unknown Less than maximum offered Maximum offered Maximum offered Maximum offered Beyond maximum offered	Some special skill or training Some special skill required Unknown Some special skill required Deceased before establishing occupation Some special skill required	32
3	Unknown Maximum offered Beyond maximum	Professional or substantial business entrepreneur Professional or business entrepreneur Professional or business entrepreneur	145
4	Unknown Education not completed	Does not apply (subject is child) Does not apply	109
Total Number			<u>607</u>

the maximum amount of education offered in the country at the time was in the category of common laborer. No one was identified as having no occupation. Children who would not have been employed were coded in the category of occupation "does not apply."

(d) Marital Status.--Marital status of individuals at the time of each photograph was recorded to the extent that it was known in the categories: single, married, divorced, and widowed. One-third of the persons pictured (205) were known to be married at the time the photo was taken. Approximately one-third (222) were single but, of these, 176 were children. The number of persons known to be in the divorced or widowed categories (10) was too small to provide an adequate sample for contrast.

(e) Population with Unknown Statuses.--Social structural characteristics of about half of the population were known. Those that were known are predominantly Christian, have the maximum amount of education offered in the country and are in professional occupations. Although the collection of family photographs contains pictures of friends and acquaintances as well as family members, it is believed that many subjects of the photographs for whom social structural placement was unknown would occupy a status group comparable to that of family members. The assumption is based upon Smythe and Smythe's assertion that:

Individuals who occupy a similar position in the status hierarchy of a local community tend to form status groups; they react to each other as social equals, encourage the intermarriage of their children, join the same clubs and associations, and participate together in informal, friendly association (1960:7).

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It is probable that photographs will also be exchanged between social equals. However, photographs of family servants who occupy a lower class than the family in general are also found in the collection. As indicated previously, only twenty subjects were known to occupy the lower class.

### Collection and Analysis of Photographic Data

Objectives in this section relate to data about specific dress of the population. Objectives are:

- Objective (5) To determine aspects of stability and change in the use of items of dress by the population, 1900-1974.
- Objective (6) To relate modes of dress of the population to social change in Nigeria, 1900-1974.
- Objective (7) To derive meanings of items and modes of dress seen on the population, 1900-1974.

### Collection of Data

The data about items of dress came from examining primary sources, the photographs. An instrument was developed to record the name of each visible clothing item, the environment in which the item was used, and sensory properties of the item<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix B). Environment in this case includes the individual who wore the item, position on the body, and the occasion for which it was worn.

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<sup>1</sup>Turner states that properties of symbols can be inferred from three classes of data: (1) exegetic interpretations, (2) significant contexts, and (3) external form and observable characteristics. See Victor W. Turner, Forest of Symbols (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967). The instrument is a means for recording environmental contexts, names of external forms, and observable sensory characteristics.

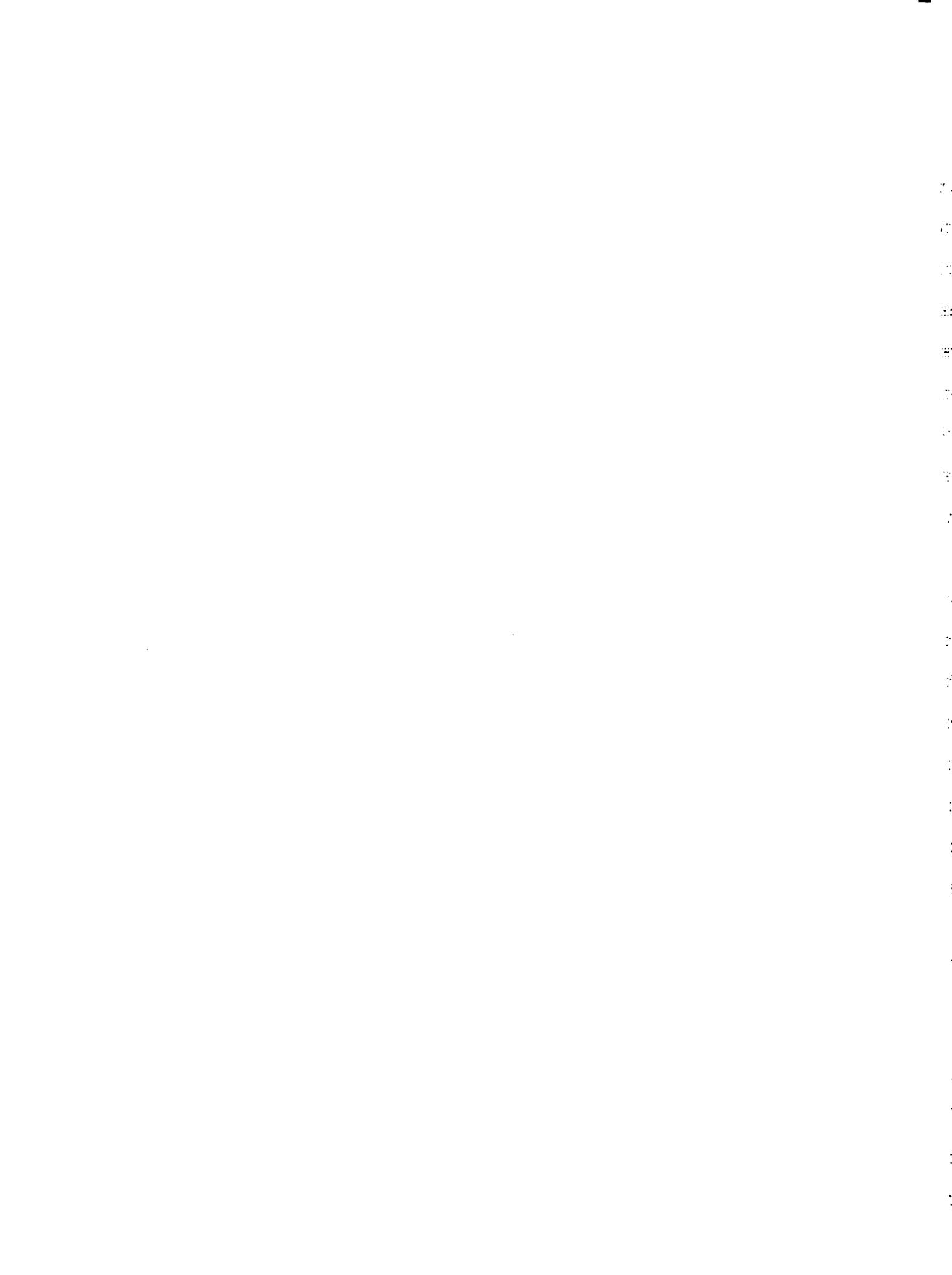
The individuals were classified according to social structural characteristics. Position on the body was recorded following a chart designating possible positions (see Appendix B). The occasion of each photograph was noted in regard to whether it was an everyday occasion of an informal at-home type, a better dress occasion calling for clothes worn in public such as to an office or a modest party, or a special occasion of a ritual or ceremonial type. The degree of formality increases with each type.

In categorizing occasions, consideration was given to categories of dress recognized by Bogatyrev (1971:36-45). He observed a transitional sequence of functions associated with types of dress which he called everyday, holiday, ceremonial, and ritual costume. The every day category of a folk society may be separated into at least two general classifications in an urban-industrial society such as that of Lagos with its greater occupational variety and specialization. Everyday dress worn at home is assumed to have functional differences from everyday dress worn to work; therefore, form may differ as well as meaning. Everyday dress worn in public by the family was coded as "better dress," a distinction which the key informant emphasized. Holiday, ceremonial, and ritual dress appear to be analogous to "special occasion" dress with variations dependent upon the relationship of participants to the occasion. Differences among individuals in relationship to the celebrant of an occasion constitute differences in social roles.

A predominance of better dress appeared in the photographs. Total number of representations in each category are:

Unknown	10
Everyday occasion, at-home type	27
Better dress occasion, work or party	402
Special occasion, picture of celebrant	55
Special occasion, member of immediate family of celebrant	51
Special occasion, distant family of celebrant	15
Special occasion, non-family	25
Special occasion, family affiliation unknown	22

The third type of information recorded included physical and psychological properties of dress recognized by informants and the researcher. Sensory properties, perceptible aesthetic elements of texture, color, and design, were recorded but were omitted from the present research report, not because they are unimportant as communicative elements, but because the decision was made to limit the research to forms which may be nominally identified as articles of clothing. Properties that were included in the analysis are a cognitive assessment of general social worth and of cultural association as recognized by the key informant. An appraisal of worth of each item was requested in the broad categories of whether the item was seen as (1) common, ordinary, (2) nice or "good," or (3) rare. The judgment of worth was considered important to the meaning an item would have for its wearer and the occasion for which it would be worn. Judgments of social worth could be difficult to make by contemporary informants viewing historical items of dress. In this case, informants who were born before 1900 were among the family members and they were asked for their judgments when the key informant was in doubt.



The cultural associations were (1) traditional, (2) western, or (3) other, associations which have been viewed as indicators with face validity of various social identifications in Nigeria since the early nineteenth century. In the recording of data it became necessary to add another association. "Other" would have been appropriate for items that have a definite cultural association other than western or traditional but very few of these items existed. A number of items did not bring to mind a cultural association and hence those that were neither traditional nor western were called "universal." Some types of jewelry are an example.

The key informant cooperated in almost daily evening interviewing sessions for about a month. Thus, the details of the photographs were studied jointly incorporating the observations of the researcher with the explanations and intuitive judgment provided by a member of the Yoruba culture. The instrument increased objectivity by directing attention to all clothing items. A nominal classification system which included each item appearing in the photographs evolved from the interviews. The classification system appears in the lexicon of dress.

### Analysis of Data

Items of dress are elements within modes of dress. Modes of dress are defined as combinations of items of dress that are seen more frequently than any other combinations worn by the population. Each garment recognized as a complete piece of clothing is one item. After items were specified, combinations of items used together at different periods of time could be determined. Before

relating differences in the modes of dress to social change, items and then modes had to be identified. Meanings of items and modes were then related to the human environmental context in which they were found. Both items and modes are included under the rubric of "forms" of dress.

The analysis of data is in three parts. An inventory of items of dress appears in the first part. Acceptable combinations of items in differing periods of time are specified in the second part. Meanings of items or combinations related to social roles and self-concepts are discussed in the final section of the analysis. Detailed steps in the analysis will be explained as the data are presented.

#### Summary

The purpose of the study was twofold: to trace forms and meanings of Yoruba dress as they interrelate with social change differentiating groups within the society and to adapt a framework from language analysis to provide a cross-cultural model for collection and analysis of data concerning dress. A photographic collection including five generations of an extended Yoruba family provided primary data. The elite status of the family made them comparable to fashion leaders in other cultures. Through field work, it was possible to combine the researcher's observations of written and pictorial data with explanations from informants.

The historical and social context of the dress of the Yoruba was described. Secondary sources were searched for information

concerning the political, economic, religious, and social climate which may have influenced dress in Yorubaland, particularly in Lagos where the family claim residency. An approximately equal number of Lagos-based newspapers from each decade of the study, 1900 through 1970, was analyzed for references to dress. Particularistic information about the family contrasted to Yoruba society in general was discussed as a case study.

There were 607 pictorial representations of the individuals in the population. Social roles of the population were identified in interviews with informants who are family members. Statuses related to age, sex, marriage, religion, education, and occupation were ascertained. Social structural characteristics of about half of the population were known. The known members of the population were predominantly Christian, had the maximum amount of education offered in the country, and were in professional occupations. It was assumed that friends and acquaintances for whom social structural characteristics were not known would occupy a status group comparable to that of family members.

The photographs were analyzed within the framework analogous to that used for studying systems of a language. Single articles of dress or single units of body modification were termed minimal meaningful units. With the aid of a key informant, all apparent minimal units of dress were identified by name, relative social worth, and cultural association on each fully visible figure in the photographs. The informant also identified context in terms of the known occasions at which the photographs were taken.



Combinations of items constituting modes of dress were determined for each of three periods corresponding to political climates of the times. Acceptable combinations of items in particular environments were formulated from the empirical evidence seen in the photographs. Meanings of dress were proposed on the basis of combining objective and subjective data. The social structural characteristics of the population were correlated with modes of dress to investigate relationships proposed in the hypotheses. In Chapter VI the historical and social context of the family is considered with the manifestations of dress over time in a systemic analysis. The extent to which dress differentiated roles and self-concepts in three periods of time is summarized.





Figure 3.1.--Location of Lagos, Nigeria, in West Africa.

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## CHAPTER III

### TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL SETTING: LAGOS

. . . there is a powerful interaction between the world we live in and the appearance we choose to make within it (Squire 1974:9).

Dress is an adaptation by humans to their socio-cultural setting. Changes in modes of dress may occur as innovations from within a culture or as selected or forced changes due to contact with other cultures. Explanations for forms of dress found in Lagos throughout the period of the study are interrelated with social changes. Historical influences affecting the forms of Yoruba dress in Lagos will be discussed in the following chapter.

#### Fifteenth to Early Nineteenth Century

The exchange of aspects of cultures can be expected when groups from different cultures establish contacts. The Portuguese visited the original settlers of Lagos as early as 1472 (Crowder 1962:58). Lagos Island did not, however, become an established settlement until sometime around the early seventeenth century when a subgroup of Yoruba moved there from the mainland to defend themselves against other Yoruba groups (Mabogunje 1968:238). In the meantime, the Portuguese as well as other Europeans continued to come to West Africa, with the quest for trade as their constant



motive. First they came looking for gold, then slaves, and finally raw materials of the West African forest (Dike 1956:5).

As foreigners arrive, the high visibility of clothing of an unfamiliar type may be one of the first differences to arouse curiosity. There are reports that traders with West Africans used clothing as a medium of exchange from the beginning of their explorations. An ambassador from the inland kingdom of Benin is said to have made an exchange visit to Portugal in the late 1400's and was given a gift of rich clothes from his hosts (Crowder:60). Records show that Europeans in 1588 brought linen, woolen cloth, copper bracelets, glass beads and coral to West Africa while they took back ivory, palm oil, pepper, and cotton cloth (Crowder:66).

In The History of the Yorubas, Samuel Johnson gives an account of a three-year celebration for peace and prosperity that was held by the people of Oyo. One of the distinguished visitors was a Popo king who

was a particular friend of the Alafin's, and usually supplied him with clothes and other articles of European manufacture, being nearer the coast and having dealings with European traders of those days (Johnson 1921:179).

Johnson says that it was an occasion for everyone to dress in "holiday best." The two kings competed in the quantity and variety of robes that they could wear. Each time the King of Oyo appeared in a different robe, the Popo king would put on a covering cloth of the same fabric.

But the citizens of Oyo grew jealous for the honour and glory of their king and wished him to appear superior to the Elewiodo King of Popo by robing himself with something the like of

which even the Elewi had not; but they found that he had nothing the like of which his friend had not; so they had recourse to a device. The manufacturers were summoned and the case put before them, and they promised to rise to the occasion. A simple gown was thereupon woven, of common stuff indeed, but embossed all over with the silken wool of the large cotton tree; seen at a distance the nature of the cloth could not be made out by the crowd; when the sun shone upon it, it reflected a silken hue to the admiration of all; when the breeze blew, detached flosses of silk floated all around his majesty. Even the Elewi-odo and the provincial kings could not help admiring the curious robe which they took for something so superior, that none but the great Alafin of Oyo alone possessed! The crowd went into ecstatic frenzy about it, and shouted an applause (Johnson:179).

While the two kings enjoyed the friendly rivalry, subjects of Oyo did not take kindly to the attempt to outdo the sartorial splendor of their sovereign. Jealousy led to bloodshed and this king of Oyo reportedly lost his life over the antagonism created by competition in clothing (Johnson:180).

Cloth also played a part in the Europeans gaining entrance to Lagos. Losi related that the King of Lagos who began his reign in 1704 knew Portuguese slave dealers when he lived previously in an area to the west of Lagos. He invited the slave dealers to Lagos.

On their arrival . . . they offered him presents of various kinds of valuable articles, among which was a costly piece of deep-jet-satin velvet. This piece of velvet being placed in his room made the room dark in the day and bright at night. He was so astonished at this that he sent the cloth to the King of Benin as a present adding that it was worthy of being only in the possession of His Majesty (Losi 1914:13).

The King of Lagos was paying deference to the King of Benin as Lagos paid tribute to the Benin Empire for two centuries (Baker 1974:18). The King of Benin was pleased and encouraged the King of Lagos to continue his friendship with the Portuguese.

Although Portuguese, along with other European powers, lingered along the coast for centuries (Ademoyega 1962:91), after 1553 England became established as the leading trader on the coast (Crowder:62). The arrival of the Portuguese had opened the first stage in the complete reorientation of the economy of the Yoruba kingdoms shifting from emphasis on interior African trade toward dominance by European interests. Trans-Saharan exchange eventually gave way to the speedier export of goods by road and rail through the ports of the Atlantic coast (Crowder:57), Lagos becoming the major port. The Portuguese were followed by the British and later by the French, Dutch, and Germans who all had their day of prominence in Lagos history.

Cloth and clothing, among other articles, remained an important item of trade throughout the history of European-African exchange. It might be anticipated that Europeans were often prone to take advantage of the situation. Crowder reveals that European merchants

. . . fobbed off second-rate goods to the Africans who had no standards of comparison, and often sold them ridiculous second-hand clothes pretending that they were those worn by the aristocracy in England. We should not laugh therefore at the amused descriptions by contemporary travellers of the pretentious attire of many African kings, for it was often as not encouraged by the white traders themselves with high profit as the primary motive (Crowder:135).

However, the major commodity for which Lagos became known in the nineteenth century was slaves. As early as 1441 slaves were sold in Lisbon (Crowder:60), but it was not until the 1800's that Lagos became an important slaving port. When the British

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outlawed slave trade in 1807, their ships took over patrolling the West African coast from the French who had begun surveillance earlier. The location of Lagos on a land-locked lagoon offered seclusion for slave-trading operations making Lagos a notorious center for hiding victims (Mabogunje 1968:240). In addition to a secluded but accessible location, Lagos had a steady supply of slaves brought in as captives from wars in the interior of Nigeria.

The human cargo of the slave ships that were intercepted by British patrols had to be released at some location where they would not merely be recaptured. In addition, other groups of African origin had gained their freedom in the New World and wanted to return to their homeland. The British established Freetown in Sierra Leone as the place where rescued slaves would be freed and repatriates could settle. The slaves who came back from the Americas came with varying amounts of western culture. They may have all come back in western dress because a description of procedures for handling liberated Africans in 1838 included: "After adjudication and liberation the new residents were given clothing and released from Queen's yard . . ." (Kopytoff 1965:27).

#### Nineteenth Century After 1840

Many of the approximately 30,000 ex-slaves who had been diverted to Sierra Leone by 1830 (Kopytoff:19) knew that their place of origin was in Yorubaland. A desire to return to families along with other conditions such as excessive pressures on the poor quality of land that was available in Sierra Leone, motivated requests to return to their homeland. Their requests interested

three elements of the British population: those who recognized the potential of legitimate trade, those committed to ending the slave trade, and those who advocated the spread of Christianity in that part of the world. It was expected that liberated Africans who had some Western education could be emissaries for British influence in Yorubaland as they "would facilitate British penetration, the routine of government, the expansion of trade, and the implantation of Christianity" (Kopytoff:v). However, some slave trade continued out of Lagos creating precarious conditions for returnees. Even after the European countries abolished slavery and the British navy patrolled the coastline, it is estimated that another 4,000,000 slaves were taken across the Atlantic (Crowder:63).

Nevertheless, a number of Sierra Leonians persisted in their desires to return to Yorubaland. In November, 1838, a petition was sent to the British requesting government and missionary support to emigrate to Badagry. Lagos was not the desired destination because

. . . however involved the Lagosians were in the trade, they were themselves rarely victims of it, in contrast to most of the other groups. Thus, to none of the returning Sierra Leonians would Lagos itself be the home of earlier days . . . (Kopytoff:14).

Many of them wanted to go back to the Abeokuta area which could be reached by way of Badagry.

In spite of the risks involved, several shiploads of emigrants debarked successfully in areas adjacent to lands which had been home for their parents or themselves. During the early 1840's, a group of Christian converts who had arrived in Badagry

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wrote to mission headquarters in Sierra Leone requesting that a missionary be sent to them. A Wesleyan missionary accompanied by an African co-worker went to Badagry in 1842. Finding that many of the Sierra Leonians had gone on to Abeokuta, he followed them there.

The missionary was impressed with the intelligence and dignity of Shodeke [Abeokuta Ruler]; with his hospitality, both toward the emigrants and the visiting missionaries; and particularly with the fact that he allowed the Sierra Leonians to wear European dress and exempted them from the traditional salutation, that is, from prostrating themselves before him (Kopytoff:48).

The repatriates were probably the first group whom many Nigerians had seen in western dress.

During the 1840's a mass of Sierra Leonians worked their way back to Nigeria. Some found their original locale but others concentrated at focal points of which, in contrast to earlier days, Lagos along with Abeokuta became most popular (Ajayi 1962:220). Between 1839 and 1841 more than 250 Sierra Leone emigrants returned to Lagos, then a city with a population of less than 20,000 (Mabogunje 1968:24). Another group of ex-slaves who were able to attain their freedom in Brazil joined the Sierra Leonians. By 1851, there were about 130 of the Brazilian families in Lagos (Mabogunje:240). The two aggregations of newcomers were known respectively as the Saro and the Amaro.

After 1850, Lagos experienced an influx of population as repatriates, Europeans, and indigenous Nigerian refugees migrated to the island. A factor of primary importance leading to the increased desirability of settling in Lagos was bombardment of

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Lagos by the British in 1851. A dispute over the chieftaincy was threatening to throw Lagos into civil war when Akitoye, a deposed contender to the throne, appealed to the British consul and agreed that if he were restored to power, he would end the slave trade which still persisted in Lagos, allow missionaries to carry on undisturbed, and do away with human sacrifice. The current king, Kosoko, had refused to stop the slave trade and had blocked the road between Abeokuta and Lagos, an act which exasperated both traders and missionaries. Access to the interior was necessary for trade, the main commodity being palm oil which was becoming a lucrative alternative to slave-trading. The British attack on Lagos drove out Kosoko and Akitoye was restated as king. As Akitoye's success in fulfilling the agreement was limited, however, the British resorted finally to annexing the island of Lagos in 1861 (Ademoyega 1962:91).

The residents of Lagos reacted initially to the bombardment by deserting the town but eventually many came back and new groups joined them. The European merchants ready to buy and sell commodities were among the first (Mabogunje 1968:242). By 1862, foreign merchants in Lagos were as follows: 16 British, 5 Brazilian, 3 German, 2 Italian, and 1 French (Crowder:151).

The missionaries were another group who served as models of European culture. While they were few in number, they were particularly influential in fostering the acceptance of European ways. "The most powerful factor of change introduced by these early missionaries was Western education (Crowder:132)." They were



totally responsible for initial attempts to bring formal education to Yorubaland. "Although Lagos became a British colony in 1861, the British government did virtually nothing about educating its inhabitants until 1882 when the first Education Code was promulgated" (Awe:5).

The Church Missionary Society known as the C.M.S., an offshoot of the official Anglican Church of England, was most prominent in early missionary activity. The ideal of the C.M.S. was not literary schooling for a few, but rather a combination of agricultural and industrial training with literary studies. However, industrial and technical education was much more expensive than literary education and missions which were always operating with limited funds could not afford their ideal for long (Ajayi 1963:520).

Pressure from the Sierra Leonian and Brazilian repatriates also directed the course of educational institutions. Many of the Africans who became staff at the schools were educated in Sierra Leone where there was a seminary and later a teachers' training college as early as the 1820's (Kopytoff:34-35). The Sierra Leonian community saw "most promising routes to success, wealth, and distinction through training and service in the Church, commerce or professional training in bookkeeping, medicine, and so on. And the key to these was grammar school education" (Ajayi 1963:522). The first secondary school in Lagos, started in 1859, offered subjects like Grammar, Composition, Arithmetic, History, Latin, Greek, Geography and the Sciences (Ajayi 1963:523). The precedent set by this curriculum was followed well into the 20th Century.



Almost all of the secondary school pupils during the first years of the school were sons of Sierra Leonians (Kopytoff:121). Any who were not Christian would become knowledgeable of the doctrine in school as well as "westernized."

. . . Christ and Western Civilization came together; no one could distinguish one from the other. Collar and tie, or the Bible. The early native Christians were known by their western dress (Delano 1945:12).

Ten years later the C.M.S. yielded to demands from the immigrant community to open a girls' school.

According to its prospectus which was printed in 1872, the school aimed at providing a good and useful education thoroughly English but suited as much as possible to the peculiarities of this country (Awe:6).

School girl fashions illustrated in the publication commemorating a century of women's education in Lagos show dress at the C.M.S. Female Institution to have been thoroughly English indeed! In 1869, the outfit featured a frilly petticoat and bustle ruffles. The example from 1879 has a bonnet, pinafore, bustle, and boots while the fashion for 1889 shows leg-o-mutton sleeves and an ankle-length skirt. Western dress has continued to prevail in school fashions and uniforms into the 1970's (Awe:36). See Figure 3.2.

Mabogunje says that throughout the nineteenth century the number of Europeans in Lagos was never very great. "In 1866 there were only 42; by the end of the century it had risen to about 250 (1968:242). The health hazards of unknown diseases which claimed many lives were a major deterrent to the white man.



Figure 3.2.--School Girl Fashions in Lagos: 1869, 1879, and 1889.

After the "reduction" of Lagos by the British, it was the African population that grew rapidly. The Sierra Leonians continued to immigrate in increasing numbers until they comprised about one-fifth of the population of Lagos in 1865 (Kopytoff:86). As a group, they became known as traders who dealt primarily in palm oil, although some ivory and locally produced cloth was also handled. Europeans did not generally welcome the competition in trade because the Sierra Leonians knowledge of the local people gave them advantages in making trading contacts. However, for the most part the repatriates emulated and admired the British and interpreted the British intervention in Lagos as benevolent efforts "to create the nation they dreamt about" (Ajayi 1961:202).

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The Governor of Lagos had orders not to extend British territory beyond Lagos but wars creating turmoil in the interior interfered with trade and left him facing a dilemma. War had begun in 1804 when the Fulani advanced against the Hausa in Northern Nigeria in their zeal to extend the beliefs of Islam. A complex of wars followed known as the Yoruba Civil Wars which lasted from 1821 to 1893. Multiple religious, political, and economic variables provoked the seemingly endless wars. The British became directly involved in 1865 when the Governor sent a contingent of West Indian troops out of Lagos to defend a strategic town on the trade route between Ibadan and Lagos (Crowder: 153).

The population count of Lagos grew as a result of the havoc of the wars. When Lagos became known as a free colony, many slaves escaping from their masters in the interior fled to the coastal city augmenting the Lagos population. Prominent among the escaped domestic slaves were Hausa who came from outlying Yoruba areas. Although Lagos is recognized as a Yoruba city, the Hausa are an indigenous group who, in spite of small numbers, have also had a strong influence in establishing the character of the peoples of Lagos. Coleman describes their individuality which persists a century after their arrival in Lagos.

The Hausa, and the groups they have assimilated over the centuries, are identified principally by the Hausa language, which has become a lingua franca of the western Sudan; the Muslim faith; the Hausa gowns and skullcap; and skill in trading. The Hausa possess an intense cultural consciousness, and no matter where they travel abroad, or how long they remain,

they retain a profound pride in being Hausa. They have displayed little desire to emulate or imitate the white man (1960:21).

Although the Hausa were a small proportion of the Lagos population constituting no more than 5 percent of the total population at any time after 1900 (Baker 1974:39), their religion was widely accepted by the Yoruba in spite of the battles that were fought to resist its penetration into Yorubaland in the early part of the century. By 1901 more than half the town was Moslem and only one-quarter was Christian (Baker:39). Because Moslems accepted polygyny and domestic slavery, their beliefs were less alien than those of the Christian. In addition to the Hausa religion, the Yoruba adopted some of the Hausa dress as part of their own. The voluminous outer gowns and slippers worn by men in traditional Yoruba dress originated with the Hausa.

During the 1860's, the interest of European countries in West Africa intensified. Britain's volume of trade on the Niger River increased from L1800 in 1857 to over L8000 a couple of years later (Ademoyega 1962:95). Merchants from different countries, particularly the British, the French, and the Germans, vied for monopolies on trade from Lagos but Britain was increasing administrative personnel in West Africa and concentrating her power closer to Lagos. In the beginning the Colony of Lagos was included in British West African Settlements with a governor-in-chief in Sierra Leone. The Colony was placed under the Governor of the Gold Coast in 1874 (MacMillan 1920:31). When West Africa was divided up among European countries at the Berlin Conference of 1885, Britain was

awarded Nigeria, particularly because of her business entrenchments in the Niger Basin (Ademoyega:93). In 1886 a separate Colony of Lagos was established. Until this time, Britain had maintained an air of indifference to expanding into the hinterland (Nwabara 1964: 313). From now on Britain was deeply involved in the affairs of Nigeria (Crowder:168). Efforts were concentrated on suppressing resistance in the interior. When negotiations failed, military expeditions went out from Lagos. By 1900, trade with most of the interior could be conducted without incident.

The activities of the British from 1850 to 1900 met the approval of some Africans but they were also resented in certain quarters. The policy of missionaries to keep Christian converts and educated Africans away from the society and politics of the old community was one aggravation (Ajayi 1961:204). White missionaries condemned the participation in local organizations of blacks who had become missionaries in their own right. "[The Europeans] were convinced that their own society was superior, and also that conversion of the local people would have to be not only from the traditional religion but from the whole way of life which was intertwined with it and supported it (Crowder:209)." Friction between blacks and whites increased because some European missionaries did not feel that black religious leaders should have positions of superiority over whites (Kopytoff:242). Between 1880 and 1900, agitation for the relinquishment of more responsibility to Africans nearly resulted in a schism in the Lagos Methodist Church while

a major split did occur in the Baptist Church in Lagos (Ajayi 1961: 207).

Movement away from the emulation of European culture could be seen among church lay members who favored reform in dress among other things. J. A. Otunbo Payne, a Sierra Leonian and active supporter of the C.M.S. along with Saro friends states that,

The unanimous opinion of intelligent Africans is that health in West Africa is impaired, and lives shortened by the adoption of European tastes, customs and habits, materials and forms of dress (Payne in Kopytoff:256).

Ajayi relates that there was a general spread of disillusionment among educated Africans in the late 1870's (Ajayi 1961:206).

They were shocked by the growing attitudes of superiority among Europeans in business and government as well as the church.

While all of the [three] papers [published during the 1880's] criticized the African population when they were felt not to have taken advantage of the opportunities offered them, criticism was more often aimed, especially in the Lagos Times, at British officials and their policies for not having given Africans sufficient opportunities (Kopytoff:218).

The increasing number of European merchants in Lagos lessened the profits of local merchants. Other merchants whose operations were based solely in Britain did not always deal in good faith. Nearly every steamer coming to West African markets brought a large batch of circulars from firms offering exceptional inducements to those who would send them orders but some of the circulars came from bogus firms that would not reply or firms that were about to become insolvent (Lagos Standard, May 24, 1899).

Political representation was another source of contention. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century a Legislative

Council of Lagos was in existence but African members were designated as unofficial members. Representation was grossly unbalanced for the population which was estimated in 1881 to be:

117 whites  
68 mulattoes  
75,085 blacks      (Tamuno 1965:558).

Chambers of Commerce for Lagos were established three times between 1888 and 1900. "All three chambers had African members until 1903, when a long period of almost complete European dominance began (Hopkins 1965:247)." Difficulties in sustaining a Chamber of Commerce could be largely attributed to the fact that head offices of expatriate firms were in Europe and all important business decisions were made there (Hopkins:247).

Dissension evolved into a minor cultural renaissance in Lagos in the last decade of the 19th century. Social, religious, and aesthetic facets of indigenous life were viewed with renewed interest. The educated population revived traditional dances, music and art. The first historical publications about the Yoruba were written. The rebirth was heralded further with the ceremonious discarding of European clothes by some (Ajayi 1961:207).

However, many Lagosians did not change their style of dress because they had never adopted European clothes. They continually wore the typical dress of the Yoruba people described by Samuel Johnson in 1899:

The Yorubas clothe themselves in loose flowing robes like the people of the East, . . . The men wear gowns, vests, and a very free and ample kind of trousers called Sokoto. In lieu

of the gown sometimes a sheet of cloth three yards by two is thrown around the body for a covering, passing under the right arm-pit, and overlapping over the left shoulder . . . (Johnson: 110).

There are three sorts of gowns, the Suliya, Agbada and Girike. The Suliya is the smallest, plainest and lightest; always made of white material, it reaches much below the knee, open at the sides, with the arm stretched the sleeve would reach as far as the ankles, and extends beyond the arms (Johnson:111).

The women's dress is much simpler, two or three wrappers and a head dress or circlet complete their toilet. Unmarried women generally use two wrappers, the under wrapper being fixed above the breasts. This is made of fine cloth and is heavier. The upper is fixed about the middle of the body; and is made of lighter cloth. To these married women add a third, used as a shawl, or covering for the head and back. Underneath all these, and immediately next the body is worn from the age of puberty a short apron or petticoat reaching the knees, and tied round the waist with a strong cord or band. This is called Tobi.

Female headgear consists of a band, of about 6 to 10 inches wide and 5 feet long (more or less). This is wound twice round the head and tucked on one side. It may be of plain cloth or costly, as she can afford. Well-to-do ladies use velvet cloths (Johnson:112).

Even though there was bitterness toward the encroachment of Europeans, educated Africans generally retained a strong attachment of Europe (Ajayi 1961:209). While they resented unfair treatment of Africans at the hands of Europeans, they nevertheless admired European culture and technology (Tamuno:272). The Lagos Standard in 1899 commented on desirable changes that had taken place in the town giving at least partial credit to the British.

In many respects the town of Lagos has made remarkable progress from the period when from being a tributary of Benin, she passed into the hands of the British government and was in time declared a Crown Colony. A vast difference exists between the Lagos of today and the Lagos of a little over three decades ago. Evidences of a progressive civilization are everywhere

apparent in well-built houses, wide streets, churches, schools, electric lights, telegraph, a free press and other adjuncts of civilization (May 17, 1899).

### Twentieth Century

#### (1) 1900-1939: Period of Low Nationalistic Sentiment

On January 1, 1900, the Protectorate of Nigeria was established as part of the British Empire. The name, Nigeria, probably appeared for the first time in an official document that year (Ademoyega 1962:213). There were three parts in the Protectorate: The Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (Ademoyega:103). Government of each area was vested in High Commissioners assisted by consuls and lesser officials. In 1906 Lagos and the Southern Nigeria Protectorates were merged into one making Lagos the headquarters for administration of the vastly expanded area.

The need arose for more administrative personnel and staff over the following decades. Educated non-Nigerian Africans took advantage of the opportunity for employment. Qualified West Indians, Ghanaians, Sierra Leonians, and Dahomeans flocked to Nigeria in the early years of British penetration and took up positions as clerks and artisans in both government and business firms adding to the diversity of the population (Coleman 1960:34). The government had their need for clerks in mind in 1909 when they founded the first government-supported grammar school in Lagos, King's College (Ajayi 1963:529).



Until this time the British government had left developments in the hands of individual enterprise but

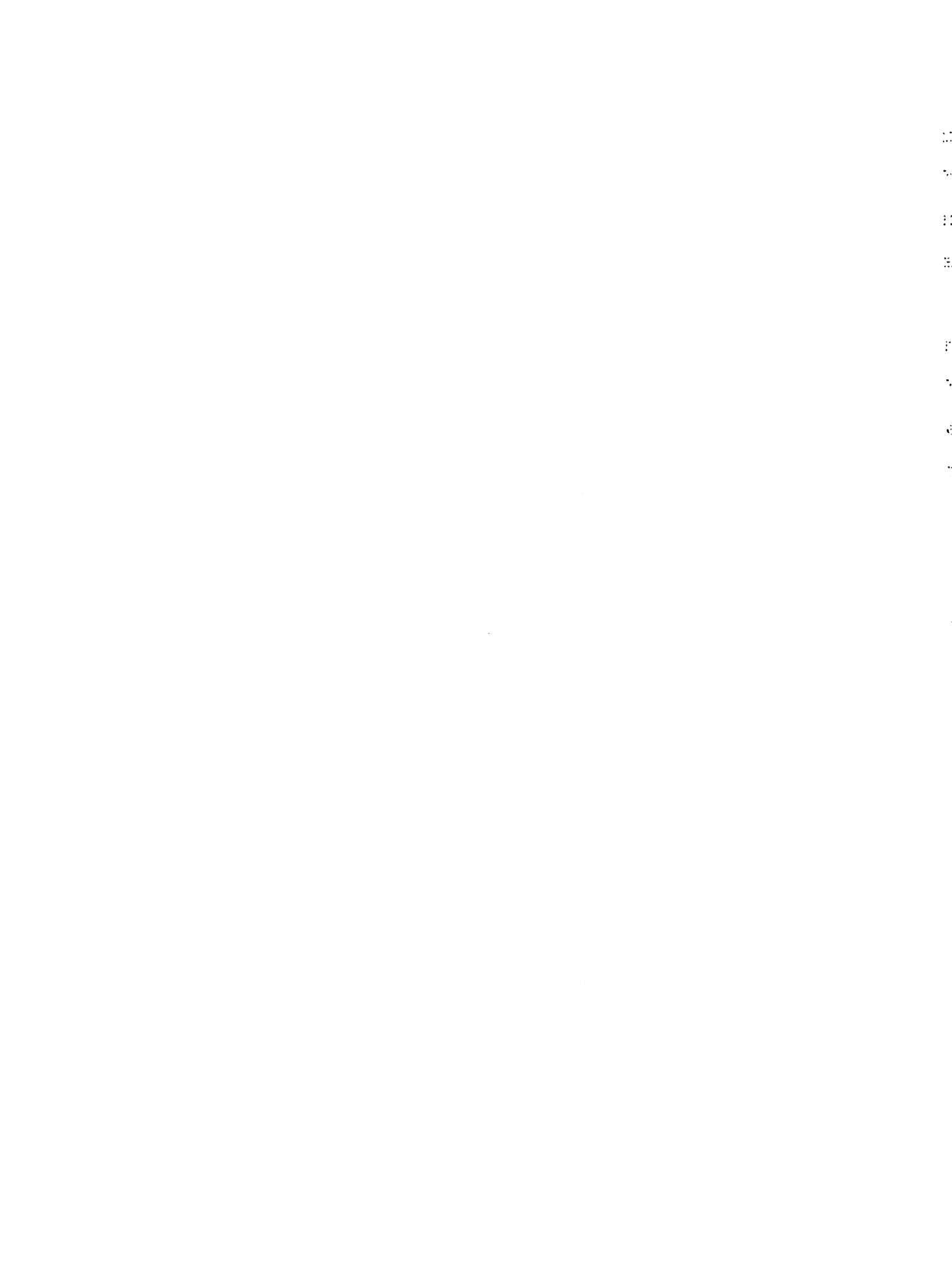
' . . . the only methods by which improvement could be carried out were beyond the scope of private resources.' Therefore, the Colonial Secretary argued, the state must take the lead in empirebuilding from the merchant and investor (Robinson 1961: 397).

Development of a new communications system was a priority. Reaching Lagos from the ocean had always been precarious because of a treacherous sand-bar at the entrance of the lagoon. Shipwrecks were common. During the first two decades of the twentieth century the harbor was deepened and a railroad was extended as far north as Kano (Baker 1974:32). When the improved harbor and railroad were usable

The trade of Lagos soared as imports and exports flowed in and out more easily. More and more people flocked into Lagos, and the town experienced a phenomenal growth in population as well as in area (Mabogunje 1968:248).

Health and sanitary reforms were also undertaken to deal with improving the water supply, organizing sewage disposal, and concentrating on ridding the town of mosquitoes. The falling death rate clearly indicated the success of the program.

At the same time protests against British policies continued as different issues came to light. Educated and Christian merchants resenting their lack of power withdrew from the Chamber of Commerce in 1903 and aligned themselves with illiterate and Muslim businessmen (Hopkins 1965:248). Lagosians objected to the British government acquiring land for official residences in 1908 (Ademoyega:113) and agitated against a water rate which taxed the African community



but provided electricity only in European quarters (Ademoyega:116). This agitation led to the formation in Lagos of a People's Union, a channel through which some educated and wealthy moderate Nigerians became active in politics (Tamuno 1965:288).

The issues of the Lagos Standard for 1909 do not report any reaction against European goods on the part of most consumers. The basis of Lagos existence continued to be commerce and Lagos was one of several African cities that was growing because it met the needs of European trade. Hodgkin says of these cities:

Their main function is to drain out of Africa its ground-nuts, palm-products, coffee, cocoa, cotton, minerals; and to pump into Africa European consumer goods--cloth, kerosene, bicycles, sewing-machines (Hodgkin 1957:64).

European goods had to be promoted to sustain trade.

The Lagos Standard contributed to an awareness of what was available in Europe. The small European population and the few literate Africans were kept up to date on fashions through newspaper accounts. For instance, the paper reported on September 8, 1909:

. . . Ascot was an unqualified success. . . . The Queen wore mauve crepe de chene, with a mauve ruffle and a straw hat with feathers to match. Princess Victoria was in cream with a cerise coat braided with black and a black coat, and I also noticed that the Prince of Wales chose nattier blue.

And later in the same column:

The opening of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington yesterday was another great event of this week . . . London came out in swarms to see the Royal procession and a sunny morning greeted the King and Queen. It was a magnificent sight to watch, and the brilliant uniforms of the 2nd Life Guards and state postillions played an important part in the

colouring. In the first carriage were the King and Queen and Princess Victoria--the Queen looked charming in mauve, and Princess Victoria wore white with a long cerise feather in a black hat. In the following carriage were the Prince and Princess of Wales and their little daughter . . . the Princess was entirely in white.

Like other cities emphasizing commerce, there was little that could not be bought by those with money to buy (Hodgkin:78). A representative advertisement which appeared eight times in the Lagos weekly papers of 1895 gives an indication of the wide variety of European goods that were available in one Lagos store.

Cole Brother & Co., Dealers in Haberdashery, Fancy Goods, Patent Medicines, Etc., Etc., Etc., (sic) Have always on hand the following goods:

Balmoral and Shoe Laces, Show Brushes, Assorted Walking Sticks, Gents Merino Finish Shirts, Ladies Wool Headkerchiefs, . . . Machine Thread, Brown Linen Drill and Holland, White Book Muslins Assorted, Gents Tuscan Straw, present shape, Gents White and Black Straw, . . . Ribbons assorted, Faille and Mohair, Penelope Canvas, Berlin Wool asstd. Rug Needles, Mourning Crape, Gents Cricketing Shirts, Gents Braces Assorted, Swiss Embroidery and Insertion, Tooth Brushes, Ladies, Gents and Children's Boots, Ladies Jerseys, assorted, present style, Ladies Silk Jersey Gloves, Gent and Ladies Linen Collars, Gents Mourning Collars, Gents assorted Scarfs and Ties, Ladies Swiss Belts assorted, Black and White stripes Mourning Prints, Mens white twill Night Shirts, Ladies and Gents Twill Silk Umbrellas, . . . (Lagos Standard, February-March, 1895).

The Lagos public had a variety of sources from which to obtain consumer goods. Clothing could be purchased ready-made in local stores, shops, and markets; it could be ordered by mail from England or it could be made-to-order by seamstresses and tailors.

It is understandable that a new emphasis on money and consumption developed for the African in the city. A feature article in a newspaper of 1909 issued an indictment against the growing emphasis on consumption:

Not the least among the doubtful legacies which civilization has bequeathed to the native is the habit of extravagance which is conspicuous in nearly all classes of the community, and which is exhibited on every possible occasion, and under every circumstance or condition of life (Lagos Standard, June 16, 1909).

The writer went on to share his observations on the conspicuous consumption of clothing in his day:

. . . Take for instance, the habit of extravagance in dress, which is developed at a very early age, and which is equally strong in both sexes. The school boy who has hardly entered upon his teens, as soon as he is able to indite a letter, makes use of the accomplishment in sending to Europe for a catalogue and samples of dress materials, and any pocket money he finds himself possessed of, readily goes toward ordering such trifles as shirts, collars, ties, hats, boots, etc. This ruling passion, it may be depended upon, does not diminish when the school boy becomes the newly-fledged government or mercantile clerk, when the greater part of his salary goes to satisfy the appetite for dress, and he blossoms out into the full-fledged dandy or dude, with a high collar, frock coat, and top hat on a broiling hot day in the tropics. If the passion for dress is so strong in the male youth, it may be imagined that it is not less so for the female, among whom extravagance in this direction is carried to the highest possible pitch, the wider range the latter possess in choice of material and the display of jewelry affording them more extensive and more costly opportunities for satisfying the craving for dress (Ibid).

Until this point, it may seem that extravagance in dress was a luxury indulged in by the educated group but, to the contrary:

Nor is this extravagance in dress limited to the educated or Christian portion of the community only, but extends to, and possibly finds its highest development, among the Moslem and Pagan classes as well. With the former at their religious festivals, and with the latter on the occasion of any public dance or play, the opportunity is seized for having a dress parade, an exhibition in which the apparent aim of each one is to rival and outshine his neighbor. Velvets, silks, and satin of the finest and most expensive material, are used, while a profuse display of ornaments of gold and silver, and other jewelry go to swell the cost of the exhibition (Ibid).

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In another diatribe later in the year, the writer associated style of dress with style of life condemning the behavior of the younger generation.

The time and attention of the average Lagos youth is so much taken up with entertainments, balls, parties, the latest style in boots and collars, fashionable dress and jewelry that he has slight inclination toward serious thoughts. This careless and frivolous disposition, which is a growing characteristic of the rising generation, is a cause of alarm to the thoughtful-minded, who see in it the fruitful cause of the ruin of the career of many a promising youth (Lagos Standard, November 24, 1909).

Consumer habits which emulated the "English gentleman" were encouraged by advertisements, by products available in the European-owned stores, and by the style of life exhibited by colonial officials. About 2,000 Europeans lived in Lagos Colony and the Southern Provinces in 1918; 1,250 of these were officials (MacMillan 1920:50), and forty-three percent of them lived in Lagos (Coleman:144). In a publication written to extol the British input in the advancement of Nigeria, the style of life described in Lagos was that of the English upper classes:

Life in a large town such as Lagos, where there is a white population of several hundreds, differs considerably from that spent in a 'bush' station. In Lagos the working day commences between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, and there is a luncheon interval of two hours in the middle of the day, whereby a short siesta after lunch is possible. The offices close between four and five o'clock, and there is then a wide variety of forms of recreation available. Polo and football are played two or three times a week, and cricket occasionally. Lawn tennis and golf can be played every afternoon, and excellent horseback riding can be enjoyed. There are many motors, and the roads are good. In the evening bridge or billiards can be played in the comfortable club-house (MacMillan:59).

Such was the style of life of the colonial officials when the political relationship of Lagos to the rest of Nigeria was

changed again in 1914. The British amalgamated the Northern and Southern Provinces leaving Lagos, the capital, as a Colony. Lagosians were to have the rights of British citizens while other Nigerians were "protected" persons (Crowder 1962:109). The Governor-General of Nigeria instituted a policy of "indirect rule" which survived for many years but which aroused considerable controversy as a spirit of nationalism grew. Basically his policy was one of preserving and utilizing the "institutions of the conquered and especially the kingships and chieftaincies which could be used as ready-made economical agencies of coherence and order (Perham 1965: xxxix)." In effect it excluded educated Africans from meaningful roles in government because they did not represent the masses. The animosity created by the policy in years to come was not foreseen.

British officials shared the view that Britain needed the economic outlet provided by the West African lands (Perham:xxx). However, efforts to promote development in any colonies at this time were interrupted by World War I--a war that Nigerians were drawn into in a small way. "A few thousand Nigerian soldiers saw service in the Cameroons and in East Africa (Coleman:187)." They were commended for their discipline, devotion, and courage while enduring long and trying barefoot marches (Crowder:224). Nigerian trade dropped temporarily but, over the total duration of the war, it increased four-fold contributing to a period of relative prosperity (Coleman:187).

There was always a small group of West Africans agitating for reform during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Immediately after World War I the Pan-African Congress which met in Paris was a major stimulus to nationalistic sentiments among educated West Africans. As a result the first political party was founded by a prominent group from Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia. A delegation from the party went to London with demands including that of a participatory government but the delegation was discredited by the current governor of Nigeria as being unrepresentative of the masses of the people (Ademoyega:117).

The Lagos of the early 1920's was later dubbed "the cradle of Nigerian party politics" (Ademoyega:119), even though political activity of that time was generally lowkeyed. The demands for more participation in government were followed by a new constitution in 1922 that gave some representation and restricted voting privileges. It provided for a legislative Council for Lagos Colony and Southern Nigeria with four elected African members, three of them being from Lagos (Coleman:196). Until 1951, these were the only directly elected representatives in all of Nigeria (Coleman:199).

The opportunity to elect three representatives stimulated the formation of political party activity in Lagos. Foremost in organizing was Herbert Macauley, civil engineer and political agitator, who gained the accolade of "father of Nigerian nationalism" (Coleman:197). His ability to communicate with the uneducated endeared him to the masses. Although the party founded by Macauley was called the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), it was concerned primarily with Lagos issues. The House of Docemo and its "white-capped chiefs," the traditional rulers of Lagos, were



one cause Macauley defended. When Lagos was annexed in 1861, the British agreed that the head of the House of Docemo would be given a yearly pension. Thus the traditional ruler lost his political power but continued to have the respect of the populous. The British on several occasions between 1916 and 1934 treated the head of the House in cavalier fashion (Coleman:195). Macauley was able to defend the chiefs and maintain a crusade against European intruders through his paper, the Lagos Daily News.

The high regard which the people continued to hold for their traditional chiefs is suggested in a controversy over who should wear a crown in 1929. The Bale of Okun (a position somewhat comparable to a mayor) was one traditional ruler who wanted to wear a crown. The Nigerian Pioneer attacked the issue saying:

Every Chief wants to wear a crown these days. . . . If crowns are promiscuously given out to every Tom, Dick, and Harry, every tenth man in our street will soon be donning a crown, and our crowned Chiefs will have no distinction as from others. It is time that the awarding of the crowns is regulated (Nigerian Pioneer, November 8, 1929).

In terms of stimulating nationalist sentiment throughout Nigeria, little had been done at this point to overcome the separations of Nigerians from one another caused "by great distances, differences in history and traditions, ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers"(Crowder:228). One reason for lack of nationalistic movements was the large number of Africans from other countries who were working in Nigeria. Most of them considered themselves temporary residents who planned to retire in

their home countries (Coleman:157). In 1921, 18 percent of the English-speaking Africans in Nigeria were from other countries.

Most of them, coming from the Creole community in Freetown, Sierra Leone, or from the coastal areas of Ghana (then the Gold Coast), had been under British influence since birth; they were the real "black Englishmen" who dressed only in European clothes (Coleman:157).

The non-Nigerian Africans held the majority of positions in the Nigerian Civil Service. A decline in their ratio began between 1921 and 1931 and continued until the end of World War II when they made up a mere fraction of the educated group in Nigeria (Coleman:157).

The educated Nigerians like the non-Nigerians seemed to be wearing mainly European clothes in 1920 but, on the traditional side of the clothing scene, at least one educated person wore a modified Nigerian style which established a fashion for years to come. Dr. O. Sapara, a highly-respected Lagos doctor, became known for his use of the Yoruba men's dress. The gown called a sapara in his honor was full and draped like the traditional agbada but was lighter in weight and made from fabric other than handwoven cloth (de Negri, June, 1962:10).

The 1920's were a time when educated Nigerians were promoting associations within their lineage groups. Many mutual benefit associations were formed in Lagos to maintain ethnic identification and assist their kinsmen in adjustments to urban life. Other groups which seem to be a carry-over from traditional guilds were formed around occupations. All social classes were included in some associations but the leadership came from the educated. In place

of the voice which the educated were denied in government affairs, these associations became their "media of political expression" (Coleman:211).

Meanwhile, far away in London a nationalistic spirit and a new racial consciousness was emerging among the Nigerian students studying abroad. Changes in the area of education were also taking place in the homeland. "In the decade after World War I the number of secondary schools had jumped from two to twenty-six"(Coleman: 163). Three different certificates based on different exams were available for students in the decade of 1910. In 1929 there was a move to substitute a Nigerian certificate for the Oxford and Cambridge certificates but the government abandoned the idea leaving the Cambridge exams to predominate (Ajayi 1963:533). Ajayi feels that the choice of exams was one reflection of the

fundamental yearning . . . for some form of rather literary European type of education that would allow us to take advantage of European trade and colonisation and ultimately to produce leaders who could compete on equal terms with our colonial rulers (1963:534).

In the same era, the distance between Europe and West Africa was becoming less prohibitive to travelers. An example of improved transportation was the Elder Dempster Line whose advertising continually occupied the full front page of the Nigerian Pioneer. She proclaimed "Regular Mail Service between Liverpool and Freetown, Takoradi, Accra, Port Harcourt, Calabar, and Lagos" (see 1929 issues). Stops at the ports of Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria, all British colonies, facilitated an exchange

of goods and people between these countries that was not shared with the territories claimed by other European nations. Saro dress from Sierra Leone and agaayin styles from the Gold Coast became familiar sights on the Lagos streets along with European and Yoruba dress. Saro dress was basically western in cut but was enhanced by unusually intricate decorative details in the bodice. Agaayin consisted of a fitted bodice top ending in a peplum at the lower edge which was worn over an ankle-length wrapper. The styles were worn by Nigerians as well as by people from the countries where the styles originated.

The exchange that developed between West Africa and Europe also created a dependency that drew Lagos into the economic depression that was affecting the western world. Accounts of the sorry state of trade began to appear in the newspapers in the latter part of 1929. There were complaints of a "scarcity of money" (Nigerian Pioneer, November 8, 1929). By 1933 it was reported that ". . . 'No trade' has long contributed to the stagnant condition of the country . . ." (Nigerian Pioneer, January 18, 1933). The educated were greatly affected as the government reduced the number of clerks employed by them. "The latter class has little to spend and what they have not they cannot spend" (Ibid).

The pro-government paper, The Nigerian Pioneer, survived until June, 1934, in spite of the cessation of advertising. One of the last clothing advertisements to appear in the paper maintained that:

The Best Cloth is British Made.

G. C. Jones & Sons, Ltds., Leicester, give the best value in British-made suiting and suits to measure; serges, alpacas, flannels, and art silks. Write for samples now (Nigerian Pioneer, January 20, 1933).

Concomitant with the depression, fashion was changing. A London reporter quoted in the Pioneer stated:

My tailor was telling me the other day that City business men have almost forsaken the traditional black coat and striped trousers. Indeed, the 'black-coated' worker of whom we so often hear hardly exists today.

City men now wear lounge suits like any other males, save that they apparently prefer slightly bolder patterns. Browns with broadly spaced stripes are popular at the moment. The City is smarter than ever, as well as brighter. Savile Row tailors declare that nowadays City business men are better customers than men of the fashionable West End. At the same time, you scarcely ever see full morning dress in the city as in old days (Nigerian Pioneer, May 19, 1933).

Today's reader may wonder to whom were the statements of how the Englishman dressed directed? Since only educated Africans could read such accounts, it would be they who might accept the report as exemplary of what was expected of them. They were British subjects, yet their attempts to emulate the Europeans often met with disapproval.

With many notable exceptions, the characteristic attitude of resident Europeans toward the educated African was one of contempt, amusement, condescension, or veiled hostility, depending upon the individual relationship. From the turn of the century until the late 1940's, many visitors to Nigeria, and to other parts of British West Africa, commented on the tension and animosity between Europeans and educated Africans (Coleman:45).

Sir John Rodger admonished in 1909: "We are busy manufacturing black and brown Englishmen--turning them out by the score,

and cursing the finished article when the operation is complete . . . "(African Mail, July 9, 1909).

Possibly some British administrators did not sense any adversity. It was 1936 when an Australian who had just resigned from service as an administrator in Nigeria said that Nigeria

. . . has fewer problems than any other governing unit of the same population in the world. There is no problem of racial antagonism; there are no economic problems, . . . there is no conflict between white capital and coloured labor, . . . and there are no political problems, internal or external, of any kind (Crocker 1936:235).

## (2) 1940-1959: Period of Increasing Nationalistic Sentiments

Whatever the political climate of Nigeria may have been in the mid 1930's, it was about to take a sharp nationalistic turn. Two Nigerians returning home from studies in the United States and England, Nnamdi Azikiwe and H. O. Davies, led in rejuvenating a Lagos-centered Youth Movement. Azikiwe who had been exposed to new ideas and patterns of protest in the United States began his political career as a strong advocate of a United West Africa (Coleman:221). With the aid of newspapers he established in five cities, Azikiwe, an Ibo, rose during the following decade to become "the staunchest and most uncompromising advocate of Black Africa" (Ademoyega:112). In Lagos he was "one of the first of his people who could seriously compete with the entrenched Yoruba aristocracy" (Crowder:238).

During the decade of the 1940's rival political parties began to take shape in Nigeria and the "thorny" issue of ethnicity was introduced into politics for the first time (Amoda 1972:18).



The Lagos newspapers, the West African Pilot and the Lagos Daily Service, were respective spokesmen for the Ibo and Yoruba antagonists (Coleman:227). A meeting called by a student group in Lagos in 1944 for the purpose of welding the "heterogeneous masses of Nigeria into one solid block" led to the founding of the NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons), a party which existed as the leading all-Nigerian nationalist organization until the late 1950's (Coleman:264). The leadership represented ethnic diversity with Herbert Macaulay (Yoruba) as vice president and Azikiwe (Ibo) as general secretary.

In 1946 a delegation of the NCNC made a mission to London to formally relay nationalistic desires to the British (Coleman: 291) seemingly to no avail. Between 1946 and 1948 ethnic tensions arose again and, in Lagos, an explosive civil situation was reported as both Ibos and Yorubas were buying arms. Northerners who felt the need to represent their interests formed the NPC (Northern People's Congress) in 1948 (Okpaku 1972:22).

No doubt the momentum toward nationalism was slowed by World War II which absorbed the attention of much of the world. Events of the war, however, increased the awareness of many Nigerians of their potential. Thousands of British and American troops passed through Nigeria presenting an image of the ordinary white man who differed from the government administrator or missionary. Joining the Armed Forces and fighting beside Europeans (as more than 100,000 Nigerians did) further helped squelch any notions of white supremacy (Ademoyega:128).

Circumstances of the war also accelerated economic development in Nigeria. Wartime shortages of imported goods and lack of shipping induced growth of local industries (Coleman:253). In addition, the British placed controls over the economic structure in order to mobilize Nigerian resources for war but, by doing so, they made themselves "vulnerable to blame for all grievances of economic nature" (Coleman:252).

Protestors advocated the rejection of all European goods. Once again,

Off the shoulders went European dresses, and off the neck, European ties. . . the wearing of Nigerian garments, the drinking of the palm-wine, and the dancing to national music typified the age of economic nationalism (Ademoyega:165).

Rejection of imported goods by a segment of the population must have been off-set by increased demand from others. A rise in the standards of living of a broader base of the Nigerian population is apparent in the increase in imports from 1939 to 1951. Two areas which serve as examples are:

	<u>1939</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1951</u>
Manufactured apparel	L155,000	L765,000	L1,093,000
Boots and shoes	33,000	417,000	1,064,000

(Coleman:316).

Comparing employment opportunities throughout Nigeria during World War II, Lagos had the most to offer. The influx of persons coming to Lagos to look for work continued on in a post-war boom. The population of 1950 was twice the size of 1931 due to natural increase as well as immigration. The number of Ibo increased from less than 300 in 1911 to nearly 26,000 by 1950 (Mabogunje 1968:257-263).

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Major European groups in Lagos continued to be the British, the French, and the Germans. In 1950, the British still manned the upper positions in the Civil Service; the French and the Germans were mainly in commerce and vehicle repair services. A small number of Asians also played a substantial part in the commercial life of Lagos (Mabogunje:264).

Ademoyega describes the aura of Lagos and other urban centers in Nigeria at this time:

. . . cosmopolitanism became a general mark of all large towns. . . . Being cosmopolitan they tended to cultivate nationalistic outlooks. They fostered the atmosphere of freedom untrammelled by serious traditional sanctions. They bred conventions in speech, dress, and tastes. They encouraged individualism--often to an extreme degree--and, what is more, they promoted a growing drift towards materialism. Only in them did unemployment exist and in them also was much emphasis placed on material success (Ademoyega:163).

After the war the British did attempt to satisfy some of the Nigerian demands which had been accumulating such as employment in the Civil Service, development of education (Ademoyega:139) and formulation of a satisfactory constitution. Resulting constitutional revisions weakened the power which had been centralized in Lagos and gave the regions much more control over their own affairs. No British official was left in a position of authority excepting the Governor whose powers were limited (Niven 1967:43). In elections of 1951, each of three parties seeking power were victorious in the three different regions, but each party was dominated by the ethnic group which was in majority in each region. The North was Hausa-Fulani country; the East was Ibo and the West was Yoruba.

The East and the West pressed for a definite date for independence. Because the North lagged behind in education and development, the leaders of the North believed they were not ready for independence. At this point they feared that independence would allow the more qualified Southerners to monopolize the top economic and political positions in the North. Their people felt encroached upon by the many Ibos and other Easterners who had moved to the North where opportunities were greater than in their homeland. In 1953 riots broke out in Kano over the independence issue and the North threatened to secede (Niven:93). Tension was alleviated with the decision that the East and West would be given self-government in 1957, while the North would wait until 1959 (Ademoyega:156). Regions were free to conduct their own affairs as long as the Federation of Nigeria was not imperilled (Niven:97).

The relationship of Lagos to the country as a whole shifted during the decade of the '50's. In 1952 Lagos was made part of the Western Region. The Yoruba-dominated party supported this arrangement arguing that Lagos was a Yoruba city. The other two parties did not want the main outlet for goods to be in another region. Eventually they all agreed that Lagos should become federal territory (Crowder:255).

Social, educational, and economic developments came rapidly to Lagos in the late 1950's. Universal free primary education was instituted for children in Lagos as well as the East and the West. Industries developed in Lagos at an astounding rate. Before 1951 there were no more than fifteen major industrial establishments in Lagos

but by 1959 they could boast of 2400 industrial units of which 300 were relatively large enterprises (Mabogunje 1968:256). In 1958 an exhibition was held in Lagos featuring an impressive array of goods that were "made-in-Nigeria" (Ademoyega:172).

Along with the rapid changes in technological development, the pride instilled by impending freedom was accompanied by a renewed mass appreciation of traditional things. Preservation of that which indicated the roots of one's identity became much more than a social movement espoused by a few. Dress reflected the change. In a letter to the Daily Service in 1959 a reader said, "We can now congratulate ourselves for respecting our own way of life particularly in fashion. Almost everybody has a Nigerian costume in his wardrobe or box" (Letter to Daily Service, February 20, 1959, Michael N. Odiah).

A columnist in the same paper commented at length as follows:

One of the most remarkable phenomena which have taken place in our ever-changing Nigerian society in the past decade or so, is the recrudescence of the Native dresses.

Years ago the hallmark of the typical Nigerian bourgeois and of good upbringing, is [sic] the ability to match a morning suit with a bowler and a 12-inch cigar and walking stick, very brilliantly.

And there was even a time (a very unfortunate time at that) when things came to such a head that the man who wore the homely sober native one was looked down upon as boorish, inarticulate, unpolished, and of low taste.

The picture of a sweltering figure of a man battling under a half-ton load of top coat in an African summer solistice could indeed be very pitiable if not risible. More miserable was the figure of a pot-bellied plutocrat battling to make his rotund tummy stay properly in his "show-me-your-socks" breeches.

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But those were the days. The days when the negroid could have passed without any query, for the Caucasian or Mongolian, if not for his pigmentation.

Now things are so wonderfully different--so wonderfully changed! And the very best pick of the gentry now pride themselves in regal "Agbadas," "Bubas" and "kembes."

### (3) 1960-1974: Post Independence

Nigeria became an independent nation on October 1, 1960. The Union Jack was replaced by the green and white Nigerian flag. In the future "Nigerian policy would be entirely in the hands of the elected representatives of the new federated state"(Collis 1970:105). The Federal Government was headed by a Prime Minister and Parliament while each of the three Regions had a Premier and Assembly. Before the date of independence, each party had launched a tremendous campaign to persuade the populace that they were best suited to govern (Collis:108). After independence, if not before, it became apparent that each party saw terminating foreign rule as their main goal and, with that achievement, no real differences existed in party programs and ideologies excepting ethnic differences and the "exploiting of deeply ingrained prejudices" (Amoda 1972:27).

The North because of its sheer size, wielded power over the rest of the country. The regional boundaries which remained from 1914 allowed the space and population of the Northern Region to be larger than the other two regions together. In the words of Moyibi Amoda,

The worst possible situation exists where there are not only linguistic and cultural differences, but where one state or

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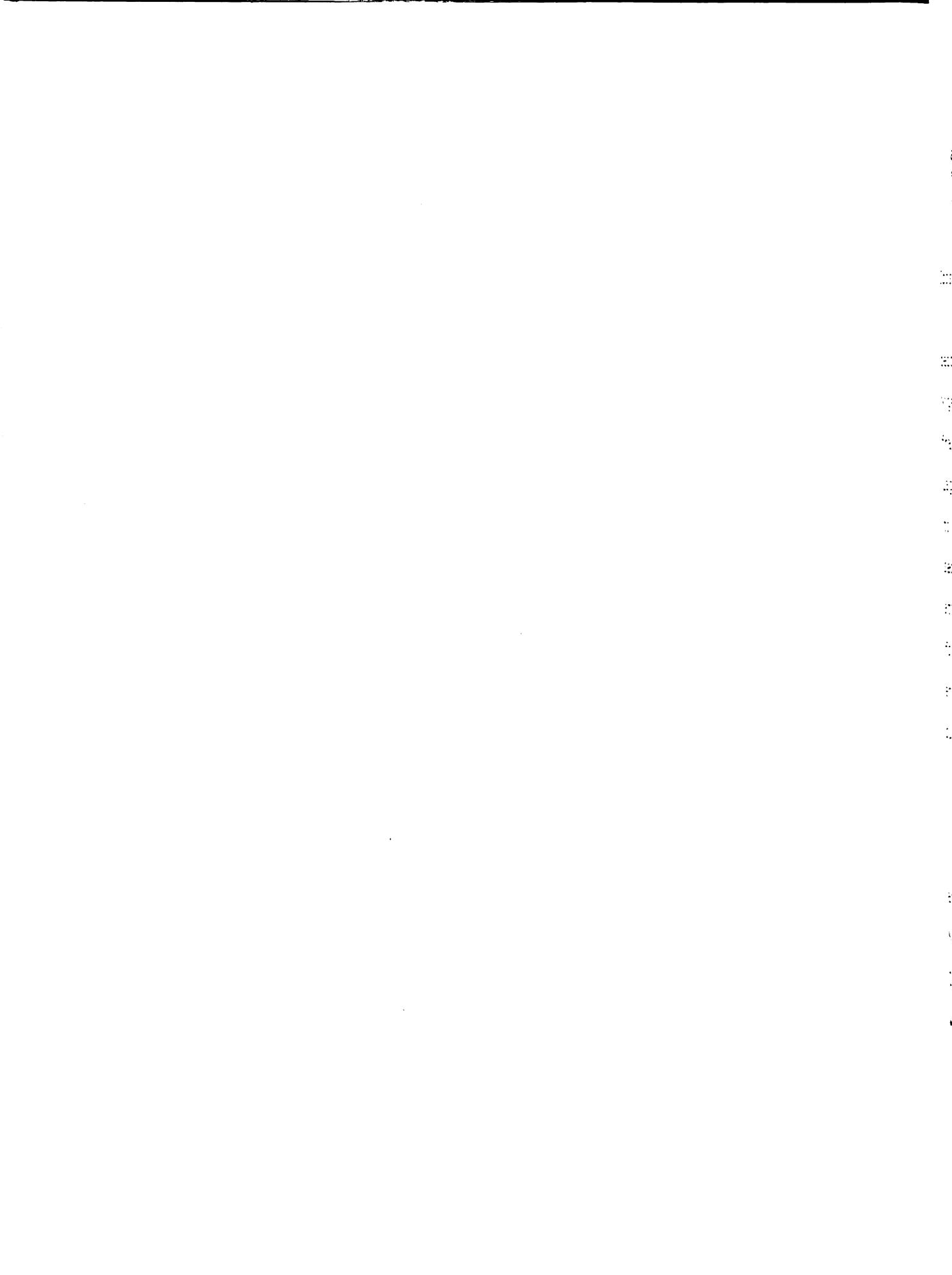
region of the federation is so large that its influence overshadows those of the other states or regions (1972:52).

It was an unfortunate division.

Sentiments about the imbalance were exacerbated when the census of 1963 revealed that the North alone could overrule the other three regions put together (Amoda:58). After two census counts revealed the same results the Southerners charged that the ensuing elections were improper. Riots broke out in Lagos and other areas in the East and West (Niven:100). Meanwhile, the coffers of the government were depleted and charges of political corruption became rife. Dissension erupted into the military coup of 1966. All of the elaborate arrangements for Federal and Regional governments were "swept away between midnight and dawn on the night of 14 January 1966, under the small arms fire of a number of young officers of the Nigerian Army" (Niven:113). The Premiers in the North and the West were murdered as was the Prime Minister in Lagos. The military based in Lagos took charge of the government.

Political leaders attempted to ward off further violence. As a result of meetings in 1966 regional divisions were abolished and political parties were temporarily banned (Niven:121) but tensions, fears, and frustrations remained. Local populace in the North were incensed by abolishment of the regions and retaliated with torturous attacks upon Easterners which drove many from the area.

The killings in the North in 1966 . . . were indiscriminately directed against people from Eastern Nigeria. . . . Thus, although the Northern wrath was supposed to have been directed



against the Ibos of Eastern Nigeria, there was nothing to distinguish one Easterner from the other, whether of Ibo, Efik, Ibibio or Ijaw origin. They wore the same type of dress and, generally speaking, behaved in the same manner (Akpan 1971:152).

Ibos particularly were determined to gain revenge.

In 1967 General Yakubu Gowon, a northerner who had recently become Supreme Commander and Head of Nigeria State, declared that Nigeria would be broken up into twelve new states. The North was fragmented into six states, the East was divided into three, and Lagos Federal State was created incorporating land hitherto belonging to the Western State (Collis:157). In turn, the old Eastern Region seceded as a whole beginning the Biafran conflict. Ibos made two attempts at sabotage in Lagos but ultimately the battles were fought in the East (Collis:158). The Nigerian Civil War did not end until 1970. Moyibi Amoda sums up a major cause of the difficulties in achieving national unity in Nigeria:

. . . the ethnic factor prevented the development of a national consciousness which could invest the national institutions with a primacy over other institutions (1972:47).

The need for national unity appears to be generally acknowledged in the 1970's. Economically, the twelve states of Nigeria are dependent upon each other for resources and services. In commemoration of Nigeria's Tenth Independence Anniversary it was said:

It was time of joy for all Nigerians and, indeed, for all Africa. . .

In those ten years, the country had made rapid economic and social progress but in the last few years, strife, culminating in civil war, had impeded wholesome advancement and caused widespread disaffection within the community itself.



All this was over by October, 1970: the hungry had been fed; the wounded in good care; the mind disabused of sterile contention; acrimony superseded by a spirit of togetherness. A new and freshening wind was blowing rigorously across our land (Nigeria 10:3).

### Summary of Implications for Dress

Early records provide evidence that cloth and clothing were among the products exchanged between inhabitants of old Yoruba kingdoms and the first European visitors to the area. The Yoruba were weaving their own cloths at this time, but the European cloth was different and, therefore, rare. Possession of rare items can differentiate persons and, in so doing, enhance the status of the owners. Instances in which unusual cloths because of their rarity stimulated social admiration are described in the accounts of Yoruba historians. In one case the King of Lagos felt that an unusual cloth which he had been given by the Portuguese should rather be the possession of his superior, the King of Benin. Another tale is told of traders who attempted to deceive Africans into thinking they were wearing the dress of aristocracy when they bought second-hand goods from the Europeans. In the first case a cloth was deemed worthy of an individual in a role of high status. In the second, the traders played on individuals' desires to enhance statuses. In both cases, apparel had a communicative function in setting persons apart from others.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, several subgroups who influenced dress in various ways became part of the population of Lagos. The European businessmen and missionaries,

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the Sierra Leonian and Brazilian repatriates, and the indigenous Nigerians from sections other than Lagos came in varying types of distinctive dress. The businessmen made the clothing products from the factories of Europe available to anyone who was financially able to buy. The missionaries promoted the use of western dress either as a supplement or an alternative to traditional dress. Education in mission schools and wearing western dress became correlated to the extent that one seemed to imply the other. As Christianity was an adjunct of education, western dress served to further identify an individual as a Christian. The Sierra Leonian repatriates were the group who were most amenable to western education in Lagos. Many of them had acquired some formal education as well as some western garments before returning to Yorubaland. They tended to continue wearing western dress, therefore differentiating themselves from other Lagosians. Although the Hausa group were a small proportion of the Lagos population constituting no more than 5 percent of the total population at any time after 1900, their religion was widely accepted by the Yoruba. In addition to the Hausa religion, the Yoruba adopted aspects of the traditional dress which the Hausa retained as a group.

In the late 1800's, dress functioned to emphasize protests against the roles which the white population prescribed to the blacks as the power granted the blacks in business, church, and government affairs was negligible. In 1870 and again in 1890, educated blacks as a symbol of protest, rejected European dress.

Various protest movements were initiated in the early 1900's against inequities practiced by the British but no accounts of another rejection of European dress at that time were found. Social and political change in Lagos may provide an explanation. The desirability of being a Lagosian may have seemed to increase after 1900 when the British made Lagos the capital of all Nigeria and again in 1914 when Lagosians were given special rights as British citizens. The development of railroad and harbor facilities brought an influx of educated West Africans from other countries to fill new clerical positions. Imports and exports increased rapidly. Prosperity from wage-employment, abundant consumer goods, and enhanced status as Lagosians may have all contributed to a placid acceptance of European goods and, consequently, an increased emphasis on materialism.

Both western and traditional dress were in evidence throughout the century. Among groups and individuals who continued to wear traditional dress were chiefs and rulers whose status stemmed from positions in the hierarchy of traditional society. The general population of Lagos refused to allow the rights of these authorities to be infringed upon when persons with traditional offices of lesser status attempted to adopt some of their distinctive dress.

In the late 1930's, rising nationalistic sentiment contributed to a changing aura in Lagos. World War II caused shortages in goods which encouraged Nigerians to produce more of their own products. In addition, Nigerians lost awe for the white man as they participated as allies in the war. When the British sought

to put controls on Nigerian resources to aid Britain's wartime needs, the Nigerians expressed their anger again by rejecting European goods including dress as they had done fifty years earlier. This time the movement was more widespread and long-lived. Commentators on the fashion scene in the late 1950's noted the recrudescence of traditional dress as a general phenomenon indicating pride in indigenous culture.

Beginning in the 1930's, political parties were forming in Lagos with foundations in ethnic allegiances. Nigerians regained authority in conducting their own affairs as social and economic developments gained momentum in the 1950's. Persons from all parts of Nigeria came to Lagos to take advantage of employment opportunities. Adjustment to the city was eased for them by affiliations with organizations of their own ethnic groups. After the goal of independence was attained in 1960, the only remaining purpose of political parties seemed to be the exploiting of ethnic interests. Tensions multiplied and finally erupted into the destructive Civil War which lasted from 1966 to 1970.

Throughout this time some fashions became distinctive to Lagos, but the ethnic diversity of the population remained generally evident in their dress. Ethnic loyalties continue to be strong after the war although the need for unity of all Nigeria seems to be generally recognized. In terms of dress, with a little effort the observer on the Lagos street will soon learn that it is still frequently possible to identify ethnic association of an individual

by his or her dress. Modes of traditional dress associated with ethnic differentiation appear to endure.



## CHAPTER IV

### CASE STUDY OF INFORMANT FAMILY

The informant family is an urban family of Nigerian origin. More specifically, they identify themselves as a Yoruba family from Lagos. Thirty persons depicted in the photographs who represent five generations were designated by the key informant as belonging to her immediate family. Cousins and affinal relatives were recognized as part of the extended family but were not designated as immediate family. Relative to Yoruba Lagosian families, the informant family is among the elite. Several characteristics designated as typical of Nigerian elite in the late 1950's (Smythe & Smythe 1960:93-153) are summarized in Figure 4.1. A close correspondence between behavior of the informant family with that designated as elite is indicated by "yes" on the Figure. As a large number of characteristics identified as elite describe the family, they serve as a selected example of an indigenous West African family of the urban elite. The characteristics are described in greater detail in the text of this chapter.

Historical accounts of costume have, with rare exceptions, focused upon the changing dress of the upper classes of any society. The economic and social resources of the upper classes have provided them with the wherewithal necessary to one who maintains a position

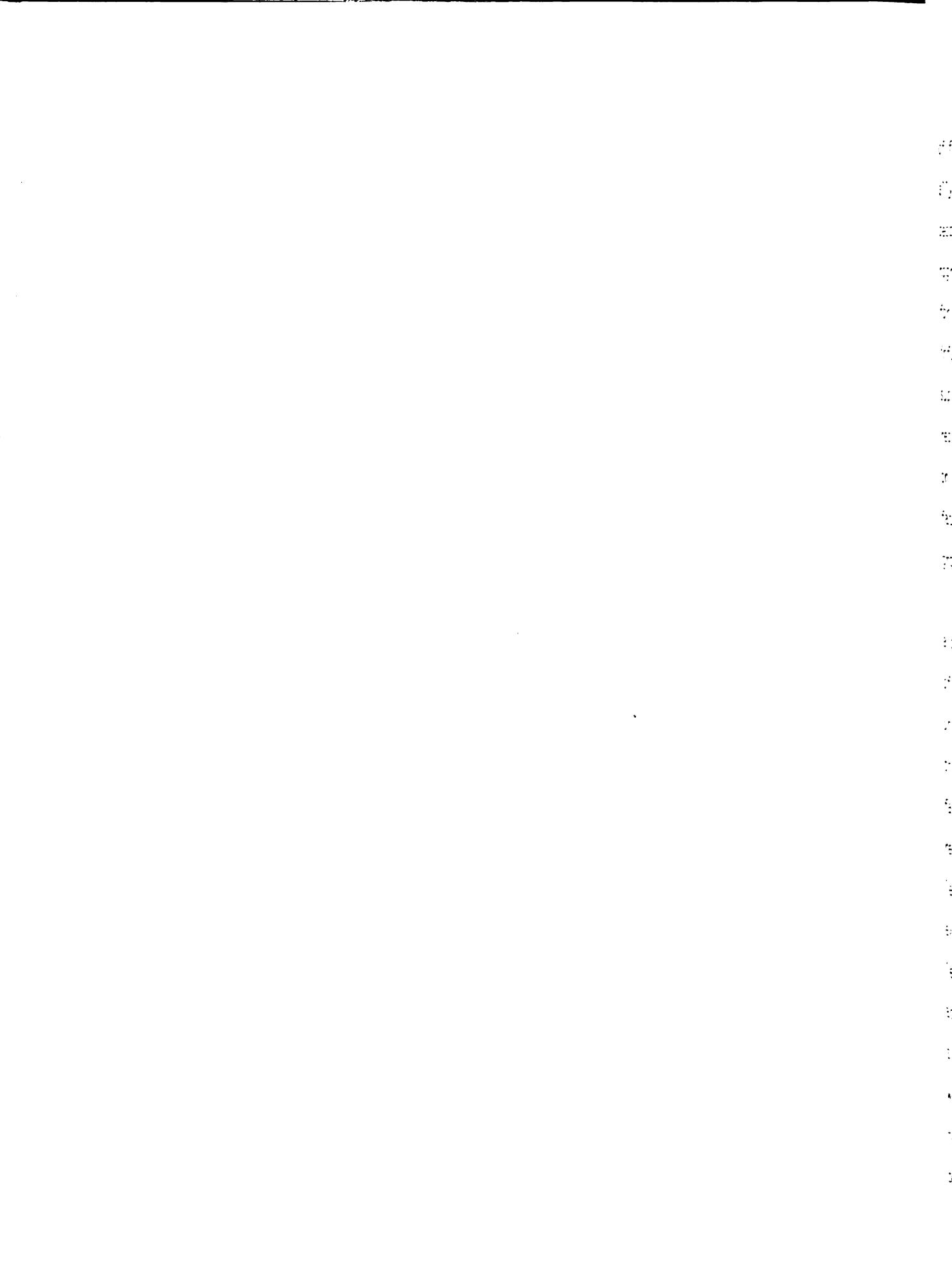
FIGURE 4.1.--Characteristics of Nigerian Elite Compared with Those of the Informant Family.

Characteristic	Tendencies of Elite According to Smythe & Smythe <sup>1</sup>	Characteristic of Members of Family
Relationships	Associate with like class Reduce scope of kin group	Yes Probable
Family	Children go away to school Husbands more formally educated than wives Subtle deference to age	Yes No Yes
Residency	Urban	Yes
Social Stratification	Occupations require secondary education or more Top strata: high public office, law and medicine, university teaching, senior civil service Bottom of professional class: assistant secretarial civil service posts, pharmacists, educators	Yes Yes Yes
Mobility	Achievement is major criteria for social acceptability Handicapped in business due to lack of capital	? None in private business other than trading
Westernization	Compromise and adaptation of Western with Nigerian cultures	Yes

<sup>1</sup>Characteristics of the elite are from Hugh H. Smythe and Mabel M. Smythe, The New Nigerian Elite (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 93-153.

FIGURE 4.1.--Continued.

Characteristic	Tendencies of Elite According to Smythe & Smythe <sup>1</sup>	Characteristic of Members of Family
Speech	English plus indigenous language	Yes
Organizational Affiliations	Join many organizations	Probable
Style of Life:		
Housing	Government reservation Western furnishings Separate garage	Yes Yes Yes
Stewards	Greater affluence, more stewards Strict division of labor among stewards	No basis for comparison Yes
Dining	A family occasion, rare to dine out Dietary patterns similar to masses	Yes Greater variety
Dress	Mixture of Western and Nigerian Complete Western outfit is elite or near-elite	Yes
Leisure	Availability of intellectual and cultural pursuits is limited	Have television, telephone, personal library, hobbies in 1974



of fashion leadership. In contrast, accounts of African dress generally describe the traditional ritual or ceremonial dress of diverse peoples at vaguely specified times. Therefore, emphasis of ethnographic material has been on unusual dress rather than dress worn for everyday occasions in Africa. The contemporary members of the informant family of this study were able to supply information which supplements previous accounts of African ritual dress with visual representations and oral commentary about normative everyday public or occupational dress. In addition, the family allows a control factor as they represent a level of social ranking within one ethnic group.

Other factors also supported the choice of this family as a case example of behavior related to dress. To gain an understanding of the social significance of the dress of a particular group, some understanding of the social structure of the group is necessary. In that regard, the length of time covered in the recollections of the family was exceptional. Five generations of the family had claimed residency in one locale, Lagos. The occupations and educational levels of members of the five generations were known. Photographs existed to verify the dress of each generation. Although the collection of family photographs contained pictures of friends and acquaintances as well as family members, it was believed that subjects of the photographs for whom social structural placement was unknown would occupy a status group comparable to that of family members. In this chapter biographical details of the family will be compared with general characteristics associated with their

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ethnic group, with Lagos residency, and with Nigerian elite status. Details include a description of demographic facts, language, occupations, education, religion, marriage customs, family relationships, and social class, determinants of social roles and self-concepts.

Ethnographers of the Yoruba culture have stressed the great regional variability between Yoruba subgroups. Any attempts at generalization about the Yoruba are dangerous due to the complexity of the Yoruba culture, their sheer number, and their geographical spread (Bascom 1969:xi). Illustrations of Yoruba culture cited in this section must be interpreted as characteristic of the particular group of Yoruba being described and not of all Yoruba.

#### Demographic Data and Language

The Yoruba are one of the largest ethnic groups south of the Sahara. The Yoruba along with the Hausa and the Ibo are the three major groups in Nigeria which together make up 58 percent of Nigeria's total population (Nelson et al. 1972:vii). Until around the middle of the nineteenth century there was no comprehensive name for the Yoruba as a whole (Fadipe 1970:30), and people referred to themselves by the name of their subgroup. In some areas in the late 1930's old men still denied that they were Yoruba since they belonged to different subgroups (Bascom:5). The subgroups of Yoruba are united by a common language making them primarily a linguistic rather than a cultural or ethnic group (Fadipe:29).

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The researcher met fifteen members of the informant family-- eight members designated as belonging to the immediate family, four cousins, and three relatives by marriage. They spanned three generations. All of the informants spoke English, a characteristic of elite status. Some were more fluent in English than others. When they conversed in casual conversation, Yoruba was generally preferred.

In addition to language, a distinguishing characteristic of the Yoruba is their pattern of settlement. They are the most urban of all African people having lived in urban settlements well before European influences promoted the development of African cities (Bascom:3). The Yoruba lands in 1970 contained at least thirteen cities with population of more than 100,000 (Nelson:110) including the capital city of Lagos whose population was stated to be nearly 700,000 in the 1963 census (Annual Abstract of Statistics 1964:12). The Yoruba account for 70 percent of the population of Lagos (Marris 1962:123). Of the thirty members identified as belonging to the immediate informant family, all were or presently are urban dwellers. The earliest known member of the family was born in approximately 1820 and has a street in Lagos named after him. Every member of the family lived in Lagos at some time but some have also lived in Abeokuta, Ibadan, Calabar, and Enugu, all cities with populations of more than 200,000 according to the 1952 census although they would have been much smaller in earlier times.

### Occupations

While they live in urban settlements, the predominant traditional occupation of Yoruba men has been farming. ". . . the farming folk have their houses in the town and look upon their farms which are in many cases situated at great distances from the town merely as places of work and temporary residence" (Fadipe:147).

In the traditional household, income is derived from farms or property held in common by the extended family, and the wives and children help either with the farming or in the trading of the product as participants in a co-operative effort (Izzett 1961:311).

Contrasted with other Yoruba areas, the population of Lagos has had few farmers in it. The island of Lagos was farmed prior to the influx of immigrants during the nineteenth century (Mabogunje 1968:239) but the density of population leaves no land for farming today.<sup>1</sup>

A statistical summary of Africans who died in Lagos during one year, 1898, as shown in Table 4.1 gives a representation of occupations at the beginning of the period covered by this study.<sup>2</sup> Of the 1,869 persons who died in Lagos, only thirty-one were farmers. Excluding 1,040 who had no occupation and were reported to be mainly children, less than four percent of the remaining cases were farmers.

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<sup>1</sup>Lagos Territory had the highest population density in the whole of Nigeria with 24,639 persons per square mile, from Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1964:3.

<sup>2</sup>The 1898 figures are from the Lagos Standard, March 8, 1899. Data from 1898 have been recoded according to categories found in Peter Marris 1962:68 and 162. The earlier data were not recorded by sex as were the Marris categories. Therefore, the Marris data has been combined to eliminate sexual differentiation.

TABLE 4.1.--Percent of Persons in Occupations in Lagos, 1898 and 1957-58.

Occupation	1898 <sup>1</sup>	1957-58
Clerical	1%	9.5%
Skilled manual	12	16
Laboring	30	6.5
Trading	42	56.5
Business	--	1.5
Professional	1	1.5
Native doctors and priests	3	2
Not working	5	6.5
Other	5	--
Unknown	1	--
Total	100	99.5 <sup>*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The figures report persons who died in Lagos. No occupational enumeration of living persons was available.

<sup>\*</sup>The number is less than 100% due to combining percentages which were listed separately for men and women.

(See Appendix A for complete list of occupations in Lagos, 1898.) The fact that nearly every Yoruba lived in a town facilitated an elaborate division of labor associated with many occupations. Occupations were recorded in thirty-three different categories in 1898 including one called "other occupations" which contained five percent of the cases. The variety of occupations indicated that a tendency toward specialization for which the Yoruba are known was well-developed at that

time. The comparison of the data from 1898 with a sample of occupations of persons in central Lagos in 1957-58 reveals changes that occurred during the period covered in the study.

The figures from 1898 are biased toward the elderly because they pertain to those who died during the year, but the comparison gives some impression of continuity as well as change in types of work. The major informant remarked that nearly all of the occupations reported in 1898 could still be found in Lagos today. Of course, many new occupations have been added as a result of changes such as industrialization and nationalism. The largest shift in type of work occurred in the laboring category. While 30 percent of the cases were laborers in 1898, only 6.5 percent were in that category in 1958. The largest increase occurred in percentage of persons engaged in trade with lesser increases in persons designated as clerical workers and skilled manual workers. The census of 1952-53 states that 90 percent of women in Lagos township were in trading or clerical work (Annual Abstract of Statistics:13). In central Lagos, nearly all of the women trade (Marris:67).

Typical of Lagosians, among the five generations of the informant family there were no farmers excepting a minister who worked as a young farm laborer for a few years. A listing of occupations of family members is shown in Figure 4.2. The occupations of the first two known generations of the family (who were adults in 1900) were nurse, trader, minister, dressmaker, and shipwright (a skilled woodworker who built ships). The nurse (a male), the dressmaker and the shipwright would be classified as skilled manual

FIGURE 4.2.--Occupations of Members of Five Generations of the Informant Family<sup>1</sup> (N=30).

Generations				
I (N=3)	II (N=4)	III (N=13)	IV (N=7)	V (N=3)
1. Male nurse	4. Minister	8. ?	21. Lawyer	28. Student
2. Trader	5. Shipwright	9. Railway administrator	22. Educator	29. Student
3. ?	6. Trader	10. Nurse	23. Gas company employee	30. Student
	7. Dressmaker	11. Senior customs officer	24. Health inspector	
		12. Chemist (pharmacist)	25. Insurance company employee	
		13. Customs worker	26. Librarian	
		14. Sociologist	27. Government administrator	
		15. Banker		
		16. Dressmaker, teacher		
		17. Maritime worker		
		18. Trader, shop owner		
		19. Deceased before adult		
		20. Teacher, judge		

<sup>1</sup>The persons listed are depicted in the photographic collection.



workers as were twelve percent of the sample from that period. Two persons were traders which places them in the most numerous occupational grouping. The minister is classified with occupations requiring professional training,<sup>1</sup> a position occupied by only one percent of the group shown in Table 4.1.

Distinctions between the Marris categories are somewhat difficult to ascertain,<sup>2</sup> but it seems that seven of the twenty-seven adults in the informant family would be classified as professionals corresponding to the 1952 census definition of occupational classes (Mabogunje:121). The professionals in the family are as follows: minister, sociologist, judge, lawyer, educator (college teacher), librarian, and government administrator. Probably the railway administrator and the chemist would also qualify for this category due to their educational attainments. The three non-adult subjects are students, one of whom is presently pursuing professional training. As may be noted in Table 4.1, professional rank was a classification attained by only 1.5% of the persons in the 1957-58 sample. The sample of the Marris study is from central Lagos where the key informant grew to adulthood and where some of her immediate family still reside. She herself has moved to the

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<sup>1</sup>The placement follows the procedure of Smythe and Smythe 1960:81, who were using contemporary data and was further verified in an interview with a contemporary Nigerian historian, Dr. Bolanle Awe, November, 1974.

<sup>2</sup>Marris acknowledges that the distinction between business owners and traders is often only one of the amount of capital invested. He does not indicate the specific occupations included in the category called professional.

Lagos suburbs. It is probable that the percentage of professionals is somewhat higher in the suburbs than in the central city. Nevertheless, they constitute a very small portion of the total population of Nigeria.

### Education

Three of the factors which have influenced placement of Nigerians in occupations are level of education, Western contacts, and sex roles. A consistency appears in the level of education of members of each generation of the family. With increasing education, there is a corresponding increase in the status of the occupations attained. Formal education in all known cases was with American or British personnel. Jobs of family members are consistent with typical sex work-roles of the time.

Figure 4.3 indicates educational achievement of family members. In the first generation it is not known if members had any formal education but persons 1 and 2 were literate in Yoruba, an unusual accomplishment when one considers that four generations later Nigeria as a whole has a literacy rate of approximately only 25 percent (Nelson, et al.:ix). It may be assumed that family members became literate through Bible study with Christian missionaries. The third ancestor had come to Lagos as a repatriate having been liberated in Sierra Leone where he may have learned a western language.

The minister in the second generation also gained his formal education through western contacts. As a young boy, his father died

FIGURE 4.3.--Formal Education of Members of Five Generations of the Informant Family<sup>1</sup> (N=30).

		Generation				
I (N=3)	II (N=4)	III (N=13)	IV (N=7)	V (N=3)		
1. Probably none	4. 4-6 years	8. 11-12 years	21. 16-17 years	28. In secondary school		
2. Probably none	5. ?	9. 11-12 years	22. 16 years	29. In college		
3. Probably none	6. ?	10. 10-11 years	23. 13-14 years	30. In secondary school		
	7. ?	11. 11-12 years	24. 11-12 years			
		12. 10-11 years	25. 13-14 years			
		13. 11-12 years	26. 15-16 years			
		14. About 20 years	27. 16 years			
		15. 11-12 years				
		16. 11-12 years				
		17. 11-12 years				
		18. 11-12 years				
		19. ?				
		20. 15-16 years				

<sup>1</sup>Persons listed are those depicted in photographs.

level

leaving him with a guardian uncle who was killed in war between Ibadan and Ijaye in the 1860's. When the chief of his area ordered that all children under age fifteen be pawned in exchange for gun powder, the boy's mother chose to give him to an American missionary who was caring for many African children, all victims of the wars. He had four to five years of schooling as a part of the household of missionaries in Abeokuta before the Christians were forced to leave the area because of the war and take refuge in Lagos (Adediran 1934:90).

The minister was one of the first to follow a pattern characteristic of those who attained a certain proficiency in the mission schools. They became, in succession, school teachers, catechists, and ordained ministers (Fadipe:322). The termination of his education with the missionaries, however, delayed his advancement toward the ministry. He had to work as a farmer for a few years before he went to Lagos where he had jobs as a laborer while also learning to be a tailor. His children remember him as a talented handyman who always had a sewing machine but tailored only to satisfy family needs. He was recognized as a church leader in Lagos and, after teaching and acting as a pastor with Lagos Baptists, he was sent back to his home area where he served as a missionary for several years. He was nearly fifty years old before he was publicly ordained as a minister (Adediran:90).

Because they were Christians, the skilled workers and the trader of the family's second generation may also have been among the children of Lagos who learned from the missionaries to read the

Bible, to write, and to do arithmetic. The C.M.S. (Church Missionary Society) of the Anglican Church began some primary and industrial-type schools in the 1850's in Lagos where the second generation were children. The Brazilian and Sierra Leonian immigrants in Lagos demanded a more literary and academic education for their children leading to the founding of the C.M.S. Grammar School, a boys' school, in 1859 (Awe:5). If the girls of the second generation went to school they would have been among the first to go to the girls' grammar school started by the C.M.S. in 1869. Their children who comprised the third generation were growing up in the period from 1896 to 1920 when employment opened up for men in the civil service, on the new railway line, or in the mercantile service. "During this period, prosperity came to the literate class" (Fadipe:322). The second generation were among those who recognized the value of education as a means of social mobility and who sent their children to school at an early age (Fadipe:1).

The members of the family's third generation all received nearly the maximum amount of education offered in Nigeria at the time. There was no government-supported school until 1909; thus, their early education was in mission schools. A photograph of a wedding in the decade of 1910 reminded one elderly informant that she had gone to school in the Anglican Church and school had been dismissed that day because the building was to be used for the wedding. Other family members went to the C.M.S. Girls' Seminary and the C.M.S. Grammar School (for boys) in the decade following 1900.

Among the Yoruba in general, as a result of education, a middle class began to emerge in the society which had previously been sharply separated into the common people and the aristocracy (Fadipe:324). The new types of occupations brought the introduction of wage employment. The kind of preferred education accompanied a lessened regard for the handicrafts. Occupations of the third generation reflect these trends as the family members who were educated young Lagosians filled positions such as railway administrator, customs officer, dispenser of pharmaceutical products and banker second in rank to the British overseer. Several of the occupations existed to facilitate colonial interests. Even the occupations of the dressmaker and the trader were imbued with the colonial influence as the dressmaker specialized in making western styles and the trader sold imports from England.

Members of the third generation who pursued their education beyond that offered in Nigeria had to exercise unusual determination and ability to delay gratification. One individual who eventually became a sociologist worked as a government clerk and a bank secretary for twelve years after completing his secondary education. From his wages, he saved enough money to begin university education in England. His mother, the minister's wife who was also a successful trader, planned to send him money but was unable to do so as trade slumped for a period at that time. Financial difficulties plagued his studies but with aid from a scholarship he was able to go on for a master's degree. Then a teaching job in West Africa intervened until 1935 when he went back to England as a doctoral

student at age 42. A younger brother who ultimately became a judge taught a variety of subjects for twenty-five years in a boys' school before going to London to study law. He was also 42 years old at that time.

There was no effort to make girls' education comparable to that of boys' in secondary schools until the 1920's (Awe:12). Their education prior to that time prepared them to be teachers or seamstresses, and occasionally a nursing assistant emerged (Awe:9).

According to a third generation member of the extended family, girls who finished secondary school taught until they were married. She herself finished secondary school in 1915 and taught for five years before her marriage. When her husband died after a few years she did not want to teach again. The Lagos Public Health Service had been established two years before and she went there to apply for a position as a health visitor. Although she was over the age limit set for health visitors, age 25, she was allowed to take the exam and when she passed at the top of the group taking the test, she was given a job. For twenty-five years she bicycled around Lagos visiting and teaching health care to new mothers. A female cousin also taught until she was married. The two other girls in the generation became a nurse and a trader.

The family supplemented the school classes of both boys and girls in the third generation with other cultural pursuits. The six boys of the key informant's father's family all learned to play a harmonium which they had at home, each one teaching the next. The youngest boy's musical talents were especially recognized

as he had a music tutor for a period of time after 1911. His talents were used in a boys' church choir and then as a church organist, a position he served in for more than thirty-six years. The girl cousins recalled taking ballroom dancing lessons on a rooftop in Lagos with partners from a boys' social club.

The girl cousins who became teachers took sewing lessons in the evening or on Saturdays for about three years--a customary thing for Lagos girls to do. The family members wanted to learn to sew for their own benefit rather than to become professional dressmakers. A journalist for the Lagos Standard in 1899 commented:

The majority--if not the whole--of the girls of today, as soon as they leave school, set themselves to acquire the art of sewing with but little results. In spite of the large number of the would-be seamstresses in this town at present, it is impossible to single out twenty-five who deserve this appellation (March 29, 1899).

One family member of the third generation did become a reputable dressmaker who, in turn, taught classes of girls to sew. She was still making her own clothes when she was well past age 70. An article in the Nigerian Pioneer in 1929 referred back to the custom:

Young girls, hitherto, in between leaving school and getting married, were wont to be engaged in dressmaking. Now, girls are seeking other employments and have boldly and successfully invaded the labour market (April 19, 1929).

The two girls of the fourth generation became a health visitor and an educator, the latter being a teacher trained before serving in government administration. The educator received a college degree in England in an area of study somewhat typical of Nigerian women of that time according to Smythe and Smythe. They state that in

1958 relatively few Nigerian women had studied abroad and their career choices were usually restricted to nursing, teaching, or secretarial work (p. 91), but while her occupation may have been conventional, the young woman who became a teacher held attitudes which were contrary to those which seemed to be exemplified by the preceding generations. Attitudes of this generation toward Nigerian culture were changing from those of earlier generations which seemed to embrace the western way of life extensively. The teacher said she came back from gaining a British education determined to teach that indigenous resources and products used scientifically were equal to those found in any other country in the 1950's.

In the fourth generation, level of education included college training for six of the seven members of the family, a majority of them studying abroad as there were no colleges in Nigeria. A few years ago Nigerians who completed higher education were almost automatically assured of a high status position. Smythe and Smythe found that persons in such positions were primarily men as conventional attitudes discouraged women from going into professional training for the esteemed areas of law, medicine, business, or university-level teaching (p. 91). Only five women were among 156 persons designated as representative of the Nigerian elite. As the number of college graduates has increased, the relationship between higher education, a high-status position, and elite status has become less predictable, however. Occupations of the college educated members of the fourth generation suggest varying degrees of prestige. For example, the lawyer no doubt ranks higher than

the gas company or insurance company employees who also have college educations. It must be noted that he spent a longer period of time in school than did the others.

Occupations of the fifth generation remain to be seen. They are all students at this time. Going to school is not unusual as nearly all Lagos children go to school now (Marris 1962:60) but competition for college entrance is still keen. A member of the fifth generation has succeeded in being admitted to one of Nigeria's universities while the other two young people are in secondary schools. The university student is a young woman who is studying science and who has expressed an interest in becoming a doctor. Attitudes are changing toward occupations for women today. Female cousins who are not included in the immediate family are presently in law and journalism, non-traditional fields for women.

### Religion

The concurrence of formal education with Christianity has been noted in the previous chapter. The missionaries were the first group of foreign individuals who lived among the local people from the time of their arrival, professed interest in their well-being, and learned their language (Ayandele 1966:29). They found support through the assistance of the expatriates from Sierra Leone who were literate in both Yoruba and English (Fadipe:320). Those who gathered in the missions would be taught to read and write, first in Yoruba and later in English (Fadipe:321).

Christianity made slow inroads into Nigeria as a whole, however. The current religious composition of Nigeria is approximately 22 percent Christian, 44 percent Moslem, and the remaining one-third are followers of indigenous religions (Nelson, et al.:2). It may be expected that there would be a larger proportion of Christians in Lagos than in other sections of the country because it was one of the first sites for Christian missions and remained the retreat where missionaries were assured of protection by the British government when they were not allowed access into other areas. Greater numbers of Europeans in Lagos than elsewhere provided more examples of their way of life, their power and their prosperity, furnishing possible models for emulation. Nevertheless, Christianity did not become the religion of the majority in Lagos until after 1950 (Baker 1974:110).

Members of all five generations of the informant family were Christians. The earliest man in the genealogy was a deacon in his Lagos church where a plaque remains commemorating him. His daughter became the wife of the Baptist minister. Succeeding members of the family remained within the Protestant faiths but, upon marriage, affiliated with the denomination of their respective husbands. When the daughter of the Baptist married an Anglican she joined a C.M.S. church. Her daughter who was raised an Anglican became a Methodist following her husband's religious convictions. A family informant stated that it is customary to join the church of the husband in order to establish one church for the children to attend.

### Marriage Customs

An indication of acceptance of Christianity in Lagos compared to other parts of Yorubaland appears in marriage statistics. Fifty-five marriages were recorded in Christian churches in Lagos during the year of 1898 when the population was about 40,000 (Lagos Standard, March 8, 1899). In contrast, all Christian marriages performed in Ife up to 1937 totaled only about sixty<sup>1</sup> (Bascom:63). Christian marriage was not popular among the Yoruba in general because law decreed that it must be monogamous. The missions and the British administration promoted Christian marriages not recognizing the many economic, political, and social advantages evolving around polygamy in the traditional society. Among the advantages, in agricultural areas polygamy helped provide the necessary labor force for agrarian productivity offsetting a high infant mortality rate. A high moral tone in society was also said to be the result of polygamy. Sexual offenses were nearly nonexistent (Ayandele:336). Regardless, many converts did join churches but continued to practice polygamy while professing Christianity. The missions could not afford to ignore their support (Ayandele:335).

Only two cases of polygamy were identified in the informant family. In one of the particular cases where one man had two women in his household, one was recognized as his legal wife and the other was called "mother of his children." The man claimed the

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<sup>1</sup>The population of Ife in 1937 is not known but it is an old, large center of population. The population of Ife in the 1952 census was 217,000.

children from both women. It was explained that all of them would be included in a will. Thus, the family recognized all of the children as legitimate. The informant family has a low incidence of polygamy compared to patterns revealed in other studies. In a 1951-53 survey in six Yoruba cities, 62.6 percent of marriages were found to be polygamous (Bascom:64).

The influence of Christianity and Islam which was noted by Fadipe as "the most fundamental causal factor of the various changes to be observed in Yoruba society today as compared with a century ago" (p. 317) brought changes in marital customs both directly and indirectly. Changes in the economic system and in education may be linked especially to Christianity; the factors jointly affectly customs regarding the institution of marriage. Establishment of the wage-earning system which came first to cities like Lagos severed economic interdependence between families lessening the degree to which marriage was viewed as an alliance to two families. The desire for formal education has prolonged the period before marriage.

Traditionally among some Yoruba groups, a family looked for a mate for a daughter when she was about age ten. Both families of the prospective couple would make inquiries about the character and health of the other family. If inquiries proved satisfactory, the girl would be betrothed but the marriage would not take place until she was about twenty years old. The man was indebted by custom to his future in-laws for obligations such as gifts and manual labor.

The great variety of types of unions and households in Lagos today run the gamut of possibilities but, to a certain extent, marriage is still considered a family affair although it is less of an alliance between families than it once was.

Traditionally, as has been said, marriages are between two families and they were frequently arranged by the elders. Today young people are more and more claiming the right to choose their own spouses, but still lay great stress upon the choice being approved by the families. When a young man has chosen a girl, he writes to her family head for permission to marry her. His letter has to be endorsed by his family elders. The girl's family will then make inquiries regarding the character and position of the young man, and that of his family: insanity, criminality, and physical defects are all taken into consideration. If the inquiries are satisfactory, the young man's family is informed that the proposal is acceptable and the two families meet for the 'Thank-you' ceremony (Izzett:312).

The traditional formality of obtaining family approval is still appealing particularly because it allows the young women the privilege of seeking family support again should the marriage fail (Izzett:313).

Gifts and money (bride-price) paid during the betrothal period symbolized securing the contract between two families in traditional marriages. Izzett says customs varied from family to family in Lagos in the 1950's but,

include 40 bitter cola and 40 cola nuts, 10 guinea-pepper, 1 bottle of gin, 1 bottle of each type of mineral water . . . or various wines. Christians also include a Bible, an engagement ring and a purse, containing two guineas which goes to the bride. The bridegroom is also expected to give the bride a gift of L10 to L30, according to his financial position (p. 308).

During the traditional marriage ceremony splitting and sharing kola-nuts further symbolized sealing the marriage contract between

families (Sofola:137). Other traditional items were symbols of good wishes for the union (Fadipe:79). Therefore, both traditional and Christian symbols have been selectively incorporated into the Christian marriage ritual. The informant family are among the Lagos families who seem to respect the traditions of the Yoruba combined with their Christian beliefs. Both pre-marriage ceremonies between families and the Christian marriage ceremony are observed.

Remaining single was against the mores of traditional Yoruba society (Fadipe:70). However, in the informant family, men in both the third and fourth generations never married. Fadipe referred to confirmed bachelors as "a product of modern times [1930's] with its greater individualism, [who] are almost invariably Christians" (p. 65). The single men in the family were individuals who continued their education outside of Nigeria. The key informant who also continued her education abroad did marry but later than the customary age in traditional society. She was past the age of thirty at the time of her marriage.

### Family Relationships

#### (a) Kinship Ties

The maintenance of group solidarity and cohesion is a basic value of the Yoruba culture (Sofola 1973:124). Preservation of kinship ties may be seen as an expression of the solidarity factor. At one time, according to Fadipe, Christians would build separate houses for themselves away from the extended family when they

found their beliefs to be incompatible with the life-styles of their kin but they never ceased contact with the extended family.

. . . in practice no one, Muslim or Christian, lives entirely outside the intercourse of members of his extended family, no matter how different their religious affiliations; and where arbitration for settling disputes which threaten the solidarity of the group is invoked, the educated Christian who insists upon autonomy within his own immediate family does so at the risk of finding himself isolated (Fadipe:114).

Most Yoruba would feel apprehensive about being isolated as it is contrary to their generally gregarious nature. In this spirit there is a Yoruba proverb that says, "It is more honorable and becoming to walk in company than alone." The key informant explained that a Yoruba person who is going to an important place or function does not want to go alone as anyone found attending many important functions on his own may be thought of as unsociable and may not be highly respected.

The kinship group has been and continues to be a primary source of companionship. Social life of Yoruba families in Lagos still revolves around family affairs as it would have in the past. The affection, sense of mutual obligation, and loyalty of the family group is the cement of Lagos social life (Marris 1960:124). Family celebrations, holidays, and visits by relatives who live far away are events which bring extended families together.

Fadipe felt that among the changes in Yoruba society throughout a century the most striking and universal feature was

the plurality and heterogeneity of attitudes to be observed in place of the relative unity and uniformity which prevailed in the earlier period in regard to any given item of custom. What subsequently happened was not simply a replacement of

old values by new ones throughout the entire society. Rather, we have the old and new existing side by side, while in between are compromise (integrated) values (p. 317).

One example of retention of the old along with the new also appears in the special occasions observed by the informant family. Marshall states that there are three important occasions making "rites de passage" among traditional Yoruba. These are naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals (p. 241). The preceding occasions are considered occasions for a special observance by the major informant but her list of special occasions also included the following: christening, birthdays, retirement, housewarming after building a new house, and betrothal. The content of family photographs suggests that confirmation should also be included. Thus, observances of the Christian faith, practices accompanying the wage-employment system introduced by western entrepreneurs, and traditional rites are incorporated into the contemporary social life of a Yoruba family in Lagos.

In addition to special events, sisters in the informant family see each other almost daily even though they both have full-time jobs and live several miles apart. Relatives who live within a few miles also drop in frequently for short visits. Affairs of the traditional Yoruba households were discussed by men of the family at meetings held periodically (Izzett:305) but Marris feels that recently "day-to-day visits exchanged by relatives strengthen the unity of the family group more than do formal meetings" (1960:124).

Not unlike the traditional Yoruba extended family who developed a strong sense of solidarity as they shared a compound,

family members of Lagos households consider needs of kinfolk as their responsibility.

Amongst those interviewed in central Lagos, thirty-two percent of all those whose mother was still living shared the same house with her, thirty-eight percent had at least one of their brothers or sisters in the same house, twenty-three percent one of their half brothers or sisters. About two-thirds had one or more of their brothers or sisters, and of their parents, living on Lagos Island within a mile of them (Marris 1960:124).

The key informant has an elderly relative as a permanent member of her household and also temporarily shares her home with three children of relatives. They go to school in the vicinity of her home. Her own children are attending schools in another city. Like the sample in central Lagos, "A quarter of the sample had some of their children under sixteen living elsewhere. Since the children spend more of their time outside their parents' household, they get used to regarding themselves as members of a family group (Marris 1960:125). The hospitality of the home of the informant family is also frequently extended to relatives and friends who are on business in Lagos.

Traditional expectations of hospitality can be a substantial drain on the Lagos householder's resources. Although the average annual earnings for salaried persons is higher in Lagos than in any other part of Nigeria (Mabogunje 1968:254), the cost of living is also very high. Knowledge about wages and salaries in Lagos has made some villagers think that anyone living in Lagos was wealthy (Marris 1962:29). Averages conceal the great inequality of income.

Lagos tends at the one end to attract the rural poor (persons lacking both assets and urban skills), while at the other to give immense opportunity to many others to express personal

talents and manipulate private property for spectacular monetary gains. As a result, its population contains a more than proportionate number of individuals with some of the highest incomes in the country (Mabogunje 1968:254).

Yet, in central Lagos, most people barely manage to live within their incomes (Marris 1962:77).

(b) Regard for seniority

Regard for seniority is another aspect of the culture which survives to "ensure respect for custom, authority, and tradition upon which the stability of interpersonal relationships among the Yoruba rests" (Fadipe:128). Names by which persons are addressed illustrate the respect for seniority which has been maintained while the English influence has infiltrated the tradition. A person who is twenty years one's senior would expect to be referred to as "Father" or "Mother." Iya is the Yoruba word for "mother" and may refer to one's actual mother or a number of female relatives. Baba meaning "father" is used similarly. Depending upon the inclinations of the family, a grandmother might be addressed by Yoruba terms, Iya Agba meaning "older big mother" is one possibility, or English terms such as Grannie or Grandma, or with a combination such as "Mamma Agba." The informant had called her grandmother who belonged to the third generation, Iya, but addressed her mother as "Mamma." Her own children usually call her "Mummy."

Yoruba have tended to identify with groups according to age with one's age-set spanning about six years. A child who did not express respect for someone senior to his age-set would be considered insubordinate (Fadipe:130). For example, the younger boys in the

third generation of the informant family could never address their older brothers by their proper names. As adults the older group acquired the prefix, "Papa," followed by descriptive affectionate pseudonyms. One who was known for his happy disposition was "Papa Jolly" and one who had a propensity for tea was "Papa Tea." Children of the younger set of brothers knew the older men by these names while the brother in their father's age-set were called "Uncle." Another example of deference to age was recalled by an elderly cousin of the family. She had postponed her marriage in 1920 until her older cousin with whom she had grown up was married because, she said, "It was proper."

#### (c) Male-Female Obligations

Both husbands and wives in Yoruba society customarily have jobs. A journalist in 1929 said that in earlier days a girl would be looked after by her family and the family of her future husband. With the advent of Christianity which decreed monogamy, girls were finding themselves left without security; hence they were competing with men for jobs (Nigerian Pioneer, April 19, 1929). The practice of women contributing to their own support was established at a much earlier time, however. When a bride went to live in the compound of her husband's family, the man would be given land and the bride would be given capital with which to start a trade. The trade was usually pursued independently of her husband, the earnings from it were exclusively hers, and she was expected to provide her own clothing. The husband was obliged to furnish her with a room and food, as well as being responsible for her debts.

The women throughout the five generations of the informant family have had their own occupations independently of being housewives. Undoubtedly the trader in the second generation carried a large portion of the responsibility for support of her family. Her husband, the minister, had a prestigious but low-paying occupation. A biographical account tells that he labored for several years in one area without receiving a penny. Perhaps financial support was not expected as it had not been a practice to sell labor or skills in pre-colonial days. With the exception of slave labor, help was freely given when required with the anticipation of mutual reciprocity (Fadipe:149). The system was effective in traditional compounds but the independent nuclear wife and family could not live in Lagos without financial income. When the minister's son went to England to school, money for his expenses was to come from his mother's earnings from trade.

According to Marshall, different types of expenses are delegated to men or to women in Yorubaland today. Husbands are responsible for housing, for major expenses for children's education, and for money to buy staple foods. Wives buy their own clothing and foods which supplement staples. Both husband and wife contribute toward buying children's clothes (p. 190). Undoubtedly, great variation could be found in this pattern.

#### Social Class

The informant family of the study appear to be among the elite of Nigeria as seen in Figure 4.1 and to have ancestors who

would also have been among the African elite of their times. The Nigerian elite have been defined by P. C. Lloyd as "those men and women who have received a substantial western education and are (almost in consequence) relatively wealthy" (p. 328). Okin sums up the elite category in urbanized Nigeria as "the group with steady employment and salary income" (p. 34). Smythe and Smythe explain the meaning which the concept, elite, has undergone:

Once understood as a small, select oligarchy, the term 'elite' now implies in modern societies a broader and more flexible stratum of people who, for whatever reason, claim a position of superior prestige and a corresponding measure of influence over the fate of the community of which they are a part (p. 4).

They agree that education is a minimum requirement for elite status.

The development of Nigeria's elite of the 1960's was said to be attributable to three major influences: urbanization, westernization, and political developments (Smythe and Smythe:44). This group is sometimes called the "new" elite in contrast to persons such as chiefs and obas who were leaders by traditional right. The circumstances which promoted development of the "new" elite were concentrated in urban areas. Schools were founded in urban areas; jobs which were accorded high status were more available in cities, and activities and patterns of living which appealed to the educated found support in cities because only in those areas were groups of potential elite large enough to form an identifiable body (Smythe & Smythe:45).

The key informant spoke of herself as upper middle class in 1974. However, the experiences, occupations, education and style

of life of the family, both past and present, reveal great similarities to the characteristics of the elite as described by the Lloyds, the Smythes, and Okin.

Smythe and Smythe interviewed an upper-level group of Nigerian elite who had been designated by informants. They state that there was a much larger group who were potential leaders--all of them would have completed a "good" secondary school (p. 75). All of the members of the third and fourth generations of the family had completed secondary school or more.

Early generations of the informant family were among the first Nigerians to receive a western education. As long-time Lagos residents they were at the Nigerian point of entry for western influences. They also were present through all phases of the growth of Lagos toward becoming a complex industrial and governmental center.

Information gained from discussion of photographs indicates that friends and distant relatives of the family have been persons who had a large measure of influence in Nigeria throughout the length of time covered by the study. Connections with the illustrious personages were sometimes by marriage but, given the emphasis placed on family approval of alliances and the encouragement of marriages between those who come from comparable status hierarchies, the connections aid in delineating the status of the family. The wife of one of the third generation family members is a daughter of one of Nigeria's first British-trained doctors. He was one of a total of only eighteen African doctors who were trained in Britain between 1876 and 1920 and who practiced in Nigeria (Lagos Sunday Times,

Nov. 22, 1964). The key informant also has two links of affinal kinship with an offspring of one of the doctors who started the public health service in Lagos during the decade of 1910. In that family, a grandfather was the first indigenous bishop of Lagos, and a great grandfather was Samuel Johnson, author of the classic History of the Yorubas. Cousins of the key informant who are children of third generation members have become lawyers, doctors, and university professors. Although they do not consider themselves to be in political positions, two members of the fourth generation of the family hold administrative positions in government departments.

Social structural criteria identifying the immediate informant family conform to descriptions similar to those of the Nigerian new elite. Persons who had studied abroad were placed at the top of the elite in the late 1950's. At that time, eight members of the informant family had studied abroad. In the occupational sphere, the family have been represented in senior civil service positions and in the profession of law, both second only to high public office in a ranking of the social status of Nigerian occupations.

Language also typified the elite, fluency in English being a necessity. Living members of the third, fourth, and fifth generations of the family are bilingual. They speak both Yoruba and English with ease.

The style of life of family members exemplified characteristics found associated with the elite in regard to housing, household help, leisure activities and dress. The major informant

lives in government reservation quarters which were designated, in general, as "the most modern and comfortable in the city" (Smythe & Smythe:138), in the late 1950's. Domestic help in the forms of gardener, driver, houseboy, nightwatchman, and others execute household tasks. While the family seem to be among the elite, to be elite does not necessarily imply affluence. Domestic help also does not always indicate wealth. Household tasks are largely unmechanized and hired help is necessary to replace labor that extended families once gave reciprocally. All of the key informant's extended family who live nearby have full-time salaried jobs and are not available to exchange assistance with household work.

Regarding dress, "[t]he clothing of the elite is a mixture of Western and Nigerian dress" (Smythe & Smythe:145). Most elite in 1958 were said to possess a limited but sufficient quantity of Western wear to be prepared for any occasion requiring western dress.

. . . the complete Western outfit--suit, shirt, and tie with shoes and socks--is invariably elite.

As for the flowing Nigerian costumes, the number, variety, and quality of fabric and embroidery are suggestive of one's position and wealth. Even those on the fringes of the elite have at least one really presentable Nigerian outfit (Smythe & Smythe:146).

The informant family have a wide variety of Nigerian and western dress today. The mixture is a change from earlier days. The third generation members who were young children around 1900 grew up wearing almost all western dress. Two family informants

from the third generation who are now in their 70's recalled their attitudes toward clothing as young women in the decade of 1910 in Lagos. They were amused in 1974 to remember parading to church in the latest western fashions. A male cousin insisted that his female cousins order their clothes from England because he wanted them to be fashion leaders. He told them not to dress like everyone else but to be first. The four girl cousins respected him for the high standards which he consistently maintained. One of the ladies laughed with delight because she said she could have made several dresses in a day but the ones from England would be "neater" and they were able to order different colors of shoes and hats to coordinate with each dress.

As a final indicator of elite status, the elite were said to be great "joiners" belonging to a numerous variety of organizations. The key informant described her husband as one who belonged to many social groups. Members of the third generation belonged to lodges whose forms and names were derived from western counterparts. A husband and wife of that generation also are leaders in the Ogboni Society, a secret indigenous group which was revived by influential Yoruba to maintain cultural and social functions (Fadipe:248). The key informant herself belongs to several professional, religious, and service organizations.

#### Summary

The informant family of the research has been described in comparison with other Yoruba groups, with the population of Lagos,

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and with the Nigerian new elite. The informant family is composed of five generations of educated, Christian, Yoruba from Lagos. Individual characteristics of members of the family indicate that they are representative of persons who as a result of education and occupations stemming from colonial intervention grew to compose a "new" elite in Nigeria. They are the antithesis of the traditional elite made up of rulers, chiefs, and members of royal families.

As Yoruba, the family is part of the dominant ethnic group of southwestern Nigeria. Cohesion of the group in earlier days was based more on the common language than on cultural similarities. One characteristic of Yoruba people in general was the tendency to be urban dwellers giving rise to large cities before cities developed in other parts of West Africa as a result of European influences. Lagos is an exceptional Yoruba city being the only one that is primarily a product of European development. Members of the informant family were Lagos residents from the time that the British first claimed the area in the mid-nineteenth century. The town which was predominantly Yoruba then remains 70 percent Yoruba today.

The diversification of occupations in Lagos differs from the farming pursuits characteristic of Yoruba in other areas. Virtually no farming is done in Lagos today. The members of the first two generations of the family were employed as skilled manual workers, traders, and a professional. The latter category comprised only about one percent of the Lagos population of the time. Eight

out of twenty members of the third and fourth generations appear to rank as professionals. Therefore, the professionals at that time constitute approximately 40 percent of the family compared to 1.5 percent of the general population in central Lagos in 1957-58.

Ability to hold professional occupations is still directly related to level of formal education although education no longer insures elite status. Educational attainments of the first two generations of the family is uncertain but third and fourth generation members were consistent in that all of them completed as much education as was possible in Lagos at the time. Some studied abroad. Two of thirteen members of the third generation and five of seven members of the fourth generation gained further education in England. Fifth generation members are receiving the maximum education now available through the university level in Nigeria. The percentage of Lagos children who attended school concurrently with the family is unknown but, as late as 1970, the literacy rate for Nigeria was only approximately 25 percent.

Because schools were established and conducted by missions, formal education was an adjunct of Christianity. The first person classified as a professional in the family, a minister, was educated by American missionaries with whom he took refuge as a result of civil wars of the 1860's. The social mobility of his children was facilitated by the fact that they had adequate education to qualify them for wage employment occupations necessary to the British administration in the early 1900's. Embracement of the western model for life-styles becomes especially apparent with the third

generation. Education for them was supplemented by lessons in music, dancing, and needlecraft, all western in type.

The religious affiliations of the family were consistently Christian dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. As Christians, they were among the minority in Lagos where the Moslem faith predominated from 1900 to 1950. Most of the family followed the Christian dictate of monogamous marriage while polygamy was the rule among other Yoruba. The effects of Christianity upon families were multiple, particularly due to the link between religion and education. As a result of education, Christians were among the first Nigerians to qualify for salaried jobs in the colonial system. Interdependencies between families necessitated by the earlier labor-reciprocal system were weakened. Some individuals postponed marriages to pursue education or chose to remain single contrary to traditional mores. Family approval of marriages became less imperative. Nevertheless, contemporary Christians including the informant family have retained aspects of traditional life along with Christian modifications. As a concrete example, they have incorporated symbols from both indigenous and Christian customs in the marriage rituals.

Furthermore, kinship ties between a small group of relatives of the informant family remain strong. Typical of most Yoruba families in Lagos, social life continues to revolve around family affairs. Sisters who live several miles apart keep in touch almost daily. Elderly relatives share the homes of the sisters in exchange for supervising the household while the younger women are away at

work. Young relatives who attend schools nearby live temporarily in the same homes. The exchange is considered part of the obligations that Yoruba owe to their kin. Regard for seniority is another obligation and is implied in one way in terms used to address older kin.

Yoruba women customarily have had a degree of financial independence but they have rarely held high-status positions. Most women of the informant family were no exception. Throughout the four generations of adults, they had their own occupations and contributed to the financial support of the family in addition to being housewives. In general, conventional attitudes decreed that women should pursue occupations which were less prestigious than those held by men. Occupations of females in the family fall in the categories of trader, teacher, nurse, and seamstress. If aspirations of a fifth generation female family member who is studying science and thinks of becoming a doctor are fulfilled, the pattern of female occupations will no longer hold.

The informant family are similar to the new elite of Nigeria in several ways. All family members who were formally educated after 1900 completed school in Lagos fulfilling the minimal requirement of elite status--a "good" secondary school education. They became fluent in both Yoruba and English. Members of the family have held occupations that rank near the top in a social status ranking of Nigerian occupations. Styles of life of members of the family pertaining to type of housing, incidence of domestic help, membership in organizations, and type of clothing worn all imply elite status as it was defined by social scientists in the late 1950's.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS: LEXICON OF DRESS

The lexicon found on the following pages is an inventory of all of the items of dress that are visibly apparent in the photographs analyzed in this study. Six hundred and seven representations of individuals seen in pictures taken between 1900 and 1974 were obtained from the photographic collection of one Nigerian family. Development of a lexicon is a step in the analysis of a language, a type of methodology that is being adapted in combination with case study and historical research. The lexicon contributes to operationalizing the section of the hypotheses (stated on page 6) concerned with modes of dress. Modes are defined as combinations of items worn most frequently in ensembles of dress by the population in certain periods of time and are the subject of the syntactical section of the research. Items found in the modes, are drawn from the items which are listed and described in the lexicon.

The lexicon of a language is its inventory of morphemes together with information about how these morphemes can be combined to form more complex lexical items (Langacker 1967:76).

A morpheme has been defined as a minimal sound/meaning correspondence. Morphemes may be combined in a regular manner to form more complex lexical or syntactic units. For purposes of the research, individual clothing items were viewed on a level analogous to

morphemes but as phenomena of minimal visual/meaning correspondence in a system of dress. Descriptive information about each item in the lexicon is related to customary identification of the item.

A basic feature in the identification of an item of dress is the sexual association of the item. Ethnographers have observed that "in human societies, clothes, as a rule . . . , are subdivided into those worn by men and those worn by women . . ." (Ogibenin 1971:13). The sexual associations accompanying the lexical items in the inventory apply to the population of the study and may not be generalizable to other populations.

Cultural association, western, traditional, or universal is also seen as a fundamental feature in the identification of an item of dress. As a word is identified within its ethnic context such as Yoruba, Ibo, or French, items of dress are identifiable by cultural association. Designations were applied as follows: traditional items are those identified as part of the heritage in dress transmitted from Yoruba culture to Nigerians of the period of the study while western items are styles recognized as having European origins. Items having no obvious cultural association (most jewelry, for example) are classified as universal. The colloquial differentiation in dress made among Lagos people is "native" or "English" rather than traditional or western. These labels remain from the colonial period when the British were the most influential foreigners in Nigeria. A category for "other" cultural identifications was also provided but the western,

traditional, and universal designations accommodated all of the items in the lexicon.

A third type of information in the lexicon is a classification of items according to the body position at which an item is worn. The position for wearing items restricts ways in which they can be combined with other items in so far as it is considered appropriate for a limited number of layers of garments to be placed on any part of the body, a syntactical consideration.

The inventory of items compiled in the form of a lexicon is a listing of all the apparent minimal units of clothing identifiable on all fully visible figures in the photographs. The list includes seventy different items. A few items are listed more than once when different names were applicable to identical items such as a pendant which may also be called a neck chain or a bowtie which is more generally classified as a necktie. Each type of item was counted only once even though multiple names are listed. The cultural associations were established primarily from the perception of the key informant and secondarily from the researcher. Sexual association and body position were based on the observation of the researcher. The inventory of items with descriptive information follows (see pages 129-137).

### Discussion

Sexual association and body area where an item was worn were clearly discernable from the photographs. The key informant was relied upon for designation of cultural origins of items. Names

Items of Dress Worn by Population		Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
<b>Arm and Hand Jewelry and Accessories</b>			
Armband: a band worn around the upper arm as identification or jewelry		Universal	Female
Bracelet: an ornamental band or circlet for the wrist or arm <sup>a</sup>		Universal	Female <sup>c</sup>
Cane: a walking stick <sup>a</sup>		Universal	Male
Cuff links: a pair of ornaments or buttons connected by chain links, a shank, or a bar which fastens the cuff of a shirt <sup>b</sup>		Western	Male
Gloves: a covering for the hand with a separate sheath for each finger and for the thumb <sup>a</sup>		Western	Both
Handbag: purse, a bag for carrying in the hand, as a small valise or a woman's bag for carrying money, small purchases, toilet articles, etc. <sup>a</sup>		Western	Both
Handkerchief: a small piece of linen, silk, or other fabric, usually square, carried about the person for wiping the face, nose, etc. <sup>a</sup>		Western	Both
Ring: a circular band of metal or other material for wearing on the finger as an ornament or a symbol of other identification		Universal	Both

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Source: Wilcox R. Turner, The Dictionary of Costume (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1969).

<sup>c</sup>Although this item is associated primarily with female dress, two males in the population also wore it.

\*Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Umbrella: a portable shade or screen for protection from sunlight, rain, etc. in its modern form consisting of a light circular canopy of silk, cotton, or other material on a folding frame of bars or strips of steel, cane, etc. <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Both
Foot and Leg Coverings		
Bootees: a baby's knitted shoe <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Sandals: a kind of shoe, consisting of a sole of leather or other material fastened to the foot by thongs or straps <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Shoes: an external covering, usually of leather, for the human foot, consisting of a more or less stiff or heavy sole and a lighter upper part <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Slippers: a light, low-cut shoe easily slipped on the foot usually without the aid of fastenings <sup>b</sup>	Traditional	Both
Salubata: Yoruba slippers consisting of a sole, vamp, possibly a heel, but no quarter	Western	Both
Socks: short stockings covering the foot and ending anywhere below the knee	Western	Female
Stockings: a close-fitting covering, usually knitted; made of wool, cotton, nylon, silk, etc.; for the foot and leg <sup>a</sup>		

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Source: Wilcox R. Turner, The Dictionary of Costume (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1969).

\* Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
<b>Foot and Leg Jewelry and Accessories</b>		
Gaiters: a covering of cloth, leather, etc. for the ankle and instep, sometimes also the lower leg, worn over the shoes, buttoned at sides and strapped under the boot <sup>a,b</sup>	Western	Male
<b>Hair Jewelry and Accessories</b>		
Barrette: a clasp for holding a woman's hair in place <sup>a</sup>	Western	Female
Fillet: (headband) a narrow band of ribbon or the like bound round the head or hair		Female
Hairbow: a looped knot of ribbon worn in the hair		Female
<b>Head Jewelry and Accessories</b>		
Earrings: a ring or other ornament worn in or on the lobe of the ear <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Female
Eyeglasses: spectacles; two glass lenses set in a frame which rests on the nose and is held in place by pieces passing over or around the ears <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Hairstyle: hairdo; any method of arranging the hair	Universal	Both
Pipe: a tube of wood, clay, hard rubber or other material, with a small bowl at one end, used for smoking tobacco, etc. <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Male

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Source: Wilcox R. Turner, The Dictionary of Costume (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1969).

\* Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Scarf: a long, broad strip (or square) of silk, lace, or other material worn about the head for ornament or protection; a muffler <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Sunglasses: spectacles with colored lenses to protect the eyes from strong light <sup>b</sup>	Western	Both
Head Coverings		
Beret: a soft, round, visorless cap that fits closely <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Bonnet: head covering with strings tied under the chin	Western	Female
Cap: a covering for the head, esp. one fitting closely and made of softer material than a hat, having little or no brim <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Male
Crown: a royal or imperial headdress or cap of sovereignty. A tiara, usually jewelled (see regalia) <sup>b</sup>	Universal	Male
Fila: a brimless cap	Traditional	Male
Wig: an artificial covering of hair for the head <sup>a</sup>	Western	Female
Gele: (headtie) a straight cloth arranged on the head in various turban shapes. Length of cloth varies from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 yards, width is usually one yard	Traditional	Female
Hat: a shaped covering for the head, usually with a crown and a brim <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Source: Wilcox R. Turner, The Dictionary of Costume (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1969).

\*Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Veil: a piece of material, usually light and more or less transparent, worn over the head or face <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Female
Neck Jewelry and Accessories		
Bowtie: a small bow-shaped necktie (see necktie) <sup>a</sup>	Western	Male
Choker: a necklace worn tightly around the neck <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Female
Necktie: a narrow band, as of silk or satin, worn around the neck, commonly under a collar, tied on front	Western	Male
Neckchain: (see pendant)		
Necklace: an ornament of precious stones, beads, or the like, worn around the neck, <sup>a</sup> shorter than a pendant, beads fall in a curved shape around neck	Universal	Both
Pendant: a hanging ornament suspended from the neck, usually on a chain	Universal	Both
Scarf: (see head accessories)		
Torso Coverings (lower)		
Iro: wrapper; a straight cloth wrapped around the body to cover the trunk or part of the trunk. Approximately 2 1/2 X 2 yards (see complete torso covering)	Traditional	Female <sup>C</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Although this item is associated primarily with male dress, one female in the population also wore this item.

<sup>c</sup>Although this item is associated primarily with female dress, two males in the population also wore this item.

\* Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Knickers: short trousers worn for casual or sportswear, <sup>b</sup> ending at the knee or above	Western	Male
Skirt: a separate garment hanging from the waist <sup>a</sup>	Western	Female
Sokoto: a loose trouser gathered by drawstring to fit the waist	Traditional	Male
Trousers: an outer garment covering the lower part of the trunk and each leg separately, and extending to the ankles <sup>a</sup>	Western	Male
Torso Coverings (Upper)		
Blouse: a sleeved or sleeveless garment covering the body from the neck and shoulders to the waistline, fitted by means of darts, tucks, gathers, or shaping	Western	Both
Bolero: a short jacket ending above or at the waistline, often without sleeves or fasteners	Western	Female
Buba: garment which slips over the head, rectangles of cloth form loose sleeves, has no features such as darts, tucks, or gathers for fitting	Traditional	Both
Dansiki: a tunic with very deep armholes and a pocket below each armhole	Traditional	Male
Jacket: a short coat, combination of jacket with matching trousers or skirt is called a suit	Western	Male

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Wilcox R. Turner, The Dictionary of Costume (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1969).

\* Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Shirt: a garment for the upper part of the body, with or without collar, short or long-sleeved, <sup>a</sup> lighter-weight and softer than a jacket	Western	Male <sup>c</sup>
Sweater: any knit or crocheted jacket or blouse <sup>b</sup>	Western	Both
Undershirt: T-shirt; an inner shirt worn next to the skin <sup>a</sup>	Western	Male
Vest: waistcoat; a short, sleeveless garment usually worn over a shirt and under a coat	Western	Male
Torso Coverings (Complete):		
Agbada: large, loose, flowing robe or gown worn as an outer garment	Traditional	Male
Cape: a sleeveless garment fastened round the neck and falling loosely over the shoulders, worn separately or attached to a coat <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Caftan: a long tunic-type shirt, long-sleeved, may extend to the ankles	Traditional	Male
Coat: an outer garment with sleeves, lengths vary, topcoat, overcoat, swallow-tailed coat are variations	Western	Male

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

<sup>b</sup>Source: Wilcox R. Turner, The Dictionary of Costume (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1969).

<sup>c</sup>Although this item is associated primarily with male dress, one female in the population wore it.

\*Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Dress, gown: garment worn usually by women, consisting of a skirt and waist, made either separately or together, a shaped to fit some part of the torso	Western	Both
Gbarye: a man's gown made of many strips of fabric which taper from hemline to shoulder; the circumference of the hemline is a full circle	Traditional	Male
Ibora: a covering cloth; a large cloth worn as an outer garment over the shoulders and trunk	Traditional	Male
Iro: (see lower torso coverings)		
Rompers: a loose one-piece outer garment combining waist and short, full bloomers	Western	Male
Torso Accessories		
Apron: a piece of apparel made in various ways for covering and also protecting the front of a person <sup>a</sup>	Western	Female
Belt: sash; a band of flexible material for encircling the waist	Western	Both
Brooch: a clasp or ornament having a pin at the back for passing through the clothing and a catch for securing the point of the pin <sup>a</sup>	Universal	Female
Collar: the part of a shirt, blouse, coat, etc., around the neck, usually folded over, <sup>a</sup> may be detachable or joined to the garment	Western	Female

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

\* Associations apply only to the population of this study.

Items of Dress Worn by Population	Cultural * Association	Sexual * Association
Dickey: (1) a waist for women, without sides or sleeves, to be worn under a dress or suit, (2) a detachable shirt front <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Flowers: blossoms used as accessories in the form of a bouquet, boutonniere, or corsage	Universal	Both
Iborun: shawl, stole, a cloth worn over the iro or carried; approximately 1 X 2 yards	Traditional	Female
Ipele: a second wrapper worn over the iro	Traditional	Female
Watch: a small, portable timepiece with a spring-driven mechanism <sup>a</sup>	Western	Both
Watchchain: (fob) a short chain attached to a watch and worn hanging from the pocket <sup>a</sup>	Western	Male
Regalia: decorations or insignia of any office or order; crown, medals, or ribbons	Universal	Male

<sup>a</sup>Source: American College Dictionary, rev. ed. (1951).

\* Associations apply only to the population of this study.

of items seen on the photographs were cues to cultural origins. When informants used a Yoruba word to identify an item, it was predictable that the item was recognized as part of traditional dress. English words denoted items of western origin. The names for slippers are a case illustrating some confusion of origins. The word for traditional slippers is salubata, a Hausa word, which implies that this item of apparel came to the Yoruba from the Hausa people of the north. In current everyday Yoruba conversations slippers are commonly referred to as "silipasi," a pidgin English derivative of the word, slippers, which probably reflects the strong western influence in the styles of slippers that are worn today.

The traditional/western designation was debatable in a few cases. An example is the popular "conductor's suit," a relatively recent fashion worn by many West African business and professional men. It is a two-piece garment cut in a western style made with short sleeves, a convertible collar, and matching shirt and trousers but in a fabric of a heavier weight than a western man's shirt and lighter weight than most western men's suits. It is classified in this study as a western shirt and trousers because of its shaping and close fit but, while the form is western, the particular combination of form and fabric is not generally seen worn in areas outside of the tropics. The name implies its resemblance to uniforms once worn by conductors on transportation lines.

Another debatable item is footwear. Because slippers were classified by the key informant as traditional, the designation of

slippers as traditional and other footwear as western was followed. One might be inclined, however, to classify all footwear as western. In the photographic collection only one example of footwear is visible with traditional dress before 1930. A young man is wearing slippers in 1910. All others pictured in traditional dress either have no visible footwear or are definitely barefoot. Neither does any author discussing traditional dress include footwear although de Negri sketches slippers as part of the current traditional ensemble.<sup>1</sup> Slippers did exist at an earlier time, to a limited extent perhaps, as indicated by the one example in the photo collection and in a portrait of the Yoruba scholar, Ajisafe, presumably taken before 1924 which pictures him in traditional dress with slippers (Ajisafe:frontispiece).

Establishment of some meaning relating to use of items becomes apparent in the lexicon of dress just as establishment of some meaning occurs at a morphemic level of language analysis. Formation of more complex combinations of items, the use of an item together with other items, is a syntactical level of analysis. The extent to which items with different cultural and sexual associations are selected for use in combinations of items and the occurrence of items, their alternates or additions, at possible locations on the

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<sup>1</sup> Descriptions of Yoruba dress are found in Eve de Negri, "Yoruba Men's Costume," Nigeria Magazine (June, 1962), pp. 4-12 and de Negri, "Yoruba Women's Costume," Nigeria Magazine (March, 1962), pp. 4-12 as well as Johnson, History of the Yoruba, pp. 106-113 and Gangan (October, 1967), pp. 11-16, s.v. "The Dresses of the Yoruba People."

body will be investigated in the section analogous to syntax. The possibility of rule-governed patterns of combinations will be examined.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANALYSIS: SYNTACTICAL PATTERNS OF DRESS

Recurrent patterns or combinations in the use of categorical items of a language comprise the syntax of the language. Patterns in language formation which are acceptable to a native speaker of a language are judged as being well-formed. Rules or conventions for arrangement of items in phrases or sentences describe the patterns which are considered well-formed. Based on the rules, a speaker can compose new combinations of items which are also recognized as well-formed. As dress is a type of non-verbal communication, some correspondence between language and dress is assumed; in this case it is anticipated that patterns of use of items will begin to be apparent related to the identification in the lexicon: sex, culture, and body position.

Patterns in the use of items of dress over time are discussed in this chapter. Combinations of items most frequently worn by the population are defined as modal patterns. Modes of dress were determined by tabulating items first to reveal those most frequently worn and by dividing the modal items into sexual and cultural categories. The number of items included in a mode was then limited according to the average number of garments worn by males or females in each cultural classification. The extent to which compositions

of dress are exclusive in cultural and sexual associations is stated. Combinations of items composing modes of dress found for males and females in western and in traditional styles are listed. Items found at one body position are compared to determine whether their use is additive as in layers or alternative as when one displaces another. The replacement or addition of items has implications for meaning if the change is influenced by particular environmental conditions. All items appearing in the photographs as modal, additive, or alternative items are accounted for in modal diagrams for each of the three periods of time in the study. Examples of rule-governed patterns in combinations of items are formulated. Conventions which may be derived from the syntactical patterns of items of dress, the modes, will be discussed in the following chapter in relation to meanings, indications of social roles and self-concepts seen through dress.

### Cultural Associations in Dress

#### (1) Traditional Yoruba Dress

Preceding the report of the findings concerning the dress of the population, a description of typical Yoruba traditional dress may be informative for those unfamiliar with Yoruba dress. The Yoruba dress of 1897 as described by Samuel Johnson (1921) has been included in the history section (see page 55). Johnson lists a number of styles for men, some of which had gone out of fashion at his time. They all appear to be variations of the traditional men's dress worn today. Basically four garments are included. On the

upper torso either the buba or the dansiki may be worn. They are both shirt-forms. The companion trouser-like garment is usually fairly loose and light-weight and is called the sokoto. A loose gown called an agbada may be worn over these. The gown also appears with fashion variations; some were known as the sapara, dandoga, suliya, and girike. No distinction is made between these in the discussion of the photographic population as informants referred to this type of garment only as the agbada. Gbariye is another type of gown that is sometimes worn in place of the agbada and may be seen in Figure 7.3. Hats and caps of various styles, all generally known as fila, complete the outfit. A typical ensemble of traditional items as they are worn today appear in Figure 6.1. According to Johnson, men's dress in his day was much more diverse than women's dress. For example, he listed eight different variations of sokoto.

Women's traditional dress in 1897 consisted of two or three wrappers and a headtie (Johnson:113). Traditional ensembles worn by Lagos women today have a buba (loose, blouse-like top) and an irobirin or iro (wrapper) covering the lower torso. The gele (headtie) is also generally worn but not as predictably as it once was. One or two additional wrappers may be added, one at the waist and hip area and another that is used in various ways as a stole. These are called ipele and iborun. Many women wear synthetic western-style slips under these garments although some still wear the traditional tobi, a wrap-around type of apron or petticoat. The tobi has utilitarian appeal for market women. It is tied around the waist



Figure 6.1.--Traditional Yoruba Men's Dress.

with an extended band that has an opening where coins and bills are deposited. The money is held securely in place next to the person by simply knotting the end of the band. Traditional items worn by women are seen in Figure 6.2.

Of the seventy types of items of dress appearing over the eight decades in this study, thirteen are categorized as traditional. The thirteen are as follows: (1) agbada (outer garment), (2) buba (shirt-form), (3) caftan (shirt-form), (4) dansiki (shirt-form), (5) fila (cap), (6) gbariye (outer-garment), (7) gele (headtie), (8) traditional hairstyle, (9) ibora (covering cloth), (10) iborun (stole or shawl), (11) ipele (second wrapper), (12) iro (wrapper), (13) salubata (slippers), and (14) sokoto (trouser-form). Numerous fashion variations of traditional items occur within the nominal classification of each type.

## (2) Patterns of Use of Western and Traditional Items

(a) Variations in perception of quantity of traditional and western dress.--A frequency count of individual items of dress with each item weighted equally reveals that the quantity of traditional items and western items used throughout the period of the study has varied only slightly from decade to decade within the population. Disregarding the first two decades, because of the small number of available pictures, in all of the remaining decades the percentage of visible traditional items of dress ranges from 32 to 36 percent of the total. When the decades are collapsed into three periods, the percentage of visible traditional items increases slightly from



Figure 6.2.--Traditional Yoruba Women's Dress.

period to period. During the period of low nationalistic sentiment (1900-1939), 28 percent of the items of dress are traditional. In the period of increasing nationalistic sentiment (1940-1959), traditional dress increases to 33 percent of the total number of items of dress and in the period of post-independence (1960-1974), traditional dress comprises 35 percent of the total number of visible dress items. Thus western dress appears to dominate the modes of dress seen worn by the urban, educated Nigerian population throughout the twentieth century.

The consistent use of western dress is contrary to the popular belief that traditional dress displaced western dress or at least became considerably more prevalent as nationalistic sentiments increased.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, a tabulation of traditional and western outfits based on an over-all general impression of each photograph reveals a different pattern in the prevalence of traditional dress. To record general impressions, the researcher made a judgment about the cultural association of a total outfit considering only main garments, those which are worn on the largest area of the torso. Accessories were not considered. Based on the recording of general impressions, the usage of traditional dress is perceived to be greater after 1940. Use of traditional dress peaks in the decade preceding national independence when more than half of the dress seen in the photographs is traditional. Table 6.1 compares the incidence of traditional dress as perceived by the two different methods.

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<sup>1</sup>Among sources where the observation is made are Ademoyega 1962:165 and the Daily Service, Feb. 20, 1959.

TABLE 6.1.--Percentage of Traditional Garments Worn Based on Two Methods of Perception: a Frequency Count of Each Item Versus a Count of Main Garments.

Decade	Individual Items Tabulated				Main Garments Tabulated			
	By Decade		By Period		By Decade		By Period	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
1900	46	( 12)			43	( 3)		
1910	21	( 34)			28	( 11)		
1920	35	( 18)	28	(108)	36	( 5)	29	( 32)
1930	35	( 44)			28	( 13)		
1940	32	( 71)			36	( 19)		
1950	33	(278)	33	(349)	55	( 86)	43	(105)
1960	36	(207)			46	(113)		
1970	33	(113)	35	(320)	42	( 40)	44	(111)

\*The N does not equal the number of subjects because individuals wear differing numbers of garments.

(b) Incidence of mixing traditional and western dress in one ensemble.--Observations of Lagos dress added to familiarity with the content of the photographic population, leads to the proposition that traditional and western dress are not often mixed in one ensemble. A tabulation of the combinations of items worn by each individual reveals a majority of cases in which traditional or western usage is mutually exclusive. However, some mixing of traditional and western items in one outfit does occur in all periods. Only about

2 percent of the outfits worn from 1930 to 1949 were combinations of traditional and western garments. There were only two cases of mixing for 100 subjects. The incidence of mixing increases to 10 percent in the decade of the 1950's, to 13 percent in the 1960's, and to 18 percent in the '70's.

Handbags are an example of a western item frequently seen used with women's traditional apparel since 1950. Another example is western-style blouses which were especially popular with traditional wrappers during the 1960's in fashions known as the "Ghana" style associated with Ghana or as "up and down" style, a fashion attributed to the people from eastern Nigeria. A third combination which is seen especially on the photographs of the 1970's is the wearing of the gele or headtie with otherwise western outfits. The incidence of mixtures of items of traditional and western designation is as follows in Table 6.2.

Footwear was not included in the tabulation of outfits which combine items of the two cultures because of their inconsistent association. The debatable cultural association of footwear was considered in the discussion of the lexicon. If footwear had been included the incidence of mixing of items of differing cultural associations would be greater. In 1940 the oxfords which were popular with western women were also the mode of footwear worn with wrappers. During the following three decades sandals or slippers became the footwear customarily used with wrappers but they are also used by Nigerian women wearing western dresses. While men have tended to consistently use slippers with traditional dress

TABLE 6.2. Percentage of Combinations of Traditional and Western Dress Worn by Population

Decade	% per Decade	N	% per Period
1900	--	( 0)	
1910	9	( 4)	4
1920	--	( 0)	
1930	2	( 1)	
1940	1.8	( 1)	8
1950	10	(20)	
1960	13	(21)	15
1970	18	(16)	

and western-style shoes with western dress, around 1950 the style in men's slippers changed from a scuff-type with no quarter section to the slip-on type complete with vamp and quarter as commonly worn for housewear by western men.

The figures indicate that the extent to which combinations of items of dress are exclusively traditional or exclusively western decreases from 1900 to 1974. Sole use of traditional or western garments within compositions of dress is not mutually exclusive but is predominant.

#### Sexual Associations in Dress

The separation of items associated with men from items associated with women was apparent in Johnson's description of

traditional Yoruba dress. A proposition that use of male and female garments in compositions of dress continued to be mutually exclusive was investigated in the consideration of sexual associations of items of dress. The nominal classification of a garment rather than stylistic differences within nominal categories was the level of analysis.

Fifty-three different items of dress were used by men during the eight decades. Forty-eight different items were used by women (see Appendix A for complete enumeration). However, a frequency count refuted the proposition of exclusive use by sex because twenty-eight of the items in the inventory were worn by both males and females. Gloves, hats, rings, and shoes are examples of items that are worn by both sexes. The extent to which western garments were worn by both sexes in the population is much greater than the correspondence in traditional patterns. More than 41 percent (25) of the western garments are seen on both sexes. Only 17 percent (2) of the traditional garments were worn by both males and females. The wrapper was seen on two males but, in both cases, the males were not Yoruba. Thus, this garment is considered as one worn by Yoruba females exclusively.

The buba and salubata are the traditional garments which have both male and female associations. They are similar to many western garments in that the name does not imply a sexual association but styles of each garment are recognized as appropriate only for males or for females. One area of style difference in the buba is the neckline. The neckline of the female buba is large enough to

slip over the head while the neckline of the male buba usually follows the line where the neck joins the upper torso and must be enlarged with an opening such as a front slit or a buttoned front closing. Differentiation in western garments is frequently based on shape of a garment which varies to fit the male or female anatomy. Because traditional garments generally fit loosely, anatomical considerations do not limit them to either sex. Possible causes of distinctions will be further discussed in the semantics section.

Western garments used exclusively by males or females in the population are seen in Figure 6.3.

<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
cane	dickey	apron	fillet
cap	jacket	armband	hairbow
cape	knickers	barrette	handbag
coat	pipe	beret	skirt
collar (detached)	trousers	bolero	stockings
crown	undershirt	bonnet	veil
cuff links		brooch	wig

Figure 6.3.--Western Garments Worn Exclusively by Males or Females in the Population.

When cultural designation is considered, male and female dress worn by the population in this analysis also differs in the number of items in an individual ensemble. The average number and the numerical range of visible garments per individual in the traditional and western categories worn during the three periods of the twentieth century are shown in Table 6.3. Compositions of dress which were mixed in items of cultural association were classified according to

TABLE 6.3.--Number and Cultural Association of Garments Worn by Individuals in Population.

Period	Average				Range			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Traditional	Western	Traditional	Western	Traditional	Western	Traditional	Western
1900-39	4	4.8	5.4	4.3	2-7	1-9	3-9	2-8
1940-59	4.7	4.9	7.1	5.5	3-6	1-7	4-10	2-9
1960-74	4.5	4.25	7.2	4.7	1-8	1-7	4-9	2-8

the designation of the main garments (as contrasted to accessories) for this tabulation.

The table indicates a slight tendency for males wearing western dress to wear a larger number of individual items than those wearing traditional dress until the period following 1960. The diminishing number of items at that time probably reflects the general trend toward greater informality in western male dress. Items such as vests, jackets, hats, and gloves which were requisites of the well-dressed gentleman of the early 1900's are seen infrequently in the later decades. On the average, women wear more garments than men but the average number of items in the female outfits also suggests some simplification and greater informality after 1960. The traditional women's costume consistently contains more items than the western costume of the corresponding period.

### Modes of Dress Related to Cultural and Sexual Associations

#### (1) Modal Combinations Related to Temporal Setting

The average of the number of garments worn was used to establish limits to the number of items included in the modes of male and female dress for the three periods. Modal garments are those which appear with the greatest frequency in the pictures. Tables 6.4 and 6.5 list the items comprising the traditional and western modes for both sexes during the three periods. The total number of males and females for each period and the percentage of those who wore the modal garments is included.

TABLE 6.4.--Female Modes of Dress.

A. 1900-1939 (Total number of subjects: 57)					
Traditional	Percent	Number*	Western	Percent	Number*
iro	40	(23)	dress	58	(33)
gele	39	(22)	shoes	53	(29)
buba	35	(20)	bracelet	37	(21)
bracelet	25	(14)	earrings	37	(21)
ipele	23	(13)	stockings	23	(13)
earrings	21	(12)	neck chain	23	(13)
B. 1940-1959 (Total number of subjects: 167)					
iro	45	(76)	dress	52	(88)
gele	37	(62)	earrings	43	(72)
buba	33	(56)	shoes	40	(68)
earrings	25	(44)	bracelet	33	(56)
bracelet	25	(42)	handbag	19	(32)
ipele	24	(40)	necklace	18	(30)
shoes	23	(39)			
or sandals		(30)			
choker	14	(23)			
C. 1960-1974 (Total number of subjects: 142)					
iro	47	(67)	dress	49	(69)
earrings	44	(63)	earrings	44	(63)
gele	36	(51)	shoes	30	(43)
buba	35	(49)	bracelet	15	(21)
neck chain	27	(38)	neck chain	11	(16)
bracelet	26	(37)			
slippers	25	(36)			
handbag	18	(25)			

\*The sum does not equal the number of subjects because individuals who wear modal items do not necessarily wear each item in the modal composition.

Tabl

Trad

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duba

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agba

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duba  
agba  
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fija

soko  
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TABLE 6.5.--Male Modes of Dress.

A. 1900-1939 (Total number of subjects: 53)					
Traditional	Percent	Number*	Western	Percent	Number*
sokoto	13	( 7)	shirt	77	(41)
buba	11	( 6)	trousers (long)	70	(37)
ibora	7	( 4)	jacket	64	(34)
fila	6	( 3)	shoes	62	(33)
agbada	4	( 2)	necktie	45	(24)
B. 1940-1959 (Total number of subjects: 81)					
sokoto	36	(29)	shirt	48	(39)
buba	33	(27)	shoes	44	(36)
agbada	30	(25)	trousers	43	(35)
slippers	26	(21)	necktie	40	(33)
fila	25	(20)	jacket	36	(29)
C. 1960-1974 (Total number of subjects: 107)					
sokoto	29	(31)	shirt	61	(65)
buba	24	(26)	shoes	45	(48)
fila	20	(21)	trousers	40	(43)
agbada	15	(16)	necktie	21	(22)
slippers	11	(12)	jacket	18	(19)

\*The sum does not equal the number of subjects because individuals who wear modal items do not necessarily wear each item in the modal composition.

The item of dress most frequently used by females in the 1900-1939 period is a western-style dress. In descending order of frequency, it is probable that the female wearing a western dress would also be wearing shoes, bracelet(s), earrings, stockings, and a neck chain if her outfit consists of the average four to five items most frequently worn by women during that period. The mode of attire for women dressed in the traditional manner consisted of five or six items which, according to frequency of appearance, were an iro (wrapper), gele (headtie), buba (traditional top), bracelet(s), ipele (second wrapper) and earrings.

The ascendancy of traditional dress is apparent in the comparison of modes for each period. The most frequently worn traditional and western items for women, the wrapper and the dress, appear in the approximate ratio of 2:3, two wrappers to every three dresses in the 1900-1939 period. The ratio changes to approximately five wrappers for every six dresses during the following period and, from 1960 to 1974, the usage is nearly equal, 1:1; sixty-seven wrappers and sixty-nine dresses are pictured.

Throughout the twentieth century western dress is more predominant for Yoruba men than it is for Yoruba women. The traditional buba and sokoto occur only one-sixth as often as the western shirt and trousers during the first period. The ratio increases to 3:4 in the period of 1940-1959 and decreases again to 3:6 in the last period.

All of the male items in the modal charts excepting the ibora (covering cloth) and slippers appear in all three periods.

There may, however, be considerable fashion variation in an item over time. The ibora which is a component of modal traditional dress in the first period disappears from the mode in the last two periods. Slippers appear in the modal outfit after 1939.

The ipele (second wrapper) disappears from the female traditional mode after 1960. Handbags become an important item with traditional wear after 1960. The traditional mode of footwear changes in each period going from none to shoes or sandals to slippers. Jewelry also changes. The most popular item of neckwear from 1900 to 1939 was a neckchain or pendant. It appears on seven subjects, a frequency too low to be included in the mode. The most common type of neckwear in the second period was a choker and in the last period the neck chain was favored again.

The neckchain is also the most popular type of neckwear with western dress in the first period when it appears thirteen times. The necklace is seen most frequently in the second period and the neckchain is again the fashion of the third period, the latter type being the same for both western and traditional modes. Stockings seen in the first period disappear after 1940. Handbags appear as part of the mode only from 1940 to 1959. The core of the western ensemble in all periods is a dress, shoes, bracelet(s), and earrings.

Although an item does not appear in the mode for a particular period it may have been in fairly common use. Tables showing the frequency of appearance of all garments, modal and non-modal during

twenty year periods are in the Appendix A. Photographs exemplifying modes from each period appear in Figures 6.4 through 6.16.

Undoubtedly the most common component of the process of dress which would involve all members of the population would be hairstyling. As it was impossible to determine from the photographs what had been done to the hair in most cases, this aspect of dressing had to be generally disregarded in the item analysis. However, the cases where traditional hairstyles were obviously visible were recorded.

Establishing the modes of dress of the population is critical to the hypotheses in which modes are viewed as indicative of varying social roles and self-concepts. The correlations will be made in Part III of the analysis. The modes also exemplify rule-governed combinations in that they indicate a kind of model that is followed more or less unconsciously by most persons in their choices of dress.

## (2) Basic Modal Items and Alternatives

The use of alternative garments to modal dress may be meaningful in relation to social roles and self-concepts. Therefore, alternatives were investigated.

One garment in each modal pattern appears with the greatest frequency throughout the three periods. The basic garment in the male traditional mode is the sokoto. In the female traditional mode it is the iro. The shirt predominates in the western mode for males and the dress in the female mode. These garments combined



Figure 6.4.--1900: Male and female traditional Yoruba dress. The male's attire exemplifies male modal dress of the first period (1900-1939).



Figure 6.5.--1920: Female wearing modal traditional dress items of the first period (1900-1939). The fabric of the iro (wrapper) is adiré eleko, a traditional handcrafted textile.



Figure 6.6.--1910: Female wearing western dress items.



Figure 6.7.--1910: Male wearing modal western dress items of the first period (1900-1939) with the addition of a hat.

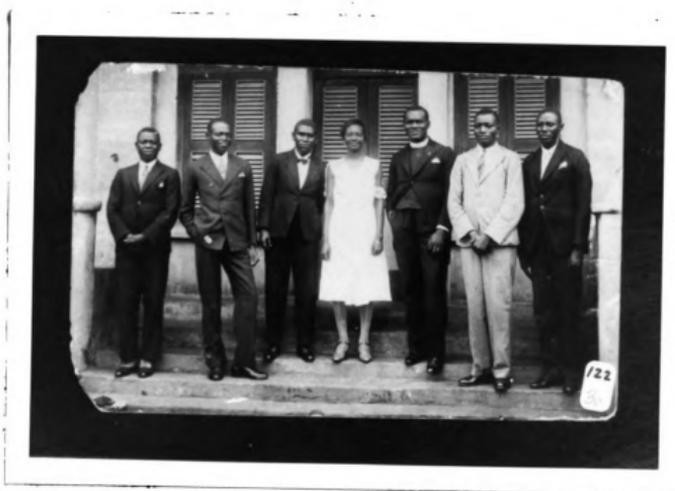


Figure 6.8.--1930: Males and female wearing modal western dress items of the first period (1900-1939).



Figure 6.9.--1940: Female wearing modal traditional dress of the second period (1940-1959).



Figure 6.10.--1940: Female wearing modal western dress items of the second period (1940-1959) with the addition of a hat and rings.



Figure 6.11.--1940: Male wearing modal traditional dress of second period (1940-1959).



Figure 6.12.--1950: Male wearing modal western dress of second period (1940-1959).



Figure 6.13.--1970: Female wearing modal traditional dress of third period (1960-1974) with the addition of a choker as neck jewelry.



Figure 6.14.--1960: Male wearing modal traditional dress of third period (1960-1974).



Figure 6.15.--1960: Groom in modal western dress items of the third period (1960-1974). Note contrast with wedding guests in traditional attire.



Figure 6.16.--1960: Female in modal western dress of third period (1960-1974) with the exception of a watch rather than the bracelet seen in modal dress.

with certain other main garments, namely the agbada, the buba, and trousers, appear to establish the traditional or western identity of an ensemble.

The male dressed in the traditional mode usually wears a buba with the sokoto although in some photographs he appears instead in a dansiki, a caftan, or a gbariye. If the agbada is worn, it may be assumed that there is a buba under the agbada although it is not necessarily visible. Women also usually wear the buba with the iro, the combination that is known as Yoruba dress. Yoruba women once wore the iro with no top but that version is seen in only two photographs. A woman may also choose to combine the wrapper with other tops such as a western blouse or a sweater. As the western dress is a complete torso covering in itself it is usually combined only with accessories. Males wear the western shirt with two forms of trousers: either long or short. The trousers appearing in the mode are long. The short form is classified by the British term, knickers.

Items which have no obvious cultural association were classified as universal in the lexicon. They are commonly seen with both traditional and western dress. Among the universal items, bracelets and earrings are seen in both the traditional and western female modes in each period. When the number of pairs of earrings seen in all modes are combined, earrings are the most frequently worn of all items. The incidence of use is probably even greater than recorded because earrings are often too small to be visible on photographs. The key informant emphasized their prevalence when she said, "Every

Yoruba girl has her ears pierced." This is often done at the same time as the baby receives her first vaccinations.

Some garments used exclusively in one cultural mode during one period become acceptable in combinations with both traditional and western dress during another period. Women's shoes are associated with western dress in the first period but after 1940 they are frequently worn with the traditional wrapper and buba. Prior to 1940, women wearing traditional main garments are pictured barefoot or in slippers. Handbags seen in the western mode in the second period transfer to the traditional mode in the third period. They continue to be an important part of the western ensemble also as they appear fifteen times in the third period but because the average number of garments in the western mode decline to a total of six in that period and handbags ranked seventh in frequency, they were eliminated from the mode. Slippers appear with western dress after 1960 but the fashionable slipper of that period is a backless "mule" for which the cultural association is uncertain. There is some evidence of one traditional garment becoming a part of western ensembles. The gele or headtie is seen with the western dress six times in the last period.

No male garment appears in both the traditional and western modes. The items are combined occasionally but not with enough frequency to be modal. An example of mixing which is common is the use of traditional hats with western suits. Those worn are usually either an embroidered cap associated with the Hausa people or a flat brimless hat similar to the fez of the Turks rather than the

Yoruba fila. In contrast to women's dress, men have no garments in the modal patterns that are classified as universal.

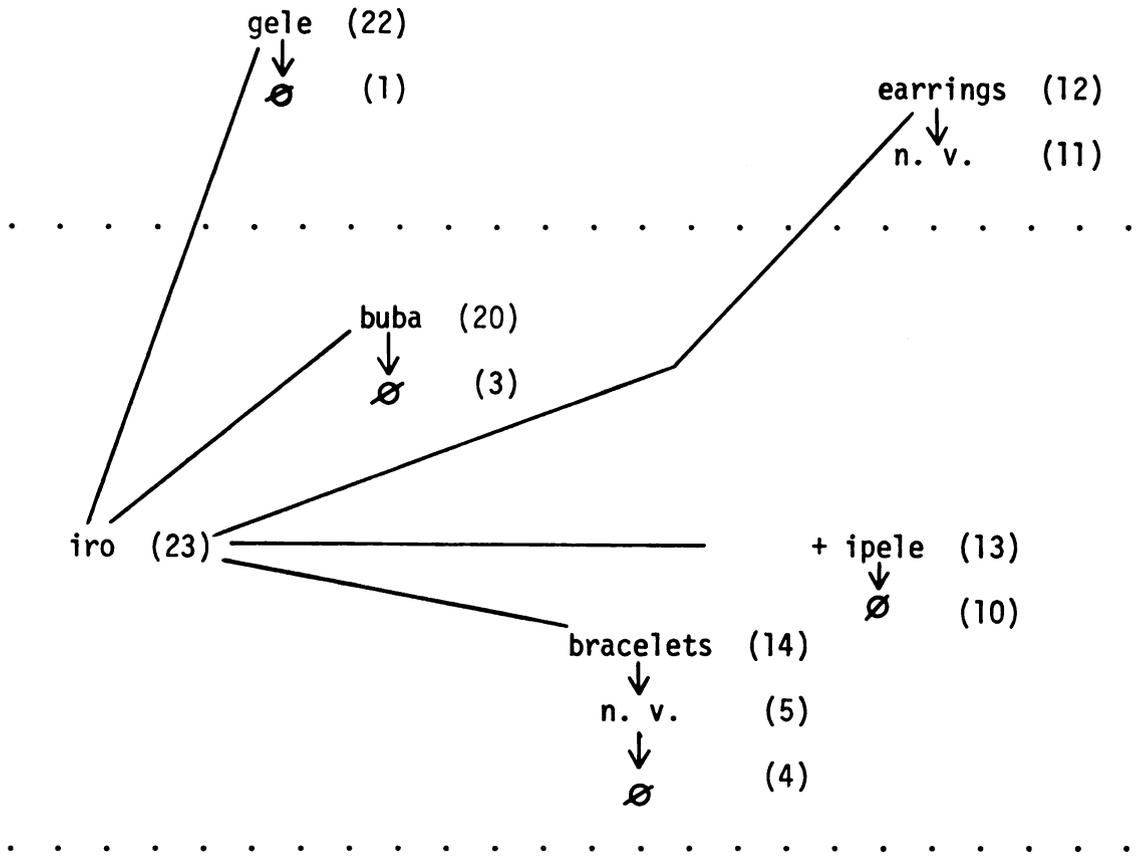
The proposition that use of male and female garments within a composition of dress will be mutually exclusive is not true in a nominal sense. However, if styles within each classification were analyzed, it seems that there would be male and female differences in nearly every case. Comparing merely the nominal categories, there are greater distinctions for male and female dress with traditional associations than with western associations but the distinction does not appear in the modal pattern. The traditional garments worn by both men and women are the buba and slippers. An agbada for women was also a fashion in the 1970's but does not appear in the photographs. Shoes appear in the western modal patterns of both men and women but, of course, great stylistic differences would be found between men's and women's shoes.

#### Interrelationships of Items of Dress

It appears obvious at first glance that the presence of certain items of dress precludes use of certain other items. The human body provides physical parameters for dress in such a way that it is impossible in many cases to wear more than one item or form on a particular body area. A step toward increasing knowledge about the meanings of dress, however, was identification of the forms of dress and of alternatives for the forms. Several questions arise from this exercise: What are the items that are worn on a particular body location? What items are additive and what items are alternatives?

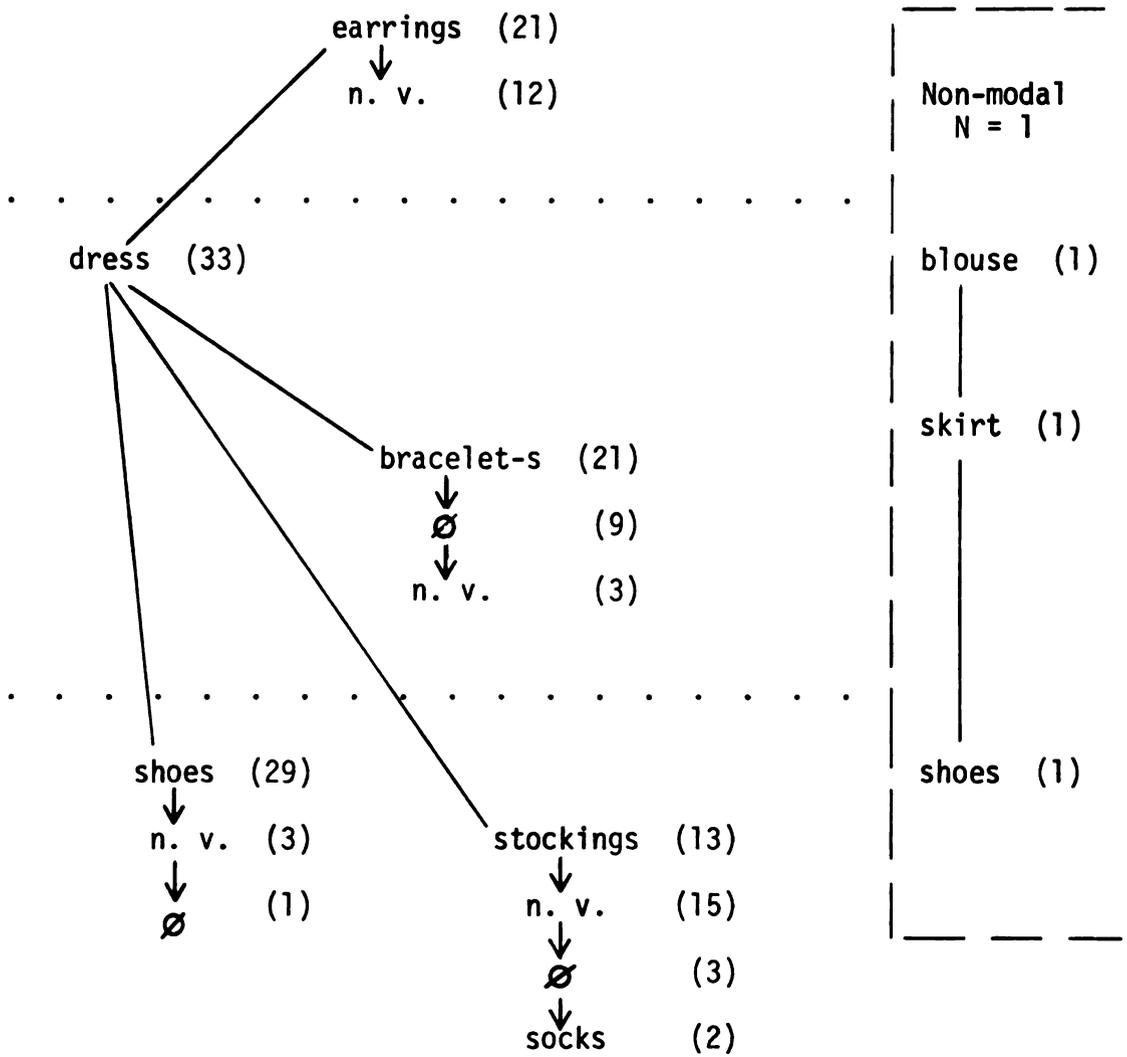
Do additive or alternative items change the meaning communicated by a composition of dress or do they paraphrase? If use of certain items precludes use of other items is it merely because of body parameters or is it influenced by other environmental factors? The last two questions pertaining to meanings will be dealt with in Chapter VII of the analysis concerning meanings. In this section an identification will be made of forms related to location on the body based on the divisions of cultural and sexual associations by historical period. Figures 6.17 through 6.28 are diagrams which include the garments occurring in the modal patterns as well as garments that were worn by subjects who did not follow the mode. In cases where two or more garments are worn in approximately the same area of the body, they are diagrammed as additions to one another. The data reported on the figures is more comprehensive than that considered in the modes because the figures include data pertaining to dress of the population which is discounted in the central tendencies revealed in modal patterns. Modes of dress indicated rule-governed behavior. Rules of dress for each period are further revealed as the dress of every subject is included in the figures which include alternative and additional garments. Items that are in addition to the average number of items worn in a mode are not included. The figures illustrate descriptive rather than prescriptive rules.

Referring to Figure 6.17, Female Traditional Dress, 1900-1939, the most frequently occurring garment, the iro or wrapper, occupies the left side of the figure. Garments are listed in



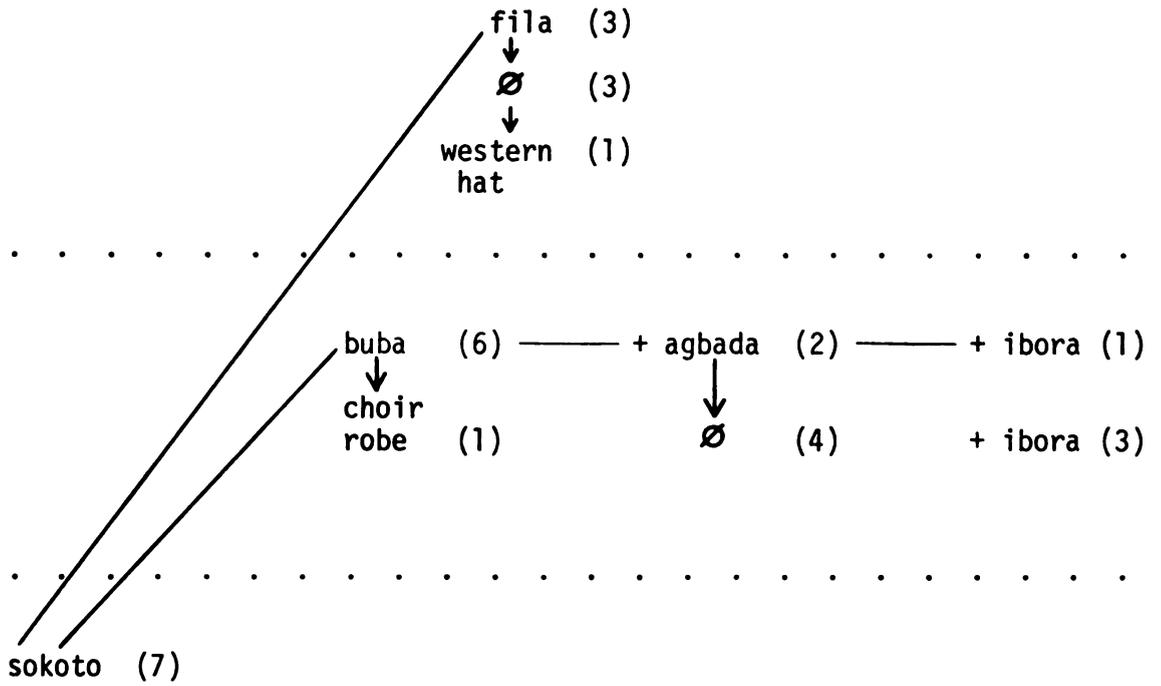
Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	∅	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—————	a garment worn with main modal garment
	. . . . .	division between upper, mid, and lower body

Figure 6.17.--Female Traditional Dress, 1900-1939 Modal Garments, Alternatives, and Additions. N = 23



Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	∅	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—	a garment worn with main modal garment
	. . . .	division between upper, mid, and lower body

Figure 6.18.--Female Western Dress, 1900-1939 Modal Garments, Alternatives, and Additions. N = 33



Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	∅	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—————	a garment worn with main modal garment
	. . . .	division between upper, mid, and lower body

Figure 6.19.--Male Traditional Dress, 1900-1939 Modal Garments, Alternatives, and Additions. N = 7





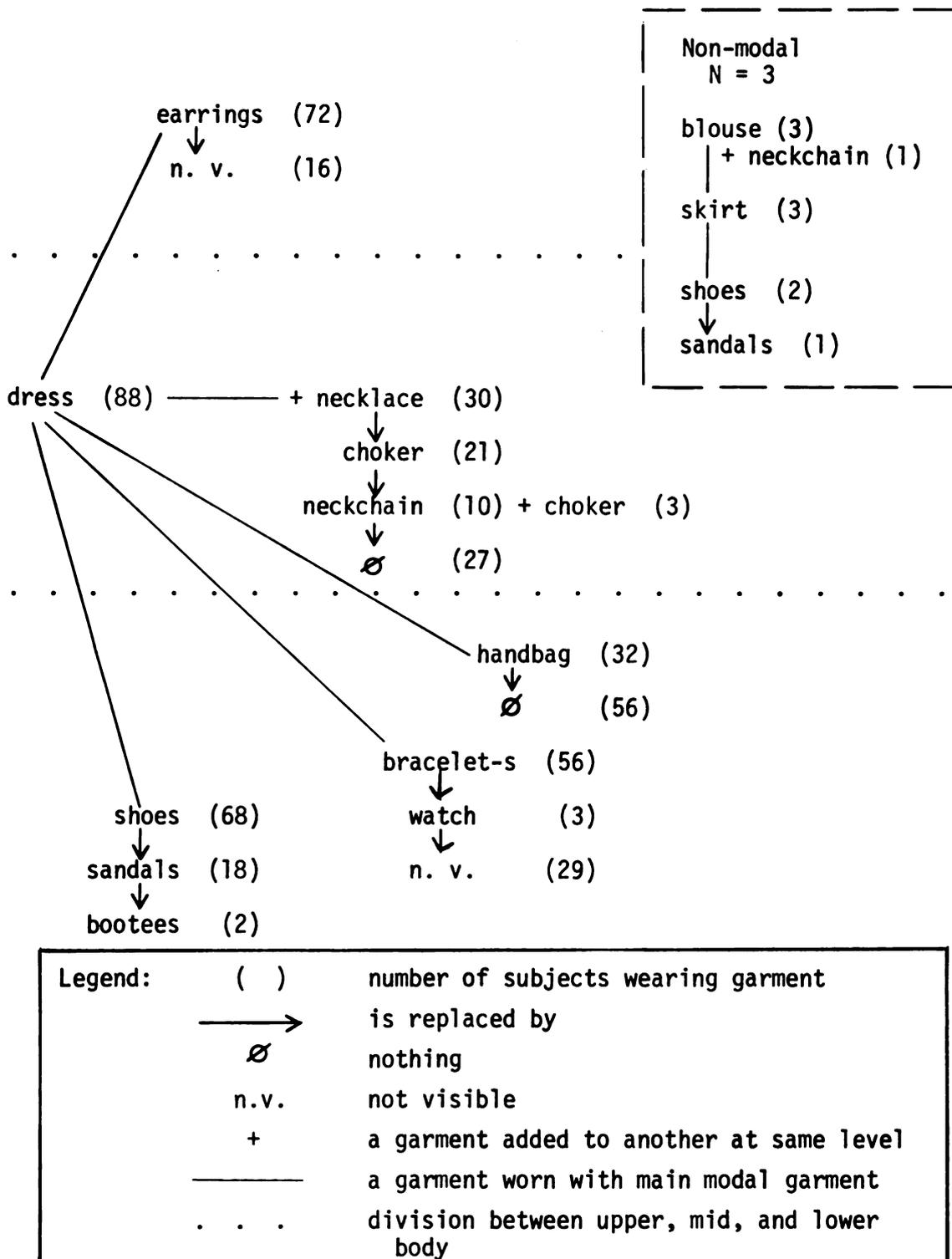
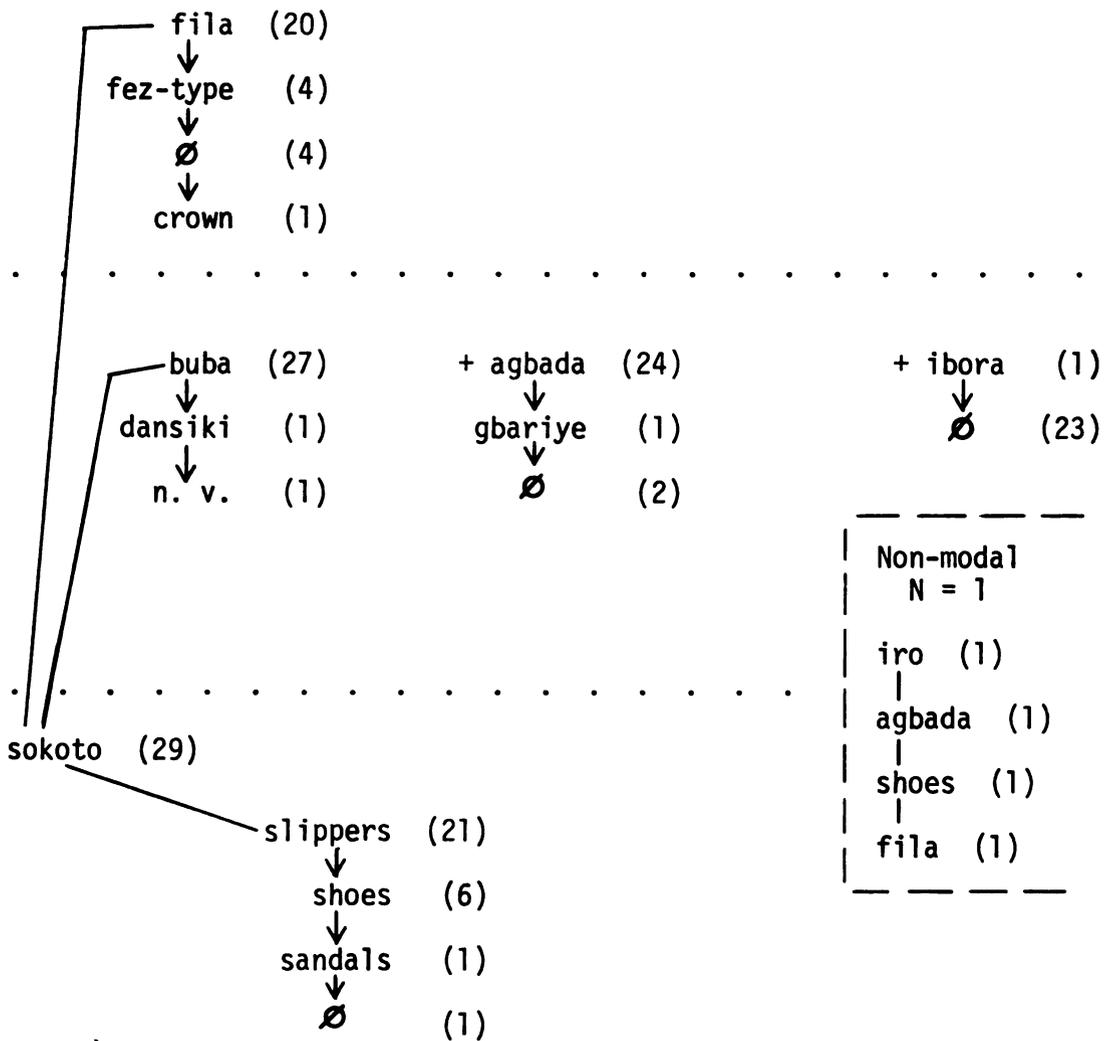


Figure 6.22.--Female Western Dress, 1940-1959 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions, (N = 88)



Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	Ø	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—	a garment worn with main modal garment
	. . .	division between upper, mid, and lower body

Figure 6.23.--Male Traditional Dress, 1940-1959 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions. (N = 29)

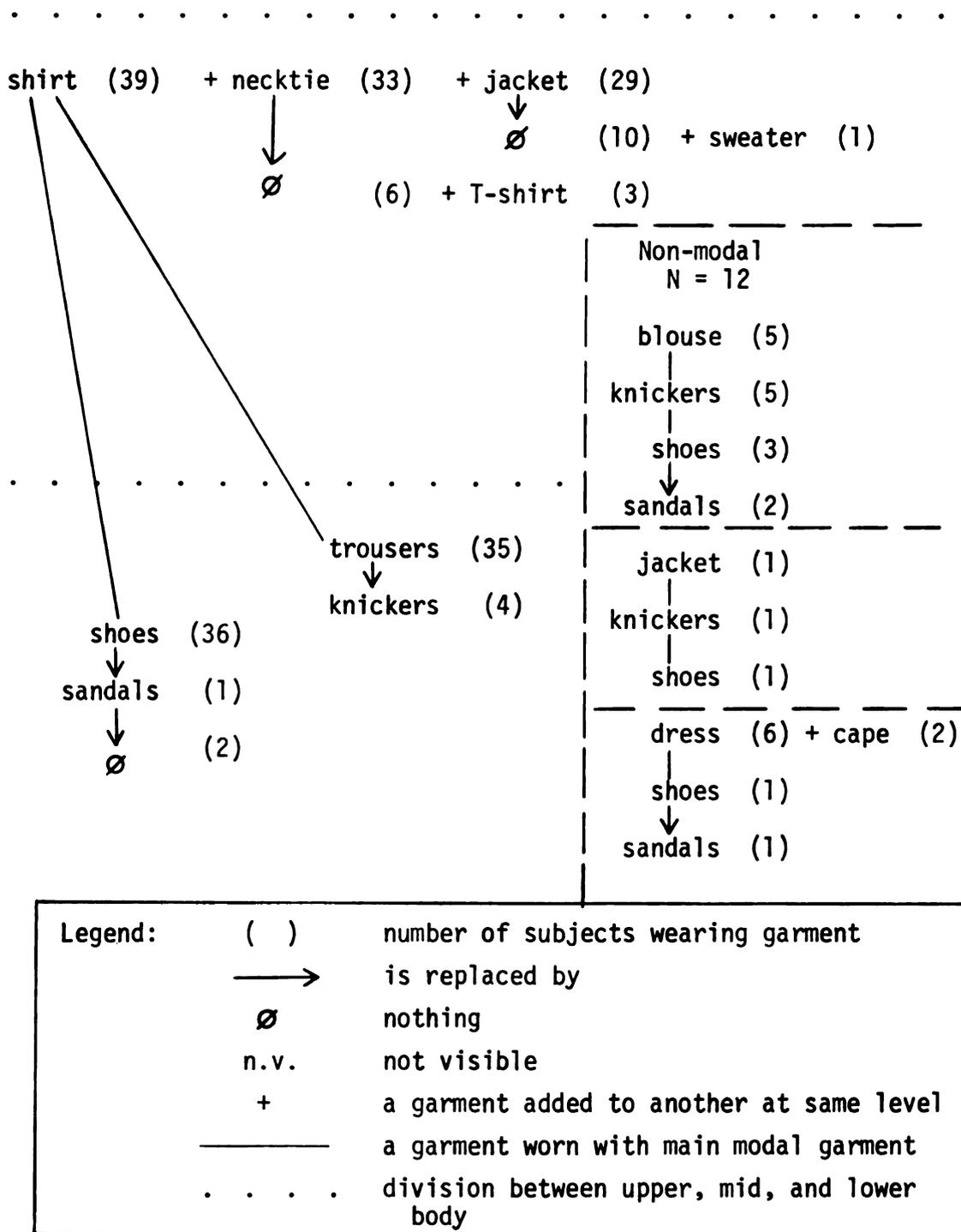


Figure 6.24.--Male Western Dress, 1940-1959 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions. (N = 39)

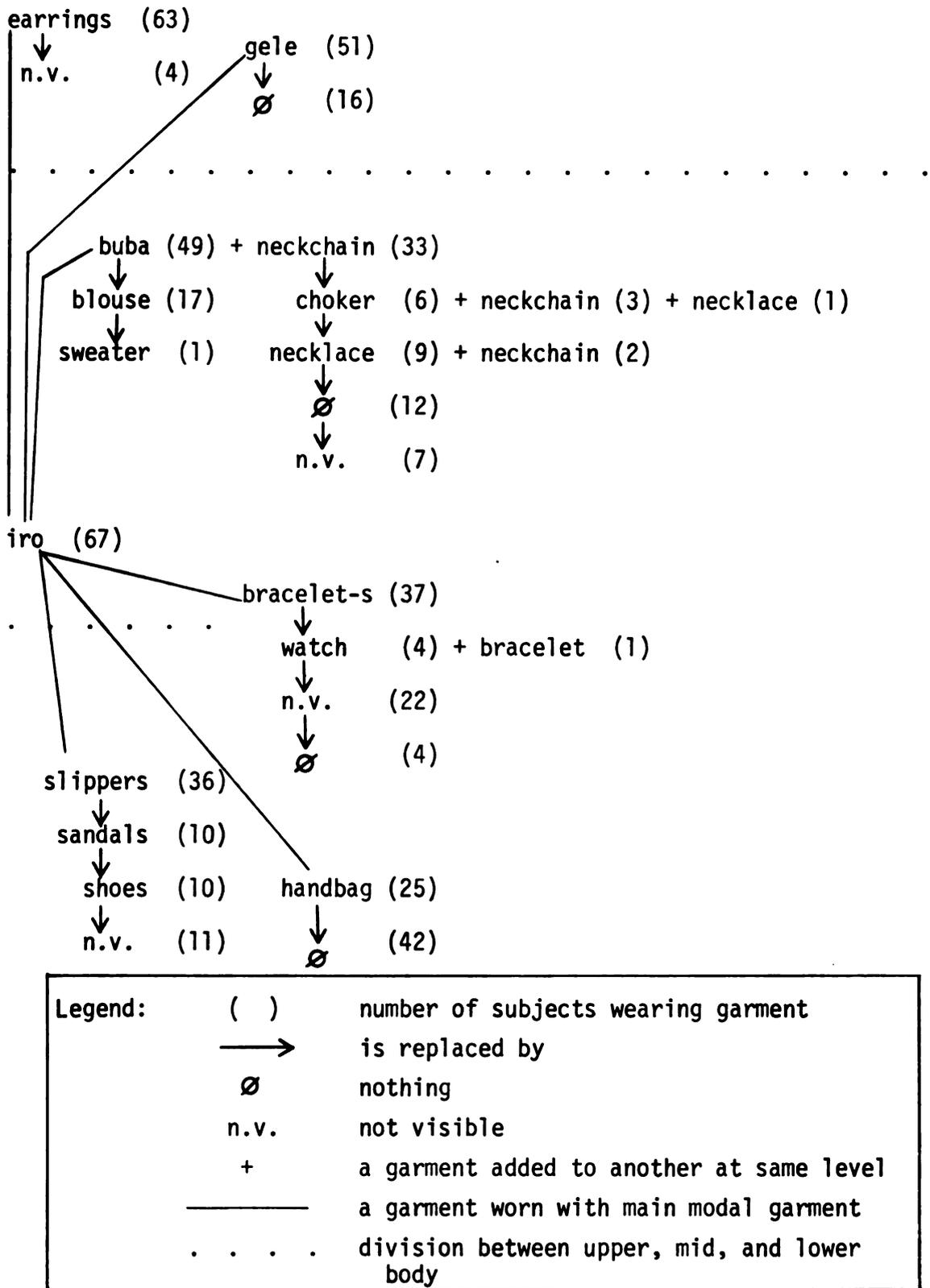
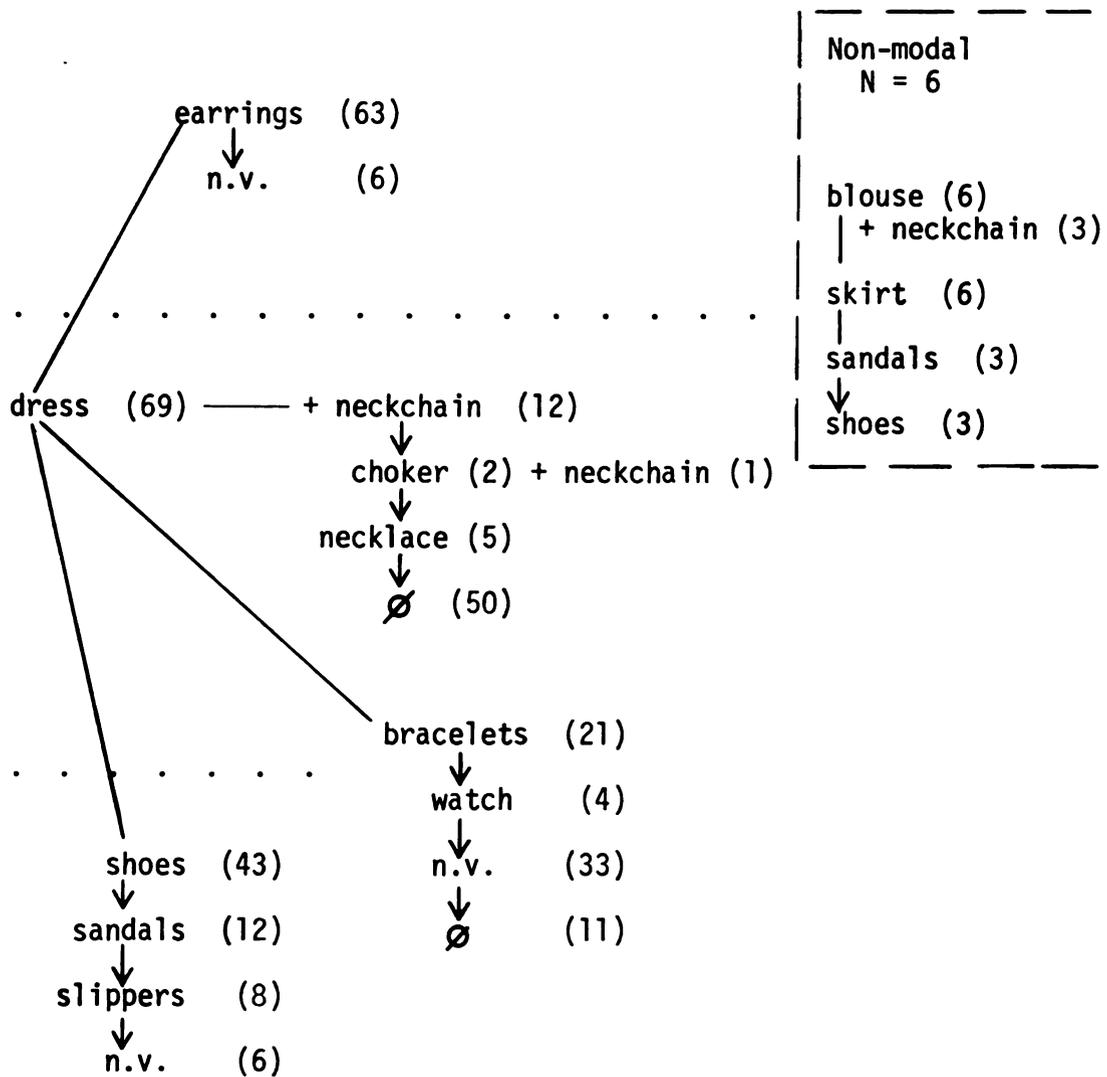
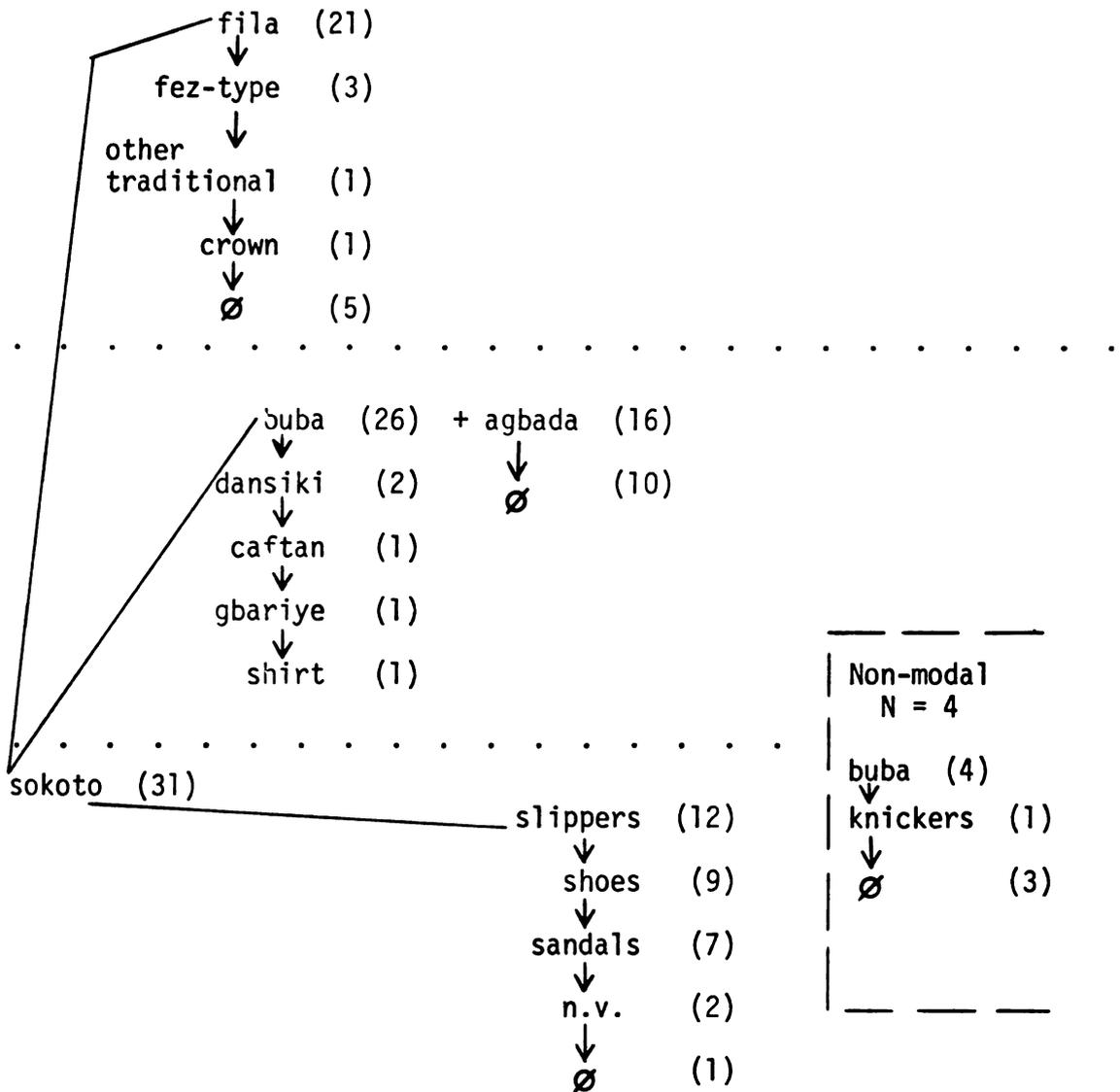


Figure 6.25.--Female Traditional Dress, 1960-1974 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions. (N = 67)



Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	∅	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—	a garment worn with main modal garment
	. . . .	division between upper, mid, and lower body

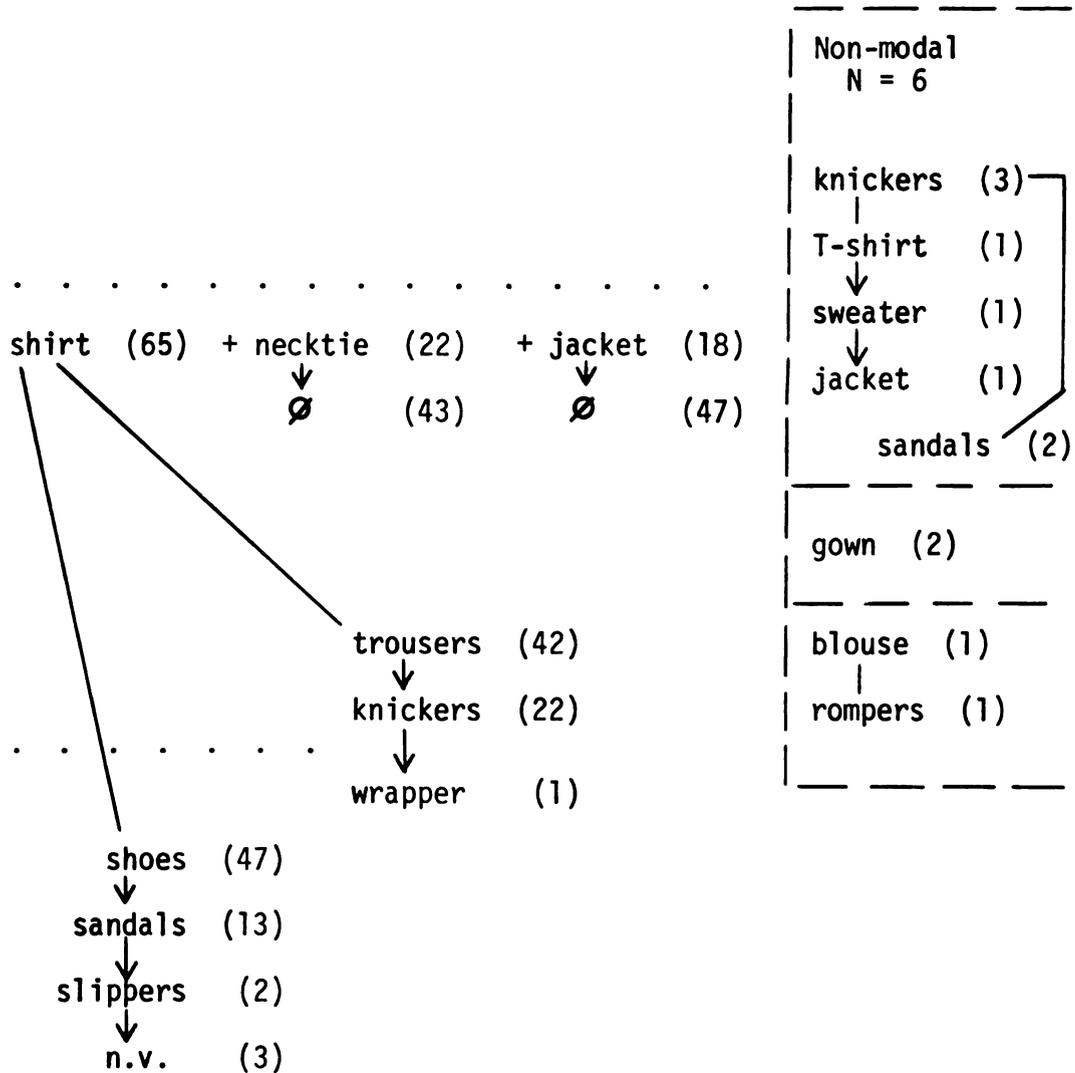
Figure 6.26.--Female Western Dress, 1960-1974 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions. (N = 69)



Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	Ø	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—	a garment worn with main modal garment
	. . . .	division between upper, mid, and lower body

Figure 6.27.--Male Traditional Dress, 1960-1974 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions. (N = 31)





Legend:	( )	number of subjects wearing garment
	→	is replaced by
	∅	nothing
	n.v.	not visible
	+	a garment added to another at same level
	—	a garment worn with main modal garment
	...	division between upper, mid, and lower body

Figure 6.28.--Male Western Dress, 1960-1974 Modal Garments, Alternatives and Additions. (N = 65)

approximate order of descending frequency from left to right. Thirteen persons who wore the iro also wore a second wrapper, the ipele. Thus, the ipele is an additional garment worn over the iro. The incidence is expressed with the addition sign (+) and the name of the added garment is placed to the right of the base garment. Other garments worn with the base garment or form are joined to it by straight lines. Figure 6.17 indicates that in the first period of the study the gele, the buba, the ipele, bracelets, and earrings appear in the modal pattern with the iro. Of the twenty-three persons who wore the iro, twenty-two wore the gele. The remaining person wore no head covering. The absence of an alternative garment is represented by a blank symbol ( $\emptyset$ ). The arrow ( $\longrightarrow$ ) indicates that an item replaces the previous item for the number of persons stated in the parentheses. On Figure 6.18, Female Western Dress, 1900-1939, stockings were worn by thirteen of the thirty-three subjects who wore dresses. Stockings are replaced with socks by two subjects and with no garment by three subjects. The cases where garments may have been present but cannot be seen because of the quality of the photographs are indicated as not visible (n.v.). The last item in a descending series replaces all previous items for the number of subjects stated in the parentheses.

Some subjects did not wear either of the garments which occur most frequently in the traditional and western modes. The non-modal cases are listed in the right-hand section of the page as on Figure 6.18. In the first period, one female did not conform

to the western mode. She wore a skirt and blouse. The addition of modal and non-modal garments yields the total number of subjects in each period.

Comparing body positions covered by modal items, the most frequently occurring items in all modes are items which cover the torso. Leg coverings are found in all modes in the first period. The iro was worn to the ankles at that time while stockings covered the legs of the woman attired in western garments. Head coverings are a component of the traditional modes for both males and females in each period while they never appear in the western modes. Jewelry for the arms and ears appears in the female mode of the first period. In following periods neck jewelry is also added. Male modes do not include jewelry. Footwear is found in the western modes of the first period and in all modes in the following periods.

#### Rules of Dress

Kuper declares that rules concerning the total structure of personal appearance are as "real" as any other rules of social communication (1973:349). The limited variety in modes of dress are evidence of rule-governed behavior related to dress. The primary data indicate that numerous additional conventions were strictly adhered to during the three time periods of the study. Certain combinations of items are invariably found worn under particular conditions. This section presents a transition between forms and meanings because, as environmental conditions under

which items are used are described, meaningful associations between item and environment can be predicted. The following logical symbols are used to condense the sets:

- ⊃ if, . . . then
- ~ "no," the item is not present
- / in the environment of
- v either, or

A set of examples portraying conventional usage of three garments by females in the first period is as follows:

1. Iro ⊃ ~ buba / before 1910
2. Iro ⊃ buba / after 1910
3. Iro ⊃ ipele / before 1910
4. Iro ⊃ (ipele) / after 1910
5. Iro ⊃ ~ ipele / under age ten

Figure 6.29.--Conventional Use of Iro, Buba, and Ipele.

Statement 6.29.1 says that if the iro is worn, the buba is not worn in the photographs of the population before 1910. 6.29.2 states that if the iro is worn, then the buba is also worn after 1910 in Lagos. Two pictures of women wearing traditional dress before 1910 exist in the collection. Both are without the buba. After 1910 only one woman out of 164 is seen wearing the iro without the buba. She is not from Lagos.

6.29.3 says: if the iro is worn, then the ipele is also worn before 1910. According to 6.29.4, after 1910 the ipele becomes an optional garment worn with the iro and, in 6.29.5, if the iro is worn by girls under age ten, the ipele is not worn at anytime. It is not known if this was true before 1910 as well as after 1910 because the subjects wearing the iro in the first decade are in older age groups.

Another set of conventions from Period I were conditioned by age (see Figure 6.30).<sup>1</sup> Statement 6.30.1 says that if a shirt is worn without a jacket or a coat the wearer is a male child. Adult men do not appear in the photographs in shirts without an additional outer garment. In 6.30.2 if a shirt is worn without a necktie, the wearer is a male child or is in uniform, and 6.30.3 says that if a shirt is worn without shoes the wearer is a male child.

1. Shirt  $\supset \sim$  jacket v coat / male child
2. Shirt  $\supset \sim$  necktie / male child v wearing uniform
3. Shirt  $\supset \sim$  shoes / male child

Figure 6.30.--Conventional Use of Jacket, Necktie, and Shoes.

An example of rule-governed behavior of males in period two appears in Figure 6.31. In rule 6.31.1, if knickers are worn then the wearer is under age sixteen. 6.31.2 states that if a shirt is worn with no necktie before 1950, the wearer is under age sixteen. After 1950 the shirt is seen worn with no necktie by men who are

1. Knickers / under age 16
2. ~ necktie with shirt / under age 16 before 1950
3. ~ necktie with shirt / after 1950, informal activity  
v low-status occupation

Figure 6.31.--Conventional Use of Male Western Garments

taking part in informal activities (not special occasions) or who have low-status occupations.

Considering jewelry on females as an example in the third period (see Figure 6.32). Statement 6.32.1 says that wearing two or three pieces of neck jewelry indicates a special occasion.

6.32.2 states that bracelets are optional if traditional dress is worn by persons who are at home or who are under age ten. In statement 6.32.3 if either traditional or western dress is worn, then bracelets are worn by persons over age sixteen appearing in public. 6.32.4 states that bracelets are optional on girls under age sixteen if western dress is worn. 6.32.5 indicates that bracelets are not worn with either western or traditional dress at a funeral.

These conventions of dress are allied with environmental conditions such as decade, activity or occasion, and age, rank, or status of the wearer. The conditions supplement the syntactical patterns of dress by adding meanings related to social roles and self-concepts. Further patterns of behavior related to dress which appear to be practiced with few exceptions will be discussed in the following section on meanings of dress.

1. Traditional v western dress  $\supset$  2 v 3 neck jewelry / special occasion
2. Traditional dress  $\supset$  (bracelets) / at home v under age ten
3. Traditional v western dress  $\supset$  bracelets / over age 16 in public
4. Western dress  $\supset$  (bracelets) / under age 16
5. Western v traditional dress  $\supset$   $\sim$  bracelets / funeral

Figure 6.32.--Conventional Use of Jewelry.

### Summary

The data concerning items of dress are organized around three descriptive categories derived from a lexical listing of all items appearing on the population. The categories are cultural association, sexual association, and location on the body. Modes of dress were determined by dividing items into sexual and cultural classifications. The number of items included in a mode was limited by the average number of garments worn by individuals who exemplify modal dress.

The cultural association of the dress of the population of the study was predominantly western throughout the twentieth century. A frequency count of all items used over the period of the study reveals very little change in the ratio of traditional to western dress. However, when main garments are considered as the critical items in establishing western or traditional identity of an ensemble, a fluctuation in the use of each type appears. The largest amount of traditional dress is seen in the decade preceding

independence, the 1950's, when more than half of all dress is traditional. For the population of the study, the use of traditional dress in current times is not as great as popular opinion might lead one to believe that it would be.

Women exceed men in the use of traditional dress. Two-fifths of women's dress in the first period is traditional compared to one-sixth of men's dress. After independence the ratio of traditional and western dress seen on women is equal while men wear one traditional outfit to every two western outfits. Until 1950, traditional and western items were rarely used together in one ensemble. In the first half of the century only 4 percent of the ensembles worn by the population were combinations of items from traditional and western cultures. In the period after independence, the incidence of combining items increased to 15 percent.

The names of approximately half of the western items appearing in the lexicon do not connote a sexual association while nearly all of the traditional items are used exclusively by males or females. Before 1900, male traditional dress was described as being more elaborate than female dress. The quantity of items worn in the traditional female ensemble surpasses that of men throughout this century, however. The number of items in the woman's traditional ensemble is always greater than that of her western counterpart because traditional dress for women is composed of three or four basic garments while western dress is only one or two. The reverse is true for men until after 1960 when men's western ensembles are composed of fewer items.

A core of common garments exists for males and for females in both the traditional and western modes in all three periods indicating the rule-governed nature of dress persisting over time. There are some shifts in the order of incidence in which items occur but the wrapper, the sokoto, the shirt, and the dress predominate in each mode throughout the study.

The chapter includes diagrams indicating items of dress which serve as alternatives to modal garments. Additional garments which are layered on top of one another on an area of the body are also indicated on the diagrams. It is assumed that combinations of garments which occur with relative frequency in the population are considered to be well-formed compositions of dress by the wearers. Combinations of items which occur consistently in certain environments are described as rules of dress. Social meaning is communicated when associations between conventions of dress and environments in which they occur are internalized by members of a society. In conclusion, rules stating relationships between selected items and environments in which they are found are listed. Further implications for meaning related to the choice of particular modal, additive, and alternative items will be discussed in the following chapter. Relationships between the particular modes of dress, social roles, and self-concepts will be considered.

## CHAPTER VII

### ANALYSIS: MEANINGS OF DRESS

Modal items and their variations are forms comprising a component in this analysis of forms and meanings of Yoruba dress. Meaning takes precedence over form when communication is the focal point of interest. However, meanings can be approached only through forms (Southworth & Danwani 1974:173).

Numerous meanings of "meaning" have been advanced by theorists concerned with the study of semantics. For purposes of this study, reference is made to a classic statement from the philosopher, Wittgenstein, who said, "Don't look for the meaning of a word, look for its use" (Lyons:410). "Use" of items of dress is represented herein by responses to an investigation of what was worn by whom, when, and where. The "who" component is established by identifying categorical placements of sex, age, religion, education and occupation, marital status, and relationship of the individual to an event. "What" is the item or combination of items of dress. "When" and "where" are spatio-temporal factors of decade and occasion. The context of use, whether ostensible or implied from previous associations, includes reference to the deictics and is integral to the meaning of items of dress.

The meanings that were in the mind of a wearer of a garment in the early part of the century cannot be probed at this time. It must be assumed that wearers had an understanding of the conventions of their culture and that quantitative evidence reveals accepted uses. Behavior related to dress is learned by a member of a culture as he observes the behavior of others and from his observations, constructs a set of rules which serve him as a guide to use of clothing within the cultural setting. The associations that may be observed by a researcher viewing photographs are a segment of the observations that could have been made by the participant in an event and which contributed to his rules of dress.

Modes of dress are a statement of the patterned behavior related to dress which was characteristic of a majority of the population at a given time. Variations in modes are hypothesized as reflections of differences in social roles and self-concepts of members of the research population. Social role differentiation is denoted from status differentiation linked to "who" one is in terms of social structural placement including sex, age, and other factors. Dress gains meaning as it becomes associated with members of a society who represent roles.

In the process of socialization in a society, individuals develop an awareness of "self" by taking the roles of "others" and internalizing their responses. As a result the individual develops

an ability to evaluate oneself according to norms of the society.<sup>1</sup> In turn, an individual's ability to express normative values and attitudes of one's social group is an important factor contributing to self-judgment and, hence, to self-concept or how one sees oneself. Information about self-concepts of individual persons could not be recorded in this study but references to general values appeared spontaneously in interviews related to the photographs and in informal conversation with the informant family. As values are integral to self-concepts, they serve to operationalize the term, self-concept. Suggested values of the society were further verified through library research. It was anticipated that values which are normative for a society would be reflected to a degree in the dress of the society. Thus, meaning of dress is being analyzed in terms of social structural criteria related to social roles and in terms of societal values related to self-concept.

Meaning develops from associations made with modal dress but meaning is also conjured from non-modal dress. ". . . the less probable a particular element is, the more meaning it has in that context . . ." (Lyons:415) is a proposition by a linguist that is useful in the search for meanings of dress. The anomalies of dress, the diversions from the mode, are frequently found to convey messages about the individual that further differentiate the wearer

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<sup>1</sup>These views on development of self-concept stem from the writings of Mead. See George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1934). Stone further elaborates on the importance of appearance in establishing the "self" in G. P. Stone, "Appearance and the Self," Human Behavior and Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach, ed. by A. M. Rose (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), pp. 86-118.

by characteristics other than his dress. Consistencies in dress found throughout the population may convey less information because of the absence of contrastive features. Furthermore, many items of dress, both modal and non-modal, may be acceptable within a given context; thus items acquire individual meanings because of the factor of choice.

Neither meanings of words nor meanings of dress can be fully determined because items of dress have multiple meanings. To choose to wear something that is worn by few others raises a question concerning the intent of the wearer that may be partially explained by status from social roles and self-concepts in the spatio-temporal context.

Objective evidence will be supplemented by subjective observations concerning the divisions of cultural and sexual associations of dress related to status and contextual criteria in the following discussion of the meanings of the dress of the population.

#### Cultural Association of Dress Related to Age

Traditions in Yoruba society do not explicitly dictate that children's dress should be different from adults. Other social behavior does demarcate differences in age-status. Members of the third generation of the informant family maintained inviolable deference to elder siblings expressed in the manner of addressing them. Greetings and manners continue to recognize age-status differential. As an example of age-status differential:

. . . in the Yoruba culture it is considered improper for a younger person to ask a woman her name, age, or how many children she has. Nor should questions be asked about . . . clothing or any personal matter; that information may be obtained from younger members of the family, not the older ones (Johnston:42).

While this behavior is appropriate for a young child relating to an older woman, it does not seem to apply to relationships between younger and older women today. It is suggestive, however, of the respect, recognition, and appreciation that are accorded the elderly, a quality regarded as one of the common denominators of African cultures (Sofola:76).

Some correlation between the high value placed on age and types of dress worn by different ages of the population might be expected. Perhaps dress which is more highly valued will be worn by the age-groups that are accorded the most respect. While styles of children's dress are not generally different from those of adults an association between youth and western dress does seem factually evident. Children are seen more frequently dressed in western styles. Over the three periods of the study, 80 percent or more of the dress worn by children was consistently western while adult dress became progressively more traditional. In the years since 1960 only 41 percent of adult dress was western while 84 percent of the dress of children under age sixteen was western. The contrast between children's and adults' use of traditional and western dress is indicated in the following table of percentages.

School uniforms are generally western but very few pictures of children in uniforms are in the photo collection. An explanation

TABLE 7.1.--Cultural Association of Dress of Population by Age.

Period	Under Age 16		Age 16 and Over	
	Traditional %	Western %	Traditional %	Western %
I: 1900-39	20 ( 6)	80 (24)	33 (23)	67 (47)
II: 1940-59	8 ( 2)	92 (23)	50 (105)	50 (106)
III: 1960-74	16 (15)	84 (77)	59 (83)	41 (58)

for the high incidence of western dress must be found elsewhere. Given the status differential between children and adults, does the cultural association of the dress of children reveal their lesser rank in society throughout the period of the study? Is western dress less prestigious?

Economically, western dress was generally more valuable in the early part of the century but whether western garments or traditional garments for children are less expensive in current times is debatable. Ready-made western clothes were said to be more expensive than traditional garments until sometime during the last decade. The competition of ready-made clothing for both children and adults is currently having adverse effects on dress-makers' businesses.

Until recently, custom-made clothing was less expensive than ready-made clothing. Both western and traditional dress could be custom-made but dressmakers and tailors for traditional garments charge less. Traditional dress requires more yardage than western

dress but the additional cost of yardage may be offset by the fact that there is less cutting and stitching involved than in making western styles. An economic factor favoring traditional garments is that a resourceful family can use them in a variety of ways since they are not cut to fit a figure. For example, a woman's stole can be used for a young girl's wrapper. In the informant's family, traditional dress for children currently has some prestige value of an economic and social nature. It has become customary for the children to get a new set of traditional garments every other year. Their traditional garments are seldom worn except for special occasions. In this case, traditional clothing for children is somewhat of a luxury purchased by the family who can afford some items that will be worn only a few times. In earlier times, western dress probably had a similar prestige value as an indicator of the family's status.

Western styles appear to be readily available for all children today because those who cannot afford new clothing have the option of second-hand clothing which is commonly seen in the markets. Informants point out that the use of second-hand clothing is offensive to most Yoruba, however. In the early 1960's, a song referred to the practice of going to the back of a market stall or to the corner, bosikona, where a person would not be seen if a second-hand garment was to be tried on. One informant said that by 1968 the practice of buying second-hand clothing was considered less self-abasing and persons no longer went to the corner. One type of second-hand clothing which is generally acceptable is that

which is handed down in a family. "Sister-reduced" or "brother-reduced" garments have been passed down from an older child and made over to fit a younger child in the family.

Economic advantages in using either type of dress are debatable; therefore, for most families the choice of western dress for children is perhaps pragmatic. Western garments are usually required for school and may be more comfortable for physical activities. De Negri supports this view arguing that the traditional female garment is suited to a life of leisure as the binding wrappers impede movement and the headtie is precariously poised (p. 5). However, market women who manage a head load, a baby on their back, and other children in tow would probably disagree as their traditional garments are arranged in a manner that assists them in carrying their loads. Perhaps young girls feel more encumbered by traditional dress but, in that case, the data of the study indicate that children are allowed to dispense with additional garments like the ipele. Traditional dress for boys usually restricts movements no more than does western dress if the buba and sokoto are worn without the agbada. The draw-string which holds the waistline of the sokoto in place may be objected to as an inconvenience for little boys but this can be replaced with elastic in contemporary sokoto. Therefore, children's western dress does not generally seem to have a greater association with comfort than does traditional dress and comfort is not a strong rationale for greater use of western dress.

Another pragmatic factor associated with the choice of western dress is the process of dressing. Putting on female traditional garments requires a skill that must be learned. Women assess one another's ability to tie their headties and recognize those who are more skillful than others. Western dress may be easier to put on children who have not acquired the necessary finesse for dressing themselves in traditional garments.

In addition to the western and traditional differentiation, several conventions in the use of particular items of dress distinguish children from adults. Of the few non-modal garments seen on the population, thirty-one of the total of thirty-eight are seen on children. Established conventions regarding use of dress appear to be more flexible for children than for adults.

Several specific examples of differences in use of items are found in children's and adults' dress. Throughout the period of the study, short pants or knickers are seen forty times on boys under age ten and only once on an older person. The exception occurs in the decade of 1970 when one older person, an office messenger who holds a relatively low occupational status, appears in knickers. In the first period, only children wear western dress without shoes. Eleven cases are visible. Only boys under age sixteen may appear without a jacket, coat or tie with western shirts and trousers before 1950. Twenty-four of thirty-one females appearing without bracelets in the first and third periods are girls under age sixteen. The two persons who wear the iro without the ipele in the first period are girls under age ten and, of the fifteen

males who wear the sokoto and buba without the agbada, eight are children and five are men engaged in informal activities such as visiting with friends at home or posing for a snapshot at work in the office. Wearing the agbada is comparable in formality to wearing a jacket with western men's dress. In the specific examples, relationships between age, status, and degree of formality are apparent. Thus, major differences between the dress of children and adults are notable in the contrasting amounts of western and traditional dress used and the greater informality implied by the types of items and the smaller number of items in ensembles of children's dress.

Bush and London's hypotheses (1960) state that changes in modes of dress over time are indicative of changes in social roles of members of that society. If so, there is very little evidence in the dress of the population to indicate change in the child-adult relationship in Yoruba society during the twentieth century. Children in the family wore western dress in the early part of the century and have continued to do so. Over a period of time western societies reflected through dress a tendency to obscure or to lower the age of passage from child to adult status as children wore items such as long trousers, neckties with sport jackets, nylon hose, bras, and lipstick at progressively earlier ages. Informants feel that the members of Yoruba society have become less authoritarian and that young people are being allowed greater freedom of expression than in earlier times but, in terms of dress, no examples of either

western or traditional adult garments worn by the Yoruba becoming acceptable as children's wear are obvious.

In opposition, an example is found of a traditional item associated with youth before 1900 which was seen only on adults later. Johnson remarked that the fila ab'eti, the Yoruba cap with "dog's ear flaps," was usually used by young folks (p. 112). In this case, the stylistic difference seems to have no relationship to status differentiation. The age group of males who wore it in 1900 probably continued to wear it throughout their lives because, in the photographs, fila ab'eti was worn by middle-aged men in the 1940's and by older men in the 1950's, '60's, and '70's. No children or young adults wore it.<sup>1</sup> Other traditional items worn by children are identical in style to those worn by adults.

One item of dress which may have enhanced the authority of older men has disappeared. The ibora or covering cloth is seen worn only by men over age forty in the photographs. It is not seen on men in Lagos after 1910 although in three cases family members living outside of Lagos wear it after that time. As the total number of cases wearing ibora is very small, support for proposing an association between the disappearance of the ibora and a decrease in the amount of authority held by the elderly is weak. It may be more probable that the ibora has disappeared not

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<sup>1</sup>Bogatyrev (1971) records a similar phenomenon among old men who disclose age differential by wearing styles fashionable during their youth in towns in Moravian Slovakia (p. 64).

for reasons related to changing age-status but because it was cumbersome for activities in an increasingly urbanized industrialized society.

The rationale for the occasional donning of traditional dress by children must take into account the fact that boys and girls may experience some sense of feeling more grown-up in traditional dress because it is a facsimile of adult dress. Traditional Yoruba garments have been noted to give a "certain ageing effect . . . even to young girls . . . because of the dignified matronly air conveyed by the turban and buba . . ." (De Negri, March 1962:7).

An autobiographical novel of the life of a Yoruba girl in Lagos refers to the opinion of an older aunt regarding western frocks.

The aunt said western frocks

. . . do nothing for your figure. They are neither up nor down, and they allow you to look younger than your age (Johnston:71).

The girl who was about to be married was urged to wear traditional dress which would emphasize her maturity.

While children's dress remained basically western throughout the periods of the study, adults wore increasing amounts of traditional dress. The relationship is significant at the conventional level (.05) (see Table 7.2). Changes in social roles related to age do not suggest reasons for change from western to traditional dress. Changes in self-concepts related to changes in political power will be discussed later.

TABLE 7.2.--Use of Western as Opposed to Traditional Dress by Adults Across Three Periods (Percents).

Cultural Association	Period I 1900-1939 (N = 70)	Period II 1940-1959 (N = 211)	Period III 1960-1974 (N = 141)
Traditional	33%	50%	59%
Western	67%	50%	41%
$\chi_2 = 12.67$		df = 2	p. < .005

Cultural Association of Dress  
Related to Sex Roles

Male and female differentiation by dress seems to be a universal phenomenon. Some indication of relationships between sexes within a culture can be gained from comparisons of their dress.

Traditional Yoruba households were composed of large patrilineal and patrilocal extended families. The head of the family was usually the oldest male member. A man was normally polygamous and dominant over his wives and children (Izzett:305). The predominance of the male was reflected in his attire. Johnson describes at length the many variations in styles of men's dress and dispenses with women's dress in four short paragraphs saying it is much simpler than men's dress (p. 122). De Negri agreed that women's dress was simpler than men's. It is her opinion that

It was but a short time ago that the Yoruba woman had very little independence, except within a few families. They were brought up with an attitude of submission and retiring modesty toward their menfolk; to be seen on occasion, and admired, but to take no active part in the affairs of her husband; to bear him children and to look decorative (p. 5).

The traditional extended family residing in patrilocal residence has nearly disappeared in Lagos eroding some authority once held by elderly men as heads of compounds but polygamous marriages are still common. A study conducted by Marris in Lagos in 1958-59 found 38 percent of married men having more than one wife (Marris 1962:48). A variety of living arrangements and types of alliances exist today allowing for variety in the roles enacted by women ranging from little or no authority to head of the household (Izzett:306-307).

The typical Lagos woman seems more aggressive than the prototype described by De Negri. For the most part, wives are expected to earn some income independent of their husband. Only eight percent of the women surveyed in the Marris study in central Lagos were not gainfully employed. Trading is by far the most common occupation for women with 87 percent of them being traders (p. 163). While husbands usually provide capital for wives to begin trading, the wife's profits are her own and are spent as she wishes on her personal needs, her children, and in helping her relatives (p. 53). Trading consumes much of a woman's time as many of them have stations where they conduct trade from early morning until early evening. One group of wives who have appeared somewhat submissive were among the new elite. Educated Nigerian men who were able to interact easily with foreign visitors often had wives who were relatively less-educated. To the foreigners, such wives seemed shy and acquiescent (Smythe and Smythe:96).

Bearing children continues to be important. The primary purpose for Yoruba marriages is procreation. ". . . a girl becomes a wife in order to become a mother" (Izzett:310). The illusion provided by traditional female dress with its layered folds adding bulk around the waistline indicates a Yoruba ideal of beauty which complements the traditional goal of fulfilling oneself through having children. In light of the possibility of changing roles, it is interesting that the bulkiness of women's garments is being somewhat reduced. Rather than the three yards of material formerly used for a wrapper, it may be made from 2 1/2 yards now. Furthermore, the ipele which provided added bulk around the waistline is frequently not worn at all in current times.

Male and female roles within traditional Yoruba society were clearly differentiated. In discussing work of Yoruba artists and craftsmen, Bascom (1969) categorically described each example as men's or women's work. If a type of work is not the province of one sex as in weaving, then the product of each sex is distinct. Weaving from narrow looms is recognized as men's work while women generally weave on wide looms. Ward gives other examples of duties specific to men and to women of the Ondo branch of the Yoruba where the sexual division of labor was clearly differentiated (pp. 125-133). Marris reported that among younger, "better educated" couples in Lagos, there is some merging of work roles. Many young husbands helped with the housework, cleaning, washing, cooking, and looking after children (p. 54).

Comparing the clarity with which male and female roles have been defined with examples from dress, it was noted in the last chapter that traditional Yoruba male and female garments rarely share the same names while western garments frequently have identical names for male and female versions. Among garments in the traditional modes, only the buba and salubata have both male and female associations. Perhaps the distinction in names of male and female garments is comparable to the separation of the spheres of male and female roles. To assert, however, that male and female roles were defined more specifically in Yoruba society than in western societies during the period of the study is purely speculative. There is also the philosophical question of whether sharing a name actually implies any sharing of common properties. However, an interesting fashion observed occasionally in 1974 was a garment called a female agbada. Side seams of the garment were sewn close to the body making the gown hug the body rather than falling loose like the male version. Again one can only speculate as to whether application of a name for a male garment to a female fashion corresponds to a tendency toward some merging of sex roles. In agreement with the notion, one informant observed that, "There is an element of 'What a man can do, a woman can do,' emerging here."

Within the informant family, some traditional roles were incompatible with the western religion, education, and occupations of family members. If dress is an accurate indicator, females in the population retained traditional roles to a greater degree than

did the men. In the first period only 11 percent of male dress was traditional compared to 40 percent of female dress. Figure 7.1 indicates the amounts of traditional dress worn by males and females of the population over the three periods of the study.

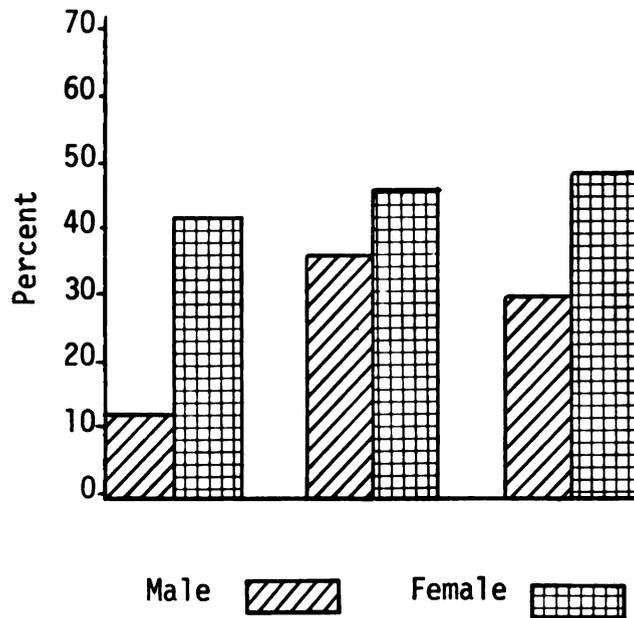


Figure 7.1. Traditional Dress Worn by Males and Females of the Population Over Three Periods.

The chi-square test shows a significant difference in the use of western versus traditional dress by males across the three time periods (see Table 7.3). The difference for women's use of traditional versus western dress was not significant. The women in the population continued to wear more traditional dress than did the men. All but one of the men in the immediate family held clerical or professional occupations. Three out of ten women were traders. The number of women in trading, a traditional occupation, is much less than the percentage found in the sample of women in central

TABLE 7.3.--Use of Western as Opposed to Traditional Dress by Males Across Three Periods (Percents).

Cultural Association	Period I 1900-1939 (N = 43)	Period II 1940-1959 (N = 68)	Period III 1960-1974 (N = 107)
Traditional	14%	43%	29%
Western	86%	57%	71%
	$\chi_2 = 10.02$	df = 2	p < .01

Lagos as late as 1950 but greater than the traditional pursuits of men in the immediate family. When women of the family are separated from non-family women, the chi-square test reveals a significant difference at the conventional level (.05) in the use of western dress across the three periods. Women of the family wore more than the expected amount of western dress proposed in the chi-square statistic in the first period, less in the second period and more again in the third period. The majority of non-traditional occupations of women in the family correlate with their use of western

TABLE 7.4.--Use of Western Dress by Family as Opposed to Non-Family Females Across Three Periods (Percents).

Family Relationship	Period I 1900-1939 (N = 36)	Period II 1940-1959 (N = 94)	Period III 1960-1974 (N = 70)
Family member	81%	48%	67%
Non-family	19%	52%	33%
	$\chi_2 = 13.62$	df = 2	p < .005

dress. Western roles and western dress were presumably more salient for men than for women of the total population. Women family members were exceptional in their relatively non-traditional occupations and their western dress. The behavior supports a proposition that a universal relationship between western dress and industrialization may not be the male and female difference "but the difference between individuals, male or female, who work at industrial or traditional tasks" (Roach & Eicher 1973:216).

#### Cultural Association of Dress Related to Education and Occupation

##### (a) Education

The type of education and the contingent occupations of the population provide one explanation for differences in the cultural associations of male and female dress. Schools encouraged western dress and the early schools were predominately male. The school census of 1899 reported 3,543 children enrolled in the Lagos schools (Lagos Standard, June 14, 1899). Of these, 2,344 or 66 percent were boys. Many families were recognizing the advantages of educating their boys since going to school "began to yield dividends in terms of the much envied white-collar jobs" (Ojo:72). Educated men sought office jobs which had been created as a result of the establishment of the colonial government. Male clerical jobs were a necessity for facilitating western-type government, trade, and later industry. Some men in clerical jobs were required to wear western dress. The key informant related that her father had to

wear a western suit and tie to the office. He changed to traditional dress for evenings and Sundays at home. She never saw her father in traditional dress outside of their home until he wore it to part of her wedding celebration during the decade of the 1950's.

Girls who went to school were expected to become teachers or dressmakers. The alternatives of being a nurse or a secretary were added at a later date. These jobs for females filled the interim between finishing school and getting married when most young women would revert to a traditional role.

Both boys and girls wore school uniforms which were mandatory by 1930 if not before. The C.M.S. Girls' School, the oldest girls' school in Lagos, formally introduced school uniforms in 1928. Since 1919, however, C.M.S. girls had worn straw hats imported from England especially for the school (Awe:14). The styles of uniforms changed periodically in coming years according to fashion trends but the characteristic color or shape has been retained making it possible for anyone familiar with Lagos schools to identify the schools of girls and boys seen on the street today. Dresses and hats often indicate the school of a girl. Schools of boys can usually be determined by their tie which has a particular color or pattern. "Old grads" show pride and loyalty by keeping a school tie in their wardrobes for alumni functions but women alumni do not have a comparable school symbol.

Schools continue to encourage wearing western dress. In 1974 all schools in Yorubaland required uniforms and only two schools had traditional dress as their uniform. One of these is

a teachers' training college. Students who board at school have different uniforms, all western styles, pertaining to different kinds of occasions. Typically a boarder would have three or four different uniforms, each one being worn only for participation in general classes, in practical or vocational classes, church and outside affairs, or physical education. Several photographs in the family collection show groups of college students in traditional dress. The students would have dressed purposefully in ethnic apparel for an occasion. Wearing traditional dress must enhance the uniqueness of an occasion for students as it contrasts with their typical western attire.

An item recognized generally as school wear for both boys and girls is a sturdy brown sandal. A C.M.S. alumnus verified the long association between sandals and school as well as a status differential indicated in the 1930's by footwear:

In 1938, the Prefects [monitors] were like gods. They went about the school in shoes whilst the other girls wore sandals or went bare-footed (Awe:25).

During the 1940's, flat, open-toed sandals with a strap across the instep appear in the photographs with western dress on a school-age boy. After 1960 sandals are common footwear seen on boys and girls in both traditional and western dress. In the third period, twenty-one of the twenty-two pairs of sandals on males are worn by boys of school-age or younger.

Education has been valued highly by the Yoruba as a means to social mobility. The uniform conveyed the message that a child

was enrolled in school. A West African novelist tersely expresses the value that children placed on school when he writes:

Among us the important question was never 'How many palm trees does your father have?' or even 'Have you ever been to Sagresa?' but simply 'Do you go to school?' Conton 1961: 8.

Contemporary events have diminished some of the prestige value of education. Throughout Nigeria the numbers of students wishing to go to school far surpasses the number that can be accommodated in existing schools. However, in Lagos nearly all children go to school now undermining the elite status of the school child. Furthermore, the job market for graduates is increasingly competitive as more individuals earn certificates and degrees and the graduate is no longer assured of securing a prestigious job.

When two teen-age girls of the informant family who go to separate schools were asked individually if they would prefer to wear or not to wear a uniform to their schools both responded negatively. The response was contradictory to that expected by a member of the preceding generation who had worn a school uniform with pride. Possibly a diminishing correlation between education and high social status will signal the demise of school uniforms.

Western dress characterized members of the population who had the maximum amount of education offered in Nigeria or education outside of Nigeria in the first period. Only 18 percent of the dress the known educated persons wore in photographs from 1900 to 1939 was traditional. Their traditional dress increased to 42 percent of their attire in the second period and after 1960 traditional dress predominated over western dress constituting 54 percent

of their pictured attire. Table 7.5 shows the contrasting periods. A comparison with individuals who had less than the maximum amount of education offered was not possible as too few subjects were available in the population. Western dress in the early twentieth century served to identify the Nigerian with a western-type education and occupation but after the middle of the century this was no longer necessary.

TABLE 7.5.--Cultural Association of Dress of Population with Maximum Education or More (Percents).

Cultural Association	Period I 1900-1939 (N = 45)	Period II 1940-1959 (N = 127)	Period III 1960-1974 (N = 113)
Traditional	18%	42%	54%
Western	82%	58%	46%

#### (b) Occupation

Even before the advent of western education, the Yoruba had associated types of dress with traditional occupations and, in turn, with social classes. Johnson described different styles of the sokoto stating who wore each style. One was worn by warriors and ruffians, another mainly by sportsmen, a third by nobles and gentlemen, another one said to be out of fashion had been worn by young and working men and, finally, one was worn by all classes (p. 111).

Thus, social stratificational divisions were viable in Yoruba society before the impact of western influences but scholars have tended to lump the traditional system into the elite and the masses.<sup>1</sup> At the top of the traditional elite were kings or obas surrounded by chiefs, officials, and military advisors. Below them, extended family compounds were headed by an elder male member called a Bale. As the government of a compound has been compared to that of a town or village in miniature (Fadipe:106), the Bale is sometimes compared to a mayor. Chiefs and obas were visibly distinguished from non-titled persons by their attire. Kings wore crowns made of costly beads and a "chain of office" which was a necklace of fine beads reaching as far down as the knees (Johnson:51). The position of the body where beads were worn indicated differentiation between obas, village chiefs, or ordinary chiefs (Ojo:259). In 1929 a controversy arose because at least one Bale wanted to wear a beaded crown. Two crowns purchased by the Bale of Okun were seized from him and the Nigerian Pioneer admonished that, "It is time that the awarding of the crowns is regulated" (Nov. 8, 1929). Beaded crowns continue to be reserved for the traditional obas of Yoruba society (Cordwell:224).

In the nineteenth century, sumptuary laws also decreed that only chiefs could use umbrellas. Offenders were "liable to punishment with a heavy fine, or imprisonment or death" (Ajisafe:22). The prohibition on umbrellas was lifted when cheap foreign-made

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<sup>1</sup>For example, P. C. Lloyd, 1966, p. 36.

models became available. Johnson reports that the decision was made at the time of wars centered in Ibadan when it was felt that men who may be killed in battle soon should not be denied the use of clothing or ornaments that would please them (p. 52). Chiefs' umbrellas remained distinguishable, however, by their quantity and size, their bright colors, and fine fabrics. Beaded slippers as well as crowns, elaborate robes, and other paraphernalia pointed out the status and prestige of the titled wearer.

. . . commoners could not afford elaborate robes, neither did they feel that it was proper in their station, so the emphasis on dress was tacitly left to the ruling class, or to cult devotees who were required to wear certain symbolic colors in cloth and beads (Cordwell:46).

Western education was instrumental in the formation of an additional class of elite. The new elite were accustomed to the communication of status through dress in traditional society. As western dress became pervasive on the new elite, imitation of the Englishman was sometimes interpreted as a rejection of indigenous culture but perhaps the motivation to indicate status within Yoruba society was equally as strong or stronger than the desire to reject Yoruba culture. Clothing items such as beaded slippers and crowns that had indicated status within the traditional elite were forbidden to the new elite, the Europeans were eager to have an outlet for their goods, and the combined pressures made western dress an efficacious medium for visually conveying the status of a new social class.

Cultural Association of Dress  
Related to Religion

In traditional Yoruba society there was very little distinction between religious and political functions (Adedeji:12). The kings were considered sacred while their functions were entirely secular (Fadipe:206). Religion was also intertwined with the power enjoyed by many of the early new elite who obtained their status from occupations gained as a result of their education in the first schools in West Africa. Until 1882 and to a large degree thereafter, all Lagos schools were administered by missions which inculcated education with Christianity.

Western dress also became associated with Christianity. The contribution of schools to this convention of dress has been discussed. The irregularity of a Christian leader in traditional dress was newsworthy. When the Lagos Standard announced the arrival of a missionary, Mr. J.J. Williams, from Sierra Leona who would be ordained to Deacon's orders in 1895, the second sentence announced, "Mr. Williams wears native costume" (February 20, 1895). The Yoruba sociologist, Fadipe, even attributed some of the appeal of Christianity in the 1930's to the type of dress that was worn to services. He commented that

Attendance at Bible class and prayer meetings does not have the same attraction for the average Lagos Christian as the divine services on Sunday, with its display of dress by both men and women (p. 290).

A picture in the family collection taken after church services on a Sunday in the 1930's verifies that church dress was western. The key informant spoke of one influential Lagos lady, a member of the same church as the family, who wore traditional dress in the 1930's.

She remarked that because of her traditional dress the lady "looked strange to us then."

In addition to promoting western dress Christian missionaries may have influenced those who wore traditional dress. The addition of the buba to women's wrappers covered the shoulders satisfying Christian conceptions of modesty. The earliest picture in the family collection of photographs is a formal pose of the key informant's great grandparents in traditional dress. The woman is not wearing a buba. The informant dated the picture as having been taken before 1903 as her mother never saw the grandmother without a buba and her remembrances extended back to the funeral of the grandfather in 1903. The couple were Christians from Lagos. It is possible that Christian mores influenced her to add the buba to her wrapper. Another factor that may have led to addition of the buba would be the general influence of culture contact that was concentrated in the urban area as western judgments of modesty affected fashions of other persons in Lagos as well as Christians. Early pictures of Moslems indicate that they also added the buba to their traditional garments. None are pictured without it.

Known religious affiliations of the population in the photographs were either Christian or Moslem. Both Islam and Christianity tended to view art objects of the indigenous religions as "products of heathenism" (Ojo:262). Thus Islamic and Christian religions detached many arts and crafts from their source of inspiration but they did not condemn aesthetic expression through dress. While the use of naturalistic motifs was discouraged by

the Islamic religion, colorful geometric designs flourished particularly in embroidery and were applied to men's agbadas and hats among other things. The embroidered agbada was adopted by the Yoruba from other Islamic people sometime before 1900. Moslem men continue in current times to be the embroiderers of the trim that is a standard feature of the agbada. While neither the Christian nor the Islamic religions encouraged display through dress they did not discourage it. In the period when the Christians became known for their western dress the Yoruba Moslems were contrasted by their traditional dress.

Both traditional and western dress are worn to Christian churches today. A practice concerning the use of dress for church over time may indicate a change in the social function of religion within the informant family. It was said that twenty to thirty years ago a new dress was first worn for a special Sunday such as Easter, Christmas, or New Year's Day. Then the dress would be worn for ordinary Sundays and finally for secular activities. The custom of today among the population is to wear a new dress to a party first and then to church.

#### Cultural Association of Dress Related to Marital Status

The importance of the role and status differences between unmarried and married women in traditional Yoruba society was emphasized by contrasting dress. Married women wore more garments than unmarried women. Two wrappers, the iro tied above the breasts and the ipele near the waistline, covered the torso and constituted

the attire of the unmarried. Married women added a third cloth, the iborun, which was used as a shawl or covering for the head and back (Johnson:112).

Gradual changes have occurred in the use of traditional garments. There has been a fluctuation in use of both the ipele or second wrapper and the iborun or stole accompanied by some variation in their meanings. One informant stated that the ipele was worn by married women. Others agreed that the iborun conveys the message that a woman is married. It seems that members of different sub-Yoruba groups vary in the item designated to indicate marital status.

The iborun and the ipele are seldom seen together in the photographs. Cases where both were used numbered one in the 1940's, five in the 1950's, and one in the 1960's. Ipele and iborun used together are considered very traditional. A Yoruba informant observed that the ipele went out of fashion and the iborun seems to be following, at least among younger people. The incidence of appearance of the iborun and the ipele over the eight decades is shown in Table 7.6.

According to Johnson and others<sup>1</sup> the iborun indicated that a woman was married. This statement appears to be true in the population throughout the study. It is seen on married women twenty-nine times and on single women three times. The three single women who are wearing the iborun (or stoles) appear in 1950 and 1960

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<sup>1</sup>See Gangan, 1967, p. 12.

TABLE 7.6.--Appearance of Iborun and Ipele on Women in Traditional Dress by Decade.

Decade	Frequency of Appearance of <u>Iborun</u>	Frequency of Appearance of <u>Ipele</u>	Number of Women Wearing One or Both	Percent of Women Wearing One or Both
1900	1	2	3	100%
1910	1	4	5	28
1920	0	3	3	27
1930	1	4	5	20
1940	3	9	11	37
1950	12	31	38	28
1960	11	14	23	24
1970	3	4	7	15

using them with Yoruba dress once, with agaayin or Ghana-style once, and with a western blouse combined with a wrapper once. As two of the three ensembles are not traditional Yoruba dress, the stole was worn only by married women in ensembles of Yoruba garments with the one exception noted above. The stole used in the exceptional case appears to be a crocheted stole rather than the usual fabric matching the wrapper. Therefore, it may not have been an indicator of the married state in the eyes of the wearer because it was not made from the customary matching textile.

The ipele or second wrapper is worn by persons known to be single in a total of five instances in 1920, 1940, and 1950. It is always worn over another traditional wrapper. Based on the few

cases seen in the population, the iborun but not the ipele seem to be associated with marital status among the subjects of the study.

The three women subjects of the first decade who wore either the iborun or the ipele, or both, used it with traditional ensembles. In the following decades the iborun or stole was used occasionally with western dress. The key informant described the stole as a compulsory part of married women's costume. It "completes it, looks elegant, and shows maturity." Perhaps married women extended the connotation to use of the stole with western dress as well.

Western garments of females do not identify the married woman as the iborun does. When the iborun is worn over western dress symbolic meaning from the Yoruba culture may supplement meanings evoked by western dress for those who have learned to associate communicative properties with both types of dress. One of the few western symbols of dress, if not the only one, which has clearly marked married from unmarried persons is the wedding ring. The wedding band appears on the pictures of persons dressed in traditional dress as well as those in western dress. Rings are visible from the decades of 1910 through 1970. Wearing a wedding ring as well as an iborun could be an example of redundancy comparable to events occurring in other communication systems for the purpose of emphasizing a point. To investigate if the message of marital state would be repeated in one ensemble, the number of times when the ring and the iborun were used together was tabulated. Of the

thirty-two women wearing the iborun, three wear rings on the third finger of the left hand. Two of these appear to be large decorative rings rather than wedding bands. Of course, rings because of their size may not always be visible on pictures. It seems, however, that the message of marital state is seldom issued through both the iborun and the ring in the same composition of dress.

A change in the importance of indicating marital status or a change in the function of the iborun or the ipele as an indicator of marital status are possible explanations of their use over time. Factors other than those related to marital status also enter in as explanations of the pattern of use. Two trends appear in the use of the two garments over time. Applying the factors considered thus far to explanations of these trends, multiple meanings can be posited. The decline from 1900 to 1939 may be attributable to the prevalence of western dress as well as to change in traditional dress. Fashion in traditional dress was influenced by religious reprimands as the iborun lost its function as a covering when the buba was introduced. The increase in use of both the ipele and the iborun in 1940 accompanies a revival in appreciation of traditional customs as a result of the political climate. The ensuing decline may point to increasing informality in dress and possibly to changing roles of Yoruba women. Fashion influenced by culture contact is also a possible explanation. As skirts became shorter in western fashions, wrappers were worn shorter by simply folding them over. Younger women in the '70's were wearing wrappers at lengths comparable to western skirts. The bulkiness of the iro

plus the ipele both folded to a short length may have become unwieldy. Informants proposed economics as another explanation which will be discussed later.

No traditional items of dress for men are known to depict marital status. In a polygamous society it would be irrelevant for a man to indicate that he was married. Polygamous men in traditional Yoruba society gained status from the number of wives that they claimed rather than the fact that they were or were not married.

The wedding ring was an item in Christian marriages for men and women (Bascom:63) and, therefore, could serve as an indication of both marital status and religious beliefs. The first example of a man wearing a wedding band is seen in the photographs in 1950. He is also wearing a western suit. Of the ten rings visible on men in the population, six do not seem to be wedding rings because they are not worn in the conventional position as a Christian symbol of marriage. It appears that in both the traditional and the western context, the convention of signifying the marital state continued to apply to women but seldom to men. An explanation for the manifestations in dress seems logically linked to the mores of a society in which polygamy has predominated.

Hairstyles were also distinguishing features between married and unmarried women in traditional society Johnson declared,

. . . a marked distinction must always be made between that of married women and the unmarried [in hairstyles]; this is a social law which on no account should ever be infringed (p. 125).

The usual method of arranging hair in a traditional form was to divide the hair into several sections and twist the sections or braid them into small braids. The specific stylistic differences between married and unmarried women's hairdos before 1900 is not clear. At that time, however, the status of obas' wives was further differentiated from the masses of married women by styles brushed and built up into beehive effects and then decorated with gold and coral ornaments (Gwatkin:41). Custom also decreed that obas' wives should never cover their heads (Ajisafe:23).

The influences of culture contact in the urban setting effected changes in the social and political spheres which were, in turn, reflected in dress. The compelling power of fashion is another factor not to be discounted as a component of change.

Hairstyles of obas' wives are no longer restricted to them corresponding to the fact that obas have lost political importance. The ordinary woman does not wear the style but contemporary performers of traditional dances frequently choose costumes complete with hairstyles that replicate the dress of the royal women.

If adults in the photographic population wore traditional hairstyles they were covered by geles from 1900 until 1970. Traditional hairstyles became associated with young children and school-girls as the use of western garments increased. The adult women in the population chose western hairstyles to go with western dress. They straightened their hair with a hot comb once or twice a week, a process that became less time-consuming as technology replaced combs heated over charcoal or gas cookers with electric combs. In

the 1970's it became fashionable for women working in offices or other commercial employment to have their hair done in intricate styles inspired by the traditional types. These are seen with western dress now. When the wrapper and buba are worn the hair is still usually hidden by a gele although the gele may be omitted for informal activities.

Comparing use of traditional and western dress over time by married and unmarried persons would lead to spurious conclusions. Fadipe reported that persons seldom remain unmarried except for extreme poverty, or mental or physical disabilities (p. 69). Later some persons deferred marriage in favor of pursuing advanced formal education but, in the adult population, there are very few persons who remained unmarried. Therefore, the category of unmarried persons in the photographs would be biased by a high incidence of children or young adults who are known to have worn predominantly western dress.

#### Cultural Association of Dress Related to Occasion

Dress functions to complement types of occasions and relationships of individuals to occasions as well as indicating cultural value of the occasion. Proprieties in dress in Yoruba society in Lagos seem to parallel those of western societies. Everyday life within one's family household demands the least formality in dress. Going out to a clerical job, a party, church, or appearing in public on the street requires that additional consideration be given to one's appearance. In terms of decorum,

these are "better dress" occasions. The greatest degree of formality in dress accompanies ceremonial or special occasions with variations depending upon the position of the individual as a participant in the occasion. Special occasions for the Yoruba Christians include both western and traditional ceremonies. The occasions for which the photographs were taken were classified as everyday, better dress, or special occasions.

Nearly all of the photographs are of persons in public dress or in dress considered appropriate for "better dress" or special occasions. Yorubas are like many persons who object to having their pictures taken in everyday attire. There is psychological reassurance in knowing that one appears at one's best in a record as permanent as a photograph. The phenomenon of being well-dressed as a Yoruba societal value is discussed further in the section on dress and values.

The occasions denoted by the key informant as being special were: betrothals, weddings, naming ceremonies, christenings, confirmation, birthdays, and retirement parties. Funerals and memorial services must also be included although they were not mentioned by the informant. For special occasions western dress predominated across three periods but the use of traditional dress increased about eightfold in the second period. Bascom stated that western styles had become common in Yoruba towns outside of Lagos in the 1930's but traditional clothing was still worn on important occasions (p. 100). The dominant type of dress for

special occasions in Lagos at that time was western. By 1958 Marris reported that Lagos had changed to "native dress" (p. 21).

Table 7.7 shows the frequency and percentage of use of traditional and western garments for special occasions for each of the three periods.

TABLE 7.7.--Use of Traditional and Western Garments for Special Occasions (Percents).

Cultural Association	Period I 1900-1939 (N = 19)	Period II 1940-1959 (N = 101)	Period III 1960-1974 (N = 47)
Traditional	5%	41%	38%
Western	95%	59%	62%

The frequency of use of traditional dress is greater in the periods following 1940 if children are not included in the total. The cultural associations of dress worn for special occasions by adults is shown in Table 7.8. In the first period traditional dress was not worn by adults of the population for special occasions. After 1960 nearly three-fourths of the dress worn by this group for special occasions was traditional.

As an example of the changing uses of western and traditional dress, the key informant stated that her mother who represents the third generation of the family always wore western dress to church in the 1930's and '40's while she wore traditional dress at home and occasionally to go out. In the third period (after 1960) the

TABLE 7.8.--Use of Traditional and Western Garments for Special Occasions by Adults (Percents).

Cultural Association	Period I 1900-1939 (N = 11)	Period II 1940-1959 (N = 91)	Period III 1960-1974 (N = 25)
Traditional	--	44%	72%
Western	100%	56%	28%

iro and buba have surpassed the western garment as the female attire for better occasions but the western shirt and trousers are still seen twice as often as traditional dress on men in the population. A pattern of wearing western dress to the office on weekdays and Yoruba dress on Saturdays has been established recently in contemporary Lagos. The key informant explained that Yoruba dress is preferred party dress; parties are frequently on Saturday, and persons go from work to parties. Such parties according to the informant are not thought of as special occasions because there are so many of them.

Both better dress occasions and special occasions may be characterized by appropriate moods. Each of the occasions previously named as special by the informant suggest a joyful mood. She seemed inadvertently to have omitted funerals and memorial services. The events surrounding death are also noted by special occasions of contrasting moods. An element of sadness is always present but expressions of grief vary depending upon the accomplishments of the deceased. Departure from life of the person who has lived to an

old age, has had children and has seen his or her children grow up to become assets to society is recognized in a spirit of thanksgiving. Grief is more intense for the death of a younger person who did not achieve those desired goals. The attire of survivors is in keeping with the mood appropriate to achievements of the deceased.

The ritual of mourning in traditional society demanded that survivors assume an abject appearance. During the mourning period of about three months widows wore dishevelled hair and rags. Men remained unwashed and unshaven. When the period of mourning had lapsed the survivors bathed, dressed in their best, and paraded the streets thanking sympathizers (Johnson:140).

The period of visible mourning is generally shorter in current times. Dress digresses from the norm in color but not necessarily in quality. Dark shades of color and minimal decorative effects are proper attire for the mourner. Mourning for a family member or a close friend is shown by wearing black when it is economically feasible. A woman wears the least conspicuous earrings that she has and no other jewelry except possibly a watch. A picture in the 1930's depicts a teen-aged girl in a light dress and a black sash, the latter conveying that she mourned the death of a parent. Survivors at a funeral in the 1950's are seen wearing no jewelry except small earrings.

Persons who can afford memorial services for deceased family members, especially parents, will hold them periodically. The predominant dress for a memorial service in 1974 given by a

Lagosian for her father who died ten years previously enhanced the joyful spirit of the commemorative event. Women were in wrappers and headties of bright shades of red damask worn with white and silver lace bubas. Men were equally resplendent in garments including velvet and gold embroidered hats and white lace agbadas.

The mood of happy occasions is emphasized with brightly patterned fabrics, rich textures, and the proper jewelry. "Miliki" is a handwoven fabric striped in a multitude of colors that exemplifies a fashionable textile for a happy occasion in the 1970's. The word, "miliki," is a Yoruba derivative from the English word, milk, alluding to something rich, nutritious, and good. The interpretation in the fabric was explained as meaning, "We are having a good time."

Jewelry serves as a complement to the appropriate mood of an occasion. For example, two sets of beads worn at once indicate a festive occasion (see Figure 7.2). Persons appear in sixteen photographs wearing two sets of beads for weddings, birthdays, the homecoming of a student returning from England, and in professional photographs where it appears that one's "best" dress is being displayed. A set of coral beads with a set of gold beads is one customary combination considered aesthetically pleasing. As two sets of beads are not seen in photographs taken before 1950, the custom appears concomitantly with the revived use of traditional dress by the family although in a few cases two sets of beads are also seen worn with western dress.



Figure 7.2.--1970: Two or More Items of Neck Jewelry Denote a Special Occasion. The Yoruba dress items worn in the picture are known as "complete" because the iro, iborun, and gele are all included.

Jewelry also indicates an individual's relationship to an occasion. Both men and women sometimes wear beads with traditional dress for festive occasions. The celebrant of an occasion will wear more beads than other participants if they are available to him or her and other persons try not to outshine the celebrant. Special relationships of other individuals to a celebrant are sometimes indicated by long chains extending below the waist. Fathers, mothers, and close friends and relatives of their generation are seen in the photographs wearing long chains at the weddings of their children. The item resembles that described in the traditional dress of kings who were allowed to wear long chains of beads reaching to their knees. No doubt the parent is exalted in status on a child's wedding day especially if the marital alliance has parental approval. A fashionable item worn to special occasions in the '60's and '70's is a large gold pendant.

Customs surrounding weddings include use of symbols denoting relationships of individuals to the special occasion. The one wedding picture existing in the collection from the first period depicts a Christian affair taking place in the 1910's. The bride, groom, attendants, and adult guests are seen in the formal attire associated with the English. The bride is in white satin and the male attendants are in top hats and tails but children are wearing basic traditional garments. Accounts from the early newspapers described similar dress that was fashionable at Christian weddings. One said:

The bride was elegantly dressed in a gown of white broche silk, richly trimmed with chiffon and orange blossoms, the front being artistically set off with a blending of pearls and sequins; a tulle veil surmounted and neatly arranged with a wreath of beautiful orange blossoms and all the accompaniments of a bride . . .

[Five bridesmaids] wore each a frock of accordeon plated [sic] grey cashmere trimmed with salmon pink surah silk and white laces with hats, parasols, gloves, etc. to match. Each carried a bouquet of white flowers (Lagos Standard, July 19, 1899).

In traditional marriages of followers with indigenous religious beliefs, Johnson related that the new status of the bride was also distinguished by special dress at the wedding and for a period of time following it. Before 1900 a bride wore a thin white veil as she was brought to the home of the groom. The new bride who was chaste was covered with coral, other beads, and gold necklaces if they were obtainable. She remained closely veiled when she went out-of-doors for at least twelve months after her marriage (Johnson:115). As another custom related to marriage, it was imperative that before marriage all girls be marked by tribal marks cut on their backs (Ajisafe:55).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The purpose of the marks is not certain. Perhaps tribal marks in this case served dual purposes of identifying group origin as well as increasing the sensual pleasure of touching. An informative article about forms and meanings of scarification of the Tiv of northern Nigeria in the 1950's relates that while the Tiv agreed that scarification was painful they asserted, "The pain is the proof positive that decoration is an unselfish act, and that it is done to give pleasure to others as well as oneself" (p. 121). The tenderness of the scars gives them an erogenous quality as it was thought that they caused a woman to demand more sexual attention and, hence, she was more likely to have children. See Bohannon, Paul. "Beauty and Scarification Amongst the Tiv," Man, Vol. LVI, article No. 129 (September, 1956), pp. 116-121. It is not known if scarification held the same meanings for the Yoruba. One Yoruba informant viewed the purpose of marks on the face or arm as identification while body marks were seen as sensuous.

Among some Yoruba groups in the 1930's, a new bride continued to wear fine clothes for about a month after marriage and then changed "into working clothes" (Fadipe:86). Working clothes were not described but it seems that they would be comparable to everyday dress as contrasted to better dress. Work clothing could be less expensive, expressive of a different mood, or simply older than better dress. Young brides in the town of Awe in the decade of the 1950's were described as wearing gold jewelry and expensive outfits to market to display their status (Marshall:134). Informants said that a Yoruba girl getting married today must have sanyan, alari, olowududu or etu, and adire, all textiles representing the traditional crafts of weaving, dyeing, and starch-resist application of designs. In a light-hearted vein it was said that without them she will not "be a good wife." With them, she has a collection of new wrappers which provide her with changes for many days to come. It remains customary for a young woman to receive traditional fabrics as part of a dowry. Women aim to acquire all of them at some time if they are not obtained before marriage.

Yoruba Christian marriage rituals have incorporated many western symbols. "A bridal veil, a wedding ring, the throwing of rice, and a wedding cake and dinner are among them" (Bascom:63). Some traditional symbols are also retained. Among Yoruba customs included in Christian weddings, ceremonies described in Iyabo provide examples. At the engagement and dowry ceremony the groom's family brought gifts including the handwoven cloths for the bride's wardrobe. The following day an aunt helped the prospective bride

change into different traditional outfits for appearances before guests. Iyabo recalled the event:

. . . at the end of the day I had put on ten different outfits. By that time I was tired and fed up, but the many people who called at our house were pleased and impressed that I was so dressed up to receive them (p. 75).

Iyabo wore a white satin wedding dress in western style for her wedding and a blue "going-away" dress for leaving the festivities. White, the wedding color, stood for peace and blue for love and luck (p. 75).

Weddings are one event where the couple being married may be seen in one type of dress, western or traditional, while most of the guests are in another. The custom contrasts with other special occasions where there is a tendency for persons to be almost all in traditional dress or almost all in western dress.

In the population of the study, western dress was the popular attire for brides and grooms in all periods of time. In fifteen pictures of bridal couples in the collection, only two show the bride and groom in traditional dress. Wedding dress of the population was compared with a survey of pictures in the Daily Service from three months in 1959 and the West African Pilot for six months in 1964. In the 1950's, one bridal couple out of seven in the population wore traditional dress. Nine wedding pictures in the newspaper revealed four couples in western dress, two in traditional, and three in combinations where the groom wore traditional dress while the bride wore western. Traditional dress was more prevalent among the small sample of Lagos residents pictured

in the newspaper than in the family population. The 1964 survey reveals some reversion toward use of western dress with eighteen couples in western dress, five in traditional and none where the bride and groom wear clothing with differing cultural associations. Contrasting the three samples, the population wear the greatest amount of western dress, 86 percent. The 1959 sample in the newspaper was 61 percent western and the 1964 sample was 78 percent western. The increase in the use of traditional dress appears to have peaked in the year preceding the gaining of independence. However, the key informant estimated roughly that in 1974 weddings were approximately half western and half traditional in Lagos.

In the photographs of the population since 1950, western attire when worn sets the newly married couple apart from wedding guests as guests are wearing mainly traditional dress. As another example of dress indicating an individual's relationship to an occasion, the key informant stated that the mother of the bride will wear the most elaborate attire of anyone present. Nevertheless, the person who is the center of attention on this day is the bride. Perhaps when the bride wears a western gown and her mother wears traditional dress they are both able to dress splendidly without competing for sartorial superiority. It is also possible that the western gown has been retained as a symbolic affirmation of religious identity relating back to the association between Christianity and western dress. One contrast exists, however, for the bridal couple are also in western dress in one picture of a Moslem wedding taken

in the 1940's. In that case female attendants are in western dress and male attendants wear traditional agbadas.

Dress facilitates identification of occasions. Passers-by who have learned cultural symbols may recognize the type of occasion by the dress of the participants. Associations often seem to be rooted in past events. For example, the use of western dress as predominant dress for work dates back to colonial prescriptions and may continue out of force of custom. Western wedding dress for the Christian is also purely arbitrary today but it is a part of ritualistic behavior in which symbols change slowly.

The prevalence of predictable behavior associated with the choice of clothing for participation in rituals emphasizes the value the members of a culture place on such events. The differences between dress for rituals and dress for everyday further intensifies the importance of ritual occasions.

Dress exemplifies a specific value in a form which has persisted for special occasions regardless of whether traditional or western dress was predominant. A characteristic that is basic to the Yoruba personality and possibly to Africans in general is a desire for social solidarity and cohesion (Sofola:124) in contrast to the western emphasis on individualism. An illustration of social solidarity shown through dress is a custom called aso-ebi. Translated it means the cloth of the family or kin group. When a person is planning a special event, he or she may select a fabric to be worn for the event and will invite a group of friends to join in wearing it. The literal translation is "family cloth" but the offer of

wearing it is extended to friends as well. Thus, several persons distinguish their cohesiveness by appearing in identical clothing at an event.

Sofola elaborates on the sociological functions of aso-ebi (p. 124). To be shown the aso-ebi and to be invited to wear it is a gesture of friendship. The willingness of a friend to make the financial sacrifice to buy the selected aso-ebi represents empathy for the celebrant. A system of mutual obligation and aid is established with the expectation that the celebrant will reciprocate when it is the friend's turn to plan a special event. The collectivity of persons wearing aso-ebi present a visual expression of esprit des corps setting themselves apart from non-participants in the event. "Monotonous conformity in dress, rather than serving to dampen enthusiasm, serves to heighten . . . positive self-feeling . . ." (Fadipe:260).

Wearing aso-ebi is practiced most extensively by women but men may also choose to wear similar items for some occasions. The earliest picture of aso-ebi in the collection shows a group of seventeen women wearing identical wrappers and bubas in the 1920's. During the 1930's and 1940's groups of women chose a westernized form of aso-ebi as they appear together wearing identical western dresses and hats (see Figure 7.4). In 1974, twenty-five women were seen at a memorial service wearing identical silver metallic and red lace iros, bubas, and geles. For that occasion a checked gingham fabric was also selected as an alternative for those who

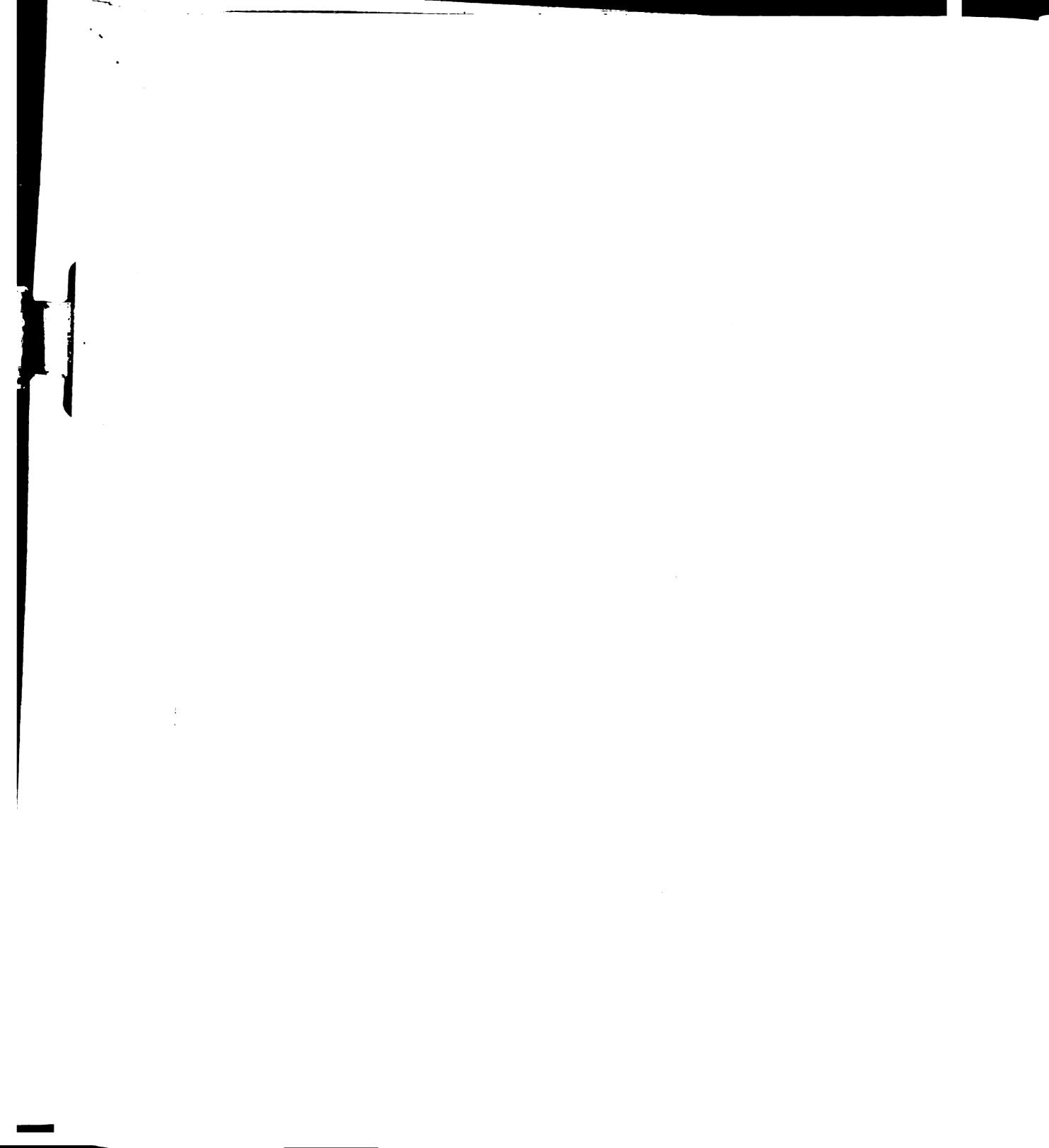




Figure 7.3.--Gbariye, traditional male garment.



Figure 7.4.--1950: Custom of aso-ebi seen in western dress.

were working in food preparation and service at a subsidiary event following the major ceremony.

Aso-ebi has been criticized as an expense which derives some persons into debt. In 1959 the question of a public vote favoring or disfavoring the practice of aso-ebi was referred to in the Daily Service (Feb. 20, 1959). According to the key informant expense is usually not a problem because persons tend to be in the same financial bracket as their friends. Other informants say it is a controversial custom especially among younger families who have the strain of expenses for school fees and feeding a growing family. Nevertheless, aso-ebi continues to flourish as a custom in the 1970's.

An aso-ebi may be worn again after the event for which it was chosen is past. When it is worn again it serves as a reminder to the wearer of its original purpose, the person and the event. It becomes a type of historical record as handwoven traditional aso-ebis are frequently saved and passed on to succeeding generations. Among the key informant's collection are some which were worn by her grandmother before 1920.

Social solidarity is expressed through dress by other types of groups as well. Dozens of market women representing the sellers of one Lagos market were observed dressed in identical traditional ensembles for the dedication of a new building in 1974. The group uniform was also common in 1930 as Fadipe wrote:

There are very few societies or clubs which at one time or another do not have to appear in public with its members

either wearing dress or costume of the same pattern or colour . . . Athletic clubs hold an attraction to the majority not for exercise which is the main reason for their existence, but for such incidentals as blazers and white flannel trousers (p. 260).

It appears that blazers and white flannel trousers may have had an appeal as a reflection of a basic desire for human cohesiveness that characterized the organization of African societies prior to disruptive western influences.

#### Values Reflected in Dress

Meanings of dress derived from association with social structural placement, i.e. sex, age, religion, education and occupation, marital status, and relationship of an individual to an occasion have been discussed. Dress may serve to validate the identity of an individual as roles considered appropriate to social structural placement are enacted. Specific structural components are relatively isolable for social role identity. Aspects of components may be measured as either occurring or not occurring.

Self-concepts of members of a society involve judgments of the self regarding one's fulfillment of normative values. A measure of value is in terms of more or less of a characteristic rather than occurrence or non-occurrence. While values of the informant family were not formally recorded, reference to values were expressed spontaneously. Observations of the researcher combined with values of the Yoruba observed by other researchers will be considered as components of societal ideals which may be expressed through dress.

Values which constitute consensual goals, standards, and moral precepts are evident in the multiple messages conveyed by Yoruba dress. Three categories of values represented in the available data will be discussed; these are grouped as economic, aesthetic, and moral values. The desire to appear affluent expresses an economic value. Emphases on beauty, creativity, and achievement of certain standards of quality are aesthetic values, and indicating respect for others by meeting group-held standards of grooming and cleanliness is an expression of moral values.

### Affluence

Clothing represents a substantial expenditure in Yoruba budgets. Fadipe observed of his people, ". . . the Yoruba loves fine clothes" (p. 260). Researchers of the economics of Nigerian cocoa farmers reported in 1956 that, "The value of the family wardrobe for many families exceeds the value of the family house . . ." (Galletti:247). From a study of the population of central Lagos in 1958, it was stated that, "Clothes, rather than furniture or household equipment, seem the most generally accepted way of spending money for show, at least amongst the Yoruba" (Marris 1962: 79). Yoruba informants disagree pointing to a subgroup of Yoruba, the Ijebus, who build mansions in their home towns to indicate their ability to do so even though they may live in them only two weeks out of a year. Housing rather than clothing is felt by some Yoruba to generally be a more prestigious symbol of status but due to problems of inadequate land, a shortage of housing, and difficult

transportation, rich and poor often live side by side in undistinguished housing in central Lagos. Therefore, to the observer from another culture in Lagos, it appeared that status did not come from housing but,

Wealth is stored in boxes of clothes and jewellery, or invested in a son at Manchester University, a daughter learning nursing at a London hospital, or in the pious distinction of having made the pilgrimage to Mecca (Marris:69).

Identical expenditures appear to prevail in 1974. A family's life-long collection of traditional fabrics and clothing is saved in large trunks. Good jewelry is also collected over a lifetime and may be kept at the bank to be taken out for special occasions. Going abroad to school is desirable but, with the development of Nigerian universities, many students have the alternative of going to school within the country.

A pilgrimage to the holy center certainly remains a primary objective of Moslems. Even the latter accomplishment is expressed in dress as the woman who has been to Mecca is privileged to wear a sheer veil over her headtie forever after and the man who completes the trip wraps a white cloth in the form of a turban over his traditional hat. The trip to Mecca is also sometimes symbolized by the addition of gold rings on fingers and on toes, braces on the teeth, or, for women, the wearing of loose pajama-type trousers imitative of the dress of women from Mecca. While the symbols reveal that the wearer has been to the religious center they are also interpreted as an indication of wealth. Having been to Mecca is dependent on the ability to pay for the trip.

Gold jewelry is generally prized by Yoruba Moslems and Christians alike. The parents who can afford it give gold jewelry to their children on special occasions throughout their life times. At the time of marriage, a customary gift is gold jewelry rather than the precious stones known in parts of Europe and America. Grandparents try to give gold bracelets or beads to a new-born child, and, as a woman gets older she hopes to be able to continually add gold beads to extend the length and quantity of necklaces that she wears on special occasions. ". . . gold jewellery is considered a basic reflection of fashion sense, financial security, and social acceptability" (Daily Times, Jan. 1, 1974).

Yoruba traditional male attire has been regarded as an index of the financial standing of the man who wears it (Gangan, p. 11). The amount of material in the agbada, the sumptuousness of the fabric, and the quantity of embroidery are variables in the cost of the outer garment. If the man's agbada is made of hand-loomed material, many strips of fabric each about 4 1/2 inches wide are sewn together. When strips of fabric are joined, extra bulk is created that would not be obtained from yardage woven in wider widths. The measurement of a standard-sized agbada belonging to a man about six feet tall are: 120" width measuring from wrist to wrist, 67" length from shoulder line to hem, and 98" in width at the lower edge (see Figure 7.5). Therefore, about ten square yards of fabric may be used in one man's agbada. A male informant told about a chief from outside of Lagos who had a version of sokoto that required 110 yards of hand-loomed fabric. The figure

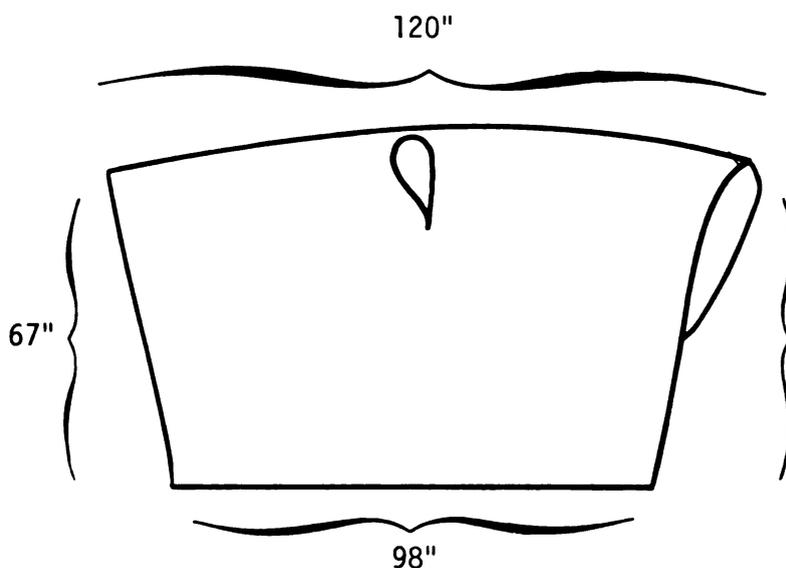


Figure 7.5.--Measurements of Man's Agbada.

must represent the total length of the handwoven strips before they are joined together.

Because they are expensive to purchase and by reason of their weight and bulk are suited to a leisurely life, the ownership of these voluminous robes give certain status as symbols of wealth and achievement (De Negri, p. 11).

A man could gain satisfaction from owning appropriate clothing or be humiliated by the lack of it. "Only the man who is in debt or who has not clothes for festive occasions would think of spending annual festival season out of town," according to Fadipe (p. 147). Discussion of a wedding picture prompted the key informant to state that nothing like a wedding suit would have been borrowed. Even a houseboy would have "skinned himself thin, saved for a lifetime," to get a suit for his wedding. Borrowing, renting, or buying

secondhand clothing were all repugnant to Yoruba. Renting of clothes was said to have begun recently and was inspired by English example.

Journalists have periodically advised consumers to limit their clothing expenditures. In 1909, an article appeared in the Lagos Standard describing the "habit of extravagance which is conspicuous in nearly all classes of the community" (June 16, 1909). Dress was the focal item selected to illustrate excessive spending. The writer viewed extravagance as one of the "doubtful legacies which civilization [sic] has bequeathed" to the Lagosian. Admonitions to use moderation in spending for jewelry were issued in the West African Pilot in 1944. It was stated, "Even people who are poor do not scruple to enter into negotiation for jewelry. The fact is that moderation is never taken into consideration in this respect" (Feb. 23, 1944). Again in 1974, a consumer advocate decried the impracticality and extravagance of a popular fabric, damask. She referred to the symbolic value of "having arrived" in Nigeria's elite circles that is conveyed by wearing damask.

The desirability of having damask, in the opinion of one informant, has affected the number of items in ensembles of traditional dress today. The iborun or stole is still an essential component of the woman's dress when an ensemble is made from hand-woven Nigerian fabric. When the outfit is in another fabric, the stole is frequently omitted. The informant felt that the cost of damask had caused the omission of the iborun.

For those who are ambivalent about saving money or exhibiting the ability to be dressed as expensively as their peers, a Yoruba proverb offers guidance.

Odaju ni o bi olowo itiju ni o bi gbese.

The translation is, "Thrift is the parent of wealth but moral cowardice is the parent of debt."

### Personal Beauty

Socio-cultural standards of beauty related to personal appearance are part of the inheritance of members of a culture. Use of cosmetics as an aid to beauty is probably a universal practice. Nigerians who are knowledgeable about the natural resources of the "bush" are able to prepare an impressive array of cosmetics and beauty aids from indigenous products. The raw materials for traditional cosmetics are available in Yoruba markets today for those who prefer them over the commercial products that have been introduced from western societies.

Local plants yield oil and fat as a base for pomades, dyes to stain the skin, nails and hair, fragrant essences for body perfumes, plant juices that can imitate tattooing or produce a lather for washing, wood for combs, toothpicks or sticks to apply galena around the eyes, or even vegetable sponges and of course the containers for the cosmetics (Bep Oliver: 247).

Among the extensive variety of local cosmetic products that may be used to temporarily enhance the body, two were noted in Johnson's description of grooming as it was done in 1899. Female grooming was completed with the application of camwood to the feet and stibium to the eyelids (p. 113). Camwood seems to be an all-inclusive term that refers to camwood itself as well as three or

four other botanical forms that produce red stains. The red color is interpreted as a sign of life, health, or joy (Oliver:255). The stain may be used to color the face, the body, or the feet. When clothing covers most of the body, body decoration is not visible, a factor accounting for the disappearance of such adornment in Lagos. "When less clothes are worn, more attention is paid to the body which is often anointed to make the skin smooth and shiny" (Oliver:248). Camwood was said to give the skin suppleness and softness by a family informant but it was not used by members of the family. If the face and body of a Lagos person are dyed with camwood today, it is probably for performing in a traditional dance, but camwood-dyed feet are still seen occasionally in the markets. It is used especially on new mothers and babies to lubricate the skin. A second factor accounting for decreased use of natural products is the competition of imports especially in Lagos and other coastal areas (Ojo:264). The imported products offer a convenience because processing of them has been completed.

Stibium is a dark substance used as eyeliner. The name is a synonym for antimony which, in turn, is a misnomer for the true product, lead sulphide, also referred to as galena or tiro. Tiro is the term used in Lagos. It is a mineral which is ground and placed in a small container. To use tiro, it is mixed with water to make a paste, and applied to the eyelids with small wooden or bone sticks (Oliver:248). All ages have worn tiro but, among the educated, the practice of applying it to babies' eyes has disappeared. In 1944, a Lagos newspaper reported the disagreement

between generations about using tiro. Educated young girls who felt it should not be applied to babies' eyes because it was old-fashioned and unhygienic argued against old and illiterate women who found it pleasing (West African Pilot, June 2, 1944). Some babies are still seen in the markets with large dark eyes outlined in tiro and some adults continue to use it for everyday grooming. According to the key informant, when a girl is getting married, it has been considered a duty of her mother to see that she has a cosmetic case for tiro.

Cosmetics provide temporary body modifications. Permanent body modifications are also made to enhance personal appearance. Piercing ears for the purpose of inserting earrings is an example referred to earlier. Cutting the skin is another. A pele is a permanent modification done solely for beauty which results when a little cut is made or a bit of skin is removed from the cheek of a child or a woman to create a "beauty mark." The function of the pele differs from tribal marks. The latter are seen as identification while the pele is strictly to satisfy ideals of beauty. Tribal marks are not generally seen on Lagosians. The Awori, the Ijebu and the Egba Yorubas who provided the earliest settlers to Lagos have identifying marks (Johnson:104-109) but, if marks existed at that time, the custom of marking was not retained in Lagos. Persons in Lagos today who have tribal marks are recognized as having come from other parts of Nigeria.

Ideals of beauty for the Yoruba include, among other features, a slight space between the front teeth. The key informant said that

this natural physical feature was regarded as attractive and would generate comments like, "You only need to see her smile or laugh. She has such beautiful teeth." Perhaps the ideal is a remnant of the extinct permanent modification which was once done, chipping teeth (Bascom, p. 99). Other modifications such as tattooing or scarification are done by some Yoruba but were not seen on the population of the study.

The aesthetic ideals represented through clothing were not purposefully explored since one element such as use of color constitutes a study in itself. It was observed that judgments about the suitability of combining garments representing varying hues of one color family such as red contrast with western ideals. Yoruba judgments about appropriate combinations of patterns in one ensemble of dress also appear to contrast with western aesthetic judgments.

Creative satisfaction is obtained from wearing traditional dress, a satisfaction exemplified in the use of women's geles or headties. The headtie fabric measuring about two yards in length is rearranged each time it is worn. It is not actually tied but is shaped and tucked into itself. Women who were asked why they did not tie it into one permanent shape replied that they enjoyed the variations. Those women who are especially skillful in arranging their geles are recognized and admired by their peers. A Yoruba proverb says,

Gele o dun bi ka mo we, ka mo we ko to ko ye ni.

"It's not the headtie, not the tying, but the way it fits and the beauty of it that counts."

In interpretation, rearranging the headtie for each use allows a woman to demonstrate her personal skill; it allows her to keep up with fashion as popular arrangements in headties change frequently, and finally it allows her to arrange it appropriately for different occasions. For a party, the headtie is worn in a more elaborate arrangement than one would usually wear to church.

The traditional buba and wrapper also allow for fashion change. Although the basic form remains the same, the shape of the neckline of the buba varies, the length and width of the sleeves change periodically, and at times the buba has been decorated with lace, ruching, or embroidery. The wrapper maintained lengths comparable to western dress throughout the study. As western skirts went up in the 1960's, the wrapper was simply folded to make it shorter. The most frequent variation occurs in fabrics, however. In a twelve month period in 1949 an anthropologist observed three major fashion changes in imported cloths in general, three changes in buba cloth patterns, and one major change in the cloths used for headties (Cordwell:276).

"Costume selection and composition affords the most personal and immediate means of aesthetic expression to the average Yoruba individual" (Cordwell:265). Aesthetic sensitivity combined with fashion results in an ideal of dress expressed by an informant, "There is a right time, a right occasion, a right material, and a right way of doing something."

### Moral Precepts

The Yoruba have been noted as remarkable in their regard for personal cleanliness. "The word Obun (filthy) as applied to a person carries with it . . . a feeling of disgust which beggars description" (Johnson:101). In the writing from 1899, it was said that a man who appeared unwashed, unshaven, and in soiled clothing was almost certainly in mourning. Except for an occasional moustache, facial hair was not visible on men in the population throughout the study.

As a current observer in central Lagos, one is impressed by the crisp, fresh attire frequently seen on individuals who provide a striking contrast to the congested streets where cleanliness and sanitation are overwhelming problems. Two Yoruba proverbs emphasize cultural admonitions which suggest a basic orientation toward the importance of dress and appearance.

Bi a ti rin ni a nko ni and Aifi eni pe eni aifi enia pe enia ti ara oko fi nsan bante wo ilu.

Translated, the first proverb states, "One is met just as one looks," and the second says, "For the country man to appear in the city dressed in his working pants is in bad taste; it shows great disregard for the feelings and customs of other people." Therefore, being seen by anyone other than those in one's immediate household requires a propriety of dress that is not imperative at home, as appearance in public will be taken at face value regardless of how one may wish to appear. The second proverb implies that appearing in public in dress that does not meet cultural standards

of appropriateness is an insult to others. The proverbs provide moral maxims which reinforce an importance placed on dress that is intertwined with aesthetic ideals and economic values.

### Summary

Meanings are derived from associations between forms of dress and the persons who wear the forms in particular spatial, temporal, social and cultural contexts. Both modal items worn by the majority and non-modal items which may be worn by a small number of persons gain meaning from association with the wearers. Relationships between dress and social structural placement of individuals reveal items of dress considered appropriate by those in varying social roles. Societal values represent a point of reference influencing formation of self-concepts of members of a society. Dress serves as a concrete form representing certain values.

Social roles defined by age, sex, education and occupation, religion, marital status, and occasion were investigated in relation to cultural associations of dress used by persons occupying status groups within the respective structural classifications. Age-groups were distinguished by dress in the population in that 80 percent or more of the dress worn by children under age sixteen throughout the three periods of the study was western. Differences in dress between other age-groups were not evident. Western dress was continually seen as appropriate dress for children while the favored dress of adults tended to change from western toward traditional. Children's dress also differed in that conventions of dress were

less rigidly followed. Children wore more than three-fourths of the non-modal ensembles of dress appearing throughout the study. No obvious examples of changing child-adult relationships were indicated by changing dress.

Lessened differentiation in male and female dress has accompanied a decrease in patriarchal authority. Women's traditional dress which was once simpler than men's dress has become equally as sumptuous, has increased in number of items used in an ensemble, and shows some decrease in the bulkiness of the silhouette. A currently fashionable garment for women bears the same name as the main outer garment for men, the agbada. The types of items used in male traditional ensembles has remained basically the same over the three periods of time. Females continually wore greater amounts of traditional dress than did men; the majority of female occupations also tended to be traditional while men held jobs resulting from western intervention in Nigeria.

Educated persons became accustomed to wearing western dress because school uniforms were usually western. The dress worn by the population known to have the maximum amount of education offered in Nigeria was only 18 percent traditional in the first period, 42 percent traditional in the second, and 54 percent traditional in the third period. Prior to the advent of formal education, dress was associated with occupations suggesting socially stratified positions in traditional society. For example, beaded items were among garments reserved for the traditional elite. The new elite who gained status from education found a distinguishing symbol in

their western dress in the first period of the study but after the middle of the century this was no longer true.

Religion was intertwined with education and occupation because the new elite qualified for their occupations as a result of education in schools sponsored by Christian missions. Thus, western dress marked the formally educated, the new elite, and the Christians who were often one and the same persons. Moslems, in contrast, became associated with the wearing of more traditional dress.

Another status indicated by dress in traditional Yoruba society was the marital status of women. Two differences were apparent in numbers of garments worn in an ensemble and in hairstyles. The iborun, a garment which was generally worn only by married women in the population, has nearly disappeared from use. The meanings conveying marital state through types of hairstyles no longer hold true. Women who wore western dress also wore western hairstyles until the current decade when traditional hairstyles have become fashionable with dress of both cultural associations. Except for a few Christian men who wear wedding rings, men do not indicate marital status through dress. The message would have been irrelevant in traditional polygamous society.

Dress is chosen to complement the type of occasion for which it is worn whether it is an everyday, better dress, or special occasion. Very few photographs were taken of persons in everyday dress. Western dress was the predominant dress worn by the population for better dress and special occasions but the use of

traditional dress for special occasions increased from 5 percent in the first period to 41 percent in the second period. After 1960, dress worn at special occasions by adults was three-fourths traditional. Relationships of particular individuals to occasions is also shown through dress as it indicates the position of the individual in a ceremony as well as the mood deemed appropriate for the individual. The colors and texture of fabrics and the type and quantity of jewelry convey varying messages.

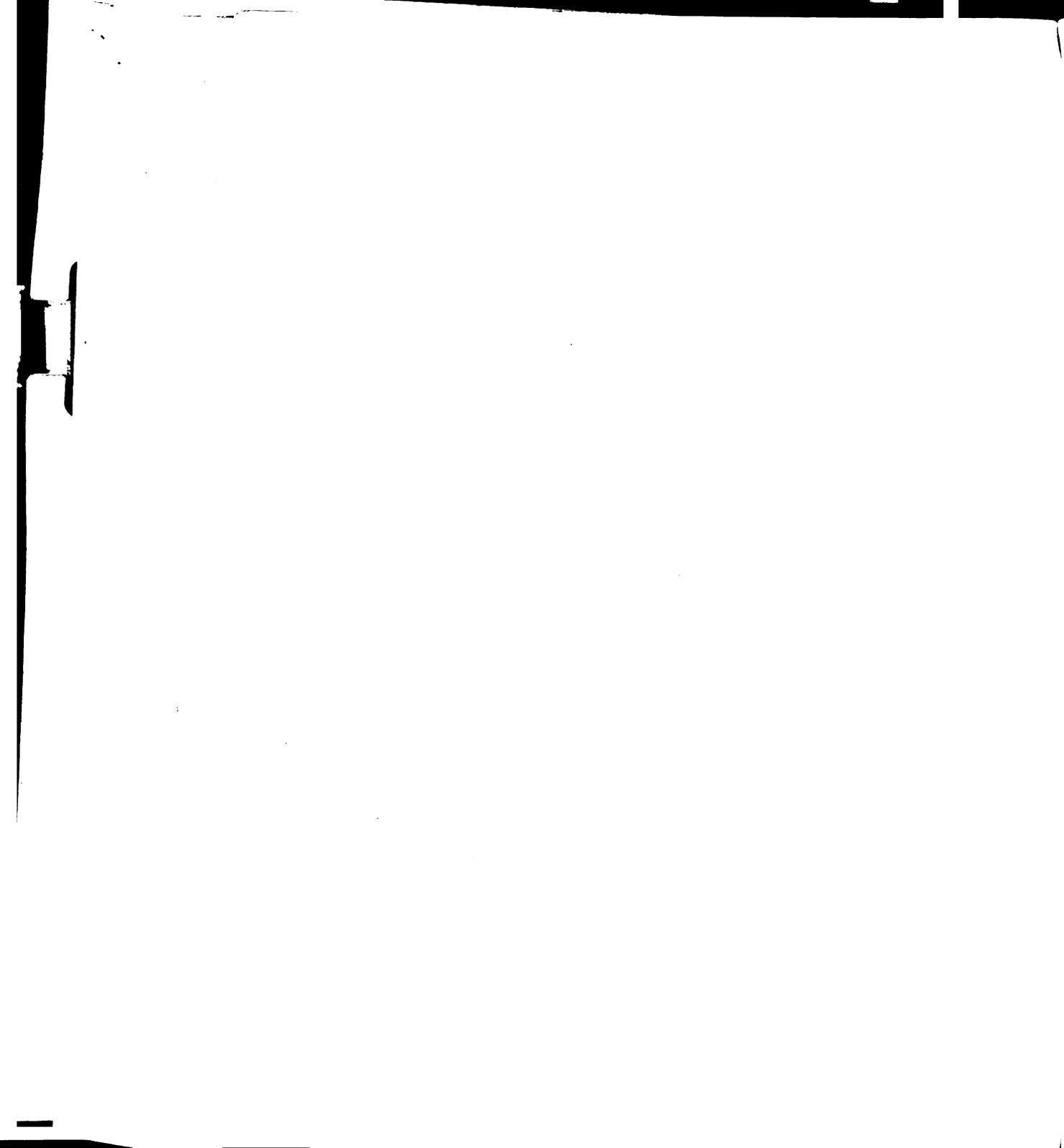
Rituals and ceremonies are special occasions valued for their function in maintaining the social order. Customs including those related to dress change slowly for such occasions. Christians have incorporated both western and traditional customs into the events surrounding marriage. The bride who may wear a western wedding dress expects to receive traditional wrappers as part of her dowry. The Christian wedding ceremony complete with western dress was a part of the rituals of Nigerian Christians before 1900, and, although the use of traditional dress by brides and grooms was re-instituted during the middle of the century, many couples still choose to wear western dress. Wedding guests wear mainly traditional dress today; therefore, the betrothed couple in western dress are easily distinguished by dress.

Whether western or traditional dress was used, aspects of traditional Yoruba values and attitudes were expressed through dress. A propensity for group cohesion and social solidarity is exemplified in the custom called aso-ebi, the appearance of a group of friends in identical dress at a special occasion. A

spirit of empathy and a commitment to mutual obligation are implied in the custom. Other examples of the appeal of symbolizing solidarity are seen in uniforms for clubs and societies and in the identical dress worn by dozens of market women who represent a common cause.

Expressions of economic, aesthetic, and moral values of the Yoruba in general are recognizable in behavior related to dress. To appear prosperous is one ideal. Observers state that clothing is a very large expenditure for many Yoruba which is justified culturally because it is seen as an indicator of financial standing. Observations regarding specific amounts spent are not well-substantiated. It appears that the voluminous male garment which enhanced the authority and stature of the male head of a compound in the early part of the century remains a status symbol as an indicator of a man's ability in the business and professional worlds of today. The financial achievements of a woman may also be indicated by the quality and quantity of her clothing and jewelry. Until recently Yoruba eschewed borrowing or renting clothing; clothing worn was clothing owned. To appear well-dressed was also interpreted altruistically as a sign of respect for others.

Striving toward ideals of beauty is accomplished by temporary and permanent modifications of the body. The use of indigenous cosmetics, a temporary modification, declined in Lagos earlier than elsewhere, probably because more body covering in the form of clothing was used there. Competition from imported cosmetics further discouraged use of local products. The use of indigenous eyeliner



on babies is one practice which became associated with social class. By the mid-twentieth century some persons were criticizing it as a practice of illiterate women. Other modifications continue without class distinction. Piercing girls' ears to insert earrings is done by all Yoruba. Traditional dress allows a woman a means of expressing her creative ability especially in arranging her headties. Aesthetic satisfaction is also sought in the frequently changing style variations of the buba and wrapper.

A change from western to traditional dress characterized the elite Lagosians of the twentieth century. The change is generally explained as an expression of cultural assertion. Sometime around 1940, meanings associated with traditional and western dress changed. Traditional dress which had been associated with the lesser-educated became a symbol of the educated elite who sought political power for the country. The switch from western to traditional dress for most persons was gradual and partial. A complete change was not necessary as some traditional dress had always been used. Among the population of the study, there was no dramatic change but a positive trend toward increasing use of traditional dress. In the first period 29 percent of their dress was traditional. The amount rose to 43 percent in the second period and to 44 percent in the third period after independence.

The changing use of traditional dress by the total population and by members of the population who represent differing social roles groups from 1900 to 1974 is summarized in Table 7.9.

TABLE 7.9.--Percentage of Use of Traditional Dress by Total Population and by Members of Population in Social Role Groupings Over Three Periods.

Social Roles	Period I 1900-1939	Period II 1940-1959	Period III 1960-1974
Total Population	29%	43%	44%
Age			
Under 16	20	8	16
Over 16	33	50	59
Education/Occupation			
Maximum education	18	42	54
Occasion			
Adults, special occasion	0	44	72
Sex			
Males	11	36	29
Females	40	46	47

Changes in mode of dress worn are most evident (1) among adults over age sixteen, (2) among the maximally educated group (which is comprised of adults), and (3) among adults taking part in special occasions. The maximally educated group increased their use of traditional dress from 18 percent in the first period to 42 percent in the second period and 54 percent in the third. An even greater change is apparent among the adults at special occasions who wore no traditional dress in the first period. After 1940 dress worn for special occasions was 44 percent traditional. The amount increased again to 72 percent traditional after 1960.

Another group among whom a large increase in use of traditional dress is evident are the males. The increase from 11 percent

traditional in the first period to 36 percent in the second period was not continued into the third period, however. A possible explanation for the reported decline in use of traditional dress by men will be discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summaries of each chapter follow their presentation. This chapter is a synthesis of the earlier chapters followed by conclusions and recommendations.

#### Synthesis of Socio-Cultural and Temporal Context with Yoruba Dress

Dress has been analyzed in this study as a communicative medium conveying messages of differences in social roles and self-concepts among members of a Nigerian population. Messages conveyed by dress are produced and interpreted within a socio-cultural system over time. The socio-cultural context was described in a case study of the informant Yoruba family of the population comparing them with the ethnic group and social class to which they belong. Historical events establishing a climate of opinion in the country for the period of the study were discussed. Aspects of the dress of the time were analyzed within a framework adapted from language analysis.

Two hypotheses<sup>1</sup> guided the study. They are:

Differences in modes of dress within a particular society are indicative of differences in social roles and self-concepts of members of that society.

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<sup>1</sup>From Bush and London, "On Disappearance of Knickers," p. 361.

Therefore,

Changes in fundamental or enduring modes of dress in a society are indicative of changes in the social roles and self-concepts of members of that society.

The years of the study, 1900 to 1974, were divided into three periods corresponding to political sentiments of the times: 1900-1939, low nationalistic sentiments; 1940-1959, rising nationalistic sentiments; and 1960-1974, post-independence. Modal dress for the population, an extended family from Lagos and their friends and acquaintances seen in the family collection of photographs, was determined for each period. Six hundred and seven photographs of individuals were analyzed. Male and female sexual associations and traditional and western cultural associations were found to be fundamental differentiations in modes. The modal patterns of dress were investigated for relationships to differences in social roles based on sex, age, education and occupation, religion, marital status, and occasion. Differences in self-concepts were ascertained from qualitative evidence concerning the relative statuses of groups of persons filling particular social roles during the three time periods. The first hypothesis was investigated by contrasting differences in modes of dress, social roles, and self-concepts within each period or between two periods of time. Change concerned the same phenomena observed across the three periods.

The dress of Nigerians has been seen by observers as a symbol of orientation towards indigenous culture throughout the twentieth century. Cultural orientation is linked to self-concept as a component of how one views oneself juxtaposed against the

values and attitudes which are part of one's cultural inheritance in conflict with manifestations of a foreign culture. Whether the anticipated orientations were accurate interpretations of individual's actual attitudes and opinions cannot be determined in historical perspective, of course. Pervading attitudes which influenced social roles and self-concepts must be assumed from the climate of opinion of the time as historians have recorded it.

Popular themes regarding climates of opinion have focused on a general shift from emulation of a foreign culture to the assertion or re-affirmation of indigenous cultural heritage during the twentieth century. Popular and academic writers have stated generalizations which blur distinctions as to comprehensiveness with which different groups reflected the respective themes. The extent to which investigation of the hypotheses clarified group differences in expression of the themes is considered in the following summary. The same hypothesis is restated for each period.

- (1) 1900-1939: Differences in modes of dress are indicative of differences in social roles and self-concepts of members of the Yoruba family under study in the period of low nationalistic sentiment.

Nigeria was officially recognized as a country and a part of the British empire in 1900. The city of Lagos as the capital of Nigeria and the leading port was the point of concentration for colonial development and expansion. Wage-employment which served colonial needs offered a new kind of prosperity to West Africans who had the appropriate skills.

The informant family of the study were among those who qualified for occupations that resulted from colonial intervention.

Members of the first and second generations of the family who had been residents of Lagos since the mid-nineteenth century had been educated by Westerners and were converts to the western religion of Christianity prior to 1900. The pattern of education and religion continued with the following generation. All of the members of the third generation of the family growing up in the early 1900's received the maximum amount of education available in Lagos at that time. Religion, education, and occupations were closely intertwined as schools were sponsored by Christian missions and those who were formally educated were nearly assured of desired clerical or professional occupations. By the early nineteenth century literate Nigerians had begun to emerge as a new social class differentiated from the common people and the traditional elite. Lagosians learned to prize education as a catalyst to social mobility in spite of the fact that ultimate power in business or government was held by colonial administrators. The educated class emulated the British in many ways yet they also retained certain Yoruba values. The maintenance of kinship ties beyond the nuclear family and of respect for elders are aspects of Yoruba culture retained by the informant family.

During this time items of western dress comprised approximately two-thirds of the dress worn by the population in the photos of the study. Groups of persons who wore western dress had been in Lagos since the mid-nineteenth century to serve as models in appearance. Repatriates from Sierra Leone who were among the first to emulate the foreigners, missionaries who advocated proprieties

supported by their religious beliefs, and European businessmen who were eager to sell imported goods were all established in Lagos by 1900.

In the first period there was a tendency to wear ensembles which were totally western or totally traditional in composition. Items with differing cultural associations were seldom combined in the ensemble of one individual. Only 4 percent of the ensembles contained items with both western and traditional associations. Western dress was interpreted as a status indicator designating the person who was educated and Christian. Persons who were illiterate were associated with traditional dress. There seemed to be reluctance toward mixing symbols conveying differing statuses.

Persons known to have the maximum amount of education available in Lagos at that time wore more western dress than did the total population. Considering main garments as the critical item in establishing cultural association of an outfit, 82 percent of the dress of the educated group was western. In general, more males than females were in school but in the informant family both boys and girls were formally educated after 1900. Thus, dress of both sexes in the family might be expected to be similar in cultural association. However, males in the total population wore a larger percentage of western dress than did females--89 percent contrasted with 60 percent. Occupations seem to provide an explanation for differences in the cultural associations in dress. Educated men went into western-type occupations while women were expected to remain in traditional spheres associated with trading, crafts, and

child care. Whether men were actually required to wear western dress to work is not known, but they did appear in the same type of dress as that worn by the foreigners who held the superior positions at work. Maximally educated men were not separated from other men in the analysis of the population; it is not known if their dress differed.

Males were dominant in traditional society and the status of the male was reflected in the quality and quantity of his dress according to the Yoruba historian, Samuel Johnson (1921). No obvious differences are apparent in the small sample of traditional dress seen on the population. On the average, females wore more individual items in an ensemble of traditional dress than males wore and no differences in quality are obvious. Changes in Lagos such as differing housing patterns, the disappearance of the extended family compound, and differing types of occupations, farming and crafts replaced by wage-labor, were factors which decreased the authority of the male. Concurrently, women's dress seems to have become comparable to men's dress in quantity and quality.

Johnson described distinctions in traditional modes of dress between married and unmarried females. Hairstyles were one difference; use of the iborun which was the privilege of married women was another difference. Hairstyles were not visible on twenty-two of twenty-three women wearing traditional dress in the first period as they covered their hair with headties. Neither could conclusions be drawn about marital status of those who used the

iborun. While all women who wore it were married, it is seen only three times in this period.

Age-role differences can be posited from dress. In traditional society where child/adult statuses and relationships were explicit, children wore only waist beads until they reached an age near puberty. Western concepts of modesty were probably instrumental in the dressing of children and, as there were no traditional items for children except jewelry, western items were generally adopted. Eighty percent of the dress of children under age 16 was western dress. Persons age 16 or over wore 67 percent western dress. Western dress at that time also conveyed some child/adult social differences. For example, baby boys wore dresses until age two or three when they began to wear knickers. Finally they graduated to long pants. Possibly western rather than traditional dress was adopted for children because in Yoruba culture putting on traditional dress implied maturity which children had not yet attained. Western dress on children seemed to convey the social status and beliefs of the family in period one indicating the ability to afford children's clothing as well as the desire to satisfy religious dictates of modesty. Parental identification with western material culture is repeated in children's dress to a certain extent. In photographs where parents are in western dress, children are in western dress but in photographs where parents are in traditional dress, children are also seen in western dress. Children were never wearing traditional dress when parents were in western dress. The small amount of traditional dress seen

on children in the population was a facsimile of adult traditional dress except children did not wear as many items as adults.

Some relaxation of conventions in dress is also suggested by children's dress in that five of six non-modal ensembles worn in the first period were worn by children. It is possible that either adults are more stringent in following rules regarding proper combinations of dress for themselves than for their children or there are alternative conventions for children which are not apparent because of the small number of children in the population (36) in this period from 1900 to 1939.

Types of occasions call for contrasting types of dress which enable the wearer to fulfill certain roles. In the first period special occasions were distinguished by western dress. Special occasions were betrothals, weddings, naming ceremonies, christenings, confirmation, birthdays, house-warmings, retirement parties, funerals and memorial services. All persons in the population who were photographed at special occasions wore western dress except one. The exception was a child in traditional buba and sokoto.

In the period from 1900 to 1939, western dress may have most clearly indicated social roles filled by persons at special occasions, by men (especially the educated), and by children. The largest amount of western dress was used by adults in the population at special occasions. Their dress was totally western. The urban, educated, Christian family and their friends apparently saw emulation of the colonialists as the appropriate appearance for their roles as

celebrants or guests at special occasions. The high incidence of western dress on men (89%) contrasted with women (60%) seems to be linked to male-female role differences demanded by their respective occupations. The third group wearing largely western dress (80%) were the children.

- (2) 1940-1959: Differences in modes of dress are indicative of differences in social roles and self-concepts of members of the Yoruba family under study in the period of rising nationalistic sentiment.

In the late 1930's organized political parties developed in Lagos to express desires of Nigerians for power in directing their own affairs. Students returning from studying abroad demanded that colonial authorities allow Africans a greater voice in government. During the decade of the 1940's, nationalism became the common goal of all Nigerian political parties. Events of World War II served the cause of nationalists by aiding in raising the self-confidence of Nigerians. Fighting beside the white man indicated their equal capabilities. Furthermore, wartime shortages in goods caused Nigerians to turn to producing more of their own products. When Britain attempted to put controls on Nigerian resources to meet wartime needs, Nigerians responded angrily by boycotting imports. The movement evolved into a cultural renaissance which persisted throughout the second period. The political activists sought the support of the general public in a movement that culminated in the next decade in a pervasive desire for independence.

The fourth generation of the informant family were young adults during this period. All of the members of the fourth

generation completed the maximum amount of education available in Nigeria. Six out of seven went to college; five of them studied abroad in England. Education provided them with the basic requirement for elite status but as the number of college graduates in Nigeria increased, the relationship between higher education and a high-status position became less predictable. Occupations of the fourth generation vary from semi-skilled to professional types. Members of the family were not political activists in the rising nationalist movement but the key informant related that her personal objective when she returned from studying in England was to teach how Nigerian products could be used making them equal in quality to those found anywhere in the world.

In the second period, use of traditional dress by the population increased from the first period. Based on the impression conveyed by main garments, traditional dress now constituted nearly half of the dress worn (46%). Use of traditional dress by the population in the decade of 1940 contrasted considerably with 1950. In 1940, 36 percent of the main garments were traditional. In 1950 the amount increased to 55 percent. It is not known if the family were early or later adopters of traditional dress but in the decade preceding independence their increased use of traditional dress reflects the national movement advocating renewed respect for indigenous cultural heritage.

Members of the population who had the maximum amount of education or more than that available in Nigeria wore slightly less than the amount of traditional dress worn by the total population.

While the total population of the study wore 46 percent traditional dress, the dress of the maximally educated group was 42 percent traditional. As the maximally educated group includes the immediate family, perhaps the lesser use of traditional dress reflects their non-involvement politically. Western dress had indicated family members' educated, urban, Christian affiliations in the first period. Sometime near the beginning of the second period western dress lost its earlier connotation but the informant family appear conservative regarding change to traditional dress.

While persons wore more traditional dress, there was also a greater tendency to mix traditional items with western items. Eight percent of the ensembles were mixtures of items with differing cultural associations.

Women of the fourth generation went into education and health-related occupations. These were female occupations but they were not traditional types of work such as that done by 87 percent of the women in central Lagos who were traders. The use of traditional dress for women in the total population rose but only from 40 to 46 percent. A larger increase appears in the use of traditional dress by men changing from 11 percent traditional dress in the first period to 36 percent after 1940. The wearing of traditional dress by men approached the extent to which it was worn by women. The increase in traditional dress for both sexes was obviously allied to the political movement in the country. There seemed to be a change in both male and female statuses in that both sexes were gaining or anticipating the gaining of authority at their jobs.

Relative to each other, however, roles were not changing markedly. Men's work was differentiated from women's work and women, except for rare cases, did not have opportunities to fill high status positions. The change in men's dress seems to be related to change in self-concept as a group more than to change in role. The men in Nigeria anticipated increased status and power in decision-making when their nation became independent of the colonial power. There was hope that the authority Nigerian men lost when the society moved from an agrarian toward an industrial society would be replaced by increased political power. The different mode of dress for men accompanied a changing self-concept.

The average number of items of dress worn in all modes, male, female, western, and traditional, increased. The 1940's and '50's were decades of general prosperity and the wearing of more items by everyone was possibly an economic indicator. For women, neck jewelry became part of the traditional mode added to arm and ear jewelry. Footwear which was not modal with traditional dress in the first period became a part of all modes. Handbags appeared among items in the female western mode. The greatest increase in average number of items used occurred in the female traditional mode. Articles such as the iborun, and ipele, and additional jewelry made traditional dress more elaborate. One article disappeared from the female modes. Stockings which covered legs, satisfying western prescriptions related to formality, modesty, or perhaps sexual attractiveness, were not available during World War II. They disappeared and did not reappear in modes after the war.

Separating children from adults in the population reveals that persons over age sixteen were wearing 50 percent traditional dress. In contrast to adults' dress which was becoming more traditional, children's dress became more western. Ninety-two percent of the dress seen on the population under age sixteen was western. The dress of children did not reflect any participation in the nationalistic movement which pervaded the adult world. In terms of dress, adult/child status differential appears to have remained as it was in earlier times.

The cultural association of dress worn for special occasions was comparable to that worn for all occasions. Traditional dress accounted for 41 percent of the dress worn for special occasions contrasted with 46 percent worn for all occasions by the total population. Forty-four percent of the dress worn by adults for special occasions was traditional. The decision to wear western or traditional dress was apparently not associated with particular occasions in the second period.

Two differences in modes of dress are most apparent in the second period. The use of traditional main garments by the population surpassed the use of western main garments in the decade preceding independence exemplifying the nationalistic fervor in the country and the enhanced self-concepts of Nigerians expressed by pride in indigenous culture. The group who expressed differences most visually through their dress were the men in the population who tripled their use of traditional dress after 1940. The roles of men in the fourth generation appear comparable to those of men

in the third generation regarding occupation, age, religion, and marital or family status. Therefore, the different mode of dress suggests a different self-concept rather than different social roles.

- (3) 1960-1974: Differences in modes of dress are indicative of differences in social roles and self concepts of members of the Yoruba family under study in the period of post-independence.

Nigeria became an independent nation in 1960. Persons from all parts of the country had swelled the population of Lagos in the decades prior to independence as they sought the jobs that accompanied social and economic developments rapidly taking place. The many ethnic groups formed separate organizations to aid their own people in adapting to the city. Thus, ethnically diverse immigrants found refuges where they could retain cultural behavior to which they were accustomed. The political parties that had begun in the 1930's also had foundations in ethnic allegiances that were continued throughout the second period. After the common goal of independence was reached in 1960, the only remaining function of political parties in Nigeria seemed to be the exploiting of ethnic interests. The eventual outcome for the country was the destructive civil war which lasted from 1966 to 1970. Ethnic loyalties remain strong as an aftermath of the war but the necessity for unity seems to be acknowledged throughout the country. Lagos escaped the destruction and has continued to lead as the most economically advanced city in Nigeria with a population estimated to be over a million in the 1970's.

The members of the informant family in the third period sustain patterns of education, occupation, and religion established by earlier generations. Children are receiving the maximum education offered in Nigeria which includes the university level now. Adults have occupations of a professional type, and the religious beliefs of the family are Christian. Life style of the key informant is similar to that described as Nigerian "elite" by social scientists in 1960 in terms of housing, household help, leisure activities, and dress.

An item count of traditional dress used by the population in period three reveals that the amount is slightly greater than the preceding period. Thirty-five percent of the items used are traditional in period three compared to 33 percent in period two. In contrast, the general impression based only on main garments indicates that 44 percent of the dress used in the third period was traditional, one percent more than the general impression from period two. While the percentages for period three are nearly the same as those for period two, mixing of traditional and western items in one ensemble nearly doubled in period three. Fifteen percent of the ensembles in period three are mixtures of items with differing cultural associations.

More than half (54%) of the dress of the maximally educated group in this period is traditional exceeding the amount worn by the total population. Use of traditional dress by all women in the study population rose negligibly from 46 to 47 percent. The dramatic increase in the use of traditional dress by men in the

period before independence was not maintained. Amount of traditional dress worn by men drops back from 36 to 29 percent. One explanation for the decrease may be found in the popularity of a new style, the conductor's suit. The style is an African adaptation of a western form. The modification is neither solely western nor traditional because a western form has been interpreted in fabric appropriate for the tropics and is seldom worn elsewhere. Conductor's suits were classified as western in the study thereby increasing the amount of data in the western category and possibly leading to erroneous conclusions. The garment is neither western nor traditional but should perhaps be in another category called contemporary West African. The conductor's suit is an interesting form as it evolved to fill the needs of men who were occupied in roles retained from industrial development of a western-type but who at the same time had gained a voice in decision-making which allowed them to express themselves as Nigerians. Enhanced self-concepts of Nigerian men as a group must be assumed. The contemporary business or professional man's occupational role has a western character but he is Nigerian; the conductor's suit combines the same qualities.

Enhanced self-concepts of women may be implied by the return to Nigerian hairstyles in the third period. Traditional braided styles are currently popular, particularly with western dress on all ages. The intricately braided traditional hairstyles were continually worn but were always covered by headties until the decade of the 1970's. Previously the braided hairstyle was

allowed to be seen in public only on young girls. If women exposed their hair it was straightened and forced into a western style. When traditional dress is currently worn in public, the headtie is still usually added to complete the outfit. The Nigerian hairstyles which are interpreted as an indication of pride in being African did not come into general use for women until approximately ten years after Nigeria became independent. Possibly in addition to showing African pride, there is an aspect of changing female roles.

The empirical evidence from the population is not sufficient to substantiate role and self-concept differences for women. Generally, Nigerian women have had a degree of financial independence throughout the century as they pursued their own occupations but they did not hold positions of high status nor did they usually have much voice in decisions affecting extended families. Today more women seem to be combining traditional roles of child-bearing and home management with professional careers in formerly all-male domains. Several differences implied by dress were suggested in conversation with informants as well as from the photographs. Women are wearing hairstyles formerly seen on young girls. The ipele which added bulk around the middle of the body in a matronly effect has gone out of fashion. The wrapper has become a little smaller also creating less bulk around the torso and the iborun which indicated that a woman was married was said to be going out of fashion, particularly among young people. A woman's agbada, a garment bearing the same name as the voluminous outer garment of men, is a current fashion.

On the average, all persons excepting females in traditional dress wore fewer items than were seen in the previous period. The diminishing number of items probably indicates a general trend toward informality that was obvious in western fashions sometime after 1940 when clothing became progressively lighter-weight and more comfortable.

Children wore more traditional dress in the third period than previously. Sixteen percent of their dress was traditional. The differential between child/adult statuses seems to indicate little change from the previous period because adults also wore more traditional dress in period three. As the great majority of children's dress remains western, wearing traditional dress seems to be a "special" experience. Nevertheless, children were not seen at special occasions in traditional dress. Traditional dress for children seems to be dress to wear to church or simply to wear for a photograph.

The climate of opinion in the period following independence in Nigeria correlates with dress in that ethnic diversity is visibly apparent in clothing. The spirit of earlier times when Yoruba might be seen in Ghanaian or Sierra Leonian dress could not endure the tensions of the 1960's. At least in the population of the study the Yoruba people wear Yoruba dress or western dress which predominated earlier. The extent to which traditional or western dress was worn is approximately the same as that of period two. A difference occurs in the extent to which they are worn together. Combinations of western and traditional items are seen

almost twice as often as they were in the previous period. The conventions demanding entirely traditional or entirely western dress were less rigidly followed after independence.

- (4) 1900-1974: Changes in modes of dress are indicative of changes in social roles and self-concepts of members of the Yoruba family under study throughout three periods of time.

Characteristics of the informant family remained constant during the years from 1900 to 1974. The thirty members of the immediate family were urban residents who considered Lagos their place of origin. All of them resided in Lagos for an extensive period of time if not for their entire lives. All of the members of the family who were educated after 1900 received the maximum amount of education that was available in Nigeria at the time. Education prepared them for high-status occupations. Some members of the second, third, and fourth generations filled positions classified as professional. First generation members lived prior to 1900 for the most part. Fifth generation members are still in school; therefore their occupations are not yet established. Religion is another constant factor as all members of the family living since 1900 have identified themselves as Christian.

The dress of the family and their friends and acquaintances who constitute the population of the study was predominantly western from 1900 to 1974 although the use of traditional main garments increased substantially after 1940. The garments worn most frequently by males and females in both the western and the traditional modes remained the same throughout the eight decades.

Garments which predominated in each of the four modes were the iro, the sokoto, the dress, and the shirt. The garments predominate respectively in the female traditional, male traditional, female western, and male western modes.

The wearing of western dress in the first part of the twentieth century tended to place a person in a group recognized as educated and Christian in Lagos. In so doing, the individual was differentiated from the illiterate masses as well as the traditional elite who both wore variations of traditional dress. Although the predominating dress for the first period of the study is western, behavior of the population of the study points to the fact that even among the elite of Lagos some traditional dress was always used. For some persons traditional dress may have simply been preferred; for others it was a political symbol. A Lagos group expressed dissatisfaction with the colonial government by rejection of European dress as early as the 1890's. Since the prevalence of English dress was greater in Lagos than in rural areas of Nigeria (Fadipe:322), from time to time throughout the twentieth century rejection of western dress served as a convenient symbol for visualizing discontent in Lagos.

In the second period, sentiments of patriotism motivated by the drive toward independence were a factor in leading Nigerians to disassociate themselves by dress from colonialists and seek identification with the nationalistic cause. A renewed interest in the customs and manners of Nigerians of pre-colonial times was embodied in the movement for independence. Dress was a visible

symbol readily available as an indicator of the general sentiments in the country. The educated elite were recognized as leaders in cultural assertion, the revived appreciation of traditional things. By 1959 Nigerians were congratulating themselves for the renewed respect of their cultural heritage which permeated the country (see p. 77 ). As an example, it was noted that now almost every Nigerian had a traditional ensemble in his wardrobe.

A comparison of quantities of traditional and western items used by the population of this study did not substantiate the expectation that there would be a direct relationship between increasing nationalistic sentiments and use of traditional items of dress. The incidence of use of traditional items in the second and third periods was smaller than was anticipated from reading reports of popular and academic writers. The number of traditional items used rose from 28 percent of the total in the first period of the study to 33 percent in the second period and 35 percent in the third. Several explanations for the small differences are possible. Selective perception is one explanation. It may be that strong nationalistic motivations biased perceptions in the direction of seeing increased use of traditional dress although the perception was not statistically valid. A second explanation is that certain items such as accessories used over an extended period of time are no longer perceived as western. The western handbag, for example, has become a part of female traditional modal dress. In some cases, styles with western origins have been adapted to fit the

needs of wearers in the tropics. Therefore, one item, the conductor's suit, seems inappropriately recorded as "western."

Four explanations pertain particularly to the social roles and self-concepts of the population of the study. The renewed use of traditional dress was behavior associated with the elite classes as they had worn mainly western dress in earlier times. Among early photos, some unknown persons who wore traditional dress in the first period may represent a different social class from that of the family. Thus the use of traditional dress in the first period may be recorded as greater than it actually was in the informant family. Furthermore, while the family is known to have characteristics of the elite, they were not politically active and they may not have embraced the movement toward wearing traditional dress in the period of rising nationalistic sentiments to the extent that others did. A third possibility is that observers who were writing in academic spheres were viewing dress for special occasions. The population of the study verifies that fact that use of traditional dress for special occasions increased substantially in the second and third periods. Fourth, the family may not be representative of the elite group in general regarding their dress.

Finally, certain garments may carry greater weight in terms of the perceived cultural association of a total composition of dress. The last explanation was accepted to facilitate this study. The recording of cultural associations of compositions of dress based on general impressions from main garments rather than equal weighting of all items indicated a substantial increase in

traditional dress in the second and third periods. Based on the general impression from main garments, those worn over the largest area of the torso, traditional dress equals 29 percent of the total dress worn in the first period. The amount of traditional dress increases to 43 percent of the total in the second period and remains nearly the same at 44 percent in the third period.

Over the three periods the incidence in the population of combining traditional and western garments in one ensemble doubles in each succeeding period of time. Very few cases of combinations (4 percent) occur in the first period. Ensembles of dress were composed entirely of either traditional items or western items. It seems that dress was most clearly an indicator of social class because those who appeared in completely western garb were the Christian, educated elite. From 1940 to 1959 the incidence of combinations increases to 8 percent and, after 1960, 15 percent of the ensembles are combinations. Possibly part of the change could be explained by increased availability of western items but a survey of newspaper advertisements suggests that western items were steadily available throughout this century excepting for some shortages during the times of the depression, World War II, and the Biafran conflict, once during each time period of the study. A social explanation is that after independence persons were more relaxed about digressing from conventions related to dress. The key informant saw the combination of features of western culture with indigenous culture as an enrichment process. Possibly combinations of traditional and western dress reflect choices which an

individual views as incorporating some of the best from both worlds. For others, the combination appears to be a compromise. One senior member of the family who wore western dress for most of her life has never felt comfortable in traditional garments. In a photograph taken on her sixtieth birthday she is surrounded by friends wearing traditional dress while she is wearing western dress. Now, past age seventy-five, she has replaced her hat with a gele but continues to wear western dresses.

Change from western to traditional dress over the three periods is most apparent for three groups in the population of the study: adults over age sixteen, the maximally educated, and adults at special occasions (see Table 7.9). From period one to period two, males wore three times as much traditional dress. In the third period, however, many men changed to a form of dress which combines western and Nigerian features. The dress of women and children remained constant in mode, but women added items to traditional ensembles making them more elaborate after 1940.

Indication of marital status was not apparent in modes related to cultural association excepting that, as nearly everyone is expected to marry, the unmarried category contains mainly persons under age sixteen. Men rarely indicated marital status through items of dress in any of the time periods, a custom allied to the mores of a predominantly polygamous society. Some items which were said to convey marital status of women in the first period seemed to be disappearing.

Modes of dress related to religion could not be verified as the population was mainly Christian. Christians were said to be identifiable by their dress in the early period but the number of persons known to be non-Christian was too small for comparison.

Changes in modes of dress appear to be indicative of changes in social roles if the roles of adults in general, particularly those who were maximally educated and those at special occasions, changed over the three periods of time. The maximally educated group were favored to fill higher status positions than those with less education throughout the century. The level of the positions to which they could rise became higher after the colonial power granted Nigeria independence. Thus, some change in roles can be assumed but, because high status positions are limited, for the majority as a group a change in self-concept seems more viable than a change in role. Opportunities for greater social mobility appeared to be a reality. According to their dress, change appears greater for men in the group than for women.

A change in the roles of adults at special occasions seems unlikely. Whether a person is a celebrant or a guest, whether the mood is one of joy or sorrow, remained constant while the type of dress worn changed. The dress seems to reflect a change in the self-concepts of Yoruba in general rather than a change in roles at special occasions. Therefore, for the Lagos population of the study, changes in fundamental modes of dress are indicative of changes in the group self-concept and, to a lesser degree, of changes in social roles.

## Conclusions

### Contributions of the Study

1. Information was recorded concerning the place of the dress of a Yoruba population within a systemic perspective. Attention was drawn to the function which dress may serve as a link interrelating individuals and families to larger systems within an ecological framework. Dress appears as an element which responds to states of the social and political environments.

2. The diachronic view contributes facts about a group over time within a continent for which no history of dress has been written.

3. Procedures from analysis of a language were found to be fruitful in studying communicative properties of dress. The ecological approach underlying the study provided a comprehensive conceptual framework but did not provide techniques for analyzing data within the framework; therefore, linguistic techniques were used as a methodological model.

4. Quantifiable modes of dress were found. Following the linguistic model, a level of minimal visual/meaning correspondence in clothing was selected for investigation. The division of minimal visual/meaning items into classifications based on common properties led to modes of dress, a concept which has been accepted previously with no empirical validity in analyses of dress.

5. The small number of modes in this study reveals the rule-governed nature of dress. Therefore, the methodology

contributes to other studies concerning dress by indicating that descriptive rules of dress relating to environmental constraints are "real" and provide reasons for the use of particular forms of dress.

6. The consistency of use of forms of dress by certain groups representing varying social roles established particularistic meanings for the forms although the meanings of dress revealed in structural measures of social role are undoubtedly only a mere segment of meanings attached to dress at a gross level.

7. In addition to the basic protective and adornment functions of dress which are assumed in the study, the relationships revealed in the data by Yoruba informants indicate that dress like language serves to differentiate individual's social categorizations.<sup>1</sup>

8. Relationships between social structural characteristics and modal items of dress are also validated through data manipulation including the chi-square statistic. The hypotheses are supported because modes of dress differentiated groups identified with varying social roles and changing self-concepts. While the differentiation of groups through dress was not mutually exclusive, strong tendencies for certain groups to wear one type of dress rather than another in a certain time period was indicated.

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<sup>1</sup>Ervin-Tripp describes the corresponding function of language. See Susan Ervin-Tripp, "Sociolinguistics," Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz, IV (1970), pp. 91-165.

### Limitations of the Study

1. The family of the study was purposively selected. Results cannot be generalized to other populations. Lack of political activism in the family may have affected their fashion leadership potential making them not comparable to other educated, urban, and politically active Yoruba families. However, there is no reason to believe they are atypical.

2. The exegetic descriptive and interpretative data is primarily from one informant although several informants contributed and reacted to the data by responding to specific questions. Meanings expressed are assumed to be only a segment of the possible meanings applied to dress. Ascertaining the multiple meanings which dress has for individuals of a society requires intensive qualitative interpretation by members of the society, a limiting factor in operationalizing the methodology for cross-cultural studies.

3. Individuals in Yoruba culture (as in many others) give special consideration to their appearance when photographed; what variations occur between appearances for photographs and unposed appearances is unknown.

4. It is not known if the associations between dress, social roles, and self-concepts found in the data as interpreted by the researcher are congruent with the actual perceptions of the wearers of the dress.

5. The meanings which were derived are a segment of the meanings which may be associated with dress. Which meanings

are more important than others in differentiating individuals is not known.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The following questions for further research among the Yoruba are suggested by this study:

1. Are individual members of the society aware of the types of associations found between dress, social roles, and self-concepts?
2. What results would be found in a comparative study with a Nigerian family of contrasting ethnicity, political orientation, education, or residency?
3. To what extent does dress serve as a cue in communicating social roles and self-concepts to members of the society representing different subsystems?
4. In historical perspective, have men's social roles and self-concepts changed to a greater degree than women's as seems to be indicated by dress?
5. Is the consistency found in type of dress worn by children accompanied by a consistency in child/adult status differential?
6. What differentiating relationships occur when characteristics are analyzed for finer distinctions? For example, males and educated persons were two categories which were analyzed but maximally educated males were not separated from the total population.

7. When items of dress are interchanged, what selectional restrictions exist for combining items to make "well-formed" compositions of dress? What combinations of items are impermissible and why?

8. Are the findings of the study consistent with findings that would be produced with different methodological techniques? An appraisal of the techniques contrasted to other methods is needed.

Further questions pertain to other Nigerian societies and other cultures:

1. Are items of dress perceived as equally important in communicating associations conveyed by an ensemble of items? If not, what items are selected as more important than others in various cultures or in differing historical periods?

2. Does dress serve to differentiate social roles and self-concepts in other societies or in other periods of time?

3. To what degree has dress been an indicator of the relationship of individuals or groups to the power structures in other societies?

4. What other dimensions of cultures are counterparts of the conductor's suit in reflecting assimilation of differing cultures?

5. Are modes of dress based on the minimal visual/meaning correspondence level of analysis identifiable in other cultures?

6. What factors other than social role and self-concept may be important variables communicated through dress?

7. What consistencies may be found between "rules" of dress of the Yoruba and the "rules" of other societies?

8. From a systemic perspective, what parallels may be found between the meaningful associations applied to Yoruba dress and those relating to the dress of other cultures?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

TABLE A.--Occupations of Deceased Africans (from Registrar General's  
 Report on Vital Statistics in the Lagos Standard,)  
 March 8, 1899.

Number of Persons	Occupation
330	traders and petty traders
90	laborers
39	"other" occupations
38	paupers
35	domestic servants
31	farmers
26	agidi makers (a type of food)
25	fishermen
25	tailors
18	carpenters
18	fishsellers
16	canoemen
16	Mohammedan priests
13	dyers
13	unknown occupations
12	wood cutters and sellers
11	housewives
10	bricklayers
10	laundresses
9	fetish priests and priestesses
7	weavers
6	hairdressers
6	medical doctors
6	clerks
4	seamstresses
4	West India Regiment soldiers
3	Houssa soldiers
3	blacksmiths
2	clergymen
1	chief
1	goldsmith
1	prince

TABLE B.--Frequency of Appearance of Female Garments.

	1900-1919	1920-1939	1940-1959	1960-1974
apron	0	0	1	0
armband	0	1	0	0
barrette	2	0	1	0
belt, sash	0	1	4	2
beret	0	0	1	1
blouse	1	0	22	23
bolero	0	0	1	0
bonnet	0	0	1	2
bootees	0	0	2	2
bracelet	11	24	98	59
brooch	0	0	6	5
buba	6	14	56	49
choker	1	0	47	8
dress, gown	11	22	88	69
earrings	7	26	116	126
eyeglasses	0	0	8	7
fillet	0	3	0	0
flowers	0	0	9	4
gele	10	14	62	57
gloves	0	0	16	5
hairbow	1	0	1	2
hairstyle (traditional)	0	0	1	11
handbag	0	5	49	39
handkerchief	0	0	1	2
hat	2	2	20	11
iborun	2	1	15	14
ipele	6	7	40	17
iro	9	14	76	67
neck chain, pendant	6	14	27	54
necklace	4	7	51	15
necktie	0	0	1	0
ring	6	10	24	15
sandals	0	0	49	25
scarf	0	0	2	0
shirt	1	0	0	0
shoes	11	19	107	56
skirt	0	1	3	6
slippers	0	5	5	44
socks	0	2	10	6
stockings	1	12	1	0
sunglasses	0	0	0	1
sweater	0	0	0	1
umbrella	0	0	0	1
veil	1	1	9	6
watch	0	0	9	5
wig	0	0	0	2

TABLE C.--Frequency of Appearance of Male Garments.

	1900-1919	1920-1939	1940-1959	1960-1974
agbada	2	0	25	16
belt	0	1	3	4
blouse	1	0	5	1
bootees	0	0	1	1
bracelet	0	0	0	2
buba	4	2	27	30
caftan	0	0	0	2
cane	1	0	0	0
cap	4	0	0	0
cape	0	0	2	0
choir robe	1	0	0	0
choker	0	0	2	0
coat	2	1	0	0
collar	1	0	0	0
crown	0	0	1	1
cuff links	1	0	0	0
dansiki	0	0	1	2
dickey	1	0	0	0
dress, gown	0	3	4	2
eyeglasses	0	0	4	10
fila	2	2	20	21
flowers	0	0	2	2
gaiters	0	1	0	0
gbariye	0	0	1	1
gloves	1	1	0	0
handkerchief	0	6	6	4
hat (western, other)	6	2	10	6
ibora	2	2	1	0
iro	0	0	1	1
jacket	20	14	30	19
knickers	1	4	10	26
neck chain	0	0	1	2
necklace	0	0	1	2
necktie	13	11	33	22
pipe	0	0	0	1
regalia	0	1	4	1
ring	0	1	4	5
rompers	0	0	0	1
sandals	0	0	5	22
shirt	23	18	39	66
shoes	16	17	48	57

TABLE C.--Continued.

	1900-1919	1920-1939	1940-1959	1960-1974
slippers	0	1	21	14
socks	7	3	10	13
sokoto	4	3	29	31
sunglasses	0	0	1	0
sweater	0	0	1	1
trousers	16	21	35	43
umbrella	0	0	0	1
undershirt, T-shirt	0	0	3	12
vest	5	2	2	2
watch	0	0	2	10
watch chain	1	0	0	0

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

INSTRUMENT A: Foundations of Meanings

Person pictured \_\_\_\_\_ Informant \_\_\_\_\_

Picture (Date and Number) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of clothing items				
Sensory properties (to be √'d)				
Value: common, ordinary				
nice or "good"				
rare				
Cultural identity:				
traditional				
western				
other				
Worn for: everyday				
better dress				
special occasion				
Source: imported				
commercially made				
in country				
made by family				
Fabrication technique:				
woven				
knit				
felt				
lace				
Design: print				
plaid				
stripe				
plain				
Fiber: cotton				
wool				
other				
Color value: light				
middle				
dark				
Position: on body				
Greatest number of layers worn at any point on body				
Environmental data:				
Occasion				
Relationship of individual to occasion				

## INSTRUMENT B: Social Structural Data

## Possible Responses for Yoruba

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth (approx. year) \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Male, Female

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Single, Married

Number of spouses \_\_\_\_\_ wives

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Moslem, Christian, indigenous

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Education (Number of years) \_\_\_\_\_

Position in family (title): Nuclear \_\_\_\_\_

Extended \_\_\_\_\_

Position in community: Traditional \_\_\_\_\_

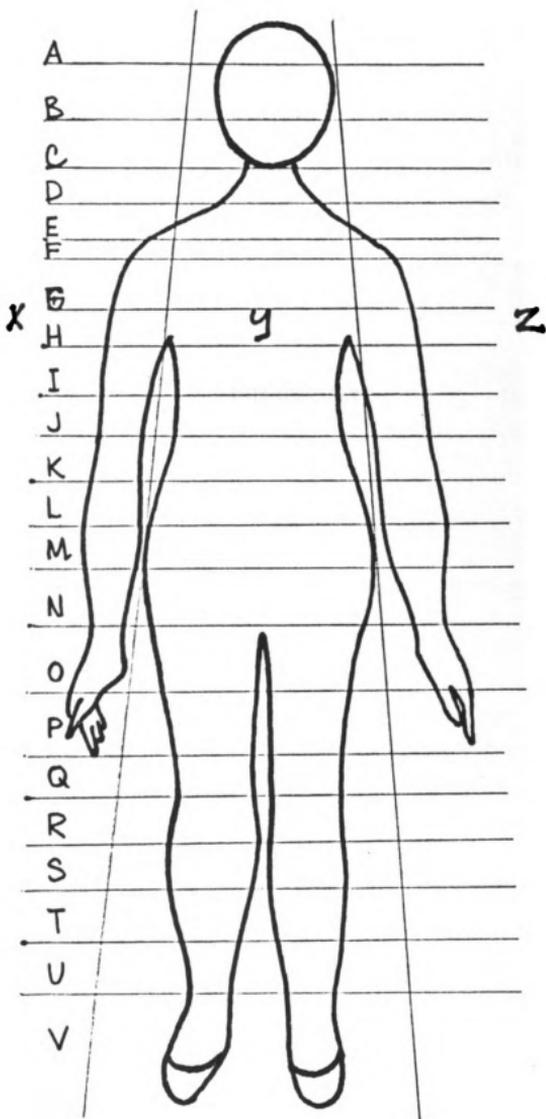
Modern \_\_\_\_\_

Position in political arena: Traditional \_\_\_\_\_

Modern \_\_\_\_\_

Informant \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUMENT C: Designation of Body Area Where Garment is Worn  
(A-V, x-z).





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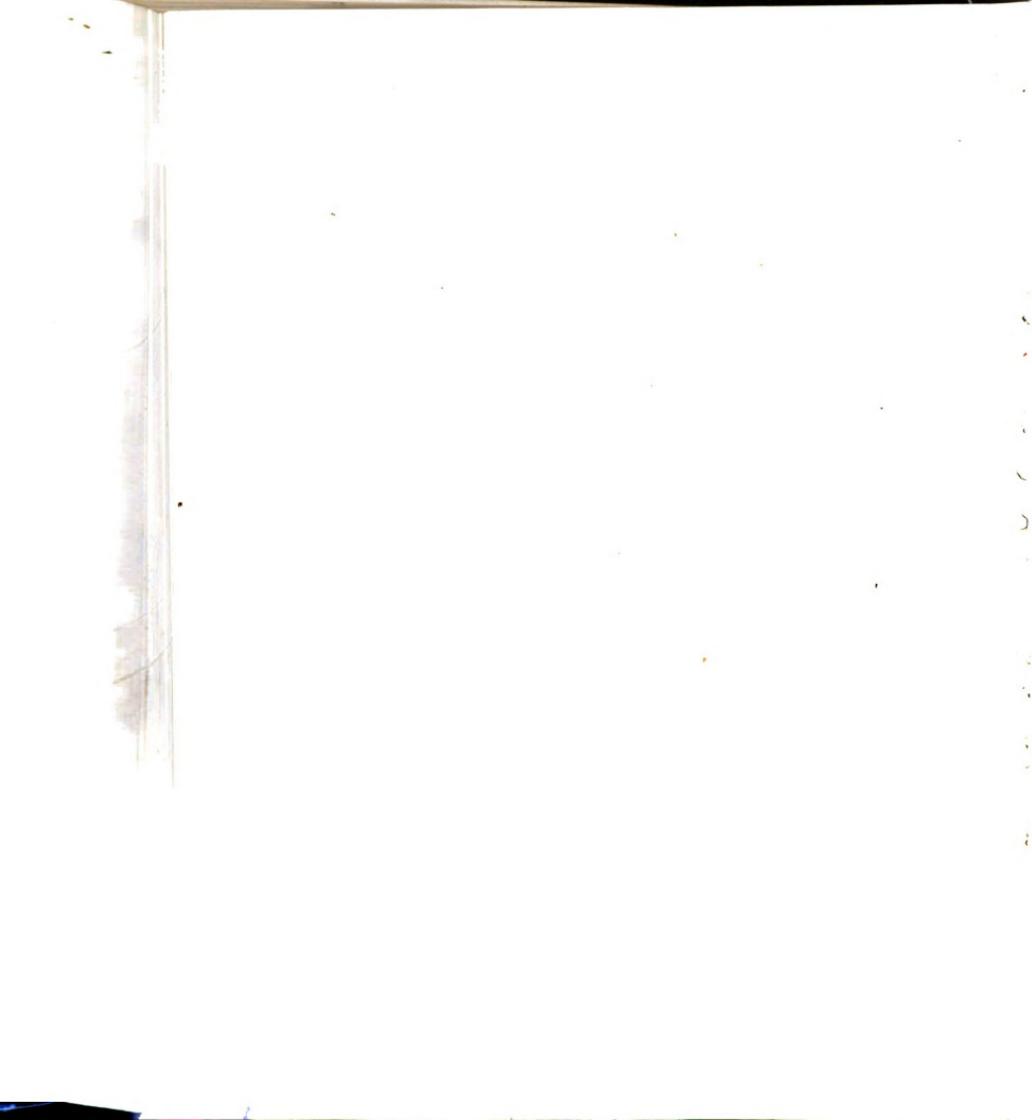
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