



universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

The Colonial Public Sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943

Verfasserin

Mag. (FH) Katharina Oke

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2013

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 390

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:

Diplomstudium Afrikanistik

Betreuerin:

Dr. Heike Ingeborg Schmidt, M.A.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my gratitude to Christina, Ernst, and Gerda, who generously supported my studies.

I want to thank Prof Heike Schmidt for continuous encouragement and support.

Thank you Andrea, Christin, Elisa, Franziska, Johanna, Julia, Karina, Silvia, and Thea for your patience and backing. Vida – thank you for last-minute support!

Thank you Mathilda and Olusegun.

Contents

Introduction	1
Public Communication, Public Criticism, and the Public Sphere.....	2
Sources and Methods.....	5
Outline	7
1 “The Old Order Changeth”? – Criticism and the Colonial State.....	9
1.1 Governing Public Communication.....	9
1.2 The Newspapermen’s Duty	26
1.3 Summary	40
2 “At it Again!” – Structure and Mechanisms of the Public Sphere.....	43
2.1 Contesting Publics and Contested Representativeness.....	46
2.2 Publicist Orientations	54
2.3 Publics and the Public Sphere of Representative Institutions	68
2.4 Summary	76
3 “Bidding Forth in its Nascent Growth” – Conceptions of Public Opinion	78
3.1 On Public Opinion.....	80
3.2 The Miseducation of Public Opinion.....	89
3.3 Summary	102
Conclusion.....	103
Bibliography	110
Primary Sources.....	110
Secondary Sources.....	112
Appendix	vii
Summary.....	vii
Zusammenfassung	ix
Curriculum Vitae	xi

Introduction

“THE old regime is dead and a new order of things is in the process of fashioning”¹ [emphasis in original] – was the opening line of *The Lagos Weekly Record* from 10 January 1920. This refers to the relief felt by the people that the condition of a “military dictatorship”, when the law was no longer a means of protection but an instrument of oppression, was now over.² Governor Frederick Lugard had left Nigeria in 1918, and the newly appointed Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, arrived in Nigeria in August 1919.³ The occasion for the diagnosis that “The Old Order Changeth” – the title of the above mentioned article – was the first speech Clifford held in the Nigerian Council on December 29, 1919. For *The Lagos Weekly Record* it seemed like a new era was dawning.

The study at hand commences in this atmosphere of departure. It investigates the colonial public sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943, through a close reading of colonial archival records and the Lagosian press. It turns to imaginations of the arena of public communication and to utterances which potentially aimed to alter or contest colonial governance. Thereby, the goal of this study is three-fold. It is to examine the role of public criticism in the colonial state, the structure and mechanisms of the public sphere, and African conceptions of public opinion. Examining colonial and local debates about the form, substance, and purpose of the public sphere, the objective is to map power structures and contestations of colonial power and to draw conclusions about colonial hegemony, the media, and the public sphere. For *The Lagos Weekly Record*, Hugh Clifford heralded a new era with regard to public criticism. Clifford, who prided himself in being sensitive to public opinion⁴, embodied a “new approach” of colonial government that seemingly implied for the people cooperation with, close touch to and assisting the government.⁵ A contributor to *The Lagos Weekly Record* writing under the pseudonym Adetayo, referred to Clifford’s speech in his contribution “A National Weakness”, observing he was struck by the importance Clifford attaches to “public criticism in the moulding of official policy”⁶. He continues: “There is no desire to escape from political storm centres, to revel in the sweet atmosphere of autocratic and beaureauratic [sic] rule, but a readiness to face intelligent criticism of Governmental policies

¹ The Old Order Changeth. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 10. January 1920, p. 5.

² Ibid.

³ Anthony Kirk-Greene, Lugard, Frederick John Dealtry (1858-1945). In: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford 2004. Hugh Clifford had been appointed as Governor of Nigeria in April that year. New Governor Of Nigeria. Appointment of Sir Hugh Clifford. In: *The Times*, 30. April 1919, p. 13.

⁴ Gabriel Olusanya, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria 1861-1960. In: Obaro Ikime (ed.): Groundwork of Nigerian History. 5th ed. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 2001, pp.518–544; p. 523.

⁵ The Old Order Changeth, 10. January 1920.

⁶ Adetayo, A National Weakness. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 03. January 1920, p. 5.

and if needs be, to profit by them.”⁷ This approach is celebrated as “great change” in the closing sentence of “The Old Order Changeth”, creating a sense of urgency, delineating the necessity for all to “fit themselves”⁸ for the new order of things. Besides changing approaches to public criticism from the top, newspapermen, contributors, and politicians debated the form public criticism should take among each other. Adetayo deplores the habit of “corner grumbling” in groups of two and three prevailing in literary, political, and social organisations in Lagos, and calls for men to raise their voices “at the proper quarter and at the proper time”⁹. Both, colonial administrators and the governed discussed the colonial public sphere, the terrain of the political struggle.¹⁰

The study seeks to provide a better understanding of the importance of public media, in particular newspapers, for Nigerian nationalism. It looks into the ways Africans employed newspapers in their contestation of colonial power and investigates the broader context of print culture under colonial hegemony. Therefore, it contributes to the history of text production, rather than investigating nationalism through utterances published in newspapers.¹¹

Public Communication, Public Criticism, and the Public Sphere

Recent protests in the so called Arab world, such as the “Arab Spring” in 2011, or protests in Iran that followed the disputed re-election of President Mahmud Ahmadinejad in 2009, have drawn attention to the public sphere. According to Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere is a communication sphere open to “strangers”. It is located between the private realm and the sphere of public power.¹² In it, individuals engage in public communication.¹³ Public criticism is voiced in the public sphere, and this criticism may eventually succeed in transforming authority.

Protests in Iran, Egypt or the Philippines suggest that increasing accessibility of communication technologies – such as the internet or mobile phones – stimulates the

⁷ Adetayo, A National Weakness, 03. January 1920.

⁸ The Old Order Changeth, 10. January 1920, p.5.

⁹ Adetayo, A National Weakness, 03. January 1920.

¹⁰ Cf. David Scott, *Refashioning Futures. Criticism After Postcoloniality*. Princeton 1999, p. 31.

¹¹ Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Die Erfindung der Nation. Zur Karriere eines folgenreichen Konzepts*. Exp. ed. Berlin 1998; Karin Barber (ed.), *Africa’s Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Bloomington 2006; Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics*. Cambridge 2007; James Coleman, *Nigeria. Background to Nationalism*. 4th ed. Berkley 1965; Toyin Falola, *Yoruba Gurus. Indigenous Production of Knowledge in Africa*. Asmara/Trenton 1999; Stephanie Newell, *Articulating Empire. Newspaper Readerships in Colonial West Africa*. In: *New Formations* 73, 2011, pp. 26-42; Fred Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937*. London 1978; Seteney Shami, (ed.), *Publics, Politics and Participation. Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa*. New York 2009.

¹² Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main 1990, p. 89.

¹³ Andreas Koller, *The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction*. In: *Social Science History* 34:3, 2010, pp. 261–290, p. 263.

political force of civil society movements. Scholars speak of a transformation of the public sphere with regard to these technologies. They facilitate participation in public communication, but do not manifest a new public sphere with the power to oust presidents – they alone do not guarantee the success of protest movements. Instead, they complement or transform existing structures of public communication.¹⁴ The media employed in the course of protest movements may, therefore, only form part of an analysis of the public sphere.

David Scott shows that public communication, especially with regard to newspapers, was not only important for the awakening of political consciousness and therefore nationalism.¹⁵ Public communication was of concern to the colonial project too. Scott shows for colonial Sri Lanka that administrators were concerned with “the creation of the instrumentalities and technologies of ‘public opinion’ ... and a free press”¹⁶. They did so, because the colonial state needed that wants would “tend to be of certain kinds and not others”¹⁷. The creation of a “rational” public was regarded to promote “good government”. Furthermore,

a more public circulation of reason would serve to undermine and break down the supports of native [sic!] knowledge[s], to disqualify them. It would, in effect, help to put in place a public sphere in which only certain kinds of knowledge[s] – and not others – could circulate with any efficacy.¹⁸

The colonial state encouraged a certain form of public communication – a kind that was regarded to strengthen the state and to form society.

In addition to interest for the public sphere spurred by technological developments, scholars like Andreas Koller, Harold Mah, and Jörg Requate recently attempted to render the analysis of the public sphere useful for historical analysis.¹⁹ Based on a critical

¹⁴ *Malcolm Gladwell/Clay Shirky*, From Innovation to Revolution. Do Social Media Make protests Possible? In: *Foreign Affairs* 90:2, 2011, pp. 153-154; *Marc Lynch*, Political Science and the New Arab Public Sphere. 12. June 2012. Abu Aadvarik's Middle East Blog,

http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/06/12/political_science_and_the_new_arab_public_sphere. Checked on 18. September 2012; *Zizi Papacharissi*, The Virtual Sphere. The Internet as a Public Sphere. In: *New Media & Society* 4:1, 2002, pp. 9-27; *Clay Shirky*, The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change. In: *Foreign Affairs* 90:1, 2011, pp. 28-I.

¹⁵ Cf. Anderson, *Die Erfindung der Nation*, pp. 36-40; Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 186; Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. vii, 42. For the importance of mass spectacle for nationalism see: *Elizabeth Schmidt*, Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa). In: *The American Historical Review* 110:4, 2005, pp. 975–1014; p. 1006.

¹⁶ Scott, *Refashioning Futures*, p.45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁹ Cf. Koller *The Public Sphere*; *Harold Mah*, Phantasies of the Public Sphere. Rethinking the Habermas of Historians. In: *The Journal of Modern History* 72:1, 2000, pp. 153–182; *Jörg Requate*, Öffentlichkeit und Medien als Gegenstände historischer Analyse. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 25, pp. 5–32.

assessment of Habermas' "Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" they evaluate existing approaches.²⁰ Moreover, they identify potential dimensions of a historical analysis of the public sphere.

Besides looking into acts of public communication performed by individuals and groups, an investigation into the public sphere addresses the role of this sphere in a given society.²¹ The public sphere possesses the "*capacity* for reasoned public choice"²² [emphasis in original], it may become a site for discursive will formation.²³ This potential feature of the public sphere becomes apparent, if associated with "the public". This link is given in German in the first place, as the words for "public sphere" and "the public" are the same, namely *Öffentlichkeit*. "The public" implies a collective, "a public of speaker(s) and audience that organizes itself and determines its own future by the force of the better argument"²⁴. The public sphere thus may exert pressure on policymakers and influence policy processes. It may install a principle of control with the aim of altering authority and to mediate the needs of society to the state. It does so by producing "public opinions" which seem to be accepted collectively.²⁵ But the public sphere may also serve the rationalization of political domination by rendering a state accountable to (some of) the citizenry.²⁶ Moreover, Habermas shows that the public sphere may be employed for the distribution of manipulative publicity. The corresponding public opinions are "formal opinions" of private persons or organisations, distributed with the aim to lay claim to an audience, to seek their approval.²⁷

Apart from fulfilling different overall roles, there may exist various "public spheres" in a given society. Diverse locations can become "sites of power, of common action coordinated through speech and persuasion"²⁸. Correspondingly, "there may be as many publics as there are controversial general debates about the validity of norms"²⁹. These various "public spheres" seem to differ when it comes to their role in a given society. Jörg

²⁰ Cf. *Craig Calhoun* (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992.

²¹ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 263; Mah, *Phantasies of the Public Sphere*, p. 155.

²² Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 263.

²³ *Seyla Benhabib*, *Models of Public Space*. Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermans. In: *Craig J. Calhoun* (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 73–98, p. 92.

²⁴ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 263.

²⁵ Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, pp. 87, 268; *Friedhelm Neidhardt*, *Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen*. In: *Friedhelm Neidhardt, Jürgen Friedrichs, M. Rainer Lepsius* (eds.): *Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen*. Opladen 1994, pp. 7–41, pp. 8–10.

²⁶ *Nancy Fraser*, *Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*. In: *Craig J. Calhoun* (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 109–142, p. 112.

²⁷ Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, p. 356.

²⁸ Benhabib, *Models of Public Space*, p. 78.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Requate distinguishes an “actual” public sphere as opposed to a “counter public”.³⁰ Nancy Fraser shows that this differentiation may be misleading, that relations between publics always were conflictual and competitive.³¹ Different publics do not develop side by side; instead, the public sphere is affected by the question of containment. It is not only defined by its capacity for critical publicity, but moreover by attempts to reform it. Certain publics, such as the bourgeois public in eighteenth century Europe, may exclusively claim critical publicity, and deny other publics, such as radical or peasant publics, to constitute public opinion.³² This draws attention to the structure and mechanisms of the public sphere, to processes of mediation between “public spheres”, and to how public expressions relate to the overall dynamic of the public sphere.³³

When approaching the public sphere, individuals and groups are faced with “culturally specific institutions ... [that] may be understood as culturally specific rhetorical lenses that filter and alter the utterances they frame; they can accommodate some expressive modes and not others”³⁴. These “institutions” may be (mass) media, or refer to boundaries of the public sphere. They might be articulated with the terms “private” and “public” when they serve as labels to delegitimise interests, views, and topics – when they determine which matters may be discussed in the public sphere.³⁵ Different publics may seek to enforce different conceptions of what may be articulated in the public sphere and hold corresponding ideals of what may amount to public opinion.

Sources and Methods

The present study relies on two corpora of primary sources accessible in London. It critically assesses dispatches and memoranda on colonial policy compiled in the Public Records Office, now accessible at the National Archives of the United Kingdom in Kew. It also consults Nigerian newspapers available at the British Library’s Newspaper Library in Colindale. The two corpora are components of imperial sites of knowledge production.³⁶

³⁰ Requate, *Öffentlichkeit und Medien*, p. 7.

³¹ Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, pp. 115-116.

³² *Craig Calhoun*, The Public Sphere in the Field of Power. In: *Social Science History* 34:3, 2010, pp. 301–335, pp. 309-310; *Geoff Eley*, Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century. In: *Craig J. Calhoun* (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 289–339, pp. 304-306; *Habermas*, *Strukturwandel*, p. 52.

³³ Mah, *Phantasies of the Public Sphere*, p. 155; Requate, *Öffentlichkeit und Medien*, p. 14.

³⁴ Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, p. 126.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

³⁶ *Ann Stoler*, Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance. In: *Archival Science* 2:1-2, 2002, pp. 87-109, pp. 90-91.

The materials available at the National Archives constitute a selection corresponding to the rationalities and mechanisms of official record keeping. Many files were destroyed under statute, in the course of the weeding out processes that affect all public records.³⁷ Other files, such as reports on “Public Opinion”, compiled at the Public Relations Department of the Colonial Office during World War II, are “wanting”.³⁸ In contrast, some of the information that arrived at the Colonial Office was accentuated. Hugh Clifford’s speech to the Nigerian Council in 1920 – “a distinctly interesting publication”³⁹ – was not retained in the respective dispatch, but transferred, among others, to the British Museum Library.⁴⁰

The British Museum holdings include only a selection of Nigerian newspapers; most of these compilations are somewhat incomplete. This collection of newspapers is now part of the British Library’s Newspaper Library.⁴¹ The specimens were collected even though they seemed ridiculous to colonial administrators.⁴² Only in the course of propaganda efforts did newspapers receive attention at the Colonial Office. Correspondingly, the respective colonial governments posted newspaper clippings and newspaper summaries to the Colonial Office.⁴³

This study examines a range of manifestations of the colonial public sphere. Its focus lies on African English-language papers published in Lagos and their coverage of Lagos politics. Utterances in these papers repeatedly claimed validity for the whole of Nigeria. Interaction with Yoruba-language papers are accounted for only when referred to in the English newspapers. Similarly, other expressions of the polity, by way of example drumming or “public arena activity”⁴⁴, are assessed when addressed in the English-language papers. Examining the emergence of a colonial public sphere, or matching Nigerian settings to

³⁷ Cf. *Anthony Kirk-Greene*, *On Crown Service: A history of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services, 1837-1997*. London 1999, p. 108; *The National Archives of the United Kingdom*, History of the Public Records Act. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/history-of-pra.htm>. Checked on 24. December 2012.

³⁸ Cf. The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA): Public Records Office (hereafter PRO): CO 875/5/7: Reports on Public Opinion, 1942.

³⁹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/94/2274: *Hugh Clifford*, Address to Nig. Council (29. Dec. '20), 24. December 1920, Minute, 18. January 1921, p. 361.

⁴⁰ TNA: PRO: CO 583/94/2274: Clifford, Address to Nig. Council, Minute, 16. March 1921, p. 362. Clifford’s speech and those of subsequent Governors are now held by the British Library.

⁴¹ One of the constituent parts of the British Library is the former British Museum’s Library.

⁴² Cf. *Rex Niven*, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope. Memoirs of a Colonial Servant*. London 1982, p. 13.

⁴³ Cf. TNA: PRO: CO 583/239: Nigeria. Press Cuttings (local), 12. February 1938; TNA: PRO: CO 583/277: Nigeria. Press Summaries, 14. December 1945.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Sandra Barnes*, Political Ritual and the Public Sphere in Contemporary West Africa, In: David J. Parkin, Lionel Caplan, Humphrey J. Fisher (eds.), *The Politics of Cultural Performance*. Providence 1996, pp. 19–40; *Sandria Freitag*, Enactments of Ram’s Story and the Changing Nature of “the Public” in British India. In: *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 14:1, 1991, pp. 67–68; *U. Kalpagam*, Colonial Governmentality and the Public Sphere in India. In: *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, 2002, pp. 35–58, p. 35.

specific conception of the public sphere, such as the bourgeois public sphere, lie beyond the scope of this study.⁴⁵

The study investigates political contests and conflicts in Lagos, starting with “diagnostic events” that strikingly reveal these processes.⁴⁶ Correspondingly, the inauguration of Hugh Clifford serves as diagnostic event to look into colonial and local imaginations of the role of public criticism, the resolution of the Eleko-question in 1931 for an investigation of contests between different publics, and the West African Press Delegation’s visit to Britain in 1943 initiates examining attempts at forming cohesion in the colonial public sphere. Therefore, the study pursues an issue-centred approach in terms of media analysis. Moreover, it looks into newspapermen’s self-conceptions, self-descriptions, and declarations of position, consults first issues of newspapers and inaugural documents of organisations.

Outline

The first chapter focusses on the role attributed to public criticism in the colonial state. The inauguration of Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria in 1919 serves as “diagnostic event” to look into colonial and local imaginations of the importance and function of public criticism in Nigeria. After the First World War, Nigeria saw transformations affecting the public sphere as well as a change at the top and an accompanying shift in the approach to public criticism. The Nigerian media landscape changed, by way of example with regard to ownership patterns. Despite overall agreement on the importance of public criticism as support for “good government”, imaginations of administrators and the population differed with regard to how public criticism should contribute. The examination of changes and continuities in approaches to public criticism makes it possible to illustrate contestations of the role of the colonial public sphere and public opinion between the government and the governed.

Chapter two addresses relations between different publics comprised in the colonial public sphere. As they sought to disseminate their discourse and their description of social realities to an ever-widening audience, their relations were conflictual and competitive.⁴⁷ The investigation of conflicts between publics – which were conveyed in “press controversies”

⁴⁵ *Nicodemus Awasom*, The Emergence of Public Spheres in Colonial Cameroon: The Case of Palm Wine Drinking Joints as lieux de sociabilité in Bamenda Township. In: *Africa Development* 35:1 + 2, 2010, pp. 210–220; *Keith Breckenridge*, “We Must Speak for Ourselves”. The Rise and Fall of a Public Sphere on the South African Gold Mines, 1920 to 1931. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40:1, 1998, pp. 71–108.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Sally Falk Moore*, Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography. In: *American Ethnologist* 14:4, 1987, pp. 727–736, p. 730.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Mary Ryan*, Women in Public. Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880. Baltimore 1990 quoted in *Fraser*, Rethinking the Public Sphere, pp. 115-116; *Geoff Eley*, Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures. Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century. In *ibid.*, pp. 289–339.

and other encounters – illustrates structures and mechanisms of the public sphere and objects of contestation. In addition to conflicts, chapter two addresses interactions between publics. It investigates how publics sought to spread their discourses and the ways they employed newspapers. By looking into publics' exchanges with the public sphere of representative institutions – the arena colonial authorities designated for public criticism – this chapter further illustrates the dynamics of the public sphere and displays the changing approach of the colonial state to newspapers and other media. The chapter's focus lies on events in 1931, it includes relevant occurrences around 1920, and provides an outlook for the 1940s.

The final chapter's examination of conceptions of public opinion makes it possible to identify a range of notions regarding the entitlement to represent public opinion. It traces how and under whose leadership newspapermen and politicians regarded public opinion to emerge. Therefore, it analyses a quest for agreement and cohesion – for a strong public opinion – which newspapermen and politicians regarded as essential for successful contestation of colonial power.

1 “The Old Order Changeth”? – Criticism and the Colonial State

Chapter one focusses on the role attributed to public criticism in the colonial state. The inauguration of Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria in 1919 serves as “diagnostic event”¹ to look into colonial and local imaginations of the importance and function of public criticism in Nigeria. After the First World War, Nigeria saw transformations affecting the public sphere as well as a change at the top and an accompanying shift in the approach to public criticism. The Nigerian media landscape changed – the Yoruba press was rekindled, newspapers appeared in the provinces, and, most importantly, ownership patterns diversified with the appearance of daily newspapers.

Judging from the fact that both – Governor Clifford and Africans engaging in public communication – regarded public criticism as a contribution to “good government”, it can be assumed that the colonial public sphere was already a social authority, however limited, that provided some checks on government and had at least theoretically the potential to alter colonial governance. But imaginations of administrators and the population differed with regard to how public criticism should contribute to “good government”. The government could enforce its outline for public criticism and repudiate existing arenas of criticism. Looking into the imaginations of both sides regarding public criticism might draw a different picture of the colonial public sphere.

1.1 Governing Public Communication

The Nigerian press commended Hugh Clifford before and then again upon his arrival in Nigeria, as Clifford was known for liberal and statesmanlike policies.² For instance in 1918, still serving as Governor of the Gold Coast, the press dubbed Clifford “Sir Hugh Fairmindedness” in comparison to the current Governor of Nigeria, Frederick Lugard.³ Contemporaries juxtaposed the two men, and while they perceived Clifford to be “liberal-minded and humane”, they described Lugard’s temperament as “frigid and autocratic”⁴. In 1912, the Colonial Office had entrusted Frederick Lugard with the amalgamation of

¹ Cf. Sally Falk Moore, Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography. In: *American Ethnologist* 14:4, 1987, pp. 727-736.

² Jeremy White, Central Administration in Nigeria, 1914-19148. The Problem of Polarity. Dublin/London 1981 p. 153; Fred Omu, Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937. London 1978, p. 220, Arrival of Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 09. August 1919, p. 4; We Appreciate. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 03. January 1920, p. 5.

³ White, Central Administration, p. 60.

⁴ Entre Nous. In: *The African Sentinel*, 28. February 1920, p.6.

Southern and Northern Nigeria in pursuit of balancing the North's financial deficits.⁵ For the governed, the amalgamation proposed by Lugard brought fear. People in Lagos fiercely opposed reorganisations that sought to conform the south to northern patterns – such as the Provincial Courts Ordinance – and Lugard's subsequent proposals.⁶

It was known that the political ideologies of the two personalities collided. John Harding, head of the Nigerian Department at the Colonial Office⁷, states: "I knew from experience that Sir H. Clifford as Governor of the Gold Coast and Sir F. Lugard as Governor General of Nigeria generally took opposite views on any question which came up in those colonies."⁸ Shortly after his inauguration as Governor of Nigeria, Hugh Clifford started sending despatches to the Colonial Office, in which he outlined his objections to the administrative machinery he found in existence.⁹ For Clifford, who was stressing his experience as colonial administrator¹⁰, his predecessor Frederick Lugard had left a "not only cumbersome, but unworkable"¹¹ machinery, and the amalgamation of Nigeria proclaimed in 1914 was nominal, and not actual.¹² Clifford declared that his overall goal was not merely an amalgamated but a united Nigeria¹³ – most likely in order to distance himself from his predecessor's reign and the respective implications. Advocating his ideal of a united Nigeria, Clifford held a speech under the heading "United Nigeria" at the African Society in 1921. At a banquet at Government House, held in celebration of the fifty-fifth birthday of King George V in 1920, he proposed the "Toast of United Nigeria", and emphasised the fact that he was talking about a united, and not amalgamated, Nigeria.¹⁴ He pursued three main reforms with regard to the administration of Nigeria: he saw the need for a restructuring of

⁵ "Nigeria" consisted of three separately administered entities up to 1906. It was mainly economic motives that lead to the merger of the southern provinces in 1906, and the amalgamation with the Northern Province in 1914. *Ezera Kalu*, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria. An Analytical Study of Nigeria's Constitution-Making Developments and the Historical and Political Factors that Affected Constitutional Change. London 1964, pp. 15-21; *Tekena Nitonye Tamuno*, British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century. In: Obaro Ikime (ed.): Groundwork of Nigerian History. 5th ed. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 2001, pp. 393–409.

⁶ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 206-211; White, Central Administration, p. 208.

⁷ S. Cooke, Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria. An Evaluation. In: *African Affairs* 79:317, 1980, pp. 531–547.

⁸ The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA): Public Records Office (hereafter PRO): CO 583/80/73600: *Hugh Clifford*: Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 03. December 1919, Minute, John Alfred Harding, 27. January 1920, p. 210.

⁹ Clifford started sending despatches as early as October 1919, merely two months after his arrival in Nigeria. John Alfred Harding showed his disappointment that Clifford had not kept his promise to tour Nigeria extensively before proposing any policy. TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Minute, John Alfred Harding, 27. January 1920, p. 210.

¹⁰ *Anthony Stockwell*, Clifford, Sir Hugh Charles (1866-1941). In: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford 2004; TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, p. 232.

¹¹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, p. 232.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 265, 289.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹⁴ *Hugh Clifford*, United Nigeria. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 21:81, 1921, pp. 1–14; Proceedings at the Official Banquet given by His Excellency the Governor of Nigeria, at Government House, Lagos, 3rd of June 1920. In Celebration of the Fifty-fifth Anniversary of the Birthday of His Majesty the King. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 19. June 1920, pp. 2–6.

the administrative system, a reform of the legislative machinery, and he considered ending the extension of the administrative system in operation in the Northern Provinces to the Southern Provinces.¹⁵ When arguing for reforms, Clifford repeatedly stressed the importance of public criticism and control for good governance.

The role accorded to criticism in the colonial state seems to be linked to the policy guiding colonial government, to two schools in colonial administration – one which sees administration open towards various interests, and one pursuing the isolation of governing bodies from economic or other interests. Clifford and Lugard are portrayed as personifications of these opposing positions. Ian Nicolson contrasts Clifford's insistence on the building of a "robust public opinion" and institutions through which it could be expressed with Lugard's aim at silencing protest, criticism and opposition, his longing for silent and unquestioning obedience. Correspondingly, Donald Cameron – head of the Nigerian Secretariat under Hugh Clifford, and Central Secretary under Frederick Lugard – assesses the successive governors with regard to their policies. He pictures Clifford as a representative of Direct Rule, which would involve open discussion of affairs, and close relations to the general community. Contrarily, Lugard – representing Indirect Rule – would seek the isolation of the "Native Administrations".¹⁶

Direct Rule is based on Crown Colony Government, established in Africa in the coastal enclaves in the 19th century.¹⁷ It describes a system of colonial rule that features institutions modelled after British example and the aim to implement British ideas of government. In Nigeria, the government of Lagos was modelled according to this conceptualisation. Direct Rule is associated with the spirit of humanitarianism and philanthropy, which considered it essential and probable to give Africans the benefit of British institutions and to enlighten them. In contrast, Indirect Rule describes the attempt to rule colonised people through what is conceived to be the heads of their own political institutions. Following its own logic, the concept is open to variations. The version of Indirect Rule in operation in the Northern Provinces – in this text referred to as "indirect rule" – governed people through Emirs, which were correspondingly dubbed Native Authorities or Native Administrations respectively. "Indirect rule" was associated with Frederick Lugard, even though it was

¹⁵ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, pp. 290-291.

¹⁶ *Ian Ferguson Nicolson*, *The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960. Men, Methods, and Myths*. Oxford 1977, pp. 226, 233.

¹⁷ The British government acquired Lagos as a colony in 1861. *Gabriel Olusanya*, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria 1861-1960*. In: Obaro Ikime (ed.): *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. 5th ed. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 2001, pp. 518–544.

others who – in reinterpreting Lugard’s policy – consolidated the system.¹⁸ For instance Charles Temple, who served from 1901 to 1907 in the Northern Provinces¹⁹, was opposed to all symbols and representatives of European civilisation, which he saw as threats to “native institutions”. “Indirect rule” may be described as conservationist; traders from the south and missionaries were regarded as unwanted influences.²⁰

When presenting his outline of an amalgamated Nigeria, Lugard propagated a relocation of the capital from Lagos to Kaduna. Clifford associated this move with the isolation of government. In course of a more general attack on “indirect rule”, Clifford argued against relocating the capital. For him, only the maintenance of close relations with the public enables “good government”.

In December 1919, Clifford filed a lengthy despatch on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria to the Colonial Office.²¹ In it, he criticises the present administrative system and submits detailed recommendations for a remodelling of the structure of government with the aim of bringing the administration under effective central control. Clifford firstly shows the practical defects of the present administrative system. Records were inaccessible and it was impossible to keep close track of them. Then, Clifford turns to a critique of “indirect rule”, which leads him to his first contention in connection with the remodelling of the amalgamation scheme: Clifford opposes the proposed relocation of the capital from Lagos to Kaduna, from the coast to a spot far north of the confluence of the rivers Benue and Niger. According to Clifford, this proposition was closely connected to the overall administrative policy guiding the amalgamation implemented by Frederick Lugard, namely “indirect rule”. The choice of an isolated spot would be a deliberately sought segregation from the life of the country, a move characteristic of this policy. Lugard’s policy would regard immigration and contact with modernity and progress as hindrances for government, as they would undermine the authority of the Native Administrations and lower the prestige of European officials. Similar to his speech to the Nigerian Council in 1919²², Clifford argues in the despatch that if the government were to

¹⁸ *Adiele Eberechukwu Afigbo*, *The Warrant Chiefs. Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria 1891-1929*. London 1972, pp. 4-5; *Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele*, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914. A Political and Social Analysis*. London 1966, pp. 128-129, 146, 148; White, *Central Administration*, pp. 33-39.

¹⁹ *Christopher Alderman*, *Temple, Charles Lindsay (1871-1929)*. In: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford 2004.

²⁰ Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact*, pp. 148-149.

²¹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, *Amalgamation*, 03. December 1919.

²² *The Capital of Nigeria*. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 14. February 1920, p.5; TNA: PRO: CO 583/84/7580: *Harry Claude Moorhouse*: *Nigerian Council*, 25. January 1920.

be seated at an isolated spot, it would become increasingly bureaucratic.²³ Instead, moderately good government would only be secured if the government maintained “as close a touch as possible with the public, European and native, whose affairs it is their business to administer”²⁴.

For Clifford, the relocation of the capital to Kaduna would not only lead to a bureaucratic government, it would also hamper economic development. He saw cooperation and close relations with the public as a necessity to secure the economic development of the country. Clifford therefore argues against the isolation sought by moving the capital and pleads for an opening up of the Northern Provinces.

In opposition to Indirect Rulers, White attributes Clifford an “active concern” for African business and commercial interests and an understanding of the aspirations of the “educated” African.²⁵ In the above mentioned dispatch, Clifford quotes Frederick Lugard’s assessment of the policies adopted by the northern and southern governments before amalgamation. Lugard refers to the policy of Northern Nigeria as primarily administrative, and that of Southern Nigeria as “commercial, and directed primarily to the development of natural resources and trade”²⁶. Clifford turns these elaborations into an argument against Indirect Rule. It may facilitate the administration of a large territory by a small number of officials, but it would hamper the cultural development of the local population as well as the development of the natural resources of the area. The amalgamation of Nigeria was, according to Clifford, the appliance of the policy established in the Northern Provinces to the Southern Provinces.²⁷ Clifford opposes this move, which he describes as “putting new wine into old bottles”²⁸. Clifford, who manages to portray himself as a keen developer of economic resources²⁹, states that instead of levelling down the South, the North should be levelled up, necessary changes in facts and ideas having to come from the central Government at Lagos.³⁰ Clifford contrasts the choice for Kaduna with considerations on the location for a capital in other parts of the empire. If the site for a capital was chosen in other British Tropical Possessions,

²³ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, pp. 232-234, 242, 244-247.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 246.

²⁵ White, Central Administration, pp. 59-60; TNA: PRO: CO 583/84/7580: Moorhouse, Nigerian Council, 25. January 1920, p. 2.

²⁶ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, p. 241.

²⁷ Ibid.; pp. 242-243.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 243.

²⁹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/84/7580: Moorhouse, Nigerian Council, 25. January 1920, p. 2.

³⁰ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, p. 286.

it has generally been recognised that so much depends, especially during the initial stages of the British occupation, upon the inspiration and initiative of the Government, and upon its close and active cooperation with those sections of the public which are engaged in the promotion of trade and of business enterprise, that it is essential that the administrative capital should itself be the great radiating centre of energy, innovation and progress.³¹

In order to cross the threshold of great commercial expansion and development, at which Nigeria would stand today, the principal operations of government should “be carried out in the midst of the most active life and thought of the country, whence it is able to maintain the closest touch with every section of the community, and where its actions are exposed to the close[s]t scrutiny and criticism”³².

With regard to his anticipated reforms, Clifford succeeded only in the realm of restructuring the administrative system. He could not achieve the revision of the overall policy guiding administration in Nigeria. Correspondingly, Nigeria saw the implementation of a single Nigerian Secretariat – the consolidation of distinct secretariat bodies –, a central Secretariat for Native Affairs and the unification of departments still administered separately in the Northern and Southern Provinces. According to White, it was Hugh Clifford, who established the tradition of a large and professional administration at Lagos, in contrast to the amateurish system in operation before.³³ Likewise, Nicolson states that Nigeria’s administrative health improved under Clifford.³⁴

The Colonial Office’s reaction to Clifford’s proposals was mixed. His eagerness for the development of resources met with appreciation – but not at the expense of “indirect rule”. Clifford’s argumentation for opening up the Northern Provinces – his demonstration that economic development and good government necessitated cooperation with and close touch to the public – was not understood. On the contrary: what appears productive to Clifford is denounced as negative influence.

In 1919 the Colonial Office was already converted into enthusiastic “indirect rulers”, adherents of the system of administration in the Northern Provinces, fond of the idea of

³¹ Ibid., pp. 244-245; *The Capital of Nigeria*, 14. February 1920.

³² TNA: PRO: CO 583/84/7580: Moorhouse, Nigerian Council, 25. January 1920, p. 3; *The Capital of Nigeria*, 14. February 1920.

³³ White, *Central Administration*, p. 75.

³⁴ Nicolson, *The Administration of Nigeria*, p. 234.

ruling along “native” lines.³⁵ Correspondingly, Alfred Harding stated in a minute to Clifford’s dispatch that the Secretary of State for the Colonies generally approves the line of policy established by Frederick Lugard and has no intention on reversing it.³⁶ Harding takes up the issue of the future capital of Nigeria as a question of “direct” versus “indirect rule”, as a question of the overall policy guiding administration in Nigeria. He sees Lagos as the home of the “direct rulers”, the traders operating from there being opposed to “indirect rule”, as it would hamper their exploitation of the local population.³⁷ He therefore regards Lagos as unsuited for a central capital, as it was politically “the centre of those influences which it is most undesirable to have pervading the central Government”³⁸, concluding that it is therefore so desirable to remove the capital from there.

Subsequently, the question of the future capital is dealt with separately from the issue of the overall spirit guiding administration in Nigeria.³⁹ This line is taken up by Alfred Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in his reply to Clifford. Milner’s addressing the question of the capital was part of his reply to Clifford’s suggestions regarding the structure of government. Milner stated that it would be preferable if the Lieutenant Governors and the Governor were located at a different place, but that it was not essential. With regard to the spirit animating the “native” policy, the Lugardian system should – at least in the Northern Provinces and the Yoruba States – be upheld in principle.⁴⁰ Milner appreciates Clifford’s desire to promote the economic development of the county, but states:

It should not, however, be impossible, while maintaining the principle of indirect rule, nevertheless to promote the development of the resources of this country. ... Generally speaking I am in favour both of continuing to carry on the Government through the native authorities, and of encouraging development to the fullest extent compatible with the maintenance of the existing political system.⁴¹

Another note to Clifford’s dispatch displays the Colonial Office’s lack of understanding for Clifford’s argumentation that criticism is necessary for economic development:

³⁵ White, Central Administration, p. 38.

³⁶ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Minute, Alfred John Harding, 27. January 1920, p. 214.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 209-210.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 214.

³⁹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Minute, 29. May 1920, p. 222.

⁴⁰ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Milner to Clifford, 5. July 1920, pp. 299, 301, 303.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 304.

Why it should be impossible, while maintaining the principle of indirect rule, nevertheless to promote the development of the resources of the country, I must say I don't entirely understand.⁴²

As Clifford's suggestions were conceived as a blow of "anti-Lugardism"⁴³, Harding even calls for an additional, semi-official note in which Clifford should be told that his attack on the system put in place by his predecessor is contrary to the wishes of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Clifford accepted the scolding, but continued to stress the importance of public criticism and control by, and influence of, the public. He confined his aspirations regarding control and criticism by the public to the country's south, as he realised that he would not be able to achieve fundamental policy changes in the Northern Provinces. In an address delivered at a Luncheon-Meeting of the African Society⁴⁴ Clifford seems to reproduce obediently bits and pieces of Milner's reply to his attacks on "Lugardism". He stated that nothing should be done to affect the northern version of Indirect Rule injuriously, and where possible, local systems of government should be used for administration along the lines of the northern system.⁴⁵ Turning then to the now geographically confined field of application for his visions, he stated that it was just as important not to "stay or stunt"⁴⁶ the political development of the Southern Provinces. The appreciation of European political ideas as a result of the education accessible to some would inevitably bring upon changes "it would be neither wise nor fair to ignore or to neglect"⁴⁷. He clearly demonstrated the significance he attributed to criticism and control when stating that it would be disadvantageous to the government, and the people, if all matters of political interest "should not be subjected to the closest scrutiny and criticism, and be made a subject of the most free and open discussion"⁴⁸. Clifford continued that he attached the "greatest possible importance"⁴⁹ to proposals accounting for the particular situation in the Southern Provinces, which he had submitted to the Colonial Office.

⁴² TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Minute, 29. May 1920, p. 223.

⁴³ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Minute, Alfred John Harding, 27. January 1920, p. 210.

⁴⁴ At the time of this meeting, the Colonial Office had already received a dispatch by Clifford in which he delineated his plans on how the public should effect control and criticism of the actions of government, namely in a reconstituted Legislative Council. The luncheon-meeting seems like a welcome opportunity for Clifford to endorse and pave the way for his plans, as he may have been aware that his dispatch on the reconstitution of the Legislative Council had already arrived in the Colonial Office. Cf. Clifford, United Nigeria.

⁴⁵ Clifford, United Nigeria, p. 13; TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: Clifford, Amalgamation, 03. December 1919, Milner to Clifford, 5. July 1920, p. 303.

⁴⁶ Cf. Clifford, United Nigeria, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

In December 1920, the remodelling of the administrative structure of government was about to be effected. Those changes that met the approval of the Colonial Office – such as the installation of the Nigerian Secretariat and the central Secretariat for Native Affairs – were to take effect on January 1, 1921. In his speech to the Nigerian Council, Clifford described these changes as his most important piece of work to date and felt ready to publicly address his planned advancements regarding control and criticism by the public. He announced his effort to effect changes to the legislative machinery.⁵⁰ Clifford expressed his hope to shortly submit a dispatch to the Secretary of State in order to establish a Council which would be a serious factor in the government – and representative of all Nigerian interests.⁵¹

In his speech to the Nigerian Council in December 1920, Clifford did not expand on the details of his anticipated reforms, but referred at length to what he announces as “one matter with which I wish to deal before I quit the subject of the control and criticism, in the public interest, of the actions of the Government through the agency of a Representative Assembly”⁵². What followed this proclamation was a denunciation of what Clifford tagged “West African National Conference”⁵³ in reference to the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA). By pointing out what form of criticism he was not willing to accept, Clifford delineated that the “representative” assembly he envisioned was to be the only arena for public criticism.

In March 1920, delegates from Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone had met in Accra to formally establish what Imanuel Geiss referred to as the dominant nationalist organisation of the 1920s.⁵⁴ Besides economic and educational reforms, the NCBWA demanded constitutional reforms granting the people a voice on their affairs in the Legislative and Municipal Governments.⁵⁵ The Congress was predominated by prominent nationalists from the Gold Coast such as Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, and was borne in Nigeria by Richard Akinwande Savage, who would later publish the *Nigerian Spectator*, and

⁵⁰ *Hugh Clifford*, Nigerian Council. Address, 1920 In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: Addresses Delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Nigerian Council, 1920, 1923. Nigeria 1923-1925, p. 16.

⁵¹ Clifford, Nigerian Council, pp. 17-18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Immanuel Geiss*, Panafrikanismus. Zur Geschichte der Dekolonisation. Frankfurt am Main 1968.

⁵⁵ National Congress of British West Africa. Resolution of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa[n], held at Accra, Gold Coast, from 11th to 29th March, 1920. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 17. July 1920, p. 6.

James George Campbell, a freelance journalist and head of the West African Episcopal Church. Aspirations to form a West African organisation date as far back as 1912/1913, and were spurred by the educated elite.⁵⁶ Various local and international factors are considered to have contributed to the emergence of, and the views advanced by, the NCBWA. Besides distress caused by racist employment policies, and economic disadvantages inherent to the colonial state, it was influenced by breakaway churches – like Campbell’s West African Episcopal Church – that were pursuing independence in religious matters, and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois’ Pan-African congress movement. Developments in India and Ceylon that saw expanded participation in the respective governments also stimulated national consciousness in British West Africa. World War I significantly influenced the nationalist movement as well, as it unsettled the colonial system. The importance of the congress lies in the sentiment behind its activities, the spirit of unity and a shared fate, rather than in a clear-cut programme for national unification.⁵⁷

Clifford’s critique of the NCBWA appears to be in defence of *his* plans for a representative assembly, and against a potentially competing model for control and criticism by the populace. The demands of the NCBWA, which Clifford associated with control and criticism of the government, received attention at a time when Clifford was drawing up his vision of a council representative of all Nigerian interests. Following his own account, he had been working on corresponding reforms since 1919.⁵⁸

In 1919, a delegation of the “Gold Coast Committee of the Projected West African Conference” had duly carried their petition for the right to a say in West African matters to Clifford, then Governor of the Gold Coast.⁵⁹ Late in 1920, the NCBWA sent a delegation to London in order to present their agenda directly to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.⁶⁰ Clifford and also Frederick Guggisberg, who succeeded Clifford as Governor of the Gold Coast⁶¹, repudiated the claims of the NCBWA. Guggisberg was irritated by the fact that the NCBWA addressed the Colonial Office without prior notice to him.⁶² For Clifford, the need to criticise the NCBWA was given by the fact that “certain well meaning

⁵⁶ James Coleman, Nigeria. Background to Nationalism. 4th ed Berkley/Los Angeles 1965, pp. 178, 191-192; Gabriel Eluwa, Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa. In: *African Studies Review* 14:2, 1971, pp. 205–218; Geiss, Panafrikanismus, pp. 221-222; Olusanya, Constitutional Developments, p. 522; Omu, Press and Politics, p. 231.

⁵⁷ Eluwa, Background, pp. 213, 215; Geiss, Panafrikanismus, p. 180; Jabez Ayodele Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945. A Study in Ideology and Social Class. Oxford 1978, pp. 118-124.

⁵⁸ Clifford, Nigerian Council, p. 17-18.

⁵⁹ Geiss, Panafrikanismus, pp. 223-224.

⁶⁰ Langley, Pan-Africanism, pp. 131, 243.

⁶¹ Anthony Kirk-Greene, Guggisberg, Sir (Frederick) Gordon (1869-1930). In: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford 2004.

⁶² Geiss, Panafrikanismus, p. 223; Olusanya, Constitutional Developments, p. 522.

and philanthropically disposed, though obviously ill-informed, persons in Great Britain”⁶³ seemed likely to treat the body as if it were significant and representative of Nigerian interests and aspirations. But his worries appeared to be unsubstantiated. In the Colonial Office, Clifford’s attacks on the NCBWA were commented with wonder about the artillery used, as the congress was perceived as a farcical affair.⁶⁴

Clifford’s denunciation of the NCBWA also seems to be a move to reinforce his concept that setting the political agenda and the initiative for reforms lies with the government only. No self-organised form of public criticism was allowed to set the tone, particularly not the West African National Conference. By attacking the very reasons for the congress’s existence, Clifford supported his vision of control and criticism by the populace. In his 1920 address, Clifford denied the congress’s claim for validity, expounding that allusions to a West African political agenda or forum for discussion have no foundation. In his view, “West Africa” could not be in accordance with the definition of a nation – it would be a merely geographical expression. Furthermore, he believed that factors binding together a likewise “un-national”⁶⁵ Europe, the profession of Christianity and analogous political and social systems, were lacking in West Africa.⁶⁶

For Clifford, control and criticism were closely related to representativeness, and in his view the NCBWA could not be representative of the people of West Africa. To him it seemed farcical that even “Nigeria can be represented by a handful of gentlemen drawn from a half dozen Coast tribes”⁶⁷. The educated elite could not claim to be the representatives of people like those living in the hills of Nassarawa, in the Muri Province or in the inner Ibo country.⁶⁸ How could the NCBWA then claim to be representative of four West African colonies? Clifford contrasted this “unrepresentativeness” with the government’s representativeness, evoked government as “trustee of the helpless, inarticulate masses, the care and protection of whom is its first and most sacred duty”⁶⁹. Therefore, reforms could only be initiated by the government.

1922 saw a constitutional reform in Nigeria which entailed Clifford’s envisioned council for control and criticism of government policies. The reconstituted Legislative Council, which

⁶³ Clifford, *Nigerian Council*, p. 20.

⁶⁴ TNA: PRO: CO 583/94/2274: *Hugh Clifford*: Address to Nig. Council (29. Dec 20), 24. December 1920, Minute, 18. January 1921, p. 361.

⁶⁵ Clifford, *Nigerian Council*, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19. It appears as if Clifford reacted to reasons for the formation of a West African organisation as given by the nationalists. By way of example, the nationalists referred to the depreciation all Africans encounter in equal measures by Europeans, and therefore concluded that all (West) Africans were in the same political and economic ship. *Duse Mohammed Ali*, In: *Africa and Orient Review*, May 1920, quoted in: Langley, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 127.

⁶⁷ Clifford, *Nigerian Council*, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

was confined to the southern Provinces of Nigeria, provided that four members of the council were to be elected by the populace.⁷⁰ In 1924, in defence of this constitution from an attack by Lord Leverhulme, Clifford denied the NCBWA any contribution in the changes made:

each of the three principal West African Colonies has received ... a new and more liberal Constitution These changes ... have been brought about in every instance, not as the result of local agitation, but through the earnest advocacy of ... officers of Government.⁷¹

Besides attacking existing forms of criticism with reference to the NCBWA, Clifford furthermore outlined how he imagined public criticism. In his speech to the Nigerian Council in 1920, he stated:

it is important ... that they [the general public, author's note] should be taken as fully as possible into the confidence of the Administration, ... they should be afforded the data upon which to base an opinion as to how far the public revenues ... are being wisely and advantageously expended or invested; ... that they should be placed in a position to scrutinise its plans, to detect weaknesses or defects that may have escaped official calculations, to utter warnings that may be needed, and to bring the force of outside criticism to bear upon questions which the Governor and his advisers may not have considered with sufficient closeness from the point of view of special interests or from that of the unofficial community as a whole.⁷²

In this passage of the speech Clifford already mentioned the thematic boundaries he later imposed on “public criticism” (see chapter 2). At the same time, it underscored his dismissal of the congress’s pursuit of setting the political agenda, of mediating perceived needs of society to the government. Clifford imagined “public criticism” to follow the actions of government, and eventually amend them, but not to provoke them.

⁷⁰ Kalu, *Constitutional Developments*, p. 27; Olusanya, *Constitutional Developments*, p. 522.

⁷¹ *Hugh Clifford*, Address. Delivered by His Excellency The Governor at the Second Session of the Legislative Council Held at Lagos on 11th February, 1924. In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: *Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Legislative Council of Nigeria, 1923-1925*. Nigeria 1923-1925, p. 5.

⁷² Clifford, *Nigerian Council*, p. 225.

Clifford's attack on the NCBWA was a rejection of the aspirations of the educated elite. But as mentioned before⁷³, Clifford did not simply call for the educated elite's compliance to the overall political outline of "indirect rule" and, therefore, for a subordination to Native Authorities, as pursued by Frederick Lugard.⁷⁴ Rather, he arrived at the conclusion that there should be particular provisions for the educated elite. Later in his speech to the Nigerian Council, he specified the role he envisioned – he appealed to the educated elite to cultivate a "robust public opinion"⁷⁵. David Scott shows that the "the creation of the instrumentalities and technologies of 'public opinion'"⁷⁶ was of concern to colonial administrators in Ceylon. It was part of their intended governance of colonial conduct, their intervention into the social, their alteration of the terrain of the political struggle.⁷⁷ According to Scott, the creation of a "rational" public, which expressed a certain kind of "wants", and not others, was regarded to promote good government, and was furthermore considered "to undermine and break down the supports of native [sic!] knowledges, to disqualify them"⁷⁸. Clifford seemingly acted in accordance with this rationality, advocated the spread of a certain form of knowledge, and repudiated others. He engaged in composing public communication, the limits of criticism – by way of example with reference to representativeness –, and ranked better and worse forms of airing views. Therefore, public communication amounted to a domain of the colonial project of constituting the colonial. Clifford effectively reversed public opinion, even though it was still regarded as a factor in policy decisions. Clifford intervened at the very root of public opinion, aimed at regulating its formation. He established a standard for public opinion, and furthermore encouraged the spread of this, his version of public opinion, in order to "convert" the populace – to disqualify other forms of expressing knowledge.

Overall, Clifford envisioned the educated elite as vanguards of European "civilization", evoked a "civilising mission" with regard to public criticism.⁷⁹ He obligated them to spread and foster a public opinion corresponding to his imagination of colonial conduct. This

⁷³ Clifford, United Nigeria.

⁷⁴ Eluwa, Background, p. 208. In the "The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa", Lugard explicated participation of the "educated" African in the state as councillor to the "Native Ruler". The interests of the majority of the population should not be subjected to the will of "educated" Africans. Indirect Rule would make Chiefs independent from educated African lawyers or advisers. *Frederick Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Edinburgh and London 1922, pp. 116, 196, 223; *Frederick Lugard, Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria. A Documentary Record*. London 1968, p. 78.

⁷⁵ Clifford, Nigerian Council, p. 55.

⁷⁶ *David Scott, Refashioning Futures. Criticism After Postcoloniality*. Princeton, N.J. 1999, p. 45.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 16, 40-45.

⁷⁸ Scott, Refashioning Futures, p. 46.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Philip Serge Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*. Charlottesville 2000, p. 34.

outline of duty implied – as a starting point, or rather a general conception of (public communication by) Africans – the ascription of a dedicated position of the African in relation to European ideas. These ideas or concepts were thereby the only ones that amounted to a standard, and it was the African's duty to select from them, translate them, and adapt them.⁸⁰ But the choice of what was best “from among the lavish crop, borne by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which the elaborate civilisation of modern Europe to-day offers to mankind”⁸¹, was not free. It was regulated with reference to educational and moral standards.

With regard to the demands of the NCBWA, Clifford called for selection, translation, and adaptation of European ideas. The “educated” Africans should not imitate political theories evolved to fit “a wholly different set of circumstances, arising out of a wholly different environment, for the government of peoples who have arrived at a wholly different stage of civilisation”⁸². Furthermore, in flaunting his obedience and therefore accepting existing structures of “indirect” government as given and sacrosanct, the congress's demand for a right to a say, or self-government, was farcical.⁸³ What was needed was adaptation to local circumstance of what Europe has to offer. National self-government could only be achieved along the lines existing. The government would maintain and support local institutions and corresponding forms of government, which are to be regarded as local expressions of political genius. National self-government would “secure[s] to each separate people the right to maintain ... its own chosen form of government, and the peculiar political and social institutions which have been evolved for it”⁸⁴. Members of the NCBWA could not claim to have political leadership over authorities like the Sarkin Musulmi at Sokoto, the Shehus of Bornu or the Emir of Katsina⁸⁵, therefore they could not amount to an adequate authority for the control and criticism of government policies.

Later in his speech, Clifford seemingly demonstrated how the selection and adaptation of European ideas should be conducted ideally, by referring to the proper way of doing so as a matter of education and moral. After distinguishing grades of education, contrasting a “nodding acquaintance with the ‘three R’s’”⁸⁶ to an education that not only encompasses the culture that is acquired from books, but also “basic principles that mould and regulate

⁸⁰ Clifford, Nigerian Council, p. 55.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 55.

⁸² Ibid., p. 21.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 20.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 52. This term refers to Reading, Writing and 'rithmetics, a quotation attributed to Sir William Curtis. *The Mirror of Ligerature, Amusement and Instruction* (29. January 1825). Autographs, with Biographical Notices, No. VI 1825.

character and conduct”⁸⁷, Clifford described only gentlemen belonging to the latter category of the “educated” African population as being “anxious to inspire their countrymen with the codes of honour, probity, truthfulness, good citizenship, self-respect and self-control”⁸⁸. In the far future, the high standard of these gentlemen would find acceptance and general imitation among the peoples of Nigeria, but for now, men and women belonging to this category would need to contribute to the foundation stones on which this “moral emancipation of their Race”⁸⁹ rests. Clifford applied this outline of how to select from the ideas Europe has to offer to the handling of the demands posed by the NCBWA. In the midst of his attack on the congress, he stated that all he said would of course be well known to the “better instructed sections of the European and African communities”⁹⁰, and that the congress’s activities would have been repudiated by the “wiser and more cultivated representatives of African opinion in Lagos”⁹¹. This demarcation of colonial conduct, of a “robust PUBLIC OPINION that will not tolerate mere *imitation*, but insist upon selection and *adaptation* of the gifts of Europe”⁹² [all emphasis in original] therefore not only amounted to a question of “rational” argumentation, but also to a question of education, and moral – the definition of which lies with the colonial government.

The “robust public opinion” Clifford referred to was closely related to a reconstituted Legislative Council, which he envisioned to be the arena for public criticism of government policies. The council thereby served as a hotbed for, and a means to instruct the populace along the lines of “public opinion”. Against the backdrop that Clifford pursued to govern public criticism, his advocacy for elective representation in a reconstituted Legislative Council seems to be a move to incorporate opposition, to subjugate critics to his outline of public criticism in course of this concession.

When arguing for a refashioned Legislative Council, Clifford demonstrated the practical use of including critics into the council. According to him:

the occupation of seats on a Legislative Council by local demagogues would tend to imbue them with a sense of responsibility which they do not feel so long as they are

⁸⁷ Clifford, *Nigerian Council*, p. 52.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

able to spread all manner of mischievous rumour among an ignorant population without incurring the risk of being publicly brought to account therefore.⁹³

In the first session of the refashioned Legislative Council in 1923, Clifford invested again in suppressing forms of criticism deviating from his imagination. He stated:

there is here no question of a Government and an Opposition, but instead an endeavour to insure closer cooperation and sympathy between the Government and the governed, ... for the purpose of securing the wise, just and efficient administration of the country and of its affairs.⁹⁴

Clifford saw the general instruction of the people as one of the tasks of a refashioned Legislative Council. He substantiated the reform of the Legislative Council with the need for “authoritatively announcing and explaining the actions of the Government to the local public, and for the latter to follow and understand them”⁹⁵. For Clifford, speeches by the Governor, as well as efforts by the members of the council, were the appropriate measures to achieve this top-down transmission of information or “sound public opinion” respectively. The Governors’ speeches were a sought-after opportunity to address the populace⁹⁶, to put on record information on Nigerian affairs:

All those who are interested in such matters are thus automatically kept aware of everything that the Administration is doing in each one of its various spheres of activity, of all that it is planning, of all that it is meditating; and they are simultaneously made familiar with the principles upon which its policies are based, with the aims that it seeks to compass, the hopes that it entertains and with the dangers which it apprehends.⁹⁷

According to Clifford, the members of the Nigerian Council should carry information to “all who have the interest of Nigeria at heart”⁹⁸ as well. In 1923, at the opening session of the reconstituted Legislative Council, Clifford referred to the responsibilities and obligations of the members of the council, and in this course related the transmission of information with “public opinion”. He stated:

⁹³ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: *Hugh Clifford*; Legislative Council: Reconstitution, 26. March 1921, pp. 114-115.

⁹⁴ *Hugh Clifford*, Address by His Excellency the Governor at the Opening Meeting of the Legislative Council, October 31st, 1923. In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Legislative Council of Nigeria, 1923-1925. Nigeria 1923-1925, p. 3.

⁹⁵ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, p. 101.

⁹⁶ See also TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, Minute, Alfred John Harding, 2. June 1921, p. 120.

⁹⁷ Clifford, Nigerian Council, p. 224.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[But] the duty which before all others this Council owes to Nigeria and to its people is that of upholding the standards and principles upon which good and efficient government is based; of forming, educating and leading public opinion along sound and rational lines; of fearlessly condemning all that is lawless and dishonest; and of championing the thing that is right, no matter whether it chance to be popular or unpopular.⁹⁹

In Clifford's opinion, the educated elite should cultivate public opinion but not set the political agenda. It was not yet up to the elite to mediate society's needs to the government in their own terms. Instead, Clifford aimed to deploy the educated elite in his governance of colonial conduct. This also becomes apparent when he dwelled on the prospects of public opinion. He envisioned a public opinion

which bears in perpetual memory the fact that the educated sections of the negro race are still young in their membership among the civilised peoples of the earth; that they have still their spurs to win, their name to make, their reputation to fashion; and that every one of these things is dependent upon the measure in which each individual educated African contributes to, or detracts from, the common stock of virtue and repute, by his personal character and by his acts, his words, his conduct.¹⁰⁰

This role of the educated elite would continue up to the moment the colonial administration regarded a certain standard as having been attained:

Considering the comparatively short time during which the Reign of Law and Order has become effective in Nigeria, extraordinary progress has been made, but the day is still far distant when it will be safe to relax the control which has alone made that progress a possibility. The inculcation of right instincts and the formation of sane and sound public opinion must inevitably be slow and gradual process; and until these things have been evolved, the responsibility for the maintenance of a rule of Law and Order cannot be confided to a people who as yet have so imperfectly assimilated an appreciation of the principles upon which good government depends.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Clifford, Legislative Council Address 1923, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Clifford, Nigerian Council, p. 56.

¹⁰¹ Clifford, Legislative Council Address 1923, p. 3.

Assessing public criticism shortly after arriving in Nigeria, Clifford explicated its shortcomings. With regard to local affairs, Clifford saw the government not only deprived from effective criticism outside the Legislative Council, he furthermore portrayed the press as ineffective for making the policy and intentions of government known:

The local Press is wholly ineffective and daily betrays a bewildering ignorance of the affairs with which it attempts to deal. It is quite incapable of producing a verbatim report of a speech, for instance, and as a medium of publicity it is quite useless.¹⁰²
[emphasis in original]

Acknowledging the importance of the press and public criticism, Clifford envisioned the local press as part of the effort of cultivating a “robust public opinion”, as a means to attain publicity for the work of the government, and an aide in governing the conduct of public communication. In pursuance of his top-down approach to public criticism, he denied the newspapers any right to set the topics of the political agenda.

In his speech to the Nigerian Council in 1920, Clifford specified the press’s lack of providing publicity, and furthermore revealed the bar he is matching the local press with:

the absence of a daily Press prevents the wide dissemination of news throughout the country which is customary in the West Indies, and which, for example, is effected in Ceylon by the publication in Colombo of two morning and two evening newspapers on every week-day, and the existence of a fairly representative Provincial Press in most of the other chief towns of the Island.¹⁰³

Clifford therefore supported the changes that were about to occur in the first local industrial enterprise, the newspaper business.¹⁰⁴

1.2 The Newspapermen’s Duty

The fact that missions had trained printers stimulated the growth of the “Indigenous Newspaper Movement” in the 1880s. Materials such as Bible lessons and the Ten Commandments were printed locally, and in 1859 Henry Townsend, a missionary in Abeokuta, founded the *Iwe Irohin*, Nigeria’s first newspaper. Townsend intended to educate the growing reading public by publishing didactic essays on history and politics. The paper was initially issued in Yoruba and later supplemented by English contributions.¹⁰⁵ Besides these local developments, the emerging English-language Nigerian press was inspired by

¹⁰² TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, pp. 107-108.

¹⁰³ Clifford, Nigerian Council, pp. 224-225.

¹⁰⁴ Omu, Press and Politics, p. 73.

¹⁰⁵ Jacob Festus Ade Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891. The Making of a New Élite. London 1965, pp. 158-159.

political printing activity in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. Newspapers, which were regarded as an “intrinsic part of enlightened society in Europe”¹⁰⁶, were made open to use. The newspapers that were produced by Africans, and were published at the most once a week, sought to influence the trend of events, backed by identity politics referred to as cultural nationalism. Their goal was the formation of a strong public opinion which could not be ignored by the Governor; the newspapers represented the respective newspapermen’s views on politics. Furthermore, the production of newspapers was an option for financially distressed traders to generate a small amount of revenue – and the business offered employment for a few.¹⁰⁷ But newspapers were a thorny undertaking, as up to the 1920s journalism had never been “a paying concern”¹⁰⁸ in West Africa. For Omu, motives behind the engagement in the newspaper business remain complex, as economic ambitions blended with philanthropy and the desire to influence public opinion.¹⁰⁹ However, it may rather be that the societal functions associated with the publication of a newspaper outdid economic motivations.

Shortly before, and shortly after, Hugh Clifford took office as Governor of Nigeria, two editors of renowned Nigerian newspapers died: George Alfred Williams, editor of *The Lagos Standard*, died in May 1919, and James Bright Davies, editor of the *Times of Nigeria*, deceased in January 1920.¹¹⁰ Some years before, in 1915, the editor of *The Lagos Weekly Record*, John Payne Jackson, had passed away too, and his son, Thomas Horatio Jackson, was in the process of taking over his father’s newspaper.¹¹¹ One may have expected this generational change to bring with it a new direction in editorial policies, but the newspapers insisted on continuation. *The Lagos Standard* stated: “we are encouraged to continue the good work so well and truly begun and handed down to us, and it is our earnest desire (God helping us) to live up to and follow in the footsteps of our departed Chief.”¹¹²

James Bright Davies and John Payne Jackson exemplify the pioneer newspapermen’s devotion to nationalism.¹¹³ In course of its first appearance under new proprietor and editorship, *The Times of Nigeria* desired “to record our humble appreciation of the excellent work which it fell to the lot of James Bright Davies to perform for his Country and

¹⁰⁶ Fred Omu, The “Iwe Irohin”, 1859-1867. In: *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4:1, 1967, pp. 35–44, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 8-12, 26-39.

¹⁰⁸ *Ajax*: Rambling Notes and News. The Lagos Standard. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 19. September 1919, p. 6a; *A Togolander*: The Passing of a Great African Editor. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 20. December 1919, pp. 6–7.

¹⁰⁹ Omu, Press and Politics, p. 29.

¹¹⁰ Omu, Press and Politics, p. 43; Our Twenty-sixth Year. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 10. September 1919, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 50-51.

¹¹² Our Twenty-sixth Year, 10. September 1919.

¹¹³ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 39-43.

Race”¹¹⁴, and the new editor, Mr. Walter Edwin, would “faithfully carry on the work so ably performed by the late lamented Editor”¹¹⁵. *The Times of Nigeria* correspondingly published articles in favour of Pan-Africansim.¹¹⁶ Also with regards to criticising the government, the new editors were no less vigorous than their forerunners. Adamu Animashaun, the new owner of the *Times of Nigeria*, was around 20 years younger than James Bright Davies and a prominent figure of the Lagos Muslim community. He initiated a change insofar as issues relevant to the respective community were taken up increasingly during his proprietorship.¹¹⁷ Thomas Jackson had stayed in London for seven months in 1918/19, where he was influenced by London newspapermen.¹¹⁸ When he returned to Lagos, he implemented reforms aimed at introducing “a spirit of successful commercial enterprise”¹¹⁹. His reorganisations took the form of new promotion techniques, and expanded job-printing.¹²⁰ On top of that, Jackson was advocating a West African Press Association in order to foster an organised West African Press opinion, and in 1920 he established *The African Sentinel*, a “London Counterpart” to *The Lagos Weekly Record*.¹²¹ But he too summoned continuity in the editorial policy of *The Lagos Weekly Record*. Commemorating the 29-year existence of the paper, he stated: “We, [too,] may be permitted to boast that we have pursued consistently an editorial policy ... characterised by a fearless defence of native interests, customs and institutions.”¹²²

In addition to continuation, the 1920s saw the dawn of a new era initiated by the introduction of new products. The organisational characteristics of printing endeavours remained virtually unchanged from the 1880s to the mid 1920s. A cultural revival emerged against the ferment of post-war politics and together with the introduction of elective representation caused several changes in Nigeria’s African press.¹²³ First, newspapers were popular – there was an outburst of journalistic activity.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the long established weeklies demised after they reached their zenith in the early 1920s. *The Lagos Standard* was to go to print for the last time for the issue of January 18, 1920; *The Times of Nigeria* ceased

¹¹⁴ The Passing of James Bright Davies. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 23. February 1920, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ African Brotherhood and the Right Spirit of Approach. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 01. March 1920, p.4.

¹¹⁷ Hakeem Danmole, A Visionary of the Lagos Muslim Community: Mustapha Adamu Animashaun, 1885-1968. In: *Lagos Historical Review* 5, 2005, pp. 22–48.

¹¹⁸ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 52-53.

¹¹⁹ Our New Series. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 07. June 1919, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 50-55.

¹²¹ Our London Counterpart. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 14. February 1920, p. 5; Our New Series, 07. June 1919, p. 3.

¹²² Our New Series, 07. June 1919.

¹²³ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 58, 61, 73, 75.

¹²⁴ Increase Herbert Ebenezer Coker, Landmarks of the Nigerian Press. An Outline of the Origins and Development of the Newspaper Press in Nigeria. 1859 to 1965. Lagos 1968, pp. 14-18.

publication in 1924.¹²⁵ They were ousted by the daily papers, an innovation that was introduced in the mid 1920s.¹²⁶ Second, the Yoruba press was rekindled – now aimed at “the masses”, those not literate in English.¹²⁷ Third, also in the 1920s, newspapers started appearing outside of Lagos.¹²⁸ Fourth, and more importantly, up to the 1920s, newspapers were small-scale businesses and amounted to one of several business activities for proprietors.¹²⁹ The editor was usually the owner of the paper, and his own reporter. He paid a small fee for other contributions to his paper.¹³⁰ The daily newspapers of the mid-1920s had a higher capital cost than the weeklies.¹³¹ They were in need of “more hands”, and therefore hired printers and journalists – who were notoriously underpaid.¹³² Corresponding to the increased need for capital, expatriate commercial interests and two prominent Lagosians established the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company, a limited liability company in 1925.¹³³ In 1926 they started the publication of the *The Nigerian Daily Times*¹³⁴, a conservative newspaper that aimed to “maintain a detached attitude towards local politics”¹³⁵. Fred Omu concludes his epochal study of the early newspapermen with the emergence of Nnamdi Azikiwe’s *West African Pilot* in 1937, the first daily paper of Azikiwe’s Zik Press Limited, which is, to Omu, the star of the new drama of nationalism that was about to unfold.¹³⁶ The *West African Pilot* became a powerful competitor to *The Nigerian Daily Times*, as it was critical of the government.¹³⁷

Around 1920, editors and proprietors reaffirmed a self-image of the press that had been stated before; they continued the tradition of political journalism. But organisational changes in the business entailed an extension of the role of newspapers for society. They were assuming their role as carriers of news, as chroniclers more explicitly, and took up entertaining their readers.¹³⁸ If they could afford it, the newspapers published Reuters or

¹²⁵ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 38, 43, 61, 85.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 53, 58, 85, 237.

¹²⁷ Karin Barber, *Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos*. In: Toyin Falola (ed.): *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honor of J. D. Y. Peel*. Durham, North Carolina 2005, pp.187–208; Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 58, see also chapter 2.

¹²⁸ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 26.

¹²⁹ Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press*, p. 82; Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 76.

¹³⁰ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 79.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹³² Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press*, p. 83.

¹³³ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp.61–64.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63.

¹³⁵ *The Birth of a New Paper* (01.06.1926). In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 04. June 1936, p. 8.

¹³⁶ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 68–69.

¹³⁷ Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press*, p. 39. It is described as being what the youth of the country was waiting for, and is said to have been a revolution in journalism.

¹³⁸ Friedhelm Neidhardt, *Öffentlichkeit, Öffentliche Meinung, Soziale Bewegungen*. In: Friedhelm Neidhardt, Jürgen Friedrichs, M. Rainer Lepsius (eds.): *Öffentlichkeit, Öffentliche Meinung, Soziale Bewegungen*.

other cabled news; they added international flair.¹³⁹ Foreign sports events and political news dominated the front pages of some of the papers.¹⁴⁰ In his 22-part series on “Journalism in British West Africa”, Nnamdi Azikiwe turns to the “importance”¹⁴¹ of news-gathering. According to him, this aspect of journalistic endeavours was a matter of concern from the start. There was no training for journalists, no schools of journalism such as in the United States or in Britain. Furthermore, there was no organisation specialised in obtaining and distributing news in British West Africa, as there were in the “civilised world”. The result would be the “apparent paucity of news which feature the pages of the average West African paper.”¹⁴² Every newspaper would have to fight its own battles in order to obtain news, and Azikiwe correspondingly called for the establishment of news services in British West African countries.¹⁴³

The newspapers also underwent changes in their coverage of local happenings to ensure reader retention. *The Nigerian Daily Times* established a Women’s Corner – a reform that Thomas Jackson had thought of too¹⁴⁴ – and other designated recurring elements, such as “News from the Provinces”, “Readers’ Views”, “Church News”, and “Social and Personal”.¹⁴⁵ The newspapers reported from courts, published the proceedings of the Legislative and Nigerian Council, and covered the activities of the Governor.¹⁴⁶ Besides repeatedly providing news for those sections, the newspapers announced and recorded meetings of local organisations – corresponding to the age of “Unity, Self-Help, and Co-operation”¹⁴⁷. Amongst the recurring elements were items such as “Week-End Humour”, “Grains of Knowledge”, a “Children’s Corner”, and puzzles. Furthermore, newspapers ensured reader retention by publishing entertaining stories over the course of multiple issues.¹⁴⁸

Newspapers were not only embodying public opinion that was closely related to the views held by the proprietors and editors, they were also stimulating the formation of public opinion by providing news. Azikiwe differentiates the two roles of the newspapers:

Opladen 1994, pp.7–41; Nnamdi Azikiwe, Journalism in British West Africa (6). In: *West African Pilot*, 25. May 1945, p. 2.

¹³⁹ Nnamdi Azikiwe, Journalism in British West Africa (7). In: *West African Pilot*, 26. May 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Frontpage of *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. June 1931.

¹⁴¹ Azikiwe, Journalism in British West Africa (6), 25. May 1945.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.; Azikiwe, Journalism in British West Africa (7), 26. May 1945.

¹⁴⁴ Our New Series, 07. June 1919.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 14. July 1931, 16. June 1931.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 5. July 1919; *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 16. October 1920; *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. July 1931.

¹⁴⁷ Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects, pp. 80-104; cf. *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 16. October 1920.

¹⁴⁸ *The Nigerian Daily Times* published by way of example “The Biggest Thrills of My Life” by Rosita Forbes. *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 16. June 1931, pp. 4-5, 9.

All boils down to this simple truism. A newspaper as an organ which reflects public opinion, crystallizes such opinion in diverse ways as enables it to control same[;] one way of crystallizing such opinion is by publishing news and other matter; another way is by making comments on such matter.¹⁴⁹

In continuing political journalism, the newspapermen were drawing on a general assumed duty of the educated elite, namely acting as custodians of the people's liberties. In the middle of the 19th century, the "educated" Africans embraced the role of vanguards of British civilization, those destined to introduce it to their "ignorant brethren".¹⁵⁰ They changed their attitude at the end of the century and, furthermore, claimed to be the custodians of African custom and of the people's liberty, the ones to defend their fellow countrymen against unjust government measures.¹⁵¹ The "educated elite" increasingly faced racial discrimination and economic hardships towards the end of the 19th century; they were disappointed with regard to the spread of British influence upcountry. They formed an "alliance for opposition"¹⁵² with the so-called traditional elite – who themselves faced economic threats when British influence spread upcountry –, joined them in opposition to government measures.¹⁵³ Their alliance was consolidated by their joint resistance to supposed expropriation of or underpay for land by the government, especially between 1910 and 1912.¹⁵⁴ In 1920, this mission was phrased in Pan-Africanist terms, with reference to brotherhood, and the ideal of the League of Nations. *The African Sentinel* declares as its aim

1. (a) The protection and safeguarding of the rights, interests, and welfare of African peoples or peoples of African origin, wherever situated. ...

6. The defence of all oppressed people, and of the principles of the League in so far as the world may be made safe for democracy by a sympathetic audience being given to the voices of the subject or coloured races and by the practical realisation of the ideal of Universal Brotherhood.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Azikiwe, Journalism in British West Africa (6), 25. May 1945.

¹⁵⁰ Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects,, pp. 19-46.

¹⁵¹ Patrick Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos. London 1975, pp. 73-104.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 73-74.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 75, 89-97; Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects, p. 62.

¹⁵⁵ Our Policy. In: *The African Sentinel*, 17. January 1920, p. 4.

The educated elite sought to influence politics with their newspapers, as they did with short-lived “political parties”¹⁵⁶, and thereby assumed that they were speaking for the people. In his “Gold Coast Native Institutions” (1903) Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford confesses that he would have edited a newspaper had he not gone to the Bar.¹⁵⁷ He refers to a concept of journalism expressed by British newspaper editor William Thomas Stead. Agitations and crusades are regarded to be a major aspect of Stead’s version of journalism; he sought to implement “government by journalism”.¹⁵⁸ In 1919, this view of journalism is taken up again in an obituary for Joseph Peter Herbert Brown, editor of *The Gold Coast Leader*.¹⁵⁹ Both texts refer to what caused Stead to never cease for a moment again to rejoice that he was a journalist, what he sees as his mission as a journalist – an adapted passage from Victor Hugo’s “L’homme qui rit”:

The people are silent. I will be the advocate of this silence. I will speak for the dumb. I will speak of the small to the great, and of the feeble to the strong. I will speak for all the despairing silent ones. I will interpret the stammering, I will interpret the grumbling, the mourning, the tumults of crowds, the complaints ill-pronounced and these cries of beasts that through ignorance and other suffering man is forced to utter. I will be the word of the people. I will be the bleeding mouth whence the gag is snatched out. I will say everything.¹⁶⁰

Early Nigerian newspapers like *The Lagos Times*, *The Lagos Observer*, *The Eagle and Lagos Critic*, *The Lagos Standard* and *The Lagos Weekly Record* were written in English, and produced by persons of stature in the society. Criticising the government was awarded with prestige, and the newspapermen affiliated a strong sense of obligation with their ventures – especially regarding the spread of education and enlightenment.¹⁶¹ Newspapers were meant to instruct people concerning their duties in the state. In the above mentioned obituary, “Togolander” depicts “a lesson that will do West Africa a great good”¹⁶², and in this course outlined the newspaper’s role with regard to education. He referred again to Casely Hayford, and reproduced his reflections on what he would do if he were publishing a newspaper:

¹⁵⁶ Tekena Nitonye Tamuno distinguishes these “parties” from those seeking self-government or contesting elections. *Tekena Nitonye Tamuno*, Nigeria and Elective Representation 1923-1947. London 1966, p. 41.

¹⁵⁷ *Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford*, Gold Coast Native Institutions. With Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti. London 1903.

¹⁵⁸ *Joseph Baylen*, Stead, William Thomas (1849–1912). In: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford 2004.

¹⁵⁹ A Togolander, The Passing of a Great African Editor, 20. December 1919.

¹⁶⁰ *William T. Stead*, W. T. Stead. In Hodder and Stoughton (ed.): Books Which Have Influenced Me. London 1897, pp. 25–41; Casely Hayford, Gold Coast Native Institutions, p.181; A Togolander, The Passing of a Great African Editor, 20. December 1919.

¹⁶¹ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 26-39.

¹⁶² A Togolander, The Passing of a Great African Editor, 20. December 1919.

If I ... were editing a paper on the Gold Coast, ... I would promote a small syndicate of independent men of means with patriotic fire in their hearts and would endeavour to deserve the confidence and support of the community. I would assiduously inculcate the study among aborigines of vernacular literature with a view to instructing them in matters political in their mother tongue.¹⁶³

In 1919, *The Lagos Standard* again advocated the need for education through newspapers, and expounded to do so despite all difficulties:

if twenty-five years ago there was need for educating the people in their duty to the state, for voicing[,] their needs, for making known their grievances for combating and bringing to light from their lurking places cruel wrongs[,] injustice and oppression wherever and whensoever found within the limits of the country, we, [none?] the less believe, the necessity exists in a far greater degree today.¹⁶⁴

When stressing their indispensable role in the colonial state, the Nigerian press often engaged in delineating their conceptualisation of the conduct of public criticism. They referred to a set of liberal ideals associated with Britain – and in this way contested the colonial state at its own game. In this way, and against this backdrop, they proved to be a prerequisite for “good government”.

U. Kalpagam shows that Mohandas Gandhi’s conceptualisation of public opinion¹⁶⁵ decidedly disengages from a “liberal” public sphere, as participation in it would constitute individuals as subjects of governmental power. According to Kalpagam, Gandhi sought to transcend the limits of liberal reason and with it colonial governmentality.¹⁶⁶ Contrarily, the Nigerian newspapermen framed their criticism with reference to liberal ideals, related it to the institutions of government and aimed at altering their conduct.

As there were no appropriate institutions for restraining and checking abuses in the colonial state, the newspapermen saw the press as the only means to do so. For Casely Hayford, a

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.7; Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 180.

¹⁶⁴ Our Twenty-sixth Year, 10. September 1919.

¹⁶⁵ Gandhi envisioned a “pure public opinion” which should not be a matter of support by the majority, but would be engendered by those who do penance and have the good of the people at heart. U. Kalpagam, *Colonial Governmentality and the Public Sphere in India*. In: *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, 2002, pp. 35-58, p. 54.

¹⁶⁶ Kalpagam, *Colonial Governmentality*, pp. 53-54.

newspaper should be the mouth-piece of the people and its editor a ready friend.¹⁶⁷ When in 1902 a measure to control the press was introduced in the Lagos Colony and Protectorate for the first time¹⁶⁸, the press was correspondingly furious, and continuously aired protest against the Newspaper Ordinance until it was finally passed into law in October 1903.¹⁶⁹ The main target for protest was a bond entailed in this law¹⁷⁰, requesting newspapermen to pay £500 to the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court, so that costs would be met in case of any conviction for printing or publishing blasphemous, seditious or other libel.¹⁷¹ It was felt that this “throws every difficulty in the way of proprietors and publishers”¹⁷².

According to the press, three hundred people, including Chiefs and prominent Lagosians like John Randle signed a petition to the Governor and the Legislative Council supporting the critique of the bill.¹⁷³ So too did Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams in 1903, at the meeting of the Legislative Council when the bill was read for the second time. He defended the newspapers, despite the fact that he himself had been severely criticised by the press.¹⁷⁴ For the *Lagos Standard* the protest aired by Sapara Williams and the other unofficial members of the Legislative Council left no doubt – if there ever was – that the measure should be removed.¹⁷⁵

In course of their protest against the newspaper law, the editors explained what they conceived to be the role of the press, besides being the people’s mouthpiece: “the only medium for expressing public [opin]ion”¹⁷⁶. The newspaper law of 1902 was felt to deprive the populace of a significant institution, of one of their rights.¹⁷⁷ *The Lagos Standard* complained with reference to constitutional failings:

Without universal suffrage, without representation of any kind ... without a municipality or other agency by which it may be said that the people have any voice

¹⁶⁷ A Togolander, *The Passing of a Great African Editor*, 20. December 1919, p.7; Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p.181.

¹⁶⁸ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 172-182.

¹⁶⁹ Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁰ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 177.

¹⁷¹ An Ordinance for Regulating the Printing and Publishing of Newspapers, In: *The Lagos Standard*, 30. April 1902, p. 3.

¹⁷² Lagosian On Dits. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 30. April 1902.

¹⁷³ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 177.

¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Legislative Council at Meetings held at Government House on the 11th and 26th February, 1903. In *Government Gazette* 1903, 07. March 1903 (10), pp. 172-177.

¹⁷⁵ *Janus*. Lagosian On Dits. In *The Lagos Standard*, 18. February 1903, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ Weekly Notes. In *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 10. May 1902, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ The Newspaper Ordinance, 1902. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 30. April 1902, p. 2; The Proposed Newspaper Ordinance, 03. May 1902.

or hand in the government, the Press as the only means, feeble and ineffectual [sic] as it often is, still it is the only means there is for restraining or checking abuses.¹⁷⁸

Subsequent measures aimed at restraining the freedom of expression, such as the Seditious Offences Bill of 1909 and the Newspaper Ordinance of 1917, sparked protest, public meetings and petitions.¹⁷⁹ The newspapermen protested against curtailing or denigrating the press with reference to the principle of a free press as a right of British subjects.¹⁸⁰ In the newspapermen's view, the power imbalance of crown colony government necessitated the press even more than in European countries. On the occasion of the introduction of the "Newspaper Ordinance, 1902", *The Lagos Weekly Record* argued on the importance of the press in the colonial state:

Taking into consideration the peculiar circumstances of Crown Colony Government, where the Administration is entrusted with absolutely irresponsible power and the people have no voice, the balance of political equity would rather point to giving free and unimpeded course to the office of the newspaper than in any way to embarrass and handicap its action.¹⁸¹

The Lagos Standard took the same vein. It postulated that if the press was important in European countries, it was even more so in West Africa, as it was the only medium to make the popular voice heard.¹⁸² In 1919, Thomas Jackson describes "The Native Press" as a national institution, "inseparable from advanced native ideas of culture; and it has justified its existence not only as a *sine qua non* under the Crown Colony system of government"¹⁸³ [emphasis in original]. The press was seen as a necessity, because there were no checks on local colonial government at hand. If people appealed to the authorities in Downing Street, the latter only consulted facts and findings provided by the local authority appealed against.¹⁸⁴

Besides emphasising their necessity as counterweight to the colonial state, the press claimed to know the people's needs and aspirations, demonstrated that they had knowledge valuable

¹⁷⁸ The Newspaper Ordinance, 1902, 30. April 1902.

¹⁷⁹ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 171–203.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁸¹ The Newspaper Ordinance 1902. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 26. April 1902.

¹⁸² The Newspaper Ordinance, 1902, 30. April 1902.

¹⁸³ *Our New Series*, 07. June 1919.

¹⁸⁴ The Thoughtless Tirade against the Native Press. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 19. March 1910, p. 4.

for “good government”. In 1910, the *African Mail*¹⁸⁵ of London publishes a reprint of *The Lagos Standard* stating that there is disquiet, discontent, and anxiety among the people in Southern Nigeria because of legislation that “seems to take but slight consideration of the interest of the native”¹⁸⁶. In a letter to the editor of the *African Mail*, someone who called himself West Coaster complains that the reproduction of these charges gives them an unwanted respectability. He states that people in Britain might give credit to this criticism, he cautions about taking serious what a section of the “Native Press” says. He devalues their utterances by referring to “powers” supposedly influencing the press and stresses that the authorities are carrying out a policy that is beneficial for both, black and white.¹⁸⁷ In reaction to this attack on the newspaper’s agency *The Lagos Weekly Record* publishes a treatise on “The Thoughtless Tirade against the Native Press”.¹⁸⁸ In it, measures currently causing disquiet and discontent like the Forest Ordinance, the Public Land Ordinance and the proposed water rate for Lagos, are addressed. Then, the author of *The Lagos Weekly Record*’s reply starts defending the press – the “needed though feeble instrument for voicing the Native side of matters”¹⁸⁹. He calls West Coaster ignorant of the fact that the people of Southern Nigeria know the position in which they are placed, “a position which accords to the ruler placed over him the wisdom and the right to know and dictate as to what is good for the native and what is not and to say what benefits him and what does not”¹⁹⁰. He would furthermore deny the people to know when they are influenced favourably, which they would show, if the government gives practical evidence of being beneficent in intention and purpose. The press – as the representatives of the interests of the people – saw themselves as the only ones to know the needs of the people and what was beneficent to them. They contrasted their insight to knowledge generated by the colonial machinery and embodied by the “man on the spot” – in this case meaning the colonial Governor.¹⁹¹ The educated elite did not want to be conceived as seditious. A contributor, “Adetayo”, idealises “frank intelligent criticism constitutionally made”¹⁹². The nationalists of the 1920s condemned alien rule, but still voiced their demands constitutionally, sought liberty within

¹⁸⁵ This London paper was edited by Edmund Dene Morel, an influential “friend of Africa”. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 162.

¹⁸⁶ *West Coaster*. The Native Press. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 19. March 1910, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ *West Coaster*, The Native Press, 19. March 1910.

¹⁸⁸ *The Lagos Weekly Record* published both, *West Coaster*’s letter to the *African Mail* and the “Thoughtless Tirade”, in the same issue.

¹⁸⁹ The Thoughtless Tirade against the Native Press, 19. March 1910, p. 5.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Adetayo*. A National Weakness. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 03. January 1920, p. 5.

the British Empire.¹⁹³ In the resolution passed at the first conference of the NCBWA in Accra, the congress states that its policy was

to maintain strictly and inviolate the connection of the British West African Dependencies with the British Empire, and to maintain unreservedly all and every right of free citizenship of the Empire and the fundamental principle that taxation goes with effective representation.¹⁹⁴

This explanation therefore set out a framework for criticism that was to be expected from the anticipated West African Press Union, respectively newspapers that were devoted to the national cause.¹⁹⁵

As the colonial government prosecuted criticism, the newspapermen's activities were curtailed. In 1909, the Seditious Offences Bill was enacted in Nigeria. It is considered to have been caused by a pamphlet published by Herbert Samuel Heelas Macaulay, in which he accused the Governor of maladministration, and by protest against the water rate.¹⁹⁶ The bill sanctioned criticism that excited hatred towards His Majesty or the Government.¹⁹⁷ In the beginning of the Water-Rate-Protest in 1908, Lagos saw unified protest of the educated elite, the "traditional" elite and the masses against the anticipated rate, which was to be levied in order to establish and maintain a potable water supply for Lagos.¹⁹⁸ But when the Colonial Office accused the educated elite to engage in seditious agitation, they withdrew their opposition, leaving the protest to the traditional elite and the masses.¹⁹⁹ In 1916, James Bright Davies was sentenced to imprisonment for publishing two articles considered to be offensive.²⁰⁰

Contributors and newspapermen associated "good government" with a true implementation of ideals associated with Britain, such as justice and righteousness, fair-play and equity. The local government was regarded as fallible, as deviating from this goal.²⁰¹ Correspondingly, the press positioned itself as the ones to safeguard "good government" – in line with the principles associated with Britain.

¹⁹³ Langley, Pan-Africanism, pp. 115-118.

¹⁹⁴ National Congress of British West Africa. Resolutions of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa[n], held at Accra, Gold Coast, from 11th to 29th March, 1920. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 24. July 1920, p.3.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ Coleman, Nigeria, pp. 179-182; Omu, Press and Politics, p. 182.

¹⁹⁷ Omu, Press and Politics, p. 183.

¹⁹⁸ Coleman, Nigeria, pp. 179-182.

¹⁹⁹ Rina Okonkwo, Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930. London/New York/Ontario 1995, pp. 11-15.

²⁰⁰ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 189-191.

²⁰¹ Cf. Reasons given in an invitation to support the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society: "the endeavour to promote and uphold ... those Christian ideals and traditions of freedom which have given the British government and people an honourable position in the annals of history". The Anti-slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, its Ideals and Objects. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 20. August 1910, p. 2.

Around a month after the first reading of the Newspaper Ordinance in the Legislative Council in 1902, the libel case of two railway officials against the editor of *The Lagos Standard* was decided by the Acting Chief Justice. According to Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams, this case was only the third libel case filed against the Lagos press since 1861.²⁰² George Alfred Williams, the editor of *The Lagos Standard*, was required to publish a statement that the passage under question – that W. Butter and G. Hubbard were “cooling their heels”²⁰³ between Ebute Metta and Club grounds, respectively “knocking up their hills [kicking their heels] between Yaba and the Club House during the day”²⁰⁴ – was not referring to the character of the plaintiffs. The sum Williams had to pay in order to cover the costs amounted to a one-hundredth of the projected bond for newspapers.²⁰⁵ *The Lagos Weekly Record* covers the decision in the libel case of 1902, and on this occasion seemingly fortifies its case against the Newspaper Ordinance. In the same issue, under the heading of “Criticism in West African Affairs”, criticising is first described as an ungrateful task, as people accuse the critic of acting out of base motives. Then, it is attributed with significance for the whole of the British Empire:

But there is a truth which is becoming daily more apparent, as the responsibilities assumed by the people of Great Britain in the management of subject races yearly increase with the expansion of the British Empire, it is that fair and honourable criticism is absolutely essential in the interest of all concerned.²⁰⁶

In the aforementioned “Thoughtless Tirade against the Native Press” of *The Lagos Weekly Record*, this point is made in reference to Imperialism.²⁰⁷ It would be a deviation from the rational and effectual plan if there was no confidence in the interests of the people – which were expressed in newspapers – and no interest to promote their welfare, as this would weaken confidence, loyalty and devotion. Only concern for the people’s interests and their welfare is “what constitutes the fundamental and guiding principle of all true Imperialism and embodies the policy which alone can achieve for Imperialism real success”²⁰⁸, a goal not achievable by employing force, or by resorting to the “official oligarchy”. With reference to its maiden issue, the *West African Pilot* states that it regards cooperation between

²⁰² Minutes of the Meeting of the Legislative Council at Meetings held at Government House on the 11th and 26th February, 1903, 07. March 1903, p. 167.

²⁰³ Weekly Notes. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 31. May 1902, p. 3.

²⁰⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Legislative Council at Meetings held at Government House on the 11th and 26th February, 1903, 07. March 1903, p. 176.

²⁰⁵ According to C. A. Sapara Williams, *The Lagos Standard* had to pay £5, according to *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 6 guineas.

²⁰⁶ Criticism in West African Affairs. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 31. May 1902, p. 6.

²⁰⁷ The Thoughtless Tirade against the Native Press, 19. March 1910.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

government and the press as beneficent for both, the country and the empire, when stating that “no progressive government can do without ... criticism”²⁰⁹.

What the newspapers were referring to in 1902 and in 1910, when they stressed the people’s awareness of the implications of colonial rule and demonstrated that they were essential for “good government”, finds a modified and stronger formulation in the 1920s. The press as medium expressing the public’s opinion positioned itself clearly as contender to the government’s self-appointed expertise on the people’s needs, and on what is best for them. The newspapermen evoked “education” not only when seeking to mobilise the populace to engage in politics. The administrators are positioned to be in need of education too. Correspondingly, *The Lagos Weekly Record* stated that it was only “correct knowledge of each other’s point of view that will make friendship between nations possible”²¹⁰.

The newspapermen were contesting the government’s self-portrait as trustees of the governed.²¹¹ John Payne Jackson, who was an admirer of Japan²¹², underscores that the British had to learn from Africans in order to understand them. Referencing a renowned writer on Japan, Hearn, *The African Sentinel* stated on its “raison d’être”:

We believe it was Lafcadio Hearn ... who pointed out ... the utter futility of the Western mind in being able to interpret correctly the Eastern mind. By parity of reason, this same dictum undoubtedly holds true in regard to the African mind; and, therefore, we are justified in hazarding the conclusion that no amount of getting ‘at the back of the Black man’s mind’ can enable the Westerner to interpret to the full the deep mainsprings of Native thought and action.²¹³

“Adetayo” showed the importance of criticism in this context. The administrators, who were foreigners, could not be expected to have a deep understanding of local social and political problems. Therefore, nothing could be more helpful to them than frank and intelligent criticism.²¹⁴ When announcing the first issue of its London counterpart, *The Lagos Weekly Record* states its intention to “interpret to the great British nation the thoughts that

²⁰⁹ Government and the Press. In: *West African Pilot*, 30. November 1937, p. 4.

²¹⁰ Our London Counterpart, 14. February 1920.

²¹¹ Cf. Clifford, Nigerian Council, p. 23.

²¹² Omu, Press and Politics, p. 51.

²¹³ Our Raison d’être. In: *The African Sentinel*, 17. January 1920, p. 4; Our London Counterpart, 14. February 1920. Most likely, this refers to the following passage in „Kokoro“: „Sympathy is limited by comprehension. We may sympathize to the same degree that we understand. One may imagine that he sympathizes with a Japanese or a Chinese; but the sympathy can never be real to more than a small extent outside of the simplest phases of common emotional life, – those phases in which child and man are at one. The more complex feelings of the Oriental have been composed by combinations of experiences, ancestral and individual, which have had no really precise correspondence in Western life, and which we can therefore not fully know.”

Lafcadio Hearn, Kokoro. Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life. London 1910, pp. 11-12.

²¹⁴ Adetayo, A National Weakness, 03. January 1920.

beat under the breast of her dusky sons of Negroland”²¹⁵. Besides illustrating that the “foreigners” had to learn, *The African Sentinel* explicates that it is the educated elite²¹⁶ who must assume the duty of teaching the “Westerner”:

it is obvious that it is the educated Native who, by virtue of his social experience, trained intelligence, and liberal culture is best qualified to express, and can rightly claim to be the true exponent of, the progressive ideals and aspiration of his less enlightened brethren; and, therefore, it is his sacred duty not only to protect the best interests of his fellow countrymen, but also to light up the torch which will guide the Western mind in its weary search through the labyrinthine maze of customary decrees and racial idiosyncrasies.²¹⁷

For the newspapermen, the press was the only institution providing checks on government and it was a prerequisite for “good government”. Furthermore, it was only the educated elite of Nigeria that may provide insight into Nigerian matters. *The African Sentinel* seems to clarify this point in light of “friends of Africa” and others establishing themselves as experts on Africa.²¹⁸

Therefore, ‘The African Sentinel’ derives its *raison d’être* not only as a sort of clearing house for African Press opinion but also as the chief organ of publicity in the heart of the Empire for the exposition of advanced Native thought. ... as the faithful custodian—the *fidus Achates*—of their sacred rights and liberties.²¹⁹
[emphasis in original]

1.3 Summary

In short, public communication, and therefore public criticism and public opinion, was a colonial project forasmuch as the state sought to determine its form. The role of public criticism in the colonial state was predefined by the overall colonial policy. Lugard and Clifford represent an opposition between Indirect and Direct Rule – and, therefore, two approaches to public criticism. Criticism was suppressed under Indirect Rule, and to some extent encouraged under Direct Rule.

Clifford saw the potential of public criticism – he revaluated the Legislative Council and encouraged the development of a daily press. He acknowledged these instruments for the

²¹⁵ Our London Counterpart, 14. February 1920.

²¹⁶ See chapter 3 for a delineation of competing claims for the people’s opinion voiced by the educated elite.

²¹⁷ Our Raison d’être, 17. January 1920.

²¹⁸ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 62-67.

²¹⁹ Our Raison d’être, 17. January 1920.

dissemination of information and fostering an understanding for government policy. But not even in the Legislative Council was public criticism supposed to set the political agenda; instead, it should rather mediate and potentially amend policy.

Clifford deployed public criticism in the Legislative Council to familiarise the “educated elite” with his imagination of colonial conduct. He encouraged them to cultivate “sound public opinion” – with reference to educational and moral standards set by him. To Clifford, some local forms of expressing knowledge – some descriptions of social conditions – were of no importance. He pursued that only a specific form of knowledge could circulate with any efficacy.

For the newspapermen, public criticism was an imperative of the colonial situation. Starting in the 1920s, the newspaper business underwent changes, but the newspapermen were continuously committed to the political aspect of their journalism. They alluded to British ideals and contested the government at its own game – they showed that the press was the only institution to provide checks on the local colonial government. They saw the press not only as a counterweight to the colonial state. When they portrayed their papers as exponents of the people’s opinion, styled themselves as custodians of the people’s liberties and rights, they contested the government’s self-appointed expertise on the people’s needs. They positioned themselves as educators of the government – they denied the government its presumed expertise on the needs and aspirations of the governed, their role as trustees.

2 “At it Again!” – Structure and Mechanisms of the Public Sphere

The colonial public sphere comprised various publics – diverse locations became sites of power inasmuch as they coordinated common action through speech and persuasion.¹ Different African publics sought to disseminate their discourse and their description of social realities to an ever-widening audience.² Correspondingly, relations between these African publics were conflictual and competitive.³ Besides expressing agreement on the overall role of newspapers, public communication via media featured numerous “press controversies”. The title of the chapter at hand refers to one of these conflicts between publics, in particular to an act of “mud-slinging” which arose shortly after Governor Cameron arrived in Nigeria in 1931.⁴ The investigation of this and other encounters illustrates structures and mechanisms of the public sphere and illustrates objects of contestation.

In addition to conflicts, chapter two addresses interactions between publics. It investigates how publics sought to spread their discourses and the ways they employed newspapers. By looking into publics’ exchanges with the public sphere of representative institutions – the arena colonial authorities designated for public criticism – this chapter further illustrates the dynamics of the public sphere and displays the changing approach of the colonial state to newspapers and other media. While the chapter’s focus lies on events in 1931, it also includes relevant occurrences around 1920, and provides an outlook for the 1940s.

When Donald Cameron returned to Nigeria as Governor in 1931, the press saw a prophecy come true. Under Governor Hugh Clifford (1919-1925), Cameron had served as Chief Secretary to the government. He had left Nigeria to become Governor of Tanganyika in

¹ Seyla Benhabib, Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermans. In Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 73–98, p. 78.

² Nancy Fraser, Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp.109–142, pp. 123-124.

³ Cf. Mary Ryan, *Mary, Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880*. Baltimore 1990 quoted in Fraser, Rethinking the Public Sphere, pp. 115-116; Geoff Eley, Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures. Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century. In *ibid.*, pp. 289–339.

⁴ At it Again! In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 24. June 1931, pp. 6–7

1925. In 1931 he came back to Nigeria “in the only capacity”⁵ Hugh Clifford saw open for him in 1925 – as Governor.⁶ The press published eulogies of Cameron’s administration in Tanganyika, stressed his alleged beneficence for the local population⁷ and demanded that he should live up to his reputation:

we ... feel sure that the experience gained by you as Governor ... will undoubtedly be of great benefit to this Colony and Protectorate⁸.

Cameron was remembered for his past service in Nigeria under Clifford’s reign and portrayed as the man needed at this particular time. At his arrival, Nigeria faced hardship due to the height of the Great Depression.⁹ The prices obtainable for export goods dropped, forcing Africans to increase the volume of production. Besides producers, traders, and urban employees also experienced a fall in their income and living standards. Consequently, the colonial state faced a reduction in public revenue, as receipts of import duties declined due to reduced purchase power.¹⁰ Additionally, Cameron’s predecessor Sir Graeme Thomson had spent the budget surplus on public works.¹¹ The press focussed in their description of the state of affairs – the “cankerworm of over-recurrent expenditure”¹² – on produce prices, which were lower than before the war, and declining railway revenues. Retrenchment seemed inevitable.¹³ The situation was considered to be more serious than in the slump of 1921, when Cameron had achieved “great things”. He was seen as the one to accomplish what was necessary now, as he had “that special aptitude for finance and economics needed at the present moment”¹⁴.

The preceding reign of Governor Graeme Thomson (1925-1931) is said to have pleased the Colonial Office, but in Nigeria the measures he introduced were unpopular and contested. Thomson implemented direct taxation in Lagos and five south-eastern provinces and strengthened the power of Chiefs (Native Authorities).¹⁵ The two measures complemented one another, as besides generating revenue, taxation was considered a prerequisite for the

⁵ Welcome To Sir Donald And Lady Cameron: A Thousand Times, Welcome! In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 17. June 1931, pp. 1–3; Sir Donald Returns "In The Only Capacity" In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 17. June 1931.

⁶ *Oliver Furley*, Cameron, Sir Donald Charles (1872-1948). In: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford 2004.

⁷ Address Of Welcome From The Nigerian National Democratic Party. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 19. June 1931, p. 2.

⁸ Address Of The Unofficial Members Of The Legislative Council. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 18. June 1931, pp. 6–7.

⁹ *Anthony Hopkins*, An Economic History of West Africa. 4th ed. London 1980; Furley, Cameron.

¹⁰ Hopkins, An Economic History, pp. 254-267.

¹¹ *Patrick Cole*, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos. London 1975, p. 141.

¹² Arrival of Our Governor. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 18. June 1931, pp. 1, 3.

¹³ Sir Donald Returns "In The Only Capacity", 17. June 1931.

¹⁴ Sir Donald Returns "In The Only Capacity", 17. June 1931.

¹⁵ Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, pp. 140–144; Furley, Cameron; *Fred Omu*, Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937. London 1978, p. 205.

installation of Native Authorities.¹⁶ The “Women’s War” of 1929 was the most prominent upheaval during Thomson’s governorship.¹⁷ A rumour that spread in the south-eastern provinces, the so-called palm-belt, said that besides men, women would be taxed too in 1929/30.¹⁸ In Calabar and Owerri “sitting on a man”¹⁹ eventually turned violent and targeted at Native Authorities (in this region referred to as Warrant Chiefs), Native Courts, and European factories. The military intervened and officially killed 57 and wounded 50 women in Calabar Province.²⁰ Besides a sharp decline in prices for palm produce – the predominant “cash crop” generating revenue deployable to meet tax demands –, the erosion of women’s power under colonial rule, and grievances experienced under the system of “indirect” administration, are regarded to have contributed to the protests.²¹ The collection of direct taxes, which commenced in 1928/29, was an innovation to south-eastern Nigeria; it was modelled after the system in operation in the Northern Provinces, which had already been implemented in the south-western provinces under Lugard. It employed Warrant Chiefs in tax collection.²² In Lagos, measures regarded as strengthening or introducing Native Authorities, such as direct taxation or the Native Courts (Colony) Ordinance, were opposed too.²³

Afigbo describes Thomson’s rule as “coping stone of Lugardism”²⁴. To him, the Women’s War initiated the end of “local rule” through Chiefs.²⁵ Even though Cameron is regarded as an ardent disciple of Frederick Lugard with regard to administrative policy, he seems to have been less rigid in implementing Lugardian principles.²⁶ William Ormsby-Gore²⁷ considers that, according to Cameron, Indirect Rule should be evolutionary and not static in form and function. It would be a means and not an end; the work of British officials would

¹⁶ *Adiele Eberchukwu Afigbo*, *The Warrant Chiefs. Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria 1891-1929*. London 1972, pp. 208, 212-213.

¹⁷ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 141; *James Coleman*, *Nigeria. Background to Nationalism*. 4th ed. Berkley/Los Angeles 1965, p. 174; *Toyin Falola/Matthew Heaton*, *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge/New York 2008.

¹⁸ Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*, p.236; *Ben Naanen*, “You Are Demanding Tax from the Dead”. The Introduction of Direct Taxation and Its Aftermath in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1928-39. In: *African Economic History* 34, 2006, pp. 69-102, p. 82.

¹⁹ Meetings of women – “mikiri” – decided upon this form of protest. *Judith van Allen*, *Judith*, “Sitting on a Man”. Colonialism And The Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women. In: *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6: 2, 1972, pp.165–181; pp. 175-176.

²⁰ Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*, pp. 241-242.

²¹ Cf. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*, pp. 238-239, 243; *Allison Drew*, *Female Consciousness and Feminism in Africa*. In: *Theory and Society* 24:1, 1995, pp. 1–33; Naanen, *You Are Demanding Tax*, pp. 82-84; van Allen, *Sitting on a Man*.

²² Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*, pp. 210, 231; Naanen, *You Are Demanding Tax*, pp. 70–73.

²³ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 140-144.

²⁴ Cf. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*, p. 207.

²⁵ Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs*, pp. 247-248.

²⁶ Furlley, *Cameron*.

²⁷ *K. Robinson*, *Gore, William George Arthur Ormsby-*, fourth Baron Harlech (1885-1964). In: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford 2004. Ormsby-Gore was parliamentary under-secretary at the Colonial Office (1922-1929) and Secretary of State for the Colonies 1936-1938.

but commence when Native Administration was constituted.²⁸ Cameron separated the Executive from the Judiciary, and he ensured that Native Courts would not exercise jurisdiction over “educated” Africans. Provisions concerning Native Authorities turned into concessions to the educated elite. Cameron declared that it was his intention to protect the liberties of persons from the colony or the Southern Provinces when travelling to or residing in the Northern Provinces.²⁹

Patrick Cole calls Thomson’s reign an “interregnum”.³⁰ When looking forward to Cameron’s arrival, the press compares him to Clifford and makes no mention of Thomson, a mere stopgap between two strong-handed Governors. The press seemingly summoned continuity, degraded Thomson to a makeshift Governor in bad remembrance.³¹ Anticipating Cameron, the press made clear what they expected of him when presenting for what he was remembered: “sound judgment, a cool head, firmness of purpose, kindliness, and, above all, an uncommonly high sense of duty”³².

2.1 Contesting Publics and Contested Representativeness

According to *The Nigerian Daily Times*, Cameron’s landing was “on all lips” weeks before his arrival. The streets were decorated with flags and bunting; those who had obtained tickets could watch the Governor walk down the gangway. All sections of the community were represented at the customs wharf where Cameron landed, and at the Council Chamber, where Cameron was to take his oath. People lined the streets on Cameron’s route through town, cheered and waved from windows and balconies.³³

The order of reception proceedings, the outline for leaving first impressions, had been published in *The Nigerian Daily Times* two days before Cameron arrived. It scheduled that high-ranking officials such as the Chief Justice and the Lieutenant Governors, members of the legislative institutions, local authorities like Oba Sanusi Olusi and the Lagos White Cap Chiefs, and representatives of Native Authorities of the Southern Provinces, such as a representative of the Alaafin of Oyo, the Alake of Abeokuta, the Oni of Ife and other Chiefs were presented to Cameron immediately after his landing. At the council chamber, after Cameron had taken his oath, addresses of welcome were to be read out. The order of reception proceeding permitted various sections of the community to welcome the

²⁸ William Ormsby-Gore, The Meaning of "Indirect Rule". The Principles of Native Administration and Their Application. By Sir Donald Cameron, G.C.M.G. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34:136, 1935, pp. 283–286.

²⁹ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 153.

³⁰ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 140.

³¹ Cf. Hail and Farewell. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 21. July 1931, p. 3.

³² "This Great Governor". In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 05. May 1931, p. 2.

³³ Arrival of Our Governor. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 18. June 1931, pp. 1, 3.

Governor. The programme comprised seven addresses, from the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council, the Lagos Town Council, the Lagos Chamber of Commerce, the Community of Lagos, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), the African Churches, and the West Indian Association.³⁴

The days following Cameron's arrival, the newspapers published these addresses and demonstrations of hospitality. They all appear to be position papers – declaring existing alliances to Cameron and the community. The newspapers depicted the names of all signatories of an address – which amounted to 88 names in one instance.³⁵ Their content was, for the most part, tame and obedient; all included some praise for Cameron's past services and a pledge of loyalty and for cooperation.³⁶ They were published amidst pieces of good advice for the government and for the populace in anticipation of Cameron's tenure.³⁷ About a week after Cameron arrived in Nigeria, the address of welcome presented by Henry Carr, the former Resident of the Colony³⁸, on behalf of the community of Lagos became the subject of a "press controversy"³⁹. Two groups contested to speak for the entire community of Lagos: Henry Carr greeted Cameron on behalf of the signatories of the address and their fellow countrymen of the community of Lagos.⁴⁰ The NNDP started out welcoming Cameron in representation of nine tenths of the electorate⁴¹ and concluded by welcoming His Excellency on behalf of the community of Lagos.⁴²

³⁴ Arrival of His Excellency the Governor. Order of Proceedings. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 15. June 1931, pp. 1, 3; Arrival of Our Governor, 18. June 1931.

³⁵ Address of The Lagos Community. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. June 1931, p. 7. The Lagos Daily News stated that the address of welcome of the Nigerian National Democratic Party was signed by 1,000 members and supporters of the party. Cf. Address Of Welcome From The Nigerian National Democratic Party. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 19. June 1931, p. 2.

³⁶ Cf. Address of Welcome From The Nigerian National Democratic Party, 19. June 1931, p. 2; Address of Welcome From the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council of Nigeria. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 20. June 1931, p. 2; Address of the Lagos Town Council. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 19. June 1931, p. 11; Address of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce. In: *Ibid.*, 19. June 1931, p. 11; Address of The Lagos Community, 20. June 1931, pp. 6-7; Address of the African Communion. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 23. June 1931, pp. 5, 8; Address of the West Indian Association. In: *Ibid.*, 23. June 1931, pp. 8, 9.

³⁷ Cf. A. Henderson, Helpful Views for Sir Donald. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 17. June 1931, p. 7; Our Duty to the Governor. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 23. June 1931, pp. 1–2.

³⁸ The Resident was an officer in the administrative machinery of Indirect Rule, ranked below the Lieutenant-Governors, and above District Officers. His main duty was the conduct of the provincial and "native" courts and he was held responsible for the efficiency of the public service in the respective province. Residents were styled as counsellors and advisers, but the advice they gave had to be followed. Thereby, the "native ruler" was urged to issue instructions not as orders of the Resident, but as his own. Lagos was not a Province and according to Herbert Macaulay, the post was only created to remove Henry Carr from the Education Department – Carr had none of the functions a resident normally had. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 114; Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Endinburgh/London 1922, pp. 100, 128, 201.

³⁹ At it Again!, 24. June 1931, pp. 6–7.

⁴⁰ Address of The Lagos Community, 20. June 1931.

⁴¹ Out of a total population of 126,108, only 1,601 persons voted in the Legislative Council elections of 1923. Pauline Halpern Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change. The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967*. Berkeley 1974, pp. 33, 149.

⁴² Address Of Welcome From The Nigerian National Democratic Party, 19. June 1931, p. 2.

For *The Lagos Daily News* it was not acceptable that Henry Carr addressed the Governor on behalf of the community. The paper doubted the legitimacy of the address, as no one besides the Nigerian National Democratic Party, which held all elected seats in the Legislative Council⁴³, could be representative of the people.⁴⁴ In particular, *The Lagos Daily News* doubted that the address read out by Carr was formed fairly. Names had been put on the list of signatories without consent, and those who signed the address had been put under pressure. In response *The Nigerian Daily Times* accused *The Lagos Daily News* of lying, sowing discord, and besmearing the name of Henry Carr.⁴⁵

This conflict was fought between two “networks of social solidarity and belonging”⁴⁶ – two publics – which may be characterised as two political factions of a split community. In the course of a series of interrelated conflicts, two political camps – which comprised various publics – emerged. Patrick Cole characterises the two factions as pro and anti-government parties⁴⁷, Karin Barber speaks of conservatives and radicals.⁴⁸ Taking into account their respective relations with the government under Graeme Thomson, the two factions may be depicted as an “actual” public opposed to a (numerically stronger) counter public.⁴⁹ Governor Thomson’s reign had seen close cooperation between the government and the conservatives. The measures Thomson introduced in the Legislative Council and the respective “collaborating” party faced fierce opposition from the radicals.⁵⁰ Seyla Benhabib explicates that in a given society there may be as many publics as there are discussions on the validity of norms.⁵¹ Relations between different publics are always conflictual and competitive.⁵² In the case of the addresses read to Cameron upon his arrival in Nigeria, two publics contested who was to be representative of the community of Lagos, and how and whether sections of the community should engage in the colonial public sphere.⁵³

⁴³ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 116.

⁴⁴ The Intelligencia of Lagos. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 25. June 1931, pp. 1–2.

⁴⁵ At it Again!, 24. June 1931, p. 6. For the week after Cameron’s arrival, three issues of *The Lagos Daily News* are missing in the British Library Newspaper Library (22.–24. June 1931). The paper’s attacks are therefore reconstructed with reference to *The Nigerian Daily Times*.

⁴⁶ Andreas Koller, The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction. In: *Social Science History* 34:3, 2010, pp. 261–290, p. 274.

⁴⁷ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 100–101, 132.

⁴⁸ Karin Barber, Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos. In Toyin Falola (ed.): *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honor of J. D. Y. Peel*. Durham, North Carolina 2005, pp.187–208, p. 200.

⁴⁹ Jörg Requate, Öffentlichkeit und Medien als Gegenstände historischer Analyse. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 25, 1999, pp. 5–32, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 140–144.

⁵¹ Seyla Benhabib, Models of Public Space. Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermans. In Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 73–98, p. 78.

⁵² Cf. Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, pp. 115–116.

⁵³ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 272.

In 1916 the “alliance for opposition”⁵⁴ between the educated and the traditional elite was ruptured when the government declared that the protest against the water rate was seditious and inimical to the war effort.⁵⁵ As a consequence, “educated” Lagosians – members of the People’s Union, which was formed in opposition to the planned water scheme⁵⁶ – abandoned the agitation, a move that was conceived as betrayal by the majority of the “traditional” elite, who continued the protest. Only in 1919, when Herbert Samuel Heelas Macaulay re-emerged on the political stage, did the two elites join forces again.⁵⁷ Macaulay – politician, publisher of *The Lagos Daily News*, a civil engineer by training and later informal head of the Nigerian National Democratic Party⁵⁸ – is said to have united one share of the two elites: the radicals. In doing so, he caused fierce opposition by those remaining – the conservatives –, who shared hostility towards him and opposed the political positions he stood for.⁵⁹

In Cole’s opinion the division resulting from the water rate protest is also partly responsible for the Muslim split, which centred on control over the Central Mosque and sparked far-reaching concern in 1919.⁶⁰ At that time at the latest it became evident that the activities of the Muslim community were a crucial factor in Lagos politics.⁶¹ In this conflict the Chief Imam, Lemomu Braimah, who was then in control of the Central Mosque, was challenged by a group of Muslims. The division was styled as power struggle between the Lemomu (Imam) and Jama’at (Community) parties.⁶² The latter had openly resisted the introduction of the water rate.⁶³ Eshugbayi Eleko, the Oba or “King” of Lagos, was drawn into this conflict, as he performed vital functions for the community.

For the government, the Oba of Lagos had officially had no political function since 1861, when Lagos was ceded to Britain – he was not a Native Authority. The Oba, who was called Eleko when Eshugbayi held this office⁶⁴, was the head of and mediator between other Lagos Chiefs such as the Obanikoro (the head of the Spiritual Chiefs), the Idejo

⁵⁴ See chapter 1. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 186.

⁵⁵ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 100-104, 120-157.

⁵⁶ *Richard Sklar*, *Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation*. Trenton, NJ 2004, pp. 41-42.

⁵⁷ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 100, 113.

⁵⁸ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 237; *Isaac Babalola Thomas*, *Life History of Herbert Macaulay*, C.E. Lagos 1946.

⁵⁹ Cf. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p.108; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 101; Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 66.

⁶⁰ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 100-104. Cf. *The Famous Thirteen*. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 01. December 1919, p. 4.

⁶¹ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 105-107; *Stefan Reichmuth*, *Education and the Growth of Religious Associations Among Yoruba Muslims - The Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigera*. In: *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26:4, 1996, pp.365–405, pp. 366, 369-370.

⁶² Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 103; Reichmuth, *Education and the Growth of Religious Associations*, pp. 369-370.

⁶³ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 107.

⁶⁴ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 123.

(landowning White Cap Chiefs), and the Eletu Odibo (the head of the Royal Chiefs).⁶⁵ As the colonial government assumed the Oba's control over trade and developments in Lagos⁶⁶, the Oba received a "compassionate" government pension in compensation.⁶⁷ But still, he was called to perform political functions occasionally, for instance in 1915 when the government requested that he should order his bell man to announce the water rate.⁶⁸ Despite the cessation of Lagos, the community expected the Eleko to continue his "traditional" duties. The people were loyal to him; some declared that they owed allegiance only to him and not to Britain.⁶⁹ He served as buffer and mediator between the government and the people.⁷⁰

"Traditional politics" describes a system where families compete for offices that determine their status and wealth through the distribution of income.⁷¹ Even the succession of the Obaship was contested and repeatedly provoked major disputes.⁷² Various factors contributed to the dynamics of "traditional politics". With the advent of British rule, the support of Government House gained importance, and families sought to utilize the British presence to strengthen their power.⁷³ But government "support" was at least uncertain. In general, colonial administrators had the means to dispose of unwanted "traditional" authorities. Even though the government could not remove the Eleko, as he was not a Native Authority, he depended on the government for his pension.⁷⁴ "Traditional politics" were also intertwined with Islam. Promotions within the Islamic hierarchy enabled the Oba to reward members of the community, and these titles were used when competing for offices.⁷⁵ Important Chiefs converted to Islam and eventually abandoned their faith when they had gained power.⁷⁶

In 1919, the Eleko, "traditionally" a mediator, could not settle the dispute between two groups of Muslims, the Lemomu and Jama'at parties. The latter is said to have persuaded Eshugbayi Eleko to approve the appointment of – respectively confer the titles of Balogun,

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 12, 16-18, 133.

⁶⁶ *Tekena Nitonye Tamuno*, Herbert Macaulay, Nigerian Patriot. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 1975, p. 29.

⁶⁷ *Robert Juby*, The Origins of Modern African Thought. Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. London 1968, pp. 383-385.

⁶⁸ Coleman, Nigeria, p. 195. Isaac Thomas describes the government's position as „muddled inconsistency“, Margery Perham concludes that the assumption that the office had no political significance would have left both parties in a false position. *Margery Perham*, Native Administration in Nigeria. 2nd ed. London/New York/Toronto 1962, p. 269; Thomas, Life History, p. 21.

⁶⁹ Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, p. 102; Perham, Native Administration.

⁷⁰ Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, pp. 24, 131.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 16, 24.

⁷² Baker, Urbanization and Political Change, pp. 212–213; Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, pp. 8–15.

⁷³ Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, pp. 43-44, 121.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 102.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

⁷⁶ Reichmuth, Education and the Growth of Religious Associations, p. 369.

Bashorun, Seriki Muslimi and Bey to – members of the Jama’at. This was regarded as a threatening purge by the Lemomu party.⁷⁷ The educated elite took part in the dispute, a discussion on the powers and the authority of the Eleko⁷⁸ and whether they were still appropriate followed.⁷⁹ Henry Carr and Herbert Macaulay were at the head of the two factions.⁸⁰ The former was associated with Lemomu Braimah and a group of prominent Lagosians – amongst them members of the defunct People’s Union – who supported him, such as Kitoyi Ajasa, John Randle, Adeyemo Alakija, Alli Balogun and Chief Obanikoro.⁸¹ Herbert Macaulay (later of the Nigerian National Democratic Party) stood for the Jama’at party and the unreserved defence of Eshugbayi Eleko.

On November 14 1919 the government intervened into the conflict and suspended Eshugbayi Eleko from his post over his alleged appointment of Muslim leaders, arguing he acted “contrary [to] [l]ocal custom and precedent, and [had] [been] fully aware that in so doing he was acting in defiance of the wishes of the Government”⁸². The conservatives were satisfied, the radicals were outraged. The matter – the so-called Eleko-question – subsequently centred around the recognition of and support for the Oba or “King” of Lagos. It caused major disconcertment between 1919 and 1931 – besides local mass meetings, petitions, and press campaigns, it also hit the headlines in Britain.⁸³ The Eleko-question seemingly exemplified “the entry of the masses of the city into politics”⁸⁴. “The masses” came to the fore; numerous people signed a petition in favour of Eshugbayi and protested on the streets.⁸⁵ But they had been an important feature of public criticism before.⁸⁶ The claim to speak for the masses voiced by the “educated elite” should justify public criticism⁸⁷ – the public’s opinion was contested.

⁷⁷ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 101–102; Prince Eleko's Position. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 03. November 1919, p. 4.

⁷⁸ *The Times of Nigeria* stressed that the Eleko could not appoint anyone to a post that could only be conferred by the religious community. Jacob Kehinde Coker and Richard Akinwade Savage held the view that what the Eleko did was not contrary to local custom. The Famous Thirteen. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 03. November 1919, p. 4; *Jacob Coker/Aki[n]wade*, Two Dissentients. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 03. November 1919, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 102; July, *The Origins*, p. 419.

⁸⁰ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 113; July, *The Origins*, pp. 418–422.

⁸¹ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 104; Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 108. According to Cole, Henry Carr was generally opposed to the Obaship as he held the view that it was impossible and disadvantageous to preserve “traditional” custom and institutions. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 108.

⁸² Prince Eleko's Position, 03. November 1919.

⁸³ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 101–144; Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 195.

⁸⁴ *Lawrence Frank*, Ideological Competition in Nigeria: Urban Populism Versus Elite Nationalism. In: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 17:3, 1979, pp. 433–452, p. 442; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 132.

⁸⁵ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 132.

⁸⁶ Rina Okonkwo shows that there had been competition on who should champion the popular opposition in face of proposed changes in land tenure in 1911–1913. *Rina Okonkwo*, The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society: A Re- Examination. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15:3, 1982, pp. 423–433, pp. 426–432.

⁸⁷ See chapters 1 and 3.

In 1919 the government based its decision to suspend Eshugbayi on the advice obtained from “thirteen Gentlemen”⁸⁸. A corresponding statement was issued to the press for favour of publication. It said that Hugh Clifford met with thirteen gentlemen “representing all shades of opinion among the educated sections of the community, including members of the reigning family”⁸⁹, who advised the Governor to order the deposition of the Eleko. In the discussion following this statement, *The Times of Nigeria* questioned the representativeness of “The Famous Thirteen”. It was said that they were known for their opposition to the Eleko and, therefore, constituted a “packed jury”⁹⁰. The sentiment of the community would be quite contrary:

We can assure his Excellency that the entire community of Lagos almost to a man, inclusive of the surrounding districts, comprising a population of eighty thousand souls, ... have been indulging the fond hope that ... his Excellency would have dismissed any charge against the Prince with a warning note.⁹¹

According to *The Times of Nigeria* the Governor had been misled by misrepresentation. Only a mass meeting held at Enu Owa was “an accurate manifestation and most reliable expression of the public sentiment and feeling throughout the country”⁹². The paper continued to explicate that the “gentlemen” presented to the Governor were not representative, as at least eleven out of the thirteen had no “true knowledge and estimate of public opinion and feeling of the situation”⁹³. They must have assembled and decided on their opinion before the meeting with the Governor. It was “a moral certainty” that the Governor had not called the meeting in this composition – he had not yet an intimate knowledge of the people and the country.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the group did not include a single member of the reigning family. With regard to church membership of the gentlemen, the Anglican Church was appearing in a large majority (eight out of eleven), and Catholics, Baptists and the Native African Church were not represented at all.⁹⁵ *The Times of Nigeria* indirectly presumed that the eleven gentlemen acted out of friendship to Henry Carr and disregarded the “great issues and principles, both moral and political”⁹⁶ at stake. The two publics, the conservatives and the radicals, were competing for who should have a say in the

⁸⁸ Prince Eleko's Position. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 03. November 1919, p.4.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ The Famous Thirteen, 03. November 1919.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ The Famous Thirteen. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 01. December 1919, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

matter and the papers were engaged in distinguishing the respective publics. They addressed the government in this regard rather than actually discussing the suspension's legitimacy. The portrayal of "The Famous Thirteen" as unrepresentative was apparently successful. A counter delegation, which was chosen in course of a mass meeting held at Enu Owa, convinced Hugh Clifford to reinstate Eshugbayi Eleko.⁹⁷ But in 1920 the government suspended Eshugbayi again and finally deposed him in 1925, which was a blow for the Herbert Macaulay faction. Eshugbayi was succeeded by two Obas associated with the Lemomu faction. He appealed his deportation and was reinstated in 1931 (see below).⁹⁸

The aforementioned press controversy of June 1931 shows another aspect of the conflict over representativeness. The address of welcome read by Henry Carr and the address of the NNDP, read by Crispin Curtis Adeniyi-Jones, differed in form and content. The latter reads like a formal presentation of Cameron, at the most posing covered and vague demands by referring to the Governor's past services.⁹⁹ The NNDP stated that they had "nothing but praise for Your Excellency's brilliant administrative career in East Africa, ... for all that Your Excellency has done in bettering the condition of the Natives in Tanganyika"¹⁰⁰. They knew that Cameron "carefully husbanded and augmented the financial resources of the Territory [Tanganyika, author's note]"¹⁰¹. The NNDP explicated – delineating the benchmark of expectations – that they already had "a foretaste of Your Excellency's tact, judicious decision, sympathetic and liberal consideration for the legitimate, wishes and reasonable aspirations of the governed: essentials of enlightened statesmanship which have endeared Your Excellency to the Native Community"¹⁰². In contrast, the address read by Henry Carr appears like a stock taking and more explicit identification of challenges. In addition, it poses a demand to the government regarding education:

We are also recognizing ... that our main work is to build up our strength as a people by promoting closer union among different sections of the community, and this ... can be gained only with the development of a stronger and higher type of character, and by the cultivation of an intense feeling of nationality which should be accompanied by a spread of higher and technical education ... as well as agricultural and industrial education among the masses. ... we earnestly look to Your Excellency's statesmanship, political insight and wide experience for assistance and

⁹⁷ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 103.

⁹⁸ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 123, 145-149.

⁹⁹ Address Of Welcome From The Nigerian National Democratic Party, 19. June 1931.

¹⁰⁰ Address Of Welcome From The Nigerian National Democratic Party, 19. June 1931.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

support in the creation and development of this system [a national system of education, author's note] as soon as it is possible to do so.¹⁰³

As a reaction to the points made in this address, *The Lagos Daily News* (LDN) published the NNDP's programme and emphasised that these had been the party's objectives since 1923. Therefore, it was they who stood for advocating the adoption of a system of Higher Education and a scheme of compulsory education. By their recognition of the National Congress of British West Africa, it was furthermore they who stood for nationalism.¹⁰⁴ The NNDP appears to have felt threatened by Henry Carr's address, as it claimed the party's agenda. In this regard, the LDN's denunciation of Henry Carr's entitlement to speak publicly – which could not be allowed as only the NNDP could speak on behalf of the populace – may seem as a measure to reclaim “their” agenda.

Patrick Cole shows how the conservatives countered representativeness based on mass support. According to Cole, those supporting Eshugbayi's suspension thought of the majority of Lagos as wicked, unscrupulous, unprincipled and irresponsible. In their view the majority was not necessarily right and, moreover, Lagos politics was competitive mass bribery.¹⁰⁵ In 1931 *The Nigerian Daily Times* took a very similar line. In defence of the address of welcome read on behalf of the community, the paper portrayed Henry Carr as one of the “honest men”, he was a “honourable man”, who was performing a “duty ... [he] feels himself obliged to perform as a leader in the community”¹⁰⁶. The other side, Herbert Macaulay and the “newspaper” he controlled was said to fool the ignorant class and the masses. The “Grand Spectacle” of a handful of cooks, stewards, mechanics, and market women gathering at a public place and giving him applause was a passing, empty show. And these gatherings were the only reason he continuously claimed to have a voice in anything done by the public.¹⁰⁷ The conservatives opposed representativeness based on mass support with reference to moral qualities. They summoned a hierarchical differentiation with regard to who had a right to speak – to them, class difference ensued different opportunities to speak publicly and therefore to be representative (see chapter 3).¹⁰⁸

2.2 Publicist Orientations

Publics sought to disseminate their discourse and their description of social realities to an ever-widening audience. The press was an important tool when pursuing such “publicist

¹⁰³ Address of The Lagos Community, 20. June 1931, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ *The Intelligenza of Lagos*, 25. June 1931.

¹⁰⁵ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 108, 113, 133.

¹⁰⁶ *At it Again!*, 24. June 1931, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ *At it Again!*, 24. June 1931, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁸ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, pp. 274-275.

orientations”¹⁰⁹ – it even posed a threat to other publics who were, in equal measure, seeking for approval. Even before the „press controversy“ of June 1931 in connection with Cameron’s welcome, articles published in *The Lagos Daily News* had overburdened the patience of some Lagosians. A deputation led by Kitoyi Ajasa attended the government in May 1929 and called for stopping “pernicious publications” and, if need be, allowing the suspensions of respective publications.¹¹⁰

For the deputation, the youth of the country was in “grave danger”¹¹¹ because of irresponsible local journalism, which was damaging to their character. This kind of journalism was said to expose “certain persons”¹¹² to hatred and contempt and it was considered to mainly reach the “unthinking populace”¹¹³ who formed the majority. Government and government officials were attacked too. This was an attitude most dangerous to ignore, for it would contribute to forming a class increasingly disloyal to the government, not only in Lagos.¹¹⁴ As Donald Cameron saw no offence, the matter was put by.¹¹⁵

The members of the delegation were alarmed by the assumed influence and reach of the press. Even though the newspapers boasted their importance, their circulation and revenue was small. Despite this, they had the capacity to reach a considerable share of the populace. Their impact is hard to measure, as numbers on circulation and reach are unreliable. According to Fred Omu, the newspapers started with a circulation of 200, and reached 300-500 every fortnight in the 1890s¹¹⁶, when Lagos was a town of about 30,000¹¹⁷. At their zenith in 1923, the weekly newspapers achieved a total circulation of 7,800¹¹⁸ per issue in a

¹⁰⁹ Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, pp. 123-124.

¹¹⁰ The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA): Public Records Office (hereafter PRO): CO 583/175/16/960: *Walter Buchanan-Smith*: Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers, 13.

September 1930, Enclosure A, pp. 32-33. Chief Obanikoro (Adamu Akju), Alli Balogun, S. H. Pearse, A. Alakija, Sanni Adewale and E.S. Ikoli were the other members of the delegation. TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure vi, p. 25.

¹¹¹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure A, p. 31.

¹¹² TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure vi, pp. 26-27, Enclosure A, p. 31.

¹¹³ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure A, p. 33.

¹¹⁴ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure A, p. 33, Enclosure vi, p. 26.

¹¹⁵ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Minute, 14. October 1931, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 81.

¹¹⁷ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 33; *Laurent Fourchard*, *Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920–60*. In: *Journal of African History* 47:01, 2006, pp. 115–137; Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 104. Omu assumes the population of Lagos to be 86,000 in 1891, a number almost three times higher than those provided by Baker and Fourchard for the 1891 census, namely 32,508. The following computations use the data provided by Baker and refer to Omu only with regard to the number of people literate in English in 1891, namely 5,000.

¹¹⁸ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 85.

town whose population had grown to about 100,000¹¹⁹. These circulation figures may speak for a low reach of the newspapers – around 1% in the 1890s and around 8% in 1923.¹²⁰ Omu lists poor communication, illiteracy, and the indifference to newspaper reading as possible causes. The newspapermen emphasised the lethargy of the reading public when addressing the financial difficulties they had to face.¹²¹ According to Omu, newspapers could only gain between £195 and £325 from sales in the 1890s and up to £ 455 in 1919.¹²² The numbers of sold issues might have been low, generating modest revenue for newspapermen – if the income from advertisements is not considered. But the newspaper's reach was considerably higher than the sales. Omu states – drawing on an article in *The Nigerian Times* – that a single issue was lent to between 3 and 10 people.¹²³ Taking this into account¹²⁴, the papers might have reached about 40% of the reading public¹²⁵ in 1891, and up to 59% in 1919¹²⁶. The newspapers' reach in the total population – taking into account that newspapers were read out to those being illiterate¹²⁷ – could have amounted to as much as 87% in 1891 and up to 77% in 1919.¹²⁸

The Lagos Daily News – the main cause of the aforementioned delegation's concern over local journalism¹²⁹ – sold from 1,000 to 2,000 copies between 1927 and 1933.¹³⁰ According S. H. Pearse, the paper printed 3,000 to 4,000 issues daily.¹³¹ *The Nigerian Daily Times* had a daily circulation of 2,000 in 1927 and steadily increased it to 4,500 in 1933.¹³² Herbert Macaulay purchased *The Lagos Daily News* in 1927 and became its controlling editor and

¹¹⁹ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 33. Baker lists census data for 1891, 1911, 1921, and 1931. The data for the years not covered by Baker are computed with the help of the geometric mean.

¹²⁰ These and the following calculations assume that newspapers were sold in Lagos only. Omu provides no numbers with regard to the distribution of newspapers outside of Lagos. Therefore, and due to Omu's emphasis on poor communication facilities as a hindrance to distribution upcountry, the numbers available are applied to the population of Lagos.

¹²¹ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 82.

¹²² Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 81-82.

¹²³ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 83. Omu refers to an article that states that papers were lent to three, four or more persons.

¹²⁴ The following computation applies a weighed multiplier (5,3) to take the lending of newspapers into account. It furthermore relies on the numbers on circulation as provided by Omu, namely 700 issues for *The Lagos Standard*, and 1,050 for *The Lagos Weekly Record* in 1919. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 81-82, 84.

¹²⁵ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 104; Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 81. According to Omu, 5,000 people were listed as literate in English in the 1891 census. Baker cites a literacy rate of 10% for 1921, which is assumed to be also true for 1919, correspondingly amounting to 9,386.8 people.

¹²⁶ According to such a calculation, *The Lagos Weekly Record* could have reached 59% and *The Lagos Standard* 40% of the population.

¹²⁷ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. xi. The weighed multiplier accounting for "reading out" is 13,3.

¹²⁸ *The Lagos Standard* could have reached 53%, *The Lagos Weekly Record* 77% of the population.

¹²⁹ Buchanan-Smith's dispatch includes extracts from *The Lagos Daily News* (enclosures i-v). Furthermore, both Buchanan-Smith and the delegation, refer to *The Lagos Daily News* and Herbert Macaulay when speaking of scurrilous publications. TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930.

¹³⁰ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 86.

¹³¹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure vi, p. 26.

¹³² Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 262-263.

joint proprietor.¹³³ The newspaper may be conceived as an electioneering newspaper unreservedly supporting the Nigerian National Democratic Party's agenda.¹³⁴ Correspondingly, it supported Eshugbayi Eleko's cause.¹³⁵ The self-styled "paper with a punch"¹³⁶ made exposing "hypocri[s]y, oppression, and all other humbug wherever found"¹³⁷ its chief business.¹³⁸

Herbert Macaulay was born in 1864, left for England in 1890 and received training at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London. After his return to Lagos in 1893, he was employed in the civil service as surveyor of Crown Lands. He left the Public Works Department in 1898 and became a private Licensed Surveyor.¹³⁹ At the latest in 1900 he became actively engaged in politics, he frequently contributed to the weekly newspapers.¹⁴⁰ With his pamphlet "Governor Egerton and the Railway", which disclosed corruption, he received widespread attention in 1908 and caused political upheaval.¹⁴¹ The "black Victorian"¹⁴² then dominated Lagos politics in the 1920s and the early 1930s.¹⁴³

The aforementioned delegation's concern seems to have centred on the general doings of Herbert Macaulay, of which *The Lagos Daily News* formed a prominent part.¹⁴⁴ Herbert Macaulay's charisma was the means and end of his political influence – he found the pulse of the community and his opponents lacked the popular support he enjoyed.¹⁴⁵ According to others, Macaulay only engaged in the Eleko-question to obtain popularity and wealth – "scandals" were useful for increasing the sale of "his" paper and prompted people to donate in contribution to their redress.¹⁴⁶

Herbert Macaulay's doings seem to be in line with a notion of the public sphere that describes it as place for competition in order to gain prominence and thus influence politics.¹⁴⁷ When retelling the festivities in honour of Macaulay's diamond jubilee in

¹³³ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 64.

¹³⁴ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 78; Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 60.

¹³⁵ By way of example, the paper published more than one hundred pieces on just one government commission of inquiry. Cf. *The Lagos Daily News*, 19. May 1931, p. 1.

¹³⁶ Message of Intent. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 20. May 1931, p. 4.

¹³⁷ The Press and the Public. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 25. June 1931, p. 3.

¹³⁸ According to Omu, it was hitting out vigorously at the least provocation. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 66.

¹³⁹ Thomas, *Life History*, pp. 1-6.

¹⁴⁰ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 65.

¹⁴¹ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 182-189.

¹⁴² Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 78.

¹⁴³ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁴ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, p. 4, Enclosure vi, p. 16.

¹⁴⁵ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 88-94; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 110. According to Robert July, Macaulay was a stirring public speaker, he was fluent in English and Yoruba. July, *The Origins*, p. 380.

¹⁴⁶ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 136; Okonkwo, *The Lagos Auxiliary*, p. 430.

¹⁴⁷ Benhabib, *Models of Public Space*, pp. 78-79.

November 1924, Isaac Thomas comments on Macaulay's position in this economy of popularity:

Macaulay was a man on whom nature bestowed profusely many gifts which ordinarily ensured successes. His aspect was dignified and attractive. In astuteness he towered above all who were running beside him the race for eminence as a public benefactor.¹⁴⁸

Herbert Macaulay stood up for the majority of the populace.¹⁴⁹ He himself was privileged, “educated”, wealthy, he possessed a certain status – resources that favoured political influence.¹⁵⁰ Macaulay was associated with opposition to government policies on land and taxation, and the responsibility for conflicts was repeatedly brought to his doorstep.¹⁵¹ It was typical of him to take up the issues of particular factions, to campaign against particular policies.¹⁵² This eventually earned him prominence – his popularity reached heights when he achieved victories for the respective groups. He was celebrated in 1921, when Chief Oluwa's case¹⁵³ – which centred on land tenure – was successful, in 1924 when the Jama'at congregation won control over the central mosque, and when Eshugbayi Eleko was reinstated in 1931.¹⁵⁴ Scandals – colonial injustices – served him to justify his speaking out and to convince his supporters to deal with certain topics – he could be sure that his utterances would receive the attention of both, supporters and opponents.¹⁵⁵ He drew on a general, negative attitude towards colonialism even though his sentiments were not anti-British.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁸ Thomas, *Life History*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁹ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 88; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁰ Herbert Macaulay was the grandson of Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first African Anglican bishop of Niger Territory. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 88-89. Cole describes Macaulay as great socialite of Victorian Lagos. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 111; July, *The Origins*, pp. 377, 380; cf. Thomas, *Life History*, pp. 3-5, 11-12.

¹⁵¹ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 91; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 111–112; July, *The Origins*, pp. 383, 386-388.

¹⁵² Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 89.

¹⁵³ In brief, the colonial government compulsorily acquired land in Apapa, allegedly for public purposes, in 1915. In this course, the government granted Chief Amodu Tijani (the Oluwa, a White Cap Chief) compensation only under seigneurial right and therefore only for the rents he collected. Chief Oluwa went to court and eventually to the Privy Council, which decided in 1921 that Chief Oluwa was the owner of the land and that government had to pay him a corresponding higher compensation. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 43–44; Thomas, *Life History*, pp. 18–19.

¹⁵⁴ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁵⁵ *Friedhelm Neidhardt*, Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen. In: Friedhelm Neidhardt, Jürgen Friedrichs, M. Rainer Lepsius (eds.): Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen. Opladen 1994, pp. 7–41, pp. 16, 17-20.

¹⁵⁶ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 115. Resorting to latent dislike of colonial rule also maintained the legitimacy of “traditional” authorities. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 107.

Herbert Macaulay identified with the concerns of various groups, which might be regarded as issue publics.¹⁵⁷ He managed to unite these publics in one political camp – he spoke for mixed publics.¹⁵⁸ Macaulay was their representative or advocate¹⁵⁹ – he amounted to a „public benefactor“¹⁶⁰. He managed to mobilise large segments of the population, most famously during the course of the Eleko-question – for instance when 17, 000 signed a petition calling for the reinstatement of Eshugbayi in 1922/23.¹⁶¹ Both Baker and Cole stress Macaulay’s organisational talent – apparently he recorded the activities of various Lagos clubs and societies.¹⁶² In the Nigerian National Democratic Party, which he had founded with Thomas Horatio Jackson, Crispin Curtis Adeniyi-Jones and Bangan Benjamin in 1923 to contest the Legislative Council elections,¹⁶³ Macaulay united various groups such as the Ilu Committee, the Lagos Market Women guilds, the Jama’at, and “educated” Africans.¹⁶⁴ Macaulay contributed to the foundation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the most prominent nationalist organisation of the 1940s.¹⁶⁵ His support of the party, which was spearheaded by Nnamdi Azikiwe, ensured a difficult transition – his reservoir of local power was later on deliberately transferred to one faction of the “younger” generation of nationalists.¹⁶⁶ With the help of his popularity, Macaulay provided a link between the traditional and modern elites.¹⁶⁷ He bridged the gap of unintegrated political communities, mobilized the people for political action through modern institutions.¹⁶⁸ His popularity was wholly personal¹⁶⁹, and besides unifying publics, he caused deep divisions.¹⁷⁰ He became the symbol of fighting colonial injustice, which eventually earned him the title “father of Nigerian nationalism”¹⁷¹.

¹⁵⁷ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 274.

¹⁵⁸ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 136.

¹⁵⁹ Neidhardt, *Öffentlichkeit*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas, *Life History*, p. 39.

¹⁶¹ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 132; July, *The Origins*, p. 385. According to I.B. Thomas Macaulay had the power to lead and direct people. Thomas, *Life History*, p. 39.

¹⁶² Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 89-90; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 111,138.

¹⁶³ Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 46.

¹⁶⁴ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 89, 108; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 136–140; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 44–48.

¹⁶⁵ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 92; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 138.

¹⁶⁶ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 92–93; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 56–58.

¹⁶⁷ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 114, 137.

¹⁶⁸ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁶⁹ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 93; July, *The Origins*, p. 380.

¹⁷⁰ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 91.

¹⁷¹ Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 197.

On July 2 1931, Governor Donald Cameron announced that the government would refrain from the legal proceedings regarding Eshugbayi Eleko's deposition and that he may return to Lagos as a private person.¹⁷² The events following this statement provide fruitful insight into the mechanisms of interaction between different publics. The good news most likely travelled fast and the Lagos community was in a festive mood – “the masses” set about to demonstrate, drum and sing.¹⁷³ But caution was advised. The Governor's statement explicated that the Oba's stipend would be withdrawn if his presence in town lead to a disturbance of peace and good order.¹⁷⁴ *The Lagos Daily News* published this crucial government announcement only in English, unlike *The Nigerian Daily Times*, which duly published a Yoruba translation of Cameron's statement.¹⁷⁵ After all, it was those who were reached more likely when addressed in Yoruba – “the masses” – that would have the greatest interests in this development.¹⁷⁶ *The Lagos Daily News* only referred to a Yoruba translation of the Governor's message in the *Akede Eko* – a Yoruba weekly.¹⁷⁷

Omu's explanations suggest that Yoruba papers generally supported the Nigerian National Democratic Party.¹⁷⁸ Isaac Babalola Thomas, the owner of the *Akede Eko* claims to have been adopted by Macaulay, politically speaking.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, the fact that *The Lagos Daily News* did not publish this announcement in Yoruba seems to correspond to a deliberate partition of target audiences in a concerted effort of the educated elite to reach the populace.¹⁸⁰ While one paper addressed those literate in English, the other seemingly took care of “the masses”.

In the 1920s – corresponding to the new wave of cultural nationalism – everything Yoruba was fashionable again.¹⁸¹ The Yoruba-press flourished and Yoruba found its way into the English press. By way of example, the relaunched *Times of Nigeria* repeatedly published Yoruba proverbs.¹⁸² Even *The Nigerian Pioneer* – an English weekly and mouthpiece of the

¹⁷² Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 149–150. Since 1925 lawyers were appealing against Eshugbayi's deportation. In March 1931 the Privy Council delivered a judgment which is said to have destroyed the government's case against the Eleko. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 145-149. Cameron furthermore prompted Oba Sanusi Olusi – who was declared Oba in 1928 – to leave the Iga Idunganran – the Oba's palace. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 123.

¹⁷³ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 149-150.

¹⁷⁴ In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 02. July 1931, p. 1; Government Announcement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 02. July 1931, p. 1. The papers published identical announcements.

¹⁷⁵ Government Announcement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 03. July 1931, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ July, *The Origins*, p. 380.

¹⁷⁷ *The Akede Eko*. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 04. July 1931, p. 1; Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 59, 66.

¹⁷⁸ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 59. According to Barber, the *Eko Akete* was allied with NNDP. Barber, *Translation, Publics*, p. 202.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas, *Life History*, p. I.

¹⁸⁰ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, pp. 190, 198.

¹⁸¹ See chapter 1.

¹⁸² Cf. *The Times of Nigeria*, 23. February 1920, 1. March 1920, 8. March 1920.

conservatives, edited by Kitoyi Ajasa¹⁸³ – published selected texts in Yoruba. The respective texts usually were disreputable for the radicals.¹⁸⁴ It appears that publication of Yoruba pieces by *The Nigerian Pioneer* – which was regarded as imitation by the Yoruba press¹⁸⁵ – resulted from fear of the power of the masses and as a measure to expand the paper's influence.¹⁸⁶

Karin Barber demonstrates the importance of considering the implied readerships of newspapers for a historical analysis of the public sphere and argues that implied publics were convened for a purpose, in pursuit of bringing “different sections of the population ... into new collective relationships”¹⁸⁷. Whereas in the nineteenth century the elite's vision of a Yoruba national cultural identity was disseminated to the hinterland elites, it was projected “downward” to the Lagos masses in the 1920s.¹⁸⁸ Correspondingly, the Yoruba paper *Eko Akete* stated that its purpose was to inform those who do not speak English of what was going on.¹⁸⁹ According to Barber, the papers addressed changes in the public spheres and the educated elite sought to widen their constituency. Starting from the 1920s, the Yoruba-language press was employed to reach the lower classes.¹⁹⁰ Correspondingly, the Yoruba papers started to feature “labour” as a complementary foundational myth of “national” dignity and future progress.¹⁹¹ In 1933 *The Comet* – then a weekly edited by Duse Mohammed Ali¹⁹² – featured articles on the British Labour Party and on a Labour Bureau in its “Yoruba Column”¹⁹³.

Herbert Macaulay cultivated an inner circle of allies and associates in which the representatives of “traditional” institutions were featured prominently. Only his word, besides that of important Imams, elders, and Chiefs, seems to have amounted to gospel.¹⁹⁴ The *Daily News* may have targeted African clerks facing a “Colour-Bar” and the youth who was proud to be educated in English but could not find a job.¹⁹⁵ The paper might be regarded as a link to the educated elite and not so much as a means for top-down control of “the masses” – the notion held by the aforementioned delegation. The paper might have been an institution announcing and disseminating the previously negotiated party line to the

¹⁸³ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 43-45.

¹⁸⁴ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, p. 200.

¹⁸⁵ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, pp. 200-201.

¹⁸⁶ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 31.

¹⁸⁷ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, p. 190.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Akede Eko*, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁹⁰ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, p. 201.

¹⁹¹ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, p. 202.

¹⁹² Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 66-68.

¹⁹³ Cf. *The Comet*, 7. October 1933, 9. December 1933.

¹⁹⁴ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 90; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 48.

¹⁹⁵ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, p. 201.

educated elite, “the masses” might have been reached differently – for instance through the Yoruba papers.

Besides print media, drumming and similar processions were important for spreading information and as public demonstrations. Drumming and the singing of songs in the streets may be regarded as “expression of the polity”¹⁹⁶. Cole describes these activities as local newspapers and propaganda leaflets. Most songs were political in nature.¹⁹⁷ Ayodeji Olukoju shows that opposition to the introduction of currency notes in course of the currency crisis of 1916-1920 was voiced by drumming and protest in the streets.¹⁹⁸ *The Nigerian Pioneer* speaks of “disgraceful scenes” when reporting that some hundreds had paraded in the streets singing and verbally abusing certain members of the community (such as the conservatives Henry Carr, Kitoyi Ajasa, Alli Balogun and Orisadipe Obasa).¹⁹⁹ Drumming was regulated by permits or passes²⁰⁰ and the singing of abusive or scurrilous songs or words in the street or any “place of public resort” was fined.²⁰¹ Olukoju describes drumming performed by Muslim youth furthermore as an act of registering their presence in a “Christian” community²⁰² – the drumming, singing, and dancing was staged on Sundays and seems to have disturbed religious services purposefully.²⁰³ According to Cole, the drummers’ association was an important asset to the Nigerian National Democratic Party.²⁰⁴ At least at one instance *The Nigerian Pioneer* suspects “educated” persons behind insulting songs.²⁰⁵ The colonial government was aware of means of distributing information besides the print media. The importance of these means becomes evident when looking into the

¹⁹⁶ By way of example, Sandria Freitag shows for northern India that public enactments of stories „constituted a fundamental form of expression of the polity – a form that we may take as a kind of ‘public opinion’, admittedly quite different from that characteristic of western civil society but nonetheless crucial in shaping and defining legitimate political organization of the state“. Sandria Freitag, Enactments of Ram's Story and the Changing Nature of "the public" in British India. In: *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 14:01, 1991, pp.65–90, pp. 67-68.

¹⁹⁷ Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, p. 138.

¹⁹⁸ Ayodeji Olukoju, Nigeria's Colonial Government, Commercial Banks and the Currency Crisis of 1916-1920. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30:02, 1997, pp. 277–298, p. 294; Abeokuta Notes and News. Prohibition of Drumming on Sundays. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. November 1919, p. 6a.

¹⁹⁹ Rambling Notes & News. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 02. December 1921, p. 8; cf. Rambling Notes and News. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 07. October 1921, p. 9; Singing of Offensive Songs in the Streets. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 17. July 1931, p. 1.

²⁰⁰ In Abeokuta, permits for drumming were issued after paying a respective charge. Abeokuta Notes and News. Fees for Permits to Drum. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 06. February 1920, p. 7. Drumming and processions of any kind, including funeral processions, were allowed only after application for a pass. Rambling Notes and News. The New Police Street Order. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 04. March 1921, p. 6; Rambling Notes & News. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 02. December 1921, p. 8; Sunday Street Drumming. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 14. July 1931, p. 3.

²⁰¹ Singing of Offensive Songs in the Streets. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 17. July 1931, p. 1.

²⁰² Olukoju, Nigeria's Colonial Government, p. 294.

²⁰³ Prohibition of Drumming on Sundays. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. November 1919, p. 6a; Rambling Notes & News, 02. December 1921; Sunday Street Drumming, 14. July 1931.

²⁰⁴ Cole, Modern and Traditional Elites, p. 138.

²⁰⁵ According to the paper “[t]he songs bore the marks of having been composed by some one able to read and write and not unacquainted with rhymes”. Rambling Notes & News, 02. December 1921.

suspension of Eshugbayi in 1920. While in England supporting Chief Oluwa's case, Herbert Macaulay gave an interview to the *Daily Mail* in which he spoke of the importance of Eshugbayi Eleko for Nigeria. The local colonial government interpreted Macaulay's statements as distortion of historical facts. It requested that Eshugbayi distribute a denial of Macaulay's statements via his bellman and town crier. Eshugbayi sent a corresponding statement to the Lagos press for publication, but refused to disseminate the statement otherwise. Consequently, Eshugbayi was suspended. The government justified this measure with Eshugbayi's refusal to distribute a revocation in the form the government requested of him.²⁰⁶

For their respective audiences, the papers fulfilled dynamic and active roles – they amounted to a “form of and a process for forming solidarity and a sense of belonging”²⁰⁷. The Yoruba papers provided a platform for discussion, produced works of historiography, contributed to ethnogenesis, and fostered a Yoruba literary culture.²⁰⁸ This was also true for the English press²⁰⁹; by way of example they emphasised that they were for discussion. In a notice to readers and correspondents, *The Lagos Weekly Record* explicated that they invite contributions from all quarters and that it is their aim and ambition to provide readers with an opportunity to give publicity to their views on current matters.²¹⁰ When publishing an article on “miscegenation” in 1936, *The Comet* invited readers to contribute to the matter in its pages and columns.²¹¹ About a month after the publication in *The Comet*, *The Nigerian Daily Times* joined the discussion under the title “That Marriage Question” and subsequently featured reader's views on the topic.²¹²

The readerships of the papers in the respective languages were overlapping. For instance, when discussing retrenchment in the English papers in 1931, contributors referred to each other's arguments, even if they were published in another newspaper.²¹³ Yoruba papers furthermore sought to widen their audience by “translation” of texts into English. According to Barber, bilingual papers convened two publics simultaneously, which were

²⁰⁶ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 126-128.

²⁰⁷ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 265.

²⁰⁸ Barber, *Translation, Publics*, pp. 188-189, 191, 196, 203.

²⁰⁹ Apparently intending to produce works of historiography, *The Nigerian Pioneer* announced a series of biographies and started with a Swedish philosopher and his work on African plants. The “Pioneer” Biographies. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 24. October 1919, p. 8.

²¹⁰ Notice to Our Readers and Correspondents. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 30. August 1919, p. 4.

²¹¹ Men and Matters. In: *The Comet*, 04. January 1936, p. 5.

²¹² *Ebun Alakija*, That Marriage Question. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 01. February 1936, p. 5.

²¹³ Cf. *Humphrey*: Retrenchment or Reductions? In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. August 1931, p. 10; *Akin*: Correspondence. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 21. August 1931, p. 1; *Fairplay*: Retrenchment Versus Reduction. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 25. August 1931, p. 9.

“partly overlapping, partly nested within each other, and partly independent from each others”²¹⁴.

Newspapers apparently contributed to the cultivation of an „imagined community“²¹⁵. In view of politicians surpassing themselves in their commitment to nationalism and unity it can be no surprise that *The Nigerian Daily Times* featured a series of articles by Ernest Ikoli on Nigeria in 1931.²¹⁶ His account of impressions collected on a nine-month trip of the country – Ikoli presumes he is the first “native Nigerian writer” who undertook such a journey²¹⁷ – might have aimed at demystifying “Nigeria”, to create understanding for and a sense of belonging to this entity. Like other contributions this serial might have been more than transiently popular.²¹⁸ In view of frequent demand of back issues, *The Nigerian Daily Times* announced that it will make available bound volumes of the paper – “bound in stiff boards and with strong cloth back”²¹⁹ – each month to those who book copies in advance.²²⁰

Recalling the implied readership of *The Lagos Daily News*, this and other English papers seem to have fulfilled a rather static function as “institutions,” too.²²¹ The NNDP and the staff of *The Lagos Daily News* were aware that Eshugbayi’s fate, at least financially, depended on the maintenance of peace and order in Lagos.²²² On July 3 *The Lagos Daily News* urged the people to refrain from drumming when celebrating Eshugbayi’s return and warned members of the party against the use of taunting songs, parables, and insinuations. This appeal, given out by the NNDP, was voiced in English, not in Yoruba.²²³ The language chosen gives a clue to the reasons for this publication besides actually directing “the masses”. Most likely, the party and the paper sensed that this occasion may provoke acts considered a violation of the government’s condition.²²⁴ Therefore, the appeal may be

²¹⁴ Barber, Translation, Publics, p. 190.

²¹⁵ Cf. *Benedict Anderson*, *Die Erfindung der Nation*. Zur Karriere eines folgenreichen Konzepts. Exp. ed. Berlin 1998, pp. 39-47.

²¹⁶ Address of The Lagos Community, 20. June 1931; *The Intelligenza of Lagos*, 25. June 1931; A Vital Issue. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 10. August 1931, p. 3; *Ernest Ikoli*, Round Nigeria by Road and Rail. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 29. September 1931, p. 10. The series of articles was published in September and October 1931.

²¹⁷ *Ernest Ikoli*, Round Nigeria by Road and Rail. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 29. September 1931, p. 10.

²¹⁸ *Anderson*, *Die Erfindung der Nation*, pp. 36-37.

²¹⁹ The "Daily Times" in Volume Form. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 05. September 1931, p. 7.

²²⁰ An Announcement. Bound Volumes of "The Times". In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 26. August 1931, p. 7.

²²¹ See chapter 1.

²²² This condition forms part of Cameron’s announcement. Government Announcement, 02. July 1931.

²²³ *C. Adeniyi-Jones/E. Moore/H. Macaulay*, Halt and Read! To All Whom it May Concern. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 03. July 1931, p. 1.

²²⁴ In his first address to the Legislative Council in 1931, Cameron stated that he had been warned that Eshugbayi’s return might cause a breach of the public peace. ADDRESS by His Excellency the Governor delivered at a Meeting of the Legislative Council of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Lagos on 20th July, 1931. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. August 1931, pp. 1–4, p. 1. *The Lagos Daily News* recalled that some people

regarded as a declaration of position – a dissociation in anticipation of acts perceived as a breach of the peace. The paper's implied audience was mostly English speaking and therefore also included government officials.

On July 7 *The Nigerian Daily Times* points out „acts of hooliganism“ which occurred in the course of the processions celebrating Eshugbayi's return on the 3rd and 4th of July.²²⁵ Trayfuls of bread had been scattered, food prepared for sale had been carried away and bottles of palm-wine had been snatched from hawkers. Furthermore, “hooligans” had been freely singing subtle suggestions or abuses which might have caused a breach of the peace – despite warnings from the party leaders.²²⁶ Well-known persons like Kitoyi Ajasa, Henry Carr, Chief Obanikoro and Orisadipe Obasa had been featured in vulgar songs, which were the exclusive weapons of the mob and the illiterate masses. The paper stated that there would be danger of unrest if the “promiscuous abuses” by the mob were permitted any longer.²²⁷

At least twice public peace appeared to be in jeopardy. On July 20 eleven men were brought before the Police Magistrate Court for assembling together whilst carrying weapons, publicly exhibiting banner, emblem, and flag calculated to promote animosity between persons and factions, and for conducting a procession without licence on July 17.²²⁸ On July 21 Karimu Kotun was temporarily arrested. He was charged with “conducting himself in a manner likely to cause a breach of the peace” and using abusive language with the intention to annoy B[u]raimoh Wonderful.²²⁹

On July 20 Donald Cameron, for the first time addressing the Legislative Council as Governor and Commander-in-Chief, referred to

a political situation of perhaps some delicacy which developed in this town in the early days of this month, a situation which I had been warned might be charged with a certain element of danger to the public peace.²³⁰

NO DANGER FOR PUBLIC PEACE Cameron continued to express his appreciation for the efforts “which have been exercised by certain gentlemen of Lagos who have used their

had said it would remain to be seen whether the arrival of the Prince was an occasion for rejoicing. When the Joy and Shouting Die. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 29. July 1931, p. 2.

²²⁵ Halt! In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 17. July 1931, p. 6.

²²⁶ The Hooligans at Work. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 07. July 1931, p. 6

²²⁷ Halt!, 17. July 1931.

²²⁸ Police Court News. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. July 1931, p. 8; Conviction of Gambari Hooligans. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 20. July 1931.

²²⁹ Karimu Kotun Remanded on Bail. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 23. July 1931, p. 1.

²³⁰ Return to Lagos of Prince Eshugbayi Eleko. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 04. August 1931, p. 1; ADDRESS by His Excellency the Governor delivered at a Meeting of the Legislative Council of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Lagos on 20th July, 1931. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. August 1931, pp. 1–4, p. 1.

influence to attain the end that I have just indicated”²³¹. For *The Lagos Daily News*, it was them and the NNDP who needed to be given credit for the fact that Eshugbayi’s return did not endanger the public peace. They had published calls to refrain from singing taunting songs, parables, or insinuations and to refrain from political processions to the Oba’s palace.²³² As soon as they knew about it, *The Lagos Daily News* pointed out irresponsible mischief makers to the authorities.²³³ Furthermore, the paper alluded to the fact that the mischief makers are among “the opposite camp”²³⁴. Why should anybody fight or create disturbance while rejoicing because of Eshugbayi’s return?²³⁵ The paper depicted the culprits who were brought to the Police Magistrate Court – picking up the phrase coined by *The Nigerian Daily Times* – as “hooligans” and demonstrated that these mischief makers could not possibly be associated with the NNDP. The eleven men – the “Gambari Hooligans” – had aimed to create a riot at the Central mosque, which was under the control of the Jama’at.²³⁶ The fact that the “hooligans” were Hausa seemingly implied association with Lemomu Braimah and the faction in rivalry with the Jama’at.²³⁷ When summing up the matter in court, the judge, C. C. Francis, explicated that the evidence satisfied him that the accused men were guilty of the charges. The men had conducted an unlawful procession – Hausa men would, in his opinion, not be engaged in celebrating Eshugbayi’s return. For *The Lagos Daily News*, those “hooligans” could, therefore, not be associated with the NNDP.²³⁸ Moreover, *The Lagos Daily News* stressed that they had repeatedly called for peace between the two factions.²³⁹ The second incident threatening the public peace was similarly disassociated from the NNDP and *The Lagos Daily News*. Karimu Kotun – “A Refined Hooligan”²⁴⁰ – allegedly attacked B[u]raimoh Wonderful, an artist who illustrated a banner for people to carry about the town.²⁴¹ This banner was made to celebrate Eshugbayi’s return as it featured him sitting between W. Wells Palmer²⁴² and Herbert Macaulay.²⁴³

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Native Songs - No Surprise. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 07. August 1931, p. 2. Besides the warning issued on July 3, the president of the NNDP urged people to refrain from political processions to Iga Idunganran or on the streets – in the interest of public peace – on July 24. No Political Processions At Present. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 24. July 1931, p. 1.

²³³ Native Songs - No Surprise, 07. August 1931. In the editorial of July 20 the paper acknowledges *The Nigerian Daily Times* for letting the cat out of the bag – that some people were planning to bring riot to town – but criticises the journal for misleading the authorities as to who the real hooligans were. Well Done!!, 20. July 1931.

²³⁴ Native Songs - No Surprise, 07. August 1931.

²³⁵ K’AIYERO! In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 22. July 1931, p. 1.

²³⁶ Conviction of Gambari Hooligans, 20. July 1931.

²³⁷ Baker, Urbanization and Political Change, pp. 108–109.

²³⁸ Hooligans Caught Red-Handed. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 21. July 1931, pp. 3–4, p. 4.

²³⁹ A Vital Issue. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 10. August 1931, p. 3.

²⁴⁰ A Refined Hooligan! In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 22. July 1931, p. 1.

²⁴¹ Police Court News. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 10. August 1931, pp. 1–3, p. 2.

²⁴² W. Wells Palmer was one of Eshugbayi’s counsels when contesting his deposition at the Supreme Court of Nigeria. The Eleko Case, 03. July 1931.

In addition to acts of dissassociation, *The Lagos Daily News* was not shy to proclaim that was capable of influencing the people:

It is no self-praise nor exaggeration when we say that we are to-day enjoying the confidence of nearly the whole of Nigeria as well as of many negroes scattered all over the world. This makes it the more important that we should always be careful in directing the masses especially in Lagos.²⁴⁴

It was difficult to pilot a paper and to shape public opinion aright.²⁴⁵ At the same time, the paper insisted that it was not manipulating its readers. Herbert Macaulay would never interfere with “the candid opinion of the editorial chair based upon the will of the people, nor ruthlessly over-ride public opinion”²⁴⁶. *The Lagos Daily News* portrayed itself as an institution that stood for cooperation and appealed to readers to tell their friends to read the paper and in this way join the campaign for peace and good government.²⁴⁷ Herbert Macaulay would have the power to enlighten the government.²⁴⁸ Compared to that strategy of securing influence, the warnings issued by *The Nigerian Daily Times* appear as a rather modest attempt to rally the people for their cause.²⁴⁹ Contrary to *The Lagos Daily News*, this paper did not claim to influence the populace. Nevertheless, it was equally engaged in demonstrating its compliance with the authorities.

Besides acting as projection screens for compliance and cooperation, newspapers fulfilled rather trivial functions too. They made utterances not only public, but official – the words these media carried were weighty.²⁵⁰ This formality was associated with any newspaper – it was not monopolized by the more government-friendly newspapers such as *The Nigerian Daily Times* or *The Nigerian Pioneer*. In the newspapers people announced when they changed their names and government issued announcements to various papers for favour of publication.²⁵¹

²⁴³ A Refined Hooligan!, 22. July 1931. Karimu Kotun was acquitted and *The Nigerian Daily Times* sensed base motives behind the whole affair. Truth Prevails. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 17. August 1931, p. 6. Likewise, *The Nigerian Pioneer* describes the incident as act of besmearing the name of Karimu Kotun. Re Police V. Karimu Kotun. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 21. August 1931, p. 7.

²⁴⁴ When the Joy and Shouting Die, 29. July 1931.

²⁴⁵ HERBERT MACAULAY AND OURSELVES. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 13. August 1931, p. 3.

²⁴⁶ HERBERT MACAULAY AND OURSELVES, 13. August 1931.

²⁴⁷ A Last Word. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 17. August 1931, p. 1.

²⁴⁸ Thomas, Life History, p. 39.

²⁴⁹ Cf. The Hooligans at Work, 07. July 1931; Halt!, 17. July 1931.

²⁵⁰ Ruth Watson, Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan. Chieftaincy & Civic Culture in a Yoruba City. Athens, Ohio 2003, pp. 159-163.

²⁵¹ By way of example, in 1921 the Acting Governor forwarded to the editors of *The Lagos Weekly Record* and *The Nigerian Pioneer* instructions with regard to the observation of the third anniversary of the Armistice. Letters to the Editor. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 05. November 1921, p. 6; Chief Secretary[s] Office. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 04. November 1921, p.7.

2.3 Publics and the Public Sphere of Representative Institutions

Despite the publics' efforts – their criticisms, their self-portrayals as institutions for cooperation, as necessary features of good government in the press – the colonial government did not consider these utterances as significant contributions when assessing the conduct of their government. For Clifford, criticism and scrutiny of government policies aired outside the Legislative Council were negligible (see chapter 1). His imagination of a realm for public criticism centred on the “formal, largely face-to-face public sphere of representative institutions”²⁵². African publics engaged in the public sphere of the Legislative Council and continuously voiced their criticism in the press.

For the colonial government, deliberations on the policy for the greatest good of the greatest number was permitted only in the Legislative Council.²⁵³ In this regard, Cameron shared an understanding with Clifford. When introducing a Legislative Council in Tanganyika in 1926, he desired to make it a strong and active body, an efficient part of the machinery of government.²⁵⁴ He aimed to impart to the public what the government was doing or attempting to do.²⁵⁵ Measures achieved in consultation appeared better and more effective to him. He regarded “African gentlemen” on the council capable of representing some aspects of the “native” point of view. But in general, the interests of the people were represented by the Governor and members of the administrative service until the people could speak for themselves.²⁵⁶

Access to this forum for public criticism was restricted and the government was never outnumbered. In contrast to the previous composition of similar assemblies, Clifford's refashioned Legislative Council established the right to vote and the eligibility to stand for election. This was based on income – probable voters and candidates had to demonstrate that their income was no less than £100 per annum.²⁵⁷ Elected members of the council were considered to be representative of the municipal area of Lagos only, as the proportion of

²⁵² Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 274.

²⁵³ Minutes of the Proceedings of a Meeting of the Legislative Council of the Colony of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Public Offices, at 3 o'clock p.m., on Thursday, the 28th August, 1919. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 03. October 1919, pp. 7–8, p. 7; *Hugh Clifford, Nigerian Council. Address, 1920*. In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: *Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Nigerian Council. Nigeria 1920, 1923*, p. 17.

²⁵⁴ *Donald Charles Cameron, My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria*. London 1939, p. 206.

²⁵⁵ Cameron, *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria*, p. 206.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 207–208.

²⁵⁷ According to James Smoot Coleman, the salary of most Africans in the civil service almost met this threshold. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 155.

educated persons in it was large.²⁵⁸ Therefore, the overall area of the colony was complemented by one nominated member. In the refashioned Legislative Council, the members representing the Southern Provinces (six) still were to be nominated by the Governor.²⁵⁹ The prerequisite for nomination was knowledge of the English language. In a discussion with J. A. Harding, Clifford declared he would be able to find corresponding African merchants or Europeans representing the Provinces.²⁶⁰ In addition to representatives of the people, European commercial interests were represented prominently in the Legislative Council. Out of the eighteen “unofficial” – non-governmental – representatives, eleven represented the populace, the others various commercial interests. The local Chambers of Commerce – which were communities of interest of expatriate firms that dominated the overseas trade – the chambers of mines, and other commercial, banking, and shipping interests were represented by Europeans.²⁶¹ The government held a clear majority, not only because “there was no way in which an alternative Government could take over should the actual one be defeated”²⁶². Clifford, for the moment, saw “a strong, and within limits [an] autocratic Government”²⁶³ as essential.²⁶⁴

With regard to the procedure of the Legislative Council, Clifford envisioned an opening session in which the Governor should deliver an address reviewing the financial and political position of the colony. Then, a select committee should consider and report upon the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the coming year – which was the main purpose of and therefore the main topic discussed in the Legislative Council.²⁶⁵ It was up to the Governor to call further sessions of the body during the year. In this context, finances

²⁵⁸ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: *Hugh Clifford*: Legislative Council: Reconstruction, 26. March 1921, p. 114.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁶⁰ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, Minute, Alfred John Harding, 10. June 1921, p. 124.

²⁶¹ Hopkins, *An Economic History*, p. 168; *Ayodeji Olukoju*, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations. Fiscal Policy and Mercantile Pressure Group Activity in Nigeria, 1916-1933*. In: *African Studies Review* 38:01, 1995, pp. 23–50, p. 26; TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, pp. 113, 116.

²⁶² *Rex Niven*, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope. Memoirs of a Colonial Servant*. London 1982, p. 141.

²⁶³ *Hugh Clifford*, Address by His Excellency the Governor at the Opening Meeting of the Legislative Council, October 31st, 1923. In: Clifford, *Hugh KCMG: Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Legislative Council of Nigeria, 1923-1925*. Nigeria 1923-1925, pp. 1–7, p. 2.

²⁶⁴ The government was represented by twenty-seven members (including the Governor), of which fourteen were normally resident at Lagos. Besides members of the Executive Council, the highest ranking secretaries, and the Senior Residents, Clifford urged that departments in constant contact with the public, namely Railway, Public Works and Post, should be represented in the council. The Legislative Council allotted eighteen unofficial members, of whom eight would normally be resident in Lagos. The majority of the unofficial members (fourteen) were nominated by the Governor. TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, pp. 112, 116.

²⁶⁵ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, p. 101; *Tekena Nitonye Tamuno*, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State, 1898-1914*. London 1978, p. 128.

could be addressed again, pending questions could be answered, and matters arousing the interest of the public could be debated.²⁶⁶ According to Rex Niven, the budget sessions lasted for some days whereas the other meetings of the council were short. The Residents – who ideally accounted for more than a third of the official representation²⁶⁷ – were seldom allowed to open their mouths. It was the Governor himself who presided over meetings, and he was undoubtedly a partial chairman.²⁶⁸ The Governor could veto or ignore decisions taken by the Legislative Council.²⁶⁹

The unofficial members of the Legislative Council directed numerous questions to the government.²⁷⁰ This might be regarded as an extension of addressing injustices in the press. In his biography of Herbert Macaulay, Isaac Thomas shows the background to questions posed in the Legislative Council at two sessions in 1924. These questions addressed the validity of work permits in the provinces.²⁷¹ In the course of a dispute over landownership Herbert Macaulay, a licensed surveyor, was employed to survey land in Iroko in February 1923. While doing so, he was expelled on the order of the Alaaḡin of Oyo founded on the fact that he had not announced his intended travel to Iroko to either the Alaaḡin or the Bale of Ibadan. Macaulay had only announced his visit in a letter to the Senior Resident, Captain William A. Ross. Before Macaulay left as ordered, Captain Ross – who maintained the Alaaḡin’s decision – interrogated him. Ross explicated to Macaulay that he was surveying land which was the subject of a border dispute between Oyo and Ibadan – a matter that was being dealt with by the Lieutenant-Governor.²⁷² The proceedings of Macaulay’s interrogation were published in *The Lagos Weekly Record* in May 1923. But not until February 1924 Joseph Egerton-Shyngle – the first Lagos member of the Legislative Council – posed questions regarding the work permit of a licensed surveyor in the Protectorate. In the Legislative Council he asked whether “a British-born subject” could be expelled from Oyo by Native Authorities whilst engaged in a professional service. Would this not establish a precedent at once dangerous and derogatory?²⁷³ Not satisfied with the answer given – the government would have had no intention to ask the Alaaḡin to reconsider his decision – the question is posed again at the Council session of March 1924, in a different form. Which Yoruba Custom or Law would be broken by surveying land?²⁷⁴ The matter is discharged

²⁶⁶ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, pp. 117-118.

²⁶⁷ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, p. 116.

²⁶⁸ Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope*, pp. 140-141.

²⁶⁹ Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, p. 27.

²⁷⁰ July, *The Origins*, p. 382.

²⁷¹ Cf. Thomas, *Life History*, pp. 24-37.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 33-34.

²⁷³ Cf. *Egerton Shyngle*, Legislative Council Debate 11. February 1924, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁷⁴ Cf. *Egerton Shyngle*, Legislative Council Debate 31. March 1924, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 37.

with the answer that it would be a grave breach of custom and law to show complete disregard of the authority of Chiefs.²⁷⁵

Overall, the elected members saw themselves as “mere recording instruments of official sweet will”²⁷⁶, unable to influence colonial policy. It was also improbable that the press could actually influence government policy or its attitude. Nevertheless, *The Lagos Daily News* took credit for the government’s concern over the budget deficit in 1931. According to the paper they had called for an investigation into the “Cacoethes Squandermania Administrationis” for the last two years and they were now more than glad that their cries had not fallen on deaf ears in Downing Street.²⁷⁷ In fact, the local press’ criticism mostly followed the proceedings of the Legislative Council and did not set the political agenda – just as Governor Clifford had imagined (see chapter 1). The newspapers published the questions posed in the Legislative Council, but left them largely uncommented.²⁷⁸

The press announced the meetings of the Council, (re)printed the meeting minutes and the questions posed in the sessions after they were published in the *Government Gazette*.²⁷⁹ It seems the *Government Gazette* was the only source providing substantial information about the discussion held in the Council. According to Rex Niven, there was only a small public gallery with a limited number of seats in the Legislative Council. Those willing to attend the sessions apparently had to compete with the wives of the official members for seats.²⁸⁰ *The Lagos Daily News* reproduced the order of proceedings of the Council meeting of July 20-21 1931 the day after the session was held.²⁸¹ The Minutes of the meeting were published in *The Nigeria Gazette Extraordinary* on July 31 1931. But it was only on August 4, the weekend and one working day after this publication, that the paper referred to Cameron stating in the Legislative Council that there was no element of danger to the public peace in the return of the Eleko.²⁸² Starting about a week after the minutes of the meeting had been published in *The Nigeria Gazette Extraordinary*, the main topic of the Governor’s speech, namely retrenchment, was discussed in the press. *The Nigerian Pioneer*, which held a constant

²⁷⁵ Thomas, *Life History*, pp. 24-37.

²⁷⁶ C. C. Adeniji-Jones, *Political and Administrative Problems of Nigeria*, 14-18. In: *Nigeria, Legislative Council Debates*, 3. May 3 1926, 18-20 quoted in: *July, The Origins*, p. 389.

²⁷⁷ RETRENCHMENT IN NIGERIA. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 12. August 1931, p. 3.

²⁷⁸ Cf. The Legislative Council. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 11. August 1931, pp. 9–10. This study does not provide a detailed account of the discussion of these questions in the press, which could only be supplied by further studies. Drawing on the material consulted in the course of this study, the conduct of the elected members in Council was scrutinized for the first time in 1938 (see chapter 3).

²⁷⁹ Cf. Minutes of the Proceedings of a Meeting of the Legislative Council of the Colony of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Public Offices, at 3 o'clock p.m., on Thursday, the 28th August, 1919. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 03. October 1919, pp. 7–8; The Legislative Council, 11. August 1931.

²⁸⁰ Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope*, p. 141.

²⁸¹ The Legislative Council of Nigeria. Ninth Session. 1931. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 21. July 1931, p. 1, The Legislative Council. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 22. July 1931, p. 2.

²⁸² Return to Lagos of Prince Eshugbayi Eleko, 04. August 1931.

circulation of 500 issues a week in 1927-1933²⁸³, began its multi-part publication of Cameron's speech to the Legislative Council on August 14.²⁸⁴

Compared to the 1920s, the 1930s suggest a diversification of voices criticising the government in the press. Governor Clifford's speech to the Nigerian Council in December 1920 – which was published before the sitting of the body²⁸⁵ – provoked articles in both, *The Nigerian Pioneer* and *The Lagos Weekly Record*.²⁸⁶ In the latter a treatise titled „Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin or A Critical Review of Sir Hugh Clifford's Address to the Nigerian Council“ was serialized from January to July 1921 (thirteen issues), when it was succeeded by coverage on the Oluwa land case. The paper was preoccupied with this critique as it sometimes hardly featured any other content. The author of the series is not disclosed and no other comments on Clifford's speech – as for example letters to the editor – were published.²⁸⁷ The criticism following Cameron's speech to the Legislative Council in 1931 generally corresponded to the editorial policy of the papers.²⁸⁸ Moreover, in *The Nigerian Daily Times*, various persons contributed to the discussion with their letters to the editor, using aliases such as Janus, Economist, Humphrey, Fairplay or A Nigerian.²⁸⁹

In short, the elected members of the Legislative Council may be regarded as associates of a “weak public” with strong communicative power.²⁹⁰ Through elected members publics gained access to “the public sphere of representative institutions”²⁹¹ and could, therefore, stress their moral influence towards the electorate and the community in general. But within the Council, these associates amounted to a weak public with no actual political power. In addition to the fact that the Council's proceedings became more and more academic, this may have contributed to increasing disinterest in the Legislative Council.²⁹²

²⁸³ Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 262-263.

²⁸⁴ ADDRESS by His Excellency the Governor delivered at a Meeting of the Legislative Council of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Lagos on 20th July, 1931. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. August 1931, pp. 1–4.

²⁸⁵ Cf. TNA: PRO: CO 583/94/2274: *Hugh Clifford*: Address to Nig. Council (29. Dec 20), 24. December 1920, Minute, John Alfred Harding, 28. January 1921, p. 361.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin or A Critical Review of Sir Hugh Clifford's Address to the Nigerian Council. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 29. January 1921, p5; Address of the Governor in Council. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. January 1921, p. 5.

²⁸⁷ At least not in 1921.

²⁸⁸ *The Nigerian Daily Times* preferred all round cuts of wages to the retrenchment of civil servants, *The Lagos Daily News* advocated retrenchment of redundant officers. The *Nigerian Daily Times* featured one piece – subtitled “The other Side of the Question” – that urged for retrenchment instead of a cut in wages.

²⁸⁹ Janus, All Round Cuts --- A More Equitable Measure! In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 7. August 1931, p. 11; Economist, Reduction Vice Retrenchment. In: Ibid., 13. August 1931, p. 5; Humphrey, Retrenchment or Reductions? In: Ibid., 20. August 1931, p. 10; A Nigerian, Retrenchment. In: Ibid. 24. August 1931, p. 9; Fairplay, The Other Side of the Question. In: Ibid., 25. August 1931, p. 9.

²⁹⁰ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 274.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² July, *The Origins*, p. 389.

Utterances voiced by “unofficial” members of the Legislative Council were only one instrument when trying to influence colonial policy. The people’s representatives and the representatives of economic interest held different positions – as is to be expected. For various reasons it was more likely that the interests of the government met with those of the European commercial community than with those of the African population – one of the most general factors being a mutual interest in the promotion of imperial economic interests.²⁹³ But some issues, such as the proposed introduction of (additional) export duties, divided government and commercial interests.²⁹⁴ In these cases business interests resorted to all means available to influence colonial policy in their favour. The measures taken by the commercial interests resembled to some extent those taken by African publics. Both groups relied on a cluster of means to build up a pressure group.²⁹⁵

Both the educated elite on behalf of the populace and business interests organized in chambers of commerce called meetings and passed resolutions that embodied grievances, forwarded these to the government, or pressed for redress in the Legislative Council.²⁹⁶ Their interests were furthermore publicised in the press – *The Nigerian Pioneer* followed a pro-European-business editorial policy.²⁹⁷ But besides these measures, business interests could resort to means not available to the representatives of the populace. The business community gave banquets in honour of the colonial Governor or other dignitaries, and used after dinner speeches to illustrate their points. Furthermore, through membership in councils, committees and boards instituted by the government to advise on various matters, business interests could exert influence on politics.²⁹⁸ Until the 1930s Africans were excluded from these bodies.²⁹⁹

Local European business interests had a close relation to their metropolitan counterparts. For A. J. Harding, the Europeans working for expatriate firms were “kept so much in leading-strings that they hardly venture to express any opinion on a matter of public interest, without the consent of their principals thousands of miles away”³⁰⁰. Their organisations – such as the Lagos Chamber of Commerce – were “mere appendages of the

²⁹³ Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, p. 29.

²⁹⁴ Cf. Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, p. 30.

²⁹⁵ Cf. *Marika Sherwood*, Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891-C. 1940. The Genesis of Underdevelopment? In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30:02, 1997, pp. 253–276; Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*.

²⁹⁶ Coleman, *Nigeria*; Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, pp. 26–27; Thomas, *Life History*.

²⁹⁷ Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, p. 28.

²⁹⁸ Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, p. 27.

²⁹⁹ Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 153-154.

³⁰⁰ TNA: PRO: CO 583/100/19595: Clifford, Legislative Council, 26. March 1921, Minute, John Alfred Harding, 2. June 1921, p. 123.

metropolitan ones³⁰¹, for instance of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. Therefore, business interests could advocate their causes to the colonial government and to the Colonial Office at the same time.³⁰² Nigerians were linked to Africans living or being trained in the metropole too. Associations based in London, such as the West African Student's Union, fostered the discussion of African affairs.³⁰³ Furthermore, Nigerians sent delegations to London to advocate for their interests.³⁰⁴

Only in the 1940s did the media's interest for the Council rekindle temporarily. By way of example, *The West African Pilot* published a series of reflections on the Legislative Council, demanded that that Council debates should be published, and disseminated a call for the installation of at least one loudspeaker so that the speeches could be heard well.³⁰⁵ When Governor Arthur Richards introduced a new constitution for Nigeria by publishing a respective White Paper simultaneously in Lagos and London in March 1945³⁰⁶ and pressed for its quick approval in the Legislative Council in May, the nationalists reacted with a storm of criticism.³⁰⁷ They resented that Richards had introduced the constitution to the Legislative Council without consulting them or public opinion. Furthermore, they decried the constitution's deficiencies – amongst them no provisions for securing greater participation or sensitivity to public opinion.³⁰⁸

The press might have been a factor influencing colonial policy in the nineteenth century when papers aired views in favour of the expansion of British influence, which met with the interests of aggressive officials.³⁰⁹ Even though the press was devalued later on, the government did not disregard the press and subscribed to local newspapers.³¹⁰ In the late

³⁰¹ Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, p. 28.

³⁰² Olukoju, *Anatomy of Business-Government Relations*, pp. 28-29.

³⁰³ Philip Serge Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*. Charlottesville 2000, pp. 95-102.

³⁰⁴ By way of example the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society sent thirteen Chiefs from Yorubaland to give evidence before the West African Lands Committee in 1913. Okonkwo, *The Lagos Auxiliary*, p. 427. See also the delegation of the National Congress of British West Africa (chapter 1).

³⁰⁵ Samuel Akisanya, Mr. Samuel Gives Impression of Legco Session. In: *The West African Pilot*, 15. April 1941, pp. 1, 5; Legco Debates. In: *The West African Pilot*, 08. April 1943, p. 2; Legco Loudspeakers. In: *The West African Pilot*, 09. April 1943, p. 2; cf. Zik: Nigerian Legislative Institutions (20). In: *The West African Pilot*, 27. May 1941, p. 2.

³⁰⁶ Nigerian Progress. In: *The Times*, 13. March 1945, p. 5.

³⁰⁷ Ezeora Kalu, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria. An Analytical Study of Nigeria's Constitution-Making Developments and the Historical and Political Factors that Affected Constitutional Change*. London 1964, p. 76.

³⁰⁸ Kalu, *Constitutional Developments*, pp. 76-77.

³⁰⁹ Gustav Deveneaux, Public Opinion and Colonial Policy in Nineteenth-Century Sierra Leone. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9, 1976, pp. 45-67.

³¹⁰ Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope*, p. 13; Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 12. The local press proved useful for the Colonial Office too. A. J. Harding attached an extract of *The Nigerian Pioneer* to a dispatch sent in by Clifford in order to illustrate what the Governor said in an address at Abeokuta. TNA: PRO: CO 583/85/17703: *Hugh*

1920s the Colonial Office became aware of the utility of mass media. At the first Colonial Conference in 1927, the implications of film and radio for the colonies were associated with educational purposes, for formal schooling and spreading general knowledge about health and economic development – a field of application advocated throughout the 1930s.³¹¹ With the advent of the Second World War, media became instruments to provide propaganda for imperial defence purposes. In 1939 a Colonial Film Unit was established and consigned with producing films explaining war and enlisting co-operation in the war effort.³¹² Correspondingly, the Secretary of State urged the appointment of Information Officers in the Colonies.³¹³ In Nigeria this officer – who had only a small office in the Secretariat – was complemented with or incorporated into a Public Relations Office in 1944.³¹⁴ The newspaper's contents and “public opinion” were now closely watched.³¹⁵ *The West African Pilot* welcomed the establishment of this “liaison” between the government and the people of Nigeria – but cautioned that this office should not amount to a “Censor of Press Morals”³¹⁶. Besides distributing propaganda materials like pamphlets, films, songs, and the publication of the *Nigerian Review*, the Information Office sought contact with the local press.³¹⁷ But editors did not attend the periodical meetings, such as press conferences, that were set up.³¹⁸ To the government, reports in the papers were misleading and articles calculated to encourage discontent with the government.³¹⁹ The press was supplied with news, but the results were unnoticeable – the papers continued to be “inconsequential” in

Clifford: Egba Govt. Revenue from Tribute Tax, 18. March 1920, Mintue, John Alfred Harding, 31. May 1920, p. 168.

³¹¹ TNA: PRO: CO 323/1400/11/7004: International Colonial Institute, 1936; *Hilda Matheson*, Broadcasting in Africa. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34:137, 1935, pp. 387–390, pp. 387, 389; *Rosaleen Smyth*, The Development of British Colonial Film Policy, 1927-1939, With Special Reference to East and Central Africa. In: *The Journal of African History* 20:03, 1979, pp. 437–450, pp. 437, 440, 447.

³¹² Smyth, The Development of British Colonial Film Policy, pp. 439-440. The Future of Public Relations was discussed as early as 1941 – mainly with regard to supporting education. TNA: PRO: CO 875/11/1: Public Relations. The Future of Public Relations, 1941.

³¹³ *Rosaleen Smyth*, The Genesis of Public Relations in British Colonial Practice. In: *Public Relations Review* 27, 2001, pp. 149–161, p. 154.

³¹⁴ Our Public Relations Office. In: *The West African Pilot*, 05. January 1944, p. 2; *Emmanuel Mordi*, Wartime Propaganda, Devious Officialdom, and the Challenge of Nationalism during the Second World War in Nigeria. In: *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 18:03, 2009, pp. 235–257, p. 248; Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope*, pp. 191-196.

³¹⁵ The Public Relations Department of the Colonial Office, which was created in 1942, features a series of Reports on Public Opinion in various dependencies. Cf. TNA: PRO: CO 875 Colonial Office: Public Relations Department, later Information Department: Registered Files.

³¹⁶ Our Information Office. In: *The West African Pilot*, 10. April 1941, pp. 1, 2; Our Public Relations Office, 05. January 1944.

³¹⁷ TNA: PRO: CO 875/7/10: Propaganda. Nigeria. Progress Reports, 1942-1943.

³¹⁸ TNA: PRO: CO 875/7/10: Propaganda, 1942-1943, Report on Activities of the Information Office. For the Half Year Ending June 30th, 1942, p. 74, Report of the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending December, 1942, p. 57, Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending June 30th, 1943, p. 35.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Report of the Activities of the Information Office. Quarter Ending December, 1941, pp. 83-84.

their selection of news.³²⁰ According to Progress Reports relations between government and the press improved only gradually – when regular meetings became less formal, editors started to attend.³²¹ The papers were more interested in post-war constitutional and economic development and African news material than reporting on the war.³²² They felt that if they gave up African grievances for “European News”, they would lose the confidence of their readers.³²³

After the war public relations efforts centred on the promotion of good relations between the colonies and Britain, on showing the advantages of the Western democratic “way of life” compared to Communism, and – seemingly in anticipation of future political changes – on promoting the Commonwealth of Nations.³²⁴ Drawing on “Education for Citizenship” – deliberations in anticipation of eventual self-government – the media were employed in an effort to implant imaginations of democracy and nationalism. Films and documentaries were again seen as aides to mass education.³²⁵

2.4 Summary

In the colonial public sphere, the public’s opinion was contested. At large, Lagos politics was dominated by two political camps, the conservatives and the radicals. Various publics were attached to one of the two factions. These “networks of social solidarity and belonging”³²⁶ in each case sought to argue convincingly that they embodied the voice of the entire community. These demonstrations were of special importance vis-à-vis the government and sought to advocate the respective group’s views. Different publics claimed legitimate representation with reference to mass support or by invoking class difference.

In the 1920s and early 1930s the dynamics of the public sphere may be described as an economy of popularity. By continuously addressing colonial injustices, and being associated with their redress, Herbert Macaulay apparently won the race for eminence as a “public benefactor”. He was regarded as a representative or advocate of the interests and needs of the people. This way, Macaulay could easily bridge the gap between unintegrated political communities and achieve the mobilization of “the masses” and the educated elite for political action along his lines.

³²⁰ Ibid., Report of the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending December, 1942, p. 57.

³²¹ Ibid., Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending 30th September, 1943, p. 24; Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope*, p. 193.

³²² TNA: PRO: CO 875/7/10: Propaganda, 1942-1943, Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending March 1943, p. 45; Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending June, 1943, p. 34.

³²³ Mordi, *Wartime Propaganda*, p. 240.

³²⁴ Smyth, *The Genesis of Public Relations*, p. 157.

³²⁵ Smyth, *The Genesis of Public Relations*, pp. 158-159.

³²⁶ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 274.

Newspapers contributed to the formation of a sense of belonging as they offered topics for discussion and provided a platform for debate and dialogue. Furthermore, they deliberately linked the discussions of distinct groups and enabled them to build rapport. They also served as projection screens for cooperation in relation to the government, and were the chief organ of public criticism. But for colonial administrators, the Legislative Council was the only arena designated to the discussions of the public good. Access to this “public sphere of representative institutions”³²⁷ was restricted by income and its composition ensured that the government was never outnumbered. For politicians, newspapermen, and communities of interest of expatriate firms the Legislative Council was only one arena in which they advocated their interests. The elected members of the Council may be regarded as an extension of their respective publics. They continuously addressed their issues in the council, but overall, they felt powerless. The governments approach to media changed in the 1930s – but rather than acknowledging the criticisms they carried, they were employed as instruments for the distribution of colonial opinions.

³²⁷ Ibid.

3 “Bidding Forth in its Nascent Growth” – Conceptions of Public Opinion

Nigerian newspapermen and politicians in Lagos both agreed upon and greatly differed in their conceptions of public opinion. Examining this discourse allows a range of notions regarding the entitlement to represent public opinion to be identified. Tracing how and under whose leadership newspapermen and politicians regarded public opinion to emerge may shed light on the formation of a momentum strong enough to contest colonial rule. Public opinion – critical publicity constituting public choice – may describe the outcome of a quest for agreement and cohesion, the voice of a united front contesting for their notion of the public good. It is a crucial component of nationalism and may be associated with persons or organisations that seem to be entitled to utter it. Newspapermen and politicians constantly strove for a strong public opinion as it was only “bidding forth in its nascent growth”¹.

The previous chapter shows that politicians and newspapermen contested public opinion by voicing claims for legitimate representation. Moreover, they debated what should be uttered in the sphere of public communication via media. They disallowed issues and views in reference to specific mechanisms of exclusion. Investigating conceptions of public opinion therefore reveals a conflict about which forms of knowledge should constitute public choice and therefore what forms of knowledge were to prevail.²

Late in 1942 the Nigerian press had made a request to visit Britain “in the interest of the war”³. The *West African Pilot* argued that West Africa’s efforts in connection with the war deserved a wider publicity and that a visit to Britain would link the bond of association between the two peoples ever more tightly.⁴ The British Council eventually invited the journalists – an invitation which may have been related to efforts by the colonial office to “manage” nationalism.⁵ In July 1943 the Colonial Office signalled willingness to discuss

¹ A Reason for Our Faith. In: *The Nigerian Times*, 05. April 1910, p. 4.

² David Scott, *Refashioning Futures. Criticism After Postcoloniality*. Princeton, N.J. 1999, p. 45.

³ Nigerian Editors To Britain. In: *West African Pilot*, 22. May 1943, p. 2; The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA): Public Records Office (hereafter PRO): CO 875/7/10: Propaganda. Nigeria. Progress Reports (1942-1943), 1942-1943, Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending December, 1942, n.d., p. 57.

⁴ Nigerian Editors To Britain, 22. May 1943.

⁵ John Flint, 'Managing Nationalism'. The Colonial Office and Nnamdi Azikiwe, 1932-43. In: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27:2, 1999, pp. 143–158, p. 153.

issues arising for the colonies after the war.⁶ But the visit was also staged at a time when Information Officers lamented the reluctance of the Nigerian press to report on the war (see chapter 2) – the visit may have simply been a welcome opportunity to kindle Nigerians' interest in the war.

In June 1943 Nnamdi Azikiwe, editor of the *West African Pilot*, Mallam Abubakar, Imam of the *Gaskia Ta Fi Kwabo*,⁷ and Isaac Babalola Thomas, editor of the *Akede Eko* and five more journalists from British West Africa formed the West African Press Delegation. The delegation was accompanied by Rex Niven, soon to be an Information Officer in Nigeria.⁸ For the newspapermen, the visit to the metropole was a welcome opportunity to attain publicity for African concerns besides advertising the colonies' contributions to the war effort.⁹ Before going to London, Azikiwe published his "Political Blueprint of Nigeria", a series of articles featuring a detailed road map to self-government within 15 years – a "friendly discussion with the Government on exactly what aspect we want Nigeria to assume, in the political sphere, in the world of tomorrow"¹⁰. At a reception in honour of the Press Delegation in London, T. J. D. Thompson of the *Freetown Daily Mail* states that the primary object of their visit was to see the war-time life of Britain. He assures those present at the reception of the delegation's solidarity with regard to the war. But Thompson also delineates the aspirations all colonies share: representative government and institutions.¹¹ The delegation was given an impression of life in England, the newspapermen met with various high ranking government officials and influential "friends of Africa"¹² and discussed the colonies' prospects.¹³ While in Britain, the West African Press Delegation composed and published a memorandum entitled "The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa"¹⁴ – masterminded by Nnamdi Azikiwe and mirroring his "Political Blueprint". After his return

⁶ *Oliver Stanley*, House of Commons Debate, 13. July 1943, vol 391, cols 48-49.

⁷ A news sheet under this title was published since 1939 by the Literature Bureau at Zaria, which was part of the Education Department of the Northern Provinces. History of Hausa Paper Is Given In Legco. In: *West African Pilot*, 07. March 1945, pp. 1, 2.

⁸ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Zik" Urges Building Of A National Front. In: *West African Pilot*, 19. October 1943, pp. 1–2, p. 1; Rex Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope. Memoirs of a Colonial Servant*. London 1982, pp. 190-191. On leave in Britain (from after Christmas 1942 to the late summer of 1943), Niven spent three months with the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Information to learn about "information". Fred Omu, *Fred Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937*. London 1978; Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation*. Trenton, N.J. 2004, p. 56; TNA: PRO: CO 875/7/10: Propaganda, 1942-1943, Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the quarter ending June, 1943, n.d., p. 35; Welcome Mr Niven! In: *West African Pilot*, 25. October 1943, p. 2; cf. *West African Pilot*, 19 October 1943, p.1.

⁹ Cf. S. Bosab, Failure To Publish Activities Of Press Delegation Is Censured. In: *West African Pilot*, 28. September 1943, pp. 1, 4.

¹⁰ Our Political Blueprint. In: *West African Pilot*, 15. April 1943, p. 2. The "Political Blueprint" was published in March and April 1943.

¹¹ British Ideals Of Self Government. In: *The Times*, 06. August 1943, p. 7.

¹² Flint, Managing Nationalism, pp. 154-155.

¹³ Azikiwe, "Zik" Urges Building Of A National Front, 19. October 1943.

¹⁴ Press Memorandum Pleads For Internal Self-Government. In: *West African Pilot*, 26. October 1943, pp. 1, 3, p. 1.

to Nigeria, Azikiwe pledged ever more strongly for unity, the settlement of internal differences, nation-building, a “National Front” in order to achieve legitimate aspirations. There was a sense of urgency to stand united and Azikiwe refers to corresponding viewpoints of “friends that we have abroad”¹⁵.

In Azikiwe’s “Political Blueprint” the press is only one amongst other agencies interested in the future of the colonies.¹⁶ But after the visit of the newspapermen to Britain, the press – not only in his view – became a crucial factor in the country’s aspirations. The press could render a unique service as it was time for a common West African point of view.¹⁷ It could guide and direct the great changes¹⁸, it would champion the course of Nigeria¹⁹; Azikiwe styled the press delegation as “Ambassadors of Goodwill”²⁰. The nationalists were encouraged by Oliver Stanley’s “significant statement”²¹ as Secretary of State for the Colonies, according to which the future of the colonies lay in their own hands – the Nigerian press repeatedly referred to this declaration.²² It was time to agree on topics and opinions and to contribute to the course of events. The press was indispensable for achieving this goal.

3.1 On Public Opinion

Newspapermen and politicians reflected on the dynamics of Nigerian politics and on how they could achieve their political goals. Nigerian journalism was political journalism right from the start (see chapter 1). With newspapers and political parties Africans sought to influence the course of events. Discourses on public opinion mirror newspapermen and politician’s aspirations for a strong voice when challenging colonial power.

In April 1910, when launching *The Nigerian Times*, James Bright Davies gave insight into his conceptualisation of public opinion. To him, “the confused jumble of tongues, notions and ideas which passes current[ly] and is generally put forward as the opinion of the country, is not public opinion”²³. Only if taking the term in the widest sense, public opinion was “bidding forth in its nascent growth, if even it can be regarded as having emerged at all out

¹⁵ Azikiwe, “Zik” Urges Building Of A National Front, 19. October 1943, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Nnamdi Azikiwe*, Political Blueprint of Nigeria (1). In: *West African Pilot*, 25. March 1943, p. 2.

¹⁷ A Common Viewpoint. In: *West African Pilot*, 19. October 1943, p. 2.

¹⁸ WASU Urges Common Views Among West African Press, 19. October 1943, p. 3.

¹⁹ Bosah, Failure To Publish Activities Of Press Delegation Is Censured, 28. September 1943.

²⁰ Cf. *West African Pilot*, 20 October 1943, p. 2. In a series entitled “Ambassadors of Goodwill” Azikiwe gives a detailed account of the activities of the Press Delegation.

²¹ A Common Viewpoint, 19. October 1943.

²² Bosah, Failure To Publish Activities Of Press Delegation Is Censured, 28. September 1943; A Common Viewpoint, 19. October 1943. Stanley made this statement most likely when in Nigeria in September 1943.

TNA: PRO: CO 583/263/18: Nigerian Youth Movement Representations, 26. September 1943.

²³ A Reason for Our Faith, 05. April 1910.

of an embryonic state”²⁴. Comparing a plurality of voices – the “confusion of tongues”²⁵ – to the story of the tower of Babel, *The Nigerian Times* stated that it was no wonder that the political, social, and economic fabric of the nation is threatened with decay and ruin under a ruthless government. According to Davis, a consonance of opinions may constitute public opinion that is able to exert pressure on the authorities. In this way the view of the imagined community of the governed could contest the government’s self appointed expertise on the people’s needs effectively, only then public opinion could amount to “critical publicity” that informs public policy and embodies public choice.²⁶ Thereby, with regard to its concern for the public good, public opinion was idealized as calling for the utilitarian ideal of “the greatest good for the greatest number”. Relating “public opinion” to the colonial state *The Nigerian Times* stated that “[u]nder the Crown Colony system by which we are governed, the public opinion of this country stands absolved from any political complexion whatever”²⁷. The party which the “public opinion” of this country ought most assuredly to acclaim was the constant reminder that the government should do “all that tends to make the people happy and contented”²⁸.

Public opinion is not a given, or simply emerging, rather it is the result of a continuous social effort²⁹ – in the Nigerian press, public opinion was usually addressed with regard to its deficits. Davis’ engagement with the “jumble of tongues” referred to mud-slinging and abuse current in the Nigerian papers.³⁰ Correspondingly, *The Times of Nigeria* distanced itself from “sensationalism and ... scurrilous and scandalous attacks on the personal and private character of individuals”³¹. This was characterised as “cankerworm ... sapping the vitals of ... national life”³². In line with this assumption, appeals for stopping destructive attacks were made in reference to solidarity. In 1933 *The Comet* published two letters to the editor, both calling for unity. One called for brotherhood in contrast to “bite over everything that

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Craig Calhoun, The Public Sphere in the Field of Power. In: *Social Science History* 34:3, 2010, pp. 301–335, p. 303; Friedhelm Neidhardt, Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen. In: Friedhelm Neidhardt, Jürgen Friedrichs, M. Rainer Lepsius (eds.): Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen. Opladen 1994, pp. 7–41, p. 8.

²⁷ A Reason for Our Faith, 05. April 1910.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann/Winfried Schulz/Jürgen Wilke, Publizistik. Massenkommunikation. Frankfurt am Main 1990, p. 262.

³⁰ Cf. Omu, Press and Politics, p.60. For Omu, Richard Akinwande Savage had a penchant for mud-slinging and abuse. In the “press controversy” addressed in the previous chapter, *The Nigerian Daily Times* blames *The Lagos Daily News* for lying, sowing discord, and besmearing the name of Henry Carr.

³¹ A Reason for Our Faith, 05. April 1910.

³² Ibid.

turns up”³³ in order to achieve progress, the other demanded mutual support to render it possible for Africans to rise³⁴. *The Nigerian Times* stated that its concern was not with individuals but with measures taken by the government – it called for a focus on specific topics, on public issues.³⁵

For newspapermen and politicians “education” could achieve the desired consonance of opinions and focus on specific topics. It would facilitate attaining their goal – a strong, healthy and vigorous public opinion that had overcome its “embryonic state”. The task of educating was assigned to the “intelligent and educated members of this community”³⁶. In this context, “education” seemingly alluded to persuasion. Newspapermen and politicians sought to convince people of their cause.

In 1910 *The Times of Nigeria* stated that public opinion must be brought

under proper training and be educated under intelligent direction; otherwise it is brute force. With such education and training we shall be enabled to comprehend and appraise at their true value whether the measures of the government under which we live appertain to our benefit or harm.³⁷

In 1931 the Nigerian National Democratic Party gave a clue to the topics addressed ideally. When publishing the party line in connection with the arrival of Governor Donald Cameron (see chapter 2), *The Lagos Daily News* listed as the second objective of the party: “To educate and organise public opinion upon the principles of Democracy or Elective Representation.”³⁸

In a small booklet entitled “Youth Charter and Constitution and Rules”, the Nigerian Youth Movement (see below) stated as its foremost aim to unify “different tribes of Nigeria”³⁹ – to encourage means that foster better understanding and co-operation so that they may come to have a common ideal.⁴⁰ Correspondingly, the second object of the movement was “[t]o educate and organise public opinion to a higher moral and intellectual lev[e], so that national consciousness may be developed and the achievement of the

³³ *An Observer*. The Ijebu. In: *The Comet*, 30. September 1933, p. 22.

³⁴ G. Okanrende, A Parable. In: *The Comet*, 30. September 1933, p. 22.

³⁵ A Reason for Our Faith, 05. April 1910; Calhoun, *The Public Sphere in the Field of Power*, p. 303; Neidhardt, *Öffentlichkeit*, p. 8.

³⁶ A Reason for Our Faith, 05. April 1910.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The Intelligenza of Lagos. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 25. June 1931, pp. 1–2.

³⁹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: *Bernard Bourdillon*: Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Nigerian Youth Movement, n.d., p. 20.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

common ideal made possible”⁴¹. The Nigerian Youth Movement strove for leadership in the expression of public opinion.

In 1919 *The Lagos Standard* explicated that any person who, “whether in his way or out of it”⁴², took part in questions affecting the public – the greatest good of the greatest number – deserved and demanded to be considered a Public Man. Even more, the man who *lived* for the good of the greatest number – and no less than that – would be a Public Man.⁴³ The concern with the public good was not limited to the Public Man, it was a duty of every citizen – the qualities associated with the Public Man can be found again in discussions of “civic rights”, in discourses on citizenship. Starting in May 1931, *The Lagos Daily News* repeatedly ran editorials addressing civic duties. A citizen “should go the length of interesting himself in what, for instance, would contribute to the welfare of his fellow-citizens”⁴⁴. It was a civic “right” of everybody to be in communication with any government department with regard to “the removal of anything which such people may consider derogatory to the health of all in their vicinity”⁴⁵. Interrogating the question of a person’s worth, *The Lagos Daily News* explicated that in the world’s estimation of greatness money could not be ruled out. But a man’s worth would depend on the sort of service he rendered for the welfare of the people – “usefulness and public service”⁴⁶ were some of the things that make up a man’s worth in relation to his fellowmen.

Despite the appeal that every citizen should be concerned with the public good, only some of the “speakers” in public were regarded as opinion leaders, only some were entitled to express public opinion. Turning to the characteristics of these leaders – “men of vision ... to lead their compatriots in the path of the best interests without self-seeking”⁴⁷ – *The Lagos Standard* delineated that a Public Man was not necessarily a leader.⁴⁸ Furthermore, all patriots would be Public Men, but not all Public Men were patriots.⁴⁹ *The Lagos Daily News* detected powers that would make certain persons “veritable ‘idols’ of the people”⁵⁰. These powers were dependent on a person’s unstinted service to the cause of humanity, which had

⁴¹ TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: Bourdillon, Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Nigerian Youth Movement, n.d., p. 20.

⁴² The Public Man. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 27. August 1919, p. 4.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Citizenship. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 11. June 1931, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ What are you worth? In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 25. August 1931, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Men of Vision. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 13. June 1931, p. 3.

⁴⁸ The Public Man, 27. August 1919.

⁴⁹ A Patriot. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 03. September 1919, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Personality. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 22. May 1931, p. 3.

endeared him [or her] to the people. According to *The Lagos Daily News*, those most qualified to be leaders were those most popular. In May 1931 the Lagos Daily News held a popularity (con)test – the paper asked its readers to solve a puzzle. There were four popular names in the community which “very many people are prepared to conjure with”⁵¹. These names were on all lips as their owners were ever ready to identify themselves with the aspirations of their fellowmen and had proved their unstinted services for the common weal. Who were they?⁵² The submissions saw Eshugbayi Eleko and Herbert Macaulay win the contest – they were the most popular names in Lagos. To the editorial staff the competition proved that readers “take in what is actually going on around them”⁵³. A month after the competition *The Nigerian Daily Times* contributed to the delineation of leaders by publishing an article by John Stuart-Young⁵⁴. In “What’s in a Name?” Stuart-Young lamented that the glamour of fame was replaced by publicity, that fame had become cheap and tawdry. Two generations ago, work had been performed for work’s own sake – there would have been sheer joy in creation. The famous man or woman had been an unassuming member of the community – not seen at midnight dances, or at popular clubs – today “every thought and attitude, every gesture and personal idiosyncrasy”⁵⁵ of him or her was known. The glamour of his or her hidden power – which was felt by admirers, critics, and students and which was real to the creator – was replaced by publicity.⁵⁶ Even though Stuart-Young’s piece refers to novelists, poets, scientists, artists, sculptors, and inspired craftsmen, it may be regarded as *The Nigerian Daily Times*’ alternative draft of popularity and its importance for politics. For the paper, the true worth of the acts of those shouting loudest were to be assessed at the “proper quarters”.⁵⁷

The conception of who was entitled to claim public opinion changed in the 1930s. A new intellectual climate and its product – “youth” – supplemented “popularity” as prerequisite for opinion leaders.⁵⁸ After the settlement of the Eleko-question in 1931, Herbert Macaulay and the NNDP lost political influence. Macaulay’s coalition was barely kept alive after the issue was resolved and the fate of Eshugbayi’s family lost its political importance. The party

⁵¹ Four Popular Names - A Puzzle. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 13. May 1931, p. 3.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ The Four Popular Names Competition. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 15. May 1931, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Stuart-Young, a merchant from Manchester, was a respected regular contributor to the Nigerian press. Cf. *Stephanie Newell*, *The Forger's Tale. The Search for Odeziaku*. Athens, Ohio 2006.

⁵⁵ *John Stuart-Young*, What's in a Name? In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 14. June 1931, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Patrick Cole*, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos*. London 1975, p. 161; At it Again! In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 24. June 1931, pp. 6–7. “Proper quarters” most likely refers to the government.

⁵⁸ *Philip Serge Zachernuk*, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*. Charlottesville 2000, p. 87; *Jean Allman*, *The Quills of the Porcupine. Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana*. Madison 1993.

was torn apart by disagreements and lost the support of the traditional elite and the Lagos Market Women. Under Governor Cameron, the NNDP became a pro-government entity and lost the support of “younger” oppositional members of the educated elite.⁵⁹ Organisations emerging in the 1930s took over the role of opinion leaders, as those entitled to represent public opinion. The Lagos Youth Movement was formed in the course of protest against government higher education policy. In 1934, as one of the first institutions providing higher education in Nigeria, the government opened Yaba (Lagos) Higher College – a vocational training institution. Enrolment and training was restricted according to vacancies in government technical departments. Yaba Higher College was not affiliated with any English university and the Nigerian degrees obtainable were regarded inferior. The educated elite demanded more than education for “badly-paid clerkships” – by way of example scholarships for studies in America or Europe.⁶⁰ The Lagos Youth Movement took up issues besides education, such as the appointment of Africans to higher posts in the civil service, discriminatory legislation, and unemployment. It changed its name to Nigerian Youth Movement in 1936.⁶¹

James Smoot Coleman dubs the movement “the nucleus of Nigeria’s first genuine nationalist organization”⁶², Toyin Falola calls it the first pan-Nigerian nationalist movement.⁶³ Entering its “nationalist phase” in 1938, the movement decided to contest the Lagos Town Council and Legislative Council elections.⁶⁴ The Youth Movement was reluctant to declare itself as political party – politics would only form part of their activities, they would seek for effective representation of the youth’s opinion.⁶⁵

The movement’s activities might be regarded as expression of intergenerational tensions, but its “youth” was first and foremost forged, defined in political rather than biological terms and put in the context of global “youth movements”.⁶⁶ It acknowledged the Nigerian

⁵⁹ Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 152-153, 158, 167, 178-179.

⁶⁰ TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: Bourdillon, Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Nigerian Youth Movement, n. d., p. 18; *James Coleman*, Nigeria. Background to Nationalism. 4th ed. Berkley/Los Angeles 1965, pp. 123-124; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 48-49.

⁶¹ Youth Movement Mission. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 11. April 1938, pp. 1, 5, 6, p. 6; Coleman, Nigeria, pp. 218, 224-225; *James Vaughan*, The Lagos Youth Movement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 16. December 1935, p. 2.

⁶² Coleman, Nigeria, p. 218.

⁶³ *Toyin Falola/Matthew Heaton*, A History of Nigeria. Cambridge/ New York: 2008, p. 141.

⁶⁴ Coleman, Nigeria, p. 218; Falola/Heaton, A History of Nigeria, p. 141; Youth Movement Mission, 11. April 1938, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Nigerian Youth Movement. Rumours About Official Charter Discredited. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 30. April 1938, p. 9; Secretary Of Youth Movement Replies To Political Attacks. In: *West African Pilot*, 02. May 1938, p. 1; Youth Movement Holds First Election Campaign Meeting. In: *West African Pilot*, 09. May 1938, pp. 1, 7, 8; TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: Bourdillon, Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Nigerian Youth Movement, n.d., pp. 20-21.

⁶⁶ *Donal Cruise O'Brien*, A Lost Generation? Youth Identity and State Decay in West Africa. In: Richard P. Werbner, T. O. Ranger (eds.): *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 1996, pp. 55–74, p. 55; *Ebun Alakija*, Youth And Age. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 24. October 1936, p. 5; *M. Bank-Anthony*, The

National Democratic party as “big political organisation” but found it impossible to be in line with it, as that “would be mixing new wine and old wine in an old bottle”⁶⁷. The Nigerian Youth Movement wanted to give vent to other schools of thought. It sought to distance itself from the “past”. In doing so, it signalled will to cooperate with elders and promulgated a notion of “youth” which was appealing to biologically older persons. The age limit for membership was fifty years.⁶⁸

The NYM may be depicted as propagating a conception of (future) citizenship partially affected by colonial outlines of “youth” as responsible citizens. The upper strata of the educated elite predominated the Nigerian Youth Movement – it was associated with “conservatives” such as Ernest Ikoli (editor of *The Nigerian Daily Times*) and Samuel Akisanya. For those “youths” their future – amongst it their membership in the ruling elite –, and the means that secured it, such as education, were at issue.⁶⁹

In 1920 it was James Bright Davies – one of the pioneer newspapermen⁷⁰ – who was remembered for “moulding public and official opinion with regard to the Eleko-question”⁷¹. In the 1920s it was Herbert Macaulay who dominated Lagos politics by addressing prominent topics. From then on there was a “burst of organizational activity”⁷² among educated groups reflecting their desire to participate in politics and to have their voices heard. These organisations were no longer staged against particular grievances, as were early political organisations; they became permanent associations.⁷³ Even if located in Lagos, these bodies maintained close links to the “provinces”. They sought to influence affairs in their home villages or districts by way of example in the form of “tribal” or lineage

Nigerian Youth Movement. Why I Must Join The Youth Movement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 07. November 1936, p. 6; *Kay*: Youth And Age. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 12. November 1936, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Youth Movement Holds First Election Campaign Meeting, 09. May 1938, p. 1.

⁶⁸ James Churchill Vaughan, the president of the movement, invites the Youths of Nigeria to “to sit with me at the feet of our elders and learn from them what were the aspirations and the ideals of those days, what were their failures and achievements”. The path to regain self-reliance would be to “treat the past and the future with [e]qual respect, committing [themselves] to neither, but taking from each those things which are sound and useful for their purpose”. Vaughan, *The Nigerian Youth Movement. Retrospection*, 06. November 1936. Cf. TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: Bourdillon, Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Nigerian Youth Movement, n. d., p. 21.

⁶⁹ Cruise O'Brien, *A Lost Generation*, pp. 65, 67; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 52; *Richard Waller*, *Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa*. In: *Journal of African History* 47:1, 2006, pp. 77–92, pp. 79–80, Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 80. In a letter to the editor Morenkeji emphasised the movement's elitism. It – “a small band of selected Aspirants scheduled to lead a mighty army” – should at this stage not be an all-comers movement as “everybody's dress is no style”. *Moronkeji*, Nigerian Youth Movement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 15. October 1936, p. 7.

⁷⁰ Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 42.

⁷¹ The Passing of James Bright Davies. In: *The Times of Nigeria*, 23. February 1920, p. 4.

⁷² Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 163.

⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

unions.⁷⁴ As economic associations, these political organisations sought empowerment, adhering the principle of “unity, self-help, and cooperation”⁷⁵. Various organisations besides the Nigerian Youth Movement referred to “youth”, such as the Union of Young Democrats, the Nigerian Youth League Movement or the Nigerian [Union of] Young Democrats.⁷⁶

They gradually took the role of “popular names” when championing the people’s aspirations – organisations assumed the qualities of public men. One of objects of the Nigerian Youth Movement – which was predominant – was “[t]o i[n]dentify itself in a whole-hearted and self-less manner with the interest of the people, irrespective of class or any other distinction, and to be always prepared to prosecute their legitimate aspirations with resolution, consistency and firmness.”⁷⁷ Nigerians had been called to rise before, but the Nigerian Youth Movement was associated with hope as never before. A contributor to the *West African Pilot*, E. N. Icheke, stated: “I think, there the leadership will come from, if there will be any at all.”⁷⁸

In 1938 the Nigerian Youth Movement organized protests against a buying agreement by leading European exporting firms that intended to lower the prices for Nigerian cocoa – the so called “Cocoa Pool”.⁷⁹ The Movement toured the cocoa-growing areas, gathering accounts to be presented to the government. Their activities were intensively covered by the press as was the fact that Governor Bernard Bourdillon (1935-1943) commended their efforts when opening the first session of the Cocoa Inquiry Commission.⁸⁰ The movement had made its mark. When they subsequently embraced to compete in the Lagos Town Council elections, they could easily contrast their activities to their opponent’s inactivity.⁸¹ The present councillors did not provide their constituencies with first hand information on local affairs. The people had to look to the press for information – what then were the councillors there for? They did not consult with their constituencies and they were not responsible. Time had come for the “youth” to be articulate – it was now up to the

⁷⁴ Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 163; 182, 193; Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 80-124.

⁷⁵ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 89, 116.

⁷⁶ Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 58; Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 97-108. By way of example, *The Nigerian Daily Times* published correspondence of the Gbagura Young Men Improvement Association (10 February 1936), and an account of the formal inauguration of the Ijebu-Ode Branch of the Young Ansar-Ud-Deen Society (1 April 1936).

⁷⁷ TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: Bourdillon, Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Nigerian Youth Movement, n.d., pp. 20-21.

⁷⁸ E. Icheke, *Reflections On Leadership*. In: *West African Pilot*, 04. April 1938, p. 5. For the specific claim of leadership voiced by the NYM, see Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 113-114.

⁷⁹ Falola/Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, p. 142.

⁸⁰ Cf. *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 5., 8. March, 11. April 1938; *West African Pilot* 12. April 1938; Sir Bernard Bourdillon Opens Session Of Cocoa Commission. In: *West African Pilot*, 29. April 1938, pp. 1, 7, p. 1; Cocoa Commissioners. Publicly Welcomed At Glover Hall. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 29. April 1938, pp. 1, 6, 7, 12, p. 6; Cocoa Inquiry Commission. Opening Session At Glover Hall, 30. April 1938, p. 6.

⁸¹ Cf. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 110.

movement to address the government on the people's grievances.⁸² Already in 1935 Akinola Maja⁸³ states that carrying out any scheme of national importance would require a strong national organisation – which was wanting then –, and it would be “this crying need” that the Lagos Youth Movement aspires to provide.⁸⁴ In an editorial *The Nigerian Daily Times* – unsurprisingly – acknowledged the Youth Movement as an organization guiding men with legitimate aspirations and attributed it moral success.⁸⁵

On Election Day the electorate granted the Youth Movement the reward accorded to Herbert Macaulay and the Nigerian National Democratic Party for 15 years – they won all (Lagos) elected seats to the Legislative Council.⁸⁶ Governor Bourdillon reported to the Secretary of State that “the Movement was proceeding on the right lines and might, if proper relations could be established between it and the Government, prove a great influence for good”⁸⁷. He soft-soaped the movement when explicating to them that both of them “were really seeking the welfare of the people of Nigeria”⁸⁸.

Nnamdi Azikiwe, who is regarded as an important contributor to the turn to “youth”⁸⁹, abandoned the Youth Movement in 1941 over the disputed succession for a vacant seat in the Legislative Council.⁹⁰ Azikiwe – a U.S. trained journalist, political scientist and anthropologist⁹¹ who was known throughout West Africa as “Zik”, for propagating “racial consciousness”, and for being convicted for publishing a seditious article⁹² – is associated with a personalized type of leadership – as is Herbert Macaulay. In 1944, the two “combined” to form the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Carrying on the youthful momentum, Azikiwe embraced the role of Macaulay’s “political son”.⁹³

The formation of the NCNC emphasises the importance of organisations in shaping and representing public opinion. Azikiwe and Macaulay’s aim was to “crystallize the natural aspirations of our people, to express in concrete form the trend of public opinion, and to

⁸² Youth Movement Holds First Election Campaign Meeting, 09. May 1938, p. 7.

⁸³ Maja later became president of the Nigerian Youth Movement. Coleman, Nigeria, p. 241.

⁸⁴ Akinola Maja, The Lagos Youth Movement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 28. October 1935, pp. 2, 3, p. 3.

⁸⁵ The Youth Movement. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 02. November 1935, p. 8.

⁸⁶ Coleman, Nigeria, p. 225.

⁸⁷ TNA: PRO: CO 583/234/15/30386: Bourdillon, Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938, Bourdillon to MacDonald, 7. November 1938, p. 6.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁹ In “Renascent Africa” Azikiwe calls for the reformation of African society and praises youth over the Africa of yesterday. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*. London 1968 [1937], pp. 7, 47-49; Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects, p. 110.

⁹⁰ Coleman, Nigeria, p. 227.

⁹¹ Zachernuk, Colonial Subjects, pp. 98-90.

⁹² Coleman, Nigeria, p. 220-223.

⁹³ Pauline Halpern Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change. The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967*. Berkeley 1974, p. 92; Coleman, Nigeria, pp. 220-224, 227; Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties, pp. 49-51, 53-54.

emancipate our nation from the manacles of political bondage.”⁹⁴ The NCNC unified various elements of the community – those who were loyal to Macaulay followed Azikiwe. Membership in the NCNC was indirect, until 1951 only organisations, such as “tribal unions” or the umbrella organisation Traders Union Congress of Nigeria, formed part of the body. The NCNC seized the nationalist agenda. Azikiwe appealed to youths, wage-earners, world-war veterans, patriots, to the peasantry and the common people – the masses.⁹⁵ When leading protest against the Richard’s Constitution in 1947 (see chapter 2) and touring the provinces Azikiwe stated that these events “have given the NCNC opportunity not only to ascertain, but to mould, direct and crystallize the trend of public opinion and give it expression in diverse forms”⁹⁶. The people had “allowed” the delegation to represent their aspirations.

3.2 The Miseducation of Public Opinion

Newspapermen and politicians idealised public communication via media – to them it constituted a public sphere in the process of progressing and expanding.⁹⁷ They disallowed arguments if they were not formed “properly”. To them, contesting the government at its own game allowed only a specific public sphere and disallowed “counterpublics” to reform or transform its form. If arguments were not presented along the lines drawn out by the educated elite, they had no chance of being heard.⁹⁸ In addition to boundaries of the public sphere that were associated with newspapers, newspapermen and politicians drew up boundaries within the sphere of public communication via media. By way of example, interests, views and topics were delegitimized with reference to “education”.⁹⁹

For all Africans engaging in public communication via media – from conservatives to radicals – the Lagosian English-language press constituted the sphere that held the capacity for public choice. Their overall role-model was the press in “the more advanced countries of the world”¹⁰⁰. Its efficiency, the recognition it enjoyed and the confidence readers accorded to it served as standard against which to judge local formulations of criticism and protest. Correspondingly, the existence of several newspapers was seen as an indication of progress.¹⁰¹ Despite pride in their own achievements there was room for improvement. In

⁹⁴ *Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik. A Selection From the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe. Cambridge 1961, p. 153.*

⁹⁵ Azikiwe, Zik, p. 166; Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 117; Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 156; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 58, 71.

⁹⁶ Azikiwe, Zik, p. 164.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Geoff Eley, Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures. Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century. In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 289–339, p. 306.*

⁹⁸ Cf. Calhoun, *The Public Sphere in the Field of Power*, pp. 308, 313–315.

⁹⁹ Cf. Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, pp. 126, 131.

¹⁰⁰ *Newspapers in West Africa To-Day. In: The Nigerian Daily Times, 26. August 1933, p. 6.*

¹⁰¹ *Our Twenty-sixth Year. In: The Lagos Standard, 10. September 1919, p. 4.*

reference to the appreciation of the British daily press and in contrast to the “level” of articles in Nigerian newspapers, *The Lagos Daily News* stated: “We cannot deny the fact that we are in our infancy in this part of the Empire”¹⁰². When assessing newspapers in West Africa today, *The Nigerian Daily Times* stated in equal measure that the local press had “a long way yet to go”¹⁰³. Nevertheless, newspapers were already making their presence and beneficial effect felt. In an editorial, the paper observes that readers appreciated the power of the press and used it as a medium for ventilating their grievances:

Affairs which in a matter of a decade or two ago might have led to serious rioting and bloodshed, calling forth the necessity for subsequent punitive expeditions entailing more loss of human lives and destruction of property, are now being treated in quite a different manner, for the aggrieved people make use of the newspaper in stating their case in a sane and sober manner which must compel attention from the proper quarters, with result that amicable and peaceful adjustment is made possible without any resort to violence or disorder.¹⁰⁴

Administrators also took note of public communication as an indication of development. In 1919 Hugh Clifford was not able to identify anything resembling organised public opinion in the Northern Provinces – due to the system of administration in operation there it had not been afforded with an opportunity of developing. He too ranked the form public expressions take. In the North, they were still “in the stage when sporadic and ineffective armed resistance is its only medium of expression”¹⁰⁵.

Within the public sphere of the local English-language press, newspapermen and politicians competed for the entitlement to be bearers of public opinion – they claimed critical publicity with reference to mass support and by invoking class difference.¹⁰⁶ The latter claim relates to a discourse on the quality of public communication. Some contributors and newspapermen called for a standard and imposed restrictions on what should be brought to the public sphere. In this way, they set out to define what form critical publicity should eventually assume. Orisadipe Obasa, a prominent Lagosian, did so in 1913, when he delineated that public communication and therefore public opinion should be “educated”.

¹⁰² The Press. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 04. July 1931, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Newspapers in West Africa To-Day, 26. August 1933.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ TNA: PRO: CO 583/80/73600: *Hugh Clifford*: Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 03. December 1919, Clifford to Milner, pp. 252-253.

¹⁰⁶ See chapter 2.

Between 1911 and 1913 two organisations competed over who should champion opposition to proposed changes in land law. The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society (LAAS&APS) and the People's Union demanded that Africans should give evidence to the West African Lands Committee that was set up to investigate the practice of land tenure. The People's Union organized a delegation obtaining the views of people from Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ife, Oshogbo and Ilesha on "traditional" land tenure practices. The LAAS&APS organized a deputation of Chiefs travelling to London to give evidence before the West African Lands Committee in 1913.¹⁰⁷

The Lagos Weekly Record covered the activities of the LAAS&APS's delegation with pride, but they also attracted bad press, especially in *The Nigerian Chronicle*¹⁰⁸. One critic of the "Picnic Party to Europe" published a series of articles under the pseudonym "S. Lasore" attacking Herbert Macaulay and Mojola Agbebi, the organizers. "S. Lasore" exposed irregularities in the delegation's finances.¹⁰⁹ Defences of the party were published under the pseudonym "Watchman" in *The Lagos Standard*. Orisadipe Obasa of Ikija – the only protagonist disclosing his identity in this act of "mud-slinging" – attacked "Watchman" in *The Lagos Standard* and *The Nigerian Chronicle*.

Orisadipe Obasa of Ikija was an established member of Lagos society and may be counted among those opposed to Herbert Macaulay. He was a medical doctor and a founding member of the People's Union; in 1921 he was nominated as member of the Legislative Council. Obasa of Ikija and his wife were active members of Lagos society, attended social events such as an "At Home" hosted by the Earl and Countess of Selborne or King's College Speech Day.¹¹⁰

In short, in the "mud-slinging" mentioned above, Obasa of Ikija condemned "Watchman's" defence of Macaulay and Agbebi, and disallowed "Pure Native", a contributor expressing appreciation for "Watchman's" attacks on "S. Lasore", the right to public communication. Obasa of Ikija stated that "Watchman" was not actuated by any sense of duty to the

¹⁰⁷ Rina Okonkwo, The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society: A Re-Examination. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15:3, 1982, pp. 423–433, pp. 425–427.

¹⁰⁸ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 39–40. According to Omu, *The Nigerian Chronicle* pursued an analytical and academic approach to problems.

¹⁰⁹ Okonkwo, The Lagos Auxiliary, pp. 427–430. Rina Okonkwo suspects that Oguntola Sapara, brother to Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams, one of the founders of the LAAS&APS who was suspended of the vice-presidency in a power struggle in 1911, penned the letters.

¹¹⁰ Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 66, 110; Charles Tetty, Medical Practitioners of African Descent in Colonial Ghana. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18:1, 1985, pp. 139–144, p. 142; Okonkwo, The Lagos Auxiliary, p. 426; Local and Provincial News. The New Member for the Legislative Council. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 03. September 1921, p. 7; Rambling Notes & News. "At Home" at Selborne House. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 23. December 1921, p. 8; King's College Speech Day 1919. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 26. September 1919, pp. 6a–6b.

public.¹¹¹ He implied that George Alfred Williams, the Editor of *The Lagos Standard*¹¹², published “Watchman’s” accounts to gain profit, and that he was neglecting his duty to the people. Turning to an assessment of criticism¹¹³, Obasa of Ikija analysed the contribution of “Pure Native” who had thanked the editor on behalf of himself and the public in general for the accounts of “Watchman” (they would earnestly pray for “Watchman”) and had launched a personal attack on “S. Lasore”.¹¹⁴ Obasa of Ikija explicated that “Pure Native’s” letter was an inadequate contribution to the discussion:

It is regrettable but not surprising that there are [to] be found in our Community men of the moral [c]lamp and men[t]al calibre of Mr. ‘Pure Native,’ men whos[e] moral discernment cannot differentiate between scurrility and criticism and whose mental calibre is the measure of the production over this NOM DE PLUME. ‘PURE NATIVE[.]’ Indeed! such men are to be found in every Community, I presume. What a pity!¹¹⁵

According to Obasa of Ikija, “Pure Native” did not know what the term “public” means – those buying watchman’s account for sensationalism would not constitute it. “The Public” was the thinking section of the community “who alone have the right to be styled ‘The Public,’”¹¹⁶ – they would see “Watchman’s” tirades as a potent factor in “the permanent degradation of the LAGOS STANDARD and an unanswerable plea for Press Censorship if total suppression is to be avoided”¹¹⁷ [emphasis in original]. Drastically emphasising that his conception of “the public” and his dismissal of “Watchman” and “Pure Native’s” contributions were legitimate, Obasa of Ikija stated that the catastrophe of these accounts should be averted, as “[l]iberty of the press and of Free Speech is justified only in a Community where there is a public opinion educated sufficiently to guide and direct such liberty as to prevent degeneration into LICENCE”¹¹⁸ [emphasis in original].

Obasa of Ikija’s attack was in line with others who sought to permit participation in the sphere of public communication via media only if contributors were distinguishable from “semi-civilised and excitable”¹¹⁹ Africans. In the course of the Muslim dispute in 1919,

¹¹¹ Obasa of Ikija, And On This. In: *The Lagos Standard*, 19. November 1913, p. 6

¹¹² Omu, Press and Politics, pp. 36-38.

¹¹³ For Fred Omu, Obasa is sounding a note of warning to be understood in context of defending the liberty of the press. Omu, Press and Politics, p. 172.

¹¹⁴ *Pure Native*, Look on this Picture! In: *The Lagos Standard*, 19. November 1913, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ Obasa of Ikija, An Open Letter to the Editor of the Lagos Standard. In: *The Nigerian Chronicle*, 28. November 1913, pp. 5–6, p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Obasa of Ikija, An Open Letter to the Editor of the Lagos Standard, 28. November 1913, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Fred Omu, The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa. The West African Example. In: *The Journal of African History* 9:2, 1968, pp. 279–298, p. 281.

Obasa of Ikija again invoked the privileges, obligations and responsibilities of the press as “impartial and enligh[t]ened exponent of the thoughts and aspirations of its Clientele”¹²⁰. He casted doubt on the “intellectuality” of the editor of *The Lagos Weekly Record* who – according to Obasa – had put into print an “ugly rumour” instead of categorically and straight forwardly clearing the atmosphere of these accounts.

Two years later, and in reference to the same dispute, *The Nigerian Pioneer* discredited *The Times of Nigeria* for publishing a letter by Adamu Animashaun on behalf of “the Muslims” in which Animashaun “vilified” Henry Carr. The paper took the liberty of giving Animashaun some advice: “A little knowledge is dangerous; even if that knowledge is ‘The English’ language. To persons of the stamp and style of Mr. A. I. Animashaun we counsel resort to night schools for more enlightenment and good manners.”¹²¹

In 1937 Oluwole Alakija similarly degraded utterances by referring to wanting education. In the column “As I See It” he addressed a Commission of Inquiry that assessed the potential partition of Ijebu Province.¹²² Alakija argued against the division of political entities in general and stated that the particular incident was unfortunate.¹²³ Such an enquiry “might not have taken place but for the intrigues of certain semi-educated elements of Ijebu Province”¹²⁴. Alakija struck a more general blow against persons he characterised as “semi-educated”. To Alakija this class of people abound throughout Nigeria were the real agitators: “They have no genuine interest in the cause they agitate for; their one satisfaction is to see a fight.”¹²⁵ According to Alakija these people were quite troublesome to Administrative Officers and wielded great influence with the Chiefs. He appealed to the educated elements to set their mind against these agitators.

In *The Nigerian Pioneer* the contributor “Pity” was concerned with “irresponsible writers” who open offices as Public Letter Writers but who could hardly put their thoughts down in an ordinary letter, let alone correctly present the thoughts of other people. According to “Pity” these men were “writing up petitions the value of which lies only in the materials

¹²⁰ Obasa of Ikija, John Akibona and The Lagos Weekly Record. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 05. September 1919, p. 6a.

¹²¹ The Resident of the Colony and The Times of Nigeria. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 01. April 1921, p. 6.

¹²² Oluwole Alakija, “As I See It”. Destructive Influence of the Semi-Illiterate. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 13. November 1937, p. 7; Adedapo Adeniran identifies Oluwole Alakija as author of the column „As I See It“. Adedapo Adeniran, *The Case for Peaceful and Friendly Dissolution of the Artificial Entity Christened Nigeria by the British Colonial Imperialists*. Lagos 2002, p. 41. Insa Nolte, Obafemi Awolowo and the Making of Remo. *The Local Politics of a Nigerian Nationalist*. Edinburgh 2009, pp. 96-119.

¹²³ Alakija, “As I See It”. Destructive Influence of the Semi-Illiterate, 13. November 1937. Nolte shows that conservative, Lagos-based politicians took sides in this dispute and facilitated the publication of views supporting their goals in *The Nigerian Daily Times*. Nolte, Obafemi Awolowo, p. 116.

¹²⁴ Alakija, “As I See It”. Destructive Influence of the Semi-Illiterate, 13. November 1937.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

used”¹²⁶. “Pity” called government for “controlling measures”¹²⁷, namely test examinations, the payment of a small fee and the issuing of licenses for Public Letter Writers.

These efforts to exclude specific accounts or contributions mirrors a mechanism observed by scholars when reassessing Habermas’ discussion of the bourgeois public sphere in England, France and Germany.¹²⁸ Geoff Eley and Craig Calhoun show that the bourgeois public, which took shape in the late eighteenth century, was engaged in establishing an exclusive claim on putting reason to use and – according to Habermas – succeeded. Eley adds to Habermas’ account that right from the start private persons beside the literate bourgeois, by way of example peasants, workers, and radicals, were “putting reason to use”¹²⁹. The bourgeois public sphere was not only defined by the struggle against absolutism, but also by addressing the problem of popular containment.¹³⁰ Calhoun explicates that different political public spheres did not develop “separately from and parallel to each other but rather in a field of contestation”¹³¹. The liberal bourgeois public sphere succeeded in dominating other public spheres.¹³² In colonial Nigeria conservatives sought to establish an elitist conception of the public sphere and public opinion with reference to the quality of public utterances – with varying success. Their criteria for exclusion seemingly harnessed those employed by the bourgeois public – they associated the right to employ public reason with education. This insistence on “educated” public opinion expressed a conflict “over the nature of the battlefield”¹³³ – a contest over what forms of knowledge should constitute public choice and therefore what forms of knowledge should prevail.¹³⁴

In an elitist conception of the colonial public sphere, educational achievements were not the significant attribute for contributions to be regarded valuable. When lamenting the contents of anonymous letters – “poisonous ebullitions” – in 1919, *The Nigerian Pioneer* stated: “Let it not be thought for a moment that this sort of thing is confined to the half educated, for the very well educated, but disappointed, person fancies the use of this way of giving

¹²⁶ *Pity*, To the Editor. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 08. April 1921, p. 6.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Cf. *Craig Calhoun* (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992.

¹²⁹ *Jürgen Habermas*, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, [trans. T. Burger and F. Lawrence. Cambridge, Mass 1989], p. xviii quoted in Eley, *Nations, Publics and Political Cultures*, p. 304.

¹³⁰ Eley, *Nations, Publics and Political Cultures*, p. 306.

¹³¹ Calhoun, *The Public Sphere in the Field of Power*, p. 309.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 309-310; Eley, *Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures*, pp. 304-306; *Jürgen Habermas*, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main 1990, p. 52.

¹³³ *Frederick Cooper/Ann Stoler*, *Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda*. In: *Frederik Cooper, Ann Laura Stoler* (eds.): *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkley 1997, pp. 1–56, p. 13.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

information as his best weapon. Poor fool.”¹³⁵ In the same paper, “Jesse Shaw” stated in reference to the above mentioned Muslim dispute:

And I look to the day, not so far distant, when THE TRUTH of the matter from the view point of the Nigerian Pioneer SHALL BE OWNED by the now overanxious and increasing army of Nigerian journalists, politicians, patriots, patriarchs, critics and agitators.

For goodness sake let reason lead and opinions follow. Place premium on understanding and let’s make a huge discount on sentiments. Criticisms well directed are always helpful, but I confess, I hope not with misgivings, that those I have recently read from the columns of some patriotic and popular Nigerian Journals, can do our cause no good.¹³⁶

The call for “educated” public opinion may be regarded as an appeal to a set of interests and values based on specific knowledge, on specific “private” experiences. This again resembles a mechanism of exclusion incorporated in Habermas’ account of the bourgeois public sphere. Calhoun shows that the individual had to be nurtured in private to be prepared for action in public. Therefore, those who were considered not fully formed individuals, those who were assumed to lack the “rational capacities for setting aside personal interests”¹³⁷, were excluded from the public sphere. The bourgeois public sphere was exclusionary in terms of gender, education, and with regard to a lack of discipline identified with workers and nonelites.¹³⁸ When estimating and eventually condemning acts of public communication, Nigerian contributors and newspapermen also referred to a conception of public opinion as unwritten laws. Some newspapermen and politicians held the notion that those participating in the public sphere of public communication via media should be individuals who had been “fully formed” in a specific variation of the “private” realm.

Along the lines of, and possibly in reaction to, discourses on “detribalisation”¹³⁹ spurred by colonial administrators – a presumed shortcoming of the urbanised, educated elite – *The Nigerian Pioneer* publishes an article on “the true social centres” – the family and the home –

¹³⁵ *Ajax*, Rambling Notes and News. Anonymous Letter Writing. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 12. September 1919, p. 7.

¹³⁶ *Jesse Shaw*, The Nigerian Pioneer in the Melting Pot of Public Criticism. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 25. March 1921, p. 6a.

¹³⁷ Calhoun, *The Public Sphere in the Field of Power*, p. 306.

¹³⁸ Calhoun, *The Public Sphere in the Field of Power*, pp. 305-306.

¹³⁹ Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 116, 119, 157-158.

and the importance of the “wise and just government of the household”¹⁴⁰ in 1921. The home would be central when anticipating the future of country and “race”, as the mothers and fathers of the land were responsible for national greatness and national purity – more than statesmen, law-makers, preachers and teachers. It was central for the emergence of “strong public opinion”:

The home must take a leading part in our educational reconstruction, there must be a strong public opinion – the unwritten laws which should govern our community as rigidly as the laws in the Statute-Book – Unfortunately there is no strong public opinion in Lagos on any subject ... We should look and see if among Christians, Mohammedans and Pagans the home is playing its important part as the sphere where the foundation of the definite shaping and sending of the inner soul and habit of a man to the great moral law of things can be truly laid.¹⁴¹

A delegation attending government in 1929 and demanding stricter newspaper legislation was also concerned with the people’s “private” experiences. Ernest Ikoli stated that there were people without “public opinion” in Lagos and that they could easily be led astray by destructive influences.¹⁴²

In a community where public opinion is properly organised, journals making use of their columns for malicious and spiteful attacks would sooner or later cease to exist. We unfortunately in Nigeria have as yet no public opinion strong enough to guide and control the youth and illiterate section to whom these disreputable publications are read and translated.¹⁴³

Likewise appealing to specific experiences and interests, the *West African Pilot* called for the cultivation of “robust public opinion” capable of dismissing unfounded rumour and views put forward as public opinion in June 1944.¹⁴⁴ This appeal mirrors activities of the Nigerian Union of Students. In June 1944 – after protests at King’s College Lagos – politicians demanded the formation of a national council or committee to coordinate existing associations.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Home Life. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. October 1921, p. 6.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: *Walter Buchanan-Smith*: Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers, 13. September 1930, Enclosure vi, Ikoli, May 1929, p. 27.

¹⁴³ TNA: PRO: CO 583/175/16/960: Buchanan-Smith, Licensing, 13. September 1930, Enclosure A, p. 31.

¹⁴⁴ Robust Public Opinion Is Needed. In: *West African Pilot*, 02. June 1944, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 56-57.

Their class status seemingly earned educated women an invitation from colonial interests, Nigerian politicians, and by newspapermen alike to participate in „The Public“. By way of example, women addressed the issue of education for girls publicly. Already in 1909 Charlotte Olajumoke Obassa, wife of Orisadipe Obasa had founded a school for girls.¹⁴⁶ Starting in the 1920s, women and their education received intensified attention. The Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies took up the view that tragic results were to be expected if the education of African woman would not progress on parallel lines with that of their husbands. The influence of “ignorant” and “uncivilized” women would hinder the development of civilization.¹⁴⁷ On the contrary, Charlotte Obasa, and the Lagos Women League founded by her, petitioned against a concept of the woman as wife and mother and argued for women’s education with reference to “tradition”. Education would ensure employment and it was the habit and tradition of Nigerian women to earn their livelihood and not to be dependent on her husband.¹⁴⁸

In 1920 Elizabeth Clifford, the wife of Governor Hugh Clifford, encouraged the formation of two clubs for Lagos educated women, the New Era club – for “more matured ladies”¹⁴⁹ – and the British West African Educated Girls Club for young ladies returning from England. The clubs aimed to draw ladies out of their reserve and foster social intercourse and better understanding. The British West African Educated Girls Club sought to provide recreation and amusement for young ladies returning from England and to encourage the young women to use their education to contribute to Nigerian society.¹⁵⁰ In 1921, women’s organizations started fund-raising for the establishment of a girl’s high school. Mrs. Obasa, Mrs. Carr, Mrs. Cameron and Lady Clifford were the most prominent participants in a respective social bazaar.¹⁵¹

In 1923 and 1925 this group of women petitioned to the government, and Queen’s College was finally established in 1927. As a counterpart to King’s College – a high school for boys which was founded in 1909 – the government school intended to provide secondary

¹⁴⁶ Rina Okonkwo, *Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930*. London/New York/Ontario 1995, p. 74.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid., p. 77-78. According to Okonkwo, the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies re-affirmed the recommendations of the Phelps Stokes Commission. L.J. Lewis, *Phelps Stokes Reports on Education in Africa*. London 1962, p. 193 quoted in Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, p. 77.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 76-78.

¹⁴⁹ Rambling Notes and News. A new Ladies Club in Lagos. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 29. October 1920, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.; Rambling Notes and News. British West African Educated Girls Club. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 05. November 1920, p. 6; Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, p. 71.

¹⁵¹ Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, pp. 74-75; Government House News. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 25. February 1921, p. 5; Rambling Notes and News. A Grand Bazaar Next Month. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 11. February 1921, p. 7.

education for those whose parents could afford the school fee, or those who won a scholarship.¹⁵² The initial curriculum of Queen's College did not prepare women for the Cambridge local examination, it rather followed the lines of missionary education, which predominated the education sector. In missionary schools, the training of girls focussed on "character training", domestic science, painting and drawing – on their preparation for becoming wives and mothers, rather than on academic education and preparation for employment.¹⁵³

The activities of the women's organisations with regard to education for girls were supported by so called "conservative" men from the start. According to Nina Mba, parents wanted academic education for their daughters as well as their sons. However, Rina Okonkwo senses only a hint of disappointment with the initial curriculum of Queen's College in the conservative press.¹⁵⁴ Women continued with the discussion of the kind of education suitable for African girls – surfaced already in 1910, probably as a result of the Lagos School for Girls established by Olajumoke Obassa in 1909¹⁵⁵ – throughout the 1930s and 1940s. They demanded vocational training and employment.¹⁵⁶

The conservatives took up the view that women should share in every particular the interests and opinions of her husband.¹⁵⁷ If women did so, they could count on the conservatives' support. When announcing the inauguration of *The New Era Club* in 1920 *The Nigerian Pioneer* stated: "It is for us to take all possible advantage of the day, when at the head of affairs we have those who take interest in all[,] irrespective of colour or race, who have a just and sane view of true imperialism"¹⁵⁸. Some organisations of educated women seemingly complied with the request of their husbands, they shared their "sane" views. When discussing retrenchment in face of the Great Depression in 1931, various contributors in *The Nigerian Daily Times* argued for a reduction of salaries, whereas *The Lagos Daily News* called for retrenchment of redundant officers.¹⁵⁹ In 1934, the Lagos Women's League, led by Olajumoke Obasa, handed a petition to the Deputy Chief Secretary siding

¹⁵² Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, pp. 80-82.

¹⁵³ Nina Emma Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized. Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965*. Berkeley 1982, pp. 61, 64.

¹⁵⁴ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, p. 61; Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁵ Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, p. 74; Foreign Education for African Grils. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 30. July 1910, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, pp. 220-223; Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁷ Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, pp. 78, 84.

¹⁵⁸ Rambling Notes and News. The New Era Ladies Club. In: *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 05. November 1920, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Humphrey, *Retrenchment or Reductions?* In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. August 1931, p. 10, RETRENCHMENT IN NIGERIA. In: *The Lagos Daily News*, 12. August 1931, p. 3.

with the moderate view propagated by *The Nigerian Daily Times* and calling for reduction in salaries.¹⁶⁰

In the “Women’s Corner” of *The Nigerian Daily Times*, women could address housekeeping and beauty and lifestyle tips without any difficulty.¹⁶¹ In the 1930s, these pages also featured other issues. By way of example, the contributor “Femina” addressed education for women and Egun Alakija assessed the Nigerian Youth Movement.¹⁶² With regard to education, women furthermore showed that they were proud of Stella Thomas, the first “lady barrister” in West Africa and the *West African Pilot* gave appreciative publicity to a speech held by a Nigerian “lady doctor”.¹⁶³ Already in 1920 *The African Sentinel* had introduced “Nefertari”, a young African lady, as regular contributor to the journal. When addressing the educated women-folk of Africa, the paper states:

... for now is the time that African women should let the world know what they think and feel ... Daughters of Ethiopia! Arise, and shake of dull sloth – an expectant world is eager to con the mystic runes of your souls’ desire[.] ... The emancipation of woman from the thralldom of sex is being effected the world over, and this is your golden opportunity to win back the past.¹⁶⁴

In November 1937, soon after bringing out its first issue, *The West African Pilot* published a lecture given by Kofo Moore on “The Emancipation of Women in Nigeria”; she was invited to do so by the Nigerian Youth Movement.¹⁶⁵ Referring to this lecture in 1938, *The West African Pilot* urged that claiming emancipation was not enough and that it was time for concrete action. The organisation of social clubs, with patronage from high official circles, was not sufficient. Women should advocate measures beneficial for Nigerian women, especially with regard to education.¹⁶⁶ *The West African Pilot*, which may be regarded to have expressed the opinion of the Nigerian Youth Movement, the “new” elite, effectively asked educated women to seize the “women-agenda” more comprehensively. Already in 1935,

¹⁶⁰ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, p. 217.

¹⁶¹ *Petite Parisienne*: Feminine Corner. Dress-Making at Home. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 15. July 1931, p. 5; *Env*: Some Appetising Recipes. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 25. January 1936, p. 5.

¹⁶² *Femina*, African Girls’ Education. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 04. September 1931, pp. 4, 9, 10; Alakija, Youth And Age, 24. October 1936.

¹⁶³ Egun Alakija, Women Pioneers. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 24. February 1936, p. 8; Dr Akerele Gives Impressive Lecture On “School Hygi[e]ne”. In: *The West African Pilot*, 28. March 1938, pp. 1, 2, 6.

¹⁶⁴ Entre Nous. “Nefertari”. In: *The African Sentinel*, 17. January 1920, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ Miss Kofo Moore Defends Her Sex. In: *The West African Pilot*, 23. November 1937, p. 5. The article is for the most part illegible. Moore’s account was published in five instalments in the section “Milady’s Bower”.

¹⁶⁶ Our Women Leaders. In: *The West African Pilot*, 19. February 1938, p. 4.

Oyinkan Abayomi, daughter of Kitoyi Ajasa, had called for highly educated women to make themselves approachable; otherwise the women would have nobody to lead.¹⁶⁷

Both the Nigerian Youth Movement and Abayomi redefined the prerequisites for women to speak publicly, they tied the allowance for public utterances – up to now founded on education – to involvement with “the masses”. *The West African Pilot* argued for the “right education” for girls, as the acquisition of little knowledge would lead to women’s dependence on men.¹⁶⁸ Besides the three R’s and domestic science, women should be educated in one business or another in order for the women’s “inherent genius for trade”¹⁶⁹ to be given better outlets.

For let nobody be deceived that by giving fine, flowery speeches about emancipation without first securing his or her economic independence, he or she can get anywhere.

Our “modern” girls should learn the lesson from the Ereko market women and others.¹⁷⁰

Educated women and “the masses” were far apart. Up to 1938, the Lagos Market Women formed the power base of Herbert Macaulay’s Nigerian National Democratic Party. They saw in Herbert Macaulay the chief advocate for their concerns.¹⁷¹ Macaulay did not support the educated women’s protest for education – he may have been one of the “old-fashioned people ... who think the educated woman is a nuisance”¹⁷², who regarded “foreign education” as diverting women from becoming mothers and genuine African women, of bringing women out of touch with their people.¹⁷³ Macaulay’s party supported universal franchise and equal educational facilities, but women never held offices.¹⁷⁴

The Lagos Market Women formed a socially cohesive, greatly visible, highly organized and influential interest group. They were engaged in “traditional politics” through the Egbe Ilu; in the early 1920s, the market women established the Lagos Market Women’s Guild presided by Madame Alimotu Pelewura. The cooperation between the market women and the Nigerian National Democratic Party was characterised by a close relationship between

¹⁶⁷ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, p. 220.

¹⁶⁸ Our Women Folk. In: *The West African Pilot*, 21. February 1938, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Female Industries. In: *The West African Pilot*, 18. March 1938, p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Female Industries, 18. March 1938.

¹⁷¹ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 108; Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 86; Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, p. 197-204.

¹⁷² *Ebun Alakija*, Higher Education. In: *The Nigerian Daily Times*, 18. January 1936, p. 5.

¹⁷³ Foreign Education for African Grils. In: *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 30. July 1910, p. 3; Okonkwo, *Protest Movements*, p. 84.

¹⁷⁴ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, pp. 204-205.

Pelewura and Macaulay. Besides the water rate protest and the Eleko-question, Macaulay addressed various other concerns of the market women, such as the disruption of trading patterns and the introduction of taxes in 1927 and 1940.¹⁷⁵

When educated women approached the masses in 1901 to combat infant mortality by distributing quinine from the government dispensary, they faced suspicion. The organisations formed by educated women were concerned with a wide range of issues besides education, by way of example they called for health care for African officials and protested against the closure of Ikoyi Cemetery in 1930-1931. In 1938 the Nigerian Youth Movement established a Ladies' Section headed by Oyinkan Abayomi, the daughter of Kitoyi Ajasa, a prominent conservative. The Nigerian Youth Movement tried to win the support of the Lagos Market Women, but only Ebute-Ero Market, represented by Madam Madina, pledged support to the Movement. The market women were split – Madame Pelewura, and therefore the Market Women's Guild, joined the Nigerian Union of Young Democrats – which was loosely associated with the NNDP. The Youth Movement criticised Abayomi for not carrying the work of the Ladies' Branch to the illiterate market women.¹⁷⁶

In the Women's Party, which Abayomi founded in 1944, some educated women could claim the „women's agenda“ with regard to specific issues. They spoke for “the masses”. The Lagos Women's League had lobbied the Lagos Town Council to prohibit the employment of girls under 14 as hawkers – who mainly sold cooked food in the neighbourhood – in 1942. The Women's Party, harnessing the Market Women's support, protested against the detention of these girls. The party again supported the Market Women in their protests against a price-control-scheme for foodstuffs.¹⁷⁷

Overall, educated women did not succeed in winning the entitlement of the Lagos Market Women to represent their interests. According to Nina Mba, the alliance between the Market Women and the Women's Party broke down in 1947 over an article by Funmilayo Ransome Kuti. But already in 1945, when protesting against the Richards Constitution, Herbert Macaulay had called for accepting Pelewura as the women's leader in Lagos. In the run up to the general strike in 1945, Madame Pelewura embodied the women's voice.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 140, 223; Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, pp. 193-204.

¹⁷⁶ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, pp. 206-221; Ladies' Branch of Youth Movement Convenes Meeting. In: *The West African Pilot*, 13. March 1938, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ Laurent Fourchard, *Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920-1960*. In: *Journal of African History* 47:01, 2006, pp. 115-137, pp. 132-133; Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, pp. 221-231.

¹⁷⁸ Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, pp. 219, 231-232. According to Lisa Lindsay, Pelewura had close ties with both, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Michael Imoudu, the Railway Union leader. When Imoudu arrived in Lagos in 1943, after serving time under wartime security legislation, Pelewura was one of the speakers at a homecoming rally. Lisa Lindsay, *Domesticity and Difference. Male Breadwinners, Working Women, and*

3.3 Summary

For newspapermen and politicians public opinion referred to a coherence of opinions that could influence the conduct of the colonial state; it embodied public choice. The characteristics of the entitlement to or claim of public opinion changed in the 1930s. Politicians modified the prerequisites for opinion leaders to become legitimate exponents of public opinion. They transformed the notion of what constituted an opinion leader. “Young” organisations replaced established, popular personalities with regard to political dominance. They took the place of “public men” when championing the people’s aspirations. In this new climate youthful organisations assumed both the role of shaping and expressing the public’s opinion. According to them, the people entitled them to assume the role of a critical public voice that could eventually contest colonial rule effectively.

Africans engaging in public communication via media depicted the local English-language press as the only sphere out of which critical publicity might emerge. They were unanimous in their exclusion of publics that sought to reform this characteristic of the colonial public sphere, but contested for the people’s opinion. They argued for their respective view of what might amount to public opinion by alluding to standards applying to public communication. In reference to “education” newspapermen and politicians sought to establish an exclusive claim on critical publicity. These deliberations on the nature of the battlefield were discussions of which knowledge was to prevail – some expressions of private experiences were disallowed, others encouraged.

The private experiences of women to be expressed in the media underwent changes. In the 1920s, corresponding to their exclusive claim on public opinion, conservatives encouraged educated women to participate in the sphere of public communication via media – as long as they held the conservative’s views. In the 1930s newspapermen and politicians requested women to seize the “women’s agenda” more effectively, they demanded that they should speak for all women – a prerequisite that did not apply to some men, who still sought to distinguish themselves from “the masses”.

Conclusion

The colonial public sphere undoubtedly concerned newspapermen, politicians and colonial administrators. Participation in it was sought after and principally encouraged – utterances were vested with substantial power. Consequently, the role of the colonial public sphere and public opinion were contested. The government and the governed imagined the public sphere contrarily. Moreover, Africans engaging in the colonial public sphere contested public opinion among themselves; they debated in what form to contest colonial power.

Compared to Governor Frederick Lugard, Hugh Clifford, who took office in 1919, ushered in a new era. He saw the potential of public criticism and fostered institutions he regarded essential for it. Scholars portray Lugard and Clifford as representing an opposition between Indirect and Direct Rule, two schools of colonial administration. The former Governor sought the isolation of governing bodies, aimed at silencing protest, criticism and opposition, and desired silent and unquestioned obedience.¹ Officials in the Colonial Office agreed with Lugard and regarded criticism voiced by Lagosians as undesirable influence. Contrarily, Clifford considered public criticism as essential for economic development. He argued for close relations to every section of the community, for close scrutiny and criticism – anything else would be disadvantageous to the government and the people. The governed should be taken into the confidence of the administration, as they might detect weaknesses or defects of government policy. This would, in turn, enable “good government”.

Clifford’s imagination of the arena for public criticism centred on the Legislative Council – on “the public sphere of representative institutions”². He revaluated the Legislative Council and encouraged the development of a daily press. Through the council the people were to be afforded the information upon which to base an opinion on public revenues; the idea was to keep them aware of everything the administration was doing, planning and mediating. Besides granting a very limited franchise – four members of the council, representing Lagos and Calabar, were to be elected by wealthy Nigerians – Clifford established instrumentalities he regarded as adequate for councillors to scrutinise public finances, and potentially bring up issues of concern.

Even though Clifford encouraged public criticism, he confined it to the frame set by him. This entailed the denial of any importance of local forms of criticism. Clifford denounced

¹ Cf. *Ian Ferguson Nicolson*, *The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960. Men, Methods, and Myths*. Oxford 1977, pp. 226, 233.

² *Andreas Koller*, *The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction*. In: *Social Science History* 34:3, 2010, pp. 261–290, p. 274.

the National Congress of British West Africa, attacked its claim of representativeness and disallowed it any right for a say. At issue was the entitlement to set the agenda of political discussion – to Clifford this was a prerogative of the colonial administration. He acknowledged the press and the Legislative Council as instruments for the dissemination of information and for fostering an understanding for government policy. But Clifford thought public criticism was exempted from setting the political agenda, even in the Legislative Council; instead, it should mediate and potentially amend policy. According to him, critical publicity was to follow the actions of the government.

Clifford deployed public criticism in the Legislative Council to familiarize the “educated elite” with his imagination of colonial conduct and expected newspapermen and politicians to do the same. He encouraged them to cultivate “sound public opinion” – with reference to educational and moral standards set by him. As he regarded Africans as “young”, they still had their spurs to win. Governor Donald Cameron (1931-1935) held very similar views. He too aimed to impart to the public what the government is doing and regarded measures achieved in consultation as being better and more effective. Africans could voice some aspects of their point of view, but in general the interests of the people should be represented by the Governor and the members of the administrative service until the people could speak for themselves.

For Clifford, the colonial public sphere – not only in the Legislative Council – was an arena of formation, an instrument to convince the governed of “sound public opinion”. This imagination was taken up by the Colonial Office eventually. Starting from the 1930s, media were used as instruments with the aim to educate and persuade. They were employed to transmit ideal imaginations of colonial conduct, by way of example in course of education for citizenship. The colonial state fostered the distribution of its opinions with the aim to gain the audience’s approval. In course of the Second World War, the governance of public communication was crucial for efforts to ensure loyalty to the empire. The colonial state sought to employ the colonial public sphere to distribute its imagination of colonial conduct. If the governed wanted to be articulate, and not only constitute a receptive audience, they should participate in the distribution of the colonial programme.

For Clifford, the limited public sphere of the Legislative Council ensured the legitimacy of the colonial state. Consequently, only some local forms of expressing knowledge were necessary; other descriptions of social conditions were of no importance. Clifford was convinced that only a specific form of knowledge could circulate with any efficacy. In

effect, Clifford and subsequent Governors sought a legitimization of the colonial state by rendering aspects of public policy somewhat accountable to some of the citizenry.³

For Africans engaging in public communication, public criticism was an imperative of the colonial situation. Newspapermen emphasised their knowledge of constitutional failings of the colonial state. To them, the press was the central stage for voicing criticism as there were no other checks on government. If the people appealed against Governors, the authorities in Downing Street would solely rely on information provided by the very authority appealed against. In contrast to Governors, the press was the people's mouthpiece. Newspapermen – as the representatives of the interests of the people – were the only ones who knew the needs of the people and what was beneficent to them.

Starting in the 1920s, the newspaper business transformed. Until then, newspapers had been small-scale businesses and one of several business activities for proprietors. After the First World War, newspapers were popular; they started to appear outside Lagos, and the Yoruba-language press was rekindled. Most importantly, the 1920s saw the introduction of daily newspapers. They had a higher need for capital than the weeklies, and subsequently Nigeria saw the emergence of limited liability companies such as Zik Press Limited and the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company. Newspapers were assuming their role as carriers of news, as chroniclers, even more clearly, and took up entertaining their readers. Nevertheless, newspapermen were continuing political journalism. It was up to the educated elite to voice public criticism. They were the custodians of the people's liberties and rights, they were the ones to voice the people's opinion.

In the colonial public sphere newspapermen contested the government at its own game. They framed their criticism with reference to liberal ideals and sought to alter the conduct of government institutions. Correspondingly, the newspapers positioned themselves as the ones to safeguard "good government". They were not only a counterweight to the government; they furthermore contested the government's self-declared expertise on the people's needs. Only they knew the people's aspirations, and therefore they were to educate the government. They denied the government its presumed expertise on the needs and aspirations of the governed, their role as trustees.

³ Cf. *Nancy Fraser*, Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 109–142, p. 112.

Africans engaged in public communication discussed the form critical publicity should eventually assume. The newspapermen ranked different ways of pursuing publicist orientations hierarchically on a line of progress. Voicing grievances by rioting and bloodshed was regarded as a thing of the past, people were now turning to newspapers when seeking for redress, by way of example in readers' letters. Especially conservative papers described singing and drumming in the streets – an expression of the polity and an act of registering presence in a community – as disgraceful. Correspondingly, Africans engaging in public communication via media saw the existence of several (English) newspapers as an indication of the progress the country had made.

Within the public sphere of the local English press, the public's opinion was contested. Different groups claimed public opinion with reference to mass support or by invoking class difference. One political camp sought to establish an elitist conception of public communication and therefore public opinion. Their criteria for exclusion seemingly harnessed those employed by the bourgeois public in Europe – they associated the right to employ public reason with “education”.

This insistence on “educated” public opinion expressed a conflict about which forms of knowledge should constitute public choice and therefore which forms of knowledge were to prevail.⁴ Even though newspapers regarded themselves as translators, only some expressions of private experiences could be articulated in their conception of the colonial public sphere. When estimating and eventually condemning acts of public communication, contributors and newspapermen also referred to “public opinion” as unwritten laws. In the 1920s “educated” women were allowed to join the public discussion – justified by their education and given that they agreed with “educated” men. In the 1930s they were supposed to represent a “women's agenda” – their entitlement to public criticism was tied to representation of “the masses”. The “private experiences” of women that could circulate in the public sphere had changed.

The newspapermen's goal was the formation of a strong public opinion which could not be ignored by the Governor. They strove for a consonance of opinions and a focus on specific topics in order to contest the colonial state effectively. Up to the early 1930s popularity could achieve this goal – politicians competed for prominence and thus influence in politics. Herbert Macaulay was a name to conjure with. He repeatedly addressed colonial injustices and was associated with their redress. Various groups approached Macaulay, and he

⁴ *Frederick Cooper/Ann Stoler*, Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda. In: Frederick Cooper, Ann Stoler (eds.): *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkley 1997, pp. 1-56, p. 13; *David Scott*, *Refashioning Futures. Criticism After Postcoloniality*. Princeton, N.J. 1999, p. 45.

addressed their interests publicly. He united this power base in the Nigerian National Democratic Party – he bridged the gap of unintegrated political communities, unified various issue publics and mobilized them for political action through modern institutions. At the latest in 1938 a new school of thought – a new intellectual climate⁵ – had changed the conception of who was entitled to claim public opinion. “Young” organisations replaced established, popular personalities with regard to political dominance. They took the place of popular public men when championing the people’s aspirations. The Nigerian National Democratic Party dissolved and the Nigerian Youth Movement made its mark – it was up to the movement to address the government on the people’s grievances. In this new climate, youthful organisations assumed both the role of shaping and expressing the public’s opinion. According to these youthful organisations, the people entitled them to assume the role of critical publicity which could eventually contest colonial rule effectively.

Newspapermen undoubtedly positioned their papers as critical guardians of “good government”.⁶ Moreover, the public sphere was a site of discursive will formation.⁷ Newspapers hosted and fostered the discussion of topics and opinions. For their respective publics, the papers amounted to a “form of and a process for forming solidarity and a sense of belonging”⁸. Both, the Yoruba and the English press provided a platform for discussion and topics for discussion. Despite personal attacks, readers discussed various issues, such as the administration’s approach to retrenchment in response to the Great Depression, in their letters to the editor. These papers were more than transient sources of information – readers kept back issues of newspapers.

In addition, newspapers were meant to instruct people concerning their duties vis-a-vis the colonial state. Besides newspapers, politicians and political organisations saw it as their duty to “educate” public opinion – to convince people of their interests and opinions. These opinions were negotiated by a closed group of people – Herbert Macaulay and those few having a say besides him, or the leadership circles of political organisations – and subsequently distributed through diverse media to gain the approval of the people.⁹ The use

⁵ Philip Serge Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*. Charlottesville 2000, p. 87.

⁶ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main 1990, p. 343.

⁷ Seyla Benhabib, *Models of Public Space. Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas*. In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 73–98, p. 92.

⁸ Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 265.

⁹ Cf. Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, p. 343.

of Yoruba ensured reaching “the masses”¹⁰, drummers associations were a crucial asset of the Nigerian National Democratic Party. Newspapermen too distributed their opinions and sought for approval.

Some English-language papers occasionally used Yoruba to reach those illiterate in English. Other politicians deliberately partitioned target audiences amongst editors of one political camp – in 1931 *The Lagos Daily News* saw no need to announce the long awaited return of Eshugbayi Eleko, a crucial event for “the masses”, in Yoruba. The use of English distributed these formal opinions to all literate in English – which included government officials. Therefore, the press may also be regarded as projections screens. They were employed tactically, conveyed declarations of positions, demonstrations of compliance and cooperation to the government.

The government and the governed imagined the colonial public sphere very differently – the smallest common denominator was the Legislative Council. For the government, it was the only arena for public criticism; for the governed and communities of interest of expatriate firms it was only one arena in which they pressed for their respective interests. Politicians were disappointed and frustrated with the proceedings of the council. They duly carried issues to the council and posed questions to the government, but felt powerless. The government denied them the setting of the political agenda. The elected members of the Legislative Council may be regarded as associates of a “weak public” with strong communicative power.¹¹ With reference to the electorate this public could stress its moral influence. Through the elected members it had access to the public sphere of representative institutions, but in this setting it amounted only to a weak public with no actual voice. The interplay of Legislative Council Meetings, press coverage of the meetings, and the discussion of these sessions in letters to the editor may be identified as field for further investigation into the colonial public sphere.

In colonial Nigeria two notions of public opinion were at play at the same time. The colonial government enacted publicity from the top and sought approval – it utilized the public sphere for the distribution of “manipulative publicity”.¹² Furthermore, it encouraged newspapermen and politicians to do the same, to spread the government’s imagination of

¹⁰ Cf. *Karin Barber*, Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos. In Toyin Falola (ed.): *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honor of J. D. Y. Peel*. Durham, North Carolina 2005, pp.187–208, p. 201.

¹¹ Cf. Koller, *The Public Sphere*, p. 274.

¹² Cf. Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, p. 343.

colonial conduct. Moreover, the government denied “critical publicity” until a standard of “sound public opinion” was achieved. Existing forms of criticism, such as the National Congress of British West Africa were delegitimized. For now the public sphere of the Legislative Council sufficed to legitimize the colonial state.

Amongst the governed, newspapers were undoubtedly regarded as an instance of „critical publicity” ensuring good government. The press conveyed their views. Moreover, the public sphere was a site of discursive will formation. Newspapers encouraged and enabled discussion. But when striving for a coherence of opinions, newspapermen and politicians were similarly engaged in manipulatively distributing their opinions – they sought for approval. In this course only some descriptions of social realities could prevail.

The goal to disseminate suchlike “formal opinions”¹³ to an ever-widening audience may be regarded as a prerequisite to contest the colonial state. Administrators claimed that they were the only ones to know the grievances and aspirations of the governed. To them, the educated elite could not represent the people of Nigeria, they could only speak for themselves. Only if opinion leaders could prove that the opinion *they* stood for was shared by the majority of the population they had a chance to be taken serious. Only then, they could contest the colonial state at its own game effectively. Reconsidering the different roles of „public opinion“ in this light, the adoption of manipulative publicity might not only stand for not fulfilling an ideal, or not corresponding to a prerequisite of democratic societies.¹⁴ It also appears as a prerequisite for nationalism.

A focus on the public sphere – on how groups and people discuss and seek to achieve coherence of opinions and approval for their issues – may be useful in an analysis of nationalism. It turns to the battlefield of political contestation as it provides an analysis of the context of public communication. This approach also entails a re-reading of newspapers that assesses how Africans employed newspapers in their contestation of colonial power. Therefore, it allows an investigation of processes of forming cohesion, solidarity and a sense of belonging.

¹³ Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, pp. 355-356.

¹⁴ Cf. *Nancy Fraser*, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*. In Craig J. Calhoun (ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp.109–142; Habermas, *Strukturwandel*.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

British Library Newspaper Library

The African Sentinel, 1920.

The Comet, 1933, 1936.

The Lagos Daily News, 1931.

The Lagos Standard, 1902, 1919-1920.

The Lagos Weekly Record, 1902, 1910, 1919-1921.

The Nigerian Chronicle, November 1913.

The Nigerian Daily Times, 1931, 1933, 1935-1938.

The Nigerian Pioneer, 1919-1921, 1931.

The Nigerian Times, April 1910.

The Times of Nigeria, 1920-1921.

The Times, April 1919, November 1923, August 1943, March 1945.

The West African Pilot, 1937, 1938, 1941, 1943-1945.

The National Archives of the United Kingdom: Public Records Office

CO 150 Colonial Office: Lagos, Government Gazettes

CO 150/11 Government Gazettes, 1903-1904.

CO 323 Colonies, General: Original Correspondence

CO 323/1400/11/7004: International Colonial Institute, 1936.

CO 583 Colonial Office: Nigeria Original Correspondence

CO 583/80/73600: *Hugh Clifford*: Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 03. December 1919.

CO 583/84/7580: *Dept. Gov. Harry Claude Moorhouse*: Nigerian Council, 25. January 1920.

CO 583/85/17703: *Clifford, Hugh*, Egba Govt. Revenue from Tribute Tax, 18. March 1920.

CO 583/94/2274: *Hugh Clifford*: Address to Nig. Council (29. Dec. '20), 24. December 1920.

CO 583/100/19595: *Hugh Clifford*: Legislative Council: Reconstruction, 26. March 1921.

CO 583/175/16/960: *Walter Buchanan-Smith*: Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers, 13. September 1930.

CO 583/234/15/30386: *Bernard Bourdillon*: Nigerian Youth Movement, 07. November 1938.

CO 583/263/18: Nigerian Youth Movement Representations, 26. September 1943.

CO 583/239: Nigeria. Press Cuttings (local), 12. February 1938; TNA: PRO: CO 583/277: Nigeria. Press Summaries, 14. December 1945.

**CO 875 Colonial Office: Public Relations Department, Later Information
Department: Registered Files**

CO 875/11/1: Public Relations. The Future of Public Relations, 1941.

CO 875/7/10: Propaganda. Nigeria. Progress Reports, 1942-1943.

Published Primary Sources

Azikiwe, Nnamdi, Zik. A Selection From the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe. Cambridge 1961.

Azikiwe, Nnamdi, Renascent Africa. 3rd impress. London 1968.

Back Matter 1903. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 2: 8, pp. 461–462.

Back Matter 1906. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 5: 20, pp. 461–476.

Cameron, Donald Charles, My Tanganyika Service. And Some Nigeria. London 1939.

Casey Hayford, Joseph Ephraim, Gold Coast Native Institutions. With Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti. London 1903.

Clifford, Hugh, United Nigeria. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 21: 81, 1921, pp. 1–14.

Clifford, Hugh, Nigerian Council. Address, 1920. In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Nigerian Council. Nigeria 1920, 1923, pp. 1–238.

Clifford, Hugh, Address by His Excellency the Governor at the Opening Meeting of the Legislative Council, October 31st, 1923. In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Legislative Council of Nigeria. Nigeria 1923-1925, pp. 1–7.

Clifford, Hugh, Address. Delivered by His Excellency The Governor at the Second Session of the Legislative Council Held at Lagos on 11th February, 1924. In: Clifford, Hugh KCMG: Addresses delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Legislative Council of Nigeria, Nigeria 1923-1925, pp. 1-218.

Hearn, Lafcadio, Kokoro. Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life. London 1910.

Lugard, Frederick, Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria. A Documentary Record Being a Reprint of the Report by Sir F. D. Lugard on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration, 1912-1919. Together with Supplementary Unpublished Amalgamation Reports, and Other Relevant Documents. Compiled and Introduced by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. London 1968.

Lugard, Frederick, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa. Endinburgh/London 1922.

Ormsby-Gore, William, The Meaning of “Indirect Rule”. The Principles of Native Administration and Their Application. By Sir Donald Cameron, G.C.M.G. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34: 136, 1935, pp. 283–286.

Stanley, Oliver, House of Commons Debates 391, 13. July 1943.

Stead, William, W. T. Stead, In: Hodder and Stoughton (ed.), Books Which Have Influenced Me. London 1897, pp. 25–41.

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction (29. January 1825). Autographs, with Biographical Notices, No. VI: Reminiscences 1825, In: The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction (Vol. 5). Containing Original Essays. London 1825, p. 75.

Thomas, Isaac Babalola, Life History of Herbert Macaulay, C.E. Lagos 1946.

Secondary Sources

Adebaniwa, Wale, Hegemony and Spatial Politics. The Press and the Struggle for Lagos. In: *Africa Development* 29: 4, 2004, pp. 75–91.

Adeniran, Adedapo, The Case for Peaceful and Friendly Dissolution of the Artificial Entity Christened Nigeria by the British Colonial Imperialists. Lagos 2002.

Afigbo, Adiele Eberechukwu, The Warrant Chiefs. Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria 1891–1929. London 1972.

Ajayi, Jacob Festus Ade, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841–1891. The Making of a New Élite. London 1965.

Allman, Jean, The Quills of the Porcupine. Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana. Madison 1993.

Anderson, Benedict, Die Erfindung der Nation. Zur Karriere eines folgenreichen Konzepts. Exp. ed. Berlin 1998.

Anasom, Nicodemus, The Emergence of Public Spheres in Colonial Cameroon. The Case of Palm Wine Drinking Joints as lieux de sociabilité in Bamenda Township. In: *Africa Development* 35: 1 + 2, 2010, pp. 210–220.

Ayandele, Emmanuel Ayankanmi, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842–1914. A Political and Social Analysis. London 1966.

Baker, Pauline Halpern, Urbanization and Political Change. The Politics of Lagos, 1917–1967. Berkeley 1974.

Barber, Karin (ed.), Africa's Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self. Bloomington 2006.

Barber, Karin, The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics. Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond. Cambridge/ New York/ Melbourne et al. 2007.

Barber, Karin, Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos, In: Toyin Falola (ed.), Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honor of J. D. Y. Peel. Durham, North Carolina 2005, pp. 187–208.

Barnes, Sandra, Political Ritual and the Public Sphere in Contemporary West Africa, In: David J. Parkin, Lionel Caplan, Humphrey J. Fisher (eds.), The Politics of Cultural Performance. Providence 1996, pp. 19–40.

Benhabib, Seyla, Models of Public Space. Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas, In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.), Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 73–98.

Breckenridge, Keith, “We Must Speak for Ourselves”. The Rise and Fall of a Public Sphere on the South African Gold Mines, 1920 to 1931. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40: 1, 1998, pp. 71–108.

Calhoun, Craig, Introduction. Habermas and the Public Sphere, In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.), Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 1–48.

- Calhoun, Craig, The Public Sphere in the Field of Power. In: *Social Science History* 34: 3, 2010, pp. 301–335.
- Callaway, Helen, Gender, Culture and Empire. European Women in Colonial Nigeria. Urbana/ Chicago 1987.
- Coker, Increase Herbert Ebenezer, Landmarks of the Nigerian Press. An Outline of the Origins and Development of the Newspaper Press in Nigeria. 1859 to 1965. Lagos 1968.
- Cole, Patrick, Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos. London 1975.
- Coleman, James, Nigeria. Background to Nationalism. 4th ed. Berkley and Los Angeles 1965.
- Cooke, S., Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria. An Evaluation. In: *African Affairs* 79: 317, 1980, pp. 531–547.
- Cooper, Frederick/ Stoler, Ann, Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda, In: Frederick Cooper, Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World. Berkley 1997, pp. 1–56.
- Cruise O'Brien, Donal, A lost generation? Youth Identity and State Decay in West Africa, In: Richard P. Werbner, T. O. Ranger (eds.), Postcolonial Identities in Africa. Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 1996, pp. 55–74.
- Danmole, Hakeem, A Visionary of the Lagos Muslim Community. Mustapha Adamu Animashaun, 1885-1968. In: *Lagos Historical Review* 5, 2005, pp. 22–48.
- Deveneaux, Gustav, Public Opinion and Colonial Policy in Nineteenth-Century Sierra Leone. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9, 1976, pp. 45–67.
- Drew, Allison, Female Consciousness and Feminism in Africa. In: *Theory and Society* 24: 1, 1995, pp. 1–33.
- Eley, Geoff, Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century, In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.), Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 289–339.
- Eluwa, Gabriel, Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa. In: *African Studies Review* 14: 2, 1971, pp. 205–218.
- Ezera, Kalu, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria. An Analytical Study of Nigeria's Constitution-Making Developments and the Historical and Political Factors that Affected Constitutional Change. 2nd ed. Ibadan/London/New York 1964.
- Falola, Toyin, Yoruba Gurus. Indigenous Production of Knowledge in Africa. Asmara/ Trenton 1999.
- Falola, Toyin/ Heaton, Matthew M., A History of Nigeria. Cambridge/New York 2008.
- Flint, John, “Managing Nationalism”. The Colonial Office and Nnamdi Azikiwe, 1932-43. In: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27: 2, 1999, pp. 143–158.
- Fourchard, Laurent, Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920–60. In: *Journal of African History* 47: 1, 2006, pp. 115–137.
- Frank, Lawrence, Ideological Competition in Nigeria. Urban Populism Versus Elite Nationalism. In: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 17: 3, 1979, pp. 433–452.
- Fraser, Nancy, Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy, In: Craig J. Calhoun (ed.), Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Mass 1992, pp. 109–142.
- Freitag, Sandra, Enactments of Ram's Story and the Changing Nature of “the Public” in British India. In: *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 14: 1, 1991, pp. 65–90.

- Geiss, Imanuel, Panafrikanismus. Zur Geschichte der Dekolonisation. Frankfurt am Main 1968.
- Gladwell, Malcolm/ Shirky, Clay, From Innovation to Revolution. Do Social Media Make protests Possible? In: *Foreign Affairs* 90: 2, 2011, pp. 153-154.
- Habermas, Jürgen, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Frankfurt am Main 1990.
- Hopkins, Anthony G., An Economic History of West Africa. 4th ed. London 1980.
- Hopkins, Anthony, Economic Aspects of Political Movements in Nigeria and the Gold Coast 1918-1939. In: *The Journal of African History* 7: 1, 1966, pp. 133-152.
- Ikime, Obaro (ed.), Groundwork of Nigerian History. 5th ed. Ibadan, Nairobi, Lusaka 2001.
- July, Robert, The Origins of Modern African Thought. Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. London 1968.
- Kalpagam, U., Colonial Governmentality and the Public Sphere in India. In: *Journal of Historical Sociology*: 1, 2002, pp. 35-58.
- Kalu, Ezèra, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria. An Analytical Study of Nigeria's Constitution-Making Developments and the Historical and Political Factors that Affected Constitutional Change. London 1964.
- Koller, Andreas, The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research: An Introduction. In: *Social Science History* 34: 3, 2010, pp. 261-290.
- Langley, Jabez Ayodele, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945. A Study in Ideology and Social Class. Oxford 1978.
- Lindsay, Lisa, Domesticity and Difference. Male Breadwinners, Working Women, and Colonial Citizenship in the 1945 Nigerian General Strike. In: *The American Historical Review* 104: 3, 1999, pp. 783-812.
- Mah, Harold, Phantasies of the Public Sphere. Rethinking the Habermas of Historians. In: *The Journal of Modern History* 72: 1, 2000, pp. 153-182.
- Matheson, Hilda, Broadcasting in Africa. In: *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34: 137, 1935, pp. 387-390.
- Mba, Nina Emma, Nigerian Women Mobilized. Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965. Berkeley 1982.
- Moore, Sally Falk, Explaining the Present. Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography. In *American Ethnologist* 14: 4, 1987, pp. 727-736, p. 730.
- Mordi, Emmanuel, Wartime Propaganda, Devious Officialdom, and the Challenge of Nationalism During the Second World War in Nigeria. In: *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 18: 3, 2009, pp. 235-257.
- Naanen, Ben, "You Are Demanding Tax from the Dead". The Introduction of Direct Taxation and Its Aftermath in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1928-39. In: *African Economic History* 34, 2006, pp. 69-102.
- Neidhardt, Friedhelm, Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen. In: Friedhelm Neidhardt, Jürgen Friedrichs, M. Rainer Lepsius (eds.), Öffentlichkeit, Öffentliche Meinung, Soziale Bewegungen. Opladen 1994.
- Newell, Stephanie, Articulating Empire. Newspaper Readerships in Colonial West Africa. In: *New Formations* 73, 2011, pp. 26-42.
- Newell, Stephanie, The Forger's Tale. The Search for Odeziaku. Athens/Ohio 2006.

- Nicolson, Ian Ferguson, *The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960. Men, Methods, and Myths.* Oxford 1977.
- Niven, Rex, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope. Memoirs of a Colonial Servant.* London 1982.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth/Schulz, Winfried/Wilke, Jürgen (eds.), *Publizistik. Massenkommunikation.* Frankfurt am Main 1990.
- Nolte, Insa, Obafemi Awolowo and the Making of Remo. *The Local Politics of a Nigerian Nationalist.* Edinburgh 2009.
- Okonkwo, Rina, *Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930.* London/New York/Ontario 1995.
- Okonkwo, Rina, The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society. A Re- Examination. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15: 3, 1982, pp. 423–433.
- Okonkwo, Rina, The Nigeria Civil Service Union, 1919-1922. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26: 3, 1993, pp. 609–622.
- Olukoju, Ayodeji, Anatomy of Business-Government Relations. Fiscal Policy and Mercantile Pressure Group Activity in Nigeria, 1916-1933. In: *African Studies Review* 38: 1, 1995, pp. 23–50.
- Olukoju, Ayodeji, Nigeria's Colonial Government, Commercial Banks and the Currency Crisis of 1916-1920. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30: 2, 1997, pp. 277–298.
- Olusanya, Gabriel, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria 1861-1960, In: Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History.* 5th ed. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 2001, pp. 518–544.
- Olusanya, Gabriel, The Nationalist Movement in Nigeria, In: Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History.* 5th ed. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 2001, pp. 545–569.
- Omu, Fred, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937.* London 1978.
- Omu, Fred, The “Iwe Irohin”, 1859-1867. In: *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4: 1, 1967, pp. 35–44.
- Omu, Fred, The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa. The West African Example. In: *The Journal of African History* 9: 2, 1968, pp. 279–298.
- Papacharissi, Zizi, The Virtual Sphere. The Internet as a Public Sphere. In: *New Media & Society* 4: 1, 2002, pp. 9-27.
- Perham, Margery, *Native Administration in Nigeria.* 2nd ed. London, New York/Toronto 1962.
- Reichmuth, Stefan, Education and the Growth of Religious Associations Among Yoruba Muslims. The Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigera. In: *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26: 4, 1996, pp. 365–405.
- Requate, Jörg, Öffentlichkeit und Medien als Gegenstände historischer Analyse. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 25, 1999, pp. 5–32.
- Schmidt, Elizabeth, Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa). In: *The American Historical Review* 110: 4, 2005, pp. 975–1014.
- Scott, David, *Refashioning Futures. Criticism After Postcoloniality.* Princeton 1999.
- Shami, Seteney (ed.), *Publics, Politics and Participation. Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa.* New York 2009.

- Sherwood, Marika*, Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891-C. 1940. The Genesis of Underdevelopment? In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30: 2, 1997, pp. 253–276.
- Shirky, Clay*, The Political Power of Social Media. Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change. In: *Foreign Affairs* 90: 1, 2011, pp. 28-I.
- Sklar, Richard*, Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation. Trenton 2004.
- Smyth, Rosaleen*, The Development of British Colonial Film Policy, 1927-1939. With Special Reference to East and Central Africa. In: *The Journal of African History* 20: 3, 1979, pp. 437–450.
- Smyth, Rosaleen*, The Genesis of Public Relations in British Colonial Practice. In: *Public Relations Review* 27, 2001, pp. 149–161.
- Stoler, Ann*, Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance. In: *Archival Science* 2:1-2, 2002, pp. 87-109, pp. 90-91.
- Tamuno, Tekena Nitonye*, British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century, In: Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. 5th ed. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 2001, pp. 393–409.
- Tamuno, Tekena Nitonye*, Herbert Macaulay, Nigerian Patriot. Ibadan/Nairobi/Lusaka 1975.
- Tamuno, Tekena Nitonye*, Nigeria and Elective Representation 1923-1947. London 1966.
- Tamuno, Tekena Nitonye*, The Evolution of the Nigerian State. The Southern Phase, 1898-1914. London 1978.
- Tamuno, Tekena*, Governor Clifford and Representative Government. In: *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4: 1, 1967, pp. 117–134.
- Tetty, Charles*, Medical Practitioners of African Descent in Colonial Ghana. In: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18: 1, 1985, pp. 139–144.
- Van Allen, Judith*, “Sitting on a Man”. Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women. In: *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6: 2, 1972, pp. 165–181.
- Waller, Richard*, Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa. In: *Journal of African History* 47: 1 2006, pp. 77–92.
- Watson, Ruth*, Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan. Chieftaincy & Civic Culture in a Yoruba City. Athens, Ohio 2003.
- White, Jeremy*, Central Administration in Nigera, 1914-19148. The Problem of Polarity. Dublin/London 1981.
- Zachernuk, Philip Serge*, Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas. Charlottesville 2000.

Internet Sources

- Alderman, Christopher*, Temple, Charles Linsdsay (1871-1929). Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63465>. Checked on 03. October 2012.
- Baylen, Joseph*, Stead, William Thomas (1849–1912). Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/vic/article/36258>. Checked on 28. September 2012.

Furley, Oliver, Cameron, Sir Donald Charles (1872-1948). Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32257>. Checked on 08. October 2012.

Kirk-Greene, Anthony, Guggisberg, Sir (Frederick) Gordon (1869-1930). Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33599>. Checked on 03. October 2012.

Lynch, Mark, Political Science and the New Arab Public Sphere, 12. June 2012. Abu Aadvark's Middle East Blog, http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/06/12/political_science_and_the_new_arab_public_sphere. Checked on 18. September 2012.

Robinson, K., Gore, William George Arthur Ormsby-, fourth Baron Harlech (1885-1964). Oxford Dictionary of National Biography 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35330>. Checked on 13. October 2012.

Stockwell, Anthony, Clifford, Sir Hugh Charles (1866-1941). Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32450>. Checked on 19. June 2012.

Appendix

Summary

The study at hand investigates the colonial public sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943, through a close reading of colonial archival records and the Lagosian press. It turns to imaginations of the arena of public communication and to utterances which potentially aimed to alter or contest colonial governance. Starting with “diagnostic events” that strikingly reveal political contests and conflicts in Lagos, it examines the role of public criticism in the colonial state, the structure and mechanisms of the public sphere, and African conceptions of public opinion. Looking into the broader context of print culture under colonial hegemony, the study’s objective is to map power structures and contestations of colonial power and to draw conclusions about colonial hegemony, the media, and the public sphere. Therefore, it seeks to provide a better understanding of the importance of public media, in particular newspapers, for Nigerian nationalism.

The study shows that the public sphere concerned newspapermen, politicians and colonial administrators alike. Participation in it was sought after and principally encouraged – utterances were vested with substantial power. But the role of the colonial public sphere and public opinion were contested. In contrast to his predecessor Frederick Lugard, Governor Hugh Clifford saw the potential of public criticism. But to him, public “criticism” voiced in the limited public sphere of the refashioned Legislative Council sufficed to legitimise the colonial state – he disregarded newspapers and the criticisms they carried. Moreover, he disallowed Africans to set the agenda of political discussion. He regarded the colonial public sphere as an arena of formation, as an instrument to convince the governed of “sound public opinion”. This imagination was taken up by the Colonial Office eventually. Starting from the 1930s, media were used as instruments with the aim to educate and persuade. They were employed to transmit ideal imaginations of colonial conduct – the colonial state fostered the dissemination of its opinions and sought to gain the audience’s approval. For Africans engaging in public communication, public criticism was an imperative of the colonial situation. In newspapers they framed their criticism with reference to liberal ideals and sought to alter the conduct of government institutions. Correspondingly, the newspapers positioned themselves as the ones to safeguard “good government”. They were not only a counterweight to the government; they furthermore contested the government’s self declared expertise on the people’s needs.

Newspapers contributed to the formation of a sense of belonging as they offered topics for discussion and provided a platform for debate and dialogue. Furthermore, they linked the discussions of distinct groups and enabled them to build rapport. They also served as projection screens for cooperation vis-à-vis the government and were the chief organ of public criticism. Within the sphere of public communication via media newspapermen, politicians, and contributors competed for the public's opinion. Different publics claimed legitimate representation with reference to mass support or by invoking class difference. They argued for their respective view of what might amount to public opinion by alluding to standards applying to public communication. In reference to "education" newspapermen and politicians sought to establish an exclusive claim on critical publicity. These deliberations on the nature of the battlefield were discussions about which knowledges were to prevail. Some expressions of private experiences were disallowed, others encouraged. Thereby, the characteristics of the entitlement to, or claim of, public opinion changed. In the 1930s politicians transformed the notion of what constituted an opinion leader. "Young" organisations replaced established, popular personalities with regard to political dominance. Overall, newspapermen and politicians strove for a consonance of opinions and a focus on specific topics. Only the voice of a united front contesting for its notion of the public good promised success when contesting the colonial state at its own game.

Key words: colonial public sphere, print media/newspapers, print culture

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht koloniale und lokale Vorstellungen von Öffentlichkeit in Nigeria 1920-1943. Durch eine Analyse kolonialer Akten und Berichterstattung in englischsprachigen, nigerianischen Zeitungen nähert sie sich der Kommunikationssphäre, in der Herausforderungen kolonialer Herrschaft artikuliert wurden, an. Ausgehend von sogenannten „diagnostischen Ereignissen“ – markanten Kulminationspunkten politischer Auseinandersetzungen in Lagos – untersucht die Arbeit die Rolle, die öffentlicher Kritik im kolonialen Staat zugeschrieben wurde, betrachtet Struktur und Mechanismen der kolonialen Öffentlichkeit und analysiert von NigerianerInnen geäußerte Vorstellungen von öffentlicher Meinung. Dieser Blick auf publizistische Aktivität im kolonialen Staat ermöglicht es, einen Einblick in Strukturen und Herausforderungen kolonialer Macht zu gewinnen und Schlüsse zu kolonialer Hegemonie, den Medien und Öffentlichkeit im kolonialen Nigeria zu ziehen. So soll die Bedeutung von Zeitungen für den nigerianischen Nationalismus beleuchtet werden.

Die Studie zeigt, dass sich sowohl nigerianische PublizistInnenn und PolitikerInnen als auch Vertreter des kolonialen Staates mit Öffentlichkeit auseinander setzten. Die Teilnahme an der kolonialen Öffentlichkeit war begehrt und wurde angeregt. Die Rolle, welche ihr dabei einerseits vom Staat und andererseits der Bevölkerung zugeschrieben wurde, unterschied sich jedoch deutlich. Im Gegensatz zu Frederick Lugard erkannte sein Nachfolger – Gouverneur Hugh Clifford – zwar das Potential öffentlicher Kritik. Dennoch war für ihn nur öffentliche „Kritik“, die im Legislative Council geäußert wurde von Bedeutung – sie legitimierte in seiner Vorstellung den kolonialen Staat. Clifford erkannte die Kritik, die in Zeitungen geäußert wurde nicht an. Er sprach PolitikerInnen und PublizistInnen die Möglichkeit ab, Themen der politischen Diskussion zu setzen. So wurde „Öffentlichkeit“ zu einer Ausbildungsarena, zu einem Instrument, mit dem der Bevölkerung „sound public opinion“ – koloniale Vorstellungen von vertretbaren Ansichten – näher gebracht werden sollten. Diese Ansicht wurde ab den 1930er Jahren vom Colonial Office aufgegriffen. Medien wurden folglich zu Instrumenten für „Bildung“ und Überredung. Sie dienten der Vermittlung idealer Vorstellungen von kolonialem Verhalten und zielten dabei auf Zustimmung in der Bevölkerung ab. Für jene NigerianerInnen, die an medial vermittelter, öffentlicher Kommunikation teilnahmen, war öffentliche Kritik eine zwingende Notwendigkeit angesichts der kolonialen Situation. Sie formulierten ihre Kritik gemäß liberaler Ideale und versuchten so die Politik von Regierungsinstitutionen zu verändern. Somit stellten sie sich als diejenigen dar, die „gute Regierungsführung“ sicherstellen würden.

Dabei sahen sich PublizistInnenen und PolitikerInnen nicht nur als Gegengewicht zum kolonialen Staat, sondern forderten vielmehr das selbstbescheinigte Wissen des kolonialen Staates um die Bedürfnisse und Wünsche der Bevölkerung heraus.

Printmedien trugen zur Bildung von Solidarität und Zugehörigkeit bei, indem sie Themen und Diskussionsmöglichkeiten anboten. Sie förderten aktiv Dialog und Kooperation zwischen unterschiedlichen Gruppen. Zeitungen waren weiters die wichtigsten Organe öffentlicher Kritik und dienten gleichzeitig als Projektionsflächen, auf denen gegenüber der kolonialen Administration Kooperationsbereitschaft demonstriert wurde. PublizistInnen, PolitikerInnen und LeserbriefschreiberInnen standen in Konkurrenz um öffentliche Meinung. Verschiedene (Teil-) Öffentlichkeiten beanspruchten legitime Repräsentation für sich und argumentierten, dass die von ihnen vertretenen Ansichten öffentliche Meinung widerspiegeln würden. In Debatten darüber, welche Äußerungen zu öffentlicher Meinung werden könnten, wurde ein Standard für öffentliche Kommunikation beschworen. Mit dem Verweis auf „Bildung/gebildet“ (educated) versuchten manche PublizistInnen und PolitikerInnen einen exklusiven Anspruch auf kritische Publizität zu etablieren. In dieser Auseinandersetzung um die Beschaffenheit der Arena des politischen Kampfes – über die Art des „Wissens“, das öffentlich artikuliert werden konnte – verhandelten PublizistInnenen und PolitikerInnen, welches „Wissen“ von Bestand sein sollte. Gleichzeitig wurden gewisse Beschreibungen „privater Erfahrungen“ delegitimiert. Vorstellungen davon, wer berechtigt sei öffentliche Meinung zu vertreten, bzw. wer den Anspruch erheben konnte, öffentliche Meinung zu vertreten, veränderte sich in den 1930ern. „Jugendliche“ Organisationen lösten etablierte, populäre Politiker als Meinungsführer ab. Generell waren PublizistInnen bemüht, Meinungskonsonanzen und Themenfokussierungen in der kolonialen Öffentlichkeit herzustellen. In ihrer Vorstellung konnte nur so – wenn ihre Ansichten scheinbar erwiesenermaßen die Meinung der Bevölkerung abbildeten – der koloniale Staat gemäß seiner eigenen Logik herausgefordert werden.

Schlagwörter: koloniale Öffentlichkeit, Printmedien, Printkultur

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

MA in African Studies (African History), University of Vienna 10/07 – present

Expected completion: April 2013.

Semester abroad, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife 11/08 – 02/09

MA in Journalism, University of Applied Sciences, Vienna 10/03 – 05/07

Thesis title: The British Angle. Analysis of the foreign coverage of British newspaper's online-publications. Supervisor: Dr Mariele Schulze-Berndt.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Three months of archival research in the UK at the National Archives (Public Records Office) and The British Library Newspaper Library
- quantitative content analysis of media coverage based on the theory of news value

PUBLICATIONS

Oke, Katharina (2012): „Das Gegenteil von gut ist gut gemeint“? Zu einer Reflexion von Weißsein und Schwarzer Kritik daran. In: Femina Politica 21: 2, 161-165. Leverkusen: Barbara Budrich.

[Journal article that questions anti-racist performativity of whiteness, exemplified by a prominent Austrian billboard.]

Bauer, Thomas/ Oke, Katharina (eds., 2011): Armut in Medien. Ausgewählte Arbeitsberichte aus dem Bachelorseminar des Instituts für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft der Universität Wien, WS 2010/2011. (brochure) Vienna: Department of Mass Communication, University of Vienna.

[This brochure comprises students' assessment of media coverage on poverty]

TEACHING

Discourses on Poverty, University of Vienna 10/10 – 04/10

Position: Tutor/ Teaching Assistant. Supervision: Prof Thomas A. Bauer, Department of Mass Communication.

Studio Africa, University of Vienna 10/09 – 07/10

Position: Tutor. Supervision: Prof Thomas A. Bauer, Department of Mass Communication.