Settlements Relocation in Northern Nigeria: A Historical Analysis of the Colonial Resettlement Scheme in Yagbaland, 1900-1950

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Abstract
For the most part of the nineteenth century, Yagbaland was in the throes of events and developments the origins of which lay outside its borders. The invasion and domination by the Nupe, a neighbouring state, and the attendant insecurity led to the abandonment of many old and revered settlements and the erection of defensive structures around vulnerable settlements. The Nupe raids thus produced a traumatic effect which was most noticeable in the demographic dislocations that it engendered. The end of Nupe imperialism and the commencement of British colonialism witnessed the beginning of a series of appeals to Yagba people to move from the hill-tops. This paper therefore deals with the historical evolution of the current pattern of settlement in Yagbaland. Also discussed is the coming of British rule and the various attempts and strategies adopted to get the people resettled. Equally highlighted is the role of Christian missionaries in the relocation exercise and the impact of the exercise on the new settlements that emerged.

Introduction
The Yagba people are one of the Yoruba groups that inhabit the most northeastern part of Yoruba land. They are found mainly in the Yagba West, Yagba East and Mopa/Amuro Local Government Areas of Kogi State. To the North-east of Yagba land are found Egbe, Eri, Ere, Ogga, Ejiba and Okoloke. Others are Isanlu, Amuro and Mopa. To the south east of the territory are the Yagba of Ejuku, Ife – Olokotun, Ponyan, Alu, Igbagun and Jega. In the south west portion of the land are to be found the Yagba of Ogbe, Irele, Oke-Ako, Ipao, Iye, Itapaji and Aiyede.

Unlike some of their counterparts in other parts of Yoruba land, the Yagba had no centralized administration. Robin Hortin classified them as stateless societies. According to him, the basic peculiarities of such states include the absence of centralization of authority or the wielding of political power by an individual ....¹ However, P.E. Mitchel has presented a very interesting counter argument saying, “every group of people must possess some form of national authority symbolized in the person of some individual or individuals.”² So whether characterized as stateless or centralized, a people is bound to possess a system of government. This is true of Yagba people, who in spite of the absence of political centralization, found a workable administration in the village organization. All members of the community participated in the government either directly or through their leaders or representatives.

There are varying concepts of resettlement and it is difficult to give a universally acceptable definition. Sutton attributed this difficulty to the bewildering varieties of origins, sizes and objectives of settlement or resettlements.”³ He notes further that resettlement schemes generally display two diagnostic features: a movement of population (voluntary or involuntary) and, an
element of planning and control. Palmer views resettlement as partly an exercise “designed to relocate people displaced by wars,” as was the experience of the Yagba. He goes further to argue that whatever the original motive, resettlement schemes are designed to contribute to development by encouraging agricultural production. In discussing settlement relocation, it is important to distinguish between those that were voluntary and those that were compelled. This distinction is necessary for our own discussion.

T. Scudder is of the opinion that most resettlement schemes are rarely initiated from within the group involved. The impetus according to him comes often from outside, and during resettlement “the external influences impose their values on a traditional society, usually without really understanding the internal complexity”. This was so in Yagbaland, at least initially when the people yielded to the appeals of the colonial masters. But towards the end, socio-economic prospects associated with the development of roads and transportation made the initiatives internal rather than external. Another analyst, R. Chambers is of the opinion that it is more profitable to have a classificatory emphasis based on the function rather than on the origin of the schemes. But in the case of relocations in Yagbaland, this writer wishes to emphasize both the origin and the function; the relocations were both voluntary and compelled. The concept of resettlement also carries with it the idea of the number of people to be resettled. But according to Abumere, “no man has been able to specify what the optimal spatial distribution of population is.” This would imply that in discussing resettlement issues, it will be difficult to establish optimal resettlement site sizes. So the whole question of what size of population to be assigned to a settlement site in order to make the provision of amenities and infrastructure economical is difficult to set out. In view of the fact that the relocation exercise in Yagbaland was not for the most part the result of a conscious governmental effort for specific purposes other than for a more effective colonial administration, the above issue does not pose a serious problem for our study. It is also important to note that no single approach has been adopted in the study of resettlement or relocation exercise. Thus, sociologists may tend to emphasize sociological factors; geographers might look at the spatial factors, while historians, apart from considering the factors above, would have a long-term historical perspective of the scheme. These considerations guide my approach in this study.

**Settlement Patterns**

Patterns of settlement deals with the spatial relations between one dwelling and another, that is, whether they are close together as in a village or town, or whether they are further apart as in a hamlet or in single, more isolated homesteads. Patterns of settlement therefore must not be confused with the distribution of settlements which is concerned with the spread of settlements. In his discussion on rural settlement, Hudson identified to major patterns. These are (i) the nucleated pattern which is composed of villages, each more or less compact and (ii) the dispersed pattern consisting of single homesteads of some distance from each other. Hudson’s classification seems to agree with that of Robin Horton, who in his study of segmentary societies established dispersed and nucleated settlements as the patterns among segmentary societies.

**Settlement Pattern in Pre-Nupe Yagba**

The basic principle that guided settlement patterns in Pre-Nupe Yagbaland was kinship ties. People settled on their family lands, as such the settlement was dispersed though tending towards compact in the nineteenth century as a result of external aggression. The head of each clan
apportioned land to different family units and held land in trust for its members. Because the kinship factor made families to build their houses as close together as possible, the pattern of settlement in Yagbaland though dispersed in essence, tended towards the compact or nucleated type. Other factors that influenced settlement were availability of water and fertility of the soil. Strangers farmed on family or clan lands upon request, accompanied by presents. The local “settlement patterns” at its most rudimentary level could be no more than a hut-aghere or a more elaborate form of it – ile, which is the smallest unit of a regular settlement. One, two or more of the regular houses could be joined together by roofed or un-covered lines of walling, to form the extended family.

Thus “settlement patterns” in Pre-Nupe Yagbaland ranged from an aghere, a house, to a group of agheres making up a small settlement. This largely explains the dispersed settlement pattern mentioned above. These mini-states as Obayemi\textsuperscript{10} called them, upheld, well-defined territorial boundaries with each lineage (ebi) in each polity having well-defined territorial boundaries. He also identified the following eight different ‘patterns of settlement’ in Pre-Nupe Yagbaland: (a) caves, rock-shelter and rock overhangs; (b) hill-top habitation sites- some early (late stone age) inhabited by the nineteenth-early twentieth centuries; (c) level ground sites of the earliest historical period; (d) level ground sites of the earliest historical period- but not associated with the earliest ancestors but evacuated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; (e) later historical sites (occupied at least during the nineteenth century –some with defensive walls; (f) Factory sites including quarries for stones and potters, clay, iron – smelting and smithing sites; (g) miscellaneous –market sites, shrines etc; (h) river-side settlement.

However, these ‘settlement patterns’ identified by Obayemi in Pre-Nupe era were disrupted as a result of the Nupe raids which forced people to abandon these settlements for defensible hill-top areas. Thus on the eve of colonial rule in Yagbaland settlements were on hill-tops and other hide-outs such as forest patches. Walled settlements were also noticeable as in the case of Ife-Olukotun and Egbe. This is probably the reason why Obayemi concluded that “no consistent pattern could be inferred for the pre-colonial history of settlement in the area.”\textsuperscript{11}

**Impact of Nupe Wars and Settlement Shift**

“Every situation” says I. F. Nicolsin, “has its roots in the past. The past survives into the present. The present is indeed the past undergoing modification.”\textsuperscript{12} The above statement is applicable to the relocation exercise in Yagbaland. According to F.S. Hudson, even in considering settlements or towns, it is found that the past is usually the key to the present and a geographical as well as a purely historical perspective is needed.\textsuperscript{13} From the mid 19\textsuperscript{th} century, till about 1894-7 (reign of Abubakar), the unified kingdom of Nupe became the prime mover of events concerning the surrounding peoples of which Yagbaland is a part. As they expanded, they exploited the surrounding peoples in their drive for economic prosperity and local military supremacy.

The Nupe wars came upon the decentralized and fragmented Yagbaland, and subjected it to a period of exploitation. At first Nupe demanded tribute which was paid in cash. After sometime, cowries (the common currency of the time), was exhausted and slaves were demanded. The period 1882 to 1897 (the reigns of Maliki and Abubakar), was characterized by violence, burdensome taxation and mass movement of people. The Yagba country was despoiled with Ife, Ejuku, Takete and smaller villages reduced to pathetic sizes. It is recorded that Mopa for instance
was reduced in a day and Ife was left with only eight old men and a dog after a resistance lasting three days.\textsuperscript{14}

Options in the face of an increasing frequency of the attacks and in the face of mounted raids were fairly clear. One easy reaction to this was that the people evacuated their exposed homes for more defensible and inaccessible locations. Withdrawals were in the direction of inaccessible places like hill-tops, caves and rock shelters as well as in the patches of rain forest where visibility was limited and deployment of cavalry difficult. Thus, the process of the exploitation of the economic and human resources which degenerated into naked hunt for slaves had left visible impact on the numerous settlements. Some of the settlements lay totally or partially in ruins, some new settlements with proximity to the hills emerged, defensive settlement such as Egbe and refugee settlement such as Igbagun are pointers to the degree of social dislocation involved.

Defence was a major consideration for the retirement of people into inaccessible places or hill top settlements. At the hill-top, the Yagbas were better able to deal with the Nupes who were fighting on horses. Towards the end of the nineteenth century therefore, nearly all the villages in Yagbaland had moved their settlements to the hilly or heavily forested areas. For example, settlements such as Mopa, Ejuku, Ilae moved to the hill-tops, while Ponyan moved to the thickly forested zone. A few others especially Egbe decided to erect defensive walls and structures. This action and reaction explains the nature of the settlement shift in Yagbaland towards the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Thus the originally dispersed village settlements emerged into something resembling compact communities and strongly fortified because of the need to establish effective defence and to provide better security for the members of the community.

The Coming of Colonial Rule
In the face of continued threat to their existence and survival, it is on record \textsuperscript{15} that the Yagba people and the Okun in general openly solicited the intervention of the white man; they reportedly requested the British to come and shield them from the Nupe. For African scholars that are familiar with several instances of ‘resistance’ to colonial rule, the case of Yagbaland might sound as an antithesis. But it should be understood that theirs was a response dictated by local historical circumstances. In the light of the circumstances under which the British agents came to Yagbaland, they had no difficulty in incorporating the area into the colonial system. Like the Idoma, Tiv, and the Jos Plateau peoples, all of the Northern administration, the Yagbas were not Islamized and operated the mini-state form of political organization.

The forces of the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.) terminated Nupe imperialism in 1897. The termination of Nupe imperialism was received with jubilation that cut across the entire North-east Yorubaland. Yagbaland became regularly administered in 1903 as part of the Northern Region. Yagbaland and other parts north-east Yoruba, the Tiv, the Idoma, Ebira etc which later became generally known as the Middle Belt never practiced the Emirate system of administration. But unfortunately, the British administration assumed that the whole North could be administered with slight modifications along the lines adopted for the classical emirates. However, the situation in Yagba was vastly different. The British found a segmentary society in which each group jealously maintained and guarded its autonomy. The British administrators were, however, so much impressed by the Emirate system to the extent that in derision, they labelled Yagbaland and the Middle Belt in general as “Pagan Belt.”\textsuperscript{16}
British Attitude towards the Scattered Settlements

For the purpose of satisfactory assessment and collection of taxes (introduced in the Northern Provinces in 1904), and the maintenance of peace, there was need, because of the segmented nature of the societies, to introduce a clearly defined hierarchical territorial administration. This in turn called for the appointment of some categories of colonial functionaries over and above the clan and family systems in operation. The Lugardian proposal then was to:

Endeavour to find a man of influence as chief and to group under him as many villages or districts as possible, to teach him to delegate powers, and to take an interest in his Native Treasury, to support his authority, and to inculcate a sense of responsibility.\textsuperscript{17}

The above proposal, apart from being a general colonial policy aimed at solving immediate administrative problems in the Middle Belt in general, was of particular significance in Yagbaland. It would be recalled that the Nupe wars had forced Yagba people to inaccessible places. Thus colonial administration found Yagba villages on hill-tops and in hide-outs ungovernable. Therefore, apart from the absence of centralized administration which generally characterized the Middle Belt region, problems of administration, maintenance of law and order, collection of taxes, became more acute in Yagbaland because of the inaccessible nature of the settlements. Thus village grouping or re-organization became a general colonial policy strategy in Yagbaland, aimed at encouraging the inaccessible settlements to move closer to central locations.

Administrative Re-organization of Yagbaland

Effective administration based on the principle of “finding” a chief emerged in 1903. The administrative arrangements that emerged placed Yagba “district” under two different administrations. The Yagba of Egbe, Ejiba, Okoloke area (later known as West Yagba), came under the provincial administration of Ilorin, as a sub-district of Lafiagi-Pategi. Their counterparts in Isanlu, Mopa and Ife-Ejuku areas (collectively known as East Yagba), were administered as a district of Kabba province. For West Yagba which came under Lafiagi-Pategi division, tax assessment and collection was systematized under a Nupe district head. The appointment of an alien district head was justified on the ground that it made for consistency and “provided ordered administration where before there had been inertia or chaos.”\textsuperscript{18}

Villages in East Yagba were re-grouped and several villages were put under a chief. By this re-organization, East Yagba was divided into three village-groups or sub-districts: the village – group of Isanlu comprising Isanlu-Makutu, Idofin, Ilafin, Irunda and Amuro Odo; the village – group of Mopa made up of Mopa, Orokere, Aiyetjeu, Oke-Agi, and Ilai; and the village – group of Ife-Ejuku comprising Ife-Olukotun, Alu, Jege, Ogbom, Ponyan, Ejuku and Igbagun. The chiefs of Isanlu, Mopa and Ife thus became the village heads and spokesmen for their respective village groups. By this appointment, the British administrators made these chiefs (the Olukotun of Ife – Chief Ajibola, the Agbana of Isanlu and the Aloko of Mopa), superior and far more important than the other clan chiefs. The appointed chief was no longer the first among equals (\textit{primus interpar\ae}). As it would be expected the path to political centralization was very rough. The other clan chiefs found it difficult to understand why they should surrender their authorities
and become the subordinates of a former colleague, hence social antagonism and resentment resulted. The idea of village-groupings was arbitrary, innovative and represented revolutionary tendency in Yagbaland. Therefore, Nockler-Ferryman was not far from being correct when he said that “the British colonial officials failed to grasp the organizational contrast existing between the Muslim emirates in the north and the so called “Pagan” of the Middle Belt.”

Desperate in search of a workable administrative formula for the scattered settlements in hide-outs, the colonial authorities on the spot moved from one administrative experiment to the other in Yagbaland. Still in keeping with the process of creating a wider political orbit and finding an equivalent to the emir, another major administrative re-organization took place in Kabba province in 1918. In this new arrangement, attempt was made at creating an “Emirate system”, fashioned along the Emirate system of the north. Hence the position of Obaro of Kabba was transformed to that of an Emir over the enlarged Emirate (the enlarged Kabba Division). By this re-organization, the four hitherto independent administrative Districts in Kabba Division were placed under the Obaro of Kabba (who was merely the spokesman for the Owe people). The newly constituted ‘Emirate’ was made up of Kabba District under the District Headship of Balogun of Kabba town; Yagba District under the Olukotun of Ife; Bunu District under the Olu of Kiri; and Gbedo District was headed by Olu of Otun – Gbedo. By incorporating these other three Districts – Gbedo, Bunu and Yagba into the Kabba Emirate, they now shared a court (referred to as a pagan court) and a federated Native Treasury at Kabba. However, even in Kabba his home base, the Obaro was regarded as primus inter pares among the senior chiefs of Kabba. This arrangement definitely ignored local peculiarities and could not but engender resentment. Complaints got to the colonial Governor from the various district heads and clan chiefs. It was subsequently realized by the colonial officials that “the Obaro was maintaining his position by virtue of British influence”. The un-workability of the arrangement unfolded and led to its final collapse in October 1922, when the Governor recommended that the various chiefs should be independent.

The administrative re-organizations which were conceived as strategies for relocating the scattered settlements and for bringing the populations out of their hide-outs and closer to the administrative headquarters rather alienated them the more. Emigration became rampant because of the artificial creation of village heads without any traditional base. Although by the 1918 re-organization the ‘Emirate’ now shared a court and a Federated Native Treasury at Kabba (located in easily accessible area to which other settlements in the hide-outs had to travel), this strategy equally failed for the common court and the common Treasury were also dismantled in 1922 when the ‘Emirates’ collapsed. With the failure of the administrative re-organizations, official colonial policy towards the scattered settlements became that of support and encouragement given to the chiefs and the people concerned to effect demographic changes. Where appeals failed, movements to the plains were in many settlements made compulsory by the British administrators as was the case in Mopa in 1918. On the whole, the people appeared to have responded to certain incentives that accompanied colonial rule in this demographic relocation. For instance, by 1913, the construction of Kabba-Isanlu Makutu road had started which facilitated communication and stimulated economic activities. Therefore a few communities or populations in their embattled settlements, which had not been eager to move, responded to these new developments. Most of these settlements finally decided to move in the 1930s to take advantage of the motorable roads constructed.
In furtherance of its efforts to encourage the growth of settlements in the plains, the colonial administrators adopted the colonial policy of government / mission cooperation. As captain E.J. Douglas stressed in 1914; “every effort should be made to maintain friendly relation between the Native Administration and the various missions.” The missions were encouraged and financially supported in the building of their churches. Most of the churches (or the missions houses as they were popularly known) were to serve as educational and health centres. In this regard, the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M) was well noted for its remarkable achievements and contributions in Yagbaland. For instance, the S.I.M’s modern medical services helped to attract people by organizing modern medical care which was non-existent in Yagbaland before. Thomas Titcombe’s wife, the first white woman to settle among the Yagba started a maternity clinic immediately she arrived in Egbe in 1914, the first of its kind in Yagbaland. The mission also ran a small school under Rev. and Mrs. Craig at Isanlu and by 1928 the S.I.M had started a school for girls at Mopa under the supervision of Miss Kruse. After the usual initial reluctance, the hut in which the daily medical care was administered was flocked by eager mothers and others with all sorts of ailments. These institutions were neither located on the hill-tops nor in hide-outs, but on the plains. Hence the people who had accepted the new religion and needed to worship in the churches, or those who desired the new education offered by the missions as well as the accompanying health services, were gradually persuaded to come down from the hill-tops to take advantage of these services. Therefore, unlike most colonial policies and methods which engendered rebellion (i.e. the imposition of the emirate model), Yagba people seemed to have responded favourably to colonial appeals to come out of their hide-outs. It is true that people were encouraged to come down from the hill-tops in their own economic interest, but more for colonial administrative convenience. The colonial social and economic developments like roads, western education and health services thus served as stimulants for the people's resettlement.

The Process of Population Relocation
Stories of migrations from one settlement to the other are a common feature of both oral traditions of many societies as well as in the available written literature for several reasons such as defence, transportation facilities, natural disasters, opportunity for spatial expansion, social security and deliberate government policy. Defence was the main reason why the Yagbas moved to the hill-tops as indicated earlier on. The villages of Mopa, Amuro, Isanlu and Ponyan are chosen for closer study amidst the numerous Yagba villages because Mopa, Isanlu and Amuro illustrate movement from the hills to the lowland areas while Ponyan presents the case of a settlement in thickly forested hide-outs.

The Resettlement of Isanlu People
In Isanlu different families such as Adi, Odi, Ajigba, Oterelu, etc. settled separately on family lands. The Pre-Nupe settlement setting was on clan basis. These clan settlements were disorganized and dislodged as a result of Nupe raids. Although Isanlu succeeded in establishing some measure of security for the people by diplomatic means, and the town became a Nupe base (Nupe got all they needed by way of shelter and victuals) for raids into some other Yagba towns, this however was not until most of the people had been forced to the hill-tops by Nupe marauders. This first shift in settlement particularly involved Makutu and Ijowq which moved a distance of 4 kilometers and 7 kilometers respectively from their original sites to the hill-tops, while settlements like Isanlu Mopo, Bagido, Odogbe, etc found abode in the valleys. The people
were forced to settle in clusters on the hill-tops though not far from one another. The kinship organization which was typical at the original site was still maintained. With the opportunity offered by the relative peace which accompanied British administration, and the advantages of the new roads, there was a relocation of population from the hill-tops to the road side. Isanlu like other Yagba villages at the turn of the twentieth century was not connected to other towns by motorable roads but by mere foot-paths. The Kabba-Isanlu road started in 1913 was completed in 1926 and was opened on 15th March, 1926.\textsuperscript{25} This road development cut off some villages situated in physically disadvantaged areas, and caused the inhabitants of such areas to move. The expansion of Isanlu Mopo along the main motor way is a typical example. The movement of Isanlu-Makutu to what is now known as Itedo-Makutu began in the 1940s. Unlike the shift to the hill-top which was hurriedly and collectively made, this movement had been slow and uncoordinated. What has emerged from that process is a daughter settlement that has resulted in the gradual disintegration of the parent settlements.

The movement to Itedo-Ijowa located in the same extended plain seems to represent a deliberate attempt to bring the various segments of Isanlu together. These movements had continued and in 1951 it was reported that:

\begin{quotation}
In Kabba Division, the town of Isanlu has began to move to the new site that has been prepared for it, and at the end of the year, 180 houses has (sic) been started or completed.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quotation}

The involvement of the colonial government in the exercise and their alleged “preparation” of the new site need to be clarified. In actual sense the new site was not chosen for the people by the government and their preparation could be explained only in terms of the fact that, in the site chosen by the people themselves, the areas for the location of the churches, schools, hospitals, markets (all of which were additional incentives), were marked out. Each group of settlers named their new quarters after the mother settlements, thus we have Itedo-Makutu. The qualification “Itedo” denotes a place settled by people from some old site. The structure of the new site, shows a linear settlement pattern in place of the isolated clusters of the old. The shifts have been gradual and on individual basis; however, a few old people could only not be persuaded to move. These people were reluctant to move either because of their farming activities as in the case of Irunda or of cultural / sentimental attachment to the old sites.

The Resettlement of Mopa People

Mopa people responded rather slowly and cautiously to colonial appeals even though they had to come down from the hills to participate in the construction of the roads (Kabba – Isanlu roads being constructed by 1913). Although the S.I.M had begun their enterprising, educational, medical and evangelistic activities, Mopa people were reluctant to move. They behaved differently from their counterparts at Isanlu and Amuro who responded enthusiastically to these incentives. In view of the expected economic benefit that such a move could generate, one might be surprised at the adamant attitude of Mopa people. They had their reasons. While it is true that colonial rule put an end to Nupe raids and heralded an era of peace, but the fear of the unknown and the memories of the harrowing Nupe experience might have been responsible for such an attitude. As an informant remarked, “We refused to come down from the hills for fear of further
war and slavery”. In fact, the relocation in Mopa had to be enforced. It was said that a colonial official set fire to the houses on the hill-top in the year 1917. Agiri compound was completely burnt down. This burning forced Mopa people to move from the hill-top down to the lowlands. Unlike population shift in Isanlu area which was gradual in nature and carried out on individual basis, Mopa’s relocation was the direct handiwork of the colonial government, a reaction to the high-handedness of the British officials. Thus, they were force to settle in their present location named Odole and Ileteju Mopa. The qualification “Odole” and “Ileteju” are indicative of the low-lying and flatness of the new settlement as compared to the hill-top settlement. The new settlement was located along the motor roads, thus producing a linear settlement pattern.

**The Resettlement of Amuro People**

In Amuro, families such as Ajigba, Eseyin, Iyaloko, Anugabo, Anulase, Omokore, Oterelu, settled separately on clan land in pre-Nupe era. As Yagba communities reacted differently to the Nupe raids of the late nineteenth century depending on the options opened to them, Amuro people were forced under that socio-political upheaval to move to the hill-top. They were scattered to Oriokes, with some at Oroke Obasoro, some at Oroke Iwo, Oroke Ijiran and others at Eherin hills. These hills were between the distances of 10-40 km from the original site. Though life was difficult at the hill-tops, it was preferred to the lowland because of the security it offered. With the proclamation of peace by the British officials in 1897 came the usual appeals to the people to come out of their hide-outs. Responding to the appeal, Amuro people began to move in the 1920s. Unlike their counterparts in Isanlu and Mopa whose direction of movement was determined by the factor of new roads, Amuro people moved in groups in various directions because the motor-road was far from them. On leaving their Oriokes, they settled in new places which they named Araromi and Aiyedayo, meaning “life has become better for me” and “the world has become peaceful”, respectively. These new names indicated their relief from the hardship that accompanied Nupe imperialism. Takete-Idel people left Eherin hills to settle at the present Takete Ide - a distance of 3 km from the hill-top. Aiyedayo people moved from Oroke-Ijiran, a distance of 5km. Others left their hill-tops to settle at Iloke, Otafun, Agbajogun, Aiyede, Aiyedayo, Okagi, Orokere- the seven villages now collectively known as Amuro. These shifts began in 1924 and were completed between 1927 and 1928. Amuro people remained at these sites (Araromi, Aiyede, Takete-Idel, Agbajogun, Okagi and Otafun), until the 1940s when yet another population relocation (voluntary) in the area occurred.

The British officials’ efforts at relocating people were supplemented by those of the missionary organizations and even those of some indigenes who appealed to their own people and encouraged them to move. For instance, Late Rev. K.P. Titus who was an indigene, a convert of and an ardent supporter of the Apostolic Church in Yagba land, made series of appeal to Amuro people to come down to the road side. By 1937, he was said to have initiated the building of a church and a primary school at the present Amuro site. This exercise encouraged the gradual movement of the other members of the church and others who wished to take advantage of the school. Essentially, however, the shift to the present site of Amuro was a product of transportation incentives. As early as 1913, Amuro people had on request “most willingly taken part in the construction of the Kabba-Isanlu road”. Although they lived not less than 27 km away from the road side, they all came to work until the 1940s when according to an informant, the people felt that it was ridiculous for them to continue to travel all that distance to help construct and repair roads and yet be denied the benefits that accompanied the opening of such
Thus while security was mainly responsible for the movements to the hill-tops, reasons ranging from religion, expansion, accessibility (this being the major determinant), etc. were responsible for the shifts in settlement to the road side. Since the 1940s, Amuro people have gradually shifted to the new site along the road. While this process is still on some people have vowed never to move to the present site. For instance, some Takete-Ide people have considered where they are currently (a distance of about 25km to the new site), as their father land. According to them, they cannot live and farm on “borrowed land.” The present Amuro site which is regarded by some as ‘borrowed’ land was fully and formally negotiated for (backed up by a certificate of occupancy) from Mopa people. So it is not in any sense a “borrowed land.” Others are reluctant to move because of farming activities and as such many people are still to be found at the old sites. At the new site, settlements cluster around the road producing a linear settlements pattern as in Isanlu and Mopa. The people built their houses where they could get land, because here there is no family land to cling to. Quarters in the new town are also named after the mother settlements such as Orokere-Amuro, Aiyedayo-Amuro and so on.

The Resettlement of Ponyan People

The Isanlu, Amuro and Mopa settlement shifts discussed earlier showed the movement of people from the hill-tops to the road side. Ponyan’s example on the other hand illustrates the movement of people away from their hide-outs in the thickly forested areas to open lowland areas. These four major families – Oketan, Abido, Ogba-Ogun and Ijowa were settled at different places on their family lands in Ponyan area. Nupe wars however disrupted these settlements in the 1890s and forced the people to seek hide-outs in the forests. Unlike their counterparts at Isanlu, Amuro and Mopa, whose response to intensive Nupe raids was their movement up the hills, Ponyan people had no hills to run to. The thick forest of South-East Yagba provided an abode for them until the coming of British rule in the area proclaimed peace and freedom of movement. Responding to colonial appeals, Ponyan people began in the 1930s to leave the forests to their present site in the open grass land, a distance of about 3km from the forest region. At the new site (Oke-Ponyan and Odo-Ponyan), the families are now mixed up because individuals settled where they could get land to build. The settlement pattern at the new site is not a linearly integrated one as is the case of Mopa and Isanlu. Rather the new site is gradually taking up the settlement pattern of a city.

Problems Occasioned by Population Relocation Exercise

The methods adopted by colonial authorities of grouping villages under village heads led to resentment. The method adopted in Mopa of setting the houses on fire led to the migration of some people to other areas in anger. However, irrespective of the method that was adopted, there were still some general problems that arose from the population relocation in Yagbaland. It is observed that there was and is a general reluctance on the part of people to move. This reluctance is not unconnected with the fact that, the Nupe raids had made many to abandon their old clan settlements in the original site. Moreover, the fear of coming back to open land vulnerable to external attack was still uppermost in the mind of the people. Others demonstrate reluctance because of their long association with their divinities (orishas), the seat of which they felt must not be moved. This is why some villages when they moved, still remained very close to their mother settlements.
If resettlement exercise is to be meaningful and viable, there is the need for the provision of essential services which are in many respects essential for the functioning and viability of a new settlement. Hence there was the problem of supporting services which should go with any resettlement exercise. Since the settlement shifts in Yagba was partly a deliberate government venture and largely due to the people’s wish, the problem of providing these services therefore, fell on the people. This probably explains in part why the people in Yagbaland have become used to self-help development programmes right from the beginning. As an informant remarked:

> every utilities you see in Mopa is due to our own communal efforts, most of the projects like the hospital, the secondary schools, post office, water project and so on were started and completed before the government took over.\textsuperscript{35}

The same is true of Isanlu and Amuro.

The problem of finance has also been identified. On the part of the individual, there was the problem of getting money to build new houses, clear new farm lands, and cost of transporting themselves and belongings to the new site. This had posed problems either because the transport facilities were lacking at the initial stage of resettlement or the cost of resettlement too high and the people or the individual could not afford them. For instance, in Amuro, the distance from the old site to the new settlement ranges between 5 and 40km, a distance difficult to trek carrying belongings without any form of transportation. The problem of acquiring land might not have posed much problem since most of the villages descended just to the feet of their hills like Mopa and Isanlu. However, when viewed from the possibility of expansion at the new sites, land acquisition became a problem. While movement to the road side solved the problem of inaccessibility for most of the villages, it did not solve that of expansion. Since most of the villages such as Isanlu and Mopa are surrounded by hills, expansion therefore has to be linear. The quest for accessibility and desire to take advantage of the roads led to the shift in settlement in Amuro. This made her to negotiate for land from Mopa which was granted in 1943 backed up legally by a certificate of occupancy. When Mopa was undertaking the deal she probably did not realize then or envisage that her physical expansion might be handicapped. Mopa people have now begun to encroach on Amuro land, a situation that has not been taken kindly to by Amuro people. Thus the problem of land acquisition and or expansion has generated conflict between the two towns concerned, resulting in strained inter-group relations.

A very fundamental problem at the initial stage of the resettlement exercise in Yagba was the economic issues. These have to do with the difficulties of clearing new farm lands and market centers at the new site. The pioneering years of resettlement thus witnessed farming at the old site by most people until new areas were gradually cleared at the new site. Social problems were also identified because, cultural/sentimental attachment to the cults made it very difficult to move these cults to the new sites. This attachment has been very difficult if not impossible to break in some areas such as in Ogbe, thus rendering the settlement shift incomplete. The colonial arrangements that emerged at the new sites (the grouping of villages under village heads) presented administrative problems, engendered strife and resentment from villages that had been subordinated to other villages. The situation has marred the relationship between the various villages i.e Egbe and Ere. The administrative problem is still clearly noticeable in the areas of
unresolved district headship particularly in East Yagba today. In spite of these problems, the locational shifts in settlements have had lasting impact on the villages and indeed Yagbaland.

**Impact of the Population Relocations**

The impact of the shift in settlement in Yagbaland could best be examined or assessed by imagining what the socio-economic conditions would have been today in the absence of the shift. By comparing the socio-economic status of the people at the original sites with those at the new sites, one would probably have come to the conclusion that shifts in settlements have had lasting impact on the communities involved. As mentioned earlier, the kinship tie was an essential sinew of the social system and if determined or influenced to a great extent the pattern of settlement in the area. This is because families settled together on their family lands. The movement to the hill-tops humped the people together but it was still possible for members of the same family to settle as close together as possible. However, with the colonial inspired shift, the system began to break down. As an informant remarked, “this bond of closeness (the family tie) is no more, as different members of families built their houses where-ever they could get land.” The situation became even more confused with the rise of a literate class. The new elite seem not to be strongly attached to the old sentiments as their parents. The result is that of a greater inter-ethnic and inter-family fusion which constitute a healthy development in the communities. The breakdown of this social bond however, does not imply an extinction of clan identity. The family ties remain strong. Moreover the development of roads and modern transportation has increased inter-community contacts and exchanges. The ability to move easily from place to place tends to change the mentality of the people in the sense that it reduces traditional isolationism.

The exposure of the people to the outside world through improved communication systems could not but affect the physical structure of the towns. H.B. James, the District Officer for Kabba Division in 1913 reported: “the compounds are found huddled together in a more or less insanitary and congested state, and in case of epidemic or fire, the consequences are disastrous.” James’ assessment report demonstrated his ignorance of the traditional system which allows family closeness. He probably viewed the structure of the house and the village in general vis-à-vis what obtained in the Western World. This notwithstanding, the point being emphasized is that by 1913, the villages did not take on a ‘modern’ look. By the 1950s, however, it was an entirely different story as the Annual Report for the year had it:

> The development along the roads witnessed newly built villages of much desirable residence of bricks, timber and galvanized irons unlike the old type of leaky barracks.

This spread of new standard of domestic architecture has continued. In the new site there are regular lay-outs. The houses are more spacious, cleaner and generally healthier than those in which people had lived on. The spatial effect of the new developments could be seen in the linearly integrated settlement pattern characteristics of a few Yagba towns today. The integration facilitated the provision of amenities which are of benefit to all sections of the communities.

Attempt at examining the impact of locational shifts in Yagbaland will not be complete without mentioning the Missionaries who pioneered the development of Western education in the area.
The Missionaries were faced with difficulties such as hostile climatic conditions, and mosquitoes. Their precarious condition was best summed up by Mrs. J. C. Bulifant, one of the early Missionaries in Yagbaland, in the following words: “There were times of testing and danger, loneliness beyond description, hunger, disease and persecution, nothing around to elevate nothing, except degradation and sin.” Bulifant’s statement probably had some touch of exaggeration. However, the Missionaries defied whatever problems they encountered, and laboured for the development of Western education in the area, as education was a major instrument of evangelization. They sowed the seed of change in the period between 1908 and 1930, and the fruition of the seed came in the period between 1930 and 1950(s). A report in 1940 stated: Some excellent schools and dispensaries were being operated by missionary societies, consequently raising the standard of health, life and education of the people. Encouraged by the Native Administration to build their churches, schools, and hospitals at the plains, the missionaries became part and parcel of the colonial strategies in encouraging settlement shift in Yagba Land. The missionaries were thus very much instrumental in encouraging movements from the hill-tops to the plains. The 1940 report went further to say, the S.I.M. schools at Mopa, Egbe and Isanlu were of particularly good standards. Egbe was doing particularly good work and was already well on the way of becoming a central school for the West Yagba area.

Egbe and Mopa had their first S.I.M. Primary schools in 1930/31 and 1936 respectively. The first generation of Yagba intelligentsia emerging from these schools (politically conscious and socially alert), was to play an important role both in the re-organized “Native Administration after 1934 and in the general progress of the area. The Yagba progressive Union (Y. P.U) inaugurated in December 1936, the first of its kind in Yagba land was the brain child of the S. I. M. educated elite. The president – Mr. J.P. Koledade was from Ejiba, the Assistant Secretary – T.B. Olorunishola from Mopa, the Treasurer – S. Adesina from Egbe, and the vice President – G.S. Afolabi from Mopa. These men were mostly from Egbe and Mopa which had relatively early advantage of missionary education. This is not to say however that if the people had remained in their hideouts and on the hill-tops, the advantages of western education would have entirely eluded them. But the point being made here is that the rate of development would definitely have been slower. Because the physical obstacles (such as inaccessibility), associated with hide-outs settlements would have militated against early contact with the missionaries. This is evident from the fact that the settlements that shifted to the roadside in the 1930s were well ahead (in socio-economic development) of those settlements at the original sites. For instance, Takete-Ide in the Amuro group of villages, located 25 km from road side had her first secondary school only in 1981 (though some of her sons and daughters are found in other schools) while Mopa turned out her first graduates (of the E.C.W.A. secondary school established in 1964) in 1968. While Egbe had her first primary school established in 1930/31, and Titcombe College in 1951, Otafun had her first primary school in 1952. The educational gap between these towns, and what the general socio-economic development of Yagba land would have been in the absence of the population relocation could best be imagined.

Perhaps a fundamental impact of the shifts could be seen in terms of more efficient operation of activities associated with transportation developments. The efficient control of the British over the districts undoubtedly demanded good transport system. This is because, the movements of the administrative officers up and down the country, and the regularity of effective communication between administrative centers and the respective local administrative stations,
were indispensable to any good government. Hence the British interest in changing the transportation outlook of the country. What was happening in Yagbaland, therefore, was merely an aspect of the transport revolution that was taking place generally in the country in the early twentieth century. In addition to the major road which ran from Kabba to Ilorin, new ones were constructed connecting inland villages with the main road. Ife road was extended to Ogga across Oyi River right to Egbe. A motorable road connected Ife-Ejuku with Kabba via Omuo-Oke which soon became for its vital economic and administrative importance. In 1937/38 a dry season road was extended to Luke in Bunu district. This transportation development, as mentioned earlier, was the prime mover in the direction of settlement shifts in Yagbaland. According to R.O. Ekundare, “improved transportations and communications are fundamental to all other types of development.” A statement on the economic programme of the Government of the Federation of Nigeria says: “A cheap and extensive system of communications is the greatest blessing which any country can have from the economic point of view.”

These views are true of Yagbaland, for the growth of cash crops like cocoa, and coffee were in response to the presence of roads. These cash crops supplemented the indigenous crops such as yam, corn, cassava, cotton, etc. Villages in the southern fringes of Yagabland such as Igbagun particularly became important in the production of cash crops. Igbagun initially was a refugee settlement of all Yagba people during the Nupe raids because its thick forest provided a hiding place for the people. After the war, Igbagun came to take the lead in the production of cash crop because of the highly fertile soil. The enthusiasm for cocoa production in this town led to an important step in the direction of improvement in the plantation started by the Igbagun Co-operative Marketing Society in 1955. This body sold most of the crop through the Kabba Union of Co-operative Marketing Society. Since these new products are not used locally, the development of roads made their transportation and marketing faster and easier.

Closely linked with the increase in agricultural activities was the enlarged markets brought about by the advantage of concentration of population along the roads. According to Niara Sudarkasa, “when villages are located along major roads, one of the first characteristics of a town which they assume is the daily trading site.” This is particularly true if the settlement is the point of convergence for unpaved roads connecting the interior settlements with the major roads such as Isanlu and Effo-Amuro. Trading and marketing have become an important aspect of the people’s life. Commenting on the state of trade in Yagbaland in 1948, the acting divisional agents of Messrs. John Holt and Company said:

Comparatively, the trade of this period shows a good improvement on that of the same period for the preceding year, the improvement of roads has no doubt been an important factor. Given a reasonable home markets and continued improvement in roads to important trading centres, we see no reason why the next few years should not see a vast improvement in Yagba’s trade.

As the agent of messrs. John Holt envisaged, continued improvements in road to important trading centres such as Akure, Ilorin, Lokoja, etc. expanded Yagba’s external markets and brought in traders to Yagbaland such that by the 1950s:
buyers are placed at important centres and the man who, six years ago had to travel fifty miles or more to sell his kernel (if he found it worthwhile to sell them at all), can now dispense them literally at his door steps.48

Today, Ejuku, Egbe, Isanlu and Mopa stand out as important trading centres because of their earlier exposure to transport facilities and the network of roads that converge at Egbe in particular. Yagba people are no longer confined to their local markets as the case was in the old sites. Internally, the daily markets in most of the small towns in the area have declined in importance with the growth of periodic markets, markets which meet every five days or every nine days. Also the daily markets are equally being undermined by the existence of small shops and stores throughout Yagba towns.

In terms of occupational structure at the new sites, this has changed to include a variety of activities unlike at the old sites where farming was essentially the occupation. There has been a gradual rise in the proportion of people engaged in other occupation such as carpentry, bricklaying, trading and teaching. Road developments have also been responsible for the population hemorrhage of Yagbaland. There had been an increasing movement of Yagba sons and daughters particularly the young ones to other parts of the country (ie Southern parts), thus leaving a depopulated area behind. Equally important is the fact that road development has increased the capacity and ease of movement along the existing routes. Such a change in capacity may be seen to have a wide spread impact on the general growth and development of Yagbaland. Therefore, it can be asserted that settlement shifts in the area of study has left profound effects, accelerating the pace of development in the settlements concerned.

Conclusion
This paper has examined a historical discourse on settlement relocation in Yagbaland which as noted was a product of several years of change and development. The Nupe raids of the nineteenth century put Yagba land in a dilemma, from which they could not free themselves. Many inhabitants were forced to move to various hide-outs. Responding to the appeals to move down from the hills, Yagba people moved though cautiously. Some left the hills but did not settle far away for sentimental and economic reasons. This explains why today, settlements such as Ejuku, Isanlu, Mopa and others are located at the foot of hills. This nearness of settlement to the hills should be seen as a product of recent historical experience, with roots in the remote past. Their immediate ancestors dwelt on these lower and level grounds, though at different locations.

The population relocation exercise of the first half of the twentieth century, which was more of response essentially to improved communication facilities, played an important role in modifying the pattern of settlements in Yagbaland. It led to the disintegration of the dispersed settlement pattern. The tendencies to build as close as possible to the road resulted over the years in the emergence of linearly integrated settlements. The movement to the road side put the towns in the area of the path of modernization, the process has, however, heightened the problems of intra-group and inter-group relations in some cases. The incomplete nature of the relocation exercise in some places such as Amuro makes the location of projects always a source of intrigues and social antagonism amidst the different sections of the Amuro group of villages. The educated
elite have become an important force in completing the exercise, and are thus major contributors to improved relations and greater integration.

Notes and References
15. See Bishop Tugwell to Captain R.L. Bower, 24 December, 1894 in F.O 83/2376, refers to a deputation of Chiefs from this area both to the RNC agents and to Bower.
16. However, there were few Emirate Organizations like Ilorin, Bida, Yola all of which were properly within the so-called “Pagan Belt”. These are exceptions which have made the uniform application of the term to the whole area inappropriate.
22. N.A.K. Loko Prof: Acc 23, kabba Annual Reports, Year-ending 1915.
23. Though there were other missions like the Church Missionary Society (CMS); The Roman Catholic Mission (RCM); The Baptist etc operating in Yagbaland at the time, the

24. Original sites referred to the place of settlement before the coming of Nupe raid.
27. Discussion with Madam Maria Obaba, 4/8/84 at Mopa.
28. This incident was confirmed by Pa Mark Sanni and Chief Ibeun interviewed at Effo Amuro on 16/4/84 and Mopa 19/4/84 respectively. See also N.A.I. File No. Cso 26/1 Kabba Annual Reports, 1918.
29. Discussion held with Mr. Elijah Iyejodo, 4/8/84 at Effo Amuro.
31. Interview with Pa Isaac Olorunleke, 6 / 8/ 84 at Effo Amuro.
32. Discussion with Mr. J. Adeyele at Takede – Ide on 10/8/1984.
34. Interview with Mr. Jeremiah Fameyo at Ponyan on 17/8/84.
35. Chief O. Ibeun. 19/4/84
36. Ibid.
38. N.A.I. File No. 12941 / XII Kabba Annual Reports, 1952.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
47. N.A.I. Kabba Annual Reports Vol. x, 1948.
48. Ibid.

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