



The Commodification and Underdevelopment of Ishan Cotton in Post-Imperialism

Onoho'Omhen Ebhohimhen* and Babatunde Agara

*Centre for Strategic and Development Studies, Ambrose Alli University
Ekpoma, Edo State, P.O. Box 3014
Benin City, Nigeria*

**Corresponding Author's Email: onomenebhohimhen@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

This paper describes an aspect of the agricultural policy in Nigeria under imperialism. The commodification and underdevelopment of Ishan cotton, an indigenous agricultural product of the Esan people, Edo State in Nigeria is employed as proxy. The paper explains the processes of the transformation of Ishan cotton production from its primary use as feedstock in the precolonial cloth industry towards export orientation or commodification for metropolitan textile production. It argues that the commodification interrelates with the lack of qualitative transformation of the immediate economic environment and cost the historical producers of the cotton a strong comparative advantage. It consequently found that the characteristics of underdevelopment were in character with the distortion of pre-capitalist modes of production. Nevertheless, the post-imperial economic policies in Nigeria perpetuate the colonial patterns of production. The paper concluded that the root cause of Nigeria's post-imperial dependence on imported textile and cotton products is the result of the non-development of cash crops in backwards integration. It recommended the qualitative transformation of indigenous skills and resources to animate the spirit of local enterprise.

Keywords: commodification; dependency; Esan; imperialism; Ishan cotton; underdevelopment.

INTRODUCTION

The economic objective of imperialism as the extraction raw material for metropolitan industrial production and creation of consumer markets in the periphery for finished products could seem *prima facie* well researched. However, there are deeper meanings inherent in the commodification and underdevelopment of indigenous products like Ishan cotton, the primary feedstock in the pre-colonial indigenous cloth manufacture of Esan people of Edo State in Nigeria deserving of further examination against the broad impact of the persistence of colonial patterns of production in post-imperial economic policies. The native Ishan cotton that featured in the local cloth manufacture was transformed from its principal role into a commodity of international trade the commodification has significant properties, beyond the classical political economy explanations. On the one hand, the commodification of Ishan cotton fulfils all the political economy arguments of imperialism as directing resources away from their prime purposes to serve different needs (Hobson, 2005), fits the underdevelopment arguments about unequal exchange and asymmetric core-periphery or metropoles-satellites (Frank, 1972; Amin, 1974) interactions, but on the other, it inheres specific qualities of underdevelopment to reveal the unstated consequences of expending European brains, capital and energy ... in developing the resources of Africa not from motives of pure philanthropy... for the mutual benefit of industrial classes and the native races in their progress to a higher plane that the benefit can be made reciprocal, and it is the aim and desire of civilised administration to fulfil this dual mandate” (Lugard, 1926:18-19).

Thus, an uncritical acceptance of ‘the dual mandate’ as orthodoxy could befuddle the profound interrogation of the essence and trajectory of economic development of Nigeria in post-imperialism. It is in context, necessary to examine the place of mercantilist capitalism in this transformation of primary resources by the suppression of the indigenous pre-capitalist industries (Basset, 2001), often given the *laissez faire* explanations as in character of the internationalisation of capitalism. For example, in the comparative context of large scale industrial setting, could not the petty commodity structure of Ishan cloth manufacturing production have been progressively expanded with the appropriate reforms of the relations of production albeit, in rudimentary and evolutionary scale? Could not the development of the productive forces have been accelerated in post-imperialism to yield independent economic outcomes? These posers have implications in the gaps not only in scholarship given contemporary acknowledgement that textile production accelerated the industrial revolution

and restructured the modern economic system as we know it but also, significant to furnish suitable weapons for fresh theorisation of development as leveraging the strong comparative advantages in indigenous resources for post-imperial progress in Nigeria.

This paper interrogates the arguments in the literature of Ishan cotton production under imperialism that its failure was underpinned by unfavourable terms of trade, low pricing regime, and transportation challenges (Igbafe, 1979). It was also argued that the primary producers became unwilling to continue to cultivate Ishan cotton for these reasons hence, a steady road to progress was abridged (Okoduwa and Odigie, 2007). It is contended that such accounts leave obvious gaps. First, they comparatively decontextualise the macro-level lessons derived from the cotton campaign in northern Nigeria (Hogendorn, 1995). Second, if transportation and pricing were allowed as the principal culprits, there were other alternatives existing then to dispose of cotton produce either in the local markets or in employment in local cloth manufacture. Third, the replacement of local cloth by dumping of foreign fabrics could be indicative of insufficiency of the elite perception of the role of indigenous products in economic development. It is contended that the underdevelopment of the pre-colonial mode of production demands reasonable accounting against the broad search for the fundamental determinate causalities of the failure to leverage strong comparative advantages in the structuration of post-imperial economic policies. This paper hopes to fill some of the gaps, which cannot be explained away by contentions of pricing and transportation challenges. This paper is also concerned that the commodification of Ishan cotton needlessly distorted the pre-colonial mode of production and yet no serious scholarly efforts seem available to explain the conflict between the indigenous and superimposed from outside, modes of production. The far reaching changes wrought on the pre-capitalist socioeconomic formation sealed the fate of Ishan cotton in the emergent but unavoidable conflict of modes of production and so, the inappropriate manner of the introduction of capitalist relations could interconnect with the consequent retardation of the growth and expansion of Ishan cotton and local cloth manufacture. Therefore, the colonial patterns of production and the negligence to develop the systems of production of Ishan cotton and other cash crops along the line of backward integration could also have caused the loss of strong comparative advantages in post-imperial Nigeria, a line of reasoning necessary to explicate the lack of independent economic development.

The paper assumes an epistemological challenge to present empirical evidence not only to characterise the commodification the indigenous

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agricultural product but also, to substantiate that the pre-colonial Esan cloth manufacture failed as the important role of the cotton it was predicated upon was altered, disadvantageously. The paper relates the process of commodification of the cotton, how it occasioned the loss of the qualitative skills resources and demonstrates that the economic disarticulation of the dominated people was the primary objective and the true meaning of imperial rule, despite pretensions of altruism.

The task of recounting the micro story of Ishan cotton as a proxy for the impact of imperial rule on the underdevelopment of the cloth manufacture industry of an indigenous people was undertaken by partly, relying on the experiential knowledge of one of the authors as an Esan person, collection and analyses of archival data as well synthesization of other secondary resources. Recent scholarship on the economic practices of cash crops production and the sociological and anthropological studies on the pre-capitalist modes of production were particularly helpful. The literature and data on the indigenous cotton and local cloth manufacture are extensive and reveal the strong comparative advantage the people enjoyed and which was undermined under imperialism vis-à-vis other textile producers. In sum, detailed and abundant evidence was marshalled to illuminate the commodification of Ishan cotton as the route of the forcible incorporation of Esan people into spawned dependency on external markets for cloth and cotton products. Overall, the multiple outcomes for the micro political economy of Esan fit into a pattern, replicable in the many stories of the failure of cash crops production in Nigeria in post-imperialism.

This paper is structured in four parts. The first part assembles available data and surveys pertinent local and international literature to characterise the Ishan cotton. The use value of the cotton was juxtaposed against the backdrop of the pre-capitalist political economy of the people. The second part, applying the theoretical framework of dependency to the commodification of indigenous crops, analyses the processes of transformation of the indigenous Ishan cotton in the context of competition between the pre-capitalist and colonial modes of production. In the struggle for the replacement of the established mode of production the emergent conflict of the modes was characteristic of the struggle of opposites. The indigenous was opposed from outside by imperial economic relations and this conflict between the old order and the not necessarily progressive new was evident in other parts of Nigeria hence, the application of structural coercion to overcome the indigenous relations (Gbor, 2004). Despite that the old order had not been successfully overcome the conflict of modes could be appraised whether as a possible key determinant causality of the asymmetric

relations between the economies of Nigeria and the developed metropolises. The third segment attempts a multidisciplinary interrogation of the impact of imperialism on the indigenous economy while the fourth part synthesizes the macro backdrop of the non-qualitative transformation of the pre-colonial mode of production in Nigeria's post-imperial economic policies. The third and fourth parts thus, mutually interrelate in the examination of the thesis of the perpetuation of colonial patterns of production in economic policies (Ogboru, 2002) and loss of competitive advantage in post-imperialism Nigeria. The deliberate or unwitting continuation of the colonial production practices would not only confirm the insufficiency of inter-elite competition but also, could elucidate the class roots of the post-colonial Nigeria's leadership elite and its crash inability to autonomously transform the quantitative resources and leverage indigenous economic structures for qualitative outcome and vice versa. In sum, the commodification of indigenous crops, persistence of the colonial mode of production (Maier, 1995) and non-qualitative transformation of the economic policies in post-imperialism could flexibly interconnect to trace the causalities of the underdevelopment of Nigeria. As the paper relies on numerous resources of information to critique an aspect of Nigeria's post-imperial policies, it subsumes primary and secondary empirical data to outline a specific case of loss of strong comparative advantage, especially as comparable practices continue to exert overall negative impact on Nigeria's socio-economy.

The Ishan cotton

The Ishan cotton is an indigenous crop of the former Ishan division of the colonial Benin province now Edo State of Nigeria.¹ The cotton was the principal raw material of the local cloth manufacturing industry. International cotton literature typologised Ishan cotton as comprising "one [that] has excellent colour and an average staple of about one inch, and a brown variety, which resembles the Nankin of Cyprus" (JTIP, 1924, p.536).² The Ishan cotton "is of long and strong lint that was durable for weaving" (Butcher, 1982, p.xix). The naturally coloured or brown variety of Ishan cotton was not developed beyond its natural state and was thus, absent in colonial trade. Its fate could be likened to other coloured cotton species, which had been "cultivated and used in native textile products by the indigenous populations" [but for] "low yields, the inability of the fibre to be machine spun, and the availability of inexpensive dye-stuffs, ... have not been utilized for commercial textile production" (Dickerson, Lane and Rodriguez, 1999:56). The benefit of hindsight would cast the fate of naturally coloured cotton as

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wrong-headed as “dyeing component constitutes high cost in fabric finishing; after laundering the colour [of naturally coloured cotton fabrics] becomes stronger and more intense” (ibid, p.1). Purseglove (1991) identified the Ishan cotton as long in use in the area before the fifteenth century.

The white species of Ishan cotton was experimented in vent for surplus production (Hopkins, 1973) over a period spanning two centuries. The specie of “Ishan cotton of Nigeria, a perennial *G. baradense* was the source of the perennial cotton introduced into Egypt in 1820 by Jumel; when crossed with Sea Island cotton about 1850, it developed into modern Egyptian cotton” (Roche, 1994:56). The localised system of vent for surplus production was evidenced by the mass propagation of *improved Ishan cotton* in the southern provinces of Nigeria to replace the American lint that failed in northern Nigeria (Garba, 1989). It was the impressive outcomes of the improved Ishan cotton that eventually sustained the activities of the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA). As J. Arthur Hutton eloquently reported to an international congress on tropical agriculture in 1914:

In most parts of the Eastern Province of Nigeria, the rainfall is far too heavy for cotton, and had it not been for the excellent quality of the Ishan cotton the best grown in British West Africa, this [BCGA] centre would have been closed down (Hutton, 1915, p.150).

As the practice of vent for surplus production of Ishan cotton maximised the opportunities for the socialisation of labour it also, facilitated the comprehensive development of the productive forces in the transplanted external societies. The detailed and elaborate facts evidenced that Ishan cotton featured in the US cotton programme of 1900s through its major offshoot, the new Egyptian cotton. Thus, the strategic use value of the Ishan cotton accounted for its significant introduction across climes as in the Salt River Valley of Arizona, in Texas, and in the Imperial Valley of California a number of hybrids were made of different varieties of Egyptian [derivatives of Ishan] cotton, Sea Island and American upland cotton. [In] 1911 the first commercial crops of thirty bales of hybrid labelled Yuma was sold at a high premium ... [the new variety] ... crossed with Pima, resulted in *S x P*, an extra-long staple cotton deemed a strategic material for military purposes (Roche, 1994:56).

Although it is now mainly **grown** outside its original habitat, “Ishan cotton [still] produces longer, silkier and better quality lint than Meko variety,” (Johnson, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This paper applies the dependency theory as a tool of analysis of the derivative effects of underdevelopment and clarification of the causal interconnections between the tendencies of the wealth of poor nations to decrease continuously while that of the rich nations increased. The theory is applied against the dual track background to explain the inextricable interlink between the gearing of the production and economic structures of indigenous products like the Ishan cotton towards export-reorientation and the resultant structural transformation of the peripheral Esan economic actors into producers of feedstock for metropolitan textile manufacturing development. This institution of relations of dependency whether as Frank (1972) explained it along the line of core-centre versus periphery argument or contextualised against the peripheries-satellites and metropolises interactions (Amin, 1974), the key determinants of the modern inter-state economic relations between Nigeria and post-imperial developed economies remain asymmetrical. The rigorous materialist interpretation of dependency by Frank (1972a) explicates it as a process of class struggle on an international scale. Accordingly, the underdevelopment of Ishan cotton could be seen as the historical product of unequal global economic exchanges (Frank, 1972b). It follows that the uneven relations between the underdeveloped and developed metropolitan countries (Freund, 1998) are an essential part of the capitalist system on a world scale (Wallerstein, 1989).

Other scholars providing critical perspectives in the international political economy like Gilpin (2001) and Dos Santos (2003) evinced the dependency theory as suitable multidisciplinary weapon to critique the different economic systems within classical Marxist and neo-Marxist frameworks. Consequently, applying the structuralist traditions or structuralist dependency methods to construct a robust template furnishes multidisciplinary theoretical conjunctures to examine the underdevelopment of Ishan cotton production. Thus, dependency theory from the classical Marxist traditions and neo-Marxist frameworks would simultaneously, yield combined methodological flexibility in tracing the nexus between imperialist commodification of indigenous crops generally and underdevelopment of Ishan cotton hence, the loss of skills and material resources by the cessation of Ishan cloth manufacture, specifically. The theory thus, situated against the persistence of colonial patterns of cash crops production in Nigeria (Attah, 2011) elucidates the broad contextual framework of analysis of Nigeria's near absolute dependence on imported cotton and textile products. This grim situation clearly implies that the neglect of indigenous products in which the

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people had enjoyed strong comparative advantage is also a major determinant causality in the failure of post-imperial economic order.

Indeed, a meticulous application of dependency theory to African nations generally, implicates the mass incidence of underdevelopment as interlinked with the forcible integration of their economies into the world capitalist system. Underdevelopment thus becomes defined by the conditions of weak national business groups, incurably unable to launch and sustain industrialisation (Amin, 1974). Against the broad backdrop of power politics and economic exploitation, increased export of surplus value that ensued with the capitalist incorporation also deprived the indigenous societies of the benefits of their natural resources and labour (Rodney, 1981). This flexible model of the dependency theory finds resonance in the “uneven incorporation into the world capitalist system” (Isaacman and Roberts, 1995:2) of the Ishan cotton economy. Contextually, the dependency theory represents appropriate analytical tools to appraise the class failure of the Nigerian ruling elite, which despite formal independence is unable to leverage the enormous natural resource endowments for economic progress. Instead, it continues to perpetuate the quintessential characteristic features of the colonial economy. The persistence of colonial patterns of production as a consequence, could explain the notorious inability of Nigeria to harness the strong comparative advantage in primary commodities like Ishan cotton for industrialisation. Within the category of causality, the perpetuation of colonial patterns in most of Africa also accounts for the lack of serious efforts at qualitative economic development (Ake, 1979).

The Commodification of Ishan cotton

The commodification of Ishan cotton has deep historical roots in the narratives of colonial reports for southern Nigeria. In the 1907 report, it was stated *inter alia*,

a sample of Ishan native cotton yarn was forwarded for examination. There is no demand in this country for native-spun yarn, but it is probable that the raw cotton of which the yarn is composed would command a ready sale in the English market.³

The clear intent of the statement did not escape colonial and capitalist firms as could be traced in the subsequent intensive production of the raw cotton for export. As shown in Fig. I, within five years of the examination of a sample of the native cotton yarn, the BCGA seized the ample opportunities of the Ishan cotton and purchased 15,000lbs (6,804kg) of raw cotton lint in

1912 and 215,000lbs (113,400kg) in 1913 (Marshall, 1938). As the BCGA generally, operated through third parties, the United Africa Company (UAC)⁴ served as its principal cotton-buying agent in Esan.

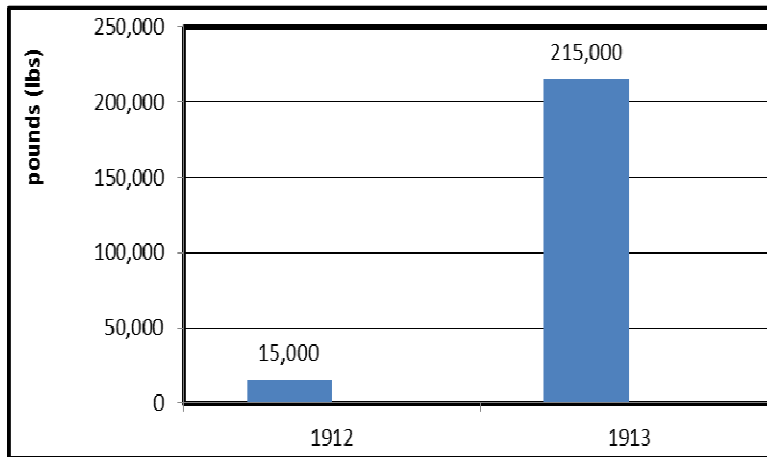


Figure 1: Growth in export volume of Ishan cotton (1912-1913).

Source: Hugo Marshall, *Cotton Growing in Benin Province* (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938).

As Table I also shows, the exportation of Ishan cotton in its native variety and in vent for surplus production as *improved Ishan cotton* rose in the following years to 380 bales (in 1927); 900 bales (in 1928); and 6000 bales (in 1929), respectively (Col. Rep., 1930). The more detailed report of 1936 showed that Ishan cotton production for export mostly increased in volume of cotton bales from 1930 to 1935 totalled 17,334 bales. Furthermore, the various reports showed that out of “the 14,500 bales of native cotton” exported from Nigeria between 1927 and 1930 Ishan cotton accounted for 6,968 bales or forty-eight percent (Col. Rep. 1930, p.14) and between 1931 and 1935 the *Improved Ishan cotton* accounted for 28,238 bales against 6,832 bales of native cotton variety, respectively.

In other words, the Ishan cotton in its vent for surplus production accounted for over eighty percent of Nigeria’s cotton export between 1922 and 1935.

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Table 1: Cotton export (lbs) from Southern Nigeria (1929-1936).

Year	Native cotton export	Improved Ishan cotton
1927-28	-*	380
1928-1929	-*	900
1929-30	3500	6000
1930-31	800	4000
1931-32	-*	1300
1932-33	-*	800
1933-34	118	2804
1934-35	150	5202
1935-36	2264	8132

Source: Report of Southern Nigeria No. 1842 (1936), p.44. Available: [http://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/ilharvest/Africana/Books... southern_nigeria/](http://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/ilharvest/Africana/Books...southern_nigeria/).

* not found in the report or insignificant.

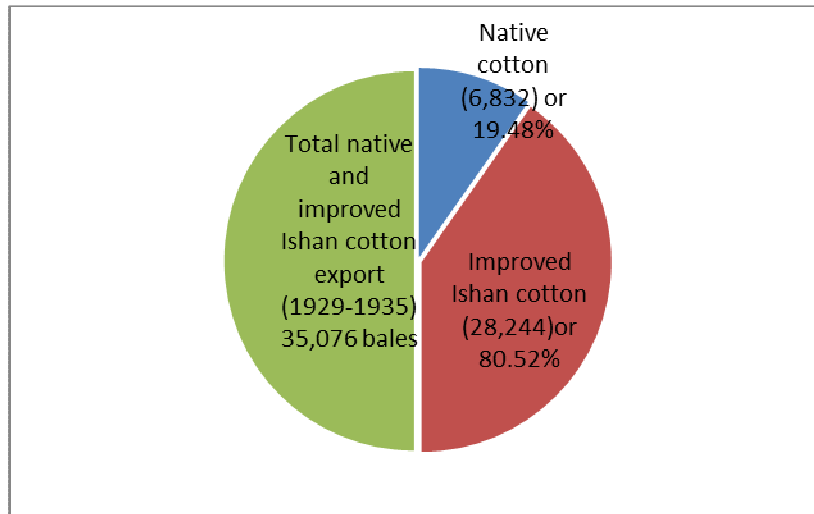


Figure 2: Total native and improved Ishan cotton export (1929-1935).

Source: Report of Southern Nigeria No. 1842 (1936), p.44.

It is therefore, safe to state that the good prospects of Ishan cotton buoyed Nigeria’s cotton export trajectory as it gained strong traction in successive years when “the export of cotton lint reached 216,938cwts, [approx. 24.3million kg], which is a record for Nigeria” (EJA, 1936:85). A detailed

combined examination of Figures II & III reveals that the Ishan cotton in its various varieties represented a critical component in Nigeria’s cotton export growth and restored hope of future abundant supply.

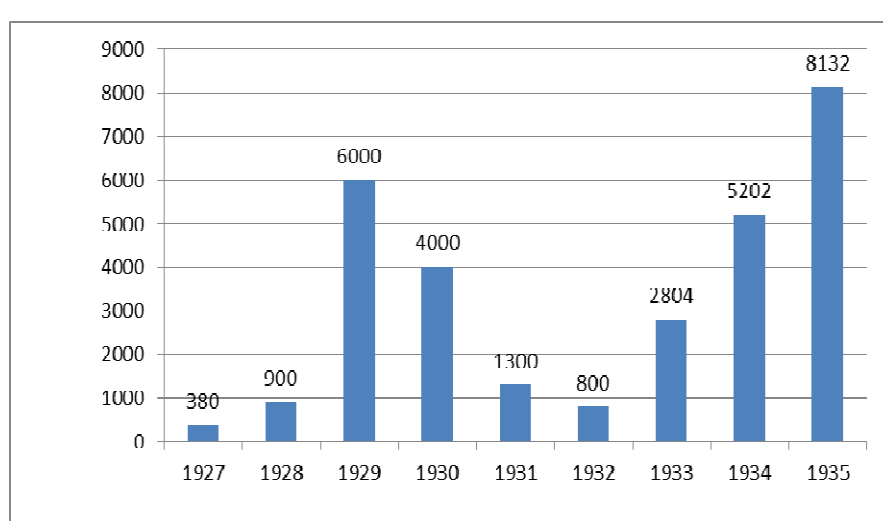


Figure 3: Export of Improved Ishan cotton (1927-1935).
Source: Report of Southern Nigeria No. 1842 (1936), p.44

Indeed, this healthy trend underpinned the prediction of a colonial official that, “in the southern provinces, the planting of the improved Ishan cotton is expanding well, and may go far to make up for deficiencies of the American crop in the north” (EJA, *ibid*, p.85).⁵

Ishan cotton in the pre-colonial mode of production

In the pre-colonial mode of production, the primary producers of Ishan cotton were mostly women who inter-planted it between food crops since both classes of crops were grown together in the same plots albeit, there was distinction between food and cash crops. The food crops were male-centred, largely the various species of yam tubers and the female-centred crops ranged from cocoyam, oil beans to vegetables, etc. The tending of all the crops up to harvesting was however, undertaken as part of regular farming activities and involved all members of the household. In some instances, male work gangs were formed with other farmers to assist with weeding and other farming

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activities. The work gang was a cooperative practice but generally, based on rotational principles with no remuneration paid. Each recipient of such assistance had the corresponding obligation to feed the work gang and partake in the farm work of other members of the work group. Nevertheless, the harvesting of cotton like other female-centred crops was undertaken by women and adolescent members and female work gangs also featured in cotton harvest.

The processing of cotton by spinning into thread yarns involved middle-aged women who were not necessarily active farmers or the original producers. As there was a domestic market for surplus cotton, a trade relationship existed but did not fit into classical definition of cash crops markets made up of professional buyers and middlemen sellers consciously exchanging primary commodities. In similar agrarian contexts, where “there existed a mercantile sector as well” (Sanderson, 1999:125) the distinction between cash and food crops production significantly defined the fundamental activities in social reproduction. In other words, the pre-colonial trade in cotton as a by-product of the necessity to dispose of what was not needed by the household, also applied to surplus spun thread yarns, traded in the same domestic market. The important point in this petty commodity production was that there were no professional cotton growers but voluntary producers. As Coquery-Vidrovitch (1976) explained this pre-capitalist mode of production, the “exchange [in the petty commodity production] reflected the internal organisation of the society and result of the organisation of the production rather than the cause” (p.94).

With the onset of imperial rule, conscious efforts were made to transform the system of production of Ishan cotton as one of the several crops and from its important role in the domestic use value creation economy towards its cultivation as a single crop and export-orientation. The policy was pursued the promotion of cash crops production. Igbafe (1979:364) reported this in collaborative efforts between the state and capitalist firms, for the purpose of promoting and developing the cultivation of cotton the BCGA ... secured the cooperation of the Colonial Office and the governments in the colonies... Arrangement was made with the governments to provide remuneration for cotton experts, selected and sent by the BCGA, responsible for paying all other expenses – the cost of seeds, mechanics and agricultural instruments, ginning and processing of cotton, machines and labour. It was in this connection that colonial officials distributed cottonseeds to chiefs who, in turn, allocated to the farmers. In the 1900s, Okoduwa and Odigie (2008, p.36) found that

Chief Iyamu of Ekpoma received 36 lbs of cottonseeds and distributed them to farmers. Similarly, other chiefs in different parts of Esan were given the new varieties to grow as a form of experiment; Onojie Iloghioba of Igueben had a load of 33lbs of cotton allocated and which he distributed to farmers at Eguare, the Onojie's capital.

In the narratives of capitalist and the colonial state collaboration was also embedded official encouragement of "rivalry in quality cotton production... and prizes [were] awarded to the town whose product was the best" (Igbafe, 1979:365).

Yet despite the professed objectives of introduction of improved methods, there was no evidence of the application of new labour-saving technological tools in the cultivation of the cotton. The clearing of bush was still by machete and weeding was by hoes; tillage was absent in the proposed larger acreage cultivation but shifting cultivation was retained. The absence of technological innovation in the Ishan cotton export economy could confirm that it was not intended as a road to industrialisation as the importation of capital goods, machinery and technology were critical to spur cultivation and support local cloth manufacture essential for industrialisation.

Ultimately, the commodification of Ishan cotton production involving collaboration between the colonial state and capitalist firms, despite the severe application of structural violence failed, eventually. Faced with declining cotton production, BCGA closed its office in 1938 and thus, "stopped the promotion of cotton cultivation in Ishan Division" (Marshall, 1938:9). In other words, many deductions could be drawn from the failure of cotton promotion in Ishan, despite the efforts to reorientate the essence of cotton production from the satisfaction of the needs for clothing into a decreed cash crops, some of the outstanding issues would be that the non-development of the productive forces. The systemic coercion of capitalist relations was immature as it was chiefly interconnected with the payment of taxation and extra monetary income devoted to meet the needs of imported fabrics and other goods obligations. Also, the new production techniques were not socially incentivised and exchange value narrowly individualised. Thus, unlike East and Southern Africa countries (Bowles, 1973) the attempt at feudalisation and capitalist efforts at establishment of a cash crops economy in Esan did not lead to the creation of a class of farms labourers and settler entrepreneurs and other more overt exploitation of peasants.

Ishan cotton and local cloth manufacture

The Ishan local cloth manufacturing was extensive and had high labour productivity. The British Consul, Burton, reported in the 1860s that the capacity of the local cloth industry was strong that the “people would not be disturbed by English trade embargo, being independent of Manchester textile mills” (Roth, 2006:142). The quality of the local cloth was quite high as noted by Windham Fosberry who visited the “Ishan country in 1902 [and found that] the quality of the cloth made from the Ishan cotton specie was ‘of strong durable texture’.”⁶ The widespread diffusion of the local cloth industry was noted by the French trader, Landolphe, in the eighteenth century as “a few houses are to be seen without cotton spinning machines or a frame for making admirable cotton or straw rugs” (Vogt, 1975:648).

The tools of labour in the local cloth industry were loom shuttles, erected *in situ* the living rooms of women or specially constructed in courtyards. The production was household based and so, was comparatively, small scale in the context of modern textile production. However, it was complex production and beyond subsistence activity given its extensive presence in the socio-economy. An interesting feature of the local cloth manufacturing was its gender division of labour since cloth production like cotton cultivation, as a sector “in the pre-colonial Esan economy [was] protected with social taboos” in favour of females (House-Midamba and Ekechi, 1995:18). The gender division of labour in cloth manufacture highlights a peculiar sociology in the economic relations that could partly, explain why cloth production was extremely valuable and essential to the Esan people. In fact, the importance of cloth resonates in annual feasts and numerous praise songs waxed in praise of cloth like the *ukele* tune that “were the cloth to relate its experience on the waist, cotton would cease to bloom in the farm;” celebratory of the use value of cloth and its cotton source.⁷ The Ishan cloth industry thrived into the early twentieth century. In 1923, “excellent specimens of Ishan cloth were sent to the British Empire exhibition where it attracted many admirers” (Butcher, 1982, p.xix).

The varieties of Ishan cotton clothes

The two, white and brown varieties of the Ishan cotton featured in native cloth production, evidenced in the assortment of dresses and modal features. There were undyed white cotton cloth products like *adeogho* (evening cover wears), brown-cotton cloth products like *obeniku* (loin clothes), *asiso* (work cloth), etc. The white cotton dyed in various colours, yielded products like

anoko (dark coloured cloth, etc. which also served as mourning attire,) *ikpon ododo* (colourful luxurious, multi-patterned social wears) and *ukpon non-gian* (the royal red cloth), popular in literature as the *Benin red cloth*. Thus, the *ododo*-dyed red clothes were popular in the Benin royal court and were some of the early products of international trade between Benin and Portugal (Vogt, 1975). In other words, the cotton cloth was a store of value and form of exchange and served the purpose of effective monetary unit of measure (Ryder, 1969) for its non-perishable nature. The production of the various modal features including colouration of the white cotton involved application of *alo* (dyes of various hues), *ododo* (indigofera) or other red dyes and *anumenlen* (black dyes) to the spun yarns. The *alo* dyes were externally sourced but *ododo* and *anumenlen* were derived from local plants. The quantity and range of the clothes varied from limited home needs to surplus for sale to other users. Cotton cloth as an undying, non-perishable commodity had an exchange value denominated by the advantage of preservation.

Surplus value appropriation in Ishan cotton clothes

The Esan leadership appropriated surplus value in the cotton cloth by the measurement of their wealth in the quantity and quality of finished products of the cotton they possessed. It was by this appropriation of surplus value that the cotton cloth was imbued with the content of the several goods that served the purpose of money prior to the introduction of coins and paper money. Therefore, the pre-colonial leadership in Esan had class interests in Ishan cotton production and kept an interested tab on the concomitant cloth industry and was thus, not class neutral or benign. Indeed, historical narratives of anti-colonial struggle in Esan are replete with the active leadership role of the normative feudal lords in the defence of native economic interests, agitation against taxation and some of other forms of the anti-colonial struggles. Okojie Ogbidi⁸ of Uromi was an example. The intermittent economic agitations characteristically, attracted severe structural coercion to overwhelm indigenous class relations (Ukpabi, 2004). This spate of structural violence has tended to ossify the sociology and defining important economic characteristics in the indigenous economic structures. This partly clarifies the fundamental theoretic concerns raised in the macro-level analysis of Williams (1988), why agrarian capitalism failed in Nigeria. Given the experience of the Ishan cotton production and the active indigenous leadership class interest and therefore, it is safe to state that the failure of agrarian capitalism in Nigeria derived from the lack of qualitative

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transformation of the mode of production and the wrongful application of structural violence to indigenous class relations during imperialism.

Failure of cash crops economy

With the decline of Ishan cotton production, emphasis shifted to other cash crops. Thus, seed varieties of para-rubber were introduced into Esan with simultaneous reorganisation of the oil palm production. Para-rubber (*havea brasiliensis*) “seedlings [were] massively cultivated by the Department of Agriculture and initially distributed free of charge to farmers from the Ubiaja rubber nursery” (Otoide, 2011:39). With the plantation of improved rubber seedlings, production yield of rubber, hitherto practically nonexistent rose to 162.6-ton by 1945. Oil palm production originally based on collection of wild palm fruits was restructured through an experimental farm system to nurse and supply improved palm seedlings. The reorganised oil palm plantations did not only occasion a shift from forays in the wilds but significantly, by 1941 some 62.68 acres of oil palm was under cultivation (ibid, p.42).

Like cottonseeds, oil palm and rubber seedlings were distributed through chiefs and village heads. The colonial patterns of production and techniques of structural violence were similarly retained in the propagation of the new cash crops. Predictably, rubber and oil palm production however, also failed to endure (Igbafe, 1979).

Underdevelopment of Ishan cotton and local cloth manufacture

The transformation of Ishan cotton into commodity of international trade clearly exerted causal interrelationship with the specific loss of the local cloth industry and the productive capacity of the people. This is because the progressive growth in the volume of export of Ishan cotton ensured that very little was available for local cloth production. Therefore, the Ishan cotton fulfilled the *prima facie* political economy argument of raw materials extraction from the peripheries for metropolitan textile production as characteristic of imperial economic policies in the underdeveloped world (Cohen, 1973; Headrick, 1981). A disaggregation of Figure III into native and vent for surplus production of Ishan cotton in Figure IV shows that out of the 35,156 bales of cotton exported from southern Nigeria between 1929 and 1936, the improved Ishan cotton constituted 28,324 bales or 80.6% (Col. Report, 1936, p.44).

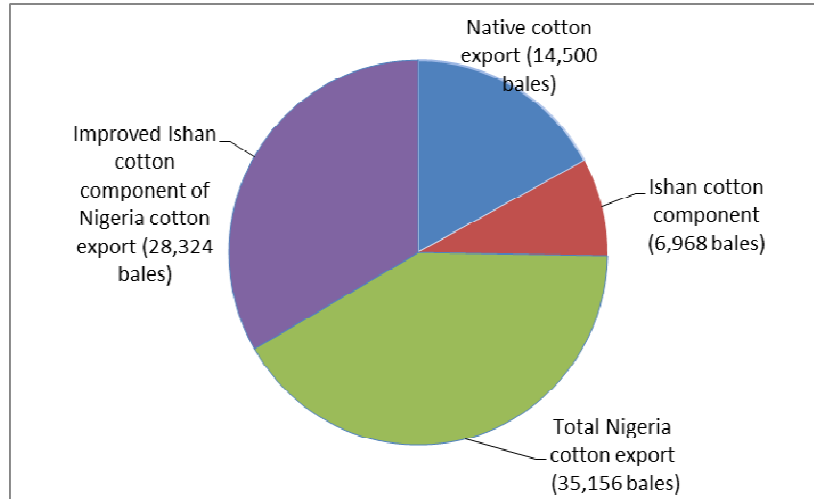


Figure 4: Cotton export from Nigeria by species (1927-1929).

Source: Southern Nigeria Report 1930, p.14.

This export reorientation clearly underdeveloped Ishan cotton production as it delinked it from the hitherto important purpose of feedstock for the local cloth industry. In similar background details, the findings of Roberts (1995) and Bassett (1995) were that the deprivation of feedstock for local production can intermix with the primary purpose of the commodification of indigenous cash crops. Thus, with export orientation, the local cloth industry is deprived of feedstock and consequently, unable to compete with metropolitan counterparts. The defining characteristics in Ishan cotton production, in comparison with the experiences in Kano, Nigeria (Hogendorn, 1995) and Cote d'Ivoire (Basset, 2001), respectively, confirm the theoretic concerns in the unequal competition between capitalist firms and local buyers of lint even if the differences interrelated only in the methods employed. The major similarities in the processes are striking to explain why the attempt at forcible "suppression of local cotton in northern Nigeria" (Hogendorn, 1995:68) by the capitalist firms and the state was not isolated practices but applicable to Ishan cotton, as well. In the context of methods, the use value of Ishan cotton plausibly, enamoured and restrained colonial capitalism against its total suppression. Instead, the commodification and dumping of cheap imported fabrics achieved the same goal of unequal competition between capitalist firms and local cloth producers. The results of this abridgement of the

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potentials of the local cloth production exhibit the same characters of systemic coercion found in Cote d'Ivoire by Basset (2001).

The enormous prospects of Ishan cotton production stimulated external economic relations but the complete absence of the application of technological innovation in the original habitat meant little developmental impact. As Headrick (2010) explains the role of advanced technology of production in dependent economies, its denial was a major tool of imperialist economic domination. In the technological context of imperialism in Nigeria, the absence of innovative technological application in Ishan cotton production at the autochthonous base flows concurrently with the logic that technology is not an ideology neuter and that it serves as a definitive weapon of maximising advantages by its historical possessor. Against the general explanation of the usefulness of technology in economic advancement, it is not even open to unfettered adaptation by underdeveloped societies to reorganise their economies for social independence. Hence, the application of technological innovation cannot be disaggregated from the motive forces and means of production under imperialism. The failure to leverage Ishan cotton production to accelerate the economic development in the colonial technological context accordingly, goes to demonstrate that “technological diffusion needs [not only] cultural environment” (Headrick, 1988:9) but also requires the decisive transformation of the mode of production. Consequently, the effective denial of development of the autochthonous base in the vent for surplus production of Ishan cotton, chiefly accounted for the lack of economic advancement in Esan.

As elsewhere, secondary causalities like the non-beneficial impact of the proceeds of cotton export on the quality of life of the producers, devotion of income to expenditure on imported goods obligation (Bowles, 1973) were common in the Ishan cotton economy. But they were of derivative effects of the ontological primacy in the relations of the state with capitalist firms including, the futile attempts to feudalise production relations (Igbafe, 1979). As these flow seamlessly with the underdevelopment of the pre-colonial mode of production, it is instructive that the dying prospects of Ishan cotton production ushered in an aggressive shift to production of other cash crops.

Nigeria's underdevelopment in post-imperialism

The casual abandonment of cotton production for other cash crops offers multiple insights and simultaneously, clarifies the underdevelopment of cash crops like the Ishan cotton, on the one hand and the class character in the dependent economic structures of post-colonial states, on the other. The loss

of strong comparative advantages in Ishan cotton and commodities economy generally, reduced the Nigerian state to dependency (Dowden, 2008) and perpetuated unequal international economic relations. In context, the experience of Ishan cotton was replicated in the fate of other commodities like “cocoa, groundnuts, oil palm products, and rubber, the principal export crops in the 1960s and early 1970s, but with export reorientation, remained of [little] importance.”⁹ Hence, the situational approach that disadvantages the indigenous modes of production faults the tenuous assumption that dependent leadership has developmental capacity. Consequently, although class analysis is sadly, scoffed in some recent policy debates, the avoidable failure of analysis of commodities economies is significant to return primacy to the class character of the dominant leadership elite in order to locate of the causalities of the non-improvement of the pre-colonial modes of production. For instance, the inability of Nigeria to leverage the strong comparative advantages in natural resource endowments to develop industrial capacities as an independent nation has been interlinked with the leadership group that took over the state, made up for the most part by petit-bourgeois... [that is] more interested in the leading positions of power and privilege than in effecting a radical transformation of the state and the society around it (Akindele, Chijioke and Feridun, 2005:30).

Otherwise, the improvement of the indigenous modes of production naturally flows with pursuits of people-driven policies for the advantageous development of the autonomous resource bases. However, the prospects of resuscitation of Ishan cotton production in the context of Nigeria as a state dependent on external ideological support and saddled with a leadership class were forlorn in the post-imperial economic conditions because the post-imperial state was impervious to the needs of the people to transit to higher stages of development. In the situation, the ideological moderation of dependency (Bodenheimer, 1971) interrelates with similar conditions impeding progress in dependent economies, which involves the manipulation of the state to defend colonial and class interests as the colonial and class structure ... defined class interests for the dominant sector.... Using government cabinets and other instruments of the states, the bourgeoisie produce a policy of underdevelopment in the economic, social and political life of the nation.... (Frank, 1972a:3).

The class interests and continuous dependence of the Nigerian leadership on foreign ideological and material support is generally, against commodities producers and unreceptive to the obligation of post-colonial societies to rise to creatively new heights. The consequent lumpenddevelopment of the economy (Frank, 1972a) has adverse implications

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for progress of capitalism itself in its historical nature and model trajectory. Capitalism in Nigeria without indigenous roots and so, supported from outside has become enfeebled to animate, promote or sustain national industrialisation opportunities in products of inherent comparative advantage like Ishan cotton. This structural incapacity compounds the functional deficiency of the Nigerian socio-political leadership class to tackle the challenges of development. Hence, as the commodification of Ishan cotton represented little or no importance to producers, so also cash crops economy in current macro-policies of Nigeria have not become useful paths to economic development. This is more so that the Nigeria's professional ruling class has been singularly incapable of cognising the route to higher stages of development, founded on egalitarian, democratic and people-centred policies.

Periodisation of the transformation of Ishan cotton

The transformation of the Ishan cotton can be periodised in three phases. The first period was between 1820 and 1902 and covers the smuggling of Ishan cotton into Egypt in 1820. The phase antedates the cotton famine of 1862-1866, (Dabney¹⁰, 1896; Isaacman and Roberts, 1995) and extends to the first recorded beginning of the exploration of the export value of the native cotton by Fosberry in 1902. This period is characteristic of the typical circle of appropriation of the products of indigenous peoples to meet the models of metropolitan capitalist production. The particular attraction in the Ishan cotton was its use value and so, the need for its large scale appropriation partly explains its transplantation in Egypt. In fact, one fundamental persuasive reason proffered for the experiment in Egypt ranged from the existence of suitable climates to the presence of social structures for extensive cash crops production. The Duke of Newcastle made the point that there existed "districts [in Egypt] where there was an adequate supply of labour to allow cotton to be produced at a remunerative price" (HL Deb 1861, p.151). This apparent limitation was imposed by the assumed absence of free and abundant supply of cheap labour for commercial cotton production and restrictive social structures in Esan, which clearly alluded to the land tenure system prevalent at the time. In the Esan land tenure system, the dead and countless yet unborn owned the land Esan people are communal in nature ... This means that their hopes, aspirations and relationships are perceived in communalistic terms ... Land ownership in Esan has a communal foundation (Ukhun and Inegbedion, 2007:16).

However, this is too specious to fully explain the non-transformation of Ishan cotton in its original habitat of production as the communal land tenure

system was amenable to reform. The counter argument would seem more plausible that the proto-Ishan cotton production, despite its high quality, diffusion and labour productivity in cloth manufacture was like other resources, in the unaltered state was inadequate to meet capitalist production models. The implication of the former argument about unsuitable local social structure would fall as the quest for higher yield of the Ishan cotton to meet capitalist model necessarily led to its crossbreeding, modification and multiplication for cultivar propagation, (Roche, 1994). In a sense, the quest for higher yield was realisable in the indigenous Esan habitat as was the case in the external climes where modern technological production practices were introduced. Besides, since the vent for surplus production of Ishan cotton in Egypt and elsewhere was by non-African entrepreneurial groups, it clearly exposes the unequal nature of the policy, which leaves the explanation of unsuitable social structure in the original habitat at best, amorphous.

The second period in the transformation of Ishan cotton is the commodification phase between 1902 and 1938. This phase integrates the exploration of the export value and the reorientation of production of Ishan cotton. The characteristics of the period interfaced with the activities of the United Africa Company (UAC), which traded in cotton at Uromi, processed it at its Illushi ginnery and exported it through the River Niger (Tamuno and Aderinwale, 1991). In this phase, the state facilitated the commodification by encouraging the exportation of raw cotton instead of spun yarns and collaborated with capitalist firms in the importation of finished cotton products or the dumping of cheaper fabrics (Butcher, 1982). The interlinked roles of capitalist firms and the state largely, made the UAC decisively successful in its monopsony of cotton trade in Esan. The commercial success achieved by the UAC as the arrowhead of mercantile capitalism in the area was therefore, through the colonial-state alliance in the exploitation of local cotton producers. In the circumstance, the partnership ensured that the producers who sold raw cotton to UAC, in turn, bought imported textile products from the same UAC, John Holt and other foreign trading companies based in Uromi. Therefore, the fundamental contradictions in the Ishan cotton economy in this phase revolve around the snag that the primary producers of Ishan cotton were also the prime consumers of imported finished cotton products and other perishable goods financed by proceeds from cotton exports.

This second period represents the effective disarticulation of the central function of Ishan cotton as feedstock of independent local cloth manufacture and was remarkable for the deliberate substitution of secondary production activities by the primary commodities economy of raw cotton exportation,

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rather than export of spun yarn. The period is also significant for the intertwining underdevelopment of the local cloth market as it became uneconomic and fruitless to produce what would not be realised. It was unsurprising that the huge reservoir of knowledge and centuries-old skills in cloth manufacture became desuetude. The Ishan cotton producers in this period obviously, did not derive essential benefits from the conditions of commodification with the productive capacity of the people imperilled and the local market effectively dominated by well-structured and financially powerful foreign-owned textile trading companies.

The third period in the transformation of Ishan cotton is a synthesis of the era spanning the smuggling of the Ishan cotton to Egypt in 1820 and its commodification from the 1920s until 1940. This phase interacts intensely not only with the transplantation of proto-Ishan cotton and its secondary crossing and experimental planting in Egypt, USA, etc., (Roche, 1994) but also its vent for surplus production in southern Nigeria (Hutton, 1915; EJA, 1936). The cumulative effects of the phase exhibited grave severity on the Esan economic environment that perturbed the district officer to raise an alarm in 1936 that “unfortunately, the cloth industry has been allowed to die due to the abundance of cheaper and more convenient mass-produced textile materials of all types” (Butcher, 1982, p.xix).

The distilled properties of the three periods intermingle in the dialectics of the struggle and unity of opposites to yield a synthesis of outcomes. The argument of imperialism that the dual mandate was for mutual benefits and ostensibly, against blatant exploitation of ‘native races’ turned out to be false in the face of the blatant commodification of Ishan cotton. It thus, revealed the unstated imperial aims of expropriation of indigenous resources concurrently with the exploitation of local producers. The resultant underdevelopment of the local cloth industry and the retardation of the productive capacity of the Esan people thus, generate conflicting interactions of distinctive import in the classical synthesis of the dialectical category of opposites. As the experience of commodification was a discernible manifestation of dialectical unity of the opposites, the three periods of the transformation of Ishan cotton are the mirror image representation of a “synthesis as a result not as a starting point, although it is the real starting point and, therefore, also the starting point of observation and conception ... the abstract definition of the reproduction of the concrete subject” (Marx, 1984:293). It is from this angle that the periods as analogous to “bottom falling off a steady progress of indigenous route to industrialisation” (Okoduwa and Inegbedion, 2007:29) could find significance but because of the non-development of the productive forces.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ishan cotton was not primarily cultivated as cash crops in the pre-colonial economy and the agricultural structure in Esan was not production-for-use, *per se*. The commodification of Ishan cotton production under imperialism revealed fundamental distortions of the character of social reproduction. The alteration of the essence of Ishan cotton also conjugated with the non-improvement of the pre-capitalist production relations as the poor technological base stifled the prospects of socialisation of labour. This confirms similar findings in Togo where the colonial state was unable to capture or recast the African agricultural productive process, and hence no significant transformation of technology or relations of production occurred, nor was there any demonstrable reinvestment of financial benefits regarding cotton, (Maier, 1995:73).

In other words, the inherent productivity value of Ishan cotton cloth industry in the petty commodity formation had good prospects for the economic transformation of the local environment vis-à-vis similar conditions in the northern hemisphere in which with introduction of technology and reform of relations of production, textile production accelerated the industrial revolution.

The periodisation of the transformation of Ishan cotton, though tentative, presents some inferential possibilities, including the need for more in-depth studies of the pre-colonial modes of production for its methodological import especially, its inherently moderating systems, which seemingly curbed the excesses of antagonistic contestations. The underdevelopment of Ishan cotton was integral to its commodification for export-reorientation that negatively affected the pre-colonial agricultural practices. Also, the gross alteration of Ishan cotton and reorientation from its essential role as primary feedstock for the local cloth manufactures towards export, underdeveloped the historical skill resources of the people. Therefore, the cumulative impact on the socioeconomic system, traced in the periodisation of the Ishan cotton outlined clear patterns in the forcible incorporation of dominated people into the international capitalist system. This systematic periodisation not only contributes to the interpretation of the category of causality but also, helps to expose the stages and high moments in the dependency character of Nigeria's commodities economy.

The objective of the commodification of Ishan cotton was economic disarticulation. The serial collaboration between the state and international capitalist firms illuminates the underdevelopment of an indigenous mode of production. The underdevelopment of Ishan cotton production resonates in

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the interconnected failure of similar cash crops due to the continued peripheral role of Nigeria as client-producer of primary commodities. The correlation between commodification and underdevelopment of Ishan cotton becomes clearer in the non-introduction of modern production techniques, the absence of technological innovation and the non-development of the productive forces. The transformation of the cotton production toward exports reorientation at the expense of local cloth production was clearly premeditated and ossified rather than overcome the difficulties in the conditions for extensive agricultural socialisation of labour (Hindess and Hirst, 1975). In short, the non-improvement of the pre-colonial mode of production was incongruent with the trajectory and logical models of progressive capitalism when sustainable agricultural development was contemplated.

The character of the pre-colonial mode of production was not completely unexploitative given the noticeable casual employment of unremunerated labour of members of the household and group, including child labour from the stage of farm work to the processing of the cotton into thread. However, there was lack of structural or systemic coercion in the non-monetisation of the labour aspect of the production process, which holds the important revelation that it was not a feudal mode of production. Moreover, the third unit of the triad of capitalist development – alienated labour and private expropriation – was absent despite that the economic structure featured transformative forms of monetised relations. Therefore, the fundamental contradiction between the social nature of production and private mode of appropriation of proceeds was not inherent in the pre-capitalist Ishan cotton and cloth manufacture processes.

All considered, it is submitted that the necessary condition to overcoming drawbacks to rapid development in Nigeria requires the benchmarking and interrogation of the inherited pre-colonial agricultural models rather than the characteristic perpetuation of the colonial patterns of production. This is partly, to state that Nigeria's economic policies as currently, structured, de-emphasises secondary production in preference for primary commodities. This is not the correct path to economic development. If the dominant leadership class continues to operate like imperialist rulers, the Nigerian state would increasingly veer towards goals incongruent with precepts of independent, democratic governance and patriotic indigenisation of economic relations.

In the light of general experience of cotton production in Nigeria, we are inclined to restate the *cri de coeur* that the socioeconomic development of countries like Nigeria was amenable to enhancement when the development

of cash crops like cotton was done in backward integration and animated the spirit of local enterprise (Anjorin, 1966:127). Finally, it follows that the prospects of endogenous development strategies in Nigeria are not in mindless reproduction of an unfounded exogenous pull or persistence of colonial patterns of production. The dependence on international market interactions alone has not yielded prospects of true development. The consequent challenge to the perfunctory theorisation of the development conundrum in Nigeria is that contrary to the modernisation template, the micro-presentation of an aspect of pre-colonial economic structures showed the characteristics of indigenous, pre-capitalist economies, although multi-faceted harboured prospects to leverage for competitive advantage in post-imperialism. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to learn the valuable lessons to build on the strong comparative advantages of the pre-colonial past to mediate extant post-imperial economic policies so that development may become about people and society. This is the experiential and more rational development framework advised by the story of Ishan cotton production.

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NOTES

1. Ishan is the anglicised form of Esan. The Esan people occupy the geographical territorial central segment of Edo State. Both terms feature interchangeably in literature to characterise the ethnic group, people, language, mores, any material substance or non-material quantities and qualities in relation to this second largest ethnic extraction in Edo State of Nigeria. In this paper the terms are applied in historical contexts as Ishan and in proper usage, Esan.
2. The "Survey of the Textile Fibres of the Empire Colonial Exhibits" at Wembley was published in *Journal of the Textile Institute Proceedings*, 15 (10), (1924), 536-541. An e-version by Taylor & Francis Group downloaded 18 September, 2012.
3. Colonial Reports—Annual no. 683. Southern Nigeria Report for 1907, p.36. Available at <http://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu>.
4. For the activities of UAC in Esan, see Tekena Tamuno and Ayodele Aderinwale, *Abebe: The Portrait of a Nigerian Leader*, (ALF Publication, Ota, Nigeria, 1991).
5. EJA was ascribed the authorship of the report. The full name of the initials, EJA was not available. The e-copy of the *Nigeria Trade Report* of 1936 sent to the authors

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- by Gemma Haxby, Secretary of Royal African Society, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PD on 5 November 2010 did not give any indication either. However, one E. J. Arnett authored several economic reports about cotton in Nigeria e.g., in Annual Report, Kano Province, 1911. It may be an educated guess that the EJA could be the initials of this colonial official who reported on Nigeria's economic affairs.
6. National Archives, Ibadan. File CSO 1/13 Vol. 20. Mr. W. F. W. Fosberry was Colonial Officer in the Benin Province in the 1900s. He also served in Eastern Nigeria, which supervised Benin Province before its relocation to Western Nigeria. As Resident of Benin Province, Mr. Fosberry undertook frequent economic tours of the hinterland to survey and explore the natural resources prospects to sustain imperial rule.
 7. *Ukpon ha te ebo mien bha akun olulu san bhu ugbo*. This song, roughly transliterated as “were the cloth to relate its experience on the waist, cotton would cease to bloom in the farm” is popular among *ukele* dancers who are mainly middle-aged women. The dance form is rich in criticisms and celebratory repertoire.
 8. Ogbidi Okojie was the 14th in the line of succession to the Uromi throne. Okojie had no modern weapons but held out against the British invasion of Uromi in 1900 for six months. He was first exiled to Calabar in 1900 but survived the detention and returned in 1909. He was against at the leadership of anti-colonial unrest and was deported to Benin in 1917 but unsettled Oba Eweka II who objected to the British Resident at Benin hence, Okojie was moved to Ibadan in 1924. In 1926, he made a dramatic escape to Uromi to ‘continue the fight’ but was rearrested and taken back to Ibadan and was finally released in 1931. He reigned thereafter as King of Uromi and died in 1944.
 9. Nigerian crops. See www.countrystudies.us/nigeria/58.htm. This source is linked to the *US Library of Congress* and downloaded in September 2011.
 10. Charles W. Dabney's report in 1896 in “The Cotton Plant” published in *Butt*. No. 33, 1896 by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture was cited in the Nigerian Colonial Report of 1916 to illustrate the effect of cotton shortages on metropolitan production. It is cited here to argue that the colonial officials were conscious of the beneficial impact that the commodification of indigenous crops like Ishan cotton could exert to fill the gaps in raw materials supply.

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