

THE HISTORICAL AND RECENT EVOLUTION IN THE SUDANIC AND SUB-SUDANIC SAVANNAH OF NE- NIGERIA: GEOGRAPHICAL, LINGUISTIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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The search for persistent elements in nature and culture, which comprises language as a constitutive part, is a prerequisite for the definition of any change which is the aim of our common project. When analysing the process of transformation by a number of disciplines we expect to discover significant features of this alteration and the forces dominating it. We must confess that tracing the reasons is more difficult than dissecting the facts. For the huge 'stage' of the historical scene in the North East of Nigeria between Lake Chad in the East, River Benue in the South and Jos Plateau in the West the linguistic findings of this session reveal that migratory movements of people from the beginning till today are constituent elements. The same happens to be the result of the recent population development under the aspect of physical, especially climatic but economic push and pull factors, too. Here agriculture is the guiding principle because the vast majority of the people rely on it.

Analysing the development of Nigeria's agriculture since independence in 1960 will remind us of the importance of the political and economical structures and the interrelation between local and general processes in the region as well as with world wide trends which is the principle clause of the *geographical axiom* based on the *planetarian continuum* of geographical science (NEEF 1967, 22)¹.

The region under investigation consists of the States of Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Yobe, with small parts of Jigawa and Kano States. From 1967 to 1976 this ethnically diverse area was constituted into the North-Eastern State of Nigeria. With an area of approximately 200.000 km², it covers one fifth of the territory of Nigeria but supports 11-12 million inhabitants only one eighth of the Nigerian population. It is therefore low populated with an average density of 60 persons per km² which is below the national average of 96 persons per km². The land area has about half the size of Germany but only one seventh of the German population. But in contrast to Germany with just one percent in NE-Nigeria 70% of the population rely on agriculture. For farming, grazing, and even daily water supply the availability of water is the restricting factor in a harsh environment where an excessive dry season increases from half a year in the South to three quarters of the year in the North.

¹ References see p. 172

The members of different disciplines and projects like to present some examples of their findings revealing the dynamic of cultural change in the north-eastern Nigerian Savannah in historic time till present days.

As about 70% of the population in this area are farmers it is of basic interest that Dr. Anamati Ntukidem as an economic geographer starts with an analysis of the generally deplorable development of Nigerian agriculture since independence in 1960.

On the background of the difficult environmental conditions especially under the aspect of desiccation I shall deal with the generally tremendous but regionally uneven impact of population growth during the same period. It resulted in an expansion of farming and an incisive change in the land use pattern especially in the surrounding of Gombe the most important growth pole in the North. Fortunately I had the chance to start my work there in 1961 at the beginning of the outstanding development there.

Dr. Gilbert MALCHAU analyses the recent economic strategies of the sons of those peasants in the Gombe region whose farms I measured in 1961. He presents his far-reaching findings about their adaptability towards modern market economy.

Most recently Gombe town became the capital of the new Gombe State. Some implications of a rapid urban development are traced by Heiko Balzer (originally presented as a poster).

The change between geographically small scale and large scale exploration will be continued in the anthropological-linguistic grass-root analysis on space and gender in two different cultures by Dr. Sabine Dinslage, Dr. Rudolf Leger and Dr. Anne Storch: A traditional magic-religious structure of the Jibi in Kona, a Jukun village near the Benue with an undisturbed cultural and social set up, and the Kwami with an urban Islamic pattern. In another paper R. Leger and A. Storch will spotlight linguistic interference between southern Chadic and Jukunoid languages in adjacent areas in the Gombe State (Bole - Tangale, Ron).

The current highly complex present linguistic situation in the western and south-western fringe of the Chad Basin will be reconstructed from the historical migrations undertaken by the various linguistic groups from Lake Chad (mainly Chadic languages) to their present settlements. The six authors, the linguists Dr. Dimitr Ibrizimov, Dr. Doris Löhr, Christopher Mtaku, the ethno-musicologist Dr. Raimund Vogels, and the historian Ibrahim Maina Waziri integrated the results of their studies into one paper towards a systemic approach by tracing back the common roots of the languages, the customs and the music of those peoples and give an outline of their tradition concerning their movements. A basic dual model of migration will be put forward.

But now we proceed to the paramount topic for an agrarian society as given and outlined by the Nigerian economic conditions.