

THE BLACKSMITHS OF KANO CITY : A STUDY IN  
TRADITION, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

by

Philip John Jaggar

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the factors involved in the expansion, during the colonial and post-colonial periods, of a traditional, i.e. pre-European craft specialism — blacksmithing, in Kano City, Nigeria — and its subsequent conversion into a modern metal-working industry. In doing so, it sheds new light on the general proposition that such traditional crafts necessarily decline before the technological onslaught of colonialism.

A notable feature of the recent development of this craft has been the differential responses of the various clusters of blacksmiths to the new socio-economic factors introduced by the British. Of these groups, the most far-reaching changes have occurred in that located within the Central Market area of Kano City, and it is the behaviour of these craftsmen - and/or trader-entrepreneurs which provides the focus of this study. These dynamic individuals effected major advances in the manufacture and marketing of ironwares, and transformed the nature of the industry here. Attention is also given to the reason why the rapid and positive reaction to the new economic opportunities of the time was limited mainly to this group.

Despite the changes in economic organisation it is argued, resultant breaches in indigenous patterns of social relationships have apparently been relatively slight. At the same time, the colonial presence, and the reorientation in production which took place later on in the City, both had important repercussions especially on urban-rural craft relations. Village blacksmithing communities, hitherto largely self-supporting, were drawn more and more into the economic orbit of the City, and particularly towards the Central Market complex which became an increasingly influential node in the metalware trade.

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#### A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transcription of the Hausa words included in this thesis is based on Standard Hausa Orthography, and includes the so-called 'hooked' letters -- the implosive glottalised 'b' and 'd', the explosive glottal phoneme 'k' and the glottal catch'.

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CHAPTER 1INTRODUCTION

Very little has been documented about the indigenous industries in Nigeria although their labour absorption per unit of capital is high and their apprentice system has been training young people long before trade centres or vocational schools were established. (Callaway, 1967 : 157).

My justification for embarking upon and later writing up this study is that it is designed to help fill what still appears to be a considerable hole in one particular field of African studies — the precise quantitative effect of the colonial system on a pre-colonial craft industry.

Much of the change and development we see taking place today on the African continent is a direct result of the impact of the West on traditional societies. Whilst economic change and growth in the developed areas of the world are well-documented however, relatively little attention has been given, as far as I am aware, to what constitutes the dominant theme of this thesis — the exact response of a traditional, i.e. pre-European African craft to the socio-economic changes of the twentieth century. It seems that Callaway's observation, quoted above, still has some validity therefore.

In the vast corpus of material on African affairs, anthropological, economic and historical, there is no lack of references, often rather casual, to this problem.<sup>1</sup> Of these generalizations moreover, a number allude to the gradual dislocation of traditional occupations under the pressure of the impinging colonial economic system. However, few of them it should be added, appear to be supported by any detailed statistical or descriptive evidence.

It is true that several comprehensive descriptions of Nigerian craft activities are available, notably Nadel's (1942) excellent account of industries amongst the Nupe, and those craft surveys conducted by Lloyd (1953) and Callaway (1967) in Yorubaland. However, useful though these studies are, they were designed to provide an overview of a wide range of craft specialisms in these areas, and so were prevented by their scope from giving the kind of focus offered in the present analysis. Kilby's (1965) detailed monograph on the Nigerian bread industry is a valuable contribution to our understanding of indigenous manufacturing and entrepreneurship, but



lacks any historical perspective since it deals, as do similar industrial studies by Harris and Rowe (1966) and Nafziger (1967), with the development of a non-traditional industry. Bray (1968, 1969a, 1969b) is, to my knowledge at least, one of the few scholars to have rigorously documented the growth and present-day shape of a domestic craft. What is more, her findings confirm, by and large, those of the present study and point to the continuing stability and vigour of the particular profession she studied—cloth production, again in a Yoruba town. The fact too that no comparable research has been conducted in Hausaland specifically may be cited as an added reason for this undertaking.

In short, here is an important subject about which our ignorance is far greater than our knowledge. Furthermore it is, I suggest, this general paucity of careful, empirical research into the problem which has helped give rise to an apparent assumption that the output of indigenous craftsmen must have declined in the face of crippling competition from equivalent consumer imports from the factories of Europe. The present work thus questions this assumption by bringing to light the case of an ancient craft industry—blacksmithing in Kano City, northern Nigeria—which not only survived in its pre-existing form during the colonial era, but in reality expanded, and, amongst one group of craftsmen at least, was eventually transformed into a modern, metal-working industry.

Its economic survival may be largely explained by the simple fact that none of the traditional products of the craft were, in this case, 'outcompeted' by foreign substitutes; and its expansion was due to the fact that the domestic market for these metalwares, far from shrinking during the period of British rule, indeed increased in time as the numbers and affluence of potential consumers rose. A further significant point to emerge is that in spite of the gradual conversion of a large segment of the traditional craft here into a more modern form, and the concomitant changes in technology and labour organisation, relatively little dislocation took place in the indigenous social structure. This was made possible by several factors: the continuing strength of traditional Hausa culture and values; the fact that many of the developments within the craft in the colonial period were in effect consistent with pre-colonial practices; and lastly the fact that the participants in the new infant industry formed an extremely close-knit group, membership of

which was based almost entirely upon kinship and/or common residence.

Another major theme I develop, and closely related to the main one, concerns the formation of a web of basically economic networks linking those blacksmith-entrepreneurs of the increasingly dominant Central Market of Kano City with other blacksmithing groups, both urban and rural. The basic point to emerge is that the reorientation in production which occurred, especially within the Central Market group, served to boost rural output of traditional metalware and to regularize and intensify these urban-rural relationships. This interaction is studied where possible in both contemporary and historical terms, for it is through such an examination that we can best understand the ways in which the form and content of these links have been modified over the years.

Such a study of African economic growth and entrepreneurial behaviour, against a social background which retains much that is traditional, is bound by definition to extend into the fields of both anthropology and economics. For this reason, it is viewed essentially as being a contribution to the economic anthropology of the area, and it is hoped that the data and analysis presented therein will perhaps persuade other scholars to research this same important but surprisingly neglected question. Perhaps too, they may be of some small but practical value to those planners whose task it is to guide modern economic development in emergent countries like Nigeria.

The selection of the Kano City blacksmiths as a case-study unit was determined by a number of considerations.<sup>2</sup> In the first place, Hausaland, with its great variety of craftsmen and traders who have contributed so much to the economy not only of Nigeria but of much of West Africa, provides a particularly appropriate setting for a study of this kind. And at the heart of this vast region lies Kano City itself, one of the most important pre-European urban centres of the Western Sudan, an entrepôt long renowned for its extensive manufacturing and commercial activities, and now the third largest city in Nigeria. It is within this now rapidly changing metropolis that our case-unit is to be found, a group of occupational specialists manufacturing indispensable consumer products and plying a key craft which has always supported large numbers of men.

Moreover, the obviously dynamic nature of this craft industry which I

encountered when I entered the field in early 1970, in both its traditional and non-traditional form, was further evidence to my mind that some of those generalizations referred to earlier required some re-evaluation. The processes of change considered here are especially well-marked amongst one group of blacksmiths in particular—those located within the Central Market area, itself the industrial and commercial nerve-centre of the old City. These men it was who effected major innovations in the indigenous system of production and marketing of metalwares, and it is the behaviour of these skilled and ambitious individuals which forms the focus of this study.

With regard to the theoretical orientation of the thesis, the contemporaneous situation requires a dual approach to the problem. This approach combines a functional and dynamic interpretation by considering the forces of both change and continuity. The functionalist view would tend to see the socio-economic impact of the West, for example the introduction of new products and technology, as causing cracks in the edifice and thereby radically disrupting traditional relationships and patterns of behaviour; we must consider too however the degree to which, and the reasons why, such innovations can be assimilated without causing violent upheavals in the indigenous social structure. Thus, whilst evaluating on the one hand the more important changes to have taken place within our unit in the twentieth century, and charting the dynamic behaviour of these men, the thesis stresses at the same time the persistence of traditional arrangements and so looks at the various developments as being continuous adjustments to changing conditions.

The material for this study was gathered in the course of fieldwork in Kano City, the capital of Kano State (formerly Province), Nigeria, between January 1970 and July 1971.<sup>3</sup> General quantitative data was collected on the urban population of smiths, and included a complete census, an analysis of social relationships, and the collection of important case histories. Comparable material was also put together on the blacksmiths of Tamburawa, a walled town some 10 miles south of the City, and noted for its smiths.

Three successive cut-off periods are relevant to the analysis, each of which coincides with a major nodal point in the growth and transformation of the craft. These periods are:

1. The period ca. 1903-40, i.e. from the time of the British annexation of northern Nigeria up until the beginning of the Second World War, and termed here the 'Pre-War Phase'.

2. The period ca. 1940-70, referred to as the 'Transitional Phase'.
3. The period ca. 1970, labelled the 'Factory Phase'.

It is within the spatial and temporal boundaries delineated above that this thesis is formulated and presented.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide a heuristic and chronological baseline for the more important Chapters 4,5,6, and 7. Each of the chapters concludes with a summary of the main points. In Chapter 2 I provide what I consider to be the relevant historical, i.e. immediately pre-colonial, background to the sociological analysis of the contemporary situation. This assessment of pre-existing arrangements helps in the later evaluation of the subsequent changes in the character and condition of the profession, culminating in its present form. Chapter 3 considers the consequences, positive and negative, which the Pax Britannica had both for the craft organisation in Kano City, and for urban-rural relationships, in the period ca. 1903-40. It is in this chapter that I introduce and demonstrate the proposition that the craft was in fact only marginally affected by the penetration of imported, factory-made ironware.

In Chapter 4 I trace, with the aid of individual biographies, the more pervasive changes which overtook this industry in the crucial post-War period 1945-70 in all but the Central Market cluster of smiths, examination of which is left to the remaining three chapters. The data presented in Chapter 4 suggest that in any study of change, it is important to realise that qualitative differences in economic behaviour do exist at the level of the individual, and that there is really no such thing as 'averages', at least amongst the men studied in this thesis. The dominant theme of the work is introduced in Chapter 5 which is concerned with the remarkable transformation, within the so-called Transitional Phase, of a large sector of the traditional craft in the Central Market into a modern, import-replacing, metalware industry. It also explores the repercussions that this basic reorientation had on the indigenous system of labour here, and also upon craft organisation in the countryside.

Chapter 6 pursues the main theme and charts the rise of a group of blacksmith - and/or trader - entrepreneurs in the Central Market. This it does by examining the ways in which these capable and highly motivated men

have managed to build up a series of interlocking economic networks. Specific data relating to the Tamburawa blacksmiths are presented in order to illustrate fully the precise nature of the urban-rural links. This chapter ends with a discussion of the outcome of the drive and ambition of these local entrepreneurs—their plan to start a modern, metal-working factory. The specific problems attendant upon this venture into the formal manufacturing sector and, from a wider perspective, the general implications of such enterprises for industrial growth in underdeveloped areas like Nigeria, are the concern of the concluding Chapter 7.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. For Nigeria specifically, see for example Mabogunje (1968), Hill (1972, 1977), and Shea (1975).
2. Quite apart, that is, from the fact that I was already acquainted with the language and culture of the Hausa people.
3. In 1967, the year following the initial military coup, a twelve-state system was set up in Nigeria, and the former Northern Region was divided into six separate states. Three of these states--Kano, North-Central, and North-Western--are the homeland of the majority of Nigerian Hausa.

CHAPTER 2KANO CITY AND ITS BLACKSMITHS: THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The contemporaneous situation, and the changes and developments in the structure and organisation of this ancient craft industry which took place in the twentieth century, are best understood if we give some outline of the historical antecedents. This chapter presents pertinent evidence relating to the precolonial period and is designed to provide a necessary baseline for the later, more important analysis.

The chapter begins with a general discussion of the more salient precolonial socio-economic and political circumstances pertaining in Kano City, viewed in toto as a major pre-industrial urban centre. Following upon this, I provide a simplified characterization of the basic case unit of this study, - the 'blacksmith' himself - and his function in Kano society. By so defining and introducing the individual, the reader is given, from the outset, an idea of the specific operational terms of reference of the thesis, in addition to gaining some general appreciation of the key socio-economic aspects of the craft. A more detailed description of such features as the distribution and functional specialisation of the Kano City blacksmiths on the eve of the colonial era is then presented, including the existence at this time of a guild-like system of artizans.

The focus then shifts to the blacksmiths and associated traders located in and near to the Kwarim Mabuga ward of the Central Market of the City, itself the commercial and industrial hub of the urban economy. Overall evaluation of the nature of this thriving complex is made through an investigation of the multilateral links which bound this complex with other individuals and groups connected with the general metalware trade. It will be seen that in the pre-colonial period these economic relationships turned essentially upon the dependence of the metropolitan economy on the largely autonomous rural economy for crucial supplies of the raw materials used in the craft, a position which was to be gradually but significantly reversed, however, in the colonial phase. Another important fact to emerge from the analysis is that even prior to the arrival of the British in 1903, the economic activities of this Central Market group were conducted on what was essentially a formalist, capitalistic basis; also, that this pre-existing situation served to provide fertile ground for the

subsequent economic expansion and reorientation within this complex and so to minimize changes in the traditional social structure.

The historical data supplied in this chapter is derived from two sources:

1. The early writings of European travellers and explorers who provide some documentary evidence on Hausaland in general. Of particular value are the remarkably thorough and perceptive descriptions by Heinrich Barth who visited Hausaland and Kano City in the middle of the nineteenth century.
2. With specific regard to the Kano City blacksmiths themselves, evidence collected during interviews in the field, and in the form of verbally-elicited statements from elderly blacksmiths in the City. Most of this data was provided by one patient and knowledgeable old craftsman who was a young married man when the British arrived but who died sadly in 1972. This evidence, though not of course empirically verifiable, was cross-checked regularly, and relates mainly to conditions obtaining in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

#### Kano City in the immediate pre-colonial era

The evidence available<sup>1</sup> indicates that from the fifteenth century onwards Kano City developed into one of the major commercial and manufacturing centres in the Western Sudan. Geographical location, fertile soil, a high water table, and favourable rainfall - all played major roles in its development. Situated at the apex of long-distance trade routes running along north-south and east-west axes, Kano City, and at a further remove its famed Central Market (Kasuwar Kurmi)<sup>2</sup>, was the focal point of widespread interregional and international trade (see Fig. 1). Commercial links across the Sahara Desert to Tripoli for instance, were well-organised and considerable supplies of cotton cloth and leather products were transported from Kano to North Africa. And extensive trade in these same commodities, in addition to ironware and such foodstuffs as salt and grain, linked Kano not only to the rest of Hausaland, but also to such distant areas as Borne, Adamawa, Nupeland and Yorubaland.<sup>3</sup>

By the nineteenth century Kano City, like other major urban centres in northern Nigeria, had attained a high degree of socio-economic and political



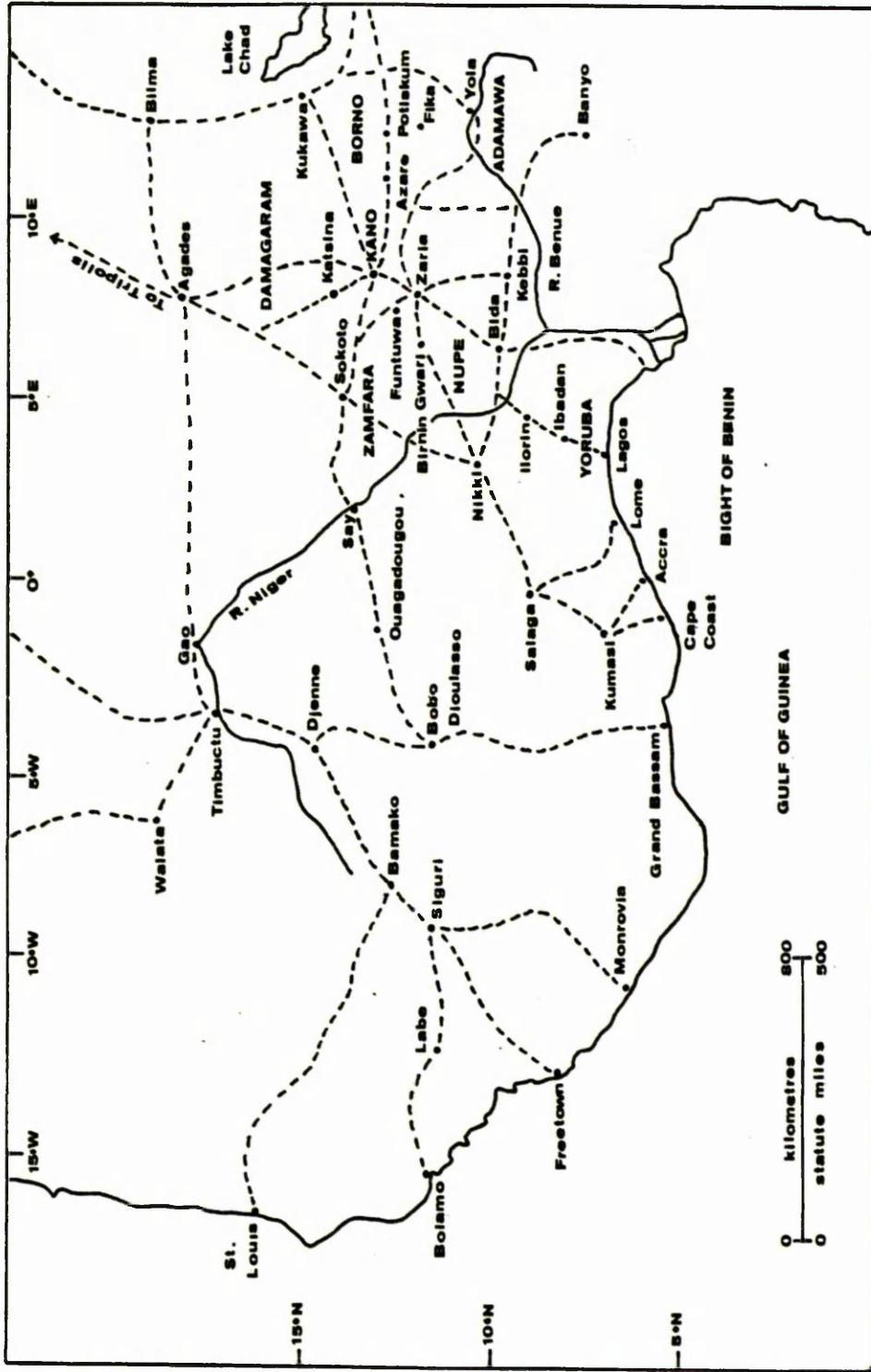


Fig. 1. Sketch-map of selected major trade routes of Northern Nigeria and the Western Sudan in the nineteenth century (adapted from Hopkins, 1973: 59).

complexity. As the capital city of Kano Emirate it embraced the politico-religious élite of the society, its specialist craftsmen and traders, and acted as the cultural, political, social, and economic focus of the whole Emirate. It was also a relatively densely populated urban centre.

Denham (1828 : 281) estimated the total population there to be between 30,000 and 40,000 at the beginning of the same century. And Barth himself (1857 : 509-10), writing some thirty years or so later, put it at about 30,000, adding that this figure doubled at the height of the dry season trading period. It is against this backcloth of Kano City, viewed as a thriving pre-colonial urban centre and evidencing all the characteristics of a pre-industrial type urbanisation,<sup>4</sup> that the present study is formulated.

The British thus arrived in Hausaland to find an extremely complex, money-orientated economy in existence, based on exchange and subsistence, and using a general purpose currency-cowrie shells<sup>5</sup>. Although farming remained the most pervasive and long-established economic activity, Hausa society also displayed an impressive range of traditional craft specialisms, all dating from the pre-colonial phase and resembling in many ways those professions of pre-industrial Europe<sup>6</sup>. The more important craftsmen, especially those living in large urban centres like Kano City, included, in addition to the blacksmiths, silversmiths and goldsmiths, weavers, leather-workers, potters, builders, tailors, dyers, butchers, tanners, woodworkers, and a variety of specialist traders. Moreover, within many of these occupations there was further functional specialisation. The general complexity and internal differentiation of these traditional occupations was, and still is, amply illustrated by our case study unit - the Kano City blacksmiths.

#### The blacksmith in Hausa society

In order to clarify matters of reference and terminology it is necessary from the outset to briefly elaborate upon the term 'blacksmith' as used in Hausa society. It should also be noted that many of the craft features and customs discussed here still apply in general in the modern day situation, as the occasional use of the present tense indicates. A blacksmith (makerin baki/babbaku - literally 'one who smiths/forges black metal') is best defined basically in operational terms as a man who manufactures certain

products in iron (bakin karfe, literally 'black metal') e.g. farm implements, domestic utensils, and weapons, and who uses in the productive process the following basic raw materials and tools: fire, charcoal, a rooted iron anvil, tongs, skin bellows, and a variety of hammers<sup>7</sup>. This then is the 'true' blacksmith, a highly skilled and much respected artisan who has been plying his ancient and fundamental craft here for centuries, forging the same vital products essentially and employing the same technology<sup>8</sup>.

In more conceptual terms, there are also certain distinctive cultural practices and traditions associated with the craft which might be said to distinguish the blacksmith from the many other occupational specialists in Hausa society. Very briefly, the more important of these customs include special wedding ceremonies, the exclusive preparation of certain magical and medicinal substances and, in the specific case of the Tamburawa blacksmiths, distinctive facial markings.

Generally speaking, the technology of blacksmithing is well adjusted to its own requirements which preclude either the setting up of large labour units or large-scale co-operation in any of the manufacturing stages<sup>9</sup>. The basic work unit is simply a domestic unit consisting of one adult smith plus a young assistant, usually a son or junior relative. It is an individualistic pursuit essentially, and co-operation between such individual labour units in actual production is minimal, being limited by and large to some of the heavier tasks, e.g. cutting up the metal, forging large hammers and anvils, and hammering out large blades.

A blacksmith begins to train his male children from the age of six or seven years upwards. The small son of a smith, whose main job is to work the bellows, participates in subsidiary work around the forge, assisting his father and elder brothers, gradually working himself into the more important and technically difficult tasks, and perhaps earning a little pocket money at the same time. Smithing is an industry which requires some technical ability, quite apart from patience and physical strength, and a lengthy training period is quite essential if the boy is to master the craft. In this way, by the time he reaches his mid-to-late teens, he will probably have broken away from his father's anvil (uwar makera, literally 'mother of the forge'), and become a 'perfect blacksmith', just as his elder brothers will have done in their time. He then sets up his own anvil and becomes his own 'closed' unit basically, planning his

production quite independently and manufacturing on his own account. At the same time, he may continue to help his father with some of the more arduous tasks in and around the smithy, especially if the latter happens to be getting on in years, and may also agree to dispose of some finished products on his father's behalf, thus saving him the rigours of travelling.

At the other end of the scale, the older and weaker a smith becomes, the more his active participation in both the productive and distributive stages of the craft decreases, and he gradually withdraws his labour, limiting himself to performing some of the lighter tasks. Thus, one may happen upon a bellows-worker who may be either seven or indeed seventy years old.

Due partly to the arduous nature of this craft and also to the restrictions of Islam, married women take no part in blacksmithing activities in general, except on certain special festive occasions such as a smith's wedding party, when they are allowed out of purdah to attend. Young, unmarried daughters, of village smiths at least, occasionally help out in the forge however, pumping the bellows or polishing knives like their young brothers.

As regards the work-place itself, the traditional-style forge (makera) of Hausa blacksmiths is generally round with walls of baked clay and, perhaps surprisingly in view of the fire hazard, a thatched and timbered roof. The forge itself is detached from the compound in most cases, perhaps because of the fire hazard and considerable noise which is generated, though there are some smiths who use the actual entrance-huts of their compound as workshops.

The traditional craft of blacksmithing is basically hereditary with sons inheriting the occupation directly, mainly patrilineally though occasionally matrilineally. Moreover, whilst there is no stated norm as such which reserves the knowledge and practice of the craft for blacksmithing families only, this is what tends to happen in reality. At the same time, the profession is open to newcomers, and youths with no craft blood in their veins, perhaps the son of a neighbour or affinal relative, are sometimes taken on by smiths as apprentices and taught the difficult skills of the craft.

Finally, a few words should be said about the status and significance of the blacksmith within Hausa society in general. References in the literature to the craft as practised in Africa consist in the main of

rather sketchy descriptions of blacksmithing communities organised into 'craft-castes'<sup>10</sup>. Smiths are described as being despised and shunned as pariah groups by their respective communities. Amongst the neighbouring Kanuri for example blacksmithing is, according to Cohen (1970 : 249), considered a shameful occupation since blacksmiths make weapons which are then used by enemies of the Prophet Mohammed. They are for this reason accorded a low status in Kanuri society. And even nearer to home, Smith (1955 : 16) reports that the smiths of Zaria, a large emirate to the south of Kano, also have a relatively low status which effectively bars them from marrying into certain groups. It is on the basis of this reporting moreover that we are informed in Column 69 of the 'Ethnographic Atlas' of the journal 'Ethnology' (2 : 114) that '...caste distinctions are absent or insignificant....' among the Hausa except in Zaria.

This is quite definitely not the case in Kano society however, where my enquiries and observations indicate that the blacksmith is in fact a well-respected individual. He is in no way subjected to any kind of social discrimination due to lowly status, and in Hausa society, both urban and rural, relationships between blacksmiths and other individuals follow the normal Hausa pattern. Furthermore, in a society where agriculture is the main economic activity, and which was in the pre-colonial era often engaged in warfare<sup>11</sup>, the smith constitutes a quite indispensable section of the community, providing vital tools for the farmers and weapons for the warriors and hunters, a position which is summed up in the Hausa saying - Kowane abu, sai an gama da makeri 'a blacksmith has his hand in everything'. In general, the Hausa tend to exhibit an essentially utilitarian attitude to such goods and services, and evaluate such specialists in terms of these pragmatic and positive values.

#### Pre-colonial distribution and organisation

The overall complexity of the politico-economic situation in Kano City prior to the Pax Britannica, and outlined earlier in this chapter, is amply illustrated at a more specific level by the highly developed and internally differentiated organisation of the craft of blacksmithing in this same period<sup>12</sup>.

One is immediately struck by the sheer diversity of the blacksmiths in

this city. The various distinct clusters present a varied and extremely heterogeneous picture, differing not only with regard to location, size and economic specialisation, but also in ethnic composition, and length of settlement.

Extensive historical enquiries revealed that by the time the British arrived in 1903 there were fifteen separate groups of blacksmiths located within the old walled city of Kano (see Fig. 2 and Table 1).

TABLE 1. Kano City blacksmiths: pre-European locations and ethnic origins

Location/ward	Ethnic origins of group
1. Diso/Galadanci	Kanuri
2. Dandalin Turawa/Shatsari	Buzu (Tuareg serf) from Agadez
3. Cediya Pera	Kano Hausa
4. Gyaranya/Durmin Sambo	Kano Hausa, Kanuri
5. Indabawa/Dan Agundi	Kano Hausa
6. Kofar Mazugal	Kanuri
7. Kofar Wambai	Kano Hausa
8. Kwalwa	Kano Hausa
9. Kulkul/Yalwa	Kano Hausa
10. Lokon Makera	Kano Hausa
11. Tudun Makera	Tripolitanian Arab
12. Warure	Katsina Fulani
13. 'Yan Nono	Kano Hausa
14. 'Yan Awaki	Kano Hausa
15. Kwarim Mabuga	Mainly Kano Hausa (Kutumbawa), Fulani

Over the centuries Kano City had developed as a key centre of immigration. Craftsmen and traders from diverse areas and ethnic groups were attracted here by the magnet of a relatively extensive demand for their products, and no doubt contributed to the introduction of technological innovations. This influx of manpower, from Kano Emirate and beyond, proved to be an important source of recruitment into this and other craft industries, and has led to a marked degree of urban heterogeneity. In this way, large

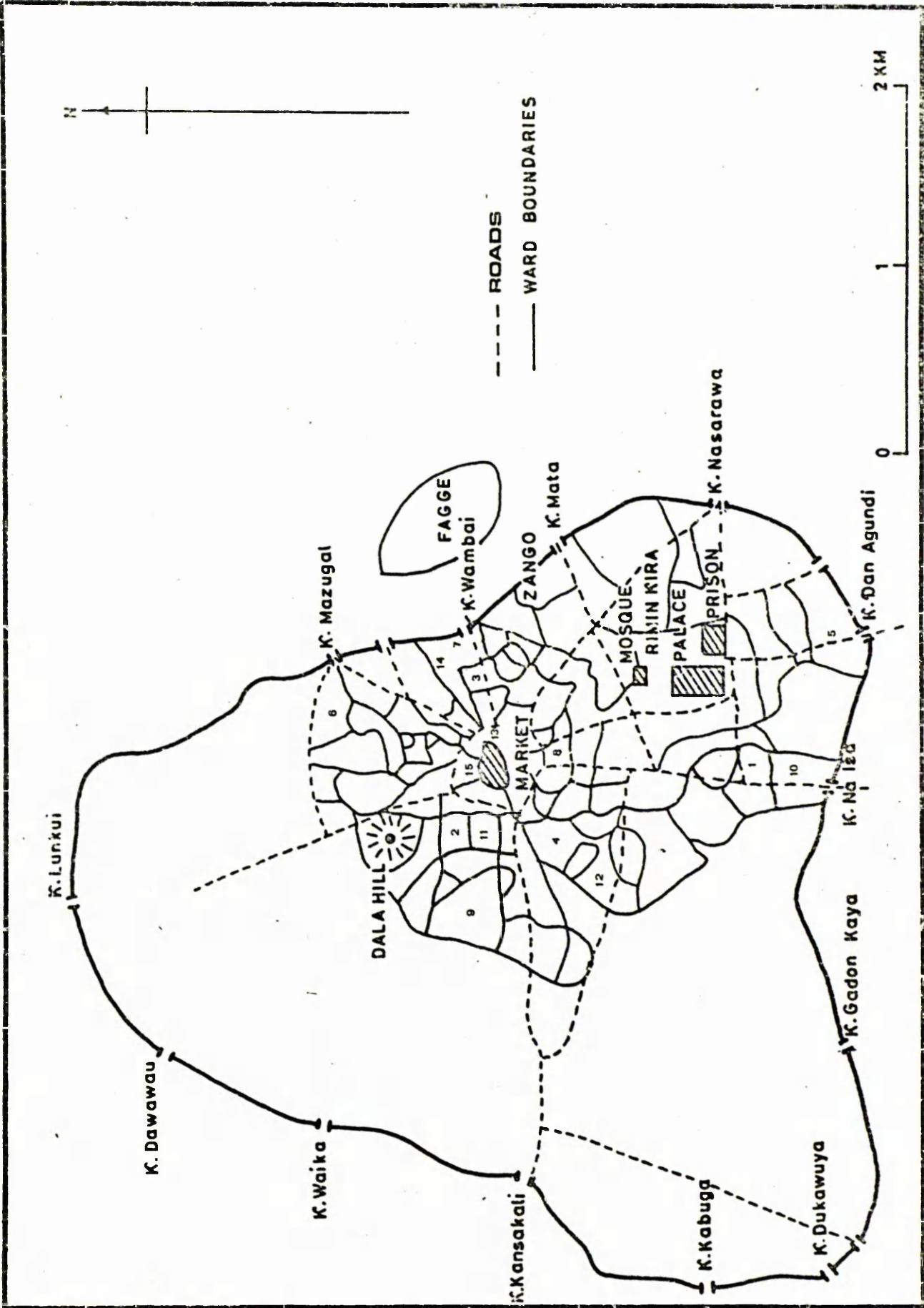


Fig. 2. Sketch-map of distribution of blacksmiths in Kano City at the turn of the twentieth century

numbers of immigrant smiths came to Kano City and took the opportunity to settle and ply their craft where their specialist skills were most needed and where they could improve their economic position<sup>13</sup>.

Although it proved difficult to obtain accurate estimates of the total number of smiths working in the City at the beginning of this century, and also on the size of each group, a rough calculation based on the recollections of older smiths would put the total figure at somewhere between forty and fifty individuals. They further claim that the Kwarim Mabuga group of artisans was the most numerous and prosperous at this time, a point I shall return to soon.

Another striking feature of the craft was the impressive range of functional specialisation by group. For example, the smiths of both Dandalin Turawa and Tudun Makera wards have always been associated with the expert manufacture of traditional metal door locks; those of Kofar Mazugal with forging and setting swords; and those of Kwarim Mabuga ward with the production of horse equipment. This wide range of economic specialisation served to satisfy the considerable urban consumer demand for such varied products. The evidence available points to Kano City having developed as a principal source of supply of metalware for Hausaland and beyond. Locally produced metal manufactures, like textiles, have always represented one of the most important items of production in many parts of West Africa. Barth (1857 : 519-20, 522) for instance reports that iron formed a considerable branch of industry in Kano City, and an idea of the extent and volume of the trade in ironware here can be gained from his calculation that approximately 50,000 sword blades of German origin were imported annually. Most of these blades were apparently set by local smiths and then re-exported to Borno, Nupeland, and other areas of Nigeria and West Africa. In addition, large consignments of locally produced horse equipment were purchased here by long-distance traders and exported to Borno where, it appears, the demand could not be met by local smiths. There was also a regular and extensive trade in agricultural hand tools, e.g. hoes, from Kano to both Damagaram and Nupeland.

This complex urban occupational situation probably achieved its most sophisticated form in the existence of guild-like structures of craft specialists like the blacksmiths, structures which were evolved for largely politico-economic purposes. Prior to the British conquest, the above system



of specialist production and dissemination of vital goods and services was important not only because it made them available for local consumption and export, but also because it served the equally essential needs of the State. The rulers, via their control of the political, military, religious and economic institutions of the State, maintained their position of power over the mass of the people who provided the necessary food surplus, craft products, military manpower, corvée labour, taxes and levies.

Exercising control over certain key commodities and services was partly realised by imposing levies on craft products. The guild-like systems evolved to facilitate an unimpeded flow of such products embraced all the more important hereditary occupations of Kano City<sup>14</sup>.

For the blacksmiths resident in the towns and larger villages of Kano Emirate this meant an annual tribute of agricultural implements for use on the numerous royal farms. Overall responsibility for this and other duties was vested, by the Emir himself, in a duly appointed Sarkin Makeran Babbaku or 'Chief of the Blacksmiths' for the whole of Kano Emirate. This official in turn selected other City smiths to act as his assistants.

The same channels of control were used to organise the mass production of vital war equipment, work which was performed by City smiths largely. These urban craftsmen were also obliged to carry out such important community tasks as the upkeep of the city prison, city gates and royal households. In turn, the Emir and his officials were obliged to ensure peaceful and stable conditions in which craft and trading activities could be carried on to the best advantage.

#### The Central Market complex

The sociological fact of most significance to emerge from investigation of the pre-colonial situation is the existence in this period of a well-integrated, multi-purpose complex of blacksmiths and associated metalware traders in the Central Market of the City. Here was the Central Market, in continuous session and dealing in all types of manufactured goods, food stuffs and raw materials - the industrial and commercial nerve-centre of the total economy. And ensconced within it, ideally located for craft production and trade, was a complex which was a nodal point of the metalware industry in general.

Informants are agreed that of the fifteen distinct clusters of blacksmiths.

located within the City walls at the turn of the century, that located in the Kwarim Mabuga ward of the Central Market was the largest, a fact which was probably due to its extremely favourable trade position vis-à-vis the other groups. Here more than a dozen adult smiths, from two separate agnatic descent groups, and linked in some cases by intermarriage, practised the craft. Furthermore, though the necessary empirical evidence is lacking, it is possible that the Kwarim Mabuga settlement was also the longest established in the City. In the first place, most of the smiths here were of Kutumbawa origin, their ancestors belonging to the same group as the pre-Jihad rulers of Kano<sup>15</sup>. And secondly, of those few groups whose origins go back beyond living memory, this particular one is situated nearest to Dala Hill (see Fig. 2), a large ironstone outcrop a little to the north of the Market, the area around which was, according to legend, first settled by immigrant blacksmiths.<sup>16</sup>

Close to the three large forges of the Kwarim Mabuga smiths, which between them constituted a sizeable manufactory, were to be found the individuals involved in the other various specialised branches of the iron-ware industry. These included the dealers in the two crucial raw inputs of the craft - iron and charcoal - and close to these the specialist traders and commission agents who handled the finished products. As we shall now see, this group of interdependent craft and trade specialists acted as the intersecting point in a network of far-reaching economic linkages which embraced, in addition to the other City smiths, smiths and traders from other areas of Kano Emirate and beyond. These pre-colonial links turned largely upon the supply of the two vital raw materials already referred to, iron and charcoal.

Firstly the dealers in the key commodity of iron. Crude iron (tama) was, with salt and gold, one of the most important minerals produced in pre-colonial West Africa, and the knowledge here of iron-ore smelting and iron working was long-established. Relatively accessible and workable iron-ore deposits were found in many parts of northern Nigeria, usually in well-wooded areas capable of supplying the timber necessary for producing charcoal. The Zamfara, Azare, Potiskum, Funtuwa and Birnin Gwari areas were some of the more important sources of supply for Kano which was itself not well endowed with workable deposits<sup>17</sup>.

The production and dissemination of iron was a complicated process.

The mining, smelting and puddling were done in mining camps during the relatively slack dry-season months, and normally by professional miner-smelters, though occasionally by visiting country smiths. The smiths of Tamburawa themselves provide an illuminating example of the economic activities surrounding the distribution of this commodity. A group of them would annually travel, on foot or by donkey, to the iron-ore mining areas around Azare, Fika and Potiskum, some 150 miles east of their village, to secure necessary supplies. These men usually purchased blooms direct from the smelters, but sometimes mined the ore themselves, and then fashioned some of the iron into implements on the spot<sup>18</sup>. They would then set off home, selling some of the pig iron and finished products in markets en route, but naturally leaving enough both for their own purposes, and also for sale ultimately in the Central Market of Kano City. Similarly, smiths from other rural areas, in addition to long-distance traders, also brought supplies to the City for sale at a profit, again mainly in the Central Market<sup>19</sup>. It seems moreover that few, if any, of the City smiths had either the time or technical know-how necessary to travel to these distant areas to smelt or purchase their own crude iron. Even in the pre-colonial era, craft production was largely a full-time occupation all the year round in the City, in contrast to rural craft production which declined rapidly in the dry-season.

The iron supplies which reached the Central Market through the channels described above were then either consumed locally, i.e. by the Kano City smiths, or re-exported along the long-established routes of supply and demand to such areas as Borno and Damagaram. Due to a general lack of workable good-quality iron-ore and sufficient timber, iron-ore mining and smelting were not well-developed in these regions and so could not cope with the local demand. Alternatively, long-distance traders would simply supply these same regions directly without coming into contact at all with the City. Often too the main iron dealers in the Central Market would keep supplies until the hot-season immediately preceding the rains, when the demand for iron was at its highest, and then resell to the City smiths at a greater profit.

Two important facts emerge from the foregoing account. Firstly, prior to the arrival of the British, village blacksmiths tended to be self-

sufficient in supplies of pig iron. In contrast the smiths of Kano City were almost totally dependent, through the agency of the Central Market dealers, on these same village smiths and long-distance traders for imports of crucial supplies of this craft input. This important finding provides some confirmation of Hill's (1977) major thesis that much of the trade and industry in what has come to be known through Mortimore and Wilson (1965) as the Kano Close Settled Zone (KCSZ) was rurally-based in pre-colonial times. Secondly, the Central Market was itself a substantial supplier of crude iron for both local and more distant blacksmithing communities. The nature of these urban-rural relationships was, as the following chapters reveal, to be significantly modified in the colonial period.

Similar arrangements were involved in the production and distribution of the other essential raw material - charcoal (gawayi). As with iron, so with charcoal, most of the City smiths were dependent ultimately upon rural sources of supply. The major charcoal-producing areas of the time were located to the north and west of the City, e.g. the areas of Dambatta (30 miles north), Dawanau (10 miles north), Lambu (12 miles west), and Rimin Gado (20 miles west). Here were sufficient supplies of wood, and especially of the hard, long-burning kirya tree. The charcoal itself was normally burned by professional charcoal-burners or, occasionally, by rural smiths, and then transported by these same individuals or by traders into the City, by animal or on foot. Less often, a City smith might venture out into the bush himself and burn his own supplies; this did not often happen, however, since it usually involved travelling some distance, supplies of the kirya tree apparently being severely limited in the immediate environs of Kano City even at this time.

At the turn of the century the main charcoal dealers were again located in the same favourably sited area of the Central Market, close to the blacksmith-producers and the pig iron traders. Interestingly, in view of the fact that adult women almost never take part in any stage of the economic activities of what are traditional male crafts, it appears that several of the major dealers at the time were womenfolk of the Kwarim Mabuga smiths themselves who traded in this key commodity from within their homes in this ward. Most of the supplies of charcoal brought into the City were

disposed of here in the Central Market, and many of the other smiths in the City relied to varying degrees on these sellers for supplies.

In this same nucleus were to be found too a group of traders who handled finished ironware products and who acted as a nodal point for wide-spread trade in these items. Smiths from other wards in the City, and particularly those whose forges were not as favourably placed for trade purposes<sup>20</sup>, often brought their output here to sell to middlemen who in turn resold at a profit. And rural smiths, perhaps travelling to the City with supplies of crude iron and/or charcoal, might also bring with them their own finished articles, e.g. hoes, in bulk for sale in the Central Market, for here they were assured a regular sale and selling price. As noted earlier, some of these and other locally-made specialist items, e.g. metal door-locks, horse equipment, were then exported to distant centres of demand.

The foregoing rather simplified account points to a relatively wide-spread and well-organised trade in metalware in Hausaland and other savanna areas, linking various different groups and individuals. Many of these economic linkages moreover centred upon the Central Market complex of Kano City. However, whilst this is a basically accurate overall picture, we should at this point enter an important qualification. Trade in general in the pre-colonial era, and long-distance trade in particular, was restricted by relatively poor communications, by dependence on animate means of transportation, and by the generally unsafe conditions prevailing then. Many of the roads at the time were useable only during the dry-season months of October-May and tended to disappear in the wet-season. Goods were transported by carriers, on the head, or by donkey, ass or horse, and probably not more than 20-30 miles could be comfortably covered in a full day's travelling. And with specific regard to metalware, because they are bulky, heavy products with a low value-to-weight ratio, the amounts which could be transported were relatively limited. There was also the ever-present danger of attack from highway robbers which meant that traders had to travel in large, well-armed convoys. Travelling was thus neither a safe nor speedy venture, and trade was in this way circumscribed.

These facts are noted because of their relevance to our assessment in Chapter 3 of the major developments in the pre-War era, and may once again

be specifically illustrated by the Tamburawa smiths. Though no statistics are available, older Tamburawa smiths claim that in pre-colonial days their fathers and grandfathers produced craft items largely for local rural consumption and trade, and that contact with Kano City was thus limited<sup>21</sup>. Further, that travel to the capital was restricted to the relatively inactive savanna dry-season when trade tended to be at a low ebb in the villages, and when the Tamburawa-Kano City route was passable. The fact too, as we have already noted, that many such rural blacksmithing communities were at the time almost completely autonomous in that they were self-sufficient in both iron and charcoal meant that interaction with the City was consequently limited. Furthermore, on those few occasions the Tamburawa smiths did make the ten mile journey, with supplies of iron and/or craft products, it was only in large and well-protected groups, and they were careful to return before dusk. It is interesting to note too that the round trip from Tamburawa to Kano City of about 20 miles represents the maximum distance which could be comfortably covered from dawn to dusk, and including trading time, whether by foot or donkey. For this reason, it may be that interaction between the City and smiths from more distant villages and towns was even more circumscribed in this era. As we shall see in Chapter 3, this situation of relatively limited contact was to change quite significantly in the colonial phase, when such semi-autonomous rural communities were drawn increasingly into the urban economic orbit.

At the same time important for our study is the fact that despite this comparatively slow, underdeveloped and sometimes hazardous system of transportation and communication in the pre-colonial period, considerable numbers of rural smiths were nonetheless attracted seasonally to Kano City by the magnet of a large and regular market for the products of their skills<sup>22</sup>. Such craftsmen lacked parallel markets in their own village communities, especially during the inactive dry-season months.

Although these seasonal migrants ('yan ci rani, literally 'sons of eating the dry-season') were drawn, in varying numbers, to all the different groups of smiths within the City, a large proportion of them made their way to the Central Market concentration where they would become attached to and work for any of several senior blacksmiths. These hired journeymen were

required to manufacture stated items of metalware at the direction of their particular 'master' blacksmith, and also to hawk some of these goods around the City on a commission basis. When free, they were allowed to work on their own account, but were then obliged to supply their own materials. In return for these services, the master smith would provide his client craftsmen with the necessary work-tools and materials, and also food and a place to lodge.

This system of mutual rights and obligations was characteristic of all master-journeyman relationships obtaining between City and village smiths at the time, and in this way close and enduring associations often developed between certain groups, many of which persist to the present day (see Chapter 4). However one significant feature did distinguish the type of arrangement practised amongst the Central Market smiths from that of other groups in the City. This was the system of contractual wage-labour whereby client smiths from rural areas did piecework for their patron smiths who then paid them for work done in cowrie shells.<sup>23</sup> Hence, even in the pre-colonial era, some of the Central Market blacksmiths exhibited certain entrepreneurial characteristics associated with capitalism, foreshadowing and facilitating the transformation which was to take place here in the Transitional Phase.

#### Summary and conclusions

Despite the obvious limitations imposed by the admitted lack of quantitative data, relating to the pre-European situation, those facts which are available for this period have permitted a number of important conclusions.

The evidence indicates that from pre-colonial days the Central Market nucleus of blacksmiths and associated traders acted as a major intersecting point at which a variety of economic links converged and/or radiated. These connections moreover, turned largely upon the supply and exchange of three key items - crude iron, charcoal, and the craft products themselves. Into the Central Market came the vital raw materials and some finished articles, and out flowed some of these same materials and manufactures in addition to a large volume of more specialist metalware products made in the City itself. Important though this complex was in the context of the general metalware

trade in the area, it should be remembered that the City smiths in toto were not, in contrast to their rural counterparts, self-sufficient in the raw materials needed by the industry, but instead were reliant upon these same country craftsmen and associated agents for essential supplies.

Furthermore, the foregoing account has pointed to the existence in the Central Market of an advanced form of pre-industrial economic organisation, in which some market activities were conducted on a largely formalist basis, and which was characterized by a capitalistic system of values and behavioural rules similar to those of industrial communities. In view of this it is perhaps not surprising that this particular complex provided fertile ground for the expansion and re-orientation which were to take place here in both the colonial and post-colonial eras. The impact of Western politico-economic forces profoundly affected some aspects of the craft organisation described in the foregoing sections, and the remainder of this thesis is devoted to a description and assessment of these changes.



FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. For general works on pre-colonial trade and commerce in West Africa, see Bohannan and Dalton (eds.) (1962), Skinner (1964), Mabogunje (1968), Meillassoux (ed.) (1971), Hopkins (1973), and references therein. And for Hausaland specifically, see Smith (1962).
2. Throughout this work, all vernacular Hausa terms are underlined.
3. Barth (1857 : 513) was most impressed with the mercantile and industrial activities in the City. See also Boahen (1964) and Shea (1975).
4. For a detailed examination of 'urbanisation' in Nigeria, both 'traditional' and 'modern', see Mabogunje (1968).
5. Cowries spread to Hausaland from the coast in the early eighteenth century. See Hiskett (1966), Johnson (1970 : 17-49, 331-53), and Hopkins (1973 : 67-9, 111, 149-50).
6. See Denham and Clapperton (1828 : 283-306), Barth (1857 : 511-23), Burdon (1909 : 31-32), Smith in Smith (1954), Smith (1955 : 51), Smith (1960 : 251-52), and Smith (1962).
7. In contrast that is to the 'whitesmith', who works gold and/or silver. See also Jaggar (1973a and 1973b) and Dark (1973).
8. The earliest reference in the literature to the craft of blacksmithing in Kano is to be found in Palmer (1908 : 65), which alludes to the existence of blacksmiths here in the eleventh century A.D.
9. See also Lloyd (1953 : 32).
10. See for example, the many references in Cline (1937), and Tuden and Plotnicov (1970).
11. When the British arrived in early 1903, Kano was still suffering the disruptive effects of the 1894 Civil War, and was also subject to raids from the direction of Damagaram to the north and Ningi to the south-east.
12. See Jaggar (1973b) for a more rigorous description.
13. I was also informed by older smiths that the more prosperous City blacksmiths owned slaves in the pre-colonial era. The titled head of the smiths (see text) for example was a prominent slave-owner, and the present-day holder of this office still has a large farm just outside the City where he employs daily labourers, some of whom are slave-descendants. These slaves provided additional labour, especially in the fields, and were sometimes taught the craft by their masters. In former times all the City smiths owned farms in or around the City, with farming secondary to craft production. Rural smiths were, and remain, much more dependent on farming for their livelihood. Indeed many of the urban blacksmiths have now either sold their land or had it compulsorily acquired by the Government for development.
14. For comparative material relating to arrangements in Zaria see Smith (1955 : 8-10, 91-100), Smith (1960). See also Nadel (1942 : 255-97), Miner (1953 : 52-54), Lloyd (1953), Bradbury (1957 : 26-35), and Cohen (1967). Shea (1975) describes a similar system amongst the Kano dyers.

15. The Fulani Jihad against the Hausa rulers was declared in 1804 by Uthman dan Fodio and led eventually to the establishment of Fulani dominance in many areas of northern Nigeria. A few of the older blacksmiths in Kwarim Mabuga ward still bear the distinctive Kutumbawa facial markings of their forbears.
16. For an account of this tradition see Paden (1973 :45-46). None of the Kano smiths, it should perhaps be said, are aware of this legend. See also Jaggat (1973b: 14).
17. Archaeological evidence has revealed that iron-ore was being smelted at Nok in northern Nigeria about 500 B.C., and the practice probably spread to the rest of the region by the beginning of the first millennium A.D. Evidence in the form of radio-carbon dating indicates that iron-ore was mined and smelted on Dala Hill in Kano City as far back as the seventh century A.D. (Angela Fagg, personal communication). Older smiths claim however that smelting here was discontinued before the Fulani Jihad when iron-ore deposits were exhausted. Zamfara iron was reputedly the best quality. See also Sassoon (1962, 1964), Krieger (1963), and Jaggat (1973b).
18. In his Assessment Report on Fika Emirate, Reynolds (1929 : para. 128) observed that 'Smelting is not carried out by local inhabitants but by strangers from Kano who make seasonal visits.'
19. For an excellent account of the role of these long-distance traders (falke), see Goody and Mustapha (1967).
20. In the middle of the eighteenth century a number of smiths from the relatively inaccessible Warure ward obtained permission to construct an extra smithy in the Central Market, a little to the west of the Kwarim Mabuga forges, in order to take advantage of the regular market there.
21. Tamburawa was fortunately located on one of the principal old trade routes from Kano City to the south, through Bunkure, Rano, and Tudun Wada (see Fig. 5, p. 76).
22. The increase in population in the City which Barth (1857 : 510) observed took place in the dry-season was no doubt partly due to the influx then from rural areas, of seasonal immigrant craftsmen like blacksmiths.
23. Shea (1975 : 161) states that wage-labour in the dyed cloth industry also became more and more important in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRE-WAR PHASE CA. 1903-40: THE IMPACT OF

COLONIAL RULE

If the existence of a traditional system of towns and cities is the first major fact about urbanization in Nigeria, the dynamic impact of modernization begun by the colonial regime and continued by the independent governments of the country is the second. (Mabogunje 1968 : 5).

The purpose of the present chapter is to set out and assess the more important consequences, positive and negative, which the British presence and influence had on the structure and organisation of the craft in both its urban and rural contexts. Once again, the emphasis throughout is upon the Central Market unit, for the evidence available suggests that it was here that the most far-reaching changes in fact took place. The aim in describing the main developments in this cut-off period 1903-40 is to provide a necessary chronological and analytical baseline for the following more important and statistically detailed examination of the contemporaneous situation.

The evaluation of the pervasive effects of early colonial rule is related throughout to two of the dominant interrelated themes of this work - the gradual expansion of the metalware industry in the Central Market area, and the changing form and content of urban-rural economic relations.

The chapter begins with an outline of the disruptive influences which the Pax Britannica had on various pre-existing craft features. Then, following a brief account of the growth of Kano City and its economy in general in this era, the focus turns to an analysis of the specific responses of the metalware industry. Consideration is given at the same time to the key question of the consequences for craft production of the penetration of imported metalwares, an exercise which permits a number of interesting conclusions of comparative sociological importance.

Disruption within the craft

In early 1903 Kano City fell to the British forces under Sir Frederick Lugard, and within a decade or so the whole of what became officially Northern Nigeria was brought under complete British control<sup>1</sup>.

The inception of colonial rule had an immediate negative impact upon

the Kano blacksmiths, and particularly those resident in the City<sup>2</sup>. The blacksmiths themselves refer to these adverse consequences as cuta, literally 'harm, injury'. In the first place the new British administration, naturally cautious in what were then untried surroundings, immediately outlawed the production and carrying of weapons in the area and, as a show of strength, publicly burned as many weapons as it could lay its hands on<sup>3</sup>.

By imposing this ban, the British pulled what had been an important economic prop from under those smiths who had specialized in the manufacture of such weapons, and these men were deprived of a substantial and lucrative traditional market. They also experienced some loss of prestige, for present-day older smiths complain that in denying their grandfathers and fathers the rewarding and long-established production of these hitherto essential and prestigious items, the British thereby undermined some of the importance and value of the blacksmiths in local eyes<sup>4</sup>. This point should not be overemphasised however since, as has already been noted, the blacksmith remains a vital and much respected craftsman in Hausa society.

The new administration also abolished all forced levies on craft products and corvée labour of the kind outlined in Chapter 2<sup>5</sup>. Maintenance of the Emir's palace and the nearby central prison, hitherto the exclusive responsibility of City blacksmiths under the supervision of the Sarkin Makera and his craft officials, was now transferred to the newly established Public Works Department, the technical section of what was then the Native Authority. And the great city gates were in time either dismantled or simply abandoned to fall into disrepair.

In this way the whole raison d'être of the guild-like structure and organisation of blacksmiths which had been of such importance prior to the coming of the British, disappeared<sup>6</sup>. The craft offices lost their administrative functions and hence importance both for the smiths themselves and the society at large, and all except that of the Sarkin Makera subsequently lapsed.

Having briefly sketched what the blacksmiths themselves agree were the major unsettling structural changes in craft organisation, our attention now turns to the more positive effects, general and specific, of the British occupation and influence.

General consequences of British rule in the area

Probably the most significant direct effect was the gradual establishment of comparatively peaceful conditions combined with improvements in the system of transportation and communications. These developments constituted the basis for all others<sup>7</sup>. We observed in the previous chapter that long-distance trade and commerce, though relatively well-developed, were nonetheless generally slow and often hazardous undertakings in the pre-colonial era; also that transporting manufactures beyond their area of production involved some risk because of the high incidence then of highway-robbery and slave-raiding. The establishment of security in the region eventually removed these restrictions on trade and led Cargill, the then Resident of Kano, to report in 1908 that 'Traders are now penetrating to more remote districts of Kano Emirate.' (NAK 1538/1908). That the situation in Kano Emirate as a whole remained largely uncertain however, at least in the initial years of colonial rule, is indicated by Resident Temple's less favourable comments in his Annual Report a year later on the '...still notorious insecurity of life and property in Kano Emirate.' (NAK 6415/1909).

It was also seen in Chapter 2 that the precolonial system of animate transportation, by head-loading and by animal, was rather slow and costly, in addition to being risky. Metalwares, moreover, tended to be rather heavy and bulky, with a low value-to-weight ratio compared to other craft products, gold and silverware being good examples. Because of this, the amounts which could be transported were relatively limited, the transportation relatively costly, and the resultant profit margins relatively small<sup>8</sup>. The British, by introducing a more advanced system of mechanized transport slowly removed these technical constraints.

In particular the extension early on of Nigeria's principal railway line from the capital Lagos to Northern Nigeria ushered in an era of unprecedented growth and prosperity. This was especially true for those urban centres, both old and new, such as Kano, Ibadan, Kaduna, Jos etc., which were located on the new rail-line. This advance led to increased inter-regional trade in manufactured goods, foodstuffs and raw materials in general, and served to stimulate commercial enterprise and geographical mobility. The later construction in the 1930s of all-weather motor roads

and the introduction of motor-lorries also acted as a further stimulus to trade, internal and external, though the benefits of this development on spatial integration and commerce were not really felt until after the Second World War.

#### The impact on the Kano metalware industry

In 1911, the main railway line was extended from Lagos to link up with Kano City, and a year later another line was built from Baro, a small town on the River Niger just north of Lokoja, to join the Lagos-Kano line at Minna. This event had major repercussions for the metalware industry in both urban and rural Kano. In 1926, a second section, joining Port Harcourt to Kaduna and Kano, was completed; in 1928 a branch was taken from Kano to Nguru in Borno; and finally, in 1930, another branch was built from Zaria to Kaura Namoda (see Fig. 3). The consequent geographical integration meant that trade in metalware could now be pursued on a much wider scale and with greater pervasiveness than in the precolonial era. Just as the export-oriented production and marketing of groundnuts in the Kano area received a substantial boost with the coming of the railway in 1911,<sup>9</sup> so too the manufacture and distribution of metalware in the area expanded. In this way, the development of the 'new' economy became closely linked to the growth of this 'old' domestic industry.

At the same time, it should be remembered that the British imposed this new spatial integration on Nigeria for their own imperial purposes essentially, in order to promote and increase external trade in minerals and cash-crops like ground-nuts. Nigeria was seen basically as a market for export products for Britain and Europe. However, the Kano City smiths, and especially those blacksmith-traders of the Central Market, responded to the new situation by turning to their own economic advantage a transportation/communications system which had been developed to evacuate export products. In this way, and from an already substantial base as we saw in Chapter 2, this particular group were able to expand their operations in general.

The specific consequences for the industry of the new factors outlined above were as follows: the highly significant introduction of imported scrap metal; a rise in the level of demand for locally-manufactured metalware; an expansion in the volume of products manufactured and in the spatial

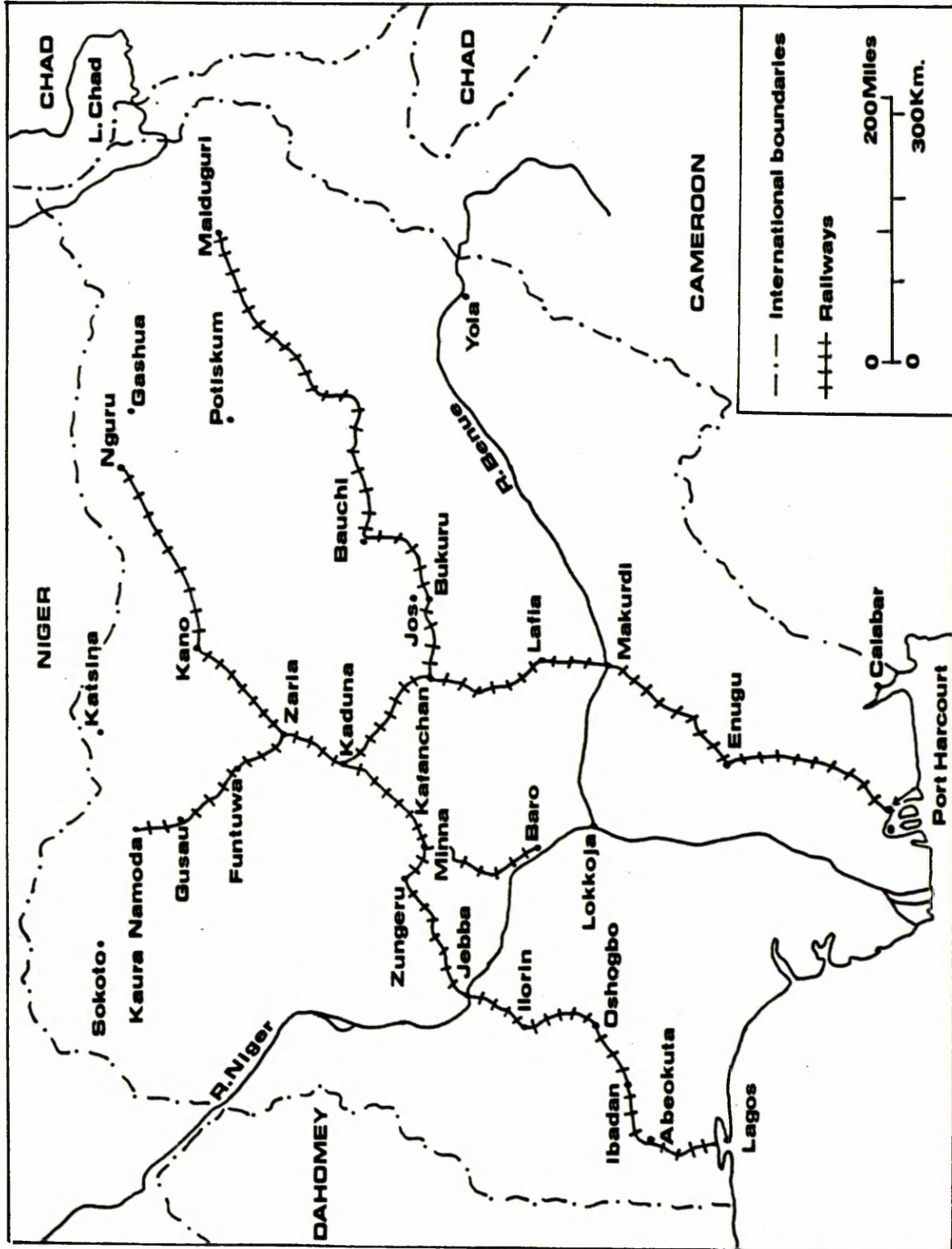


Fig. 3. Sketch-map of Nigerian Railways (adapted from Hill, 1972: 8).

market for this increased output; and an increase in the numbers of individuals involved in all stages of the industry. These overall effects combined to establish the Central Market complex as a matrix in the production and dissemination of ironware in the region, and are now dealt with in detail.

The introduction of imported scrap metal

Probably the most far-reaching consequence the arrival of the railway had for this craft was of a technical nature, namely the gradual introduction and spread in the period under consideration of European scrap iron (karfen Turawa, or 'metal of the Europeans'), the bulk of which originated in Britain. This crucial new development was in many ways the sine qua non of the growth and eventual differentiation of the industry here.

It is probable that by the late 1930's imported scrap had all but replaced native-mined iron as the smiths' raw material in Northern Nigeria, except perhaps in some of the more remote regions<sup>10</sup>. An offsetting factor inevitably was the associated decline of the traditional profession of iron-ore mining and smelting described in the previous chapter<sup>11</sup>.

In the short period between the initial arrival of the British and that of the railway, assorted supplies of foreign scrap began to filter through to Kano City from the south, usually transported by ox-drawn carts, by donkey, or by carriers. These supplies consisted mainly of imported corrugated iron roofing sheets from Minna and Zungeru, some bars of iron-plate from Lokoja, and long strips of tin which were used for tying up packages of kolanuts. Since however, both the volume and quality of these supplies were relatively low, native-mined iron continued to be the basic raw material of the blacksmiths.

The coming of the railway almost immediately brought increased amounts and types of scrap to the Kano City rail terminal, especially in the form of metal railway sleepers (sakkwati), railway keys, and iron plating from broken-up river boats. By the early 1950's for example, the number of 48lb iron sleepers being issued to Kano by the railway authorities had reached 16,000<sup>12</sup>. This scrap was off-loaded at the Kano Railway Station where it was then sold by the Railway Authority to dealers for eventual distribution to the various centres of demand in the North<sup>13</sup>. A large proportion of these scrap dealers, moreover, came from the Central Market area.



In this way, Kano City, and within it the Central Market nucleus, rapidly became the key distributive centre for scrap metal supplies for much of northern Nigeria.

The bulk of the scrap iron now reaching Kano City was transported by rail from Lokoja via the Baro-Minna branch of the main railway line. This important river town was founded in the mid-nineteenth century as a trading post and depot for river fleets. Situated at the confluence of the great Niger and Benue rivers Lokoja had, by the end of the same century, developed as a key metalware-manufacturing centre and source of scrap iron, particularly metal plating from broken-up steamships. Its growing importance is illustrated by the fact that a number of blacksmiths from both Kano City and Tamburawa began to travel there each year and ply their craft in the dry-season months.

The importation of scrap iron, in steadily increasing amounts, had a number of important related consequences for the metalware industry in general and also for urban-rural economic relationships. In the first place, its penetration, and the concomitant decline of the indigenous, rural-located mining and smelting profession, meant that trade in this substitutive raw material became more and more urban-based. Thus, whereas in the pre-colonial era the Kano City blacksmiths and traders were almost entirely dependent upon village smiths and long-distance traders for necessary supplies of locally-mined crude iron, from 1911 onwards the nature of this traditional relationship was slowly but very surely reversed. Thus, country smiths such as those of Tamburawa now found themselves in the converse position of being progressively reliant upon the City for supplies of the new, substitutive scrap metal. They were now compelled to travel more frequently to the City, and particularly to the increasingly dominant Central Market complex, to obtain supplies of imported scrap to take home and work.<sup>14</sup>

As with scrap metal, so too trade in the other key craft input-charcoal-became more and more urban-based in the pre-war phase. Rapid population increases in the Kano Urban Area during this time (see below) led to the growing deforestation of the traditional charcoal-supplying districts which had great difficulty in coping with the expanding urban demand for sylvan.

Resident Hastings, writing in 1914, felt it necessary to comment upon the alarming number of trees which were being felled around Kano City for firewood.<sup>15</sup> With the introduction of the railway, and then of the motor lorry in the 1920's,<sup>16</sup> trade in charcoal too tended to become more long-distance and urban-centred, with consignments being shipped directly to Kano City from such distant places as Kaduna, Azare, Potiskum and Gumel, where plentiful supplies were still available.

Again, the bulk of these supplies were brought eventually to the Central Market charcoal dealers who had of course carried on an extensive business in this raw material since pre-colonial times. As a result of this, blacksmiths from such outlying rural communities as Tamburawa became partially dependent on these Central Market charcoal traders for crucial supplies. Thus, when visiting the Market to secure fresh supplies of scrap and perhaps also dispose of a few of their finished products, rural smiths would sometimes take the opportunity to buy some charcoal as well. Once more, the nature of the pre-colonial urban-rural arrangements had been partially reversed, and these village blacksmiths were drawn even further towards the Central Market centre of gravity.

#### Reaction to the importation of European hardware

Our attention now moves to the crucial question of the consequences which the inevitable penetration of foreign metalware had on this indigenous industry.

There appears to be a general absence of in-depth information and detailed statistics relating to the exact performance of West African crafts in the colonial period, a lacunae already pointed to in Chapter 1. The literature is nonetheless dotted with sporadic references to the effects, usually disastrous, which the introduction of cheap, mass-produced items from Europe had on traditional crafts, particularly textile production but including blacksmithing in some cases. A few examples should suffice to illustrate this point.

Callaway, in his survey of industries in Ibadan City, reports that:

The traditional blacksmith is in fact declining....

Weaving, spinning and dyeing are related crafts which were more vigorous in the past than at present... Goldsmiths are also caught in the competition with imported goods...Pottery and basket-making are declining crafts of the urban centre...(1967 : 157-58).

Mabogunje (1968 : 82-85, 120-21, 198-99) makes several references to the decline of ancient craft industries in the colonial phase, again in Yoruba cities:

More important however, for the decline of local crafts, was the penetration into the country of cheap, manufactured articles from the factories of Europe. For two of the basic industries of these towns—iron-smelting and weaving—the effect was almost catastrophic. (1968 : 85).

He goes on to claim that many such traditional craftsmen were in this way deprived of their livelihoods and that in many Nigerian cities smithies for example were forced to close down because of competition from mass-produced European substitutes, with the result that:

...a blacksmith might become a tinker, bicycle repairer or mechanic.... but for the large majority, a return to the land was perhaps the safest and most certain of opportunities. (1968 : 120-21).

Hill, writing of Batagarawa, a Hausa village near the city of Katsina, states that:

Improved availability of many manufactured goods, especially cloth, may on balance be beneficial, but an offsetting factor is the associated decline of traditional crafts such as weaving and dyeing, which have been replaced by few modern crafts or industries. (1972 : 32)

And writing of Dorayi, a small village just outside Kano City itself, in the 1920's, she says that:

Textile production was already in decline owing to increased competition from European cloth.... (1977 : 96).

Finally, Shea tells us:

It was the importation of European produced textiles and other manufactured goods which had the long-run effect of bringing about a decline in craft production in Kano...Increased dependence on imported goods also contributed to the decline of crafts in the countryside... An overall view of the colonial period shows that imported cloth was gaining an increasingly large share of the market. (1975 : 46, 48, 85).

A few scholars on the other hand report more optimistic findings on the subject. Lloyd for instance, describing Yoruba towns in the 1950's, notes that 'In every town the older crafts linger on; a few flourish...' (1953 : 30), and gives the impression that blacksmithing, in the areas he studied at least, was one of these still thriving crafts. And Bray (1968, 1969a, 1969b) points to and documents the continuing dynamism of traditional weaving in the Yoruba town of Iseyin, a little to the north of Ibadan City. Hill herself in fact remarks that blacksmithing in rural areas of Katsina continues to flourish, in contrast to such crafts as weaving and dyeing (1972 : 195). And we know from Cohen (1966, 1969), Hogendorn (1966, 1970), and Lovejoy (1970, 1971, 1973) that the indigenous trade in such commodities as livestock, groundnuts and kolanuts underwent considerable expansion in the twentieth century. Lastly, Hopkins (1973 : 246) writes that the indigenous fish industry probably expanded, along with certain other traditional crafts, in West Africa.

Three basic points need to be made at this juncture. Firstly, this crucial problem deserves much more rigorous attention than it has in fact received to date; secondly, generalisations on the subject might find readier acceptance if they were supported by adequate descriptive and quantitative data; and lastly, expanding consumption of imported items, of whatever kind, does not necessarily mean an absolute decline in the output of the domestic producers of these same items.

At the same time there is no doubting that the colonial phase did have the effect of undermining, and in some instances destroying, a number of traditional occupations in Nigeria and West Africa, and especially in rural areas as trade became increasingly urban-based. We have seen ourselves how the introduction of European scrap metal in time eliminated the domestic iron-ore mining and smelting profession. It should be said too that conversations I had with a number of gold and silversmiths in Kane revealed that the penetration of inexpensive imported trinkets did not have a wholly beneficial influence upon these sister crafts.

Bearing all this in mind then, the present study not only questions, along with Hopkins (1973 : 244-53), the assertion that domestic industries inevitably decline when faced with competition from equivalent imported manufactures, but provides firm evidence that it is in fact misleading.

Why then did the indigenous craft of blacksmithing in Kano not only escape the adverse consequences reported elsewhere and survive, but remain an important and thriving industry, and indeed develop in new directions later on in the colonial era? Why did it prove to be such an 'exceptional' case, the reverse of what might perhaps be expected in the light of some previous claims? <sup>17</sup>

There are basically two related reasons which account for this. In the first place, most of the factory-produced metalware items which were introduced into local markets in the area, e.g. bolts, headpans, hinges, shovels, spades etc., were, unlike textiles for instance, completely alien and formerly unknown, and so did not compete in any way with the blacksmiths' traditional output, e.g. agricultural tools and domestic implements. What is more, it was the very penetration of such foreign hardware and the sudden shortage thereof during the Second World War which, ironically, eventually led to the successful reorientation and establishment of an import-competing industry in the Central Market nucleus, the nature of which is documented in full in Chapters 5 and 6. And secondly older smiths insist that those few equivalent substitutive products from abroad which did find their way into the interior after 1911, e.g. domestic utensils such as knives, scissors, axes, matchets, padlocks etc., work-tools such as hammers, chisels, files etc., and a few hoes, were never a real threat for the simple reason that they were too expensive to compete effectively with the much cheaper items of domestic manufacture. A locally forged axe head for example could be purchased for only 5d or 6d around this time, whereas the imported equivalent might cost anything up to 1/6d—a sum beyond the purse of all but the wealthy customers. Such foreign hardware products were prohibitively expensive because, apart from the high costs of ocean freight from Europe, they had to bear the additional carriage and handling charges from Lagos to the hinterland. In fact Lagos and adjacent areas remained the major markets in Nigeria for these and other imported consumer goods <sup>18</sup>.

Markets in the North, like Kano, thus had a certain amount of natural protection from such imports, and as long as the considerable disparity in prices was maintained (as it was), and such foreign metalware was beyond the purchasing power of most regular Kano customers, then there was no danger of destructive foreign competition <sup>19</sup>. A further, more technical

reason for the regular Hausa customer's preference for the locally-made items over their imported equivalents is that the former, should they break or blunt, are easily fixed and mended, since they are usually made of softer metal; the latter on the other hand, are often too hard and brittle to be so repaired. Unlike the European manufacturers moreover, the Kano City smiths could save costs by being located relatively near to the final market for their products, and also had comparatively low overheads in production. This important point is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 which deals with the emergence of the import-replacing industry in the Central Market.

For the reasons outlined above, the level of consumer demand for such domestically-made traditional ironwares was not only maintained in the colonial period,<sup>20</sup> but in fact rose for reasons which will now be considered in detail.

#### The initial expansion of the metalware industry in Kano City

The growing level of consumer demand for metalware products in general in the twentieth century already referred to was the outcome of two associated factors: an increase in the Kano urban population; and a rise in urban per capita incomes and purchasing power.

Colonial rule affected the demographic composition of Kano City in two significant ways. Firstly, the extension of the railway to Kano in 1911 led to a great influx of immigrants from the southern areas of Nigeria. These immigrants were mostly non-Muslim, semi-skilled workers who were attracted to Kano City to meet the needs of the new colonial administration there. These individuals, the majority of whom were Yoruba, settled in the Sabon Gari or 'New Town' area outside the old City, (see Fig. 4)<sup>p. 59</sup> since non-Muslims were prohibited from living within the City itself. This stranger community grew rapidly, and by the early 1950's its population had reached 21,624, 12,770 of which were the increasingly numerous Ibos<sup>21</sup>.

Secondly, in addition to population increases due to immigration, the improving medical and sanitary services provided by the British,<sup>22</sup> in lowering the infant mortality rate and raising the birth rate, led to a natural increase in the indigenous City population. Meek (1925 : 179) reported that between the years 1911 and 1921, Kano experienced a percentage increase in its population of 26.8 %, from 39,368 to 49,938. Twelve years

later, Whittlesey (1937 : 177) wrote, 'The Kano Urban Area has a population of 89,000, swelled by an estimated 25,000 during the harvest season, and by an additional daytime increment at that period of another 23,000...' Such figures, though probably only approximations at best, nonetheless give some idea of the rate of growth which took place in the period up to the Second World War, a rate which was to increase rapidly after the War.

In addition to their being a rising number of people requiring metal products, the local demand for domestically-manufactured metalware also expanded as the per capita income and spending power of the urban population increased in general, largely through the sale of lucrative export crops like groundnuts. These export earnings served to put additional cash into the hands of many individuals, which meant that they could increase their consumption of these and other items. Although precise quantitative data on increases in per capita income and purchasing power are generally absent for this period, Table 2 (see page 48) does provide some interesting statistics on pre-European crafts in the early years of British rule here. We must of course allow for a margin of error in what is probably no more than an approximation of the industrial scene in Kano City in the 1920's. Nonetheless, this list is of some value not only because it provides information on the relative size and prosperity of the blacksmithing community then, but also because it is one of the few comprehensive industrial assessments compiled and published by the colonial authorities. It also provides some base upon which to assess subsequent changes in the numbers of individuals engaged in the craft industry over the period 1926-70.

One innovation in particular, of a technological nature, permitted the expansion in production necessary to meet the growing desire for metalware, an expansion which in turn led to increased profitability. This was the enlarged volume and range of supplies of imported scrap iron available to the blacksmiths and referred to earlier in the chapter. This was made possible not only by the fact that there was now so much more raw material at hand than had been the case with locally-mined iron (which was known to run out occasionally), but also because of the basic technical reason that imported scrap was much easier for the smiths to work since most of it was already shaped and so simply had to be cut up. Smiths old enough to remember testify for example that only relatively modest levels of daily

TABLE 2. Estimated Income (Per Annum) By Traditional Occupation, 1926

Occupation	Number	Percent Total	Income ( £ )
1. Wealthy traders	43	.37	80
2. Chief traders	200	1.74	36
3. Kola sellers	472	4.12	35
4. Groundnut sellers	142	1.24	35
5. Lodging-house keepers	290	2.53	34
6. Grain sellers	143	1.25	33
7. Skins sellers	153	1.33	32
8. Chief butchers	69	.60	30
9. Black-gown sellers	46	.40	27
10. Cloth beaters	80	.69	26
11. Potash sellers	62	.54	25
12. Dyers	337	2.94	24
13. Whitesmiths	204	1.78	24
14. Gown sellers	226	1.97	23
15. Donkey sellers	34	.29	23
16. Builders	220	1.92	22
17. Mattress makers	29	.25	22
18. Black-cloth sellers	40	.34	22
19. Horse sellers	40	.34	22
20. <u>Blacksmiths</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>.55</u>	<u>22</u>
21. Barbers	167	1.43	22
22. Beggars	197	1.72	22
23. Cattle sellers	20	.17	21
24. Brokers	479	4.19	21
25. Small kola sellers	20	.17	20
26. Saddle cloth sellers	61	.53	20
27. Leather workers	473	4.13	19
28. Scent sellers	53	.46	16
29. Sword sling makers	5	.04	15
30. Kola wrappers	15	.13	15
31. Snuff sellers	70	.61	15
32. Sheep sellers	33	.28	14
33. Indigo sellers	70	.61	14
34. Petty traders	766	6.70	14
35. Weavers	227	1.98	14
36. Tanners	122	1.06	14
37. Labourers	611	5.34	13
38. Tailors	877	7.67	11
39. Cap makers	2,405	21.03	11
40. Sweetmeat sellers	38	.33	11
41. Horse trappings makers	49	.42	11
42. Petty meat sellers	296	2.58	10
43. Raw cotton sellers	9	.07	9
44. Mallams	1,320	11.54	8
45. Fruitiers	11	.09	8
Totals	11,431	100.00	

Source: P.G. Harris, 1926 Kano Province Assessment Report, Kano City Assessment.



production could be achieved in the pre-colonial era, even under urban conditions of demand. According to them, a blacksmith at that time could fashion perhaps six to eight hoe-blades per day, using unwieldy blooms of local iron costing between 600 and 800 cowries each (approx. 3d.)<sup>23</sup>. The finished blades might then sell for 250-300 cowries each (approx. 1d) soon after the British arrived, the profit from which was enough to purchase about two bowls of corn. Much energy in other words, was expended for comparatively small returns. Working with one shilling's worth of the new scrap metal on the other hand, the same smith could produce as many as two dozen of the same size hoe-blades in the same time, each of which would then fetch 5d-6d. in the period between roughly 1911 and 1920, the resulting profit being sufficient to buy perhaps four or five bowls of corn. The importance of the above technological advancement cannot be overestimated. In addition to being labour-saving, it permitted production on a much greater scale, at a lower real cost per unit, and in less time. This same innovation moreover was to prove crucial to the eventual transformation and increased specialization which took place in the Central Market in the Transitional Phase. At the same time it should be borne in mind that whilst the productivity and craft income of the Kano City blacksmiths increased in general in the pre-War period, they continued with traditional lines of production, and using the same simple technology and labour-units which had characterized the pre-colonial era.

Nor were the changes in this period restricted to the productive capacity and related prosperity of these craftsmen. If we compare the estimated figure of forty to fifty blacksmiths working in pre-European Kano (see Chapter 2), with the total given in Table 2, we may reasonably conclude that there was also some increase over the period 1903-26 in the numbers of individuals involved in the manufacturing stages of the craft. Such a conclusion is, moreover, corroborated by oral testimony from a number of older smiths.

This expansion can probably be partially accounted for by the growing numbers of rural smiths now making their way to the City to work on a semi-permanent or permanent basis<sup>24</sup>. The rise, in the urban context at least, in the demand for traditional metalware items served to provide additional employment opportunities for such country craftsmen, and especially in the

Central Market nucleus. The financial rewards of producing for such a substantial market, safer travel, modern urban utilities, and growing economic dependence upon and interaction with the City economy - all these factors combined to exert an increasingly strong pull on these rural artisans, drawing them further and further into the metropolitan orbit, and particularly to the influential Central Market. Several Tamburawa blacksmiths for example began, for the first time, to remove to the City each year and ply their craft in the Central Market area during the dry-season, attaching themselves to some senior smith/trader, and working largely at his direction. However none, it seems, chose to settle here and so become 'permanent migrants' as was the case with a substantial number of other immigrant smiths at this time, many of whose sons and/or grandsons live near and work in the Central Market to this day.

The rising consumer demand and expanding spatial extent of the domestic metalware market also brought about a growth in the numbers and affluence of those individuals involved in the distribution of both finished metalware products and scrap metal. The initial arrival of the railway and its extension in 1928 to Nguru set in motion an increasing flow of traditional hardware to more distant market areas, particularly around Nguru and Gashua in Borne (see Fig. 3 p.38). These heavy and bulky durables could now be evacuated to such long-established centres of demand more cheaply, more quickly, and in larger amounts than were previously possible. Apart from shortening the journeying time to those areas close to the rail-line from about a week to little more than a day, regularity of supply was now almost guaranteed, and traders were consequently able to arrange large shipments of such goods well in advance. This trade was further stimulated with the gradual expansion, later on in this period, of the road transport and haulage industry.

The overall effect of these new factors was, according to older smiths and traders, to push up the numbers and prosperity of those who bought and sold the finished products. Indeed a few of the more foresighted of the Kwarim Mabuga smiths were persuaded to take advantage of the new commercial opportunities and involved themselves in the marketing as well as manufacture of ironware, travelling to these distant markets to sell their own and others' products. Most smiths however, continued to rely, as before, for disposal

of their output, upon the growing number of long-distance traders and brokers who were now purchasing metalwares for transaction in increasing amounts. Present-day smiths and dealers claim that whereas when the British first arrived in Kano there were only a handful of commission agents dealing in metalware products from grass sheds in the Central Market, by the late 1930's the number of separate trading stalls here had risen to about ten. They further claim that overall profits from sales of such goods increased three to fourfold in this same period.

Finally, though it was impossible to obtain exact figures, as trade in scrap iron became an increasingly lucrative line of business in the Central Market, the numbers of scrap dealers too gradually increased throughout this period. My enquiries indicate for example that by the beginning of the Second World War there were a dozen or more dealers selling scrap from stalls in the Central Market, compared with three or four traders in native-mined iron here at the turn of the century. Of these, six were immigrants from the Sokoto area who had been attracted to Kano City in the 1920's by the growing profits attached to this trade, and the remainder were either of traditional Kwarim Mabuga smithing families, or were descended from families who had specialised since pre-colonial times in selling locally-mined crude iron.

#### Summary and conclusions

The foregoing material and interpretations have established a number of important points. It was observed that Kano's open economy in general responded readily to the new economic factors of the colonial era, with resultant increases in both the numbers and affluence of the urban population. Also, that whilst the most spectacular advances probably occurred in the export sector, here was an indigenous, domestic-oriented industry which also reacted in its own positive fashion and began an all-round expansion itself. These changes led at the same time to marked reversals in the pre-existing nature of urban-rural economic relations, with trade in certain of the key commodities of the industry becoming more and more urban-based. The Central Market complex in particular underwent a significant extension in the scale of its activities and exerted a growing influence upon the metalware trade in general. Since, furthermore, this process was already in

fact under way in the pre-colonial phase, some of these developments may be seen as more in the nature of continuities.

In sum, the overall picture described in this chapter hardly points to a traditional craft in decline. Rather, the imposition of British rule served on balance to create the conditions necessary for the growth of the industry here, and its subsequent differentiation and transformation in the Transitional Phase. This judgement is not intended to be an apologia for colonialism, but should be seen as a tribute to those individuals who responded so rapidly to the new conditions and opportunities of the time.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria had already been created in fact in 1900, when the British assumed full control of both Northern and Southern Nigeria. Later, in 1914, these two Provinces were amalgamated to form the single country of Nigeria, with Lagos as the capital.
2. For a fuller account of these structural changes, see Jaggard (1973b).
3. A prohibition which proved much more difficult to enforce in the more remote and inaccessible regions of Kano Emirate where British penetration and control were only minimal at first, and where blacksmiths continued, to all intents and purposes, to manufacture weapons. The main difference was that these were no longer used for military purposes as in pre-colonial days, but simply for hunting and for personal protection against the still-present threat of attack from either wild animals or highway robbers.
4. Koll (1968 : 76) reports a similar finding amongst the blacksmiths of Yorubaland.
5. Resident Arnett (N.A.K. 1114/1912) observed in 1912 that corvée labour had by then virtually died out.
6. For an account of similar consequences in Zaria, see Smith (1955 : 8-9, 97-100). See also Shea (1975 : 7-8, 97).
7. Indeed Lugard (1922 : 5) felt able to boast, rather exaggeratedly perhaps, that, 'The material development of Africa may be summed up in one word-transport.' And Kilby (1969 : 36) states that 'As the production and export of groundnuts, cotton, hides and skins, and tin-ore - the mainstays of the northern economy - did not begin on a substantial scale until after 1912, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that the availability of rail transportation has been the single most important factor in the economic development of Northern Nigeria.'
8. In 1926, the cost of transporting freight by human portage was 2/6d. per ton-mile, compared with 2.2d. per ton-mile by rail. Figures taken from Kilby (1969 : 35, 39).
9. See Hogendorn (1966, 1970). The initial expansion of the kolanut industry also awaited this extension of the railway to Kano - see Cohen (1966, 1969), and Lovejoy (1970, 1971, 1973). Detailed accounts of improvements in transport media and the implications for the Nigerian economy may be found in Walker (1959), Mabogunje (1968 : 148-58), Kilby (1969 : 35-38), and Hopkins (1973 : 187 - 98).
10. Interestingly, the smiths here claim that the mining and preparation of local iron-ore underwent something of a temporary revival in the Zamfara area during the Second World War when supplies of scrap iron from Europe were restricted. The indications are that this was in fact the last area in which iron-ore was mined.
11. Mabogunje (1968 : 85) similarly reports that the penetration of imported scrap metal into Yorubaland proved catastrophic for the iron-smelting industry there. And Bower (1948 : 4-5) writes that by 1923 the local mining and smelting of tin had also died out in northern areas of Nigeria.

12. See Kadmin-Tra-Ind. G.66. Y.A. Vol. 1, 1951-56.
13. Metal railway sleepers and keys were also occasionally sold by the authorities at the old Treasurer's Residence in the City itself.
14. Shea (1975 : 133-35) reports a similar trend in the cloth industry of the area, which also became increasingly urban-centred in all its facets. See also Hill (1972, 1977).
15. See Hastings, 1914, N.A.K. 494P/1914.
16. Alexander (N.A.K. K.105. Vols 1 and 2, 1925) reported a, '...constant and increasing use of lorries for trading purposes, especially ground-nuts, hides and skins.' Although the rapid expansion of motor-lorry transport did not take place until after the Second World War when the extent of tarred motor-roads was considerably increased, by the 1930's commercial haulage firms were operating fleets of lorries between the larger urban centres.
17. My investigations would seem to indicate that a similar response characterised blacksmithing communities in other urban areas of northern Nigeria, though none reacted in quite such a positive and dynamic fashion as the Kano City smiths.
18. Mabogunje (1968 : 83) says that imported iron axes, though of inferior quality were cheaper than and so undercut the prices of the local equivalents in southern parts of Nigeria.
19. An amusing and indicative incident underlines this basic fact. A little before the Second World War, a number of imported, factory-made British hoe-blades were introduced into the Kano Central Market by a local expatriate company. However, due to its high price (3/-) compared with the locally-made blade (1/-), and also its size (it was apparently much too large, unwieldy and heavy for the type of soil in Kano), only a very few were in fact sold. One of the senior Kwarim Mabuga smiths, acting with typical initiative, went and bought up several hundred of these blades direct from the firm, at about 1/- each, had each one of them cut up and fashioned into two smaller blades, and then sold the newly-forged blades on the market for 9d each, thus making a handsome profit.
20. The blacksmith thus continued to produce, though now in greater quantities, implements utilized in a large range of crafts, and particularly hand tools for farming which remained the basis of the expanding economy. Hopkins (1973 : 37) remarks that, '...virtually the whole of the massive expansion of domestic foodstuffs and export crops which occurred during the twentieth century was produced with the aid of traditional tools.'
21. Figures from 'Tribal Population Statistics', N.A.K. 5908. Kano Province, 1954/55.
22. The City Hospital was completed in 1924, and in 1929 a piped water supply was installed in the City.
23. Though the value of cowries against the newly-introduced British currency depreciated rapidly before finally disappearing, the rate prevalent in the immediate colonial period was approx. 240 cowries to 1d.

24. Whittlesey's (1937 : 177) calculation that the Kano population was swelled by 25,000 (approx. 35%) in the dry season may be taken as a rough indication of the scale of this seasonal immigration from rural areas.

CHAPTER 4KANO CITY BLACKSMITHS IN THE PERIOD CA. 1945-71 : AN OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and account for the more significant and differing effects which post-Second World War socio-economic developments had on the condition of the craft of blacksmithing in all except the Central Market unit. Investigation of this particular group merits treatment in itself and so is reserved until the remaining more important chapters. The quantitative basis for the analysis now presented derives from a complete census of the blacksmiths of both Kano City and Tamburawa, in addition to individual case histories and general ethnographic data, and the analysis itself is presented in an historical perspective when possible, in order to illustrate trends.

The chapter first gives a brief background account of the overall demographic growth and economic expansion of Kano City in the post-War period. The study then proceeds more specifically to identify and evaluate those variables which are important to what is the central problem of this chapter, indeed of the whole thesis—change. A number of major trends are discernible. These include changes in the demographic characteristics of the various groups; increased economic differentiation and modifications in such occupational principles as craft loyalty and the system of apprenticeship; the question of differential individual responses to the new economic opportunities of the period; and lastly variations in patterns of inward labour migration.

The general background : Kano City in the period ca. 1945-71

The Second World War and immediately preceding years had, in general, been a time of severe economic depression and strain throughout the whole of West Africa, with the frontiers of both export and domestic markets temporarily checked. However, its termination in 1945 witnessed the beginning of a period of rapidly increasing prosperity and an acceleration of the pre-War pace of westernisation in the area. The important politico-economic developments which took place here have been described and evaluated in detail by numerous scholars.<sup>1</sup> Kilby for example writes of Nigeria:



...the post-War era was a period of unprecedented prosperity. With export earnings up as much as 850 per cent over pre-War levels, money income and consumer purchasing power increased sharply. (1965 : 10)

These trends were also reflected in Kano City. Exports of such items as groundnuts, livestock, kolanuts, and hides and skins were revived after the strictures of the War years,<sup>2</sup> and, as will now be seen, the internal market also experienced a renewed growth. Indeed, as early as 1947, Resident Featherstone wrote of:

...a wonderful seller's market for an abundance of locally grown and manufactured articles in Kano, and an increased awareness of the world beyond Kano and Nigeria.<sup>3</sup>

In the modern sector too a considerable number of manufacturing industries were established in the area, and by the 1960's Kano had the largest and most important modern manufacturing sector in northern Nigeria.

These developments combined to increase the amount of cash in circulation, domestic per capita incomes, and consumer purchasing power in general.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there arose a greater desire on the part of the ordinary urban customer for a larger variety of European-type consumer goods, e.g. cars, motorbikes, bicycles, modern-style concrete houses, stores, general domestic utensils, radios, watches etc.

Alongside expansions in the economic structure, both pre-modern and modern, the population in the area mushroomed at an enormous rate over this period, a result both of natural increases and growing immigration. At the time of the 1952 census for example, the Kano Urban Area had an estimated total population of 127,205 (see Fig. 4, page 59), and by the time the next census was taken, in 1963, the population had reached 250,000, including 165,455 in the walled City itself, 83,584 in Waje - the outlying immigrant areas, and a further 9,246 in the Township, formerly the Government Residential Area.<sup>5</sup> By 1967, the estimated population had risen to over 400,000, and to a possible 600,000 by 1971.<sup>6</sup> Comparison of these figures with those given in Chapter 3 reveals that the Kano Urban Area thus underwent a massive increase in population of something like 1500 % over the period 1911-71.

#### DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSES OF THE CITY BLACKSMITHS

Table 3 (see page 58) provides detailed information on a number of crucial

	of smiths (a)						workers	supplementary
Diso	9	2	7	9	-	2		Repairing farm-tools and pick axes Jews' harps; fitting; gardening; porterage.
Dandalin Turawa	2	-	2	2	-	-		Metal door locks and screws; bicycle repairing; carpentry; room-letting.
Gyaranya	2	2	-	2	-	-		Metal door locks and screws
Kofar Mazugal	1	1	-	1	-	-		Swords, daggers and few farm tools.
Kofar Wambai	4	3	1	4	-	4		Small metalwares e.g. scissors, needl knives; some farm tools.
Kulkul	1	1	-	1	-	-		Metal door-locks
Kwalwa	1	1	-	1	-	-		Soldering; sewing-machine repairs.
Tudun Makera	2	2	-	1	1	-		Metal door-locks, keys; repairs to safes, sewing-machines; welding; mechanicking.
Warure	2	-	2	2	-	1		General repair work; carpentry.
'Yan Awaki	1	1	-	1	-	-		Farm-tools, weapons, axes, knives.
Kwarim Mabuga (c) (Kasuwar Kurmi)	11	11	-	5	6	24		Traditional products inc. door locks, stirrups, bridles and bits, knives, farm tools; modern items like door bolts, hinges, shovels, headpans; mechanicking.
TOTALS	36	24	12	29	7	31		

(a) Born and resident in Kano City, tax-paying (see Table 4, note (a)).

(b) For analytical purposes I delineate as 'inherited' any individual whose forbears have been practising the traditional craft of blacksmithing for at least three preceding generations. All twenty-four migrants listed have inherited the craft. (see also Table 5, page 85).

(c) Nowadays includes, in addition to the ancient blacksmithing quarter of Kwarim Mabuga, the wards of 'Yan Doya and Bakin Zuwo, bo of which border on the Central Market (Kasuwar Kurmi) area, and the Jakara area of the Market (see Fig. 6, page 84).

Source: All the data tabulated in this and other tables was compiled from a complete group census conducted in the spring of 1971, and also from genealogical material collected in the field.

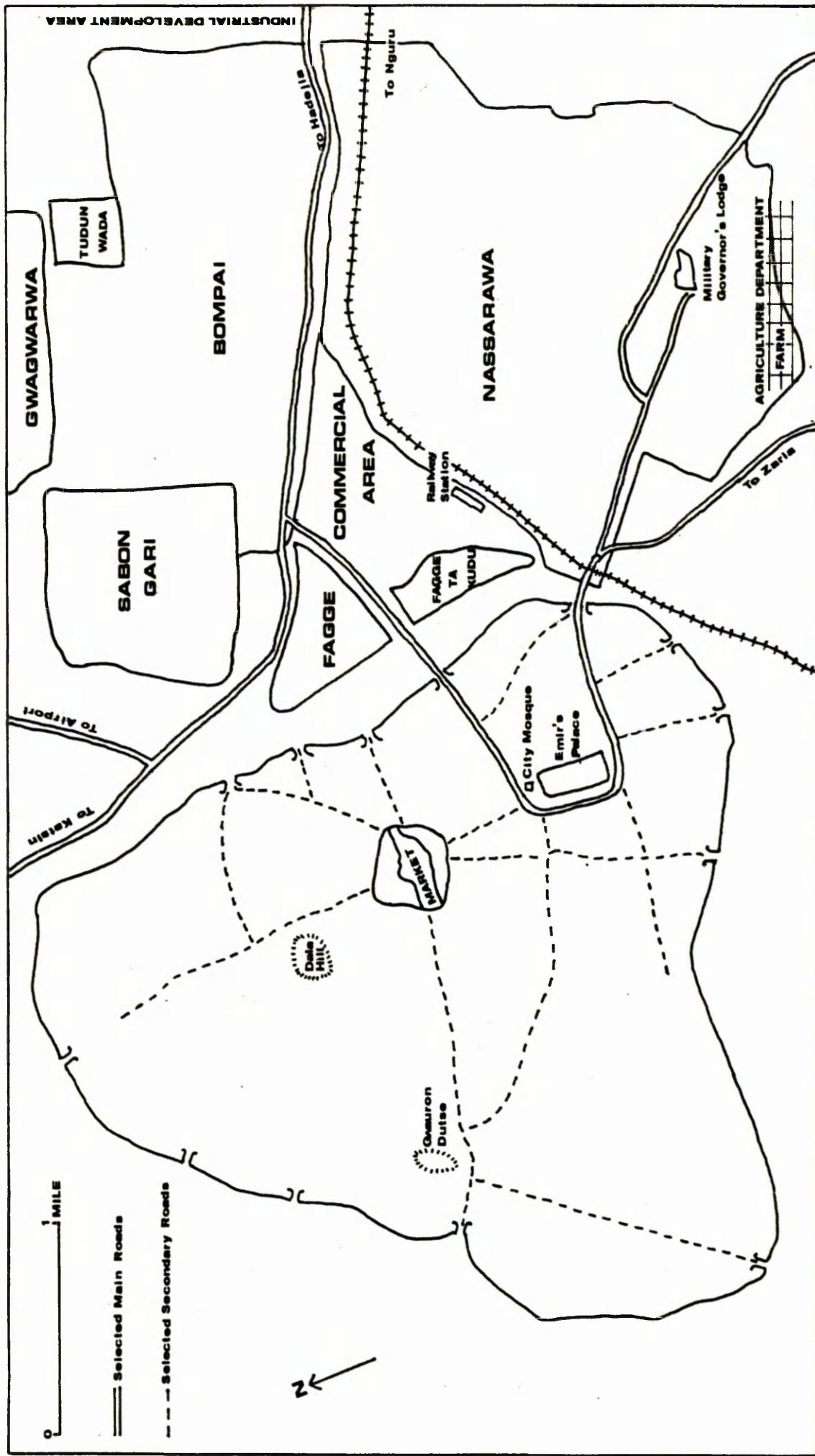


Fig. 4. Sketch-map of Kano Metropolitan Area, 1969.

related aspects pertaining to the contemporaneous nature of the blacksmithing industry in Kano City. A glance at this table reveals that in the spring of 1971 when a general census was taken for the whole population of smiths, there were 11 distinct clusters with a total of 36 Kano-born blacksmiths pursuing the craft within the old City. There were in addition 31 immigrant rural smiths, some permanent and some seasonal, working in the City at the same time, making a grand total of 67 blacksmiths altogether.

An even closer look at this data brings to light the following relevant facts:

- 1) The considerable numerical size of the Central Market (Kasuwar Kurmi) group of smiths which contains 11 out of a total 36 smiths (31%), and which has an even larger proportion - 11 out of 24 (46%) - if we take only full-time craftsmen. This is in contrast to the other groups, many of which have only one or two remaining craftsmen.
- 2) The comparatively large proportion (6 out of 11) of Central Market smiths who have not inherited the craft they practise, again in stark contrast to the remaining groups where the craft is almost wholly hereditary.
- 3) The proportionately large number of immigrant smiths - 24 out of 31 (77%) - working in the Central Market area.
- 4) The existence in the majority of the clusters of several modern-day occupations, most of which are in fact related to the traditional craft and which are also combined with it to varying degrees.

Since the emphasis of the present chapter is on the differing responses to modern economic influences of those smiths from groups other than the Central Market one, the remainder of this discussion will centre upon an examination of the above demographic and organisational features only as they concern these same non-Central Market clusters. References to this all-important complex, by way of contrast and comparison, are unavoidable, but will only be made in so far as they are pertinent to a particular point under discussion in the text.

A comparison of Tables 2 and 3 appears to suggest something of a decline in the overall number of individuals pursuing the craft here in Kano City in the period 1926-71 - from 64 to 36. We should be wary of coming to any firm conclusions on this particular matter however, chiefly because the estimates compiled by the colonial authorities tended to be rather conjectural

at times, and also because we are not sure exactly what categories of workers were in fact included in the 1926 assessment. At the same time, and whatever the possible defects of these earlier figures, I believe we may reasonably conclude that, leaving aside the Central Market group, there has probably been on balance something of a decrease in those Kano City-born men employed in the profession of their ancestors. This contraction moreover is due to the following reasons: the complete disappearance of several traditional production units within this period; and the loss, amongst some units, of workers to other modern specialisms, some related and some not.

#### Demographic changes

Some of the more obvious and pervasive changes to overtake the craft in the last thirty years or so have been of a demographic nature. A comparison of Tables 1 and 3 shows that the traditional craft has vanished completely in four of the original fifteen pre-European clusters. In Cediya Pera and 'Yan Nono wards, the smiths' forges were demolished in the early 1950's as part of changes in the actual physical lay-out of certain sections of the City, involving in particular the reconstruction of the Central Market and a widening of the roads thereto. A few of the rather unfortunate 'Yan Nono craftsmen turned subsequently to modern-type carpentry (aikin katako) - in its older form the traditional occupational combination with blacksmithing in fact <sup>7</sup> - and later to trading in metalware products; and the one Cediya Pera smith remaining at the time simply switched to commission trading in metalware, a trade he pursues to this day. In Lokon Makera ward, the traditional craft died a natural death when the sole remaining smith died about thirty years ago, leaving no male heirs to carry on the craft. And finally, in Dan Agundi ward, the last blacksmith abandoned the profession of his forbears a few years ago and became a small time building contractor.

#### Changes in occupational mobility and differentiation

The post-War period in general saw a steadily increasing preference for a whole range of new occupations and opportunities made available in the modern

urban context as a direct result of westernisation. The final column of Table 3 shows that, for the Kano City smiths, some of the more popular modern-day specialisms include carpentry and house-repairing, welding and fitting, and bicycle-repairing and mechanicking, all of which service trades, it should be noted, are associated with the traditional craft of smithing.<sup>8</sup> As will soon be seen, a new specialism may remain ancillary to smithing, in other cases it may eventually take over as the primary occupation, and in yet other cases it may become a whole-time profession. On the other hand, a number of men have taken up completely unrelated trades such as general dealing in <sup>such</sup> potentially lucrative commodities as groundnuts, kolanuts and cloth. Every group however has at least one member who has, at one time or another, turned to one of the above related service trades, whether permanently or temporarily. It should also be noted, though in passing only at this stage, that an impressive, modern import-substituting industry has emerged since the 1940's in the Central Market complex, as a direct result of the more specialised present-day needs of urban society. This important development is dealt with fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

To return to our present theme - changes over the years in occupational mobility and differentiation - presented below are a number of pertinent biographies and data. Taking the Kulkul and Warure units as illustrative examples, there were, according to older smiths, three and four adult full-time blacksmiths respectively working in these two clusters in the 1930's, whereas nowadays, as Table 3 indicates, there is only one full-time smith still working in Kulkul, and two part-time smiths in Warure. In the former ward, one of the three senior smiths died in the mid-1940's, and although he left seven sons in all, only one of them chose to take up his craft. Of the remaining six, four in time left smithing and turned instead to trading in kolanuts, one took up groundnut trading, and the remaining son died when young. And in Warure ward, all the living adult relatives of the two surviving part-time blacksmiths nowadays do carpentry and/or roof repairing, with the sole exception of one who is the ward head. European-style furniture, like European-introduced metal-ware (see Chapter 5), has become increasingly popular since the Second World War, and because of this many individuals, including blacksmiths and non-blacksmiths, have subsequently turned their hands to modern carpentry.

The effects of modern culture contact here have found expression too in the fact that more than a dozen City smiths, from various groups, have been employed at some time or other in the past fifty years as artisans at the Agricultural Research Station just outside the old City, maintaining and repairing agricultural tools and machinery there. The smiths of Kofar Wambai for instance have supplied the Station with a number of craftsmen over the years. In some cases too, a certain group will gradually become associated with a particular modern occupational combination, not always an associated service trade, which may itself develop into a major occupation in time. In this way, several of the Diso blacksmiths at present combine, to varying degrees, work as porters at the City Hospital (see Table 3) with smithing, in order to supplement their income.

The following individual case studies illustrate in greater detail the ways in which a number of individuals have, at some period in the last thirty years or so, either modified, expanded, or completely transformed their traditional fields of activity and thereby adapted their economic roles to new needs and conditions.

#### Malam Lawal

Malam Lawal is about sixty-five years old<sup>9</sup> and was appointed 'King of the Blacksmiths' (see Chapter 2) at the beginning of the 1960's. Up until his late twenties he worked at his own and his father's anvil in the Diso/Galadanci forge, and then spent a number of years travelling and working as both a blacksmith and silversmith in the Zaria and Katsina areas. Just before the War he attended the Craft School in Kano City<sup>10</sup> where he learned the modern skills of welding and fitting, and during the War itself worked on the construction of bridges and buildings at the recently-built Kano Airport. At the end of the War, after returning briefly to smithing, Malam Lawal took a job as a fitter with the Rural Water Supply section of the Ministry of Works, and was eventually put in charge of the workshop there, a position he holds to this day. The reasons he gives for abandoning the profession of his ancestors and turning instead to a modern trade are basically financial. He claims that the rewards he gained as a blacksmith in the Diso forge at the time were too irregular - anything from 10/- to 30/- profit per week. Wage-employment with the Local Authority on the other hand, though restricting his personal freedom somewhat, at least meant a regular income - about £5 per month when he first started - and the work was not nearly as exacting.<sup>11</sup> Several of Malam Lawal's younger relatives have followed in his footsteps and trained as fitters, an occupation they now combine with part-time smithing.

Malam Ahmadu

Malam Ahmadu is fifty years old and was born in Kulkul ward of a traditional blacksmithing family. He worked as a smith until some twenty years ago when he decided to try his hand at some other trade and left for Abeokuta in western Nigeria where he spent ten years trading in kolanuts. Eventually Malam Ahmadu decided to return to Kano where, instead of once again taking up the family craft, decided instead, for economic reasons he claims, to turn to the less arduous trade of carpentry. Malam Ahmadu says that at the time he found he could earn up to 15/- per day clear profit making such up-to-date and increasingly popular items as wooden chairs, beds, tables, cupboards etc., about twice as much as he had been making forging traditional farm-tools and knives.

Malam Sane

Malam Sane is thirty years old, lives in Tudun Makera ward, and is the nephew of a blacksmith-cum-locksmith who specialised, when alive in manufacturing traditional metal door locks (kuba)<sup>12</sup>, a specialism for which he became famous in the Kano area. Malam Sane has continued with this particular line of his uncle and takes pride in the fact that his smithy, though relatively inaccessible, still attracts a considerable number of regular customers in search of these high-quality products. Over the last fifteen years or so however, Malam Sane has differentiated and expanded his field of activity and nowadays spends much of his time doing skilled repair work on safes (for which he also makes keys), sewing machines, and even radios and gramophones. Malam Sane claims that he and his co-worker, a neighbour who took up the craft as a young lad, can make as much as £30 profit between them in only four to five days work. Several of Malam Sane's younger relatives are now mechanics, welders, or bicycle-repairers.

The above individual cases are repeated by a number of similar ones throughout the City, and together they serve to highlight some of the ways in which occupational mobility and differentiation have accelerated in the period under consideration.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, whilst pointing to the enlarged range of occupational choices resulting from the impact of colonialism and also to some of the individual reasons for these choices, these short biographies do of course bring to light an important concomitant effect - a general reduction of attachment to the traditional craft.



Apropos of this particular problem, Smith, whose data and theoretical models are so often the sine qua non of any discussion of Hausa socio-economic institutions, has made a number of references in his many writings on Hausaland to the existence, in Zaria at least, of closed hereditary occupational groups. Thus he writes:

Although agriculture is the basic Hausa industry, large numbers of men are engaged in craft and trade. These occupations are often hereditary; children learn their fathers' skills and follow their occupations. Hausa describe such hereditary occupations as karda, and contrast them with those which are freely chosen by individuals. The latter are known as shigege, and the dichotomy is applied to political office as well as other economic pursuits. The karda distinction and status ranking indicate an occupational order in which most men follow in their fathers' footsteps and in which mobility is quite low...The prevalence of karda implies the existence of a set of closed occupational groups recruited by agnatic descent. (1959 : 248).

In examining the variable in question - the extent to which the Kano blacksmiths represented, and continue to represent, an essentially closed, hereditary occupational group in which sons automatically inherited the craft from their fathers - we must proceed with caution, for two reasons basically. In the first place, relevant quantitative data, though systematically collected for the contemporaneous situation, is inevitably lacking for the intervening years, and so it is impossible to calculate trends with any acceptable degree of accuracy and hence come to any firm conclusions. And secondly, Smith's generalisations on this matter, none of which it should be added appear to be supported by an statistical evidence, pertain only to the Zaria situation and so must be treated with circumspection, though in all fairness to Smith he does recognise the limitations of his 'Hausa models'. Recent studies, apart from the present one, and notably those of Polly Hill, have proved, possibly more than anything else, that considerable variations in socio-economic forms exist between different areas of Hausaland.

Returning to the immediate problem - the proportion of sons actually taking up their fathers' craft nowadays - Table 4 (see page 66) reveals that out of a total number of 42 census-enumerated brothers from 22 different sets,

23 (55%), all of whom inherited the traditional craft as 'sons of inheriting' (fan gado), continue to ply it as a full-time occupation in the City. The remaining 19 (45%) include both those individuals who at one time practised the profession but eventually abandoned it and 'ran away' (suka gudu) to take up other occupations, some associated and some not, and also a few men who never did any smithing at all.

TABLE 4. Kano City and Tamburawa: occupations of brothers<sup>(a)</sup>  
of blacksmiths<sup>(b)</sup>

	Total No. of smiths	Total No. of brothers	Occupation	
			Smithing	Non-smithing
Kano City	22	42	23(55%)	19(45%)
Tamburawa	18	35	26(74%)	9(26%)

- (a) Tax-paying, sharing the same blacksmith father. In general, able-bodied sons are expected to pay their own annual community tax (haraji) as soon as they begin to work as independent craftsmen in their own right—in their late teens typically, and a few years before their first marriage. In the City, the tax rate in 1971 ranged from about 50/- to 70/-, and from 40/- to 55/- in Tamburawa.
- (b) Inherited blacksmiths, active and (semi-)retired, born in Kano City or Tamburawa.

Individuals in the latter category, when pressed as to the reasons they had either left smithing or indeed had never smithed at any time, tended, much as Malam Lawal and Malam Ahmadu, to reply, 'Why should we do such difficult and dirty work when there are nowadays so many easier and equally rewarding jobs we can do?' None, it is worth noting, ever volunteered the explanation that they had in any way been forced out of the traditional family industry because of any decline therein, a significant point I shall pick up again in due course. On the other hand, most of those men still pursuing the profession, if asked about the history of their specialism and their reasons for continuing to practice it, invariably answered that they chose to carry on the craft simply because they belonged to a kin group which had been plying it for generations. Some also pointed to an obligation to cater for customers who had patronised their fathers and grandfathers and with whom they often shared highly personalised relationships. Still others would

respond shruggingly with such rationalisations as 'This is what Albah intended for me, apart from smithing what else can I do?' (haka Allah ya nufe ni, ban da kira me zan yi?), or 'I do smithing for the sake of tradition' (ina kira ne sabo da gado).

As regards former times, we are hampered by a lack of crucial data, and so are reliant once more upon oral testimony. What can be said however is that when questioned specifically on this matter, reliable older informants were emphatic that more sons would follow in their fathers' blacksmithing footsteps formerly than is now the case, an observation Smith (1955 : 16) in fact made regarding the situation in Zaria. This is due to two reasons basically. Firstly, there were not as many occupational avenues open to individuals in pre-colonial days; and secondly more pressure would be put on sons (za a matsa musu) then to take up the family craft and so help preserve group unity.

All in all, and in the absence of any contradictory evidence, this would appear to be a reasonably feasible, if not verifiable, evaluation of the changing situation. Furthermore, comparable census data collected for the Tamburawa blacksmiths and also listed in Table 4 for comparison, clearly show that a higher proportion of brothers (or sons) here - 26 out of 35 (74%) - are currently active blacksmiths, compared with 55% for the City. If, moreover, we make the by no means completely untenable assumption that present-day arrangements in such rural communities as Tamburawa essentially reflect the past, i.e. pre-European, situation in the City itself, then this could be interpreted as evidence in support of the proposal that a greater percentage of sons would probably have taken up the family craft formerly in the City than do nowadays. This aside, the main reasons for the lower rate of occupational mobility in villages like Tamburawa, and a conversely stronger attachment to the craft, lie in the fact that alternative jobs and new opportunities are in general lacking in such rural areas; also young smiths are often positively discouraged from leaving the profession, thus ensuring greater occupational stability and continuity. Those few rural crafts, like blacksmithing, which continue to thrive to this day, thus tend to be lifetime commitments basically. It may be the case too that as modern wants and incentives gradually penetrate even further into such satellite communities from increasingly dominant metropolitan areas like Kano City, more and more

of the younger element in particular will become restless and not only forsake the craft but move away physically. Indeed, the signs are that this process is already under way in Tamburawa.

At the same time, those City informants able to recall the immediate pre-colonial and early colonial phases insist that even then it was by no means the rigid axiom that sons take up the family industry. One case should suffice to illustrate this point. The oldest surviving Kano blacksmith at the time of fieldwork, a man of nigh on a hundred years who was a young man when the British arrived, had five brothers, three elder and two younger, only one of whom actually plied the craft of his blacksmith ancestors. It was thus unusual, even in pre-European times, for all sons to follow the profession of their father, and membership of a particular descent group did not necessarily determine what occupation an individual would take up.

I do not wish to labour this matter however. In sum, I think we may reasonably conclude that the traditional craft of blacksmithing was, and still is essentially, the basic preserve of a number of hereditary descent groups resident in particular wards in the City, an arrangement which serves to ensure that such specialist roles are filled generation after generation. Also, that in former times, when mobility in terms of occupation, locus and income was relatively limited, men tended to follow their fathers and enter the 'craft that gave birth to them' (gana'a wacce ta haife su), a situation which still prevails basically in rural areas. Nowadays on the other hand, with the increased range of occupational choices brought about by Western economic influences, attachment to the craft, in the urban context at least, has in general been reduced and occupational mobility has accelerated. Young men who would traditionally probably have taken up smithing are now sometimes attracted to newer, less exacting ways of making a living, and enter jobs in which the significance of kinship is not as great; it should be mentioned nonetheless that they do tend to continue living in their natal compounds and so remain within the sphere of their own descent groups basically.

Finally with regard to this question, it is worth noting that this modern orientation often conflicts with the more traditional outlook of the older generation of smiths who complain about these changes in attitudes and principles of behaviour. More impressionistically, they bemoan the breakdown of traditional values and bondship (zumunci) which used to hold between fellow

craftsmen, and the increasing individualism (yanzu kowa yana jin kansa, sai kudi yake so 'nowadays everyone is out for himself and just wants money') which have taken place in their lifetimes. These same smiths also relate how many of the age-old customs and rituals associated with the craft (see Chapter 2), whilst persisting in many country areas (Tamburawa being an excellent example), have lost their function and significance in the City and so have disappeared in time.

#### The practice of apprenticeship

Closely related to the foregoing variable - that of individuals leaving the craft they inherited - is the converse practice of apprenticeship, i.e. of outsiders with no craft blood in their veins entering into and learning the skills of the industry. In neighbouring Nupeland, Nadel (1942 : 255) maintained that blacksmithing was a closed ascriptive profession and that no non-blacksmith could thus become a blacksmith. We have already seen too that Smith noted the existence of similar closed craft specialisms in Zaria; and further afield, Lloyd observes of craft industries in Yoruba towns that:

In the old days, it was unlikely that a craftsman would adopt and train a boy unrelated to him. Today, however, some blacksmiths do take boys who are strangers to the lineage, and pay apprenticeship fees to the master.  
(1953 : 33)

As regards the Kano situation, any evaluation of former arrangements is once again inevitably speculative since there are no data available for us to make an accurate re-construction. Nonetheless, when questioned specifically about past arrangements regarding the institution of apprenticeship, older informants made several noteworthy claims. According to them, Kano blacksmiths have always accepted that outsiders (bako 'stranger, guest') should be able to learn the traditional craft as apprentices (yaro 'boy'), if they, or indeed their parents, so wished. Also, that this agreement involved a period of apprenticeship under a senior smith, such an arrangement being quite essential if the boy was to be taught the necessary technical skills. Moreover, although adding that the custom of taking on non-inherited apprentices was by no means a regular occurrence (perhaps the very nature of the craft acted to limit entry!), they were able to recall a dozen or so instances of this happening in the present century.

The young apprentice would usually be a neighbour and/or relative of the master-smith, perhaps a sister's son for example, and was sometimes 'given' to the smith to learn the trade. The whole arrangement would be very informal, the only 'conditions' of such an apprenticeship being that the lad should prove a willing and capable worker, prepared to carry out any tasks his master should wish, no matter how irksome or arduous. There was no payment for tuition, no formally binding agreement, and the boy would usually continue to live in his own compound. Furthermore, this remains the arrangement basically to this day, at least in the non-Central Market groups (see the case of Malam Sabo below), and in rural blacksmithing communities.<sup>14</sup>

Concerning present-day urban patterns, Table 3 shows that of the 36 blacksmiths working here in 1971, 7 (19%) had in no way inherited the craft. However, and this is important for the later analysis, all but one of these 'outsiders' are located in the Central Market complex. The special factors responsible for this development here are considered in full in the following chapter. Suffice it to say for the time being that these men have been attracted to work in this group by the substantial profits which can nowadays be made here in manufacturing.

Leaving aside the Central Market unit, we can see that within the remaining ten clusters, only one out of a total twenty-five smiths has not directly inherited the profession. In Tamburawa too, where traditional behavioural patterns and values tend to persist to this day, the proportion of outsider apprentices to inherited blacksmiths is equally low - two out of a total of thirty-two craftsmen.

Taking the above evidence into account, I think we may conclude that the traditional craft, as practised in both the City and rural Kano, has always been open and flexible enough to incorporate and train those few non-inherited outsiders who wished to learn its skills. Also, that there has probably been little appreciable variation over the years in the numbers of such individuals entering the craft in each generation.

#### Differential economic behaviour

Our attention now turns to documentation of the varying economic aims and motivations of the Kano City blacksmiths and their differential responses to the developments of the post-War period. First of all however, it is

worthwhile reiterating a number of crucial interrelated points.

Most important, we should not lose sight of the fact that the traditional blacksmithing industry in general continues to thrive in Kano City to this day, for the simple empirical reason that the rapidly expanding urban population continues to be heavily dependent on this local manufacturing industry for almost all its essential agricultural hand-tools and domestic utensils, and indeed will remain so in the foreseeable future. It is for this reason that none of the individuals listed in Table 4 for instance as currently practising non-smithing occupations could be said to have been in any way 'forced out' of their traditional specialism, and into other trades, by competitive pressure from modern industry and factory-made tools. None of the many men I discussed this particular point with ever made such a claim. Thus, whilst it is true that men such as Malam Lawal and Malam Ahmadu above decided, of their own will and for mainly financial reasons they say, to give up smithing and turn to related jobs, there are equally numerous cases of other individuals, like Malam Sane for instance, who have opted to remain within the craft; these men have subsequently prospered by differentiating and expanding their lines of production, combining the manufacture of traditional items with associated modern servicing trades. There is also another category of craftsmen who have simply switched from making one type of traditional product to making another, in response to shifts in urban consumer demand. Malam Sabo is an excellent example in point, and is probably just as typical nowadays as our other case studies.

#### Malam Sabo

Malam Sabo is forty-five years old and is the only remaining blacksmith in Kulkul ward. As a young lad of fifteen years or more, he was taken on as an apprentice artizan at the Agricultural Research Station where he worked for about ten years, finally leaving, he says, because he did not like the strictures that wage-employment entailed, preferring, as indeed most craftsmen do, the freedom of working at home in his own time. Back in his father's forge, and after a spell in which he combined the traditional manufacture of farm-tools and knives with some modern carpentry, Malam Sabo set himself to master the skilled manufacture of metal door-locks (see Malam Sane above and footnote 12), as the demand for these specialist products had risen steadily since the time of the Second World War.

As a direct result of his endeavours, enterprise, and skill, Malam Sabo nowadays enjoys a lucrative business in what are traditional items of manufacture here. He can, for example,

with the help of a young apprentice who works for him, manufacture as many as four or five medium-size locks in a full day's work. Each of these locks he then sells for 20/-, usually to regular buyers in either the old Central Market or the modern Sabon Gari Market, men who place single orders with Malam Sabo for anything up to a hundred locks. Moreover, as he realises an enormous profit of something like 19/- on each such lock, using merely 6d worth of metal and 3d worth of charcoal, he can thus make as much as £4-5 clear profit daily, less another 3/- which he gives to his young apprentice.<sup>15</sup> What is more, because his daily returns are so substantial, Malam Sabo is able to save enough money to take time off from his craftwork now and again. In 1971 for example, he left home and travelled around Nigeria for two months, visiting his numerous friends and relatives.

The above case study is important because it serves to highlight the process whereby an individual craftsman, after some experimentation, decided to forsake production of such traditional manufactures as farm-tools (sometimes called kira mai nauyi or 'heavy smithing'), and changed instead to a more profitable line of production, though continuing at the same time to make a traditional item - metal door-locks. As was mentioned above, the demand for these particular products had grown steadily in the period under consideration, and for several reasons. Firstly, wartime restrictions had led to a drastic reduction in imports of factory-made locks, as well as other European-made metalwares (see Chapter 5 for details), with the result that people were compelled to purchase locally-manufactured ones. Secondly, in the years following the War, local merchants were constructing an increasing number of lock-up stores in which to keep growing amounts of stock of various kinds, and so needed more and more of these locally-produced locks.<sup>16</sup> And lastly, these security rim locks, with three to six folds, proved to be much more reliable and hence more popular than ordinary padlocks, since, in addition to being stronger, they were fitted on the inside of the door.

Malam Sabo is not the only blacksmith in the City to have made this change-over in production and so capitalize on the substantial profits which can still be made in the traditional craft under modern urban conditions of demand. A look at the final column of Table 3 reveals that the manufacture of these high profit-margin items is nowadays the major or exclusive specialisation of individual blacksmiths in a number of different groups in



the City. There are in fact at present only a handful of City-born craftsmen who continue to forge what are still probably the most important of all the traditional manufactures of the blacksmith - farm-tools. Chapter 5 deals with the important subject of how the resultant 'hole' in manufacturing has been filled.

The analysis to date raises another key question - what of those individuals in the City who have not chosen Malam Sabo's path but have instead continued with less profitable traditional lines? Taking the City as a whole, it is quite clear that because skill, work-rate, output, and hence income vary so much from individual to individual, including those who specialise in the manufacture of the same single product,<sup>17</sup> a blanket analysis is impossible. Thus, whilst men like Malam Sane and Malam Sabo enjoy a relatively high standard of living for traditional craftsmen, there are other smiths who earn much less from their craftwork, as the following brief case study shows.

#### Malam Ibrahim

Malam Ibrahim is forty-five years of age and is one of the few full-time blacksmiths still working in the Diso smithy. Until ten years ago, Malam Ibrahim had specialised in manufacturing metal Jews' harps. It was then that one of his senior relatives - one of the two remaining smiths still doing 'heavy' smithing at the time - died. Malam Ibrahim immediately stepped into his uncle's shoes and took up his major specialisation - repairing digging-tools and axe-heads - mainly, he says, because he felt morally obliged to continue to cater for his uncle's many regular customers. Malam Ibrahim nowadays concentrates on repair-work basically and can mend up to ten pick-axe heads in a good day's work, charging 1/6 per head, and considers it a good week if he can make £4 clear profit.<sup>18</sup> Thus, unlike Malam Sabo who can realise as much profit in a day as he can in a week, Malam Ibrahim makes little profit over and above what he pays for his raw materials, mainly charcoal. When asked why he chose to adhere to this non-too-rewarding specialism instead of perhaps changing to a more lucrative line, Malam Ibrahim replied that in the first place he was accustomed to and so skilled at his own type of work, and anyway might find it too difficult at his age to master the complicated technical skills involved in putting together such items as door-locks; this is a rationalisation which he and other smiths sometimes sum up with their own epithet - kira gu dun biri, kowa da wacce ya iya 'smithing is (like) the running away of a monkey, everyone has that which he can (do)', i.e. each smith to his own specialism.

The above cases are by no means untypical, and between them highlight a number of crucial features regarding the present-day situation here in the City. In the first place they illustrate just how uneven the various individual responses to the socio-economic changes of the period have been. More specifically, they reveal the degree to which economic behaviour and aptitude differ from person to person and so serve to underline the important fact that in any discussion of economic inequality and the effects of social change,<sup>19</sup> we must always leave a place for the often predominant factor of individual motivation and choice. Success and prosperity (arziki)<sup>20</sup> come with hard work, skill, enterprise, aptitude, good luck, chance and so on, qualities and circumstances found in different combinations and to varying degrees from man to man. Hence, we find men like Malam Sane and Malam Sabo who, having made rational and well-considered decisions in changing their particular lines of specialisation, and blessed with a combination of the above attributes, have chosen to remain within the traditional craft and are nowadays relatively prosperous blacksmiths.

Craftsmen like Malam Ibrahim on the other hand lack the capacity or incentive to switch, and have chosen, for various reasons, to follow other lines of production; these lines are moreover much less rewarding, mainly due to the relationship between the low selling price of their goods/services and the costs of production in terms of raw materials, time and energy. Because, unlike Malam Sabo, these craftsmen have no holding power, they have to sell their goods/services almost at once in order to have sufficient money to purchase more raw materials and also for ordinary day-to-day living expenses. Such men are judged and indeed referred to as madaidaici by their fellows, i.e. they are neither 'prosperous' like Malam Sabo nor 'poor'.

#### Migration of rural blacksmiths to the City

The final section of this chapter is concerned with variations in the pattern and rate of inward migration of craftsmen from the countryside. Scrutiny of Table 3 reveals that out of a total number of 31 migrant smiths working in Kano City in the Spring of 1971, 24 (77%) were located in the Central Market nucleus, and the remaining 7 (23%) were spread amongst 3 of the other 10 groups,

many of which thus had no resident migrant craftsmen at all. These statistics, when combined with the cross-checked statements of a number of reliable informants concerning past arrangements, point to the following opposite trends: a net increase over the post-War period in the numbers of migrant village smiths travelling to the Central Market complex in search of dry-season craft work; and a converse decrease in those journeymen making for most of the remaining City groups. The present nature and extent of both seasonal and permanent immigration to the Central Market are fully explored in Chapter 5.

As regards the other clusters, the following material gives some idea of the character of this age-old migratory process, and also of how and why the numbers of seasonal migrants have diminished in time.

The smiths of the Warure quarter claim that for as long as they can remember at least, and up until some twenty years or so ago, a group of country smiths would annually travel to their forges to spend the dry-season months earning a living. These journeymen would number anything from three to six individuals, and they came regularly from such outlying districts as Kokai (thirty-five miles north-west), Lambu (ten miles west), and Gwarzo (forty miles due west) (see Fig. 5, page 76). They would be provided, by their urban hosts, with a place to stay, some work-tools including an all-important anvil, a meal a day, and perhaps a gown when they finally departed in April or May, a little before the onset of the rainy season. When not assisting their patrons, these village craftsmen were free to organise and carry on with their own work independently.

Their hosts, apart from a customary present of grain from the village, appeared to gain little if anything materially from the relationship, though their prestige would be enhanced somewhat from having such dependants. The relationship itself approximated in many ways a patron-client association; certainly the terms employed - maigida 'master, patron', and talaka 'commoner, poor man' or bara 'servant, client' - would indicate this to be the case. In time, lasting relationships would often be created, sometimes persisting over generations of craftsmen, and with some village smiths perhaps deciding eventually to move to the City and take up permanent residence.

Essentially, the whole arrangement may be viewed as one in which relatively prosperous urban smiths helped out their less fortunate fellow craftsmen from the countryside, and especially during the inactive dry-season months when

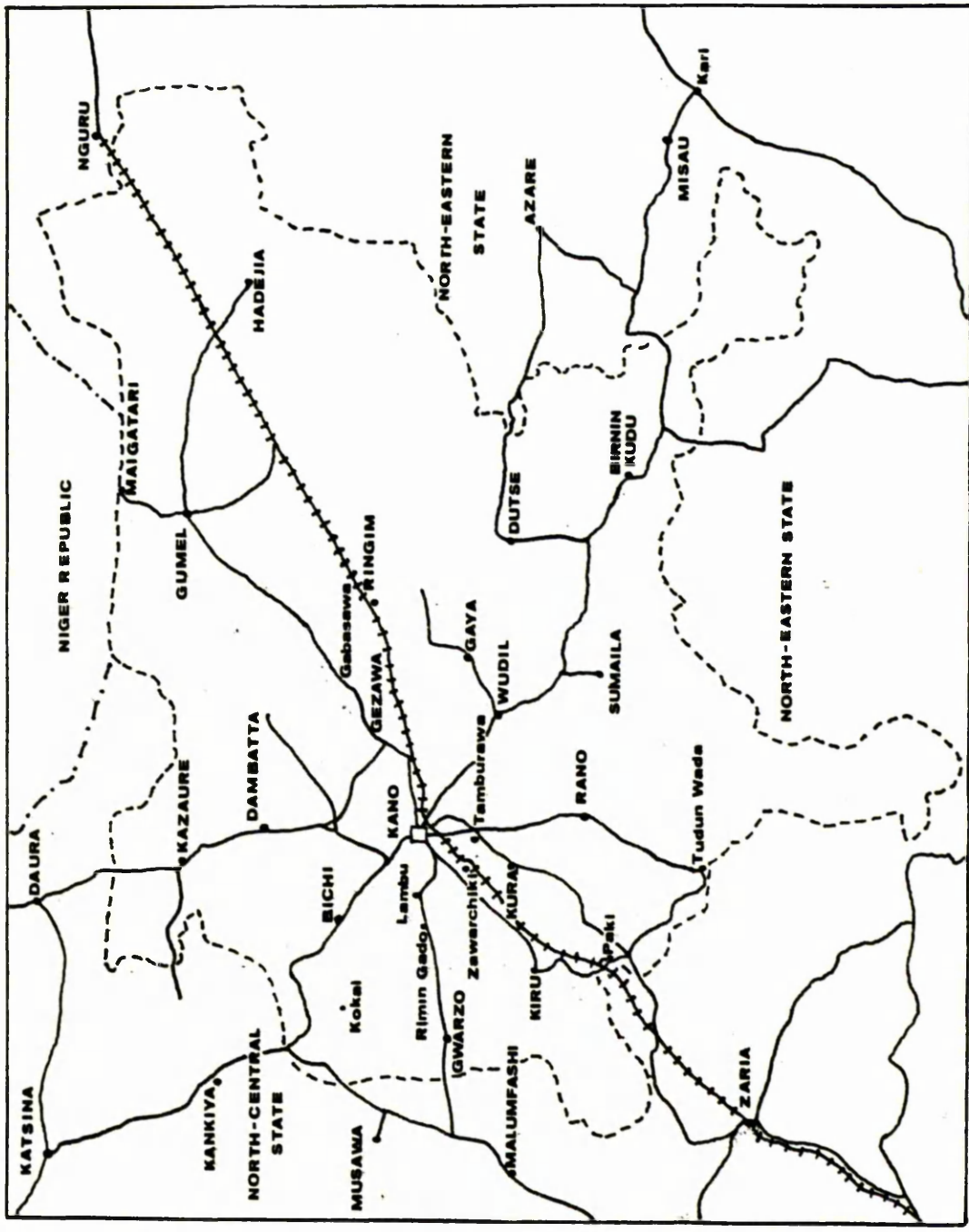


Fig. 5. Sketch-map of Kano State, 1969 (including all locations mentioned in the text).

--- International Boundary  
- - - State Boundary  
—— Roads (Main and Secondary)  
+ + + Railway

0 50 MILES

craft output in the villages, unlike the City, tended to be at a low ebb. It is of interest to note too that the forementioned migrant smiths all originated from districts to the west and north-west of the City, areas which were formerly under the supervision of one of the senior, titled blacksmiths of Warure who was responsible for the collection of craft levies in these particular areas (see Chapter 2).

Nowadays on the other hand, there is only one such village smith who makes his way to the sole remaining Warure smithy during the dry-season, from Kokai, and then not on a regular yearly basis as was the case with his father and grandfather before him. There are several reasons which account for this contraction, over the last twenty or thirty years or so, in the numbers of migrant craftsmen visiting not only the Warure forge, but also other clusters like Gyaranya and Kulkul. In the first place, both City and village smiths explain that because of improvements in transport and communications in the area since the Second World War, and also the rising level of urban demand for metalware, many smiths from areas not too distant from the City now find it just as profitable, and certainly more convenient, to remain at home during the dry-season and ply their craft; they then simply travel into the City with their surplus output of traditional manufactures, perhaps once or twice a week, to sell in bulk amounts. This claim is corroborated by the present-day patterns of production and marketing in the Tamburawa metalware industry, and which are discussed in Chapter 6. Another reason for the said decline, according to those remaining craftsmen in wards like Warure, Gyaranya and Kulkul, is that they are themselves no longer able, or indeed willing, to fulfil the kinds of obligations to such rural clients that their fathers and grandfathers had taken on in their time. Related to this, and at a more conceptual and impressionistic level, they further declare that in these days of individualism and increasing commercialisation, where 'money has entered everywhere' (kudi sun shiga ko'ina), even in rural communities, the close personal relationships and reciprocal bonds which used to develop between City and village blacksmiths are no longer valued as much as they were. I myself came across a small group of rural smiths, consisting of two adults and a young apprentice, in Yalwa ward, a little to the west of Kulkul. These craftsmen had migrated from the village of Lambu (see above) two years ago, complete with anvil and work-tools, and built a grass hut on one of the main thoroughfares, where they have worked ever since, manufacturing

traditional farm-tools mainly. This case is mentioned because in former days these same individuals would probably have attached themselves, initially at least, to a patron-blacksmith somewhere in the City, just as we have noted a number of Lambu smiths did in the Warure quarter.

Finally with regard to the present question, it is an empirically verifiable fact that if village smiths are nowadays to be drawn to any group in search of dry-season work, then they are more than likely to be attracted to a focal area such as the Central Market nucleus, favourably situated as it is for display and trade. And conversely, they tend to avoid such peripheral locations as the above mentioned, since these 'stranded' groups are denied similar trade advantages and opportunities for making profit.

### Summary and conclusions

This chapter has attempted to provide a reasonably accurate overall picture of what has typically happened to the Kano City blacksmiths and their ancient craft in the crucial years following upon the Second World War. In essence, the analysis has been concerned with the internal responses here to changes induced by largely external factors, and with the consequences that these exogenous influences had on the more important principles of this traditional craft.

A number of significant points have come to light in the course of the analysis. Firstly, there is the obvious unevenness of response on the part of the individual smiths themselves; and in exploring the possible underlying causes for such qualitative differences in economic behaviour, the picture to emerge is basically one of free competition against the conservative background of kinship and family tradition. What we appear to have here is a basically laissez-faire situation in which Allah yana taimakon wanda zai taimaki kansa 'God helps those who help themselves', and which has led to rather marked economic inequality. The second major finding is that despite the far-reaching developments which have taken place, i.e. a general reduction in craft attachment, increased economic differentiation, and changes in patterns of occupational preferences, the industry continues to flourish on a large scale in its traditional form, and opportunities still exist within it for earning substantial rewards. Further confirmation of the present-day vigour of the craft, in traditional and modern forms, is now provided by the craftsmen - and

trader-entrepreneurs of the Central Market, for it is here that the most dynamic changes have taken place.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Some of the better known general works on Nigeria and West Africa as a whole include: Lloyd (1967b), Hopkins (1973), Bascom and Herskovits (1959), (eds.) Herskovits and Harwitz (1964), (ed.) Wallerstein (1966), Hodgkin (1956), Apter (1965), (eds.) Coleman and Rosberg (1964), Post (1964), Kilby (1969), Eicher and Liedholm (1970), and (eds.) Bchannan and Dalton (1962).
2. See Cohen (1966, 1969), Lovejoy (1970, 1971, 1973), Hogendorn (1966, 1970), and the Statistical Economic Review 3 and 8.
3. NAK 43495 1947
4. For details, see for example Berg (1964), and Kilby (1969).
5. Estimates taken from Trevallion (1966). See also Mortimore in (eds.) Caldwell and Okonjo (1968).
6. Figures calculated by the Physical Planning Unit of NISER, University of Ibadan.
7. For a description of the nature of this particular occupational combination, see Jaggar (1973b, fn. 16, pp. 20-21).
8. This may be compared with the situation in Yoruba towns for instance where, according to Lloyd (1953 : 41), present-day mechanics are rarely blacksmiths by birth since modern craft industries and guilds in the area are not based upon the traditional lineage system.
9. Most of the individual ages listed in this study are only approximate. Exact ages are normally not known.
10. Founded soon after the British arrived in Kano, in 1909.
11. All the amounts listed in this thesis are in Nigerian £s, shillings and pence. In 1971, the official exchange rate was approximately £N6 to £7 sterling. In 1972, this old currency was replaced by the Naira and Kobo.
12. These locks were first introduced into Kano City, older informants claim, by visiting Arab merchants in the early nineteenth century.
13. For some comparative data on similar trends and changes in crafts in western Nigeria, see Callaway in (eds.) Lloyd, Mabogunje, Awe (1967), Lloyd (1953), and Koll (1969).
14. These structural arrangements may be contrasted with the much more institutionalised situation in Nupeland as described by Nadel (1942). See also Jaggar (1973b: 21-22), and Callaway (1964 : 62-79).
15. To put this amount into some perspective, Malam Sabo's potential daily income may be compared with the basic daily 1971 rate for skilled artizans (Grade I) in Federal Government service of 17/6, and 5/6 per day for unskilled labour.
16. The 1960's in particular witnessed a massive expansion in the building industry.
17. Shea (1975 : 151) reports that this is also true of Kano dyers.
18. An amount which is little more than the average computed weekly earnings of a Tamburawa blacksmith in the slack dry-season.



19. Hopkins (1973 : 238-43) discusses the economic inequalities that arose within several occupations in West Africa in this same period. And one of the major themes in Hill's (1970, 1972, 1977) many studies on rural Hausaland of course is the existence there of pronounced economic inequalities. Moreover my own research amongst the blacksmiths of Tamburawa suggests that such inequality is equally apparent among these men.
20. For a discussion of the term arziki and its connotations in Hausa, see Smith (1955 : 14-15), Hill (1973 : 185-87), and Hill (1977 : 155-56).

CHAPTER 5THE CENTRAL MARKET COMPLEX IN THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE CA. 1940-71:THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IMPORT-REPLACING METALWARE INDUSTRY.

This chapter concerns a crucial period of experimentation and transition amongst those craftsmen and associated traders within the Central Market: experimentation with the new, substitutive manufacture of modern, imported metalwares; and transition from an economic system geared to traditional needs to one catering for more up-to-date consumer tastes. I use the term 'transitional' quite deliberately to designate specifically the small-scale, artisanate, but recognisably modern industry which has sprung up here since the War, a system which, although it has partially broken away from the informal traditional sector, is still based upon pre-industrial technology and so has not yet entered the modern formal sector. This ultimate step is, along with the emergence here of a group of successful entrepreneurs, the concern of the final two chapters.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the present structure and mechanics of traditional blacksmithing in the Central Market area. It then moves on to an assessment of the multicausal factors which combined to give rise to the above phenomenon; following this, consideration is given to the consequences which the inevitable changes in the organisation of labour and production had for the indigenous social structure. Finally, our attention turns to the extension in the scale of marketing activities which also took place here in the Transitional Phase.

The present-day manufacture of traditional metalwares

The specialist manufacture of traditional blacksmiths' products, a craft which continues to flourish in the Central Market complex, is nowadays divided between both local and immigrant craftsmen. A glance back at the statistics listed in Table 3 shows that there is a total of eleven local men here who still ply what is the traditional craft according to the basic definition put forward in Chapter 2, i.e. they make traditional (pre-European) products, using pre-industrial hand tools and methods. Almost all these eleven smiths moreover specialise in the manufacture of one of two highly

profitable items - metal door-locks and stirrup-irons (likkafa) - and once again it is the potentially substantial earnings attached to the skilled manufacture of both these extremely popular products which have lured these men to these specialisms, (see the case of Alhaji Rabi'u, Chapter 6), just as they attracted Malam Sabo above. Several of the older of these eleven smiths, like Malam Sabo, switched after the Second World War from producing less rewarding traditional items to making door-locks in response to the changing needs of the society.

A further noteworthy point emerging from Table 3 is that only five individuals, and from two large Kwarim Mabuga blacksmithing families, are actually pursuing the ancient profession of their descent groups, a situation which is explained by the fact that many of their relatives are at present engaged in other related activities which have developed from the craft, mainly 'coldsmithing' (see below), but also mechanicking, fitting and carpentry. This development has however been offset to a certain extent by the six non-inherited blacksmiths listed in Table 3, whose main output consists of door-locks and stirrups. All of these men were born, grew up, and still reside in either Kwarim Mabuga ward itself or the adjacent 'Yan Doya ward (see Fig. 6, page 84), and so were already well-known to the blacksmiths who took them on as young apprentices and taught them the technical requirements of these particular specialisms. There has also been a certain degree of intermarriage over the years between the smithing and non-smithing descent groups in these adjacent quarters.

In addition I enumerated a total of 24 immigrant blacksmiths in the Central Market nucleus in the spring of 1971, all of them fashioning traditional products, apart from a fair number of non-enumerated young assistants, usually junior relatives from the same villages.<sup>1</sup> Table 5 (see page 85) reveals that of these 24 country smiths, 10 were recurrent and 14 were permanent migrants, and that every one of them had inherited the craft back home. These journeymen are a valuable and integral part of the traditional metalware industry in Kano City, and the following two case studies illustrate the processes of inward labour migration, seasonal and permanent, and also the typical arrangements which nowadays surround this practice here in the Central Market.<sup>2</sup>

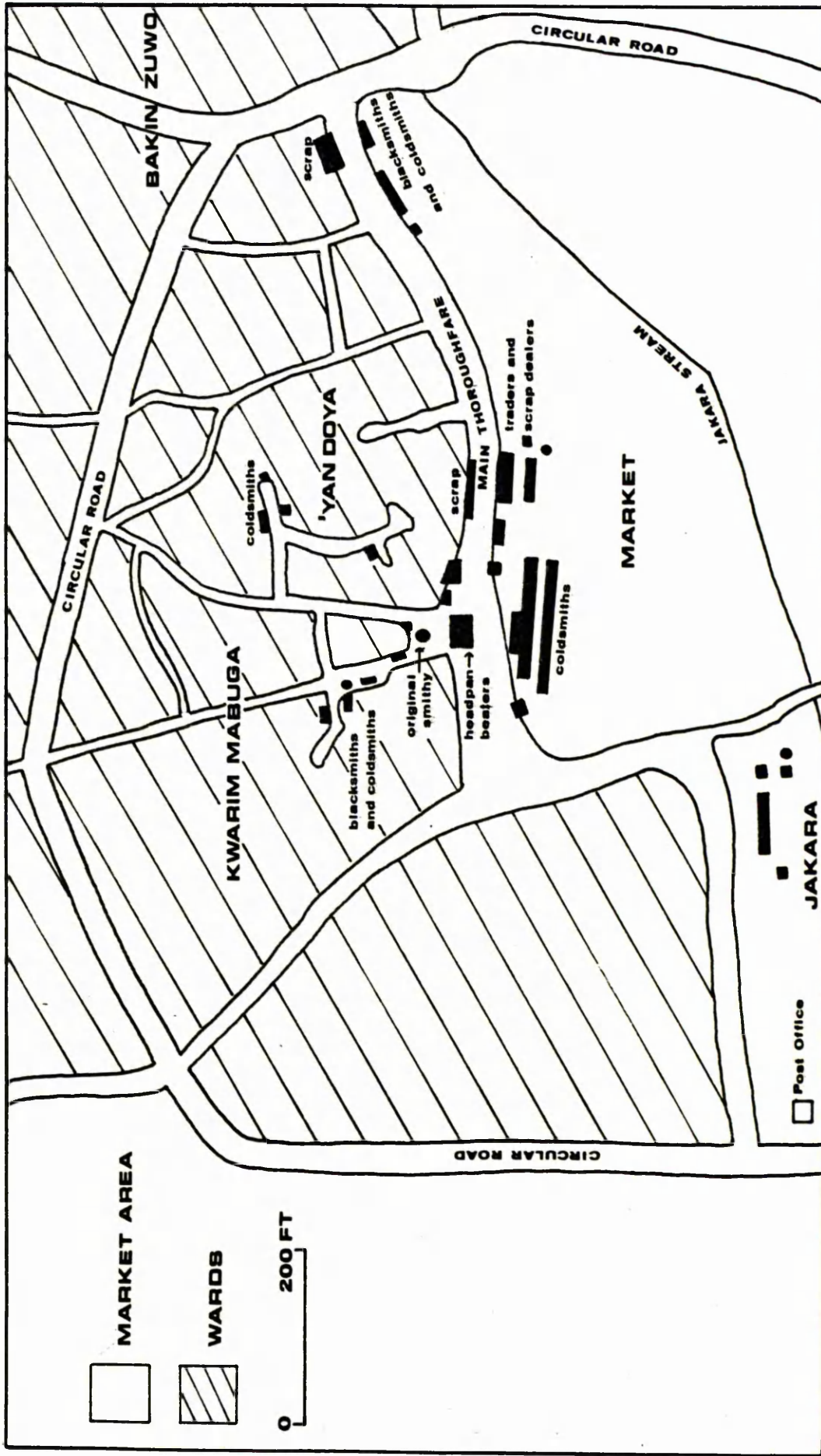


Fig. 6. Sketch-map of main concentrations of metal-workers and traders in the Central Market.

TABLE 5. Migrant workers in the Central Market<sup>(a)</sup>

Total No. of migrants	Principle specialisation			
	Traditional products (hotsmithing)		Modern products (coldsmithing)	
37	24		13	
	Inherited	Non-inherited	Inherited	Non-inherited
	24	-	7	6
	Seasonal	10	Seasonal	1
	Permanent	14	Permanent	12

(a) Tax-paying.

Malam Iro

Malam Iro is forty years old and was born in Kiru, a small town about thirty-five miles south-west of Kano City. Malam Iro first visited the Central Market, together with his younger brother, some ten years ago, searching for dry-season employment, and was taken on by Alhaji Tijjani, a metalware dealer from Kwarim Mabuga who had been a blacksmith in his time. Malam Iro and his brother have been travelling to work in Alhaji Tijjani's employ every year since, leaving home in December when the harvest is completed, and returning for the planting season, usually sometime in May. In this way, essential crop-production is not interrupted. In 1971, there were four such rural smiths working for Alhaji Tijjani - Malam Iro and his brother, and two migrants from Paki, a village close to Kiru.

Alhaji Tijjani directs almost all of Malam Iro's production, supplying him with the necessary raw materials and fuel, e.g. scrap iron, charcoal, wooden handles and work-tools, and pays him an agreed sum for each article made. During the dry-season months of roughly December to March, matchets, axes, sickles, knives and needles make up the greater part of Malam Iro's output, and he says that he has an average weekly cash-income at this time of something like £3, much more, he holds, than he could hope to earn back home. In the busy hot-season period of approximately April - May, i.e. just before the planting rains and farming season when agricultural tools are in great demand, Malam Iro concentrates, with the help of a younger cousin, on forging hoe-blades almost exclusively. For each triangular hoe-blade he completes, Alhaji Tijjani

pays him 6d, and since he can fashion as many as forty such blades a day working flat out, this means a potential daily wage (albashi) of about 20/-. Again, Malam Iro states that he is considerably better-off all round than he would be back in Kiru, especially as Alhaji Tijjani also provides him with one good meal per day (in the evening), and free accommodation, usually a small room near the forge itself, complete with electricity and a nearby piped water stand. His young relatives too have the chance to make some pin-money for themselves, head-loading metalwares for sale around the City, and receiving 10 per cent of the selling prices from Alhaji Tijjani.

Furthermore, should it happen that Alhaji Tijjani has no work on hand for them, especially during the dry-season, then Malam Iro is free to organise his own production, in which case of course he is obliged to supply the raw materials himself. Alhaji Tijjani also allows him to return home occasionally for a few days at a time, to visit and provide for his family, to celebrate important ceremonial occasions, e.g. Islamic festivals, weddings and naming ceremonies, and to do essential weeding on his farm.

#### Malam Tsoho

Malam Tsoho is fifty years of age and was born in Zawachiki, a small village only about six miles south-west of the City. When he was a small boy his blacksmith father, looking to better his economic position, came with him to the Metropolis and ended up settling there, attaching himself as a client to one of the senior Central Market smiths at the time. On his father's death a few years later, Malam Tsoho remained in the service of this patron who eventually helped him to purchase a small house and also gave him one of his daughters in marriage. In time, Malam Tsoho accumulated enough money from his craft-work that he was able to set himself up independently, building, some ten years ago, his own work-hut and display stall here in the Market.

Malam Tsoho is a seemingly tireless worker (his fellow smiths refer to him as sarkin aiki or 'king of work') and specialises in manufacturing the same products his father had taught him to make, mainly farm-tools and axe-heads, as well as a number of actual work-tools, e.g. large hammer-heads, chisels, files and so on. In 1971, Malam Tsoho had four assistants working for him - his own younger brother with two other seasonal migrant lads, and one permanent migrant. This latter individual has been working for him for four years now, and receives 10/- a day wage and one full meal. In

addition to his rewarding craft-production, Malam Tsoho now also conducts a healthy trade from his stall which is located on the main Market thoroughfare (see Fig 6, page 84), buying and selling all manner of ironware.

A number of salient points arise from these two biographies. In the first place, it is clear from the many conversations I had with these men that they are attracted to the expanding economic sector here mainly because migratory labour makes good financial sense for them. Given the fact that it is dovetailed with the rural economy, they calculate that the possibilities of maximising their cash-income are much greater here in the Central Market than at home. And some of these journeymen, like Malam Tsoho, do of course settle here permanently and 'make good'.

Furthermore, the mutual duties and obligations outlined above are typical of the kinds of relationships which exist between local employer-entrepreneurs and their rural employees in the Central Market complex. It was briefly noted in the preceding chapter that this system of wage-labour, with skilled journeymen doing piece-work for their patrons, and giving the employer the right to the labour of his client-workers, is practised in the Central Market group only, and it should be added that smiths from other groups in the City tend to frown upon it, informing me, with a tinge of economic jealousy perhaps, that they regarded this arrangement as unjust exploitation.<sup>3</sup> Nor is this system wholly innovative in the sense of having developed merely in response to modern economic conditions; the historical evidence presented in Chapter 2 clearly indicated that such 'capitalistic' practices in fact existed here, though on a limited scale, even in pre-colonial days. This factor no doubt facilitated the later entrepreneurial developments which took place in this complex.

Finally with regard to the present topic, it is important to note once again that it is immigrant rural craftsmen, men like Malam Iro and Malam Tsoho, who have contributed substantially to filling the large economic gap opened up in the City as a direct result of local smiths forsaking either the craft itself, or at least the manufacture of certain traditional items in favour of more profitable lines. These skilled artisans originate from communities in which production is still geared largely to the demands of the traditional market, and where craftsmen adhere to traditional lines of manufacture inherent

in their experience and area of origin. They all possess the necessary technical know-how, experience, and strength for the so-called 'heavy smithing' of less profitable but still quite indispensable items like farm-tools. In this way, imported labour benefits the urban economy by allowing the compensatory production of these essential goods. Examination of the other important channel of supply - rural smiths bringing their manufactures into the metropolis to dispose of in bulk - is presented in the next chapter.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF AN IMPORT-SUBSTITUTING METALWARE INDUSTRY

Our focus now turns to what is perhaps the most sociologically important feature of the Transitional Phase - the fundamental reorientation in the system of production and distribution within the Central Market nucleation, a transition which was to foreshadow the later establishment of a modern metal-working factory. We have here an interesting on-the-ground situation in which two distinct types of pre-industrial manufacturing industries, the one traditional and the other modern import-replacing, the latter spawned by the former, coexist and thrive alongside each other.<sup>4</sup>

The economic revolution which took place amongst this group of black-smiths exclusively, involved a fundamental change-over from producing traditional metalwares to manufacturing, still by hand, import-replacing modern metalwares and so catering for the more up-to-date needs of the urban society. This development in the Central Market is attributable to the following exogenous and endogenous factors:

- 1) War-time restrictions on the importation of modern European hardware which served to stimulate the local substitutive production of what had by then become essential consumer items.
- 2) The remarkable degree of innovation, enterprise and adaptability shown by a number of individuals here in rapidly accommodating themselves to the new opportunities that came their way.
- 3) The already highly favourable central location of this complex for craft-production and trade, allied to its long-established industrial and commercial tradition.

The explanatory framework proposed above is thus a multicausal one in that it embraces politico-economic, socio-psychological, and historical



determinants of the changes under analysis. All of these determinants are indeed important, and the model adopted permits us to explore the different strands of the problem without relying upon a narrow, single-factor explanation. The remainder of this thesis is concerned with the interactions of these variables and their consequences for the metalware industry in Kano.

#### War-time curbs on the importation of foreign metalwares

The post-War developments under consideration have their roots in the War itself, a period of general economic stagnation which proved fortuitous to the development of this small-scale import-replacing industry. In the years preceding the War, there had been a growing consumer desire for a large variety of imported European hardware, especially door-bolts, hasps, hinges, shovels and headpans, all of which were needed for the construction of an increasing number of Western-style buildings. This demand was influenced partly by the more westernised Nigerians here and also by the expanding expatriate community which subsequently included a large number of allied soldiers who were stationed here in Kano from 1940 to 1945.<sup>5</sup> During the War-time period of scarcity, shipments from Europe of manufactured goods in general were severely curtailed, including essential metalware products of the kind just mentioned.<sup>6</sup>

At the time, the lucrative wholesale and retail trade in these products was largely in the hands of local Lebanese merchants,<sup>7</sup> and it was a number of these same merchants who decided to approach the renowned Central Market blacksmiths with selected samples of the above items, to find out whether they would be prepared to (or indeed able to) manufacture substitutive equivalents by hand. A number of the more foresighted individuals here, only a handful at first and mostly trained smiths, perceiving that the production of such goods offered new and potentially rewarding commercial opportunities, seized the opportunity and stepped in to satisfy the continuing demand. In the words of the smiths themselves, these were fortunate men to whom 'Allah had given wisdom' (Allah ya ba su hikima), and who had 'opened their eyes' (sun bude ido).

In this way, the new industry emerged initially from within the ranks of the traditional blacksmiths themselves, and foreign machine-made products came

to find local exponents who were skilled and enterprising enough to copy and manufacture them by hand. As we shall see, over the next thirty years or so an increasing number of individuals turned to producing these items in the Central Market conglomeration in response to the ever-growing and apparently unrestricted domestic demand.<sup>8</sup>

This infant industry came to be known, neologistically, as 'coldsmithing' (kiran sanyi) since, apart from important differences in the kind of articles manufactured, and excepting the production of door-bolts at least (see Table 6, note (b), and the case of Alhaji Isa, Chapter 6), few of the materials, tools or techniques of real smithing are used in the technological process (see below). In contrast, the traditional craft is occasionally referred to now as kiran wuta or 'smithing with fire', or 'hot-smithing'. This distinction between hotsmithing and coldsmithing is quite clearly a pertinent one for the individuals concerned, quite apart from its central importance to the present study.<sup>9</sup>

Finally on the present matter, it is of interest to note that because of War-time stringencies the Central Market metal-workers and associated traders could afford to charge abnormally high prices for their substitutive products, and without fear of competition from imported equivalents, since they were the only source of production here, and remain so for all practical purposes.<sup>10</sup> For example, a dozen of the extremely popular 10" bolts could apparently fetch as much as 60/- during the War, but as soon as import controls were relaxed after 1945 and supplies of foreign metalware were resumed once again, the selling price was necessarily reduced, to 24/- per dozen, in order to compete effectively with the imported bolts which were then selling at about 36/- per dozen; and locally-made shovels, sold at an exorbitant 6/- each, were lowered in price to 2/6 when imported British ones reappeared on the market at 5/-. Prices had to be kept at a level sufficiently lower than the better-quality factory-made products to ensure sales, a matter I shall return to later. Other reasons were involved here. During the War period, crucial supplies of scrap were also limited and hence expensive, and moreover only a few men were at the time engaged in the innovative manufacture of these products, whereas so many individuals in time took up production of these popular and profitable items that profit-margins were inevitably lowered. Increasing inflation over the years and higher production costs have also acted to reduce percentage profits.

The organisation of production in the coldsmithing industry

Concerning the present-day situation, Table 6 reveals that in 1971 there was a total of 106 locally-born, adult workers actively participating in the hand manufacture of modern metalware products in the Central Market complex, in addition to 13 migrants (see Table 5), making a grand total of 119.

TABLE 6. Manufacturers of modern hardware products in the Central Market<sup>(a)</sup>

Total No. of workers <sup>(b)</sup>	Inherited	Non-inherited
106	22	84

(a) Tax-paying, Kano City born.

(b) Four of these 106 men manufacture modern door-bolts but use the traditional techniques and tools of true blacksmiths. (see Alhaji Isa case study, Chapter 6).

The average age of these workers moreover was only 24 years, an indication of how recently the emergence and expansion of the industry took place. I also counted nearly 50 non-adults, i.e. young non-tax paying individuals, working in the same area at the time. Of these 106 workers, 22 were sons of traditional Kwarim Mabuga blacksmiths, and the remaining 84, though themselves not descended from either of the two distinct Kwarim Mabuga smithing descent groups, were nonetheless almost all born in, and still resident in, either Kwarim Mabuga, 'Yan Doya, or adjacent wards. The above statistics are an indication of the increase which has taken place during the Transitional Phase in the numbers of men, most of whom are relatives or friends of each other, engaged in what now represents an important domestic industry in Kano.

There has also been a concomitant expansion in the range and volume of modern metalwares produced. These associated coldsmiths, always on the look out for new and popular consumer products, nowadays manufacture, apart from the door-bolts, hinges, hasps, shovels and headpans which were the first substitutive articles to be made locally, such items as bicycle-stands,

mouse-traps, trowels, rakes, metal cooking-trivets, watering-cans, and even tin piggy-banks. This growth in the level and type of production has been greatly facilitated too by an increase in the amounts and types of scrap metal now available.<sup>11</sup>

The last two decades or so have thus seen a diversification of specialist occupational roles in this industry, roles which cater for the seemingly unlimited desire of today's public for a growing variety of such up-to-date articles. In order to give some idea of the mechanics of this extensive industry, two short but typical biographies are now presented.

#### Malam Musa

Malam Musa is thirty-five years of age, is the son of a local Koranic teacher, and was born in 'Yan Doya ward where he still lives. Malam Musa is one of the older coldsmiths and has been working here since he was a young boy, specialising at first in hasps, but later changing to the production of metal mouse-traps. Malam Musa says he became a metal-worker soon after the Second World War when he saw that many of his friends and relatives were entering the occupation and profiting thereby. He maintains a high and regular level of production, and can make a maximum of three dozen large traps per day, which he sells to nearby dealers at 12/- per dozen, making a daily profit of about 30/-, less 3/- worth of scrap. Malam Musa works in a small lock-up shed which he shares with two fellow-workers, both neighbours of his, one of whom makes hasps, and the other bicycle-stands. Two of his younger brothers are also coldsmiths.

#### Malam Talle

Malam Talle is in his mid-twenties and is the son of a former Kwarim Mabuga blacksmith. Malam Talle decided upon his present specialism - door-hasps - as a young lad, and has been manufacturing them in large quantities ever since. Malam Talle turns out these hasps in rapid succession for hours on end, and in anticipation of sales since, like his fellow workers here, he is always sure of a market for his products. He can make as many as twenty dozen large hasps in a full day's work, and from only 5/- worth of metal. Malam Talle then sells his output either direct to the many passers-by who see them on display outside his workplace, to one of the Central Market traders, or to visiting dealers, at 3/- per dozen, and can thus make as much as 60/- profit daily. He also purchases metalwares himself, from other coldsmiths,

for resale at a profit.

Malam Talle has enough work on his hands nowadays to employ two young assistants, his own younger brother and a seasonal migrant, who cut up the metal plate and steel rods that he needs to make these hasps, and he pays each of them a daily wage of 3/- to 5/- depending upon the amount of work they do. Malam Talle has three other young brothers, ranging in age from ten to eighteen years, all of whom are also engaged in the coldsmithing industry here, manufacturing both for themselves and for their elders, on both a regular and casual basis.

It has already been noted that twenty-two of our coldsmiths are men, like Malam Talle, who have inherited, but decided not to pursue, the traditional craft of hotsmithing, a statistic which largely explains the fact that only five out of the eleven blacksmiths here have actually inherited their profession (see Table 3), and this from two large descent groups. I should emphasise immediately however that none of these twenty-two 'inherited' coldsmiths ever claimed, in the many conversations I had with them about their choice of occupation, that they had been in any way compelled to pursue this modern specialism because of any decline in the craft of blacksmithing. On the contrary, we have seen that on balance the traditional profession in fact continues to flourish in the City as a whole, with a few modifications. The present occupations of these metal-workers, just as with those mechanics, carpenters and indeed blacksmiths whose cases we have already examined, are simply the result of personal, rational, economic choices which are now made possible in the modern urban context.

#### Changes in the social organisation of production

The growth in both the size and complexity of the coldsmithing industry here since its beginnings in the Second World War, and the associated prosperity of its individual workers, have inevitably brought about a number of innovations in labour organisation.

One of the more evident changes has been the increased commercialisation of labour and the introduction of casual wage-labour. Young workers nowadays enter into contractual relationships with their seniors, expecting and receiving cash-payment, even from kinsmen, for work completed. In this

way, new forms of relationships have developed, still based largely upon the ties of kinship, but expressing new sets of values and interests. My own observations, together with discussions I had with many craftsmen here, indicate that the majority of the older workers here, hotsmiths and coldsmiths alike, have younger lads in their employ, who may be anything from roughly ten to eighteen years old, and who also work for themselves in their spare time. In some cases the lad concerned will be a junior relative of his 'employer', or alternatively the son of a neighbour/friend of the employer.

One of the more prominent Central Market entrepreneurs for example, a semi-retired blacksmith who is also ward head of Kwarim Mabuga, has three small sons working for him, in addition to four clients - two sons of neighbours and two permanent migrants. The eldest son, who is fifteen years of age, hammers out hasps for his father and also pumps the bellows in his smithy, for which he receives 3/6 daily. In his spare time, he makes hasps for himself, between one and two dozen a day on average, which he sells locally for 2/- per dozen, and so can make up to 7/- pin-money per day.

There also exists a large category of young local workers who sell their labour, on a casual day-to-day basis, to any of a number of older, established craftsmen and/or traders, and earning up to 20/- per day on piece-work rates. The general arrangement is that the older and hence more skilled and productive an individual becomes, the more wage he receives, until he eventually becomes completely independent, normally when he reaches his late teens by which time he should be paying tax on his earnings.

Some meaning is given to the potential cash-incomes of the above individuals, including Malam Musa and Malam Talle, when one realises that in 1971 unskilled factory-workers had a weekly take-home wage of about 50/-, and that hand-cart pushers ('yan kura) earned between 5/- and 7/- daily for their considerable toil. Young boys in the Central Market complex are thus able to achieve a degree of economic independence and prosperity which was unattainable in former times. All these workers, though operating as yet on a relatively modest scale only, are themselves potential entrepreneurs, many of them fired by a strong desire to emulate more successful senior kinsmen or neighbours such as Malam Musa and Malam Talle, and at an even higher level, those extremely prosperous craftsmen and trader-entrepreneurs whose careers are documented in the following chapter.

One feature which should be mentioned at this juncture is that coldsmithing,

in contrast to hotsmithing, represents a general lowering of skills, and so is ranked below the older craft in local eyes. It is an individualistic, self-taught pursuit essentially, and involves less training and skill than the parent industry. Unlike the latter specialism moreover, where the technical processes sometimes require more than one man (see Chapter 2), the comparatively simple technology of coldsmithing necessitates only one-man production-units. Coldsmiths can set up almost anywhere, in an alleyway for example, and in the open air, and since all that is needed in the way of work-tools is a lightweight hammer, a chisel, and a flat portable anvil, capital investment is minimal. True blacksmiths, and especially those from non-Central Market units, complain that 'nowadays smithing is all over the place' (yanzu kira ta yi barkatai), and I have even heard some of them refer to this modern equivalent as 'thieving smithing' (barawon kira). To these men, this new breed of metal-workers or tinsmiths, though thrown up originally from within the ranks of blacksmiths themselves, do not have an inherited profession in the traditional sense, and many are regarded as plying this specialism simply as a stop-gap occupation, and on a purely casual basis, in order to earn enough to take care of their daily needs (su nemi abinci).

These same changes in the technology and organisation of production, apart from leading to the above modifications in social relationships, also gave rise, albeit briefly, to a new type of occupational association within the coldsmithing industry.

In the early 1960's, as a result of increasing involvement in the new and changing economic sector, one of the larger categories of specialist coldsmiths - the metal-headpan (kwano) makers - attempted to form their own union in order to represent and protect their economic interests which were being threatened. Up until this time, most of the two dozen or so young headpan-manufacturers had been producing their goods in large quantities at the orders of numerous local dealers.<sup>12</sup> Each lad was paid a stipulated amount for every bowl made - the rates were 9d. 1/- and 1/6 depending upon the size of the bowl - with the entrepreneur supplying the raw material and disposing of the finished articles himself, either locally or in more distant centres of demand. After several years working at the same piece-work rates, these specialists collectively demanded a rise of 6d per headpan produced,

and when the traders concerned refused to grant this increase, some of the workers decided to form their own union to try to deal with the new situation.

The Union was organised complete with a secretary, treasurer, and four committee members, and its stated aims and functions were as follows:

- 1) To establish a minimum purchasing price for their products, so that if the dealers declined to buy bowls from members at this price, the Union itself would use its own funds to purchase them, and hold them in stock until they could eventually be sold at or above the stated price.
- 2) To purchase necessary raw material, in the form of (groundnut) oil-drum, and keep a plentiful supply in stock which Union members could then draw upon when necessary.
- 3) To provide sickness benefits and similar financial aid to cover marriage, birth expenses, etc.

The committee itself met once a week on average, and an attempt was made by the few members who were semi-literate in English to keep accounts, and record minutes of meetings. Each member was moreover obliged to contribute a weekly sum of between 2/- and 5/- to Union funds, depending upon his age, output and hence income.

This novel industrial and commercial organisation, cutting across traditional ways of grouping, and developed basically to cope with modern economic conditions, unfortunately proved to be somewhat overambitious and was shortlived. It worked in a limited sense for almost two years, but general inefficiency and mismanagement put a strain on the loyalty of the individual members, and so inhibited its chances of operating effectively. Essential supplies of scrap were often just not available and members found themselves stranded without work. Moreover, they could see that those few men who had opted not to join the Union originally, but had continued instead to work for the dealers, were never wanting for either material or work. The final outcome of this generally unsatisfactory state of affairs was that the Union members decided to approach the traders again, worked out a compromise deal involving an increase of 3d per headpan, and the by now moribund Union was disbanded.

Finally in this section, it is legitimate to ask whether the various changes which we have seen have taken place within the indigenous economic framework of our case-unit have in any way disrupted the traditional social structure.<sup>13</sup> The immediate answer to this important question appears to be that despite modifications in the organisation of production and



related socio-economic activities of this group, such breaches have been relatively minimal.

It is demonstrably true that the present generation of young coldsmiths is linked together essentially by specific economic interests which are themselves a function of modern consumer demands and the condition of the labour market which satisfies these demands. It is clear too that the significance of kinship is not as strong in this new industry as it is in the ancient craft from which it grew. It is also true, as we have seen, that there have been changes in the form and content of the relationships existing between individuals and groups in this complex, in addition to increases in the number of relationships in which each person participates: individuals have, to a certain extent, become divorced from their status as members of a descent group and have entered into more contractual relationships.

At the same time, and against all this, it is equally clear that traditional institutions and values continue to persist despite these trends. This is partly attributable to the fact that, as we have seen, many of the present-day arrangements in the Central Market are to some extent congruent with earlier practices. Strong antecedent traditions are present in this group which have made adjustment to the new industrial changes that much easier. Another striking feature of this new industry is that almost all the 106 local workers listed in Table 6 were born in and continue to live in Kwarim Mabuga, 'Yan Doya or contiguous wards. My own observations and field enquiries indicate that these associated metal-workers form a very close-knit community in which there are many different relationships obtaining between the composite units, and that recruitment into this industry is based largely upon ties of kinship and/or common residence, as it is in the traditional industry. These individuals not only pursue the same economic goals in this well-integrated and multi-functional complex, but also live, pray, eat and seek entertainment and companionship together, and are in many cases related to each other by ties of blood and/or marriage. Like the parent craft industry, the organisation of this new industry is thus largely inseparable from a descent group structure which remains basically intact. In this way, their common economic interests are reinforced by kinship links.<sup>14.</sup>

In all, these men retain a basically conservative outlook and interact

in what is still an essentially traditional Hausa milieu. Because moreover they continue to live in or near their natal compounds and so maintain close ties with their descent groups, the bonds of kinship, and friendship, remain the most important for social behaviour and basic patterns of social relationships have survived. No doubt too, at a higher level, the strongly conservative influences of Islam and the socio-political system, added to the relatively late contact with the west, have also acted as a break upon the rate of change in a society which retains much that is traditional.

### Patterns of distribution

The nature of this rapidly growing industry necessitated an expansion of and changes in the system of marketing, an expansion which was possible in the Central Market complex. The Transitional Phase thus saw increases in the numbers of full-time specialist traders dealing in both traditional and modern hardwares here, quite apart from those men who have come to combine actual production with marketing on a large scale (see Chapter 6); we saw in Chapter 3 moreover that the beginnings of this development were already apparent here in the Pre-Transitional Phase. In 1971 I counted over twenty such dealers (dan koli/tireda) here, again mostly from Kwarim Mabuga, 'Yan Doya and nearby wards, all of them attracted by the increasingly large market for all types of metalware.

Buying and selling the vast array of items produced in the Central Market nucleation involves complex arrangements nowadays, and several important changes have overtaken traditional patterns of distribution.

Firstly, the steady expansion of the domestic market in all kinds of metalware was accompanied by and was partially contingent upon further improvements in transportation and communications in the post-War years. This particular era witnessed the growing importance of road transport, a mode of transshipment which reduced distribution costs and, because motor-lorries were more mobile, speedy, and flexible than the railway, extended the spatial boundaries of the domestic market even further.<sup>15</sup> Nowadays, one comes upon the distinctive products of these Central Market specialists in the markets of all major cities and towns in northern Nigeria, and also in western Nigeria. I myself have seen their bolts, hasps, hinges and headpans on sale in such far-apart places as Ibadan, Jos, Maiduguri, and

even in the market-place of the distant town of Agadez in the Republic of Niger. There have also been great improvements in the road network system particularly over the last two decades: Hopkins (1973 : 282) tells us for instance that whereas in 1945 there were only 500 miles of tarred, all-weather roads in Nigeria, but 1963 this number had risen to 8,000 miles.

Added to this, in the early 1950's a number of changes were made in the actual lay-out of this northern part of the Central Market, designed to make access easier for the increasing amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. These changes involved the construction of a wide thoroughfare, cutting east-west through the Market from Bakin Zuwo ward, past Kwarim Mabuga and 'Yan Doya quarters, to Jakara (see Fig. 6). This new road now allowed visiting freight-lorries to load and unload metalware and scrap much closer to the complex and provided almost a door-to-door service. In this way, it came to combine the functions of a principle business and trade thoroughfare and main traffic artery.

Just as important for the related industries of hotsmithing and coldsmithing, these physical alterations also created considerable amounts of extra space alongside the new street, and manufacturers and traders were quick to either rent or purchase corrugated-iron stalls and work-sheds which sprung up in no time, especially on the Market (south) side of the thoroughfare.<sup>16</sup> There are now more than forty such constructions here, housing all the various processes of the metalware industry in this conglomeration - blacksmithing, coldsmithing, and trading in finished products and scrap metal (see Fig. 6).

These developments had obvious commercial advantages for the distributors, as well as the manufacturers now firmly ensconced along this road. First, because of the subsequent expansion in trading activities, ironware dealers were able to amass much greater profits and capital than had been previously possible. I know for example of several large-scale trader-entrepreneurs who regularly hold more than £300 of goods in stock (kamci), and many with more than £100 worth.<sup>17</sup> Related to this, the burden of distribution has shifted over the years from commission-agents (dillali) to outright dealers (dan sara). We saw in Chapter 2 that in former times, before this considerable extension in the scale of economic activities took place, when the manufacture and marketing of metalwares were not as highly diversified, and when opportunities for capital accumulation, either in the form of goods or cash, were limited, the two activities of production and distribution

were largely separated. Normally, the smith would simply hand over his finished products to one of these brokers who would then sell them on his behalf, at a retail price and on an agreed commission (lada), usually about 10 per cent of the price paid.<sup>18</sup> In this way, the smith was saved valuable time and transportation costs at a time when the transshipment of such heavy, bulky merchandise was a slow and costly operation. Nowadays on the other hand, not only do many individuals combine trading with manufacturing, but most traders here possess enough liquid capital to purchase finished items in large amounts from the producers and then resell at a profit. Some of these entrepreneur-traders in fact began their careers as brokers ( or blacksmiths ), gradually built up a substantial trading capital by increasing the range and volume of their products after the War, and eventually established themselves as prosperous wholesale-retailers.

One final important point should be emphasised once again, regarding the selling patterns of locally-manufactured vis-à-vis imported modern metalware. The central theme developed in this chapter revolves around the way in which a set of new products has been introduced into an indigenous economic system and successfully copied despite the presence on the market of equivalent imported factory-made articles, a situation made possible by the decisive cost advantage of the local products. The cost data listed in Table 7 (see page 101) reveal how these disparities in price are maintained to this day, an arrangement which is quite essential of course if disruptive competition from foreign products is to be minimised to an acceptable degree.

We observed in Chapter 3 that imported equivalents failed to supplant traditional items of local manufacture simply because they were too expensive. For the same reason, domestically-produced modern metalwares of the type listed in Table 7 are also more popular because of the basic economic reason that they are substantially cheaper and so more within the range of the 'normal' Hausa customer's pocket; they are cheaper moreover because inexpensive family labour, and relatively low overheads and distribution costs, mean a lower unit cost of production basically. They are, it is true, often rather roughly hewn and so of inferior quality to their imported counterparts, but against this they are much easier to mend if broken. Most customers to the Central Market, and especially those from the countryside, because their incomes tend to be rather modest, buy

the cheaper lower-quality local products, sometimes in bulk, in preference to a limited number of higher-quality, but higher-priced, imported alternatives. In this way, customer satisfaction is maximized.<sup>19</sup> Metal-workers here are also normally seen using locally-fashioned work-tools, hammers, chisels, files etc., almost all of them made by village smiths (see the case of Malam Tsoho). At the same time, it may be that the presence of equivalent machine-made items is beneficial inasmuch as it persuades local producers to manufacture as high a quality a product as possible.

TABLE 7. Average 1971 selling prices of selected foreign-made and equivalent locally-made modern metalwares.<sup>(a)</sup>

Item	Imported <sup>(b)</sup>	Local
10" door-bolts ( <u>sakata</u> )	48/- (per dozen)	23/-
8" ditto	40/- (ditto)	20/-
6" hinges ( <u>hingiz</u> )	30/- (ditto)	13/-
mouse-traps ( <u>tarkon bera</u> ) (medium-size)	20/- (ditto)	10/-
shovels ( <u>shebur</u> )	10/-	4/-
rakes ( <u>manjagara</u> )	5/-	1/6
headpans ( <u>kwano</u> ) (medium-size)	13/-	6/-
locks ( <u>kuba</u> ) (medium-size)	35/-	20/-
hammer-heads ( <u>hama</u> )	10/-	4/-
chisels ( <u>kurfi</u> )	8/-	3/-

(a) Seasonal price changes are expected and do occur, and prices establish themselves after bargaining.

(b) These prices apply to imports from Britain. Cheaper and generally lower-quality metalwares from Eastern Europe and China are also imported.

All the dealers here in the Central Market say that they realise most of their profits through trade in locally-made hardware. Some of them

informed me for example that for every one foreign-made shovel they sell for about 10/-, usually to City customers, they can dispose of forty or more of the locally-made ones at 4/- each, particularly during the early post-harvest months when villagers begin once again to flock into the metropolis and spend profits from sales of cash-crops.

The largely prohibitive ex-factory prices of foreign metalwares are further enhanced by extra transport costs from the distant Nigerian sea-board. Kilby (1969 : 40-41) provides some interesting data on the crucial variable of transport costs and natural protection, especially in northern Nigeria, and writes:

...the cost of carriage provides a substantial measure of protection (or equally, an enlarged market) for many kinds of import substitution and plays a key role in internal industrial location....we may say that local industry competing with sea-borne imports enjoys a minimal natural protection of 15 to 70% of production cost depending on the commodity in question.

The following case amply illustrates the extent of 'value added' and the importance of the transportation factor in the final cost of this particular transport-heavy commodity.

In the late 1960's, an English tool-manufacturing company shipped a batch of 2,000 triangular hoe-blades to several expatriate firms in Kano, for distribution on the market. These tools were modelled on local hoe-blades and were in fact one of the few factory-made items which might have posed a threat to the substantial domestic manufacture of these all-important farm-tools. However, although the ex-factory selling price of each blade was a relatively low 3/6, by the time it reached Kano via the port of Lagos, and after 'value added' by ocean carriage, land transport, handling charges, and import duty, it had jumped to around 5/-, more than twice as much as the local alternative. Although the Local Authority did end up purchasing a number of these hoes for use on farms at the Agricultural Research Station, general sales to price-conscious local customers were disappointingly but predictably poor. Ironically therefore, and for reasons outlined above, this expatriate firm failed, where our case-unit had succeeded, to capture a sufficiently large market for their substitutive products.

#### Summary and conclusions.

Summarising the principal points of this chapter, we have, with regard

to our case-unit, the unusual phenomenon of two related hand-manufacturing industries operating and thriving alongside each other: the modern, import-substituting form deriving essentially from the ancient form, and both of them monopolising and catering for an insatiable consumer demand for their respective outputs. Since moreover, neither field seems to be overcrowded, there is no danger as yet of over-supply. The two combine to provide employment, both stable and marginal, for a considerable number of individuals, most of whom originate from the same, highly concentrated area of the Central Market; and together, these industries may be said to constitute an important factor in the growth of the informal economic sector in modern Kano.

A further notable point to emerge is that changes in the technology of production and concomitant modifications in the organisation of labour do not appear to have seriously affected traditional patterns of social relationships. In all, adaptation, and not disruption, has been the keynote of their story so far, and it is against this background of innovation and receptiveness to change that we now move on to considering the final stages of this story--those Central Market individuals who have been most successful in translating the potential of their craft into reality.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. I also came into contact with, but again did not include in the census, a number of short-term, transient migrants here, called 'yan kadan raba' in Hausa, literally 'sons of the dew', presumably because like the morning dew they do not stay too long before disappearing.
2. For comparative ethnographic data on labour migration, see for example, Prothero (1957, 1958), Hill (1961, 1963), Berg (1965), Kuper (1965), and Olofson (1976).
3. Interestingly, village smiths such as those of Tamburawa, refer to these migrants as ma'aikata or 'workers', a term normally applied to dependent workers in official wage-employment, e.g. factory-workers, - an indication perhaps of how they view these individuals. The same description is extended to 'coldsmiths' working here too.
4. Koll (1969 : 92) for example says that blacksmiths in Southern Nigeria became impoverished as a result of post-War changes and were eventually replaced by tinkers and tinsmiths.
5. American and British airforce contingents used Kano as a base for air traffic to the Middle East, India and Burma, and were housed in specially-constructed, European-style barracks near the aerodrome itself.
6. The supply of these products was of course greatly restricted in the West too. For a discussion of the acute shortage of consumer imports throughout West Africa as a whole, see Hopkins (1973 : 184-85).
7. Lebanese businessmen began arriving in Kano in increasing numbers in the 1930's, and eventually served the middleman function in a number of other local industries, e.g. groundnut buying and selling and wholesale textiles. Later they moved into the haulage industry. For a discussion of their role in West Africa in general see Winder (1962), and in the Kano economy specifically, see Paden (1973).
8. Wartime shortages of manufactured products had similar repercussions on a number of other industries. Kilby (1969 : 82-83) for example reports that the Nigerian cigarette industry firmly established itself during the 1939-45 period. And Shea (1975 : 88) writes that post-War inflation in Europe meant that the price of imported cloth more than doubled in Kano, with the result that customers' dependence on local production was increased.
9. Lloyd (1953 : 32) reports that this distinction is also important amongst Yoruba craftsmen.
10. A substantial coldsmithing industry has also sprung up since the War in the Sabon Gari Market, the majority of its workers originating from, and residing in, Zango ward, a traditional silversmithing quarter just inside Kofar Mata gate (see Fig. 2). However, since these metal-workers specialise mainly in manufacturing such items as metal containers, baking-tins etc, there is little overlap and competition with the Central Market products. The scope of the present work has meant that the study of this separate complex could not be included.



11. Metal-workers in general nowadays have a host of materials that they can work with, apart from the ever-popular railway lines, most of them motor-car parts. The more important include (mild) steel from the body, wings and crankshaft; cast-iron from the piston-rings; and aluminium (alloy) or stainless steel from the body trim. Steel reinforcing rods are also used.
12. There are nearly 40 adult headpan-makers in the Central Market, and they constitute the largest of the different specialist categories which together make up the 106 coldsmiths here (see Fig. 6).
13. For comparative works on this problem, see for example Bascom and Herskovits (eds.) (1959), Little (1959), and Long (1968).
14. Mitchell (1966) discusses the interaction of these different fields of activity in great detail.
15. See Hawkins (1958) and Mabogunje (1968 : 146-48) for a discussion of the development of the motor-lorry industry and its subsequent impact upon internal trade in West African states.
16. These rather cramped and hot corrugated-iron structures (rumfar kwano) have replaced almost all the traditional and more comfortable mud-built smithies (see Chapter 2) and grass-built trading stalls (rumfa) here.
17. One of the great advantages of metalwares of course is that they may be stored for relatively long periods and in large quantities, in contrast to such perishable items as meat and kolanuts.
18. Brokerage is still however a common practice in rural communities like Tamburawa where there are as many as five commission-agents who regularly sell for the blacksmiths here.
19. Kilby (1965 : 109, 1969 : 33) comes to the same conclusion regarding the choices of customers with limited purchasing powers.

CHAPTER 6THE CENTRAL MARKET ENTREPRENEURS: THEIR NETWORKS AND  
PROJECTED FACTORY

The participation of Nigerian entrepreneurs in the economic development of their country has been striking in comparison with the experience of most other African countries. Internal trade...and industry have been areas of growing entrepreneurial effort by Nigerians in recent years....many small and medium scale indigenous firms have played an important part in the structural transformation of the economy. (Harris, 1971 : 331).

The socio-economic developments and multicausal determinants which have just been outlined were essential to the gradual emergence in the Central Market complex of a group of prominent individual entrepreneurs or 'big men' (manyan mutane) as they are sometimes known. First of all, I propose as a broad working definition of the term 'entrepreneur'—'a self-employed and risk-taking capitalist who owns and manages relatively large amounts of cash, capital stock and labour, with a view to maximizing his profits', a figure which approximates Kilby's (1971 : 3) 'modern industrial businessman'.<sup>1</sup>

The initial part of this penultimate chapter is about how these entrepreneurs typically capitalized on the rising import-created demand for modern metalwares, and then established and gradually widened their personal trading contacts. Examination, though presentation of business biographies, of these largely economic networks reveals certain broad entrepreneurial patterns and provides a closer understanding of the contemporary organisation of production and marketing in our case-units. Attention is also given to the way in which changes in urban patterns of production acted in the long run to stimulate an expansion of craft output in rural areas. The final section of the chapter then discusses the moves made by these businessmen to establish a mechanized metalware plant.

THE RISE OF THE 'BIG MEN'

The qualities of '...effort, foresight, resourcefulness, thrift, and ability to perceive economic opportunity...' which Bauer (1954 : 30)

attributes to West African traders typify in full the Central Market entrepreneur-smiths and/or - traders who form the focus of this chapter. These men it was who first experimented with and effected the aforementioned technological innovations, and in time accumulated enough capital and marketing experience to diversify their economic roles. The processes underlying these developments will be discussed in the course of delineating the biographies of some of the more prominent and go-ahead of these local entrepreneurs, men who have played, and continue to play, crucial roles in the Central Market set-up.

#### Alhaji Isa

Alhaji Isa is in his late forties and is one of a family of six highly industrious and enterprising brothers, all of whom were born in the same house in Kwarim Mabuga, and all of whom inherited the craft of blacksmithing directly through their father. Of the four full brothers still alive, three, including Alhaji Isa himself, now manufacture modern products on a full-time basis, and the remaining one, the oldest surviving brother and ward-head of Kwarim Mabuga (see Chapter 5 and below), is a part-time manufacturer of door-locks.

As a young lad in the decade before the Second World War, Alhaji Isa was making, together with the smiths of his own and other groups in the City at the time, traditional products, e.g. agricultural implements, axes, knives, sickles, scissors, etc. In the late 1930's however, he spent several years away from the craft, first in the employment of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, breaking up scrap metal at the Kano depot, and then trading in metalware in the Borno area.

Towards the end of the War, Alhaji Isa decided to return to the fold largely because, he says, he realised as his kinsmen did, that potentially large profits could be earned in the new import-substituting industry which was by then emerging in the Central Market. Alhaji Isa began by reproducing door-hinges, a coldsmithing specialism which requires the use of only a hammer and chisel basically, but later changed to manufacturing metal door-bolts, a task which entails the production of non-traditional items but with traditional hotsmithing methods and tools. Alhaji Isa holds that he made this switch primarily because of the high profit-margins attached to these products, but also because he wished to retain and use the high-level techniques and expertise his father had taught him in the Kwarim Mabuga smithy. Interestingly, the remaining three men, including two of Alhaji Isa's brothers, who at present pursue the same line of production, are all inherited blacksmiths (see also Table 6, footnote (b)).

In a full day's work, Alhaji Isa can turn out, with surprising ease and rapidity, a maximum of seven dozen medium-size (6") bolts which he then sells at 13/- per dozen, making a daily profit of about 60/-, i.e. less 30/- production-costs - mainly steel construction rods and fuel. Allowing moreover for a six to seven working day week, i.e. excepting Friday afternoon when he attends the congregational prayer at the Central Mosque, this means a cash-income from production alone of something like £20 per week. Alhaji Isa sells his manufactures directly from his own workshop located right on the main Market thoroughfare, either in bulk to dealers from the Central Market or Sabon Gari Market (see below), or direct to the individual customer. He is never without a market for his considerable output, and sometimes receives single orders for as many as fifty gross of these bolts.

Nor is craft-production Alhaji Isa's only source of income. By using the substantial capital he has amassed over the last twenty years as a result of his efforts and skill, he has been able to extend his operations to include dealing in metalwares of different kinds, and in a number of directions.

Firstly, he carries on a lucrative trade in both traditional and modern (mainly locally-made) hardware. He regularly buys for example, large numbers of headpans from their producers here in the Central Market, usually to order, as well as traditional articles like hoes and adzes from men like Malam Tsoho. He also has several young lads in his employ, including his two eldest sons, who work for him on both a regular and casual basis depending upon the amount of work he has on hand, manufacturing door-hasps at his direction. These youths also assist him in his own work, blowing the bellows and cutting up the steel rods and metal plate he uses,<sup>2</sup> and receiving a daily wage of between 5/- and 7/- for their labours.

Alhaji Isa has, in time, also established and gradually widened a personal network of close trading links with many smiths from surrounding villages, and not least the Tamburawa blacksmiths who nowadays have regular contact with Alhaji Isa and others like him (see below and the case of Malam Tanko). Alhaji Isa says that he first began purchasing traditional manufactures from these rural craftsmen in the early 1950's, and many of them have subsequently become heavily reliant upon this trade with the City for their income.

Apart from disposing of many of his wares here in the Central Market, Alhaji Isa also has a number of trustworthy agents-cum-clients (he refers to them as his yara or 'boys') who have permanently removed to larger centres of demand, mainly Maiduguri, Nguru and Gashua in North-East State. These agents, some of whom also work for a number of Alhaji

Isa's fellow entrepreneurs, are mostly from Kwarim Mabuga and 'Yan Doya wards, but a few, interestingly, are immigrant smiths who came originally to the Central Market complex from the small town of Gezawa (20 miles north-east of Kano City), worked for men like Alhaji Isa, and finally decided to settle here. Alhaji Isa is also married to the sister of one of these men.

These agents are responsible for informing him about trends in prices and the forces of supply and demand for different metalwares, in addition to arranging to collect any consignments which he has delivered to these points.<sup>3</sup> Items like stirrup-irons (see the case of Alhaji Rabi'u below), bits, matchets, knives (see Malam Tanko below), and headpans are especially popular in North-East State, where the demand for such products cannot apparently be satisfied locally, and where the profits on these items thus tend to be greater than in Kano.<sup>4</sup> Alhaji Isa leaves the conduct of business at their end entirely to the honesty and discretion of his agents, and simply purchases and forwards, by rail or road, the required amounts of different metalwares. They then keep an agreed proportion of the profits on all subsequent sales.

Alhaji Isa reckons that he makes anything from £10 to £15 clear profit per week from these multifarious business activities, a sum which, when combined with his earnings from production, means a potential cash-income of about £35 a week.<sup>5</sup> A measure of his growing prosperity lies in the fact that ten years ago he purchased a large, concrete, two-storey house in Gwammaja ward just to the north of the Market itself;<sup>6</sup> has twice in recent years performed the pilgrimage to Mecca; and has three wives.

#### Alhaji Rabi'u

Alhaji Rabi'u is forty-five years old and was born in and still lives in Kwarim Mabuga, though he is not of a blacksmithing family. He is in fact one of the six non-inherited smiths presently working here and listed in Table 3, all of whom took up the craft of their blacksmith neighbours and were taught its skills as apprentices attached to one or other of the senior craftsmen. Like Alhaji Isa, Alhaji Rabi'u is now a trader-manufacturer with varied commercial interests, and combines the specialist production of metal stirrup-irons with extensive trading in hardware, domestic and imported, and charcoal.

Unlike Alhaji Isa however, he is not a full-time worker, and only makes these stirrups when the demand for them is at its highest—in the dry-season months—when traders from such areas as Niger Republic and North-East State in particular visit Kano in increasing numbers.<sup>7</sup> When working flat out, however, in a make-shift open workplace attached to his house, he can fashion up to two dozen pairs per day, each of which fetches about 4/-. Since moreover, he says that he can

dispose of these items almost as quickly as he can turn them out, this means a potential £5 daily from sales, less approximately 30/- costs for raw materials and also wages for his younger brother and two young immigrant smiths who assist him. Alhaji Rabi'u maintains a permanent capital stock of these stirrups in his lock-up stall on the main street, and particularly when storing for a price-rise in the dry-season may have as many as 400 pairs in stock.<sup>8</sup>

Alhaji Rabi'u has, like Alhaji Isa and others, branched out into other fields over the years and gradually built up an extensive business in metalware trading, with numerous contacts. From his stall he buys and sells traditional products, many of which originate from the Tamburawa smithies, in addition to non-traditional items, mainly of local manufacture. He also handles substantial contracts for the Kano Local Authority and Nigerian Tobacco Company. In July 1970 for example, he received an order for 300 hoes from the Local Authority, for use on its prison farms, the bulk of which he sub-contracted out to the Tamburawa smiths; and in September of the same year, the Nigerian Tobacco Company placed an order with him for 200 watering cans, which he this time divided amongst local coldsmiths.

Alhaji Rabi'u has also, for the last twenty years or so, carried on a highly profitable business in charcoal here. He obtains supplies of this essential fuel, by lorry, from the Rimin Gado area mainly (15 miles west of the City), and sells much of it to the Enamelware Factory located in the Industrial Development Area of Kano, and to several large hotels outside the City proper. He also sells to individual blacksmiths, urban and rural. He claims that this particular line is now his main source of income in fact, and that his sales to the Enamelware Factory alone bring him a personal profit of something like £30 per month.

Four years ago, Alhaji Rabi'u felt himself prosperous enough to justify opening an account at the local Barclays Bank in Kano (one of only a handful of these businessmen to have done so I believe), and in the same year went on pilgrimage to Mecca for the first time.

The cases of Alhaji Isa and Alhaji Rabi'u are of particular relevance to this study because they exemplify most of the important modern trends and developments that have taken place in our case-unit, including: increased horizontal mobility between occupations; the growing commercialisation of wage-labour; and the factors involved in the establishment and expansion of those personal trading networks which now radiate from the Central Market complex.<sup>9</sup> Before pursuing this crucial matter of networks however, I should like to deal with the following important question

regarding the characterisation of the entrepreneurial activities which have been observed here--are these particular individuals, in Schumpeter's (1934) terminology, to be viewed as 'innovating' or simply 'imitating' entrepreneurs?

Katzin (1964 : 183) employs the term 'innovating entrepreneur' to designate an individual 'who conceives an idea and introduces a new element into the economy', and applies the label 'imitating entrepreneur' to any person 'who adopts a new economic practice after a local innovator has demonstrated it to be practical and profitable'.

It is probably the case, as Kilby (1971 : 23) holds, that true innovation is in fact quite rare in underdeveloped areas, and that:

...with very few exceptions entrepreneurial activity in developing countries is directed to expanding production or import substitution in response to price signals.

And Callaway, (1967 : 154) writing of Ibadan's craftsmen and traders, observes in a similar vein that:

...real innovators in any society are exceptional. First it is necessary to have - and in large numbers - skilled craftsmen with a sharpened business sense. They are imitators, adapting known techniques to local conditions - and at this stage in the city's development are much more important than innovators.

Without denying the basic accuracy of these remarks, the biographies and data of this and previous chapters suggest, I believe, that the entrepreneurs of our case-unit (see too the case of Alhaji Audu below) probably fall somewhere between the two types. Certainly, they can be considered as having 'innovated' in the loose sense that their local reproduction of non-traditional metalwares was in itself 'innovative', even if these non-indigenous products were already in use in industrialised countries. I am in basic agreement therefore with Katzin's (1964 : 183, fn 11) later observation that:

The argument that the adoption of an element originating outside the indigenous economy is not innovation has only limited validity, since the innovator in this case must envision the possibility of integrating the new element into the ongoing culture and must be willing and able to meet the obstacles that are likely to confront him.

Economic networks: the case of the Central Market and Tamburawa

The foregoing material has provided a few glimpses of the present significance for the urban economy of its regular and growing interaction with the rural economy.<sup>10</sup> The following case study and material serve to fill in the specific details of the development and modern extent of these important linkages.

Malam Tanko

Malam Tanko is in his mid-sixties and is one of the more senior and wealthy of the Tamburawa blacksmiths. In the early 1930's, he spent several dry-seasons smithing in Lokoja (see Chapter 3), where he learnt the technique of casting aluminium handles for knives, daggers, swords and matchets, a skill which was later to prove most rewarding.<sup>11</sup>

Like all village blacksmiths, and in contrast to their urban counterparts, Malam Tanko's craft production is determined largely by the season. Thus, in both the hot and rainy seasons (roughly May-September), a period of intense activity in the fields and forges, he concentrates on making farm-tools; and in the remaining dry-season months, when work on the farm is limited essentially to cutting grass and manuring, he specialises in making these aluminium-handled products. These highly popular items are the exclusive manufacture of Malam Tanko and four other Tamburawa smiths, and have become their identifying trademark almost.

Whereas the farm-tools Malam Tanko makes are for the local Tamburawa market basically (he does dispose of some in the City), his dry-season production is geared almost exclusively to the requirements of the Metropolitan market. Malam Tanko claims in fact that he was one of the first smiths here to begin substantial surplus production for export to the City, in the early 1950's, and that others then followed. Nowadays, he regularly manufactures as many as twenty dozen small knives in a full week's work which he then takes to the City, travelling by bus, and on non-market days.<sup>12</sup> He disposes of his output in the Central Market mainly, to such traders as Alhaji Isa and Alhaji Rabi'u, but also in the Sabon Gari Market and to the blacksmiths at Kofar Wambai (see Fig. 2). Malam Tanko normally takes the opportunity too to purchase and return home with fresh supplies of scrap metal. Our entrepreneur Alhaji Isa says that he often buys up to ten dozen of these special knives at a time from Malam Tanko, paying 8/- a dozen and reselling them, many in the North-East State,<sup>13</sup> at about 12/- per dozen. Occasionally, and especially if Alhaji Isa needs a large supply of such products, he will either advance enough money to Malam Tanko to purchase the necessary materials, or simply supply him with them himself.



Malam Tanko calculates that he can realise about £6 - £7 profit in a good week, adding that this could be more were he not so old now.

As he is gaining in years however, as often as not nowadays he entrusts his products to his two adult sons to dispose of on his behalf, since they are better able to endure the journey. These two smiths have inherited all the technical skills and enterprise of their father, and themselves carry on a sizeable trade in similar products with the Central Market dealers. Both specialise in making large knives in the dry-season, the profits on which are quite considerable. They sell the finished articles through several traders, including Alhaji Isa and Alhaji Rabi'u for 25/- a dozen, less 12/- or so production-costs, which leaves about 13/- profit; and as they can each turn out nearly two dozen in a full day, they are able to make about 25/- daily. Allowing for, at the most, two return trips per week to the City, by bicycle, each of which takes up about half a working day, they can earn a maximum of £6 - £7 per week, and something like £5 a week on average, a sum which represents an excellent cash-income, particularly for the dry-season, and not only by rural standards.<sup>14</sup>

Nor is their lucrative surplus production for the City market restricted to the dry-season only, for they also manufacture large quantities of hoes for sale here in the hot and rainy season months, i.e. even at a time when the local rural demand for such tools is at its highest. This is the time of the year when output rises to its maximum level, and when village blacksmiths may be seen working furiously to meet the enlarged demand, a situation summed up in the Hausa saying 'a blacksmith is only needed in the hot season' (sai da bazara ana son makeri). These two men thus manufacture these items for both local consumption and export, though they must be prepared to accept a proportionately lower price if selling them in bulk in the City than if disposing of them in much smaller amounts in say Tamburawa, an arrangement which applies to their dry-season output too of course. One of these brothers estimates that he produces, to order,<sup>15</sup> over 800 hoes a year for his patron Alhaji Rabi'u and another entrepreneur here in the Central Market, a contract which alone is worth more than £50 to him.

This composite case history typifies the kinds of trading relationships which have been created and solidified between many of these rural blacksmiths and their urban patrons in the years since the end of the Second World War; my travels and observations in and around the Kano area

indicate too that the development of such close inter-community links is by no means unique to the Tamburawa smiths. Hill (1977 : 104) for instance reports that in Dorayi, a small village only a mile or so to the south-west of the City, blacksmiths are the only resident craftsmen who '...enjoy a significant external demand for their wares', by which I presume she is in fact referring to the nearby metropolitan demand. At the same time, the particular extension in the scale of economic linkages which did take place between our two case-units was 'greatly facilitated by a number of distinctive factors which, in combination, might perhaps be said to render Tamburawa a special case. These influencing factors are:

- 1) The proximity of this community to the Metropolis.
- 2) Advancements in modes of transportation and communication between the two units. In the mid 1950's, the new Kano-Zaria laterite road was built, to the east of the ancient Kano-Zaria caravan route (see Fig. 1), and passing within half a mile only of Tamburawa itself, and was coal-tarred at the beginning of the 1960's (see Fig. 5). This, coupled with the establishment of a regular bus-service and the general spread of bicycle transport, made the journey to the City much quicker and easier.<sup>16</sup>
- 3) The individual enterprise, energy and awareness of its particular blacksmiths, as evidenced by the case of Malam Tanko.

We saw in Chapter 3 how this urban-rural interaction hinged, in the years before the Second World War, largely upon the growing necessity of securing supplies of imported scrap iron, the trade in which, it was noted, had become increasingly urban-based. What the above data reveal therefore is that the post-War period simply witnessed an extension of a process which was already under way, with rural manufacturers like those of Tamburawa now gearing their production more and more to the insatiable requirements of an urban economy which was no longer self-sufficient in a number of important traditional metalwares; also that this process was, with specific regard to our own case-unit, greatly enhanced by the various determinants listed above.

There is nowadays a constant stream of such village smiths coming

into the Central Market with bulk amounts of their finished wares to sell to such entrepreneur-traders as Alhaji Isa and Alhaji Rabi'u, at the same time taking the opportunity to buy further supplies of scrap (and charcoal), and perhaps too some of the many consumer items only available here in the City. In this way, the two economies have slowly become more interdependent and integrated.

In Tamburawa, the livelihood and prosperity of all but a handful of the resident blacksmiths are nowadays dependent, to varying degrees, on the surplus production of traditional articles for export to the City, where they are assured a large and regular market. Furthermore, as the case of Malam Tanko well illustrates, these developments mean that opportunities do exist today for these particular craftsmen to earn a significant year-round income from craft-production, a fortunate situation which is shared by few, if any, other rural specialists. The fact too that a number of the Tamburawa smiths sometimes employ labourers to farm for them indicates that they find it more profitable on balance to devote their time to manufacturing - 'work of the home' (aikin gida) - as they term it.

These artisans have thus been pulled even further into the orbit of the increasingly dominant metropolitan economy which needed and absorbed their surplus output. Together with those immigrant smiths considered in Chapter 5, they fill the considerable hole in production which was the inevitable consequence both of the post-War increase in the level of demand for such essential manufactures and the converse decrease in the numbers of City craftsmen occupying these traditional economic roles. Thus, an unintended but very significant side-effect of this reorientation in urban production patterns was the stimulation of compensatory rural production.

#### The Central Market entrepreneurs and the Nigerian Civil War

Just as, ironically, the Second World War proved fortuitous to the emergence of a modern, pre-factory, metal-working industry within our case-unit, so too the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70, despite the general

suffering and hardship it caused, served to accelerate the expansion of the existing networks extending from the pivotal Central Market.<sup>17</sup> This expansion was itself a function of the establishment of a strong commercial foothold in the Sabon Gari Market.

The Sabon Gari residential and commercial district had, like other parts of the Kano Urban Area, experienced a rapid growth in population and economic activity in the years following the Second World War. According to Trevallion (1966), the population had reached 40,000 in 1966, compared with just over 21,000 in 1954 (see Chapter 3), of whom approximately 80 per cent were Ibos from eastern Nigeria. Furthermore, in the same period, the Sabon Gari Market began to overhaul even the City Market in terms of business, turnover, and numbers of traders, though it should be added that the two complexes did tend to specialise in different manufactured products, the former offering a greater range of factory-made and imported goods than the latter which dealt more with locally-produced craft items.<sup>18</sup>

With specific regard to trade in imported hardware, it was observed in the previous chapter that, initially, this was largely in the hands of local Lebanese merchants who were the main buyers and distributors. By the early 1960's however, soon after Independence, this retail trading role began to be filled increasingly by Ibo middlemen, operating from stalls in the Sabon Gari Market.

In May 1966, following a military coup in January of the same year in which a number of leading northern Nigerians were killed, serious anti-Ibo rioting broke out in Kano, as a result of which large numbers of Ibos were attacked and killed. The outcome of these massacres (others took place in October) was the immediate, mass exodus of Ibos from the north in general, many of whom, in their haste, simply abandoned their properties and businesses which were then quickly taken over by local Hausa. The final case study in this work concerns one of the Central Market entrepreneur-traders who came to acquire, in this way, a substantial share of the local market in modern, mainly imported, metalwares.

#### Alhaji Audu

Alhaji Audu is forty-five years old and is one of nine brothers, all of whom were born in Kwarim Mabuga ward of

a blacksmithing family. He started his working life as a modern-style carpenter in the same ward, making cupboards and doors. During the Second World War Alhaji Audu was of those men to be initially approached by the Lebanese traders, as a result of which he abandoned carpentry and switched instead to reproducing, by hand, hinges and hasps. Eventually he had accumulated enough liquid capital to purchase his own trading stall in the Central Market, from where he carried on an increasingly remunerative trade in modern hardware, mainly of local manufacture.

In the early 1960's, Alhaji Audu took advantage of the building boom (see Chapter 4) and branched into imported hardware and general building materials, buying mainly from the Ibo dealers and also from a few expatriate companies. In time, he became a trusted business associate of these same traders, and early in 1966 a number of these Ibos, sensing that trouble was imminent, came to Alhaji Audu and asked him if he would be prepared to buy them out since they had all decided to leave Kano for their homeland. Although this line of business was a highly rewarding one, local merchants at the time were cautious about buying up such concerns in what was an uncertain business atmosphere. Nevertheless, Alhaji Audu decided to take a risk which turned out to be more than justified, and not only bought the titles to these particular plots and businesses, and at a knockdown price, but also paid the outstanding rent and acquired the titles to a number of other stalls that had either been abandoned or burned down. He then placed these shops in the charge of his own brothers and close friends, at the same time arranging for several other Central Market men to act as his agents in Lagos, the main port of entry for these and other foreign manufactures.

As a reward for his personal enterprise and labours, Alhaji Audu and his relatives and clients had, by 1968, established a near-monopoly of the Sabon Gari trade in imported hardware, quite apart from his well-established and lucrative Central Market interests, and he had more than recovered the capital cost of his investment. Nowadays, there is scarcely a City craftsman who does not have some kind of contact with either or both these two communities, particularly if he happens to specialise in door-locks or non-traditional products.

During the Civil War period, Alhaji Audu was able to increase his prices and profits since foreign hardware, and building materials were in short supply due to the restrictions and extra levies which were imposed on the importation of such items.<sup>19</sup> These restrictions also gave a boost to the local reproduction of these metalwares, just as they had done in the Second World War. Alhaji Audu turned this situation to his own financial advantage, and by late 1968 was in a position to open his own company, buying and selling

hardware, mainly imported but also Nigerian factory-made, building materials, paints and so on, and located on the main road which passes by the Sabon Gari Market.

Alhaji Audu is now a highly successful local entrepreneur, well-known in Kano business circles. He owns a car, a large and luxurious house in the old City, has a full complement of four wives, and regularly makes the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, sometimes paying for his dependants and clients to make the journey too.

This particular case history is especially noteworthy because it not only sheds light on the development and form of this web of multilateral links which now embraces the metalware business in both the Central Market and the Sabon Gari Market, but also reveals how this empire was founded on ties of kinship essentially. Almost all of Alhaji Audu's associates and subordinates were born in Kwarim Mabuga, 'Yan Doya or adjacent wards, and have at some time worked in the Central Market, as coldsmiths mainly, but also as blacksmiths and carpenters; and most of them continue to live in the same locality, commuting daily to their stalls in Sabon Gari.

The above entrepreneur-traders and manufacturers are typical of a number of the more wealthy, capitalistic individuals in this Central Market group who have responded to the changes and new opportunities of the day with extraordinary ease and success. These businessmen operate on a relatively large scale, co-ordinating various categories of labour--relatives and non-relatives, local and migrant--to manufacture for them. They have, in time, developed entrepreneurial skills which, along with capital accumulated, have enabled them to diversify and broaden their operations beyond their initial specialisms. As Katzin (1964 : 180) says of African traders moreover, the basic motivations and aims of these men are:

not to change the system of trade but to advance their own position within the existing system, by building up trading capital, expanding the range of their trading contacts and thereby increasing their volume of trade.

The entrepreneurs here perceived that they could increase their incomes by differentiating their roles and redirecting existing skills towards the manufacture and marketing of new and profitable products - like Kilby's (1965 : 75) bakers, they now enjoy 'a transitional monopoly as a

reward for their innovation'.

Together such individuals form an ever-growing urban business class which seeks and obtains wealth through commerce and manufacturing. As the above biographies reveal, they now enjoy a conspicuously high standard of living and tend to live in a material manner set apart from those who lack, for whatever reasons, the same fortunate degree of arziki (see Chapter 4). These conspicuous investments are of course not without benefit: houses, cars, trips to Mecca, a fine wardrobe, several wives and so on all provide concrete evidence that a man is prosperous and so creditworthy.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst all this is true, however, these self-employed entrepreneurs nonetheless remain basically conservative in outlook and have departed little, if at all, from the traditional Hausa way of life. None, for example, are literate in English or have received any modern schooling of any kind, but they are now coming to realise more and more the desirability and value of such an education. It is moreover upon such highly-motivated men that economic progress, of the kind now discussed, can be founded, and with some hope of success.

#### The projected establishment of a metalware factory

This concluding section concerns what is the culmination of the dynamism and drive of these individual entrepreneurs - their plan to launch a modern, metal-working factory, the implications of which are then discussed in the final chapter.

Early in 1969, a group of about twelve of these men, headed by Alhaji Isa's senior brother (see Chapter 5) and including Alhaji Isa, Alhaji Rabi'u and Alhaji Audu, formed their own company (Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim Metal Company) with a view to expanding and modernising their industry. They then decided to apply to the Kano State Ministry of Trade and Industry for financial and technical assistance in buying modern machinery and equipment and building a factory, it being basic policy at both Federal and State level to stimulate economic development by encouraging such small-scale manufacturing units.<sup>21</sup> It was proposed that the plant should specialise in the mass-production of such modern items as shovels, picks,

headpans, plough shares, window and bed-frames, bolts, staples, hasps and hinges.

In due course, the Ministry dispatched one of its officials to interview the applicants in the Central Market and prepare a pre-investment proposal (Report on the Kwarim Mabuga Metalworking Project by Malam Sane Daura, Assistant Trade Officer, March 1969). Two other commercial officers from the Industrial Development Centre in Zaria also visited them to assess the project (I.D.C. Report on Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim Metal Company, Goni Song/H.H. Turner, August 1969).

As a result of these and other follow-up visits and inspections, and on the basis of the joint feasibility reports which were submitted, in January 1970 the Ministry sanctioned the plan and agreed to provide a loan of £4,500, repayable over 8 years at an annual interest rate of 5 per cent, and with the possibility of further loans. The Ministry also calculated that a total investment of £15,000 would be needed to cover the capital costs of building the plant and installing machinery,<sup>22</sup> which meant that the Company was thus required to raise the remaining £10,500 equity itself. There was a further stipulation that since the physical conditions in the Central Market were far from ideal, the factory should be located in the Industrial Development Area outside the City proper, where access both to raw materials and customers would be easier. The main partners of the Company had in fact already put together about £3,000 between them, and the rest was soon collected by other local businessmen who acquired share holdings by contributing varying sums of money. Most of these thirty or so shareholders were connected in some way, directly or indirectly, with the metalware industry here in the Central Market.

The provision of finance was however not the only kind of assistance the enterprise needed, and the two Reports do contain between them a number of major reservations regarding the planned factory, including:

- 1) The lack of knowledge of the market potential on the part of the individuals concerned, and the related question of their ability to mount the sales and distribution programme necessary for full utilisation of installed productive capacity.
- 2) The managerial competence of the promoters to cope with the problems of a greatly expanded operation which requires a grasp of financial



matters, production, and sales.

- 3) The absence of written records of business transactions due to the fact that few, if any, of these men are literate in English.

These criticisms were then followed up with a number of recommendations as follows:

- 1) A sales and distribution programme should be formulated involving a market potential survey, a competitive price determination, and an analysis of existing sales practices and methods.
- 2) Technical training in quality control and the use and maintenance of modern machinery and tools should be provided.
- 3) Proper accounts of all transactions should be kept, in order to maintain close surveillance over revenue and expenditure.

The Reports conclude in reasonably optimistic terms, that despite all these potential drawbacks, 'The project appears to have a substantial basis for success, since there appears to be a need for this type of facility in the Kano area with its progressive industrialization.' The market is without doubt large enough to sustain such an industry, and as they add, 'These products are in great demand, and substantial orders are already in hand from such far away areas as Sokkoto, Maiduguri, Bida, and even Niger Republic.' The Reports go on to mention the important fact that, in northern Nigeria at least, there are as yet few, if any, similar manufacturing units in operation in this particular field, and so there is no danger of over-production in a market where the demand far exceeds the supply. Finally, they note that the project should contribute to the economic development of both Kano State and the country as a whole, and should provide employment for a number of local workers.

The Central Market entrepreneurs are themselves only too aware of the many problems they will have to grapple with in this transition from an informal to a formal mechanized manufacturing sector, and that such technical, managerial and commercial abilities are not easily learned. Nonetheless, such venturesome individuals do constitute a key factor in government planning in countries like Nigeria, where industrial entrepreneurial activities of this kind constitute what Kilby (1971 : v) terms the 'missing component' in the growth process of developing countries, and so serve to

provide a crucial backdrop to modern economic development. Conclusions as to whether or not these entrepreneurs stand any chance of success in their venture, and the implications of such enterprises for national economic growth, are key issues which are now taken up in the final chapter of this study.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Numerous comparative studies exist on entrepreneurial supply and performance in Africa, a number of which are referred to in the text. These include for example: Bray (1968, 1969a), Berry (1975), Callaway (1967), Hill (1962, 1963, 1970), Katzin (1964), Kilby (1965, 1971), Koll (1969), Levine (1966), Lloyd (1953), Marris and Somerset (1971), Middleton (1966), and Parkin (1972). Kilby (1971 : 1-40) provides an excellent summary and criticism of the various competing explanations of entrepreneurship.
2. There are two gangs of labourers in the Central Market whose special task it is to cut up scrap metal, each of which is made up of four to six young men, a number of whom are immigrant rural blacksmiths.
3. The railway was extended to Maiduguri, capital of North-East State, in 1964.
4. A situation which has induced a number of Central Market craftsmen to take their advanced skills to these same sources of demand and settle there permanently. See also Koll (1969 : 23-24).
5. In 1971 workers in the so-called 'low-income group', i.e. labourers, clerks etc., had a pre-tax annual income of no more than £500, i.e. £10 per week maximum; and professionals in the 'upper-income group', e.g. university lecturers, accountants, engineers etc., had a basic starting salary of £1,200 p.a., i.e. approximately £25 per week.
6. An area very popular with the new breed of Kano businessmen in fact. A number of the more prosperous Central Market men have purchased houses here and moved in to escape the congestion and generally bad living conditions which prevail in the Market area.
7. Vast regions where the horse remains a popular means of transport, especially during the dry-season.
8. A common practice in the metalware industry, in both its traditional and non-traditional forms.
9. For a discussion of general network theory and the different components of networks, see for example Epstein (1961) and Mitchell (1966).
10. Miner (1965) and Mortimore (1972) provide some interesting comparative data on urban-rural economic relationships.
11. This particular technique is very similar to the *ciréperdue* method used in bronze-casting. Aluminium, like bronze, has a relatively low melting-point (about 650°C) and so can be melted in the forced-draught charcoal-fires of the type used by Hausa blacksmiths. Iron on the other hand, has a much higher melting-point (1600°C), and the temperature attained in these furnaces is not sufficient to melt and cast it.
12. Tamburawa has an 'alternate day' market.

13. These knives and daggers are apparently in great demand with Fulani herdsmen in this region, who carry them for protection in the bush.
14. These amounts take on more meaning when it is realised that farm-labourers ('yan kodago) receive about 6/- a day (plus one good meal), and that their services are not normally required at all during the dry-season.
15. Alhaji Isa and Alhaji Rabi'u often used to employ me as a 'go-between' to convey instructions to their Tamburawa clients.
16. These changes have meant that one of the traditional modes of transportation--the donkey--has been largely superceded here. Only one Tamburawa blacksmith in fact continues to use this particular means of transport. All the others either travel to the City by bus - the journey takes about fifteen minutes and the return trip costs 2/- - or they cycle in, which takes the best part of an hour. A few have purchased their own second-hand bicycles for about £10; others rent them for 3/- a day.
17. See also the Standard Bank Economic Review of Nigeria, 1970-71, where it is stated that the domestic production of building materials and textiles as import substitutes was also accelerated during this period.
18. This remains the case essentially. See also Paden (1973 : 313-18, 356-66).
19. Prices of small, imported door-locks for example, jumped from 15/- to 30/- from 1967 to 1968.
20. An important point also made by, inter alia, Cohen (1969) and Katzin (1964 : 193) with regard to Hausa traders in Ibadan and Onitsha (eastern Nigeria) traders respectively.
21. Roughly defined as enterprises employing less than 100 workers and involving a capital investment of not more than £30,000.
22. Mainly lathes, forging dyes, presses, arc-welders, vices, punches, grinders, power saws, and hand forges.

CHAPTER 7PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

...the gestation period required for the assimilation of technical skills; the vigorous response of indigenous entrepreneurs; the development and spread of new tastes...coupled with growth in money incomes; Government policies which for the most part are favourable to the development of the industry--such are likely to be the essential ingredients in the effective transfer of technology and in the enduring establishment of industry. (Kilby 1965: 105).

We have scrutinized in the preceding two chapters both the nature and timing of import-replacing manufacture by hand and also the various factors which influenced the emergence of a group of successful entrepreneurs in our case-unit. It is now perhaps appropriate therefore to conclude this thesis by drawing upon our own empirical findings and those of other scholars in order to identify and assess the specific problems which are likely to face this and other similar enterprises in developing economies.

The exposition itself is organised around a number of analytical questions, and the observations made are seen as having a wider application in the context of economic advancement in general in newly industrializing countries. Quite simply, the basic question which we must now attempt to answer in this final chapter is as follows--in the light of the generally disappointing performance of such indigenous industrial ventures, what chances of success does the present enterprise have?

Most scholars of the subject of development nowadays agree upon two propositions: first, a degree of industrialization is probably a prerequisite for lasting economic growth in developing countries; and second, given a sufficient level of consumer demand, the establishment of viable import-substituting industries is itself a crucial component in this process. It is regarded as crucial moreover because of the potential contribution

of such industries to the national product; to the balance of payments and conservation of foreign exchange; to local employment opportunities; and to the development of much-needed managerial and technical skills. Kilby, whose influential writings on the subject are heavily-drawn on in this final chapter simply because they provide such a comprehensive picture of the processes and problems of economic growth in such regions, writes for instance that:

...import substitution is a reliable base for industrialization...the great majority of underdeveloped countries will have to place major emphasis upon import replacement. (1969: 346).

At the same time, it is true of course that infant industries in these areas do tend to be rather vulnerable to competition from foreign firms, largely as a consequence of the latter's superior technical and organizational competence and purchasing strength. More specifically, this vulnerability, and especially during the early 'learning' stages of factory production, relates to the fact that indigenous entrepreneur-manufacturers must be able to market their finished products at prices lower than the current prices of imported equivalents in order to minimize competition--a key consideration already discussed with regard to the present-day hand-manufacture of modern metalwares in the Central Market complex. This point calls into question too the critical matter of protective government policies.

A number of measures may in fact be adopted at governmental level to help safeguard domestic industry from overseas manufacturers, mainly in the form of trade barriers against foreign equivalents and import duty relief on materials used in the manufacturing processes. The Federal Government has moreover extended some of these fiscal incentives in order to promote local investment in import-replacing industries - including metalware-manufacturing plants - and to eliminate competition. The imposition of protective tariffs is basically designed to provide such nascent local industries with a decisive cost advantage over advanced foreign suppliers who might otherwise acquire a large share of the primary market with their superior products. This device thus

helps to ensure the marketability and profitability of domestic manufacture.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the question of marketability, an effective consumer demand is clearly a major component in the establishment and productiveness of all such concerns, and this particular factor is seen as imposing few, if any, limitations on the Central Market entrepreneurs in their pioneer project. This is because it is planned that the factory should manufacture a relatively cheap, middle-quality range of metalware products, i.e. somewhere in between the labour-intensive 'inferior' hand-made items at present turned out in the Central Market complex, and the 'superior' hardwares imported from abroad. Nor is there any doubt that the market share of these goods will be sufficiently high to support such a plant since, as per capita incomes rise in general, it is anticipated too that the preferences of the consuming public for such articles should increase in proportion.

Internal transportation costs are an important additional element in the location, establishment and potential viability of such small-size, import-replacing industries, and this factor is especially influential with regard to the present project. We saw in Chapter 5 that the 'value added' cost of carrying transport-intensive foreign metalwares to the hinterland of Nigeria means that the current selling price of locally-made metalwares is on average half that of the cheapest import (see Table 7, p. 101). Kilby's (1969: 41) observation that 'The further inland the factory is sited...the greater is the additional protection afforded by the cost of land transport...' has obvious implications therefore for the success of this and other import-substituting units located in the north of the country.

Despite the existence of government policies which are favourable to the growth of the domestic industrial sector, experience suggests that the actual road to enduring industrialization in such countries is full of pitfalls, and one should resist the temptation to be over-optimistic and perhaps play down the many problems. Kilby (1971: 27-28) himself identifies four sets of interacting roles the effective performance of which is crucial to the successful operation of industrial projects in newly industrializing countries. Briefly, these different entrepreneurial activities relate to:

- 1) Exchange relationships and marketing.
- 2) Political administration.
- 3) Management of the ongoing concern.
- 4) Technology.

Kilby adds that whilst the performance of indigenous entrepreneurs in roles one and two has been reasonably effective, their overall showing in the domains of production management and technology, i.e. tasks two and four, has been less than satisfactory. This conclusion is based upon and supported by empirical evidence from a variety of in-depth studies of industrial entrepreneurship and development, all of which point to such managerial and technological shortcomings as being the principal bottlenecks inhibiting industrial growth in developing countries.<sup>2</sup> Harris (1971: 354) for example remarks that:

Nigerian entrepreneurs have been somewhat more successful in identifying opportunities and gaining command over resources [role one] than they have been in the management of enterprises they have founded [role two]. Nigerians are not unresponsive to economic opportunity and are capable and willing to change and adapt their businesses as circumstances require.

Looking to the future execution of these key tasks in the so-called Factory Phase, the following observations, or rather predictions, may be tentatively made vis-à-vis the Central Market entrepreneurs. In the first place, the cumulative evidence presented in the foregoing chapters does, I believe, indicate that with regard to exchange relationships at least--i.e. identifying market opportunities, gaining command over resources in order to establish the business, coordination of raw material purchases with product orders, and marketing the final product--pre-existing transmutable traditions and activities here should provide some foundation for the successful performance of similar if more complex roles in the factory system. In responding so readily to the economic opportunities that came their way in both the pre-War and Transitional Phases, these entrepreneurs have already revealed quite clearly the necessary willingness to take risks and demonstrated considerable skills in marketing.



Execution of the second major task however--Kilby's 'political administration', under which rubric he includes management of human relations within the firm and with customers and suppliers, in addition to dealing with bureaucracy--may prove more problematical for the Central Market businessmen, especially with regard to the handling of workers.

A number of studies have shown that factors deriving from the traditional social structure may act to block the effective carrying out of this particular set of entrepreneurial tasks in the modern factory environment;<sup>3</sup> and there are already in fact signs of what Kilby (1971: 39) calls 'role incongruency' on the part of some of the Central Market individuals. It is evident for example that a few of the more elderly and status-conscious promoters of the project are having difficulty adapting their traditional roles as senior kinsmen within the group to the more democratic behavioural requirements of an advanced industrial set-up, a situation which has led to several of their younger, more merit-conscious lieutenants objecting to the sometimes rather authoritarian and paternalistic way in which they handle their subordinates in the Market. These differences have at times erupted into the open moreover, and resulted in one particular instance in two workers actually withdrawing from the venture. Arguments have also arisen between a number of the senior shareholders of the company, mainly concerning the delegation of important financial responsibilities in the enterprise. Other potential socio-cultural impediments exist and are dealt with below in the context of an assessment of the likely repercussions on our case-unit of the two major obstacles to industrial progress--managerial and technical deficiencies.

Observed managerial shortcomings relate basically to a lack of interest in keeping written records as a control technique, inadequate supervision of the manufacturing process, and a disinclination to effect improvements in production control and product quality. These weaknesses together lead to general underutilization of the productive capacity of the industry.

Concerning the Central Market entrepreneurs, we have already noted an overall reluctance on their part to use written records for purposes of control despite the fact that the loan-supplying authorities had expressly requested that they commence producing

statements of all transactions as part of the original loan agreement. This limitation aside however, perhaps the major potential impediment to the success of this and similar industrial projects relates to the performance of what is the central managerial activity--the conscientious daily coordination of the work of various individuals and groups.

It is probably the general case that in traditional and semitraditional societies, because of a relatively simple technology and the related fact that individual craftsmen tend to manufacture products in their entirety, at their own rate, and to their own standards, there is little or no need for direct managerial supervision. As Kilby (1971: 37) notes, 'In sum, in traditional society there are no antecedents for the coordination and control functions which are central to the management of an industrial enterprise.' Without disputing the general validity of this statement, it should be noted at once that it is not wholly applicable to our own case-unit and so needs some qualification in this instance at least. The data and biographies presented in Chapters 5 and 6 do in fact point to a noticeable degree of divisibility within the production processes of the current Central Market system. In other words, there are certain antecedent managerial roles in existence in this complex--putting-out of labour, sub-contracting, individual workers carrying out subsets of production operations--which, though admittedly limited, can nonetheless be built upon and should thus facilitate the adjustment to the more complex managerial activities required in the factory system.

On the technical side, experience indicates that these businessmen should be prepared to face a number of obstacles as they try to break into the modern manufacturing sector, mainly with regard to maintaining and operating machines and equipment in the factory, improving existing processes and products, and introducing new ones. This transfer of technology may prove difficult for the Central Market workers moreover, and in spite of the fact that most of them have acquired considerable skills and experience in the semitraditional artizan context. This is because there is clearly a large gap between the relatively simple technology of blacksmithing (and coldsmithing) and the more advanced technical expertise which is required in the modern mechanized setting.

Earlier we briefly considered some of the traditional social structure factors which may contribute to deficiencies in managerial performance, and before moving on to discuss the possible solutions to all the above bottlenecks, I should like to take up again this question of likely socio-cultural restraints on industrial progress in underdeveloped areas.

It is often suggested that antecedent prestige patterns can act to impede modern business enterprises. Kilby (1969: 341-42, 1971: 38-39) and LaVine (1966: Chapters 1 and 2) for instance point to a general disinclination amongst superiors raised in a traditional social setting towards exercising supervision of the work of subordinates in the new industrial context: this is due to the fact that concern with the task performance of workers represents a socially degrading activity and would mean some loss of status respect. It could be the case too that status factors of this kind may prove to be especially problematical for this particular enterprise, since conspicuous leisure is a principal index of high social status in the strictly hierarchical society of the Hausa.

The demands of the extended family are also frequently cited as an additional cultural factor which can act as a drag on indigenous industrial growth in newly industrializing countries: in this way the drains imposed by the extended family are seen as inhibiting both the accumulation of capital and the productive reinvestment of earnings. Apropos of this variable, it is true, as has been noted, that our entrepreneurs have typically invested a portion of their profits in cars, houses, pilgrimages to Mecca and so on. At the same time, the exact quantitative effect of such claims and expenditures is very difficult to calculate, quite apart from varying from area to area. It was also observed earlier that such 'conspicuous' investments are in fact not without benefit to the modern Hausa businessman. Katzin also believes that too much significance has probably been attached to this factor and writes:

There can be no doubt that family obligations can be a drain on business capital, but the effect may have been exaggerated...some Africans have been able to hold such expenditures within tolerable limits, because they have built up substantial capital through reinvest-

ment of earnings while meeting these obligations and remaining on the best of terms with their families. (1964: 195).

-- a statement which certainly has some application to the Central Market entrepreneurs. What is more, insofar as these prosperous craftsmen-traders all started at a comparatively low level and with little capital, it seems improbable that the claims of fellow descent group members have blocked their business performance to any appreciable extent.

For all the forementioned constraints on industrial progress--managerial, technical and socio-cultural--there are of course no quick or simple remedies. Regarding the first two bottlenecks, part of the solution clearly lies in the provision of appropriate conventional training and education, and most governments nowadays do offer various types of assistance to indigenous entrepreneurs in a bid to produce the kinds of organizational and technical skills required to plan and operate a modern small-scale industry. A number of the Central Market craftsmen have in fact already attended short technical training courses at the Industrial Development Centre in Zaria where they received instruction in some of the simpler modern labour skills, e.g. use and maintenance of lathes, power saws and welders; and whilst a few of these trainees had some difficulty adapting to the new technology, most of them showed that they were able to draw upon their existing technical expertise and so cope adequately with the more complex modes of machine production. As a back up measure too the Government plans to supply several officers to assist in the factory during the initial manufacturing stages, a move which should help the workers gradually acquire valuable 'on-the-job' training in the plant itself. Informal apprenticeship and self-education of this kind are just as much prerequisites to the effective adaptation of advanced production processes as the more formal measures outlined above.

One factor which should be to the benefit of these men when factory production finally commences is that the machinery to be installed is relatively uncomplicated. Kilby makes this important point when he writes that:

...realization of the advantages of any capital substitution is subject to a number of con-

straints: that the equipment does not require highly specific skills to operate or maintain... (1965: 109),

and one advantageous feature of this projected metalware-manufacturing plant is that it lends itself to moderately labour-intensive operations and so will not necessitate a highly-skilled work force. Indeed, one of the main attractions of such small-size industrial enterprises in general is that they do not as a rule require or use the capital-intensive production techniques and processes of large-scale industries; as a consequence, newly-introduced methods may be more readily absorbed and utilized by smaller manufacturers like these.

Concerning the oft reported organizational weaknesses of similar industrial ventures, increasing the managerial capabilities of the entrepreneur-promoters is obviously a key element in any programme aimed at encouraging those indigenous small businessmen who display the ability to break out of the pre-modern sector and pioneer new industries. Staley and Morse (1971: 365) for example state that:

Poor management causes not only low labor productivity but also, even more critical in capital-scarce countries, "underemployment of capital", and wastage of materials... "Skill-intensive" measures for management improvement, as contrasted with "capital-intensive" physical facilities, therefore assume highest importance in most developing regions.

In-plant experience is quite clearly a key requisite for creating managerial competence, but as they further observe:

Experience alone is rarely enough, however, to ensure the most effective management of small business facing the complexities of a modern economy. (1971: 365).

The provision of management advice and assistance for small entrepreneurs, and covering such critical tasks as product planning and improvement, production methods, marketing, purchasing, financial control, management of personnel and so on, is therefore crucial. On this matter, the Kano Ministry of Trade and Industry

plans, mainly through the agency of the extension services of the Industrial Development Centre, to offer a selected number of the Central Market businessmen short courses in management training, apart from supplying, as mentioned earlier, technical managers when the factory begins production. It is possible moreover that instruction in modern management methods may in fact find relatively easy acceptance amongst these men who, because of their long occupational experience as entrepreneurs in the semi-traditional context, might readily grasp and absorb any new lessons.

It has been proposed that certain other factors adversely affecting entrepreneurial performance are rooted in the traditional socio-cultural background. Kilby (1971: 36) for example concludes that:

...technological and managerial weaknesses in the entrepreneur's performance are seen to be a function not only of the technological environment but also of the social structure which supports and is pervasively intermeshed with traditional technology.

These cultural impediments to effective entrepreneurship can, furthermore, only be ameliorated, as Kilby himself rightly argues, by gradual changes in attitudes and behaviour as part of a general modification of traditional values. Modernization, in the sense of changes in ways of living, values and attitudes, as well as in directly material terms, is thus essential if these and other local entrepreneurs are to achieve true 'take-off' into modern production and subsequent industrial growth.

For Kilby, the differential performance of entrepreneurial tasks in newly industrializing regions is influenced primarily by antecedent social structure factors of the type discussed above; and he observes further that many of the remedies suggested tend to concentrate largely upon managerial and technical problems, i.e. to the virtual exclusion of socio-cultural determinants. Without denying the influence of this particular variable and the general relevance of these observations, as a statement of universal truth I believe it has its limitations: local conditions do vary, and consequently the precise limitational factors which must be dealt with also differ from area to area. As Staley and Morse themselves write:

No two countries have exactly the same economic opportunities, business traditions, labor and managerial skills, political pre-suppositions, administrative capabilities, educational foundations, and cultural backgrounds. (1971: 363).

The basic position I am taking is that there is no single solution to the various problems--managerial, technical and socio-cultural--which we have seen face such entrepreneurs in their attempt to break out of the traditional and into the modern industrial sector. Thus, the most effective response will be elicited only if there is an integrated attack on all those factors which have been specifically identified as the principal bottle-necks to indigenous industrial development.

What then is the most likely prognostic for these men? There is, I think, reason for careful optimism regarding their venture into the factory system, and in spite of the obstacles, both observed and anticipated, discussed above. A number of related factors have been noted which should operate to the benefit of these entrepreneurs. First, it is clearly to their advantage that the new industry is linked with and so is to be founded upon an existing, long-established local craft whose exponents have considerable occupational experience in both production and marketing: this combination of transmutable technical skills and business acumen should thus provide some base for learning the more complex modes of factory production and management. Secondly, the planned utilization of relatively simple labour-absorptive production techniques has obvious technical benefits for such nascent small-size plants. Thirdly, the current market for these particular products is certainly large enough to sustain such a unit, and an anticipated growth in per capita income, coupled with gradual changes in consumer tastes, are likely moreover to have a favourable impact upon the market. The scope for this particular import-replacing industry thus appears to be quite considerable, even if it has to be partially protected by competition-eliminating tariffs.

Last, though by no means least, there is the sheer drive, ambition, ingenuity and responsiveness of these men, all of which qualities have been well documented in this thesis. It is true that some years will no doubt elapse before they acquire, through formal training and in-plant experience, the kind of learning and

familiarization that will eventually lead to raised productivity and cost reductions once the new industry has found its feet. On the other hand, the intense desire of these individuals to absorb and emulate, an attribute that Callaway (1967) for example observed amongst similar small businessmen in modern Ibadan, surely constitutes one of the most positive factors for overcoming all the above constraints. These and other local entrepreneurs represent a precious national resource and, just as small-scale industries continue to make a substantial contribution to industrial production in the developed economies of the world, so too they are a viable and constructive factor in the economic growth of late industrializing countries. As Kilby (1965: 3) rightly comments, '...it is upon the emergence of such a group [of entrepreneurs] that the hope of any enduring industrialization in these [African] countries depends.'

Finally, it is via such an analysis of the development and contemporary nature of these back-street artizan industries that we can examine the basis of indigenous entrepreneurship--itself the necessary sub-soil for industrial development from below. An orientation of this kind is seen as being vital to any study of modern social change, and as having too some relevance and practical value for those development programmes aimed at encouraging local businessmen to expand and modernize their operations. It is also hoped that the findings presented in this thesis may have provided insight into some of the more significant processes of current socio-economic change and concomitant problems on the one hand, and into how, on the other hand, the very occupational foundations of society can be a marked asset in modern economic growth in developing countries.



FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Kilby (1969: 28-29) reports that Nigerian-produced cloth for example receives protection from the Federal Government of something like 55% of the landed value of imported textiles. For an extended discussion of the advantages or otherwise of protective tariffs in developing areas, see especially Kilby (1965: 106-108, 1969: 41-55).
2. See in particular the major works on Nigerian industrial entrepreneurship by Kilby (1965, 1969, 1971), Harris and Rowe (1966), Harris (1967), and Nafziger (1967). Other important developmental studies, all of which deal with the various problem areas covered in this chapter, include: Wells and Warmington (1962), Robinson (ed.) (1963), Hanna (ed.) (1964), Herskovits and Harwitz (eds.) (1964), Callaway (1967), Lawson (1968), First (1971), Staley and Morse (1971), and Lubeck (1975). A number of these works are referred to in the main text.
3. See for example Herskovits (1952: 123-26), Levine (1966: Chapter 1), and Kilby (1969, 1971: 38-40).

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