

**The Politics of the Public Sphere:
English-language and Yoruba-language Print Culture in
Colonial Lagos, 1880s-1940s**

Katharina Adewoyin Oke
The Queen's College
University of Oxford

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Short Abstract

This thesis studies print culture in colonial Lagos against the background of the public sphere, and brings together a variety of English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers. Such an approach allows for highlighting the practicalities of newspaper production and foregrounding the work accomplished by newspapermen in a changing ‘information environment’ and political context. It offers insights into Lagos politics, contributes to the history of the educated elite, and to more global histories of communication. Using newspapers as well as archival records, and focussing on events that strikingly reveal dynamics in the public sphere, this thesis narrates a nuanced history of a discursive field which was, amongst other things, central for Lagos politics.

This thesis complicates a Habermasian notion of the public sphere as an open discursive space, and not only highlights that the public sphere was an arena of contested meanings, but also illustrates axes along which the composition of this social structure was negotiated. When newspapers emerged in the late nineteenth-century, discussions in the press were largely restricted to the elite. The economy of recognition that was at play in the public sphere was to change in the 1920s. This thesis highlights how newspapermen and contributors sought to carve out niches for themselves in the public sphere in new ways and how their becoming a speaker in this discursive field was challenged and contested. It highlights the nuanced ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics through their papers: how they did so around particular issues, in distinction from each other, and how they adapted the convening of publics to new political dynamics in the 1940s. This thesis gives insight into the complex relationship between English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers, and moreover illustrates how the practicalities of the newspaper *business* were coming to bear on dynamics in the public sphere.

Long Abstract

This study gives insight into the ways in which Lagosians negotiated a discursive field constituted by newspapers between the 1880s and 1940s. In particular, it studies the politics of convening publics in the English-language and Yoruba-language press and the practicalities of newspaper production. That is to say, it brings together an analysis of discussions in the press with a study of more contextual aspects that shaped what form those discussions could take. In so doing, this dissertation offers various perspectives on the public sphere in colonial Nigeria. It narrates a nuanced history of a discursive field which was, amongst other things, central for Lagos politics.

The choice for approaching newspapers in colonial Lagos against the background of the public sphere grows out of recent literature on African print cultures. Such studies have analysed newspapers in their own right, outside a paradigm of resistance against colonial rule. This has, in turn, made it possible to re-assess the larger structural importance of newspapers in West Africa – to conceive them as forming a forum for debate, open to strangers. Such an approach forms the background for this study's investigation into the changing dynamics of this discursive field. It studies various newspapers and publishing activity by a range of actors, draws on archival materials and focuses on events that strikingly reveal dynamics in the public sphere.

Overall, this dissertation's insights into print culture in colonial Lagos can be clustered around three broader themes. Firstly, it foregrounds the importance of newspapers in addition to constituting a discursive field. Secondly, it highlights the work newspapermen accomplished when navigating a changing information environment and changing political contexts. In doing so, it illustrates that not only the convening of a national public, but also the formulation of complex identities, identity politics, histories of social becoming, complex negotiations of what 'modern' Lagos should look like, and also commercial opportunities and constraints form part of the history of the press. Thirdly, and by highlighting the politics of convening publics, this

dissertation shows that Lagosians not only debated issues in the press, but that the discursive field itself was a subject of debate. It provides further insight into the relationship between English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers, and thus into how Lagosians imagined a discursive field in a multilingual environment.

When studying practicalities of the newspaper business, this dissertation gives insight into the ways in which newspapers were intertwined with various economic projects. It argues that newspapers were not only a means to achieve political ends, but as businesses, were a political end in themselves. They not only advertised projects of economic nationalism, but were themselves considered examples of African industriousness. Duse Mohammed Ali's *African Times and Orient Review*, which brought together the investments of Lagosians and other West Africans, further illustrates that newspapers could exemplify economic pan-Africanism. Moreover, this dissertation highlights the ways in which newspapers contributed to nationalist projects besides the transmission of ideas. It shows how newspapers were intertwined with African-owned banks and thus brings the contribution of newspapers to broader projects of economic nationalism back into view.

When looking into the practicalities of 'news gathering' this thesis gives further insight into the cultural and ideological work newspapermen accomplished in a changing 'information environment'. Looking at the history of the Reuters news agency, and the ways in which newspapermen engaged with the service, this dissertation contributes to foregrounding the accomplishments of newspapermen when establishing and maintaining information networks and other connections. This study shows that Reuters established links to Nigeria only 20 years after newspapers resumed publication in Lagos. Nigeria was marginalized in an emerging imperial and ultimately global information and communication infrastructure. Nevertheless, Nigerian newspapermen entertained meaningful connections to newspapers, contributors and readers along the West African Coast, within the British Empire and beyond since the nineteenth century.

Moreover, this dissertation demonstrates the complex relationships newspapermen established through and beyond the pages of their papers. In showing how newspapers were intertwined with various other commercial projects, this study illustrates that relationships between reader/contributors and their editors could change and grow into potential business partners.

This dissertation also further illustrates and highlights the critical and independent ways in which newspapermen and contributors engaged with information flows emanating from the imperial metropole. Reuters news, which was available via the government at a comparatively low cost in Lagos between the turn of the century and up to the mid-1920s, enabled the Lagosian press to make links and comparisons between the experiences of locals and others as imperial subjects. This dissertation, however, also shows that the appeal this service had for the Lagos press probably had limits. The Yoruba newspapers which emerged in the 1920s subscribed to the service but barely featured it in its pages, and for the English-language press Reuters failed, at the latest in the late 1920s, to provide 'news of relevance'. This dissertation thus highlights other factors besides the cost of the service that contributed to the disconnection of West Africa from the Empire's information broker.

Furthermore, this dissertation gives insight into the ways in which newspapermen and journalists navigated publishing activity in the face of a colonial state which increasingly sought to intervene in the press, in particular starting from the 1930s. Following the Second World War and wartime propaganda, the colonial state continued to engage in close information management via the Public Relations Office. The administration sought to harness the media for policy goals and challenged newspaper's reporting in their own publications, at press conferences, or by sending out articles to the press urging them to correct 'misleading' statements. This study gives insight into how potential readers perceived the press in a political climate which was becoming more and more radically anti-colonial. A survey of radio listeners in 1948 showed that the press was valued for their engagement with colonial policy.

By then, journalists had generally come to embrace more politically active personas. This dissertation argues that when the Public Relations Office sought to influence reporting, the ensuing altercations offered journalists opportunities to convene radical anti-colonial publics. In disputing the reasoning behind these interventions, journalists could challenge the colonial state's capacity to produce knowledge more generally.

By looking at the biographies of newspapermen, textual features, reporting on specific issues, and the practicalities of the newspaper business, this dissertation gives insight into various dynamics at play in the public sphere. In particular, it sheds light on the changing politics of convening publics in colonial Lagos. It thus complicates a Habermasian notion of the public sphere as an open discursive space, and not only highlights that the public sphere was an arena of contested meanings, but also illustrates axes along which the composition of this social structure was negotiated in colonial Lagos. Moreover, this study illustrates that the creole elite, which Benedict Anderson considers central for the emergence of a new, nationalist consciousness, was not the only group imagining community in the press. It highlights moments and ways in which this elite was challenged and superseded.

This dissertation brings attention to the structural challenges and opportunities associated with the newspaper business, which were coming to bear on dynamics in the public sphere. Newspapers were precarious businesses that could barely make ends meet. They were highly dependent on sales, and this study shows potential ways in which newspapermen sought to increase their returns through their reporting. This allows us to put the controversial nature of newspaper reporting into greater context. Furthermore, in addition to editors, journalists and contributors, a variety of other stakeholders were involved with publishing a newspaper. Drawing on letters of employees at Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News*, this study gives insight into how resulting financial pressures could limit a paper's capacity to convene radical publics. It suggests that while newspapers were highly dependent on sales, advertising revenue from expatriate commercial interests could placate employees the paper otherwise

struggled to pay. It thus illustrates how newspapermen had to navigate between convening radical publics around issues such as the boycott of expatriate firms with their ability to bring out a newspaper altogether.

By looking at the ways in which newspapermen and contributors embarked on convening publics in the press, this dissertation shows that up until the 1920s, discussions in the press were limited to an exclusive circle of elite Lagosians. It argues that an economy of recognition was at play in the public sphere. For those who could not boast close connections to the Lagos elite, recognition in the wider West-African print network could provide them with the credentials needed to achieve speaker-status in the Lagos press. However, eminence alone did not guarantee the success of a newspaper.

This study illustrates that although members of the anglicised Saro elite held on to political leadership until the 1930s, they felt that their claim to do so was already under threat in the 1920s. Starting at that time, Lagosians sought to convene publics in new ways and to reach out to new groups of readers. This study argues that such dynamics unfolded against the background of the colonial state questioning the capacity of the elite to represent the wider population. At the same time, and in laying claim to 'representativeness' in other ways, groups hitherto marginalised in discussions in the press sought to convene publics in their own right. The new ways in which newspapermen and contributors sought to convene publics did not go unchallenged. Looking at discursive registers – references to broader themes – this dissertation illustrates how Lagosians negotiated different notions of how publics should be convened in the press. Interlocutors employed discursive registers when appealing to publics, and equally when challenging and contesting the ways in which others were convening publics. Some among the established elite sought to reinforce Victorian notions of respectability and discredited those that sought to convene publics by alluding to 'mass support'. Discursive registers associated with education and educational credentials mirrored

colonial discourses about education, and the ways in which some sought to convene publics was moreover contested by urging the colonial state to take action.

This dissertation analyses the way in which Yoruba-language newspapers made reference to class rhetoric when convening publics in distinction from the English-language press in the 1920s. In doing so, it gives insight into the nuances of and changes in the 'vernaculars' of publics, how their overarching narrative, which served interlocutors as frame of reference for their contributions, changed over time. This study argues that by the late 1920s references to class rhetoric had become declarations of solidarity with limited performativity, which suggests that the public sphere was by then imagined as a more diverse discursive field.

This dissertation gives further insight into dynamics in the public sphere when analysing reporting on issues associated with the so-called Eleko-question. This issue centred on the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as Oba or King of Lagos; his recognition was withdrawn in 1920 and he was deported from Lagos in 1925. This study illustrates that victory against the colonial administration in the Apapa land case in 1921 validated a new political dynamic, and thus new ways in which political demands and positions were formulated in the public sphere. When seeking justice for the Eleko, his supporters were hoping that their understanding of justice, which was formulated along such lines, would be equally validated.

This study illustrates that the Eleko-question further divided two political camps in Lagos. Herbert Macaulay and other 'radicals' supported Eshugbayi's cause and successfully directed the new political momentum. They were opposed by the so-called 'conservatives' which opposed Eshugbayi or sought to abolish the office of the Oba altogether. This dissertation highlights how newspapermen were convening publics in a way that sought to overcome such political polarisation. Newspapermen sought to convene publics around notions of a 'third way' – around varying degrees of support for Eshugbayi and different ways of appealing to the aspiring middle classes. In its examination of the Yoruba paper *Eko Akete*, this study provides insight into the difficulties and challenges newspapermen faced when seeking to convene

publics in such ways. Their attempts were often dismissed as siding with the ‘conservatives’. Against this background, this study argues that interpretive frames and personalities directing political dynamics were intertwined in complex ways, and that alternatives to this polarisation of Lagos politics could only gain wider ground when leading ‘conservative’ politicians no longer contributed to discussions in the press.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the ways in which the public sphere was conceptualised in a multilingual environment, and the complex ways in which English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers related to each other. In the 1880s, the public sphere was envisioned as a space for discussion in the English language. With his *Iwe Irohin Eko*, Andrew Thomas sought to transform this sphere by enabling discussions in English and Yoruba side by side. This attempt was, however, unsuccessful, and illustrates the limits of Lagosian’s ‘cultural nationalism’ in face of increased racial discrimination in government and trade. When Yoruba-language newspapers re-emerged in the 1920s, English-language and Yoruba-language contents no longer mirrored each other and Yoruba-language newspapers used English and Yoruba in different contexts and in pursuance of different aims.

This dissertation moreover shows that Yoruba-language newspapers cannot simply be associated with one of the political camps of Lagos politics – the positions papers took, and the ways in which they convened publics were more complex. Colonial prosecution of newspapers focussed on the English-language press, thus potentially encouraging powerful alliances between publications in the different languages. Nevertheless, Yoruba newspapers pursued their own agendas, and convened publics independently. An Analysis of reporting on the return of the Eleko to Lagos in 1931 illustrates the nuanced ways in which *Akede Eko*, a newspaper usually associated with the ‘radicals’, related to political projects pursued by this political camp. Instead of joining the ‘radicals’ in their campaign to discourage readers from celebrating the Eleko’s return by calling for calm and restraint, the Yoruba paper joined readers in their celebrations and encouraged them. This study nevertheless also reveals that

there were limits to how much Yoruba newspapers could distance themselves from 'politics'. This study argues that E.A. Akintan sought to continue convening publics around a notion of a more neutral 'third way' in Lagos politics when he re-launched *Eletì Ofẹ* in 1947 after a 15-year hiatus. He did so when he convened publics around notions of progress and development, which allowed him to embrace opportunities offered by the different political 'sides'. When Obafemi Awolowo launched his *Ẹgbẹ Ọmọ Oduduwa* – a Yoruba cultural organisation – in Lagos, Akintan's paper commended the association and its achievements, not least as its goals fit well with the ways Akintan convened publics in his paper. This dissertation argues that *Eletì Ofẹ* became involved with 'politics' inadvertently when the *Ẹgbẹ* became the bone of political contention, and Akintan saw the need to defend the association in this course. This illustrates that 'politics' had by that time become ubiquitous, not least as 'ethnicity' had become one of the discursive registers of inter-elite competition.

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Note on Orthography

The orthography of the Yoruba-language varied in the period under review. For this reason, diacritical marks are not generally given. However, when quoting from sources, this dissertation follows the spelling used. Moreover, depending on context, different spellings for names and positions were used in the period under review. For this reason, anglicised versions are given, if they were in use.

Abbreviations

CMS	Church Missionary Society
HMP	Herbert Macaulay Papers, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan
NCBWA	National Congress of British West Africa
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NNAE	Nigerian National Archives Enugu
NNAI	Nigerian National Archives Ibadan
NNDP	Nigerian National Democratic Party
NYM	Nigerian Youth Movement
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom

Introduction

In 1925, Adeoye Deniga, editor of the bilingual Yoruba newspaper *Eko Akete* found himself under attack by some of Lagos' 'radical' politicians – even one of his long standing contributors, Atari Ajanaku, had turned against him. Thomas Horatio Jackson, the most prominent among those attacking Deniga, had just published a critique of Governor Clifford in his *Lagos Weekly Record*. He and others disapproved of the way in which Clifford had dealt with the so-called Eleko-question – which centred around the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as Oba or King of Lagos, which the Colonial Government had suspended. Although an ardent supporter of the cause of the Eleko, Adeoye Deniga criticised Jackson's 'attack' on Clifford – opining that instead of helping matters, such an attack would just complicate things further. What followed was, in the words of Kekere Ilu, another contributor to Deniga's paper, that some of the 'radicals' uttered "distasteful words" towards Deniga, which were in turn amplified in the *Lagos Weekly Record*.¹ When Atari Ajanaku explained why he had turned against his editor, he delineated his conception of the relationship between contributors and editors of a newspaper – he refers to *Eko Akete* as his landlord, and sees his column as a small apartment hired from the paper:

The expression is used figuratively as EKO AKETE is not our landlord in the literal sense. EKO AKETE newspaper is like a landlord while columnists who write features in the paper and advertisers who place adverts in it are like tenants. As such, we have no authority over our 'landlord', but we know what to do when our landlord begins to prove difficult.²

¹ Kekere Ilu, 'Si Oni Iwe-Irohin EKO AKETE', *Eko Akete*, 30. May 1925, p. 4. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi. Copies of the *Lagos Weekly Record* for 1925 are not available in the British Library, and this analysis thus relies on assessments by Atari Ajanaku and Kekere Ilu.

² Atari Ajanaku, 'Si Oni 'we-irohin "EKO AKETE"', *Eko Akete*, 18. July 1925, pp. 7-8. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi.

With the latter remark, Atari Ajanaku was in no way threatening to ‘move out’ from *Eko Akete*, but rather insisted that he would “not hesitate to challenge EKO AKETE if the publisher allows some unscrupulous elements to mislead it with lies.”³

This example gives insight into a minor and short-lived so-called “press controversy” – a recurrent feature of newspaper reporting in colonial Lagos. Heated exchanges between, and, as the above illustrates, also within newspapers, can be described as one characteristic of publishing activity in the period under review. Newspapermen and contributors on the one hand passionately engaged in such skirmishes, but, on the other hand, condemned such altercations, as the disunity they displayed was seen as hampering political progress.⁴

The example also illustrates that newspapermen and contributors were concerned about the way in which publication activity was conducted more generally. Following the initial attack on his editor, Atari Ajanaku’s column was suspended for a week, but then reappeared again, allowing Ajanaku to justify his attack on Deniga by invoking a sense of duty towards the paper as illustrated in the above quotes.⁵ Newspapermen and contributors engaged in complex manoeuvres when publishing texts. According to newspaper historian Fred Omu, Kekere Ilu, who was defending Deniga in face of Ajanaku’s attack, was in fact Deniga, the editor, himself⁶: instead of evicting his ‘tenant’, Deniga found another way to accommodate this difference with his contributor. The above example thus draws our attention to the various ways in which editors and contributors sought to appeal to readers. In other words, this draws our attention to the ways in which newspapermen convened publics, how they sought to construct a public that came into being only in relation to their reporting.⁷ The way in which *Eko Akete* let the

³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴ Cf. ‘A Reason for Our Faith’, *The Nigerian Times*, 5. April 1910, p. 4.

⁵ Atari Ajanaku made a vague reference to why his column did not appear – he referred to certain “hitches” which had never occurred before. This could even suggest that the reasons for his column not to appear were unrelated to the ‘press controversy’.

⁶ F. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937* (London, 1978), p. 70, note 14.

⁷ Cf. M. Warner, ‘Publics and Counterpublics’, *Public Culture*, 14:1 (2002), p. 50.

disagreement between Atari Ajanaku and Kekere Ilu play out illustrates that editors in Lagos could convene competing, parallel and overlapping publics in their papers.

This exemplary press-controversy also gives insight into what was at stake during discussions in the press. In this case, it was the question of how to contest the colonial state, but also how the institution of the Oba of Lagos could continue to function under colonial rule, and more general dynamics of Lagos politics. This 'press controversy' thus also points out that various other dynamics besides convening a national public – a function of the press highlighted by Benedict Anderson – form part of the history of the press. In newspapers, Lagosians expressed and shaped a wide range of identities, the press created new networks of exchange, newspapers were a central stage for politics, and also served the preservation of culture and history. Moreover, newspapers were also businesses.

Atari Ajanaku uses the metaphor of the compound to describe the discursive setting of which he is part – he highlights his relationship with his 'landlord' and mentions other tenants as forming part of this environment. This dissertation studies newspapers against the background of the public sphere – in the terms of Ajanaku's metaphor, it situates the dynamics of *Eko Akete* compound in the context of the wider 'settlement'. That is to say, it brings together the study of English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers between the 1880s and 1940s, and thus allows for a more comprehensive examination of this discursive field. More so, it studies publication activity in a variety of newspapers and by a range of actors in Lagos and thus gives insight into broader dynamics at play in this social structure. Approaching print culture against the background of the public sphere, it moreover provides new perspectives on newspapers. This dissertation studies practicalities of newspaper production such as newsgathering or the newspaper business, and thus highlights more contextual aspects informing publication activity under colonial rule. This study approaches the public sphere as an arena of contested meanings; in its analysis of publishing on selected issues as well as reporting in the course of diagnostic events, it highlights how newspapermen and editors

negotiated this discursive field. It draws attention to the ways in which Lagosians established themselves as speakers in the public sphere, the particular ways in which they set out to convene publics and the contestations and challenges they encountered when doing so.

This dissertation could thus narrate a history of nationalism(s), and describe the ways in which the press evoked and made reference to various different, overlapping and competing communities of social solidarity and belonging.⁸ Instead, this dissertation narrates a nuanced history of a discursive field in which, amongst other things, politics happened. It offers a West African perspective on imperial and ultimately global news networks and information infrastructures. Furthermore, this study contributes to the social history of the educated elite and of those “hovering on the outskirts of the elite”⁹ as it allows for deepening our understanding of the cultural, political and ideological work accomplished by newspapermen.

Newspapers in West Africa

When newspapers were introduced in the nineteenth century in Sierra Leone,¹⁰ West Africa saw broader changes in the field of textual production. With Islam, a particular culture of scholarship and writing had spread in Africa – literacy in Arabic was a quintessential part of the faith. In West Africa, manuscripts and books were imported via the Sahara, and early on local industries focusing on manuscript-copying and bookbinding emerged. By the sixteenth century, Timbuktu had become an early centre of the wider distribution of such works, and the city remained important up to the twentieth century.¹¹ In the eighteenth century, the local production of writing had become more frequent.¹² Paper, which was for instance traded for

⁸ See also W. Adebani, *Nation as Grand Narrative. The Nigerian Press and the Politics of Meaning* (Rochester, 2016).

⁹ S. Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana. 'How to Play the Game of Life'* (Manchester, 2002), p. 8.

¹⁰ In 1794, one of the first printing press was fitted up in Sierra Leone. C. Fyfe, 'The Sierra Leone Press in the Nineteenth Century', *Sierra Leone Studies*, 8 (1957), p. 226. Printing presses in Sierra Leone thus predate the publication of short-lived French-language periodicals in Egypt during the Napoleonic occupation. Cf. C. Burrowes, *Power and Press Freedom in Liberia, 1830-1970. The Impact of Globalization and Civil Society on Media-Government Relations* (Trenton, 2004), p. 23.

¹¹ G. Lydon, 'A Thirst for Knowledge. Arabic Literacy, Writing Paper and Saharan Bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara', in G. Krätli, G. Lydon (eds.), *The trans-Saharan Book Trade. Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy, and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 48, 50, 61.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3.

gum, became more easily available in the second half of the nineteenth-century and at this time, we also see printed books in Arabic being traded in the region.¹³ This writing tradition extended into Yorubaland – Oluwatoyin Oduntan points out that Anjami, an Arabic script, was used for writing in the Yoruba language; he refers to Samuel Johnson, a local historian, who in the late nineteenth-century attests that an Arabic script for writing Yoruba was known to Yoruba Muslims.¹⁴ J.D.Y Peel gives the example of an encounter between a Hausa Muslim and a missionary, in which the former explains that the alufa, that is a pastor or preacher, were trying to write Yoruba in Arabic script just as they did for writings in the Hausa-language. According to Peel, this interaction occurred at about the same time when British missionary Henry Townsend started the publication of *Iwe Irohin Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba* (1859), usually referred to as Nigeria's first newspaper.¹⁵ We thus see, concomitant with the introduction of newspapers in West Africa, a more general increase in literary activity, which was eventually dominated by literary production in roman script.¹⁶

The introduction of newspapers in Nigeria in the nineteenth century was connected to missionary activity and the emergence of African capital (see also chapter 1). Although the first newspapers in West African were characterised by state or missionary influence, they provided important impulses for African newspapers, which emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ In short, liberated Africans, who had been sold into slavery, been freed

¹³ Ibid., pp. 47-49, 63.

¹⁴ O. Oduntan, *Elite Identity and Power. A Study of Social Change and Leadership Among The Egba of Western Nigeria 1860-1950* (Ph.D. thesis, Dalhousie Univ., 2010), pp. 76-77. Oduntan refers to work by Isaac Ogunbiyi to make this point. See I. A. Ogunbiyi, 'The Search for a Yoruba Orthography since the 1840s. Obstacles to the Choice of the Arabic Script', *Sudanic Africa* 14 (2003), pp. 77-102. See also J.F.A. Ajayi, 'How Yoruba Was Reduced to Writing', *Odù*, 8 (1960), pp. 49-58.

¹⁵ J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000), p. 207.

¹⁶ Cf. G. Furniss, 'Innovation and Persistence. Literary Circles, New Opportunities, and Continuing Debates in Hausa Literary Production', K. Barber (ed.), *Africa's Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, 2006), pp. 417-418.

¹⁷ K.A.B Jones-Quartey, *History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana. The Fictions and the Facts* (Accra, 1975) pp. 5, 10-11, 19; O. Oduntan, 'Iwe Irohin and the Representation of the Universal in Nineteenth-Century Egbaland', *History in Africa*, 32 (2005), pp. 298-299; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 7. Emmanuel Ojo highlights that the *Calabar Observer* was set up after 1846, but argues that *Iwe Irohin* was the "first breakthrough in sustained newspaper publishing" in Nigeria. E. Ojo, 'Mass Media and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria. An Overview', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 13:3 (2013), pp. 430-31.

by the British Preventive Squadron on the way to the Americas, and been resettled in Sierra Leone, where they had received mission education, returned to Lagos in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ They engaged in the trade in palm oil, and emerged as a wealthy and influential elite by the time Lagos was annexed by the British Crown in 1861.¹⁹ In the newly established colonial order, Africans were trained as printers by missionaries or in government printing establishments, which, together with the capital Africans earned in trade, facilitated the establishment of newspapers under African leadership.²⁰ Similar developments contributed to the emergence of African newspapers in Southern Africa, where mission-trained Africans, such as John Tengo Jabavu, started publishing independent newspapers in the 1880s.²¹ While the availability of African capital facilitated the emergence of newspapers on the West Coast, its absence was among the main reasons why African newspapers emerged in East Africa only in the 1920s and 1930s.²² Moreover, missionary endeavours were taking a different shape in East Africa, which resulted in the later and quantitatively smaller emergence of an anglicised elite, that was driving local newspaper production on the West Coast.²³

¹⁸ J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria. The "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890* (Madison, 1965); R. Law, 'Yoruba Liberated Slaves Who Returned to West Africa', in T. Falola and M. Childs (eds.), *Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana, 2005), pp. 349-365; L. Lindsay, "'To Return to the Bosom of Their Fatherland": Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos', *Slavery & Abolition*, 15:1 (1994), pp. 22-50.

¹⁹ J. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891. The Making of a New Elite* (London, 1965); J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria*, pp. 3-8, 40, 63-110; A. Hopkins, 'Property Rights and Empire Building: Britain's Annexation of Lagos, 1861', *The Journal of Economic History*, 40:4 (1980), pp. 777-798; R. Law, 'Yoruba Liberated Slaves', p. 358, K. Mann, *Marrying Well. Marriage, Status, and Social Change Among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 18-21; K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African city* (Bloomington, 2007), Chapters 3 and 4; J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*, p. 24.

²⁰ Cf. C. Fyfe, 'The Sierra Leone Press', p. 229; O. Oduntan, 'Iwe Irohin', p. 298.

²¹ D. Peterson and E. Hunter, 'Print Culture in Colonial Africa', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), p. 8.

²² Cf. R. Ainslie, *The Press in Africa. Communications Past and Present* (London, 1966), p. 107; A. Roberts, 'African Cross-Currents', in A.D. Roberts (ed.), *Cambridge History of Africa. Volume 7 1905-1940* (8 vols, Cambridge, 1986), p. 235; M. Sturmer, *The Media History of Tanzania* (Ndanda, 1998), pp. 54 et seqq. Despite this availability of African capital, newspapers were, in general, undercapitalised. D. Peterson and E. Hunter, 'Print Culture', p. 2.

²³ D. Peterson and E. Hunter, 'Print Culture', pp. 9-10. Emma Hunter is giving insight into the emergence of a reading public in colonial Tanzania. E. Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania. Freedom, Democracy, and Citizenship in the Era of Decolonization* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 37 et seqq.

In South Africa, African newspapers thrived until the early 1930s, when they were pressured out of business amidst the economic constraints of the great depression, and in a climate of political repression.²⁴ Newspapers directed at an African audience became dominated by white commercial and mining interests until the 1950s, when an African-controlled press could re-emerge.²⁵ Against this background, some have emphasised the exceptionality of West African newspapers.²⁶ Starting in the late nineteenth century, a lively print culture emerged – for Nigeria, Increase Coker gives a list of 147 different general interest, religious, and ‘vernacular’ newspapers that were published between 1859 and 1960.²⁷

Besides missionary activity and African capital, politics was a main driver of publication activity. In fact, Nigerian newspapermen had seen themselves as political campaigners from the start. Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford was among the first that linked African newspapers to a crusading journalism as articulated by W.T. Stead, and this notion was reiterated by Nigerian English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers.²⁸ Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria’s first president, was well-known beyond Nigeria for the fierce criticism of colonial rule in his *West African Pilot*, which he had founded in 1937.²⁹ Other African post-independence leaders, such as Milton Margai and Kwame Nkrumah in West Africa and Jomo Kenyatta and Kenneth Kaunda

²⁴ At the height of this development, 19 newspapers were registered with the government, and thus constituted a substantial alternative to the white-dominated press which was supported by mining interests. L. Switzer, ‘Bantu World and the Origins of a Captive African Commercial Press in South Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14:3 (1988), p. 351. At this time, mining interests started to exert control over newspapers catering to African audiences. Cf. L. Bourgault, *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington, 1995), p. 160; L. Switzer, ‘Introduction. South Africa’s Alternative Press in Perspective’, in L. Switzer (ed.), *South Africa’s Alternative Press. Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880s-1960s* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 2.

²⁵ L. Switzer, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

²⁶ Cf. R. Ainslie, *Press in Africa*, p. 99.

²⁷ I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press. An Outline of the Origins and Development of the Newspaper Press in Nigeria: 1859 to 1965* (Apapa, 1968), pp. 116-121.

²⁸ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas’s ‘Life story of me, Seḡilola’ and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), p. 33; J.E. Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions. With Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London, 1903), p. 181; K. Oke, ‘The Colonial Public Sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943’ (M.Phil thesis, Univ. of Vienna, 2013), pp. 32 et seqq; A Togolander, ‘The Passing of a Great African Editor, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 20. December 1919, p. 7.

²⁹ James Brennan illustrates how texts published in the *West African Pilot* found their way into *Tanganyika Opinion*. J. Brennan, ‘Politics and Business in the Indian Newspapers of Colonial Tanganyika’, *Africa*, 81:1 (2011), p. 61.

in Eastern and Southern Africa can similarly be associated with newspapers.³⁰ As a consequence, newspapers came to be seen as political weapons, and, as William Hachten put it in 1971: “To study either nationalism or the press in British West Africa is to study the other.”³¹ Particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, newspapers formed an important part of the narration of the ‘triumph of nationalism’. In nationalist historiography, media histories as well as histories of Nigeria refer to newspapers foremost in terms of their importance for nationalism. They see them as outlets for nationalistic ideas or as agents of racial consciousness that predisposed Nigerians to a nationalist ideology.³² Such accounts were seemingly further encouraged following the publication of Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* in 1983, in which he underlines the importance of print capitalism and mass media for the growth of nationalism.³³ Such studies focussed largely on the English-language press. The Yoruba press was, at best, seen as extending such a momentum, or became part of a narration of nationalism by stressing its importance for ‘cultural nationalism’.³⁴

However, ‘the masses’ were not simply mobilized into politics, and in particular into anti-colonial nationalism, through newspapers in a top-down fashion.³⁵ By focussing on actors other than elite men, authors such as Susan Geiger and Elizabeth Schmidt have shown that the masses were already mobilized and engaging in struggles against the colonial state on their own. Moreover, they have shown that it was by no means only the elite that were shaping the

³⁰ Milton Margai, the “architect of Sierra Leone’s independence” was the founder of the *Sierra Leone Observer*. M.C. Fyle, *Historical Dictionary of Sierra Leone* (Lanham, 2006), pp. 122-123. See also W. Hachten, *Muffled Drums. The News Media in Africa* (Ames, 1971), p. 146. According to Jennifer Hasty, Kwame Nkrumah came to power through his newspaper, the *Accra Evening News*. J. Hasty, *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana* (Bloomington, 2005), p. 34; See also M. Sturmer, *Press History*, p. 11.

³¹ W. Hachten, *Muffled Drums*, p. 144.

³² J. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1965) pp. 184, 186. In *Press and Politics*, Fred Omu refers to the assessment by Coleman. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. vii.

³³ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp. 36–40. Scholars have however also highlighted that Anderson’s study offers opportunities to rethink the universalization of the ‘national form’. E. Hunter, ‘Komkya and the Convening of a Chagga Public, 1953-1961’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures*, p. 284.

³⁴ Cf. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 58.

³⁵ Even William Hachten acknowledges the limits of mass-mobilization through the press when noting that the press only managed to reach “the masses” between 1947-1952. W. Hachten, *Muffled Drums*, p. 149.

ways in which the nation was conceptualized. It was party leaders, intellectuals as well as market women, workers, and peasants – which were counted among the masses – that mobilized the nation.³⁶ Not least against the background of low literacy rates, scholars have also emphasised the importance of performance and mass spectacle for creating a sense of unity. Rallies, intensive campaigning in rural areas, and social formations such as dance societies could contribute to the construction of a vision of national unity, and party slogans, symbols, uniforms and songs were not only means to create community, but also crucial for spreading the anticolonial message.³⁷ This equation of the growth of newspapers with the growth of nationalism was thus questioned in the course of broader critiques of the ‘metanarrative of decolonization’, which sees political parties and their leaders as the main actors and enablers of anti-colonial nationalism.³⁸ Along these lines, various studies have illustrated the importance of other forums of political debate (and their relations to the press), underlining their significance at times by illustrating how such arenas were commensurate to a public sphere.³⁹

In addition to questioning the assumed central importance of newspapers for anti-colonial nationalism, recent literature has moreover challenged the newspapers’ supposed focus on territorially bound notions of nationalism. Drawing on Frederik Cooper, Partha Chatterjee, and

³⁶ E. Schmidt, ‘Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, With Special Reference to Guinea’, *The American Historical Review*, 110:4 (2005), pp. 1002, 1004.

³⁷ E. Schmidt, ‘Top Down or Bottom Up’, pp. 985, 1006-1007; Schmidt refers in particular to the work of Ann McClintock. A. McClintock, ‘No Longer in a Future Heaven’. Women and Nationalism in Sought Africa’, in G. Ely and R. Suny (ed.) *Becoming National. A Reader* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 260-284. See also S. Geiger, ‘Tanganyikan Nationalism as ‘Women’s Work’. Life Histories, Collective Biography and Changing Historiography’, *Journal of African History*, 37: 3 (1996), pp. 465-478.

³⁸ Cf. J. Allman, ‘Between the Present and History. African Nationalism and Decolonization’, in J. Parker and R. Reid (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 231 et seq. Allman particularly highlights impulses from social history in the 1980s and 1990s.

³⁹ It might be argued that such studies pursue an associational view of public space, according to which such a space emerges when people act in concert. Cf. S. Benhabib, ‘Models of Public Space. Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas’, in C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 78. See, for instance, studies by Sandra Barnes and Keith Breckenridge: S. Barnes, ‘Political Ritual and the Public Sphere in Contemporary West Africa’, in D. Parkin, L. Caplan, and H. Fisher (eds.) *The Politics of Cultural Performance* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 19-40; K. Breckenridge, ‘“We Must Speak for Ourselves”. The Rise and Fall of a Public Sphere on the South African Gold Mines, 1920 to 1931’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40:1 (1998), pp. 71-108.

Karin Barber, Stephanie Newell points out that West African newspapers were evoking a variety of imagined communities simultaneously, which could range from local to trans-regional.⁴⁰ Karin Barber moreover refutes that Yoruba newspapers, which emerged in the 1920s, were merely a response to or an expression of cultural nationalism which somehow resulted from the political ferment of the First World War.⁴¹ Even though these paper's potential or intended readership was apparently limited to Yoruba speakers, the pages of the Yoruba-papers addressed Lagosians, Yorubas, and, at the same time, all black people and the people in the four corners of the world.⁴² Such works speak to a literature which challenges us to re-assess political imaginations besides the nation.⁴³

New Perspectives on Print Culture and Method of Research

Recent literature on print cultures in Africa has provided perspectives on newspapers that move beyond the focus on anti-colonial nationalism, and have thus drawn attention to the various other ways in which Africans engaged with the press, and literary activity more generally.⁴⁴ In doing so, such works again speak to broader trends in the literature, which see scholars moving beyond the resistance paradigm when analysing historical processes and events.⁴⁵ Stephanie Newell, for example, urges us to read newspapers "beyond, or outside, the anti-colonial nationalist perspective".⁴⁶ Moreover, she introduces the neologism "paracolonial" to highlight literary activity alongside and beyond the British presence, and by

⁴⁰ S. Newell, *The Power to Name. A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, Ohio 2013), pp. 46-49. See also S. Newell, 'An Introduction to the Writings of J.G. Mullen, an African Clerk, in the Gold Coast Leader, 1916-1919', *Africa. Journal of the International African Institute*, 78:3 (2008), pp. 384-400.

⁴¹ K. Barber, *Print Culture*, p. 33.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴³ Cf. F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society. The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996); F. Cooper, *Africa Since 1940. The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴⁴ For the most recent edited volume pursuing such a perspective, see: D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell, *African Print Cultures*, in particular pp. 4-5 on their programmatic stance.

⁴⁵ E. Allina-Pisano, 'Resistance and the Social History of Africa', *Journal of Social History*, 37:1 (2003), pp. 188, 193-4; K. van Walraven and J. Abbink, 'Rethinking Resistance in African History. An Introduction', in J. Abbink, M. de Bruijn and K. van Walraven (eds), *Rethinking Resistance. Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 1-40.

⁴⁶ S. Newell, 'Articulating Empire. Newspaper Readerships in West Africa', *New Formations*, 73 (2011), p. 26. See also: K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 145.

actors besides the elite.⁴⁷ In pursuing such a perspective, contestations of power besides resistance to colonialism come back into view and the importance of newspapers for other social dynamics is highlighted. This makes it possible to acknowledge the importance that was sometimes attached to (see) words in print, for instance for writers aspiring to elite status.⁴⁸ More importantly, such a perspective offers insights into the cultural and ideological work accomplished by newspapermen and contributors, for instance as preservers of popular culture, or as hosts for verbal memorials. It also highlights the ways in which they enacted and constituted sociability in and through the pages of their papers.⁴⁹ Together with studies on so-called tin trunk literature – everyday literary activity by clerks, village headmasters and other aspirants to elite status⁵⁰ – these studies do not only give a broader insight into the literary activity of Africans, but also put publications in newspapers, and in particular those associated with nationalism, into perspective.

Releasing newspapers from the straightjacket of anti-colonial nationalism has also facilitated new conceptualisations of the structural importance of West African newspapers. Given the fact that newspapers generally addressed their readers as an audience of anonymous, equivalent and interchangeable readers, Stephanie Newell suggests that they constituted a distinctive colonial public sphere. In her history of anonymity and the use of pseudonyms in the West African press under colonial rule, she moreover shows how Africans could conceal

⁴⁷ S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, pp. 47-49.

⁴⁸ K. Barber, 'Introduction. Hidden Innovators in Africa', K. Barber (ed.), *Africa's Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, 2006), pp. 6-7; S. Newell, 'Entering the Territory of Elites. Literary Activity in Colonial Ghana', in *Ibid.*, pp. 211-235; J. Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 254.

⁴⁹ K. Barber, 'Cultural Editing, Memorialisation and Popular Voices in Early Yoruba Print Culture' (paper presented at the Mellon-Sawyer Seminar on Ethnicity in Africa, University of Michigan, 2011); R. Jones, 'The Sociability of Print. 1920s and 1930s Lagos Newspaper and Travel Writing', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.) *African Print Cultures*, pp. 102-123; S. Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana. 'How to Play the Game of Life'* (Manchester, 2002); N. Sawada, 'The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers. In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Birmingham, 2012). Karin Barber moreover highlights textual experimentation in Yoruba-language newspapers: I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 44 et seqq; K. Barber, 'Experiments with Genre in Yoruba Newspapers of the 1920s', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 151-178.

⁵⁰ Cf. K. Barber (ed.), *Africa's Hidden Histories*.

their identity “behind the ‘screen’ of print”.⁵¹ African-owned papers thus opened up a forum for ‘free’⁵² and critical dialogue between West Africans, a public sphere “coterminous with print, as generated in print, by and for print-consuming, print-producing colonial subjects”.⁵³ With this description of a physical and virtual sphere of communication open to strangers, Newell gives, according to Andreas Koller and others, a minimal definition of the public sphere, describes how it is constituted.⁵⁴ Such a definition mirrors a conceptualisation of the public sphere as outlined by Jürgen Habermas in his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* as a communication sphere open to strangers, located between the private realm and the sphere of public power.⁵⁵ This dissertation does not seek to assess the ways in which such an African public sphere is commensurate to western conceptualisations of such a discursive field at a specific moment in time, and does not probe into or assesses its capacity for ‘reasoned public debate’.⁵⁶ Rather, approaching newspapers against the background of the public sphere serves as a starting point to investigate dynamics in this discursive field. Informed by work by Geoff Ely and Nancy Fraser, this study approaches the the press as a space in which not everyone could find publication and the public sphere as an arena of contested meanings and is thus interested in conflicts and contestations in this discursive field.⁵⁷ This dissertation not only studies discussions in the public sphere, but also how

⁵¹ S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, p. 2.

⁵² These newspapers were operating in the field of imperial power, and were therefore subject to colonial surveillance and control. Cf. S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, pp. 36, 51, 71. See also: S. Newell, ‘Paradoxes of Press Freedom in Colonial West Africa’, *Media History*, 22:1 (2016), pp. 101-122; F. Omu, ‘The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa. The West African Example’, *Journal of African History*, 9:2 (1968), pp. 279-298.

⁵³ S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, p. 43.

⁵⁴ A. Koller, ‘The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction’, *Social Science History*, 34:3 (2010), p. 263. Andreas Koller refers in particular to works by Craig Calhoun and Michael Warner.

⁵⁵ J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990), p. 89.

⁵⁶ Andreas Koller suggests that for empirical research, “the notion of an unlimited capacity for reasoned public choice serves as a methodological fiction to detect variations in the extent of this capacity” A. Koller, ‘The Public Sphere’, p. 265.

⁵⁷ G. Ely, ‘Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century’, in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. 304-306; N. Fraser, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy’, in *Ibid.*, pp. 115-6. Chantal Mouffe

Lagosians negotiated the discursive field itself, how interlocutors were making their voice heard and reshaped the public sphere.

In particular, this dissertation studies the politics of convening publics in the Lagos press. In this context, 'public' refers, in the words of Michael Warner, to "the kind of public that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation"⁵⁸ and not *the* public as a sort of social totality, as the people organized as the nation or some other form of community.⁵⁹ This dissertation thus studies, in other words, how different ways in which editors and newspapermen sought to appeal to their readers relate to each other, and highlights power dynamics in this discursive field. An investigation of such dynamics promises to be fruitful when studying West African newspapers, as Stephanie Newell points out that they were not "radically open, unregulated forums for anybody who could write to find publication".⁶⁰

For Karin Barber, genre is important for understanding the changing ways in which publics are convened. To her, genre is the key to understanding how texts relate to the social world: as localised ways of organising speech activity, they bring with them certain expectations by the audience. Different genres render time, space and being in different ways, and thus contribute to the formation of specific historical forms of consciousness.⁶¹ Genre is thus important for understanding the process of convening publics, as new genres emerge when "writers/composers of texts convoke new audiences (or old audiences in new ways) and, at the same time, the people out there bring new expectations to bear on texts, responding in

moreover highlights that eliminating power and antagonism denies the central role of conflict in politics and for the formation of collective identities. C. Mouffe, 'Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?', *Social Research*, 66:3 (1999), p. 752.

⁵⁸ M. Warner, 'Publics and Counterpublics', p. 50.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48-9.

⁶⁰ S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, p. 52.

⁶¹ K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts*, pp. 37, 41-2. See also approaches in critical discourse analysis which consider texts as expressions of a particular, historically situated way of thinking which can be assessed by critical analysis, or which consider texts as 'materialities' which should not be viewed differently from other 'practical activities'. S. Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse. Eine Einführung*, 5th edn (Münster, 1999), pp. 122, 133.

new ways. Emergent genres and emergent constituencies come into being in response to each other.”⁶²

This dissertation builds on Barber’s emphasis on genre and addressivity when studying the ways in which publics were convened in the Lagos press. However, it does not aim to narrate the history of the public sphere by tracing the emergence or change of genres, and in this way the different ways in which publics were evoked.⁶³ Rather, it seeks to provide further insight into the specific textuality of texts in other ways, and thus by moving beyond genre. Bearing the importance of specific, localised ways of organising speech activity in mind, and at the same time highlighting more contextual aspects shaping the ways in which texts come into being, it offers new insights into the work of evoking and convening publics at particular moments in time.⁶⁴

This dissertation studies the politics of convening publics against the background of the public sphere, and, in doing so, also provides new perspectives on newspapers in the following ways. Firstly, it studies what might be described as the production structures of the public sphere.⁶⁵ Recent studies of West African newspapers have focused on textual aspects and, in this way, have given invaluable insight into the cultural and ideological work accomplished by newspapermen as outlined above. This dissertation pursues an approach which highlights the practicalities of newspaper production.⁶⁶ That is to say it, it draws attention to contextual aspects informing publication activity such as information flows under colonial rule and the workings of the newspaper business. In doing so, it provides new insights into opportunities

⁶² K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts*, p. 138.

⁶³ Cf. S. Freitag, ‘Enactments of Ram’s Story and the Changing Nature of ‘The Public’ in British India’, *South Asia*, 14:1 (1991), pp. 65-90; F. Orsini, ‘The Social History of a Genre. Kathas Across Languages in Early Modern North India’, *The Medieval History Journal*, 20:1 (2017), pp. 1-37.

⁶⁴ Karin Barber also points to the importance of an approach which brings together the local specificity of text production with contextual forces and trends that affect it but do not determine it. K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts*, p. 223.

⁶⁵ A. Koller, ‘The Public Sphere’, p. 272.

⁶⁶ In a paper given in 2011 Karin Barber highlights that little is known about the practicalities of newspaper production in Nigeria. K. Barber, ‘Cultural Editing, Memorialisation’, p. 10.

and constraints when publishing a newspaper and convening publics and thus gives further insight into the work accomplished by newspapermen.

Secondly, this study brings together reporting in a variety of newspapers in new ways. Scholarship on the changing connections of texts, newspapermen and contributors along and beyond the West African coast has been emerging in the last years,⁶⁷ and the literature on print(ing) cultures⁶⁸ gives insight into some dynamics between different publications. The different and changing dynamics of specific nodes of this print-network over a longer period remain, however, understudied. This thesis brings together English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers in a historical study. In doing so, it contributes to a growing body of literature which brings the bilingual Yoruba-press back into view and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the public sphere.⁶⁹ Studies focussing on the English-language press suggest that the different papers were associated as topics and arguments were crossing languages, and studies focusing on the Yoruba press argue that it kept a “foothold” in the ‘Anglophone print sphere’, by carrying English content alongside Yoruba texts.⁷⁰ This dissertation seeks to further our understanding of dynamics between the different papers by studying reporting on diagnostic events and selected issues between 1890 and the

⁶⁷ See, for example: J. Brennan, ‘Politics and Business’; L. James, ‘Transatlantic Passages. Black Identity Construction in West African and West Indian Newspapers, 1935-1950’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.) *African Print Cultures*, pp. 49-74; S. Newell, *The Power to Name*; S. Newell, ‘Newspapers, New Spaces, New Writers. The First World War and Print Culture in Colonial Ghana’, *Research in African Literatures*, 40:2 (2009), pp. 1-15; D. Pratten, ‘Creole Pioneers in the Nigerian Provincial Press’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures*, pp. 75-101; In her study of colonial Tanzania, Emma Hunter gives insight into this discursive field in East Africa. E. Hunter, *Politics and the Public Sphere*.

⁶⁸ K. Barber, ‘Audiences and the Book in Africa’, *Current Writing. Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 13:2 (2011), pp. 16-17.

⁶⁹ Cf. I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*; R. Jones, ‘The Sociability of Print’; O. Oduntan, ‘Making Constituency in the Province. The Osumare Egba (1935-1937) and the Agenda of Abeokuta Modernization’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures*, pp. 306-334; T. Olunlade, ‘Notes on Yoruba Newspapers 1859-2002’, in T. Falola and A. Genova (eds.), *The Yoruba in Transition. History, Values, and Modernity* (Durham, 2006), pp. 3-11.

⁷⁰ S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, p. 34; K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos’ in T. Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honour of J. D. Y. Peel* (Carolina, 2005), p. 201.

1940s which strikingly reveal dynamics in the broader discursive field.⁷¹ It studies Lagos 'politics', that is to say inter-elite competition and broader contestations of political leadership. Moreover, negotiations of a variety of issues which were publicised in the press such as questions about how to contest the colonial state or how to bring together local political structures with institutions emerging under colonial rule or which were associated with Britain also form part of the analysis. Furthermore, this dissertation addresses how newspapermen imagined this discursive field in a multilingual environment, and how they navigated changing political dynamics and the changing way in which the colonial state engaged with the press.⁷²

Thirdly, this dissertation is informed by recent scholarship on the public sphere which has pointed to more structural analysis as well as to the study of processes of inclusion and exclusion in this discursive field.⁷³ This focus reflects a variety of critical responses to Jürgen Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, and draws attention to dynamics such as stratification, inequality, conflict, competition, and divisions.⁷⁴ In other words, this points to the study of the ways in which newspapermen and contributors negotiated this discursive field. Against this background, this dissertation studies the politics of convening publics in the following ways. On a textual level, it is particularly interested in discursive registers employed and alluded to by newspapermen when convening publics. In this context, discursive registers describe references to broader themes such as education, popular support or social differentiation when constructing publics. Discursive registers thus not only illustrate

⁷¹ Cf. S. Moore, 'Explaining the Present. Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography', *American Ethnologist*, 14:4 (1987), p. 730.

⁷² It is, in the words of Andreas Koller, also interested in how newspapermen imagined the "physical and virtual sphere and institutional setting of communication open to strangers". A. Koller, 'The Public Sphere', p. 263.

⁷³ Cf. A. Koller, 'The Public Sphere', pp. 272-6. See also: H. Mah, 'Phantasies of the Public Sphere. Rethinking the Habermas of Historians', *Journal of Modern History*, 72:1 (2000), pp. 153-182; J. Requate, 'Öffentlichkeit und Medien als Gegenstände Historischer Analyse', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Zeitschrift für Historische Sozialwissenschaft*, 25 (1999), p. 7; S. Shami, 'Introduction', in S Shami (ed.) *Publics, Politics and Participation. Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York, 2009), pp. 32-4;

⁷⁴ Cf. A. Koller, 'The Public Sphere', pp. 270, 272; G. Ely, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures'; N. Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere'; M. Warner, 'Publics and Counterpublics'.

the 'vernaculars' of publics, the overarching narratives which served interlocutors as a frame of reference for their contributions.⁷⁵ They also point to changing notions of how publics should be convened, and thus more normative conceptions of this discursive field. In this context, challenges and contestations of the way in which publics were convened are also of interest. These dimensions are further explored when studying the different ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics around a specific issue, the aforementioned Eleko-question. This study in a sense moves beyond the text when it highlights the biographies of newspapermen. In doing so, it gives insight into the ways in which editors and contributors negotiated their becoming a 'speaker' in the public sphere – how they embarked on convening publics in the press, and how their doing so was contested by other 'speakers'.

This study focuses on newspapermen, and thus offers limited insight into gendered dynamics in the public sphere. Audrey Gadzekpo shows for West Africa, and in particular for colonial Ghana, that women, although operating in a male-dominated field, were engaging with newspapers as readers, writers, correspondents, or were featured in the press as illustrative figures, early on.⁷⁶ Stephanie Newell and Karin Barber give insight into the ways in which women were represented in print in general, and for instance in a serialized contribution to a Yoruba paper in particular.⁷⁷ An analysis along these lines is, however, beyond the scope of this study.

Sources

The present study draws on archival sources as well as on newspapers to study dynamics of the public sphere. Archival records help contextualise textual production and in this way give further insight into the cultural, economic, and ideological work accomplished by

⁷⁵ Cf. E. Hunter, 'Chagga Public', pp. 295-6.

⁷⁶ A. Gadzekpo, 'Women's Engagement with Gold Coast Print Culture From 1857 to 1957' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Birmingham, 2001), pp. 91 et seqq.

⁷⁷ S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, chapters 5 & 6. I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*.

newspapermen. Moreover, they contribute to illustrating the changing social, political, and cultural context in which the publication of newspapers took place.

Records of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which were accessed via microfilm copies available at the CMS archive in Oxford, for instance illustrate the cultural and linguistic environment in which Lagosians were starting newspapers in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, they make it possible, via records relating to specific churches, to situate newspapermen in the wider Lagos community, to illustrate their connections to various communities living on the island. Colonial records available in the National Archives in the United Kingdom give insight into the changing approaches of the colonial state to mass media, for example through policy papers and deliberations in the Colonial Office on proposed newspaper legislation, and through commentaries of colonial officials on the Lagos press. Moreover, they illuminate some of the ways in which newspapermen engaged with the colonial state, in particular through petitions. They further offer a perspective on the practicalities of media production and consumption: Blue Books list circulation figures for newspapers, and surveys allow glimpses into radio listening in Lagos. The colonial records held at the Nigerian National Archives give further insight into how editors engaged with the colonial state in matters relating to the press. Particularly the files of the Public Relations Department illustrate such interactions. They also further our understanding of the practicalities of newspaper production, for instance when documenting the introduction of the Reuter's News Agency in Nigeria.

The private papers of Herbert Macaulay held at the Kenneth Dike Library at the University of Ibadan provide invaluable insight into Lagos politics covering roughly the period 1920s-1940s. They contain a range of material, from pins of members of the Nigerian National Democratic Party to the remaining records of Tete Ansa's Industrial and Commercial Bank and a range of editorials and other texts written and published by Macaulay and other personalities of Lagos politics. The material relating to Macaulay's *Lagos Daily New* was of particular interest.

Business records as well as letters by employees of Macaulay's press were a valuable source to learn more about the practicalities of newspaper production and the day to day workings of the press, even though they were incomplete and patchy.

Newspapers form the second pillar of source material for this dissertation. A wide range of English-language newspapers published in Lagos are available at the British Library. Nevertheless, there are some significant gaps, in particular with regard to the availability of newspapers published in the 1920s and papers closely associated with political parties in the late 1930s and 1940s, such as the *Daily Service*. The fact that the British Library offers access to digitized copies of African newspapers published between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s has greatly facilitated the work on various chapters. It has offered new opportunities to trace connections between different newspapers published along the West African Coast. The Nigerian National Archives hold copies of Yoruba-language newspapers published in the period under review. There are gaps in the holdings of the archive – copies of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, which is the subject of the study in chapter 3, are, for example, no longer available in the archives. I am grateful to Taiwo Olunlade who shared his copies of the paper with me.

Texts published in the Lagosian press serve as a starting point for this thesis to uncover relations and interactions of contributors and editors, and the relationship between and within different newspapers. Karin Barber urges historians and anthropologists to exercise care in their use of texts – to not only search them for facts about the past nor prioritise those texts that most closely resemble ethnographic accounts. Instead, she encourages us to appreciate texts in their specific textuality, and contends that it is only by such an acknowledgement that we can uncover anything about social relations through texts.⁷⁸ Thus, this dissertation takes an in-depth look at a range of different texts published in the Lagos

⁷⁸ K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts*, p. 13. See also D. Peterson and E. Hunter, 'Print Culture', p. 1.

press, and does not restrict itself to studying texts that explicitly address the process of convening publics or relations between contributors, editors, and readers.

Structure

Except for the first two chapters, this dissertation is organized chronologically. Chapters 1 and 2 addresses practicalities of newspaper production in colonial Lagos, and highlight contextual aspects shaping the way in which editors, contributors, readers and others engaged with newspapers. Chapter 1 studies the *business* of newspaper production. It highlights the various ways in which newspapers were intertwined with other commercial activity, and illustrates how stakeholders besides editors and contributors were involved in the production of a newspaper. Furthermore, this chapter gives insight into commercial pressures associated with the production of a newspaper. Chapter 2 studies the history of the Reuters news agency in Nigeria, and addresses the relationship of Lagos newspapers to global and local information networks. Moreover, it highlights colonial media legislation and other ways in which the colonial state sought to influence public communication and thus shape discussions in the public sphere. These chapters point out opportunities and constraints shaping newspapermen's field of operation, and thus the background against which they set out to convene publics in various ways.

Chapter 3 studies the emergence and decline of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, Lagos' first bilingual Yoruba-newspaper. It situates Andrew Thomas, the editor of the paper, in the political, social as well as linguistic context of late nineteenth century Lagos. It provides a close study of the contents of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, and particularly focusses on reporting on the resignation of Bishop Crowther from the Finance Committee of the Niger mission in 1890. Addressing how such content related to the publication in other English-language newspapers, this chapter provides further insight into dynamics in the public sphere. This chapter moves beyond prior assessments that have considered the Yoruba paper as a means to unite Lagosians with other Yoruba speakers

living upcountry, and provides new insight into the potential motivations that led Andrew Thomas to publish a bilingual newspaper.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the ways in which newspapermen and contributors were convening publics in the 1920s and 1930s. They approach the public sphere as an arena of contested meanings and the press as a space in which not everyone could find publication. In doing so, these chapters give insight into the politics of the public sphere in the following ways: On the one hand, they highlight how editors and contributors sought to carve out a niche for themselves in the public sphere, and on the other hand, they highlight conflicts and contestations over the way in which publics were convened. The first part of chapter 4 looks into the biographies of different newspapermen and draws out broader dynamics at play when they embarked on convening publics in the press. Moreover, it situates the various ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics in the changing political and social environment. Against this background, it turns to how editors and contributors justified the way in which they were convening publics, and how this was challenged or contested. The second part of chapter 4 examines “press controversies” and brings to the fore and interprets the terms or discursive registers used by contributors and newspapermen to contest the ways others convened publics. Moreover, this part of the chapter studies the varying ways in which Yoruba-language newspapers alluded to class-rhetoric, and thus gives insight into the ways in which the ‘vernaculars’ of publics, and the public sphere at large, changed in the 1920s.

Chapter 5 focuses on the so-called Eleko-question, which revolved around the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as the Oba of Lagos, and studies how Lagosians convened publics around this and related issues. This chapter is split into two parts. The first part highlights the importance of the office of the Oba of Lagos for local social structures and political dynamics. Moreover, it illustrates how a new political dynamic, which made reference to Yoruba understandings of social order, was introduced into Lagos politics in the 1920s. This part of the chapter studies the possibilities and constraints newspapermen faced when seeking to convene publics

around this polarising issue. In particular, it highlights attempts to convene publics around notions of a 'third way' which sought to overcome the division of Lagos politics into 'conservatives' and 'radicals'. The second part of this chapter studies reporting on the return of the Eleko to Lagos in 1931, after almost six years in exile. It focusses on the English-language *Lagos Daily News*, and the bilingual Yoruba paper *Akede Eko*, both of which were associated with the same political camp. In doing so, it gives further insight into the nuanced ways in which Yoruba papers engaged with the political projects of the 'radicals', and into the relationship between English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers more generally. Chapters 4 and 5 thus paint a complex picture of political activity in the interwar period.

Chapter 6 gives insight into the ways in which newspapermen navigated the more radical political dynamics of the 1940s, and focusses on reporting between 1946 and 1948. Drawing on a survey of radio listeners conducted in 1948, this chapter gives insight into the ways in which Lagosians viewed the press. Moreover, it studies the ways in which newspapermen and journalists engaged with efforts at information management by the Public Relations Office, and highlights how such interventions offered opportunities to convene radical, anti-colonial publics. This chapter also studies the way in which E.A. Akintan convened publics in his Yoruba-language paper *Eletì Ofe*, which he re-launched in 1947 after a 15-year hiatus. In particular, this chapter highlights the possibilities and constraints Akintan faced when he sought to adapt his editorial policy of pursuing a 'third way' compared to the 1920s. These different perspectives on the ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics highlight the complexity as well as the political possibilities this moment in time had to offer.

Chapter 1 – The Newspaper ‘Business’

Introduction

This and the subsequent chapter address practicalities of newspaper production in colonial Lagos. That is to say, they draw attention to more contextual aspects shaping the way in which editors, contributors, readers and others engaged with newspapers. The two chapters give insight into what might be described as the production structures of the public sphere. They draw attention to the business of producing a newspaper, and, moreover, consider news and information flows under colonial rule as factors shaping dynamics in the public sphere.¹ That is to say, they are interested in the ‘information environment’ in which newspapers operated as well as in the practicalities shaping how ‘information’ could be made available in the pages of newspapers. In so doing, these chapter point out opportunities and constraints shaping newspapermen’s field of operation, and thus the background against which they set out to convene publics in various ways, which the following chapters will address in more detail.

The starting point of the present chapter is Fred Omu’s assessment that the press can be considered as Nigeria’s “first indigenous industrial enterprise” – the publication of a newspaper was one of the few occupations in which African entrepreneurship was not thwarted.² Although the availability of African capital encouraged the emergence of newspapers, they were difficult to maintain in Nigeria as in other parts of the empire, not least because almost all materials needed for the production of a newspaper had to be imported.³

¹ Cf. J. Brennan, ‘Communications and Media in African History’, in J. Parker and R. Reid (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013), p. 497-498; A. Koller, ‘The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction’, *Social Science History*, 34:3 (2010), p. 272. Brennan points to the study of the production and control of postcolonial news, but it might be argued that such an assessment is of equal relevance for the study of the public sphere in the colonial period. While Koller speaks of the production structures of the public sphere when assessing the ways in which different institutional fields, such as the economic or political field, are involved in the co-production of public communication, it might be argued that an assessment of the control of information as well as a more detailed study of the ways in which newspapers operated are of relevance in this context as well.

² F. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937* (London, 1978), pp. 28, 73.

³ James Brennan for example describes Indian newspapers in colonial Tanganyika as “fragile enterprises”, and Tony Ballantyne notes that newspapers in Otago, New Zealand were similarly facing

This chapter gives insight into the working of the newspaper 'industry', and thus brings the commercial aspects of newspaper production back into view.

Such an approach makes it possible, as Tony Ballantyne argues in his study of newspaper reading in colonial New Zealand, to move beyond the model of newspapers as means for ideological transmission, and allows us to bring other ways in which they were part of the colonial cultural landscape, back into view.⁴ Moreover, a study of the newspaper business provides further insight into the specific textuality of texts by highlighting more contextual aspects shaping the ways in which texts came into being.

This chapter highlights the various ways in which newspapers were intertwined with other commercial activity, such as the projects of 'political entrepreneurs'. It thus gives insight into how newspapers could be 'political' beyond the transmission of political ideology. Moreover, and by drawing on the Herbert Macaulay papers, this chapter studies the ways in which various stakeholders besides editors and contributors were involved in the production of a newspaper. Against this background, it provides insight into commercial pressures associated with the production of a newspaper and illustrates dynamics informing the ways in which newspapermen could convene publics in their papers. Showing how political and business interests came together in the press thus gives insight into complex dynamics informing the publication of a paper and thus dynamics in the public sphere.

Newspapers Between Politics and Business

The literature as well as editor's and contributor's accounts emphasise that under colonial rule engaging in the publication of a newspaper was mainly driven by political motivations. Accordingly, newspapermen have emphasised the philanthropic and educational nature of their undertakings, and have underlined the political importance of the work they undertook, almost in the manner of martyrs, in spite of an adverse colonial administration and at great

financial difficulties. T. Ballantyne, 'Reading the Newspaper in Colonial Otago', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 12 (2011), p. 54; J. Brennan, 'Politics and Business', p. 42.

⁴ T. Ballantyne, 'Reading the Newspaper', p. 49.

personal expense.⁵ Newspapermen seldomly portrayed commercial interests as inspiring the publication of a newspaper.⁶ However, as Fred Omu argues in his seminal study *Press and Politics in Nigeria*, economic distress could in equal measure make “pioneer newspapermen” turn to the press.⁷ When prices for palm oil and kernels fell in the early 1870s and again in the 1880s and business opportunities diminished with increasing competition, some African traders started the publication of a newspaper or assumed the editorship of a paper, as this promised to be an opportunity that would allow them to get back on their feet (see chapter 3).⁸ In general, newspapers were, however, seen as commercial unviable; they were undercapitalised and had a short life expectancy.⁹ As one contributor put it in 1919: “It is an admitted fact that journalism in West Africa is not a paying concern and considering that the governments of Africa being alien and autocratic, its paths are not strewn with roses but thorns. It is a dangerous venture to embark upon.”¹⁰ Such a portrayal of the work of newspapermen forms part of narrations stressing the importance of the press for Nigerian nationalism, and the achieving of political independence (see introduction).

Although much of the recent literature on print culture has focussed on literary aspects, some authors have highlighted the importance of commercial aspects for the study of the press. In his study of ‘Politics and Business in Indian Newspapers in Colonial Tanganyika’, James Brennan illustrates contradictions shaping the very business of newspaper production. He highlights tensions between newspapers as co-producers of a wider moral community independent from the market and the state, and their more mundane need to secure

⁵ Cf. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 11, 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 75-6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 35, 37.

⁸ A. Hopkins, ‘Economic Imperialism in West Africa, 1880-92’, *The Economic History Review*, 21:3 (1968), pp. 585-6, 592-5, K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African city* (Bloomington, 2007), pp. 155-9; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 28.

⁹ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 76-77; D. Peterson and E. Hunter, ‘Print Culture in Colonial Africa’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), p. 2.

¹⁰ A Togolander, ‘The passing of a Great African Editor’, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 20. December 1919, p. 6. Reflecting on the 1930s, Obafemi Awolowo describes journalism as an “unprofitable, frustrating and souldepressing career”. O. Awolowo, *Awo. The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 80.

resources and readerships in a local community.¹¹ Bodil Frederiksen also addresses the relationship between political and business activity in her study of printing and publishing in colonial Kenya. She gives insight into the ways in which the coming together of a group of entrepreneurs, journalists and editors – African and Indian – was crucial for the emergence of local newspapers and other printing activity. Frederiksen also highlights how groups involved in publicist enterprises were involved in political organizations and thus points to links between political and commercial aspects of newspaper production.¹² This chapter similarly highlights how tensions inherent in the business of producing a newspaper, what Brennan describes as the shifting business and patronage terrain, could influence reporting in the press. Moreover, it illustrates that more political aims and business needs were not necessarily competing goals, particularly as the newspaper business in itself could constitute a political goal.

From the start, newspapers in Lagos were intertwined with various other commercial activities in complex ways. For one, newspapers or printing works were seldom a proprietor's only commercial interest, and, as alluded to above, seem to have provided an opportunity for individuals to diversify their business, particularly in times of economic crisis.¹³ For Richard Beale Blaize, who brought out the *Lagos Times* in the 1880s, this was always a side venture to his successful trading business.¹⁴ Samuel Herbert Pearse became involved with printing in the 1920s, when seeking to restructure and diversify his business. He had previously worked as a produce merchant and was a member of the Legislative Council. He established the Awoboh Press, which was contracted to print newspapers such as the *African Messenger*, at a time

¹¹ Cf. J. Brennan, 'Politics and Business', pp. 42-44, 52, 56.

¹² B. Frederiksen, 'Print, Newspapers and Audiences in Colonial Kenya. African and Indian Improvement, Protest and Connections', *Africa*, 81:1 (2011), pp. 155-172.

¹³ I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press. An Outline of the Origins and Development of the Newspaper Press in Nigeria, 1859 to 1965* (Apapa, 1968), p. 20; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 76.

¹⁴ Cf. A. Hopkins, 'Richard Beale Blaize, 1845-1904. Merchant Prince of West Africa', *Tarikh*, 1:2 (1966), pp. 70-79.

when demand in printed works increased more generally, not least due to increasing literacy levels (see also chapter 4).¹⁵

At the same time, the publication of a newspaper was only one of the activities of newspapermen if they owned their own printing press – job-printing was another important source of income.¹⁶ In the 1920s, Thomas Horatio Jackson, publisher of the *Lagos Weekly Record*, for instance advertised that his Samadu Press was undertaking “printing of all kinds”.¹⁷ Muraino Olayiwola Oso moreover shows that besides printing, Jackson was also involved with a shipping company and a Palm Produce trading company on the Niger.¹⁸ Similarly, Nnamdi Azikiwe, who had publishing the *West African Pilot* since 1937, sought to diversify his sources of income after 1943. He planned to purchase a rubber plantation in Benin “in order to have an independent source of income, apart from my other enterprises”, which were mainly newspapers at that time.¹⁹

This close connection of newspapers to other commercial activity points to the fact that newspapers did not only serve as a means to achieve political ends, but that they also constituted a political end in themselves. Informed by African and Pan-African political and economic thought, newspapers advocated African commercial activity and cooperation as a means of ‘self-help’, and encouraged Africans to carve out a niche for themselves in the colonial economy in pursuance of ‘economic nationalism’.²⁰ In the 1940s, anticolonial

¹⁵ A. Olukoju, ‘Accumulation and Conspicuous Consumption. The Poverty of Entrepreneurship in Western Nigeria, ca. 1850-1930’, in E.K. Akyeampong, R.H. Bates, N. Nunn and J.A. Robinson (eds.), *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective* (New York, 2014), pp. 222–223; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 55–56. The 1920s saw the emergence of five new printing presses. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁶ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 80-81. See also T. Ballantyne, ‘Reading the Newspaper’, p. 54.

¹⁷ A. Macmillan, *The Red Book of West Africa* (London, 1920), p. 112.

¹⁸ M. Oso, ‘Labour News. Press and Industrial Relations in Nigeria’ (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Leicester, 1986) p. 205.

¹⁹ N. Azikiwe, *Zik. A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 212. On the different newspapers Zik acquired in the 1940s, see N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey. An Autobiography* (London, 1970), pp. 301-2.

²⁰ Cf. A. Harneit-Sievers, ‘African Business, “Economic Nationalism,” and British Colonial Policy. Southern Nigeria, 1935-1954’, *African Economic History*, 24 (1996), pp. 25-68; A. Hopkins, ‘Economic Aspects of Political Movements in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast 1918-1939’, *The Journal of African History*, 7:1 (1966), pp. 133-152.

nationalists regarded African commercial activity as essential for achieving economic freedom which was to accompany political freedom.²¹ At the same time, the successful publication of a newspaper in itself was a practical example of the ‘economic nationalism’ these very policies and ‘political entrepreneurs’ called for.

In 1910, John Eldred Taylor, a Sierra Leonean, sought to establish a London-based magazine devoted to African trade. To this end, he approached Dusé Mohammed Ali, a British-Egyptian, who was an active pan-Africanist journalist and politician. When Taylor and Mohammed Ali parted ways in 1912, the latter continued a magazine supportive of (West-) African commercial activity – the *African Times and Orient Review* (ATOR). Mohammed Ali published, for instance, business advice for those engaging in the trade of West African products, lauded “coloured” inventors and entrepreneurs in the pages of his paper, and published a directory of Africans and African-Americans engaging in the produce trade.²² The *ATOR* moreover served Dusé Mohammed Ali as a mouthpiece to publicise his own ventures into the produce trade²³ – he was putting into practice what he was preaching in his paper, and, as Ian Duffield argues, with this practical maintenance of political ideals secured pan-Africanism as a movement.²⁴ Furthermore, the *ATOR* exemplified pan-Africanist economic goals, as it brought together West Africans, and among them Lagosians, as shareholders of the Review Company, which was incorporated in London, and which was to provide the *ATOR* with the much needed capital to go ahead.²⁵

Similarly, Nnamdi Azikiwe considered newspapers as an expression of the commercial capacity of Africans. In 1925, Azikiwe was arguing that the establishment of a newspaper was important for ‘progress’ in Onitsha, and urged his “fellow compatriots” that mighty mansions

²¹ N. Azikiwe, *Zik*, pp. 212-213.

²² I. Duffield, ‘The Business Activities of Duse Mohammed Ali. An Example of the Economic Dimension of Pan-Africanism, 1912-1945’, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4:4 (1969), pp. 572, 575-7.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 576, 579, 582.

²⁴ I. Duffield, ‘Duse Mohammed Ali and the Development of Pan-Africanism 1866-1945’ (Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh Univ., 1971), p. 563; I. Duffield, ‘Activities of Duse Mohammed’, p. 596.

²⁵ I. Duffield, ‘Activities of Duse Mohammed’, pp. 572-3. Despite their efforts, the paper however never achieved financial security, as the initial nine backers failed to convince more people to invest.

and holding a seat in the Legislative Council would not ameliorate the current political situation. Instead “unity” and “proprietary printing press incorporated and financed by Oshans” was the only way to recover from “political enthraldom”.²⁶ While these early standpoints only implicitly link the importance of the press to its commercial aspects, Azikiwe portrays himself as having made this link more explicitly after returning to Nigeria from the United States in the 1930s. In his autobiography he recalls that he, on the day before his *West African Pilot* was published for the first time in 1937, “reminded my colleagues ... that we were entering the field of competitive journalism to do two things: revolutionise journalism as it had been practised in Nigeria from 1859 to 1937, and demonstrate that journalism can be a successful business enterprise, just as any other field of human endeavour.”²⁷

Newspapers and Political Entrepreneurs

As the boundaries between individual’s different commercial initiatives were often blurred, newspapers were also linked with various commercial schemes in complex ways. From the 1920s onwards, West African economic thought started to find expression in political institutions such as the National Congress of British West Africa,²⁸ and the press extensively reported on the activities of this association (see chapter 4). At the same time, individuals such as Tete Ansa launched various efforts at establishing cooperatives and local banking initiatives in a bid to ameliorate the economic position of Africans. What follows below illustrates that newspapers were not only giving publicity to such schemes and policies, but were involved with them in complex ways and beyond the pages of their papers. In doing so, this section highlights that newspapers facilitated nuanced relationships between ‘editors’ and

²⁶ B. Nnamdi Azikiwe, ‘Onitsha and Civilisation. Our Political Situation Bogus’, *Yoruba News*, 17. March 1925, p. 3.

²⁷ N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, p. 291.

²⁸ T. Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital. The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise*, (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 16; A. Hopkins, ‘Economic Aspects’, p. 135. Duse Mohammed Ali had been thinking about cooperatives and banks since the 1910s. I. Duffield, ‘Activities of Duse Mohammed’, p. 571.

'contributors'. Moreover, it brings the various ways in which newspapers contributed to political projects such as nationalism back into view.

Cooperatives were one of the ways in which political entrepreneurs sought to improve the position of Africans within the emerging colonial export oriented economic order – they sought for instance to hold against the British monopoly on cocoa exports and marketing, and to strengthen African traders and businessmen that were “strangled” by European competition.²⁹ They set out to bundle the cocoa produced in West Africa and sell it directly, for instance to America, the biggest consumer of cocoa.³⁰ The formation of cooperatives could go hand in hand with the formation of local banks, in particular when such banks should finance the export schemes of cooperatives. The services offered by British banks in Lagos were attractive for an urban population – forms of credit and saving current in the nineteenth-century, such as *esusu* and *ajo*, were still in use, but banks were emerging, alongside money-lenders, as an alternative attractive for those employed as clerks and civil servants (see also chapter 4).³¹ Banks were interesting for those townspeople that wanted to save to meet demands from the family and social obligations such as weddings or funerals, build a house, or engage in trade or a business – and to those that needed credit for the same reasons.³² In the 1930s, the share of Africans among the 10,000-12,000 depositors to British owned banks in Lagos is regarded to have been considerable.³³ Credit was crucial for the establishment and running of business such as newspapers. However, British banks were reluctant to give credit to Africans – especially to those in the lower ranks of the civil service.³⁴ Local banking

²⁹ I. Duffield, 'Activities of Duse Mohammed', p. 580; T. Forrest, *The Advance*, p. 16; A. Hopkins, 'Economic Aspects', p. 138.

³⁰ A. Hopkins, 'Economic Aspects', p. 139.

³¹ T. Falola, "'My Friend the Shylock": Money-Lender and Their Clients in South-Western Nigeria', *The Journal of African History*, 34:3 (1993), p. 405.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 411.

³³ A. Harneit-Sievers, 'African Business', p. 32.

³⁴ D. Chukwu, 'The Economic Impact of Pioneer Indigenous Banks in Colonial Nigeria, 1920-1960', *The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 19 (2010), p. 103; T. Falola, 'My Friend the Shylock', pp. 405, 412; A. Harneit-Sievers, 'African Business', p. 31; C. Uche, 'Credit Discrimination Controversy in British

initiatives thus also sought to provide solutions for this dearth of available capital (see also below).³⁵

The entanglement of newspapermen with various commercial schemes could contribute to the formation of complex and shifting relationships between editors and reader/contributors. Akinpelu Obisesan was a subscriber to Dusé Mohammed Ali's ATOR since the early 1910s. In 1917, Mohammed Ali moreover published a letter by Obisesan, in which the latter pledged his support for the magazine and supported it with a monetary contribution.³⁶ For Obisesan, this was an achievement with regard to his literary aspirations and a confirmation of his social status. Obisesan lived in Ibadan, a city north of Lagos; he had worked as a clerk for a European business before, and was becoming more and more involved with the management of his family's interests in the cocoa trade. Obisesan counted himself among a small group of people who entertained a literary lifestyle in colonial Ibadan; command of English served them as a marker of social status, and to be published in the press was a public assertion of literary skills, and promised respectability by peers.³⁷ This thus points to a specific way in which Obisesan related to Mohammed Ali as a contributor. Three years later, in 1920, Mohammed Ali was travelling to West Africa seeking to implement a scheme which would bring together an African-American bank with West African cocoa producers and thus enable the direct export of cocoa to America as envisioned by other pan-Africanists.³⁸ In the course of his visit to

West Africa. Evidence from Barclays (DCO)', *African Review of Money Finance and Banking*, 1-2 (1996), pp. 87-106.

³⁵ Tete Ansa sought to mobilise the capital of African savers. A. Hopkins, 'Economic Aspects', p. 139. This dearth of capital was hampering the running of newspapers. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 42, 76-7. For Rosalynde Ainslie, the formation of African-controlled banks was the most important reason for the flourishing of newspapers in the post-war period, as they provided the resources on which newspapers depended. R. Ainslie, *The Press*, p. 56.

³⁶ I. Duffield, 'Development of Pan-Africanism', p. 405.

³⁷ O. Adebayo, 'Reading the Diary of Akinpelu Obisesan in Colonial Africa', *African Studies Review*, 51, 2 (2008), p. 79; J. Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 254 et seqq; R. Watson 'Literacy as a Style of Life. Garveyism and Gentlemen in Colonial Ibadan', *African Studies*, 73:1 (2014), pp. 1-21; R. Watson, "'What is Our Intelligence, Our School Going and Our Reading of Books Without Getting Money?'" Akinpelu Obisesan and His Diary', in K. Barber (ed.), *Africa's Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, 2006), pp. 52-77. For the importance of literary achievements for social status see also chapter 4.

³⁸ I. Duffield, 'Development of Pan-Africanism', p. 607.

Nigeria, Mohammed Ali met Obisesan – the latter was part of a congregation of cocoa traders which Mohammed Ali addressed in Ibadan.³⁹ Mohammed Ali's visit was a success – he could secure substantial guarantees for his scheme from farmers and traders.⁴⁰ Obisesan attended this meeting as a produce trader, and it might thus be argued that the relationship between him and Mohammed Ali had changed or expanded: in addition to being a contributor to the ATOR, Obisesan was now also a potential business partner of Mohammed Ali.⁴¹

In the late 1920s, another 'political entrepreneur', Tete Ansa, a Gold Coaster who had spent time abroad, visited the West African coast pursuing a similar scheme as Mohammed Ali.⁴² In addition to the West African Co-operative Producers Ltd., which was founded in an effort to sell cocoa directly to the United States, he moreover sought to set up a bank in Lagos, the Industrial and Commercial Bank Ltd., to provide financial means for businessmen and farmers.⁴³ *Eko Akete*, *Akede Eko* and Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* gave Tete Ansa and his initiative wide publicity – they carried advertisements for his schemes, celebrated his plans in editorials, and praised his exemplary African industriousness (see also chapter 4). Macaulay moreover held shares in one of Tete Ansa's schemes, and Akintunde Adeshigbin, whose Tika Tore printing works published the two Yoruba papers, had opened an account at Tete Ansa's Industrial and Commercial Bank.⁴⁴ The scheme however failed in 1931, not least due to mutual distrust among managers and a lack of support on the ground in West Africa.⁴⁵ Tete Ansa left Lagos for South-Eastern Nigeria, and attempted a new start at a bank with the Nigerian

³⁹ I. Duffield, 'Development of Pan-Africanism', pp. 613-15; G. Williams, 'Garveyism, Akinpelu Obisesan and His Contemporaries. Ibadan, 1920-1922', in T. Ranger and O. Vaughan (eds.), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa. Essays in Honour of A.H.M. Kirk-Greene* (London, 1993), p. 117.

⁴⁰ I. Duffield, 'Development of Pan-Africanism', p. 613.

⁴¹ Although Mohammed Ali could secure support in Ibadan, other potential partners were more hesitant, and the scheme was never realised.

⁴² Cf. A. Harneit-Sievers, 'African Business'; A. Hopkins, 'Economic Aspects'. See also D. Pratten, *The Man Leopard Murders. History and Society in Colonial Nigeria* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 133 et seqq.

⁴³ Cf. Hopkins, 'Economic Aspects', pp. 138-140.

⁴⁴ Herbert Macaulay Papers [hereafter HMP]: Box 29, File 6: 'Industrial and Commercial Bank/Nigerian Mercantile Bank Ltd'. Adeshigbin invested £3 into the Industrial and Commercial Bank. HMP: Box 31, File 6: 'The Industrial and Commercial Bank Limited, Lagos, Nigeria, 13. October 1930'.

⁴⁵ Hopkins, 'Economic Aspects', pp. 140-141; W. Newlyn and D. Rowan, *Money and Banking in British Colonial Africa. A Study of the Monetary and Banking Systems of Eight British African Territories* (Oxford, 1954), p. 98.

Mercantile Bank. As David Pratten shows, colonial officials were worried about the network of 'agitators' that came together at a meeting inaugurating Ansa's scheme in Aba in 1932. Moreover, they were concerned about the means of propaganda they had access to.⁴⁶ According to a police report, Ansa's supporters were planning to publish a newspaper, and relied on the printing press of W. Coulson Labor to do so.⁴⁷ Labor was a pioneer of newspaper publishing in the South East, and had started his first publication, *The Aurora*, in 1914 in Onitsha.⁴⁸ Labor was apparently not envisioned to edit the planned Tete Ansa paper, and producing publicity for the scheme might have merely presented a commercial opportunity for Labor. This prospect alone might have been compelling enough for Labor to give up his current residence and to move to Aba.⁴⁹ His biography moreover suggests that he might have been sympathetic towards Ansa's scheme anyways. He was born in Sierra Leone into a family of printers. After the turn of the century, he was employed by Elder Dempster Lines in Lagos, and later joined government service and was transferred to the Consular Secretariat at Calabar. He resigned after a few years and took up the publication of a newspaper.⁵⁰ His biography thus resembles those of other 'agitators' supporting Ansa's scheme, who were disillusioned former government servants.⁵¹ Although Labor's motivations for teaming up with Ansa and the extent of his involvement in the scheme remain unclear, his association with Ansa again points out the nuanced relationships newspapermen entertained with other commercial initiatives.

⁴⁶ D. Pratten, *Man-Leopard Murders*, p. 134.

⁴⁷ Nigerian National Archives Enugu [hereafter NNAE]: RivProf 2/1/19: A. V. D. Inoe, Assistan Commissioner of Police, 'The opening of Branches of By W. Tete Ansa in Aba Township. Memorandum. 3. August, 1932'. I would like to express my thanks to David Pratten for sharing this source with me.

⁴⁸ I. Coker, *Landmarks*, p. 45; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 254. Labor apparently moved his paper to Calabar in 1916.

⁴⁹ NNAE: RivProf 2/1/19: A. V. D. Inoe, Assistan Commissioner of Police, 'The opening of Branches of By W. Tete Ansa in Aba Township. Memorandum. 3. August, 1932'. According to the police report, Labor's press was brought to Aba from Onitsha for the purpose of generating publicity. Increase Coker notes that Labor migrated from Calabar to Aba in 1929. Although dates and localities of origin differ in both accounts, it might be suggested that Coulson moved to Aba about the time that Tete Ansa inaugurated his scheme there.

⁵⁰ I. Coker, *Landmarks*, p. 45.

⁵¹ Cf. D. Pratten, *Man-Leopard Murder*, p. 134.

Banking and running a newspaper could also come together in one person, as the example of Nnamdi Azikiwe illustrates. As mentioned above, Azikiwe got involved with banking for the first time in the 1930s by acquiring shares in the Nigerian National Bank, a venture initiated by some of Tete Ansa's former supporters.⁵² When Azikiwe sought to diversify his business in the 1940s, he himself embarked on establishing a bank. As reason for doing so, he recounts an encounter at a British owned bank. When he sought to obtain a loan of £400 from his bank, the bank manager acted prejudiced and unreasonable towards him, and acted as if he was doing him a favour despite the fact that he had been with the bank for seven years.⁵³ According to Azikiwe, the bank he set up in 1944 was dormant and not open to the public until 1947, when the British Daily Mirror Group invested into a rival newspaper, the *Nigerian Times*, and, in face of this, the Zik Group "had to prove equal to the occasion".⁵⁴ Various companies involved in Azikiwe's publishing business – of which he owned from 45 to 63 percent each – contributed more than half of the paid up capital of the bank, which was now called the African Continental Bank Limited.⁵⁵ Azikiwe styled himself Founder, Governing Director and Chairman of the bank. Furthermore, the Zik Group then loaned money from the bank at low rates⁵⁶ – for instance for the purchase of a new printing plant and machinery.⁵⁷ According to Richard Sklar, the Zik Group suffered financial losses from 1949 onwards, relied on the bank, and thus drained its fund of deposits and reserves.⁵⁸

In the 1950s banks became important vehicles for financing political parties: funds from local governments, in which Africans started to be represented more prominently, were channelled into banks which in turn entertained close connections to political parties, and thus facilitated

⁵² The aforementioned printer Akintunde Adeshigbin was prominently involved with this venture. W. Newlyn and D. Rowan, *Monetary and Banking Systems*, p. 99.

⁵³ N. Azikiwe, *Zik*, pp. 212-13. See also R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Trenton, 2004), p. 165; R. Tignor, *Capitalism and Nationalism at the End of Empire. State and Business in Decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya, 1945-1963* (Princeton, 1998), p. 255.

⁵⁴ N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, p. 310.

⁵⁵ Cf. R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 165.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁵⁷ N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, pp. 310-11.

⁵⁸ R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 166.

the financing of political campaigns.⁵⁹ What was the African Continental Bank for Azikiwe's National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons, was the Nigerian National Bank for Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group. Just as the African Continental Bank had close links to Azikiwe's newspapers, the latter bank was closely associated with Awolowo's printing firm.⁶⁰

Martin Lynn shows for the 1950s that 'economic development' formed part of Azikiwe's radical nationalist politics. He for instance sought to foster 'development' independently from Britain, by establishing connections to and seeking to encourage investment from the United States and Europe.⁶¹ The close connections between politics and business illustrated above similarly highlight that 'nationalism' was not a unidimensional project. Rather, it was bringing together various initiatives, included economic projects, and thus also newspapers in their capacity as businesses. This in turn highlights that newspapers were increasingly involved in political projects, amongst them nationalism, in various other ways besides acting as organs of political expression.

Commercial Pressures and the Convening of Publics

The following section highlights further aspects of the practicalities of newspaper production. In particular, it focusses on aspects relating to the ways in which newspapers operated as businesses. It gives insight into the challenges and opportunities which stakeholders, such as employees of printing presses and news vendors, faced when working for a newspaper. Taking such a perspective also sheds light on the ways in which newspapermen's dependence on such stakeholders could inform publishing decisions, and thus dynamics in the public sphere more generally.

⁵⁹ M. Lynn, 'The "Eastern Crisis" of 1955-57, the Colonial Office, and Nigerian Decolonisation', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 30:3 (2002), pp. 101-102; K. Post and G. Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty. Personality and Politics in Colonial Nigeria* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 298, 316; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, chapter IV; R. Tignor, *Capitalism and Nationalism*, p. 255-6.

⁶⁰ K. Post and G. Jenkins, *The Price of Liberty*, p. 323.

⁶¹ M. Lynn, 'The Eastern Crisis', p. 97.

The business model of newspapers was based on sales; Fred Omu points out that sales were far more important than advertisements as a source of revenue.⁶² Estimates in the private papers of newspaperman Herbert Macaulay confirm such an assessment. In a business plan for a daily newspaper, drawn up in the late 1920s, the projected income from advertisement constitutes 5 per cent of the venture's overall expected monthly income.⁶³ The majority of advertisements featured in Macaulay's paper were small and by local businesses, notices that announced a "change of name", obituaries or other forms of commemorating the dead. However, way more important financially were advertisements by expatriate commercial interests. The United Africa Company and the Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale advertised on behalf of themselves and some other expatriate companies, and paid for large numbers of instalments in advance.⁶⁴ Content was crucial for boosting sales and thus revenue. At the same time, and if it alienated advertisers, it could further reduce the pool of already limited sources of income.

The above assessment of newspapers in their commercial environment illustrates the blurring of political and commercial interests, and thus raises questions about the ways in which such entanglements might have affected the content of newspaper's reporting. Muraino Olayiwola Oso stresses the commercial interests of those turning to the press, and suggests that the motives behind the political demands voiced in the press in the late nineteenth-century were informed by other business interests of editors. He argues that support of the press for British intervention in the Yoruba wars, which were fought north of Lagos, can for instance be seen as a campaign for restoring trade with the interior, on which Lagos traders depended and which

⁶² F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 76 et seqq.

⁶³ Income through sales for 26 issues of a paper at a circulation of 2,000 is given as £162/10/0, the projected income from job printing is given as £25, and income from advertisement as £10. HMP: Box 2, File 3: 'Rough Estimate For Working Per Month', p. 3.

⁶⁴ Small advertisements were sold for 3/4 per installation, whereas income from expatriate commercial interests could amount to one time payments of as much as £7. HMP: Box 7: 'Expenses and Receipts, 1930-1931'.

was disrupted by hostilities.⁶⁵ Similarly, James Brennan shows for colonial Tanganyika how the press was pressured by investors to moderate their political stances.⁶⁶

As this chapter has illustrated above, political and commercial motivations can hardly be divorced, which complicates assessments along such lines. In this context it is however interesting to note that the Lagos press addressed the question of whether commercial interests were motivating the publication of specific pieces: rival newspapermen and the government were accusing some editors and journalists repeatedly of sensationalism for profit. Doing so often coincided or exemplified attempts to discredit political opponents or so-called 'agitators' (see also chapter 5).

Controversy helped to sustain publishing activity in Lagos as elsewhere, and even some colonial officials could understand such dynamics to some extent. In 1929, Governor Graeme Thompson likened the *Lagos Daily News* to the British publication *John Bull*, suggesting that clerks reading the Nigerian paper were doing so because they "liked [the] spicy bits" not because they agreed with the paper's policy, just like the readers of the British paper.⁶⁷ The conservative *Nigerian Daily Times* assessed the taste of the Lagosian reading public very similarly when noting that the *Lagos Daily News* was "in tune with popular rel[is]h for something exciting, something emotional or ludicrous" and that it "has made the habit of attacking people its chief means of living".⁶⁸ A brief letter in the Herbert Macaulay papers further corroborates this interest in controversy – a reader asks the editor of *Akede Eko* for six copies of "your publication in which the article against Mr. Ikoli [the editor of the *African Messenger*, author's note] is published."⁶⁹ Similarly, Adeoye Deniga lets a controversy between two of his contributors take its course in the pages of his paper instead of

⁶⁵ M. Oso, 'Press and Industrial Relations', pp. 204-206.

⁶⁶ Cf. J. Brennan, 'Politics and Business', p. 52.

⁶⁷ The National Archives of the United Kingdom [hereafter TNA]: CO 583/175/16 Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers 1930: 'Minutes. In regard to a Deputation received by His Excellency at Government House at 12 noon on Thursday, the 2nd of May, 1929 re scurrilous articles in newspapers', p. 29.

⁶⁸ 'Daily News on A Silly War Path', *Nigerian Daily Times*, 28. April 1932, p. 4.

⁶⁹ HMP: Box 7, File 3: 'J. F[?]' to Editor Akede Eko, 3. August 1929.

suppressing it – presumably as it similarly presumed readers would enjoy such “spicy bits” (see introduction).⁷⁰ Another way to boost sales might have been the publication of special issues. A brief note in the Macaulay papers illustrates, that in February 1928, 1,000 copies of a special issue published almost two weeks before, were commissioned for sale on the railway line to Ibadan alone.⁷¹ This constituted a considerable purchase of papers, as the circulation given for the paper at that time was 2,000 issues.⁷²

Seemingly fully aware of the tastes of their readers, newspapermen skilfully found ways to entice their readers into buying issues of their paper. As Patrick Cole shows, one controversy had a particular capacity to encourage publishing activity, namely the so-called Eleko-question which centred on the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as Oba or King of Lagos (see chapters 4 and 5).⁷³ The issue was more broadly fraught with accusations that those prominently involved with the issue were enriching themselves at the expense of Lagosians loyal to Eshugbayi.⁷⁴ Such complaints were also voiced with specific reference to publishing activity. A letter to the editor of the *African Messenger* in 1923 noted on the occasion of a controversial article published in the *Lagos Weekly Record* that Herbert Macaulay and Thomas Horatio Jackson were after the dollars rather than the vindication of the Eleko. The issue in question had apparently come out one week late, and during that time, “most scandalously worded”, “scandal-monging” placards which had been posted in town, had worked up the excitement of the people, and had made them await the sale of the paper with eagerness.⁷⁵ Reducing the publication of political pieces to an attempt to make profits, and putting the rationale behind publishing a paper in question was thus a way to discredit political opponents, and mirrored

⁷⁰ Kekere Ilu, ‘Si Oni Iwe-Irohin EKO AKETE’, *Eko Akete*, 30. May 1925, p. 4; Atari Ajanaku, ‘Si Oni ‘we-irohin “EKO AKETE”’, *Eko Akete*, 18. July 1925, pp. 7-9.

⁷¹ A Johnson received 1,000 copies of a special issue published almost two weeks before, to sell it on the line to Ibadan. HMP: Box 2, File 3: ‘Johnson, 3. February 1928’, p. 44.

⁷² Cf. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 262.

⁷³ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge 1975), p. 156.

⁷⁴ Cf. TNA: CO 583/135/39701: ‘Officer Administering the Government to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15. August 1925’.

⁷⁵ The Eleko Matter (Letter to the editor), *African Messenger*, 1. February 1923, p. 4a.

wider concerns and negotiations about who should contribute to discussions in the public sphere (see chapter 4).

While newspapers offered commercial opportunities for some stakeholders, others faced dire conditions when working for the press. For newsvendors, the press constituted a fairly reliable source of revenue. Although newspapers were sold by market women,⁷⁶ this commodity does not seem to have been firmly integrated into structures regulating the sale of other goods in the market.⁷⁷ Rather, the sale of newspapers entailed its own distribution infrastructure, which in turn offered commercial opportunities for newspaper vendors. Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* offered, like most other newspapers, a flexible commission system.⁷⁸ Smaller sellers could make up to 16.6 per cent in commission from their sales of a paper, those selling more issues could make up to 25 per cent.⁷⁹ Gbeleyi, one of Macaulay's most successful vendors, could thus make up to £2 per month through his commission – which compared rather favourably to the salary of a machine turner, who earned 25/- per month.⁸⁰ Azikiwe portrays himself as having encouraged vendors to form an institution which would allow them

⁷⁶ TNA: CO 583/175/16 Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers 1930: 'Minutes. In regard to a Deputation received by His Excellency at Government House at 12 noon on Thursday, the 2nd of May, 1929 re scurrilous articles in newspapers'.

⁷⁷ Cheryl Johnson Odim illustrates how sections of traders of related products had their own leadership. C. Johnson, 'Nigerian Women and British Colonialism. The Yoruba Example with Selected Biographies' (Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern Univ., 1978), pp. 20 et seqq.

⁷⁸ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 79.

⁷⁹ HMP: Box 7: 'Expenses and Receipts, 1930-1931'. These figures are higher as those given by Omu, who suggests vendors could make between 5-12.5% in commission. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 79. Nnamdi Azikiwe notes that he offered vendors between 25 and 33.5% commission. N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, p. 299.

⁸⁰ Benjamin Akani was supposed to earn 25/- per month between August 1933 and November 1934. HMP: Box 2, File 3: 'Benjamin Akani Machine T[urner]'. Gbeleyi's income is calculated from the commission he received according to Macaulay's account books. He was earning more than £2 per month between 17. November 1930 and 20. January 1931. Urekipim, who was selling on average 18 newspapers a day, and thus far less than Gbeleyi, only made 5s4d between 17. November and 18. December 1930, and 7s1d between 16. Oktober 1930 and 15 November 1930. HMP: Box 7: 'Expenses and Receipts, 1930-1931'.

to exploit the commission system in the early 1940s.⁸¹ In Lagos, a news vendors union emerged in the late 1940s, thus institutionalizing a local distribution infrastructure.⁸²

Besides offering commercial opportunities, the newspaper business could put considerable strain on stakeholders involved in the publication of a paper. The ways in which those working for newspapers reacted to such challenges could in turn inform the ways in which editors could convene publics around certain issues. The literature gives the impression that starting from the 1920s, the organisation of the newspaper businesses was only slowly transforming from small-scale enterprises run virtually single-handedly by editor-proprietors to corporate institutions and newspaper companies.⁸³ This not only obscures the fact that in addition those contributing to the content of the newspaper, other stakeholders were involved with bringing out a paper, such as the vendors referred to above. Moreover, it pushes dynamics between the different people involved in the production of the actual paper into the background. The following section illustrates such dynamics with particular reference to Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Already in the 1920s, newspapers could employ, at least temporarily, a range of people, and it might also be pointed out that the minority of employees was tasked with content production. In Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News*, the workforce comprised of printers, compositors, machine or pressmen, messengers, apprentices, and in later years of one journalist. While the production of content might have been a one-man show, the actual publication of a newspaper was not. Staff lists for the paper show that in January 1928 ten people, not including the proprietor/editor were employed by the paper.⁸⁴ In 1929, 27 people can be found on staff lists, in 1932 28, and in 1934, when the

⁸¹ N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, p. 299.

⁸² An article in *Eletì Ofe* suggests that the union, holding a certificate as a trade union, emerged in 1947. 'Ègbẹ̀ Ata'we irohin Gba Iwe Èri lati Odọ̀ Ijọba', *Eletì Ofe*, 28. August 1948, p. 2. According to Azikiwe, a printer's union emerged in the 1940s. 'Inside Stuff. Journalism in British West Africa (4)', *West African Pilot*, 22. May 1945, p. 2.

⁸³ Cf. R. Ainslie, *The Press*, p. 33; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 73, 75.

⁸⁴ A staff voucher suggests that ten people were paid for their services in January 1928. However, not all of them might have been employed. Nevertheless, one version of the constitution of the LDN lists nine employees (without the proprietor/editor) as staff, another version additionally lists an undisclosed

paper was increasingly facing financial difficulties, about 20 people were still listed as staff.⁸⁵

The paper might still be described as a family paper, in particular for the periods in which Frank Macaulay, Herbert Macaulay's son, was employed as editor for the paper. However, this should not necessarily be seen as an indication of the size of the paper.

Having such an extended group of stakeholders involved in bringing out a newspaper was particularly the case for ventures which not only produced a paper's content, but also published the paper in-house. This was the case, besides the *Lagos Daily News*, for papers such as the *Times of Nigeria*, the *Daily Times*, and the *Lagos Weekly Record*.⁸⁶ Whereas some of these presses – such as the aforementioned Samadu Press, which published the *Weekly Record* – engaged in commercial printing in addition to the publication of a newspaper, there are no records suggesting such activity in Herbert Macaulay's press. The situation was different for the bilingual Yoruba-newspapers *Eko Akete* and *Akede Eko* which both outsourced printing to Akintunde Adeshigbin's Tika Tore printing works.⁸⁷ Sales were even more crucial for these papers,⁸⁸ and I.B. Thomas, the editor of *Akede Eko*, applied for a loan to the Colony Development Board to purchase a printing press in 1948, presumably to increase his commercial opportunities.⁸⁹

The fact that a considerable number of stakeholders was involved with the publication of a paper could expose proprietors to considerable pressures, and thus also inform the ways in which they convened publics in their papers. Letters of employees of the *Daily News* suggests that their situation at work was characterised by financial insecurity. For instance, the paper

number of apprentices as staff. HMP: Box 2, File 3: 'The Lagos Daily News Voucher for 31 January 1928'; HMP: Box 2: 'Lagos Daily News, n.d. [1928]'; HMP: Box 2, File 1: 'The Lagos Daily News, 10. January 1928'.

⁸⁵ HMP: Box 2 File 3: 'Lagos Daily News, 1. June 1929'; 'The Lagos Daily News Staff Salary Account up to 31. July 1932, n.d. [1932]'; 'Lagos Daily News Staff, 28. August 1934'.

⁸⁶ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 53, 57, 62, 74; *Times of Nigeria*, 6. October 1919.

⁸⁷ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 74. Akintunde Adeshigbin's signature can be found on numerous issues of the two Yoruba-language newspapers in the holdings of the Nigerian National Archives.

⁸⁸ Barber illustrates that the printers had to be paid whether or not subscribers had paid for their issues. I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, p. 39.

⁸⁹ Nigerian National Archives Ibadan [hereafter NNAI]: Comcol 9/3 CrdV/P/22 Akede Eko. Lagos. Application from.

owed Nathaniel Jackson, a printer who had been working for Macaulay for three years, £55.6.10d – more than 18 months of salaries – in 1934.⁹⁰ Employees had difficulties paying school fees, and their precarious employment moreover threatened to adversely affect domestic arrangements.⁹¹ In negotiations for their pay and the terms for continuing to work for the *Lagos Daily News* employees could bring references to their loyalty and ‘politics’ to the fore. After complaining about the difficulties he faced because of irregular payment, Nathaniel Okusanya, a head printer, seems to have appealed to Macaulay’s political pride in an attempt to secure payment. He stated that it was “very funny that the Hd. Printer of the Lagos Daily News will get 1/- for 2 day[s]”, and followed up with the rhetorical question “[h]ow much more for the ordinary press like Daily Times or Telegraph” thus apparently indirectly seeking to blackmail Macaulay into paying by highlighting his association with this “special” paper, and, presumably, its political stance.⁹² However, records in the Macaulay papers also illustrate that ‘politics’ and political allegiance could have low importance when it came to working for a newspaper. For one Akibiyi, economic motivations seem to have been overriding when he left the paper for the *Pioneer* in 1936, and thus took up work under Kitoyi Ajasa, one of Herbert Macaulay’s political opponents (see chapter 5).⁹³

Given such dire working conditions, staff were apparently willing to take it into their own hands to make sure they were being paid in some form. Those in charge did little to discourage such initiative. In May 1929, Joseph Olushola informed the management that he had kept advertising revenue for himself: “We (I mean myself + Frank⁹⁴) kept it and used it as we were in need. It is shameful that we should go a starving [sic] when we were working. This is not the only advert-money that we kept. Frank had no salary, mine was, and is still

⁹⁰ HMP: Box 2, File 3: ‘N.B. Jackson to Herbert Macaulay, 15. November 1934’.

⁹¹ HMP: Box 2, File 3: ‘N. Okusanya to Herbert Macaulay, 16. June 1936’. Okusanya’s wife was threatening to go to Ijebu, which presumably meant she was threatening to leave him.

⁹² Ibid. When bargaining for his salary, Nathaniel Jackson similarly highlighted his loyalty to Macaulay in contrast to those who had left the paper at critical times. HMP: Box 2, File 3: ‘N.B. Jackson to Herbert Macaulay, 15. November 1934’.

⁹³ HMP: Box 2: ‘N. Okusanya to Manager, n.d. [April/May 1936]’.

⁹⁴ Frank refers to Frank Macaulay, Herbert Macaulay’s son.

iniquitously low in comparison with our work and responsibility.”⁹⁵ Olushola’s foray seems to have not resulted in any reprimand, and he was apparently still employed one month later, when he resigned reluctantly, as his calls for, and the promise of a salary increase had remained unheeded.⁹⁶ A letter by Gaphon Suiti suggests that this was a more general practice. In July 1934, in a letter attributing his being out of pocket to the piecemeal payment of his salary, he stated that he had been expecting “to get some money on Saturday on the £4 from C.F.A.O. [Compagnie Française de l’Afrique Occidentale, author’s note] which we generally distribute among ourselves”. However, “that hope was surprisingly cut down on account of Mr. Odumosu taking the law to his own hands”, meaning, most likely, that Odumosu had kept the advertising money for himself.⁹⁷

In this context, the political stance taken by Nnamdi Azikiwe towards advertisements of expatriate firms in his *West African Pilot* in the 1930s seems particularly bold. Azikiwe boycotted European advertisers which were taking part or could be associated with price controls that kept the price for the produce of African farmers such as cocoa and palm oil artificially low. Amongst such firms were the aforementioned United Africa Company. This was a major political point Azikiwe advocated. As David Pratten shows, Azikiwe’s paper moreover criticised other newspapers which accepted advertising revenue from such firms. When convening publics against this background, Azikiwe’s paper appealed to and fulfilled the expectations of an increasingly radical anti-colonial reading public. Although other newspapers sought to appeal to publics with similarly radical politics in their articles, their ability to successfully convene publics was limited, particularly if they could not afford to boycott European advertisers.⁹⁸ The example of the *Lagos Daily News* has shown that such a boycott could threatened the very existence of a newspaper, as personal economic needs of

⁹⁵ Olushola describes himself as Editor, Printer, and Co-publisher of the *Lagos Daily News*. HMP: Box 2, File 3: ‘J. Olushola to Proprietors of Tanimola Press and Lagos Daily News, 16. June 1929’; J. Olushola, ‘Re Phillips Stores £4-10-0, 15. May 1929’.

⁹⁶ HMP: Box 2, File 3: ‘J. Olushola to Proprietors of Tanimola Press and Lagos Daily News, 16. June 1929’.

⁹⁷ HMP: Box 2: ‘G. Suiti to Herbert Macaulay, 16. June 1934’.

⁹⁸ D. Pratten, ‘Creole Pioneers’, p. 91.

stakeholders could outdo political loyalty to a newspaper. With regard to how the illustrated tensions influenced dynamics in the public sphere, Obafemi Awolowo's assessment of the *Lagos Daily News* in the 1930s seems particularly apt. It captures how newspapermen had to navigate between successfully convening publics through 'politics' as expressed in their reporting and commercial pressures the newspaper business entailed. According to Awolowo, the *Daily News* would only come out if Herbert Macaulay "could afford to buy newsprint and ink and persuade his irregularly paid and half-starved compositors to work."⁹⁹ Awolowo continues with what seems to be a reference to Macaulay's sense for what kind of content would sell well: "Whenever this paper made its appearance it sold like hot cakes."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has provided insight into the practicalities of newspaper production by bringing commercial aspects of running a newspaper back into view. From the start, newspapers were intertwined with various other commercial activities in complex ways – for some proprietors, they were only one amongst other business interests. Newspapers were not just a means to achieve political ends, but, as examples of African industriousness, also constituted a political end in themselves. In their pages, they publicised and advocated African commercial activity, and, at the same time, newspapers were an expression of the "self-help" and unity they were advocating. The *African Times and Orient Review*, for instance, was bringing together capital of various West Africans in a company registered in London. Moreover, newspapers were not only reporting on various projects of "economic nationalism", but, as businesses, were also closely intertwined with them. As a result, newspapers facilitated a range of complex relationships in addition to editor – reader/contributor interactions. Readers could be potential business partners and newspapermen could become advertisers for and clients of political entrepreneurs. Furthermore, initiatives seeking to foster African commercial activity

⁹⁹ O. Awolowo, *Awo*, p. 82. See also F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 64-5.

¹⁰⁰ O. Awolowo, *Awo*, p. 82.

could come together with publishing activity when newspapers became shareholders of local banking schemes. This illustrates that newspapers could not only contribute to political projects as transmitters of ideology, but also as businesses.

By studying the practicalities of the newspaper business, this chapter has illuminated more structural challenges and opportunities newspapermen were facing, and which were thus coming to bear on dynamics in the public sphere. In addition to readers and contributors, newspapers entertained relationships with a range of stakeholders. For newsvendors, the press could provide a fairly sustainable commercial opportunity. A commission system, which rewarded those selling large quantities of papers for newspaper producers, encouraged the formation of a news vendors union and thus a distribution system independent from established structures such as the Lagos markets. Studying account books and letters of employees of Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News*, this chapter has, however, also illustrated commercial pressures associated with the publication of a newspaper. Newspapers depended on sales, were notoriously undercapitalised, and could often barely make ends meet. Controversy was selling papers in Lagos as elsewhere, and newspapermen devised various strategies to cater to reader's interest in 'spicy bits'. At the same time, accusations of 'sensationalism for profit' served to discredit political opponents.

This chapter has illustrated how newspapermen had to navigate 'politics' and commercial pressures when convening publics in their papers. Due to the precarious nature of the press, those employed by newspapers often had to endure financial hardship when they only received parts of their promised salary. Political affinity and loyalty to a paper could not always placate employees. Although newspapers generally depended on sales, advertising revenue from expatriate firms could provide much longed for financial relief for stakeholders involved with bringing out a paper. This chapter has illustrated how employees of Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* distributed such advertising revenue amongst themselves, and by bypassing their managers. Nnamdi Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* illustrates how the boycott

of expatriate advertising could increase sales, as it allowed editors to convene radical publics. The example of the *Lagos Daily News* however suggests that the loss of this revenue could, at the same time, further alienate staff that was barely coping with working conditions and thus threaten a newspaper's very existence. By highlighting more practical and commercial aspects of running a newspaper business, and in particular by addressing how stakeholders beyond readers and contributors engaged with newspapers, this chapter has thus illustrated dynamics operating behind the pages of the press which came to bear on dynamics of the public sphere.

Chapter 2 – News Networks and Colonial Information

Management

Introduction

This chapter continues the study of practicalities of newspaper production in colonial Lagos, and addresses the relationship of the Lagos press to local and global information networks as well as information flows in and to colonial Lagos more generally. In other words, this chapter studies the broader ‘information environment’ in which newspapers operated. In doing so, it gives insight into further aspects shaping the ‘production structures’ of the public sphere.

Recent literature on print culture highlights the ways in which Nigerian and more generally West African newspapers formed part of a broader “trans-colonial reading public”, a “pan-imperial imagined community”.¹ Not least through culling – that is, reprinting other published texts – the press forged links between different localities and facilitated the formation of transnational communities of social solidarity and belonging. At the same time, newspapermen in Lagos enabled more local links by reaching out to readers and contributors in other parts of the colony. This chapter studies such process against the background of newsgathering and information flows. By moreover highlighting the way in which the colonial state sought to manage and intervene in discussions in the press, it illuminates opportunities and constraints informing the practicalities of newspaper production in colonial Lagos, and foregrounds the work accomplished by newspapermen when trying to fill the pages of their papers.

This chapter looks into the ways in which Lagos was connected to one of the empire’s chief information brokers, the Reuters news agency, and highlights the changing ways in which the press engaged with the services provided via this network. At the same, this chapter illustrates

¹ S. Newell, ‘Articulating Empire. Newspaper Readerships in Colonial West Africa’, *New Formations*, 26 (2011), pp. 27-8.

the ways in which the Lagos press was relating to and tapping into other networks along which information was exchanged. In addition to 'international' relationships, the more local connections of the press as well as more general challenges associated with recruiting contributors are of interest in this context. This chapter moreover gives insight into colonial media legislation and other ways in which the colonial state sought to influence public communication and thus shape discussions in the public sphere.

'Newsgathering' in Colonial Lagos

In 1945, in a 22-part assessment of journalism in British West Africa, Nnamdi Azikiwe noted that with regard to making use of news agencies, British West Africa was far behind other parts of the world. Moreover, he explained that there was no regional news service in operation, a fact which furthermore contributed to the paucity of news in the West African press. With regard to obtaining international news each paper had to "fight its own battles and make its own arrangements".² Although news agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, Havas or Tass were available in Nigeria in 1945, and newspapers at times subscribed to the various services, Azikiwe's account suggests that it was mainly concerns of cost that made these services beyond reach for the majority of West African newspapers.³

With this account, Azikiwe gives insight into the practicalities of newspaper production – his elaborations on the difficulties of accessing international news raise broader questions about the ways in which newspapermen were gathering information and thus ultimately the copy that filled the pages of their papers. Besides international news, newspapermen's access to proceedings of the local colonial government or to news from the provinces is of interest in this regard too. More generally, this account of journalism in British West Africa draws attention to news and information flows under colonial rule and to colonial attempts at restricting and influencing discussions in the press. What follows thus highlights the ways in

² 'Inside Stuff. Journalism in British West Africa (6)', *West African Pilot*, 25. May 1945, p. 2.

³ 'Inside Stuff. Journalism in British West Africa (7)', *West African Pilot*, 26. May 1945, p. 2.

which newspapermen navigated a complex information environment when engaging with the publication of a newspaper.

Such an inquiry complicates accounts which explain the different 'news-content' of papers published in Africa by referring to different editorial policies. Rosalynde Ainslie suggests that while the white settler press in East Africa took pride in associating with the traditions of Fleet Street, and thus saw their role mainly in the transmission of news, the press in West Africa was less interested in news and more concerned with political lobbying and campaigning.⁴ Such an assessment of the differences between newspapers masks that not only the creation of knowledge, but also its distribution was shaped by specific power structures under colonial rule.⁵ An assessment of the practicalities of newspaper production with regard to newsgathering and information flows thus allows us to gain insight into opportunities and constraints shaping newspapermen's publication decisions, that is to say, it furthers our understanding of the context in which newspapermen's decisions to publish one text or another, were forged. This gives, in turn, insight into the context in which newspapermen and contributors set out to convene publics in the Lagos press.

The Lagos Press and Global News Networks

When highlighting newspaper's relationship to news agencies, Azikiwe's account of journalism in British West Africa draws attention to the historical development of an imperial and ultimately global information infrastructure. It brings to the fore questions relating to the position of Nigerian newspapers vis a vis this network, and the ways in which newspapermen engaged with and worked around this system. This section focusses on the emergence of Reuters on the West Coast as well as African responses to it, and when doing so gives a first insight into the broader opportunities and constraints shaping newspapermen's publication decisions.

⁴ R. Ainslie, *The Press in Africa. Communications Past and Present* (London, 1966), p. 99.

⁵ Cf. F. Cooper and A. Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony', in F. Cooper and A. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 11 et seqq.

The history of Reuters in Nigeria illustrates that the African press was awarded marginal importance in an emerging global information infrastructure from the start. In *News and the British World*, Simon Potter shows that by the late nineteenth century, the world's major news agencies had formalized their division of the world amongst them, thus establishing a global communication order. The British agency Reuters had secured most parts of the British Empire as its share, and its network encompassed about 260 offices and correspondents by the turn of the century.⁶ An emerging "Imperial Press System" was bringing parts of the empire, the so-called Dominions, closer together with the imperial centre. The press in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa shared similarities and entertained close links with the press in Britain – Potter characterises their connection as one of mutual interdependence and sees the imperial press system shaping the development of newspapers in all regions concerned. Journalists, information as well as capital funding the establishment of newspapers were circulating freely in this network.⁷ Telegraphic connections, which facilitated such exchanges and through which Reuters distributed its services, were seen as an important means to sustain a racialized sense of Britishness, and commercial interests quickly found ways to sustain, encourage and exploit this eagerness for exchange between the Dominions and London – Reuters quickly emerged as an important information broker in the British Empire.⁸ In particular for so-called constructive imperialists, the press, and more generally this imperial press system, moreover promised to be a powerful tool for achieving their goal of imperial integration – at least with regard to the Dominions.⁹

In Africa, the "Imperial Press System" at best included the white settler press – the African-owned and controlled newspapers were marginalized in terms of news distribution, and the establishment of local outlets of news agencies to cater to an African press was similarly not

⁶ S. Potter, *News and the British World. The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876-1922* (Oxford, 2003), p. 87.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15 et seqq., 26.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 28 et seqq., 88.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

prioritized. At the first Imperial Press Conference in London in 1909, which gave expression to ambitions of imperial integration with the help of the press, no African newspaper was present, and the only non-European representing a newspaper on this occasion was Surendranath Banerjee of the Indian newspaper *The Bengalee*.¹⁰ Nigeria was officially linked to the network of news agencies more than 20 years after newspapers resumed publication in Lagos and about 40 years after news agencies were established in Asia.¹¹ The Reuters news agency started to supply its services to the Southern Nigerian government shortly after the turn of the century.¹² When Azikiwe started to work as a stringer for Reuters in 1945, he was among the first West Africans to do so.¹³ The situation was different in African colonies with larger European communities. In Kenya, some form of Reuters news were taken up shortly after the establishment of the *African Standard*, a newspaper produced by and catering for white settlers.¹⁴ The news agency had been transmitting information from and to South Africa since the 1870s and established a local news service in 1912, which further facilitated the transmission of information to newspapers closely associated with mining capital, and thus the white community.¹⁵

¹⁰ Cf. T. Hardman, *A Parliament of the Press. The First Imperial Press Conference* (London, 1909).

¹¹ A telegraphic connection to West Africa was established in the late nineteenth century. R. Ainslie, *The Press*, p. 191. Reuters was established in Asia in the 1860s; a London-Bombay telegraphic cable was inaugurated in 1870. C. Bayly, 'Informing Empire and Nation. Publicity, Propaganda and the press 1880-1920', in H. Morgan (ed.), *Information, Media and Power Through the Ages* (Dublin, 2001), p. 181; G.N.S. Raghavan, *The Press in India. A New History* (New Delhi, 1994), p. 64.

¹² Government records are inconclusive with regard to when exactly an agreement was reached between Reuters and the Government in Lagos – one source gives the year 1904, whereas in 1930 the Postmaster General indicates that the service was taken up in 1906. NNAI: CSO 26/1 01964 Reuters Telegram: M.D.H. Lyon, 'Reuters News Telegrams', p. 10; NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III i) Reuters News Service: Proposed INCREASE to Service, ii) Nigerian Daily Times (Newspaper): 'Distribution of Press News by Posts and Telegraphs Department. Notes of an Interview with His Excellency the Governor 5th February, 1930', p. 306.

¹³ William Hachten suggests that only the *New York Times* had correspondents in Africa following the Second World War, and stringers starting from the 1950s. W. Hachten, *Muffled Drums. The News Media in Africa* (Ames, 1971), pp. 54-5, 58.

¹⁴ R. Ainslie, *The Press*, p. 99. The paper was launched by A.M. Jeevanjee but soon taken over by Europeans. M. Sturmer, *The Media History of Tanzania* (Ndanda, 1998), p. 53.

¹⁵ R. Ainslie, *The Press*, pp. 199-200; S. Potter, *Imperial Press System*, p. 100. At this time, African-owned newspaper's access to political and public affairs news was restricted. L. Switzer, 'Introduction. South Africa's Alternative Press in Perspective', in L. Switzer (ed.), *South Africa's Alternative Press. Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880s-1960s* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 1.

When highlighting that every newspaper had to make their own arrangements with regard to newsgathering, Azikiwe's assessment of journalism implicitly highlights the importance of the various networks Nigerian newspapermen fostered and tapped into and which served as important routes along which 'information' could reach them. In such networks, links were made through personal connections but also by reprinting and borrowing from what was published in other newspapers along the West African coast, and also, for instance, in the United States, the Caribbean, or Britain.¹⁶ Engaging with wider networks of intellectuals and political activists in such ways has in fact a long history in West Africa – in the nineteenth century, an educated elite was part of an international formation of exchange across the Atlantic, which Paul Gilroy dubs the Black Atlantic.¹⁷ For the colonial period, Stephanie Newell notes that such networks were facilitated by the colonial state but she also highlights that trans-colonial or paracolonial networks connected elites in West Africa alongside and beyond the British presence.¹⁸ The emerging press in West Africa contributed to maintaining such connections and facilitated the establishment of new links.¹⁹

Although marginalized in news networks maintained by news agencies, West African newspapers thus formed part of a broader "trans-colonial reading public", a "pan-imperial imagined community", as Stephanie Newell puts it. Readers in Lagos not only learned about political demands in Ireland and South Africa, but moreover made links and comparisons

¹⁶ Cf. L. James, 'Transatlantic Passages. Black Identity Construction in West African and West Indian Newspapers, 1935-1950', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.) *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 51, 53, 62, 65.

¹⁷ M. Vaughan, 'Africa and the Birth of the Modern World', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 16 (2006), p. 147; P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London, 1993). Their exchanges might have been framed by anti-slavery efforts and Christianity, but also covered the important questions of the time such as science, the future of Africa and women. M. Vaughan, 'African and the Birth', p. 147.

¹⁸ S. Newell, 'Articulating Empire', pp. 27-8; S. Newell, "'Paracolonial" Networks. Some Speculations on Local Readerships in Colonial West Africa, *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 3:3 (2001), p. 350; S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom in Colonial West Africa', *Media History*, 22:1 (2016), pp. 103-104.

¹⁹ The Yoruba press participated in such networks too, and, as Karin Barber shows, was moreover reaching back in time. In this way, it brought texts that had been published 40 years earlier back into circulation. I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas's 'Life story of me, Seḡilola' and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 41-42.

between their own and others experiences as imperial subjects.²⁰ Various scholars have commented on the multitude of texts, and thus ‘news’, that were published in the pages of West African newspapers, the at times eclectic bricolage newspapermen were compiling and which resulted, not least, from the various sources from which information or ‘news’ was drawn. The press compiled sometimes contradictory texts which were regarded of interest in equal measure as they addressed a shared topic – racially offensive pieces could be published next to calls for pan-African solidarity, as they both addressed the issues of race and Africa.²¹ The recourse to ‘culling’ from other sources could also serve to ‘ventriloquise’ challenges to locally existing hierarchies – voicing them through texts authored by others limited the exposure of local editors and contributors.²² In other instances texts originating from different sources were not only printed next to each other, but served as commentary on each other.²³ The following closer look at the way in which the Lagos press engaged with Reuters once the service was made available further illustrates the importance of the links newspapermen established and entertained to news outlets besides news agencies.

What’s (the) news? Lagos Newspapers, Reuters and Local ‘sources’ of News

Azikiwe’s 1945 account of journalism suggests that it was the prices charged by news agencies which limited newspaper’s access to their news, and that this was among the reasons why the press in West Africa was “behind” when making use of such services. Looking into the ways in which Lagos newspapers engaged with the services offered by Reuters however complicates this assessment. Looking at the ways in which different newspapers made use of the agency’s service in the 1920s, this section argues that cost was not the only factor which made Lagos newspapers reluctant to publish Reuter’s news. It suggests that, at least in the late 1920s,

²⁰ S. Newell, ‘Articulating Empire’, pp. 27-28.

²¹ S. Newell, *The Power to Name. A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, 2013), p. 46.

²² S. Newell, ‘Articulating Empire’, pp. 35-6.

²³ L. James, ‘Transatlantic Passages’, pp. 60, 64-5.

publishing Reuters news had become an unattractive means to connect to a “pan-imperial imagined community”. Relating the use of Reuters to the engagement with other ‘sources’ of information or news, this section further highlights the importance of the different ways in which newspapers connected to readers and contributors when gathering news and increasing their circulation.

Lagos newspapers were not merely carriers of international news – they were a product of and reflected local elite culture. Consequently, the ‘news’ published in the press were often focussing on local personalities, providing a commentary on their doings, for instance when publishing reports of concerts, dances, garden parties, church events, and also weddings, and such reports were frequently complemented with long lists of prominent personalities attending these gatherings.²⁴ The bilingual Yoruba-press that emerged in the 1920s similarly featured personalia in their pages, and when doing so reported on a variety of Lagosians, not just an exclusive circle of the elite.²⁵ Newspapers were documenting Lagos life more generally when publishing official announcements, speeches, proceedings and minutes of meetings of local associations and societies. In Karin Barber’s words, they amounted to “permanent repositories of information”, were envisioned as record ‘books’ to be consulted in the future.²⁶ Other studies moreover show that newspapers served as preservers of popular culture, and illustrate the ways in which they formed part of processes of memorialisation.²⁷ Connecting to readers in various parts of the empire was thus only one aspect of a paper’s reporting, and thus only one aspect of the cultural and ideological work accomplished by newspapermen.

²⁴ Cf. M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos. Aspects of nineteenth century Lagos Life* (London, 1977), pp. 5, 31; I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, p. 28. Newspapers were also providing information about who was leaving and arriving on ships.

²⁵ Cf. I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 42, 45.

²⁶ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, p. 41. See also M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos*, p. 5.

²⁷ K. Barber, ‘Cultural Editing, Memorialisation and Popular Voices in Early Yoruba Print Culture’ (paper presented at the Mellon-Sawyer Seminar on Ethnicity in Africa, University of Michigan, 2011); N. Sawada, ‘The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society’ (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Birmingham, 2012).

Other elements of reporting could rely on specific, local references, and expected readers to understand allusions to locally shared popular memory and other local experiences.²⁸

The way in which Reuters was introduced in Nigeria, as outlined above, illustrates how the colonial government emerged as a gatekeeper of sorts for this kind of international information at the turn of the century.²⁹ This was to shape the way in which this service was made available to the local press. First via Cape Town, and later directly from London, the agency cabled about 5,000 words per month to Lagos. According to Reuters, they were charging the government only for the transmission of the news, and not the news themselves. Once cabled to the government, the transmissions were in turn made available to the public via the Government Printing Office; government officials, private individuals, clubs, and newspapers could subscribe to these printed copies of the service for a comparatively small fee of between 1/- and £4 per year – in some cases these news sheets were even distributed for free.³⁰ Although Reuters entertained close relationships with other colonial governments, the emergence and maintenance of this exclusive link with the government in Nigeria differed from other parts of the empire, where the development of the imperial news network was driven and maintained mainly by commercial interests. In Lagos, Reuters was thus more easily accessible for emerging and established newspapers alike, while in other parts of the empire, smaller newspapers were often excluded from access to the agency's transmissions.³¹

²⁸ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 10-11.

²⁹ As Newell illustrates for 1902, Reuters news could find their way into the West African Press even before an official link with the government was established. S. Newell, 'Articulating Empire', p. 28.

³⁰ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol. IV Reuters Telegraph Company Limited: 'Officer administering the Government to Secretary of State, 25. November 1930', p. 363; NNAI: CSO 26/1 01964 Reuters Telegram: M.D.H. Lyon, 'Reuters News Telegrams', p. 10. In 1919, an annual subscription to Reuters was £4. Government Printer, *The Nigeria Handbook* (Lagos, 1919), p. 122. In 1923, unofficial members to the Legislative Council demanded that the fee should be £1. NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III i) Reuters News Service: Proposed INCREASE to Service, ii) Nigerian Daily Times (Newspaper): 'Distribution of Press News by Posts and Telegraphs Department. Notes of an Interview with His Excellency the Governor 5th February, 1930', p. 307. The press rate for Reuters was 1/- for 50 words in 1926. Ibid.: 'Post Master-General to Chief Secretary, Lagos 15. April 1926', p. 176. In some instances, Reuters was distributed to newspapers free of charge in exchange for copies of the paper. NNAI: CSO 26/1 01964 Vol. II Reuters Telegrams Distribution etc.: 'Acting Government Printer to Chief Secretary to the Government, 22. May 1923', p. 137.

³¹ Cf. S. Potter, *Imperial Press System*, pp. 29, 87-8.

Although English-language newspapers as well as the Yoruba papers thus had access to, and subscribed to this service up to the mid-1920s, only the former seem to have given this particular kind of news full-page coverage.³² The English-language press moreover reprinted Reuters news from other newspapers when the service was not yet available from the administration in Lagos.³³ In the emerging Yoruba press, however, columns dedicated to news snippets focussed rather on local social news in the 1920s.³⁴ This was, however, not an indication that the bilingual press was less interested in ‘international news’. As Karin Barber shows, the Yoruba papers were, just like their English-language counterparts, connecting to newspapers published along the West Coast and further afield – they too associated with a “trans-colonial reading public”.³⁵ The fact that Yoruba papers did not publish Reuters news despite subscribing to the service thus suggests that Reuters news were considered to be of limited value when seeking to forge such connections, that newspapers prioritised other ways to establish them or might have prioritised the forging of other kinds of connections altogether.

The service Reuters had to offer also seems to have been losing appeal for the English-language press over the course of the 1920s. The arrangement between Reuters and the colonial government in Lagos was revised in the latter half of the 1920s, and assessments of the service in this course suggest that Reuters’ capacity to meet the needs of Lagosian newspapers was limited. In 1925, the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company sought to take over the government’s subscription to Reuters when in the process of starting the *Nigerian Daily Times*. Part of the business model of the newspaper was to sell copies to the former subscribers of the government-distributed Reuters telegrams. The Nigerian Printing and

³² *Eko Akete* applied for Reuters News in 1922, the year it was first established. *Eletì Ọfẹ* followed suit when it was established in May 1923. NNAI: CSO 26/1 01964 Vol. I. Reuters Telegrams Distribution etc.: ‘Editor Eko Akete to HCS, 16. October 1922’, p. 92. NNAI: CSO 26/1 01964 Vol. II Reuters Telegrams Distribution etc.: ‘E. A. Akintan to Government printer, n.d. [received 10. May 1923]’, p. 138.

³³ S. Newell, ‘Articulating Empire’, pp. 27-28.

³⁴ Besides these ‘news’, Akede Eko featured four main types of content: advertisements, editorials, news from correspondents and regular columns. I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 40-41.

³⁵ K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 41, 46.

Publishing Company brought together Nigerians such as Adeyemo Alakija and Ernest Ikoli as well as Europeans working as agents for foreign trading interests such as John Holt, and thus constituted a venture with more capital at their disposal than the average publisher (see also chapter 4).³⁶ In light of this change, which for Reuters represented a shift to the commercial use of their services, the agency pledged to supply news of general interest as well as news “of special interest for West Africa”³⁷ – and the publishers of the *Daily Times* were in a position to pay £640 per year for this service.³⁸

The service Reuters delivered to the *Daily Times* was however soon considered inappropriate, and the paper sought to end its connection with the agency. Reuters seemingly could not provide news of special interest for Nigeria, and by 1929 the *Daily Times* considered the agency’s service “useless”. The publishers noted that the service was barely distinguishable from the Government Wireless Service, which was more up to date, and at £36 per year considerably cheaper.³⁹ The original contract between Reuters and the administration in Lagos however bound up all West African colonies, and when the *Daily Times* took over the service from the government, the government was contractually obliged to step in, should the newspaper fail its obligation towards the agency. Thus, the contract could only be terminated when the Governors of all West African colonies agreed to cancel their subscription, which they eventually did.⁴⁰ The link to the imperial news network via Reuters was thus severed, and

³⁶ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol. IV Reuters Telegraph Company Limited: ‘Officer administering the Government to Secretary of State 25. November 1930’, p. 363. Omu suggests that the *Daily Times* was launched when the government proposed to double the price for subscribing to the Reuters news sheet. F. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937* (London, 1978), pp. 62-3.

³⁷ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III i) Reuters News Service: Proposed INCREASE to Service, ii) Nigerian Daily Times (Newspaper): ‘An Agreement made this 20th day of July 1925 between REUTERS LIMITED of Thames Embankment, Blackfriars, LONDON, E.C. 4 (Hereinafter called the Company) of the one part; and THE CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES, 4 Milibank, Westminster, LONDON, S.W.1, on behalf of the Government of NIGERIA’; ‘Messrs Reuters Limited to Crown Agents, 17. September 1925’.

³⁸ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III i) Reuters News Service: Proposed INCREASE to Service, ii) Nigerian Daily Times (Newspaper): ‘Messrs Reuters Limited to Crown Agents, 17. September 1925’, p. 164.

³⁹ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III. (i) Reuters News Service: proposed INCREASE To Service ‘The Manager The Nigerian Printing & Publishing Company to Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, 10. September 1929’, p. 266.

⁴⁰ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III i) Reuters News Service: Proposed INCREASE to Service, ii) Nigerian Daily Times (Newspaper): pp. 288 et seqq.

for successive years there is little information on the government's or newspaper's connections to the agency. The Government Wireless Service, which apparently constituted cheaper alternative to Reuters, was either too expensive for the local press, or similarly of limited interest to newspapers. In 1930, only three out of 14 local periodicals subscribed to the service.⁴¹

Azikiwe and others have rightly emphasised that it was the cost of the service that was hampering newspapers' publication of Reuters news – this might have been particularly the case with the onset of the Great Depression.⁴² The above has highlighted other factors that might have contributed to the fact that Lagos newspapers were turning away from Reuters over the course of the 1920s. In particular, this section has highlighted that Reuters was offering news that were of limited interest to the Lagos press. The kind of news the agency made available also seems to have been of limited appeal to newspapers in other colonies. James Brennan shows for colonial Tanganyika that Indian newspapers entertained a complex relationship with the news service. Although Reuters was one of the main sources of news from India, newspapers voiced their frustration about the service, for instance when it failed to publicise news about Gandhi they considered relevant.⁴³

Pointing out the limited appeal of Reuters for the Lagos press highlights the cultural and ideological work newspapermen accomplished when forging connections to and associating with a “pan-imperial imagined community”. It puts further emphasises on how editors and contributors were weaving together local and ‘international’ news, how they constructed local meaning when referring to news from abroad. Furthermore, considering other factors besides the cost of international news services might contribute to our understanding of why personal

⁴¹ NNAI: CSO 26/1 01938 Vol III i) Reuters News Service: Proposed INCREASE to Service, ii) Nigerian Daily Times (Newspaper): ‘Questions and Answers at the Legislative Council of 30. 1. 30’, p. 313.

⁴² L. James, ‘Transatlantic Passages’, p. 54. Even the considerably cheaper option of the official wireless broadcast (see above) constituted expenditure some papers seemingly could not afford. The *Lagos Daily News* struggled in April 1932 to pay £2:20 for the wireless news and was put before the courts. HMP: Box 2 File 3: ‘Subscription to Rugby Wireless Service’.

⁴³ J. Brennan, ‘Politics and Business in the Indian Newspapers of Colonial Tanganyika’, *Africa*, 81:1 (2011), pp. 56-57.

connections and other networks which newspapermen and contributors entertained continued to be of great importance when international news services became more easily available to West Africans again in the latter part of the 1940s.⁴⁴

While securing access to Reuters might not have been of high importance to Yoruba newspapers when seeking to fill the pages of their papers, mobilizing correspondents or regular contributors of texts in Yoruba was one of the challenges they faced.⁴⁵ While some concerned parties worried about whether a Yoruba paper would be able to attract readers given that not everyone was able to read Yoruba, others were more concerned with the younger generation's capacity to compose texts in Yoruba.⁴⁶ T.A. Awoniyi argues that the teaching of Yoruba was neglected in educational policies and programmes since the late nineteenth century, and that the instruction of the language was encouraged more comprehensively only after the implementation of the education ordinance of 1926.⁴⁷ In the 1910s, school inspectors were concerned with pupil's skills in Yoruba, and in the late 1920s proper and 'pure' Yoruba prose was considered a rarity in schools – pupils were discouraged to use the language, and if they did, mixed it with "other" languages – presumably English.⁴⁸ However, Awoniyi also suggests that Yoruba publications emerging in the 1920s were beneficial for adults who knew Yoruba.⁴⁹ The readers Awoniyi is most likely referring to is a group of people advocating the use of Yoruba in the 1880s and 1890s in the course of 'cultural nationalism', and those who benefitted from this interest in the language (see chapter 3). Perhaps they learned to compose texts in Yoruba in an informal context, outside of school hours. It might be suggested that potential contributors to the Yoruba newspapers from the

⁴⁴ Cf. L. James, 'Transatlantic Passages', p. 63.

⁴⁵ Cf. K. Barber, 'Cultural editing, Memorialisation', p. 10; I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 37, 39.

⁴⁶ Cf. K. Barber, 'Cultural Editing, Memorialisation', pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷ Cf. T. Awoniyi, *Yoruba Language in Education 1846-1974. A Historical Survey*, (Ibadan, 1978), chapters 3 & 4. Awoniyi also highlights that assessing Lagosians level of competency in writing Yoruba is difficult to ascertain.

⁴⁸ T. Awoniyi, 'The Yoruba Language and the Formal School System. A Study of Colonial Language Policy in Nigeria, 1882-1952', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 8:1 (1975), pp. 70, 72.

⁴⁹ T. Awoniyi, *Yoruba Language in Education*, p. 75.

1920s onwards were not only more established or older members of the community, but also that they were most likely well educated, which further reduced the pool of potential contributors.⁵⁰ The translation of English into Yoruba, and vice versa, was an important component of instructions and examinations in the language, and starting in 1931, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate offered a paper along these lines which counted towards the London Matriculation.⁵¹

Given this potential high demand for competent writers in Yoruba, newspaper's attempts to secure such contributors could cause tension between papers. Stephanie Newell shows how pseudonyms used by Yoruba contributors were guarded carefully: Adeoye Deniga, the editor of *Eko Akete*, lodged a protest when the pseudonym of a regular contributor, Atari Ajanaku, emerged in another Yoruba paper.⁵² Moreover, it seems Deniga was holding a grudge against E.M. Awobiyi, who had been contributing to *Eko Akete*, when he started his own Yoruba newspaper in 1926. Deniga's paper attacked Awobiyi's paper, stating that the latter only started his venture because he had no other job.⁵³ Similarly, it seems to have been costly for Deniga to lose his correspondent Eleti Ofe, that is, E. A. Akintan, who started his own newspaper in 1923. Akintan had contributed a children's column and other texts to *Eko Akete*.⁵⁴ When Akintan started his own paper, which was named after his pseudonym, *Eletí Ofe*, this was greeted with sarcasm by Deniga. His paper published a proverb suggesting that

⁵⁰ Cf. K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos' in T. Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honour of J. D. Y. Peel (Carolina, 2005)*, pp. 187-208.

⁵¹ Ibid.; T. Awoniyi, 'The Yoruba Language', pp. 77-8.

⁵² S. Newell, *The Power to Name*, p. 180.

⁵³ K. Barber, 'Cultural Editing, Memorialisation', p. 12.

⁵⁴ Eleti Ofe (E.A. Akintan) started to contribute to *Eko Akete* shortly after its launch, and, for example, commented on the politics of the Obaship and the affairs of Lagos Muslims. Cf. Eleti Ofe, 'Ipọ awọn omọde', *Eko Akete*, 2. September 1922, p. 2; 'Awọn Imale ati ile-ẹkọ', *Eko Akete*, 22. July 1922, pp. 3-4; 'Awọn Imale Eko' in *Eko Akete*, 5. August 1922, pp. 4-6.

Akintan was not cut out to run his own newspaper,⁵⁵ and *Eko Akete* moreover criticised Akintan's capacities as a journalist and distanced itself from his paper.⁵⁶

In the 1920s, the prominence of connections other than those to newspapers and contributors along the West Coast or in wider Atlantic and pan-imperial networks increased. Although Lagos papers had been connected to readers and contributors in other parts of Nigeria since the late nineteenth-century, their reporting on events unfolding outside Lagos intensified markedly at this time. When modes of transport improved and newspapers became more popular, newspapermen sought to establish distribution agencies to reach readers outside Lagos and engaged in publicity tours to the Provinces to further increase the circulation of their papers.⁵⁷ The forging of personal and other networks was crucial for mobilizing readers as well as contributors on a regional and colony-wide level too. Karin Barber and Rebecca Jones illustrate that I.B. Thomas, the editor of the bilingual *Akede Eko* was an avid traveller, who forged personal connections on his voyages and in this way, besides constructing sociability and illustrating social connectedness in the pages of his paper, also sought to recruit potential readers as well as contributors in person.⁵⁸ Both, English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers started featuring regular columns with "News from the Provinces". The Yoruba-language paper *Yoruba News* moreover illustrates that newspapers could facilitate a variety of connections, that newspapers were not necessarily a centripetal force bringing 'provincial' news together in one centre: In 1925, Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Ibo, contributed a series of articles and poems in English to the bilingual paper published in Ibadan. When doing so, he

⁵⁵ "O nbere ibiti oja ta, o ko be re loṣo ori" [You are asking what trade is profitable but you're not asking your maker if it's your destiny to do that trade; translation with Olaniyi Stephens]. 'Gbohun Gbohun. Kinni yi dotẹ ye, o d'otẹ!!!', *Eko Akete*, 10. February 1923, p. 3.

⁵⁶ 'Kere o! Kere o!!/ Important to the Public', *Eko Akete*, 10. February 1923, p. 9. When engaging in a discussion with *Eleti Ofe* on the ordination of a bishop, Deniga attributes what he sees as flaws in *Eleti Ofe*'s position to lacking journalistic skill. "'Eleti-Ofe" şe igi era, iwọ, iwọ ni yio pa ara re!!!', *Eleti Ofe*, 28. April 1923, p. 8; see also 'Eleti Ofe ko mọna o nda pade-pade', *Eleti Ofe*, 12. May 1923, p. 5. Translation with Gbenga Adekambi.

⁵⁷ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 74, 83-85.

⁵⁸ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, pp. 39, 41, 47; R. Jones, 'The Sociability of Print. 1920s and 1930s Lagos Newspaper and Travel Writing', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.) *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 103, 112-3.

was specifically addressing people from Onitsha that were living in northern Nigeria.⁵⁹ The *Yoruba News* thus illustrates that the bilingual Yoruba-press was not restricted to a Yoruba-speaking internal diaspora.⁶⁰

Newspapers in the Colonial Legal Framework

The connections and networks Africans entertained, and thus the various routes along which newspapers could gather 'news' and information started to become a concern for colonial authorities in the 1930s. At that time, the West African press started to interact with the black American press and newspapers giving expression to labour politics in the Caribbean more substantially.⁶¹ Such exchanges were bringing together anti-colonialism and anti-racism. As Leslie James illustrates, such content could for instance be collected, curated and redistributed in London by George Padmore who had established personal and other connections to newspapers in diverse locations along and beyond this Atlantic formation.⁶² These networks were important for forging and (re)shaping political demands and enabling new notions of solidarity. Colonial authorities voiced concern about the connections Africans were forging, particularly when they suspected them of interacting with communists or Moscow. Consequently, newspaper editors suspected of entertaining such links were placed under colonial surveillance, and efforts to suppress such and other 'subversive' materials and publications were intensified.⁶³

⁵⁹ Cf. *Yoruba News* 17. March 1925 – 29. September 1925. In one installation Azikiwe urges his readers into action: "The changes occurring in the universe are due to the concatenation of causes and events for the uplift of humanity in various regions, but in our dear Onitsha, we have been bamboozled and thereby debauched of that mastergift of reason that gross political blunders were made. ... Through the mediums of the columns of 'Yoruba News' I think it advisable to speak to you my fellow compatriots in the Northern Nigeria on the only way possible to solve our problems." 'Onitsha and Civilisation. Our Political Situation Bogus', *Yoruba News*, 17. March 1925, p. 3.

⁶⁰ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, p. 41.

⁶¹ L. James, 'Transatlantic Passages', pp. 50-1; D. Pratten, 'Creole Pioneers in the Nigerian Provincial Press', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 75-101; P. von Eschen, *Race Against Empire. Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, 1997).

⁶² L. James, 'Transatlantic Passages', p. 62.

⁶³ S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', pp. 101, 104-108.

The more general implementation of newspaper legislation in West Africa appears to have been paradoxical, as Stephanie Newell and Fred Omu point out, in particular, as conflicting and contradictory interests were coming together in its introduction and execution.⁶⁴ Put simply: on the one hand, press freedom was considered a principle of British imperialism as it was seen to underscore the legitimacy of British rule in contrast to rival imperial powers.⁶⁵ Correspondingly, some restrictive measures proposed by colonial governors were shelved or outright denied in the Colonial Office. On the other hand, colonial officials on the ground sought to sustain their authority vis a vis colonial subjects, and the Colonial Office was in general supportive of such attempts. What might have been considered fair comment in Britain could be considered harmful in the colonies, and what was cleared as safe for publication in the colonies in London was considered unsuited by officials in West Africa.⁶⁶ As a result, there were no clear principles guiding newspaper legislation in West Africa, and the forms it could take depended on the character of officials involved on the ground and in the Colonial Office, as well as shifting overall policy goals.⁶⁷

Overall, the instances in which the colonial state prosecuted newspapers were few in the period under review.⁶⁸ The legal means for regulating press activity were markedly extended during the Second World War, and also included pre-publication censorship.⁶⁹ Moreover, the prosecution of newspapers was largely restricted to English-language publications, and

⁶⁴ Ibid.; F. Omu, 'The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa. The West African Example', *Journal of African History*, 9:2 (1968), pp. 279-298.

⁶⁵ S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', p. 105. Moreover, liberal and humanitarian groups in Britain were likely to exert pressure on restrictive laws in their advocacy of African interests. F. Omu, 'Dilemma of Press Freedom', p. 281.

⁶⁶ F. Omu, 'Dilemma of Press Freedom', p. 280; S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', pp. 108-109.

⁶⁷ S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', pp. 103-104; F. Omu, 'Dilemma of Press Freedom', pp. 281-3.

⁶⁸ E. Ogunade, 'Freedom of the Press. Government-Press Relationships in Nigeria, 1900-1966' (Ph.D. thesis, Southern Illinois Univ., 1981), pp. 95-6, 107-108; F. Omu, 'Dilemma of Press Freedom', pp. 289-294; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 295-297.

⁶⁹ S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', p. 109.

colonial records moreover suggest that articles published in Yoruba were rarely a cause for concern (see also chapter 5).⁷⁰

Mass Media and the Colonial State

While newspaper legislation remained paradoxical, other attempts by the colonial state at managing what information was reaching the colonies intensified over the course of the period under review. The late 1920s saw the beginning of colonial attempts at utilizing mass media to promote the circulation of specific kinds of information and media products in Africa. Especially film and broadcasting, but also the press,⁷¹ were assessed for their potential as means to spread 'general' knowledge, such as instruction for public health. The aim behind such considerations were broader goals of 'educating' and 'improving' the conduct of Africans, of modernizing colonial people, and ultimately integrating them into colonial society and economy more 'usefully'. Such initiatives were seeking to create colonial subjects through constructing specific subject positions with which African audiences were supposed to identify.⁷² Onookome Okome in this context also highlights the work of missionaries, which, starting from the first decade of the twentieth-century, made use of film to familiarize audiences in Lagos and Abeokuta with 'civilization'.⁷³

In this context, and in its most positive conception, the press was assigned a specific task, namely, to make the intentions of the government known, to familiarize Africans with the

⁷⁰ The author is unaware of instances in which the colonial state took legal action against the publication of a Yoruba-language text. Complaints against publications in bilingual Yoruba newspapers were few in the period under review. Cf. NNAI: Oyoprof 1: 3835 Oyo Native Administration Press Criticism: 'J.S. to [A].R., 29. January 1943', p. 192.

⁷¹ R. Smyth, 'The Roots of Community Development in Colonial Office Policy and Practice in Africa', *Social Policy & Administration*, 38:4 (2004), p. 423. See also the case of *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo* below.

⁷² B. Larkin, *Signal and Noise. Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, 2008), p. 56-8. See also C. Kaul, *Communications, Media and the Imperial Experience* (Basingstoke, 2014), p. 3; R. Smyth, 'The Development of British Colonial Film Policy, 1927-1939, with Special Reference to East and Central Africa', *Journal of African History*, 20:3 (1979), p. 437; R. Smyth, 'The Genesis of Public Relations in British Colonial Practice', *Public Relations Review*, 27 (2001), pp. 152-3; R., Smyth, 'Community Development', pp. 427, 439-442; M. Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills. Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge, 1991), chapter 8, pp. 185 et seqq.

⁷³ O. Okome, 'The Context of Film Production in Nigeria. The Colonial Heritage', *Ufahamu. A Journal of African Studies* 24:2-3 (1996), p. 46.

work of the government. Under the guise of liberalism the government thus sought to instrumentalise the independent press and to discourage it from setting the agenda for political discussions.⁷⁴ Officials sought to direct discussions in the press, for instance by suggesting topics for the press to report on and outlining which topics should be brought to the attention of the government but should not find publication.⁷⁵

Hand in hand with such projects, notions of the special needs of an African audience started to take shape. With regard to film, William Sellers' observations on audiences in Nigeria became influential in colonial filmmaking – they are seen to have outlined a “grammar” for respective filmmaking which persisted up to the late 1940s.⁷⁶ It was assumed that African audiences' aptitudes and needs were different from those of European spectators.⁷⁷ James Burns emphasises how racist assumptions underlying film theory closely link it to justifications for white rule in South Africa; they attest limits to the intellectual capacity of Africans and thus justify their exclusion from participating in a society which considered itself technologically sophisticated and democratic.⁷⁸ Similarly, censorship was conducted under the guise of protecting African audiences, and could serve attempts to preserve colonial power. Some officials voiced concern about screening films that showed criminal and immodest behaviour by whites, as this would undermine the degree of respect officials could inspire, on which, in turn, the success of colonial governance would rest.⁷⁹

The close management of information was awarded crucial importance in propaganda efforts in the course of the Second World War. The Information Office in London was working together with the Colonial Office in tailoring messages for African audiences and a local

⁷⁴ S. Newell, 'Paradox of Press Freedom', pp. 111-112; K. Oke, 'The Colonial Public Sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943' (M.Phil thesis, Univ. of Vienna, 2013), pp. 26, 40-41.

⁷⁵ Cf. S. Newell, 'Paradox of Press Freedom', 111-12.

⁷⁶ J. Burns, 'Watching Africans Watch Films. Theories of Spectatorship in British Colonial Africa', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 20:2, pp. 198-9, 203-206. 197-211.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201; M. Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills*, p. 191.

⁷⁸ J. Burns, 'Watching Africans Watch', p. 198.

⁷⁹ R. Smyth, 'British Colonial Film Policy', p. 438. See also S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', p. 106.

Information Office was set up in Nigeria at the beginning of the war.⁸⁰ One of the main aims of the propaganda effort was to keep Africans interested in the war, and to this end Public Relations Officers sought to establish closer relations with the press, for instance by staging weekly press conferences. Moreover, newspapers were supplied with information and pictures on the progress of the war, designated periodicals were produced locally, and the state provided information in local languages.⁸¹ For some, this propaganda effort constituted an “information explosion” capable of changing the worldview of many Africans.⁸² Such effects were however less pronounced in West Africa given that, as Stephanie Newell emphasises, the tradition of independent media production in the region had contributed to shaping “mature, engaged media consumers”.⁸³

After the war, efforts with regard to employing media in the distribution of ‘instructional’ material were continued, and formed part of the larger programme of colonial ‘development’. Documentary films such as ‘Daybreak in Udi’, were seen as broadening horizons and helping people adjust to changing political and economic conditions.⁸⁴ An “experiment in colonial journalism” – the publication of a newspaper by the Literature Bureau in Zaria under African editorship – which sought to be a contribution to the ‘development’ of government relations

⁸⁰ R. Smyth, ‘Community Development’, pp. 427 et seqq. NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Dept: Government Printer, *Annual Report on the Public Relations Office for the Year 1944* (Lagos, 1945), p. 1. See also: R. Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope. Memoirs of a Colonial Servant* (London, 1982), pp. 191-196.

⁸¹ However, the press showed limited interest in the war (see also chapter 6). Public relations officers tasked with assessing the progress of propaganda in Nigeria noted that the press was “exploiting anti-racial feeling”, was mainly interested in local affairs, and was “not deeply interested in the war”. TNA: CO 875/7/9 Propaganda. Progress Reports Nigeria: ‘Report on the Activities of the Information Office For the Quarter Ending September 1941’, p. 10. Another concern with the press was “that they get what they want out of the war by a process not far removed from blackmail”. TNA: CO 875/7/10 Propaganda. Progress Reports Nigeria: ‘Report on the Activities of the Information Office For the Quarter Ending September 1942’, p. 66. Moreover, “the point which appears to have interested the Press most is post-war constitutional and economic development”. TNA: CO 875/7/10 Propaganda. Progress Reports Nigeria: ‘Report on the Activities of the Information Office For the Quarter Ending March 1943’, p. 45.

⁸² Cf. R. Smyth, ‘War Propaganda During the Second World War in Northern Rhodesia’, *African Affairs*, 83:332 (1984), p. 345.

⁸³ S. Newell, ‘Paradoxes of Press Freedom’, p. 102.

⁸⁴ R. Smyth, ‘Community Development’, pp. 429-32.

with Africans, received financial support from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund.⁸⁵ The colonial approach to public communication was thus adapted to conform to new policy goals such as appeasing the educated elite, and imagining audiences as potential partners in 'self-government'.⁸⁶ In this context, colonial conceptions of newspaper journalists could shift from viewing them as "mischief makers" to consider working with them "for the good of the country".⁸⁷

Officially, approaches to the dissemination of information on the activity of the government was to change with the end of the war. In 1946 Heads of Departments and Residents were urged to provide information to the press as the government was to turn from announcing to explaining government measures.⁸⁸ Whereas Residents in the 1930s prevented journalists from gaining access to Council meetings, they were now the ones trying to facilitate journalists' work. Moreover, journalists no longer had to formally apply to the government to be considered as recipients for occasionally distributed information about the colony – they were supplied with a regular stream of press releases and other material by the Public Relations Office (PRO).⁸⁹ The number of Advisory Boards and Committees in which Africans could discuss matters relating to media and public communication with officials increased, and

⁸⁵ One of the proponents of this scheme urged the importance of making use of the press and not to "leave this most powerful of all instruments for the moulding of public thought lying about to be picked up by anyone who cares to use it" as people were still "far more susceptible to the suggestion of the printed word than in a country like England". TNA: CO 583/267/3 Pt. 1 Education. Development of Vernacular Literature. Gaskiya Corporaion: 'Relations with the New African. An Experiment in Colonial Journalism', pp. 1, 2.

⁸⁶ P. Zachernuk, 'Who Needs a Witch Doctor? Refiguring British Colonial Cinema in the 1940s', in L. Grieveson and C. MacCabe (eds.), *Film and the End of Empire* (London, 2011), p. 95. See also S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', pp. 110-11.

⁸⁷ TNA: CO 583/261/8 Future Political Development of Nigeria: B. Bourdillon, 'A Further Memorandum on the Future Political Development of Nigeria, 1942', p. 8.

⁸⁸ "Heads of Departments and resident should render all assistance that they can to Press officers and local journalists in this connection and should supply information asked for promptly unless the release of the information would be contrary to public policy." NNAI: Oyoprof 2/3 151 (i) Press Censorship (ii) Public Relations: 'Circular No. 27/1946', p. 834. See also S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', p. 110; TNA: PRO CO 583/269/2 Pt. 2 Newspaper Legislation 1946: 'Colonial Publicity' [Enclosure].

⁸⁹ NNAI: Oyoprof 1 748 Press Cuttings and Reporters. Report on: 'District Officer Ibadan Division to District Office Ibadan, 10. December 1934. Representative of the Nigerian Daily Times. (Mr. Obafemi Awolowo)', p. 23-24; Cf. NNAI: Oyoprof 2/3 151 (i) Press Censorship (ii) Public Relations: 'District Officer to Resident, Oyo Province 15. April 1947. Ibadan Council Meeting', p. 904.

Africans were appointed to more prominent positions in the Public Relations Office – A. Lijadu, former editor of the *Nigerian Daily Times*, was appointed press officer in 1948.⁹⁰ The PRO set up a press club which brought together staff and journalists in 1947.⁹¹

This opening up of the administration, and the establishment of closer relationships to journalists was seen as a way to exercise influence over them. The surveillance of journalists was continued, and control was also exercised under the guise of familiarizing journalists with the principles of “sound journalism”.⁹² Consequently, the interactions between officials and the press could be characterised by a patronizing relationship as the following recollection of Rex Niven, an Information Officer, illustrates:

Every Thursday I had an interview with the editors of the three Lagos dailies – Dr. Azikiwe (later first President of Nigeria) of the *West African Pilot*, Akintola of the *Daily Express* and Thomas of the *Daily Times* – and the one weekly. They would walk very cautiously into my office. They had reason to be apprehensive. I had in my desk drawer what I called the ‘editorial of the week’. I would keep it back for a while and then take it out, very carefully. By this time they were on the edges of their chairs, but when they could see from the type the paper in question, the others would sit back looking smug. Then I would pull the editorial to pieces – in the kindest manner, of course – and invite the editor’s comments and explanation. I was always ready to explain our attitude and would invite a head of department to be present, if they had been sniping too near a departmental target. I am sure that these meetings did real good.⁹³

Besides fighting their own battles and making their own arrangements when seeking to fill their pages with content, as highlighted by Azikiwe in his assessment of journalism in 1945, newspapermen and contributors moreover had to navigate a complex legal landscape and

⁹⁰ Africans were invited to the Public Relations Advisory Committee, the Lagos Broadcasting Committee (Broadcasting Advisory Committee), and the Cinematograph Censorship Board. NNAI: FIS 1/471 Annual Report on the Public Relations Dept.: Government Printer, *Annual Report of the Public Relations Department for the Year 1946* (Lagos, 1947), p. 1; ‘Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1948’, p. 109.

⁹¹ ‘Lagos Journalists Honour New Eastern Regional P.R.O.’, *Nigeria Review*, 16. October 1948, pp. 4-5.

⁹² S. Newell, ‘Paradoxes of Press Freedom’, p. 110. NNAI: Oyoprof 2/3 151 (i) Press Censorship (ii) Public Relations: G. Beresford Stooke, ‘Public Relations’, 29. April 1946, p. 835. For inviting the press for “friendly talks with the Department of Information” when seeking to influence the press in Kenya in the 1940s, see also B. Frederiksen, ‘Print, Newspapers and Audiences in Colonial Kenya. African and Indian Improvement, Protest and Connections’, *Africa*, 81:1 (2011), p. 163.

⁹³ R. Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope*, p. 193. For a similar approach by Governor Bourdillon see S. Newell, ‘Paradoxes of Press Freedom’, pp. 111-112.

other attempts to manage public communication in the period under review. From the start, newspapermen commented critically on and staged protests against colonial projects affecting public communication and demanded changes to emerging and existing structures. They condemned colonial efforts to curtail the freedom of the press through newspaper legislation, and fought obstacles put in the way of those wanting to start a newspaper.⁹⁴ The West African press for instance also critically engaged with the ways in which Africans were portrayed in films, and thus challenged the subject positions colonial officials sought Africans to identify with.⁹⁵ The critique of the content of media products designed for African audiences and global communication structures more generally found prominent expression on the international stage between the 1960s and 1980s.⁹⁶ Media professionals and politicians criticised existing global networks as tools and expression of neo-colonialism, and sought to build up alternative structures such as a Pan-African News Agency.⁹⁷

Conclusion

By studying the practicalities of newspaper production, this and the previous chapter have highlighted more contextual aspects shaping the publication of newspapers and have thus given insight into the background against which processes analysed in subsequent chapters were taking place. The present chapter has illustrated the relationship of the Lagos press to global as well as local information networks and has addressed colonial interests in and attempts at shaping the kinds of information or news that was made available to Africans. In doing so, it has not only illustrated some of the challenges, constraints and opportunities

⁹⁴ One of the first instances of protest was against the newspaper ordinance of 1902. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 174 et seqq.

⁹⁵ J. Burns, 'Watching Africans Watch', pp. 204-5, R. Smyth, 'Community Development', p. 431.

⁹⁶ This critique was emerging against the background of broader demands by the Non-Aligned Movement for a New International Economic Order. Cf. D. Frau-Meigs, J. Nicey, M. Palmer et al, 'Introduction', in D. Frau-Meigs, J. Nicey, M. Palmer, J. Pohle, and P. Tupper (eds.), *From NWICO to WSIS. 30 Years of Communication Geopolitics. Actors and Flows, Structures and Divides* (Bristol, 2012), p. 3.

⁹⁷ R. Ainslie, *The Press*, p. 202, 210; D. Frau-Meigs, J. Nicey, M. Palmer et al, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5; W. Hachten, *Muffled Drums*, pp. 59, 68-9.

newspapermen faced when seeking to fill the pages of their paper, but has also foregrounded the work accomplished by newspapermen in a changing 'information environment'.

From the start, newspapers contributed to and maintained connections to intellectuals and political activists along the West African Coast and beyond. In such networks, information was distributed in various ways – for instance through personal connections but also by reprinting and borrowing from what was published in other newspapers in the United States, the Caribbean, or Britain. In the 1930s such connections were important for forging and (re)shaping political demands and enabling new notions of solidarity by bringing together anti-colonialism and antiracism.

Such connections were particularly important as West Africa was marginalized in an emerging imperial and ultimately global news network. The British Reuters news agency emerged as important information broker in the British Empire in the late nineteenth century, and Nigeria only established a direct link to this network 20 years after newspapers resumed publication in Lagos. Reuters news could serve newspapers as a way to forge notions of imperial citizenship, but looking into the ways in which newspapers in Lagos engaged with the agency also suggests that it was losing its appeal at the latest in the late 1920s. Although subscribing to the agency, Yoruba papers rarely published Reuters news, and the *Nigerian Daily Times* cancelled its subscription when the service could not provide news of interest. This suggests that other factors besides the high cost of the service form part of explaining why West Africa severed its connection to this imperial information broker. This, in turn, further highlights the importance of other forms of 'international' connections newspapermen and contributors established and entertained, and emphasises the cultural and ideological work newspapermen accomplished when they constructed local meaning by referring to news from abroad.

Starting from the 1920s, newspapermen intensified their efforts to interact with readers and potential contributors outside Lagos through publicity tours and by forging personal

connections when touring the colony. These were not simply attempts at newsgathering, but rather illustrate that maintaining such connections was part of a newspaperman's job. In this context, newspapers not only sought to bring together news from various parts of the country in one centre, but also enabled connections between people in different localities, seemingly circumnavigating the place of a paper's publication. While celebrating such connections in its pages, the Yoruba press at the same time featured altercations between current and former contributors which had turned editors in their own right. This chapter has illustrated that mobilizing and maintaining contributions in Yoruba constituted a particular challenge for editors of bilingual newspapers.

The colonial state sought to shape the conduct of public communication through media legislation and information management. While newspaper legislation in West Africa appears to have been paradoxical and contradictory, colonial attempts to control information flows intensified in the period under review. The colonial state started to consider the use of mass media for the distribution of instructional material to colonial peoples in the late 1920s. Such efforts aimed at the social conduct of Africans and at integrating them into colonial society and economy more 'usefully'. This brought with it specific notions about the capacity of African audiences and sought to assign specific subject positions to Africans. During the Second World War, colonial concerns with information management were intensified and found expression in the course of propaganda initiatives. Moreover, the colonial state sought to utilize media in attempts to accommodate the educated elite and when seeking to achieve policy goals such as development. After the war, the colonial state opened up to the independent press, but closer relations to newspapermen and contributors, which were part of such efforts, at the same time provided opportunities to exert control over them, for instance under the guise of familiarizing editors and contributors with "sound principles of journalism". It might thus be argued that colonial governance of public communication closely mirrored more general changes in colonial policy.

Chapter 3 – Reforming the Public Sphere? – Andrew Thomas and

Iwe Irohin Eko

Introduction

This chapter studies the emergence and decline of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, Lagos' first bilingual Yoruba-newspaper. It gives insight into the public sphere between 1880 and the 1890s by studying the paper in relation to other Lagosian and West African newspapers. Highlighting potential aims pursued by this newspaper, this chapter narrates the history of an ultimately failed attempt to reform the way in which discussions in the Lagos press were conducted. In doing so, this chapter moves beyond prior assessments that have considered the Yoruba paper as a means to unite Lagosians with other Yoruba speakers living upcountry and addresses other ways in which this paper was significant.¹

Firstly, this chapter illuminates political and social configurations in Lagos, the wider context in which newspapers emerged at the close of the nineteenth century, and situates Andrew Thomas, the editor of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, in this context. It addresses issues relating to the identity of those migrating to Lagos in the nineteenth century as well as relationships between different communities settling on the island. It moreover addresses the use of Yoruba by Lagosians and the emergence and proliferation of 'cultural nationalism' at the end of the century, and in doing so provides insight into the potential motivations that led Andrew Thomas to publish a bilingual newspaper. The chapter also considers discussions about the viability of a Yoruba-language newspaper in the Lagos press, and addresses reactions to the launch of Thomas' paper in English-language newspapers.

Secondly, this chapter provides further insight into dynamics in the public sphere through a close study of reporting and other features of *Iwe Irohin Eko*. It analyses the ways in which

¹ Cf. K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos', in T. Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honour of J. D. Y. Peel* (Carolina, 2005), pp. 187-208.

such content related to publications in other English-language newspapers, and in doing so further illustrates potential aims pursued by Andrew Thomas with his Yoruba paper. It moreover focusses on the reporting of different papers on the resignation of Bishop Crowther from the Finance Committee of the Niger mission in 1890, and in this way also deepens our understanding of the more general workings of the public sphere at the turn of the century.

Social Configurations in Lagos and the Call for a Yoruba Newspaper

As outlined in the introduction and the first chapter, the first newspapermen in Lagos formed part of a diverse group of immigrants, who settled on the island starting from the mid nineteenth-century, as well as their descendants. From the beginning of the 1880s, the position of this so-called educated elite was starting to be unsettled not only by economic changes as highlighted in chapter 1, but also political changes. Up until then, immigrants, and most prominently among them anglicised immigrants from Sierra Leone and their descendants, the so-called Saros, filled high and influential posts in the emerging colonial administration and supplied the majority of missionaries that operated in Lagos and the so-called interior; they embraced the role of those destined to spread British notions of civilization.² These immigrants, however, lost political influence and standing towards the end of the century. Almost parallel to the deterioration in trade, unfavourable and racist views of Saros slowly began to take hold among European administrators, traders and missionaries – starting from the 1870s, it was increasingly questioned that they should hold influential posts. Moreover, Saros lost their one representative in the local Legislative Council when the

² J. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891. The Making of a New Elite* (London, 1965); J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria. The "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890* (Madison, 1965), pp. 3-8, 40; R. Law, 'Yoruba Liberated Slaves Who Returned to West Africa', in Toyin Falola and Matt Childs (eds.), *Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana, 2005), p. 358; K. Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change Among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 18-21; K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth*, pp. 90, 104, 124-6, 140-141; J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000), p. 24.

institution was abolished in 1874, as a consequence of Lagos being administered from the Gold Coast.³

It was amidst these changing political and economic configurations that the 'pioneer newspapermen'⁴ turned to the press. Richard Beale Blaize's *Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser* was first published in 1880, deliberately intending to create a space for discussion. The paper sought to call attention to immigrant grievances, and thus to contribute to the growth and progress of Lagos.⁵ The *Lagos Observer* (1882), and the *Eagle and Lagos Critic* (1883), soon followed, and were, as the *Lagos Times*, initiated by anglicised immigrants from Sierra Leone and their descendants.⁶

Historians of nineteenth-century Lagos divide the island into four distinct communities along a notion of origin: "indigenous" Lagosians, the Sierra Leoneans, the Brazilians and the Europeans. This social order was seen to have persisted beyond the turn of the century.⁷ However, more recent studies show that these stark distinctions were often blurred; immigrants shared certain commonalities, a sense of groupness was invoked strategically,⁸ and immigrants fostered connections beyond their 'group of origin'.⁹

³ J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria*, pp. 215, 261-8.

⁴ The first person to publish a newspaper in Lagos was Robert Campbell, who published the *Anglo African* in 1863. His activities and his paper are not included in the following study. This chapter thus follows Fred Omu's assessment, who considers Campbell an inspiration for newspapers emerging in the 1880s, but does not count him among the broader movement he sees emerging at that time. F. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937* (London, 1978), pp. 19-23.

⁵ 'Our Third Volume', *Lagos Times*, 8. November 1882, p. 2. For another association of newspapers with the progress and development of Lagos, see W., 'To the Editor', *Lagos Times*, 13. June 1883, p. 3.

⁶ Cf. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 21; F. Omu, 'The Newspaper Press in Southern Nigeria, 1880-1900', in Boniface Obichere (ed.), *Studies in Southern Nigerian History* (London, 1982), pp. 105-106.

⁷ Cf. P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change. The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (Berkeley, 1974); P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge 1975); S. Brown, 'A History of the People of Lagos, 1852-1886' (Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern Univ., 1964). According to this literature, these divisions became less important after the turn of the century, when political mobilisation along racial lines brought the different immigrant communities closer together. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 75.

⁸ L. Lindsay, "'To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland". Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos', *Slavery & Abolition*, 15:1 (1994), p. 31.

⁹ Instead of assuming hard groups or fluid groups, this study focusses on processes of group formation. Cf F. Cooper with R. Brubaker, 'Identity', in Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, (Berkeley, 2001), pp. 59-90.

Nevertheless, immigrants tended to settle in separate quarters corresponding to their starting point for migration to Lagos (see also map below): the already mentioned Sierra Leoneans were based in Olowogbowo, or Saro town, on the south-western end of the island, with European traders and the administration located further to the East along the southern shore of the island. The so-called Brazilians, people sold mainly into slavery to Brazil or Cuba and who managed to buy their freedom and eventually to save enough money for the ship fare to Lagos,¹⁰ settled just further north. This division was largely the result of land allocation policies that dated from the time when immigrants initially settled at Lagos in the middle of the century.¹¹ The Southern part of the island was distinct from the North, which was the home of “old” Lagos. With the advent of the British, and after the Oba or King of Lagos had ceded the territory to the Crown, slave traders had been driven away and expelled from the island, and only a few traders associated with “old” Lagos could make their mark in the newly configured economic sphere.¹² The two areas of the island were initially separated by a natural barrier of rivers, swamps and creeks. The Oba’s palace was situated in the North-West, it faced the markets for trade with regions to the North of Lagos, which were situated on the mainland. Interactions between the inhabitants of these two distinct parts of the island were limited, and initially characterised by hostility.¹³

¹⁰ J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria*; R. Law, ‘Yoruba Liberated Slaves’, pp. 349-365; L. Lindsay, ‘To Return to the Bosom’.

¹¹ A. Hopkins, ‘Property Rights and Empire Building. Britain’s Annexation of Lagos, 1861’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 40:4 (1980), p. 786.

¹² One exception to this is DC Taiwo Olowo, who was a successful trader and closely connected to “old” Lagos. A. Olukoju, ‘Accumulation and Conspicuous Consumption. The Poverty of Entrepreneurship in Western Nigeria, ca. 1850-1930’, in E.K. Akyeampong, R.H. Bates, N. Nunn and J.A. Robinson (eds.), *Africa’s Development in Historical Perspective* (New York, 2014), p. 217.

¹³ S. Brown, *A History*, pp. 34-5; P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 48-9; J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria*, p. 270.

Part of these immigrant communities' self-understanding and self-identification centred on cultural practices associated with the places from which they or their ancestors had migrated to Lagos. The Saros, for instance, strongly identified with the British colony in Sierra Leone, and are referred to by scholars as Black Victorians or Black Englishmen due to their anglicisation not only in language, but also in dress, names, and social mannerisms.¹⁴ Many Saros were mission-educated Christians who were considered to have known the ways of the British administration – most frequently it was from among their ranks that influential government positions were filled. Moreover, it was mainly Saros that were well established in the export trade.¹⁵ Brazilians, by contrast, celebrated their language and religion – they can be regarded as the pioneers of Catholicism in Lagos¹⁶ – in distinction from other immigrant communities. They were known as skilled artisans and left their mark on the architectural appearance of the city. Moreover, they maintained connections across the Atlantic World with Brazil, just as the Saros were connected to members of an anglicised community along the West African Coast.¹⁷

Immigrants from Sierra Leone and their descendants self-confidently regarded themselves as the top tier of the social order, but boundaries with other immigrant communities were often blurred. Some among those who had resettled from Brazil and Cuba were absorbed into the most exclusive circle of elites.¹⁸ Moreover, (elite) men from different immigrant communities came together through various interest groups and associations formed in support of the different polities further North to which they traced their ancestry. That is to say, for instance, that Saros traced their ancestry to different polities such as Abeokuta, Ibadan or Ijebu, a

¹⁴ Cf. P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, 2000), p. 42.

¹⁵ N. Muniz Improta Franca, 'Producing Intellectuals. Lagosian Books and Pamphlets between 1874 and 1922' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Sussex, 2014), pp. 120-121.

¹⁶ R. Law, 'Yoruba Liberated Slaves', p. 358; L. Lindsay, 'To Return to the Bosom', pp. 31-2.

¹⁷ See, for example M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos. Aspects of Nineteenth Century Lagos Life* (London, 1977), p. 30; L. Lindsay, 'To Return to the Bosom', p. 31; R. Sarracino, 'Back to Africa', in J. Stubbs, P. Perez Sarduy (eds.), *AfroCuba* (Melbourne, 1993), pp. 67-76.

¹⁸ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 46-7.

commonality they shared with other immigrants from Brazil and Cuba.¹⁹ Thus, Lagos' vibrant social life with its tea parties, dances, concerts and associational meetings brought together people of the various communities.²⁰

Members of these different communities also identified in varying degrees with Christianity, western education, and employment with the missions or the colonial administration. Besides the Christianised elite, for example, a significant number of Saros were Muslims, and besides the elite, the community consisted of Saros of decidedly more modest means.²¹ With regard to the emerging print culture, this implies that despite it being Saro elite men such as Richard Beale Blaize that published newspapers, it cannot be assumed, as Nara Improta shows, that it was only the elite that contributed to Lagosian print culture. In her dissertation, Improta identifies 170 authors who published at least one book or pamphlet between 1874 and 1922, and shows that only 22 of these authors can be assigned elite status according to a definition based on occupational criteria.²²

Andrew Thomas, the publisher of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, the first Yoruba newspaper published in Lagos, exemplifies this more nuanced picture of Lagos' immigrant communities, illustrating that it was not only those that could be counted among the most exclusive circle of the Lagos elite that engaged with the publication of newspapers. Andrew Thomas had worked as a printer for Richard Blaize's *Lagos Times* since 1880 and he established his own printing press, the General Printing Office, when the newspaper ceased publication in 1883.²³ Thomas' name suggests a Saro background, and judging by his profession as a publisher, he could be assigned

¹⁹ Cf. J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria*, pp. 194-7.

²⁰ M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos*; N. Sawada, 'The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Birmingham, 2012).

²¹ Cf. G. Cole, *The Krio of West Africa. Islam, Culture, Creolization, and Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, Ohio, 2013), pp. 132-146, K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth*, p. 124. Mac Dixon-Fyle shows that in Port Harcourt, the Saro community consisted of both, wealthy as well as Saros of more modest means. M. Dixon-Fyle, 'The Saro in the Political Life of Early Port Harcourt, 1913-49', *Journal of African History*, 30:1 (1989), pp. 125-138.

²² N. Muniz Improta Franca, 'Producing Intellectuals', pp. 119-120.

²³ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 30; J. Payne, *Payne's Lagos Almanack and Diary for 1883* (London, 1883), p. 60.

elite-status.²⁴ His place of work and home were, however, on the fringes of where the elite settled. Thomas' office, and thus most likely his printing press as well as his lodgings, were on Victoria Road, on the eastern edge of Olowogbowo, the Saro quarter.²⁵ Victoria Road was one of the major thoroughfares from the north-east to the south of the island. It connected the broader area in which the palace of the Oba was located with Tinubu Square, the seat of the Court of Justice, which, in turn, was not far from the Marina, the seat of Government House as well as the stores of wealthy European and Saro traders.²⁶ Victoria Road was in the process of upward revaluation – in the early 1880s, some plots of land along the road were still unoccupied, but the area was already considered to be one of the more developed areas of Lagos.²⁷ Correspondingly, Thomas' printing office was located in a vicinity of stores that offered European merchandise such as hip corsets, straw hats, English Ale and Cadbury Cocoa – but only one of the store owners close by can be considered to have formed part of the elite.²⁸ At that time, the offices of printing presses, like the majority of elite stores, were mainly to be found in Olowogbowo and along the Marina. Besides Thomas, only one other business that dealt with printed matter – a bookbinder – was situated beyond the centres of the elite in the 1880s.²⁹ Thus, despite his very real connections to the exclusive circle of the

²⁴ Cf. K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics', p. 195. Kristin Mann identifies the educated elite by occupational criteria, and includes publishers in this assessment. Moreover, one Akedeko M. Thomas, which could refer to Andrew Thomas, features in her list of elite men in Lagos, 1880-1915. K. Mann, *Marrying Well*, pp. 25, 131.

²⁵ In an obituary for his daughter, he is referred to as "A. M. Thomas of Victoria Road". Obituary, *Nigerian Chronicle*, 13. October 1911, p. 3.

²⁶ Cf. Ordnance Survey Office, *Map of Lagos*, (Southampton, 1891); S. Brown, 'A History', p. 338.

²⁷ 'Tit Bits', *Lagos Observer*, 6. April 1882, p. [4]. Commenting on an official report on the sanitary condition of Lagos, the *Lagos Observer* mentions Victoria Road. *Lagos Observer*, 13. & 20. October 1888, p. 2. For rising property prices in an area adjacent to Aroloya in the 1880s, see S. Brown, *A History*, p. 128.

²⁸ Besides in newspaper advertisements, people owning stores on Victoria Road can be found in the Blue Books, for instance when storeowners were acting as sureties for employees of the colonial administration. Cf. Lagos Blue Books for 1886-1890, and 1892. From the storeowners featured in the Blue Books, only one, namely Edward Roper or Sogunro, is to be found on Mann's list of elite men. K. Mann, *Marrying Well*, p. 131. For some of the goods the traders advertised, see 'To be had at the Store of E. T. Scott', *Lagos Observer*, 18. August 1888, p. 4.

²⁹ Georg W. Johnson was a bookbinder from Isalegangan, north-east of Victoria Road J. Payne, *Payne's Lagos Almanack and Diary for 1884* (London, 1884), p. 32.

Lagos elite, it might be suggested that Andrew Thomas cannot be counted amongst their ranks, at least not unreservedly.

A close consideration of Thomas' church-affiliation not only illustrates connections of Saros beyond the immigrant communities indicated above, but also illuminates a community which might have shaped Thomas' understanding of a potential audience for his future newspaper. Thomas was listed as subscribing or donating 10 shillings to the Lagos Church Mission Fund in the Palm Church/Aroloya district in December 1885.³⁰ Aroloya is located north-east of Olowogbowo, and east of Victoria Road. In accounts by one missionary stationed there in 1876, the area is described as originally having been predominantly Muslim.³¹ The Christian church is said to have increased and been infused with "spiritual life" when European missionaries were expelled from Abeokuta in 1867 and local Egba converts fled with them to Lagos, and in particular to Aroloya.³² When doing so, these converts most likely joined people who had moved from Abeokuta or other Egba towns to Lagos before 1867, corresponding to more general patterns of settlement in Lagos.³³ Many refugees soon relocated again and moved to Ebute Metta, the mainland north-west of Lagos Island, where they were granted

³⁰ Church Missionary Society Archive Oxford, Section IV Africa Missions, Part 8: Nigeria - Yoruba Mission, 1880-1934 [hereafter CMSA, S. IV, P. 8], Reel 138 G3A20 Original Papers 1886, 1887: *The Fourth Report of the Lagos Church Mission for the Year 1885* (Exeter, 1886), p. 45. Besides Andrew Thomas, D.F. Deigh, a trader from Victoria Road, contributed in to the same fund in Aroloya. The Lagos Church Mission was the Missionary Wing of the CMS Native Pastorate. E. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson. Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836-1917* (London, 1970), p. 85.

Further indications that Thomas was involved with the church in Aroloya are, for instance, a report in the *Lagos Observer* on an anniversary meeting of the Native Pastorate Auxiliary Church Association held in St. John's Aroloya, at which A. M. Thomas is listed as one of the speakers. *Lagos Observer*, 8. May 1884, p. 3. Moreover, Thomas is listed as forming part of a group of members of St. John's presenting a financial contribution to Rev. A.W. Howels for pursuing his Master's degree. Representation Rev. A. W. Howels, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 13. February 1906, p. 4.

³¹ CMSA, S. IV, P. 4, Reel 67: CA2057: 'Nathaniel Johnson – Annual Letter 1867', Journal of Nathaniel Johnson, 1877.

³² *Ibid.*, 'Nathaniel Johnson – Annual Letter 1877'.

³³ Spencer Brown highlights that permission for settlement on the island before 1861 had to be sought from one of the Lagos Chiefs. The way in which permissions to settle were granted made it very likely that people identifying with the same upcountry polity would settle in close vicinity, and this practice may have continued under British administration. S. Brown, *A History*, pp. 171-3.

land by Governor Glover and established farms.³⁴ In the 1870s the congregation in Aroloya is described as poor, and in 1879 some people in Aroloya had to make a living by farming elsewhere, as economic opportunities appear to have been limited in Aroloya. Women could earn a modest living in trading in foodstuffs or in the small-scale sale of merchandise such as clothes.³⁵

In Olowogbowo, churches initiated by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) developed rapidly, following the arrival of Christian worshippers in Lagos, and church membership in this parish soon took over the mission headquarters in Faji, further east.³⁶ Whereas Sierra Leoneans attended St. Paul's Breadfruit in Olowogbowo in large numbers – this being amongst Lagos' richest churches thanks to its elite congregation, including the aforementioned Richard Beale Blaize³⁷ – Saros formed a less prominent part of the CMS congregation in Aroloya. The most renowned among them was most likely Nathaniel King, the first medical doctor of Nigeria, who was Aroloya's choirmaster in the early 1880s.³⁸ When reviewing the composition of the congregation and its piety in 1876, Reverend Adolphus Mann described Sierra Leoneans as one element of his congregation, contrasting them to other Lagosians, by calling them "my joy and blessing".³⁹

It may be assumed that Aroloya consisted in a large part of a Yoruba-speaking congregation. Prior scholarly work has generally identified Aroloya as being inhabited by "indigenous

³⁴ CMSA, S. IV, P. 3, Reel 62: CA2037: 'Annual Letter – Valentine Faulkner 1869'; P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, pp. 22, 30.

³⁵ CMSA, S. IV, P. 4, Reel 67: CA2057: 'Nathaniel Johnson – Annual Letter 1869', 1876, 1879, Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. Seventy-second year, 1870-1871* (London, 1871), p. 20; A. Hopkins, 'An Economic History of Lagos, 1880-1914' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London, 1964), pp. 78-9.

³⁶ J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*, pp. 125-6; J. Webster, *The African Churches Among the Yoruba, 1888-1922* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 2-3. According to Lisa Lindsay, business alliances were re-enforced in St. Paul's church. L. Lindsay, 'Remembering His Country Marks. A Nigerian American Family and Its "African" Ancestor', in L. Lindsay and J. Sweet (eds), *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia, 2014), p. 196.

³⁷ E. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson*, pp. 89, 93; J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*, pp. 126, 141-2; J. Webster, *The African Churches*, pp. 73-4.

³⁸ N. Sawada, 'The Educated Elite', p. 139; D. Ogunrinade, 'Content analysis of music curriculum for the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE)', in *Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 10 (2013), p. 85.

³⁹ CMSA, S. IV, P. 4, Reel 69: CA2066: 'Adolphus Mann – Annual Letter 1876'. Mann also illustrates that slaves formed a part of the congregation in Aroloya. K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth*, p. 203.

Lagosians” in distinction to the immigrant communities, and therefore it has been considered Yoruba-speaking.⁴⁰ The temporary settlement of refugees from Abeokuta in this part of town, who most likely joined other Egbas already living there, further corroborates this assumption. Missionaries were interested in teaching people how to read and write in Yoruba, and in 1881, Reverend J.B. Wood, secretary of the CMS Yoruba mission, indicated that more and more Lagosians were reading and writing in Yoruba.⁴¹ A more concrete assessment of how many Lagosians were literate in Yoruba remains difficult to ascertain as the missionaries’ approach to teaching Yoruba in schools was inconsistent in the late nineteenth-century. English as well as Yoruba were taught in mission schools, scarce teaching materials and the fact that some parents insisted that their children should be taught in English further limited education in Yoruba.⁴² Nevertheless, missionary reports state that in 1881 Aroloya had 130 communicants, which in turn suggests that at least a proportion of them had undergone scripture studies before they were welcomed in the church, and thus were somewhat acquainted with reading and writing.⁴³

One commonality immigrants shared with the wider population of Lagos was that many had at least some knowledge of Yoruba. In public, some Saros might have acted as if they were only English speakers, and as if they did not speak Yoruba at all, in order to distinguish themselves from other Lagosians, and many pretended to know English, even if they only mastered a few

⁴⁰ Cf. K. Barber, “Translation, Publics’, p. 194. According to James Johnson, Yoruba was the “vernacular” of a great majority. Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1882-1883*, pp. 24-5.

⁴¹ M. Ogharaerumi, ‘The Translation of the Bible into Yoruba, Igbo and Isekiri Languages of Nigeria, With Special Reference to The Contributions of Mother-tounge Speakers’ (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Aberdeen, 1986), p. 75; J. Wood, ‘On the Inhabitants of Lagos. Their Character, Pursuits, and Languages’, *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record*, (1881), p. 691. For the general argument, see J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*.

⁴² T. Awoniyi, *Yoruba Language in Education, 1846-1974* (Ibadan, 1978), p. 48.

⁴³ Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1881-1882*, p. 18. The number of communicants attending the church service in Aroloya in 1879 is given as 273. Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1879-1880*, p. 13. The Proceedings cease to give numbers for church attendance in Aroloya this year, as the church was associated with the Native Pastorate after that. Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1880-1881*, p. 16.

Giving an insight into their strictness with regard to baptism, missionaries’ narratives of conversion frequently refer to promising candidates as reading the scripture. Cf. Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1882-1883*, p. 27.

phrases, to the same effect.⁴⁴ However, many Saros grew up in Sierra Leone speaking Yoruba, and many returnees from Brazil also spoke Yoruba.⁴⁵ Moreover, it seems that in the 1880s more people in Lagos grew up speaking Yoruba than before, as the number of immigrants decreased.⁴⁶ It appears that in bilingual households Yoruba was largely spoken at home, whereas English was spoken in public – Yoruba was the language of daily life.⁴⁷ Moreover, church services were held in English and Yoruba, and some Brazilians dictated their wills in Yoruba and Portuguese.⁴⁸

It was in the context of addressing this widely shared knowledge of Yoruba, that a first call for a Yoruba newspaper was voiced in 1883 in an anonymous letter to the editor of the *Lagos Times*. This plea was voiced amidst wider protest against the Education Ordinance 1882. The Ordinance provided for the creation of an Education Board which was to regulate government grants aiding primary schools. The most controversial provision of the Ordinance was that the volume of grants was to depend on the number of pupils passing an English-language examination in reading, writing and arithmetic.⁴⁹ A group of Lagosians, headed by James Johnson, the pastor of Breadfruit church in Olowogbowo, protested against the Ordinance. Their main contention was that the ordinance favoured mission schools with their focus on English, and neglected all others that taught the “vernacular”.⁵⁰ Those who protested the education ordinance were also concerned that if taught only in English, pupils’ understanding of topics would suffer.⁵¹

⁴⁴ F. Akere, ‘Linguistic Assimilation in Socio-Historical Dimensions in Urban and Sub-urban Lagos’, in Ade Adefuye, Babatunde Agiri, and Akinjide Osuntoku (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State* (Ikeja, 1987), p. 185; Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1882-1883*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ For instance, an interview at Government House with repatriates from Brazil and Havana is held in Yoruba and English. ‘Negro Repatriation’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 16. August 1890, pp. 2-3. See also L. Lindsay, ‘To Return to the Bosom’, p. 25; R. Law, ‘Yoruba Liberated Slaves’, p. 357.

⁴⁶ Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1882-1883*, p. 25.

⁴⁷ ‘Local News’, *Lagos Times*, 13. June 1883, p. 3; F. Akere, ‘Linguistic Assimilation’, p. 167.

⁴⁸ L. Lindsay, ‘To Return to the Bosom’, p. 23.

⁴⁹ ‘Local News’, *Lagos Observer*, 20. April 1882, p. 3; *Lagos Observer*, 20 July 1882, p. 4.

⁵⁰ ‘Local News’, *Lagos Times*, 13. June 1883, p. 3.

⁵¹ Eko, ‘To the Editor’, *Lagos Times*, 10. January 1883, p. 3; Local News, *Lagos Times*, 13. June 1883, p. 3.

In the literature, protest against the education ordinance is considered as having formed part of preparing the ground for an elite movement or mobilisation that coalesced in the 1890s.⁵² Scholars attribute this “cultural nationalism” to increased racial discrimination in government and trade which was brought together with a keen interest in Yoruba culture, language and literature.⁵³ A mobilisation along these lines was reflected in some of the writings of the intelligentsia of that time,⁵⁴ and many Saros began to choose a Yoruba dress over English fashion and changed their anglicised names to Yoruba names. In 1882, contemporaries observed that “race-feeling” had permeated Lagos. James Johnson, for instance, propagated ideas such as “Africa for the Africans”, and sought to replace English church services with masses and teaching in Yoruba.⁵⁵ However, not all Lagosians supported the protest against the Ordinance. The *Lagos Observer* dismissed the protests as part of a fancy by “Yoruba maniacs”.⁵⁶ The paper insisted that the present canon of works in Yoruba was sufficient and that current conditions did not allow for speaking only Yoruba, and for thus denouncing “the tongue that Shakespeare spoke”.⁵⁷ In contrast, the *Lagos Times* supported those leading the protest, and published letters to the editor in support of the protests.

It was one contributor to the *Lagos Times*, who wrote under the pen name “A Native” and had previously advocated education in Yoruba, that called for a Yoruba newspaper in 1883. He did so in reaction to a piece by Isaac Willoughby, a prominent Lagosian trader and former government interpreter and inspector of police. Willoughby had expressed his pride in the existence of three (English-language) newspapers in Lagos.⁵⁸ The anonymous writer objected that the English press was only understood by a few, and that real power would lie with a

⁵² F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 107-111.

⁵³ For a brief discussion of the literature, see J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*, pp. 279-281.

⁵⁴ For a critical assessment of how scholars “sieved” a broad range of publications produced in the period for cultural nationalism, and, correspondingly “obliterated” and “ignored” other themes, see N. Muniz Improta Franca, ‘Producing Intellectuals’, pp. 83-109.

⁵⁵ Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings 1882-1883*, p. 25.

⁵⁶ The “Lagos Observer’s” Tit-Bits, *Lagos Observer*, 31. August 1882, p. 4.

⁵⁷ ‘Our Vernacular’, *Lagos Observer*, 16. August 1883, p. 2.

⁵⁸ W, ‘To the Editor’, *Lagos Times*, 13. June 1883, p. 3.

paper in Yoruba, as it would be able to reach “the masses” – people literate in Yoruba to be found, for instance, in connection with churches. The contributor substantiated his argument for the assumed force of a Yoruba newspaper by referring to India, stressing that the government feared the vernacular press.⁵⁹

Iwe Irohin Eko in the Lagos Printing Sphere

It was five years after the aforementioned call for a Yoruba newspaper was published in the English-language press that Andrew Thomas started publishing the *Iwe Irohin Eko*, an English-Yoruba bilingual newspaper, in 1888. Since 1883, Lagos had seen the rise and demise of three English language newspapers – by 1888 the *Lagos Observer* was the only newspaper still being published.⁶⁰ The number of publications in Yoruba had simultaneously increased, including many works that addressed Yoruba culture and traditions such as “Iwe Owe” (Book of Proverbs) by S. A. Allen, “Iwe Alo” (Book of Riddles) by D. B. Vincent and “Kekere Iwe Orin Aribiloso” (a book on songs by Aribiloso, an Egba humorist) by E. M. Lijadu.⁶¹

Initial reactions to Andrew Thomas bringing out a bilingual newspaper resembled two divergent notions regarding the use of Yoruba which had been voiced in the context of protest against the Education Ordinance of 1882, mentioned above. The *Lagos Observer* greeted the *Iwe Irohin Eko* as a commendable effort at preserving Yoruba literature and historiography from oblivion.⁶² This portrayal is intriguing; here, the paper appears to be primarily regarded as a contribution to the growing body of work on Yoruba culture and traditions, thus underplaying the paper’s political agency. Other papers, however, considered the Yoruba paper as a clear political ally, and did not deny the Yoruba paper being associated with notions

⁵⁹ A Native, ‘To the Editor’, *Lagos Times*, 22. August 1883, p. 3. The contributor most likely referred to the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, which imposed restrictions on the vernacular press in India. R. Darnton, ‘Literary Surveillance in the British Raj. The Contradictions of Liberal Imperialism’, *Book History*, 4 (2001), p. 148.

⁶⁰ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 252.

⁶¹ R. Law, ‘A Pioneer of Yoruba Studies. Moses Lijadu (1862-1926)’ in Gabriel Olusanya (ed.), *Studies in Yoruba History and Culture. Essays in Honour of Professor S. O. Biobaku* (Ibadan, 1983), p. 110; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 108.

⁶² ‘Jottings by Stet’, *Lagos Observer*, 3. November 1888, p. 2.

of progress and power, akin to their English language counterparts.⁶³ These papers acknowledged that the Yoruba paper was part of the public sphere.

A look at some of *Iwe Irohin Eko's* features suggests that it did participate as an equal in the public sphere. For instance, the paper was associated with other papers through advertisements featured in its pages, in particular through an advertisement in Yoruba for an artificial ear drum, promising to cure deafness, which was published frequently in 1890 and 1891.⁶⁴ Very similar advertisements, varying in the wording between papers and over the years, appeared in other coastal newspapers such as the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* and the *Gold Coast Chronicle*, in other African newspapers such as the *Nyasaland Times*, in the United States of America, and in Australia⁶⁵ – but not in the English language newspapers that operated in Lagos at this time, the *Lagos Weekly Times* and the *Lagos Weekly Record*.⁶⁶ This advertisement was remarkable not only for its longevity, but because it seems to have been one of the paper's very few advertisements in Yoruba.⁶⁷ Even though the Lagosian English-language papers did not feature the advertisement praising the artificial ear drum, they published other announcements for Victorian 'quack' medicine, in which Lagosians apparently had great faith.⁶⁸ Advertisements for medical products seems to have formed a recognisable

⁶³ See, for instance the aforementioned letter to the editor by Isaac Willoughby. He links the existence of three newspaper to the rising of "this country". W., 'To the Editor', *Lagos Times*, 13. June 1883, p. 3.

⁶⁴ In 1890, of the 17 analysed issues featuring a cover, 11 contain the advertisement. The Issue of 9. May 1891 also features the advertisement.

⁶⁵ *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7. December 1889, p. 1; *Gold Coast Chronicle*, 28. July, p. 4; *Nyasaland Times* 8. September 1900, p. 5; *St Johns Herald* (Arizona), 2. September 1899, p. 15; *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 4. December 1900, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Richard Beale Blaize re-launched the *Lagos Times* in May 1890 under the editorship of John Payne Jackson; their cooperation ended in 1890, and Jackson established his *Lagos Weekly Record* in January 1891. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 32-3.

⁶⁷ In the issues under review, the only other advertisement in Yoruba is one announcing "Iwe Pero Esopu" (Book of Aesops Fables) by A.L. Hethersett. Cf. *Iwe Irohin Eko* 5. July 1890, p. 1. Hethersett was an interpreter in the Governor's office since 1879, and known for his connections to Oyo. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 60; Government Printer, *Lagos Blue Book for 1890* (Lagos, 1891), p. 32.

⁶⁸ M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos*, pp. 24-5. One example for such advertisements in the English press is the promise of treatment by letter for "Sufferers from Cramps and Nervous Debility". *Lagos Times*, 6 June 1891, p. 1; see also F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 90.

feature of West African newspapers,⁶⁹ and thus, even if the advertisement was translated and published on the paper's own initiative, and without monetary reward, it speaks at least for *Iwe Irohin Eko's* attempt to forge a link with the broader West African printing sphere.

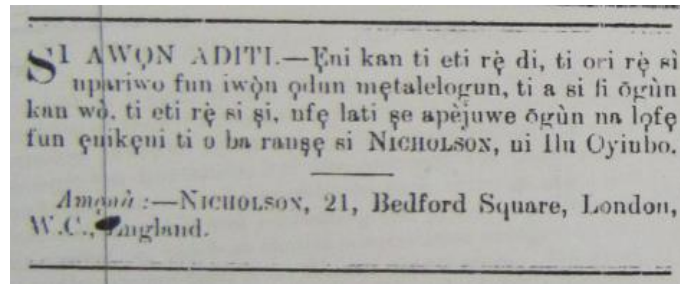


Fig. 2: Advertisement for an artificial ear drum. Source: *Iwe Irohin Eko* 5. April 1890, p. 1.

Iwe Irohin Eko was also connected to other coastal newspaper more substantially: the paper was regarded as an ally, and other papers picked up content from the periodical, for instance letters to the editor.⁷⁰ Moreover, the column “Lagos Intelligence” in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* lists the *Iwe Irohin Eko* next to other Lagosian papers as one of its sources of intelligence,⁷¹ and when the paper seems to have ceased publication in 1891, the Sierra Leonean paper bemoaned that only the *Lagos Weekly Record* remained in “the field to fight”⁷². In addition to its connections to other coastal papers, *Iwe Irohin Eko* had an agenda setting capacity with regard to specific Lagosian topics – that is to say, topics covered by the bilingual paper would be picked up by an English-language Lagosian newspaper with an explicit reference to the bilingual periodical. For instance, in October 1891, in an editorial on the irregularity of school inspections in the Colony, the *Lagos Weekly Record* started the piece with the reference that *Iwe Irohin Eko* had drawn attention to this topic.⁷³ In the same month, a contributor to the *Lagos Weekly Record* referred to the *Iwe Irohin Eko* and stated that

⁶⁹ According to Christopher Fyfe, it was advertisements for patent medicines, such as Holloway’s Pills, that kept the emerging colonial press in Sierra Leone afloat. C. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, rev. ed (Aldershot, 1993), p. 281.

⁷⁰ For instance, the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* published an open letter taken from the *Iwe Irohin Eko*. ‘A Native Church in Lagos’, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, p. 7. November 1891, p. 8.

⁷¹ ‘Lagos Intelligence’, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 25. July 1891, p. 6.

⁷² ‘Scarcity of Rain at Lagos’, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 28. November 1891, p. 7.

⁷³ ‘The School Inspection of the Colony’, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 17. October 1891, p. 3.

despite being small, it was not behind with posting some "valuable and welcome news", when it covered a prayer meeting that was held in reaction to an outbreak of smallpox in the colony.⁷⁴

Reforming the Public Sphere?

In a study of bilingual Yoruba newspapers, Karin Barber shows that *Iwe Irohin Eko* was pursuing political goals beyond the preservation of Yoruba literature and historiography from oblivion. She argues that the aim of the paper was to unite people that associated with different polities upcountry and thus foster the advancement of a country or nation of Yoruba speakers, and how it harnessed progress and development accordingly in its prospectus.⁷⁵ According to Barber, the paper showed all those speaking Yoruba what they had in common at a time they were engaged in warfare. It did so when it published works of historiography and texts on traditions, a feature which can be considered as "preserving" culture in the sense that the *Lagos Observer* approved of, as illustrated above. In these instances, the paper's main agenda was carried out in Yoruba.⁷⁶ Barber shows that the paper moreover brought together different readerships: it reached out to polities upcountry, and, at the same time, in particular by using English, it addressed the Lagos Saros, urging them to help in ending the interior wars.⁷⁷

This thesis expands on the above assessment of *Iwe Irohin Eko*, looks into its importance beyond forging a Yoruba nation and campaigning for peace in the interior, and focusses on its significance in the context of Lagos newspaper reporting. The following analysis draws on issues of *Iwe Irohin Eko* between February and November 1890, during which a total of 20

⁷⁴ 'The Continued Raging of the Small Pox', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 31. October 1891, p. 3.

⁷⁵ K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics', p. 197.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 195-7.

Information on readers and the circulation of the paper remain limited. However, this study assumes that even though issues of Lagos newspapers could circulate considerably along the coast and upcountry in the late nineteenth-century, their biggest readership was most likely in Lagos.

issues were published.⁷⁸ However, only half of these issues are available to be studied in their entirety; copies of two issues from this period no longer exist, with six others being incomplete. The longest run of complete issues is from August to November 1890, consisting of seven issues in total.

During the period under review, *Iwe Irohin Eko* featured a great number of texts which were written in English as well as Yoruba – a characteristic that Barber also indicates.⁷⁹ An analysis of editorials and letters to the editor published in *Iwe Irohin Eko* suggests, moreover, that it was one of the paper's aims to render the great majority of its content available in English as well as Yoruba.⁸⁰ Two thirds of the editorials forming part of this analysis were published in English and Yoruba in the same issue of the paper.⁸¹ In three of the remaining four editorials, rendering the text in the respective other language was delayed, resulting in two English editorials which appear to be placeholders. But interestingly enough, both of these editorials covered the same topic, that is, a complaint about the insufficiency of the police in Lagos.⁸² Published letters to the editor mirror this trend observable in the editorials. Again, only one third of the letters do not find a direct counterpart in this rendering of English and Yoruba discussions side by side.⁸³

⁷⁸ Issues of the *Iwe Irohin Eko* are no longer available at the National Archives in Ibadan. The present analysis thus relies on issues preserved by Taiwo Olunlade, who most generously shared his copies with the author.

⁷⁹ K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics', p. 189.

⁸⁰ This study considers an analysis of letters to the editor and editorials particularly informative on the aims of the papers, as these items were most likely specially chosen by the editor.

⁸¹ In twelve out of the eighteen issues under review editorials in the two languages were preserved, and were therefore analysed (cf. issues of *Iwe Irohin Eko* of 1. March, 13. March, 3. May, 7. June, 5. July, 2. August, 16. August, 6. September, 20. September, 4. October, 18. October, and 1. November 1890). The English editorial of one other issue (which is not included in this analysis as the Yoruba editorial of this issue is missing), points out that the Yoruba editorial deals at some length with the same topic. *Canoe Accidents, Iwe Irohin Eko*, 17. May 1890, p. 4.

⁸² Cf. editorials of 7. June and 6. September.

⁸³ Cf. *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 13. February, pp. [2]-3, 3. May, p. 3; 7. June, p. 4, 2. August, p. 3 (two letters); 20. September, p. 3 (two letters), 4. October, p. 4, 18. October, p. 3. Letters expressing thanks for sympathy are not included in this analysis, as they are not contributing to ongoing discussions. The letters not 'picked up' are from the issues of 7 June, 2 August, and from 4 October. This rendering of content in both languages is also observable in the paper's "News Items" column, or with regard to small pieces on Abeokuta and Porto Novo which are as good as always given in both languages.

One letter to the editor published in *Iwe Irohin Eko* points towards the fact that the paper took publications in the English language press into account when aiming to provide content in both languages. That is to say, that it would not necessarily reprint content in English when it had already been published in the English-language press, and that in these instances, it would rather focus on rendering the respective text in Yoruba. In 1890, *Iwe Irohin Eko* was the only newspaper published in Lagos until the *Lagos Weekly Times*, a reincarnation of the *Lagos Times*, went to print in May of the same year.⁸⁴ A letter by a contributor calling himself Yahya that made derogatory remarks on the celebration of the yearly Islamic festival, presumably Id el Kabir, is published only in Yoruba in *Iwe Irohin Eko*. However, on the same day, the *Lagos Weekly Times* published an English version of this letter.⁸⁵ This consideration for publications in English can also be observed with regard to matters relating in some way to the colonial administration. The *Iwe Irohin Eko* seemingly published only what it considered the most important of such matters in both languages, that is, the minutes of the Legislative Council. In other instances, such as a report on the school inspection as well as the text of a petition to the government with regard to the interior wars, matters involving the government were only given in Yoruba, having been published in the English press in the preceding weeks.⁸⁶

In addition to instances outlined above, the paper appears more generally not to have taken a stance too divergent from that of the *Lagos Weekly Times*, with these two papers often publishing on the same or similar issues. The Yoruba paper did thus not amount to a “counter public”, was not defined by the oppositional content of its discussions, and in general was not

⁸⁴ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 252.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Lagos Weekly Times*, 2. August 1890, p. 3 and *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 2. August 1890, p. 3.

⁸⁶ For the report on the School inspection for 1889 see *Lagos Weekly Times*, 9. August 1890, pp. 2-3 and 23. August, pp. 2-3 as well as *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 16. August 1890, pp. 2-3, 20. September p. 2, and 18. October, p. 2. For the memorial or petition addressing the wars upcountry see *Lagos Weekly Times*, 20. September 1890, p. 2 as well as *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 18. October 1890, pp. 2-3. The only exception to this consideration of publications by the English press are the minutes of a meeting of the Brazilian community with the government, which are given in English as well as in Yoruba: *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 16. August 1890, p. 4 (in English) and 6. September 1890, p. 2-3 (in Yoruba), p. 4 (in English, ctd.) and *Lagos Weekly Times*, 16. August 1890, pp. 2-3.

conceptualised as subordinate to the publics convened in the English language press.⁸⁷ For instance, with regard to the broader issue of what position to take in respect to fighting upcountry, the paper pursued an editorial stance very similar to that of the *Lagos Weekly Times*. In 1877 a series of conflicts, referred to as the Kiriji War⁸⁸ or the “Sixteen Years’ War”,⁸⁹ began and involved various parties in Yorubaland until 1893. It saw hostilities between Ibadan and polities such as Abeokuta, Ekiti, Ijesha and Ilorin, in part contesting Ibadan’s suzerainty, and, additionally, attacks by the king of Dahomey westwards, towards Abeokuta.⁹⁰ In August 1890, the government in Lagos introduced a restriction on the importation of guns – a move which was welcomed by the *Lagos Weekly Times*.⁹¹ In fact, the paper had called for policies along these lines before the government imposed restriction became public.⁹² The paper considered this matter in light of the state’s role as protector of Lagos, highlighting the government’s responsibility as arbitrator for hostilities upcountry; it published various more or less veiled calls for intervention.⁹³ The *Iwe Irohin Eko* joined the discussion of this topic when it published the government’s announcement regarding gun import restrictions in the Yoruba-language.⁹⁴ And, in subsequent issues, the paper argued that the restriction meant no harm and insisted that it was the obligation of the Lagos government to get involved in the wars. Moreover, the paper urged its readers in both languages to contribute to and facilitate reconciliation, to remember the commonalities all Yoruba speaking peoples shared, and to unite for peace and prosperity.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ M. Warner, ‘Publics and Counterpublics’, *Public Culture*, 14:1, pp. 85-6.

⁸⁸ E. Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies* (London, 1979), p. 19.

⁸⁹ S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, reprinted (Lagos, 2001 [1921]) pp. 413-426.

⁹⁰ J. Herskovits, *Preface to Modern Nigeria*, pp. 159-162.

⁹¹ ‘General News’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 30. August 1890, p. 3.

⁹² ‘The Prohibition of the Sale of Arms and Munitions of War to the Interior, and Absolute Necessity’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 24. May 1890, p. 2.

⁹³ ‘Abeokuta and the Lagos Government’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 23. August 1890, p. 2; ‘Dahomey and Yoruba-Land’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 6. September 1890, p. 2.

⁹⁴ ‘[Ihin Oniruru]’, *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 6. September 1890, p. 3.

⁹⁵ Cf. ‘Dahomey and Yorubaland/Idahomi ati Ilẹ Yoruba’, *Iwe Irohin Eko* 4. October 1890, p. 2 (Yoruba) and p. 4 (English).

By offering similar content as the English-language press and seeking to stimulate discussion for readers in both languages, *Iwe Irohin Eko* made issues of (Lagos) politics accessible to a wider readership which included Lagosians only literate in Yoruba. From an anglicised elite-centred perspective, the paper disseminated or distributed discussions in the English language press further, and granted Yoruba readers an opportunity to eavesdrop. The paper's emergence may thus simply be equated with an expansion of the boundaries of a public sphere constituted in print.⁹⁶ On the other hand, however, this parallelism of contributions in both languages enabled Yoruba readers to take up topics discussed in the English-language press, and thus brought them in association with the elite – something many seemed to have aspired to (see also chapter 4). Moreover, when the paper made Yoruba-language letters sent to the editor available in English, Yoruba readers potentially felt they could join in and contribute to the wider discussion.

Reading a more normative aim into this approach, it might be suggested that the paper promoted the idea that written discussions ought to be held in both languages, reflecting every day interaction in Lagos. That is to say, the paper may also be considered to have offered a competing model of what a space for discussion could or should be like, in relation to the English-language press. By not only empowering Yoruba readers to know about discussions, but by equally making their contributions in Yoruba available in English, it may be considered to have challenged the English paper's guidelines on how a space for discussion – this “form of civil society on paper”⁹⁷ – should be constituted.

The Crisis on the Niger

There is one instance, however, in which the reporting of the *Lagos Weekly Times* and the *Iwe Irohin Eko* varied notably in the period under review, this being when Samuel Crowther was

⁹⁶ This corresponds well with a notion of Lagosian intellectuals aiming to contribute to a wider pool of knowledge, which Nara Improta identifies with regard to historical writing. N. Muniz Improta Franca, 'Producing Intellectuals', pp. 72-82.

⁹⁷ S. Newell, *The Power to Name. A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, 2013), p. 34.

pressured out of his position on the Finance Committee of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Niger Mission. Exploring reasons why the reporting of this event differed in the two newspapers gives further insight into the workings of the public sphere at this moment in time. It points to the importance of connections to members of the elite in order to run a newspaper successfully (see also chapter 2), and to the limits of a political project of ‘cultural nationalism’ as advocated by *Iwe Irohin Eko*.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a freed slave from Oshogun, near Abeokuta, had become, in pursuance of Henry Venn’s missionary ideal of a self-governing Anglican church in Africa, the first African to hold the position of Bishop on the continent – he was consecrated Bishop of West Africa in 1864.⁹⁸ Crowther not only exemplified the aspirations of the educated elite, but also came to epitomise their disillusionment in a climate of heightening racism at the end of the century. Africans were systematically excluded from new jobs and old positions in the colonial service and the professions.⁹⁹ Resultant tensions came to a head in the Niger Delta and on the Lower Niger, in Crowther’s area of operation: regulations for the trade on the Niger, the policies of steamship companies, as well as fierce competition – for instance by the Royal Niger Company – made it hard for small-scale traders to survive, particularly African traders.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, missionary activity was intertwined with trade, and missionaries, who were mainly Africans, sided with Africans pushed out of the trade by European competition. This support not only arose from sympathy but also personal family and friendship connections. Conflicts were polarised along racial lines when European traders discredited African missionaries and European missionaries espoused similar views of African missionaries and traders.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ J. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria*, pp. 20, 178, 194. Crowther’s bishopric excluded various missions in British colonies on the West African coast as well as Abeokuta, which formed part of the Diocese of Sierra Leone, and was headed by a European Bishop. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 274-7.

⁹⁹ K. Mann, *Marrying Well*, pp. 21, 24; P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 72-75.

¹⁰⁰ K. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (Oxford, 1956), Chapter 6, pp. 171 et. seqq.

¹⁰¹ J. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria*, pp. 210-11, 241, 243 et. seqq.

In August 1890, G.W. Brooke, F.N. Eden, and J.A. Robinson – three European missionaries, who sought to reform the mission, not least in terms of spirituality – brought charges ranging from fraud and engaging in contraband trade to untruthfulness, ignorance and immorality against African pastors at a series of meetings of the Finance Committee of the Niger mission, held at Onitsha. They suspended those accused, overruled Crowther’s dissenting vote despite him chairing the meeting, and, moreover, suspended the Bishop himself for defending the pastors. Crowther subsequently resigned from the Finance Committee of the mission, and the administration of his bishopric was placed in the hands of European Secretaries.¹⁰² Crowther’s replacement may be characterised as a moral shock,¹⁰³ in particular for the educated elite. This ousting of a role model, of a shining and inspiring example for achievement and recognition is considered to have encouraged mobilization towards the formation of an African Church, independent from the CMS.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, it is considered that Crowther’s removal encouraged the popularity of more radical ideas about the need for self-determination among West Africans, which were espoused by James Johnson or Edward Wilmot Blyden.¹⁰⁵

These Finance Committee meetings were held between 18 and 29 August 1890, and it took about three weeks until the news reached Lagos, that is to say the *Lagos Weekly Times*, who reported on a crisis in the Niger Mission on 20 September.¹⁰⁶ The paper engaged with the crisis in subsequent issues, even though it apparently received no further substantial news on the matter and having already reported on the dismissal of African pastors in its first installation on the topic. On 30 September the paper published a letter to the editor voicing

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 253-4; G. Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918* (Leiden, 1978), pp. 110-111.

¹⁰³ J. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest* (Chicago, 1997), p. 106. Jasper describes a moral shock as an instance raising a person’s level of outrage and as inclining them towards political action.

¹⁰⁴ J. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria*, pp. 272-3; J. Webster, *The African Churches*, pp. 42 et. seqq.

¹⁰⁵ E. Hulmes, ‘Christian Attitudes to Islam. A Comparative Study of The Work of S.A. Crowther, E.W. Blyden and W.R.S. Miller in West Africa’ (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 1980), pp. 214-6; R. July, *Origins of Modern African Thought* (London, 1968), pp. 230-233. A connection between the “importance of the future of that mission in connection with the race question” was also made in the press: ‘General News’, *Lagos Weekly News*, 20. September 1890, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ ‘General News’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 20. September 1890, p. 3.

incomprehension with what was described as a “new scheme” – a reference to racial discrimination – operating on the Niger, and on 4 October the paper reported that Eden and Brooke, two of the instigators, were travelling to Liverpool.¹⁰⁷ Coverage on the events on the Niger was taken up by the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* on the 11 October, soon after issues of the *Lagos Weekly Times* presumably reached Freetown. The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* reprinted extracts from the *Lagos Weekly Times*, published an extract from a private letter, and made an editorial comment highlighting the need to organise a “Native Defence Association to watch and resist all wicked projects taken up to be carried out in church or state”.¹⁰⁸ The *Iwe Irohin Eko*, in contrast, did not report on the matter until 18 October, almost a month after the initial coverage by the *Lagos Weekly Times*. It mentioned the expulsion of pastors only in its English “News Items” column, stating that a meeting was held on the matter and that they would elaborate on it once they had received further information.¹⁰⁹ The aforementioned ‘meeting’ had been held ten days before the publication of this brief piece. Dandeson Crowther, one of the suspended pastors and son of Bishop Crowther, had arrived in Lagos, and participated in the meeting alluded to in the Yoruba paper.¹¹⁰ The meeting was held at a school room in Olowogbowo, the Saro quarter, comprised of “many influential Christians”, and passed a resolution to address the Parent Committee of the CMS on the expulsion of missionaries – all of which was not to be learned from the pages of *Iwe Irohin Eko*.¹¹¹

The manner in which the Yoruba-paper reported on the issue can be interpreted in multiple ways. Assessing why the *Iwe Irohin* did not publish news on the crisis on the Niger until the 18

¹⁰⁷ A Native of West Africa, ‘The Niger Mission’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 30. September 1890, pp. 2-3, General News, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 4. October 1890, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ A Sierra Leone Negro, ‘The Niger Mission – A National Crisis!’, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 11. October 1890, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ ‘News Items’, *Iwe Irohin Eko*, 18. October 1890, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ ‘General News’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 11. October 1890, p. 3.

¹¹¹ ‘The Niger Mission’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 11. October 1890, p. 3. A corresponding letter was approved and signed by Lagosians of various denominations on 24 October 1890, and sent to the CMS in London. ‘General News’, *Lagos Weekly Times*, 25. October 1890, p. 3, G. Tasia, *Christian Missionary Enterprise*, p. 114.

October, and then only in the briefest outline and exclusively in English, might be explained by looking at the kinds of connections – or absence thereof – other newspapers had with educated Africans working and living on the Niger. The way the paper reported on the issue on the 18 October – stating that they were awaiting further information – suggests that the paper had not yet had a chance to independently corroborate the news despite it must have been afloat in Lagos at that point. The fact that the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* took up the story from the *Lagos Weekly Times* might have been aided by the fact that the paper could substantiate the quoted passages with a private letter seemingly confirming their content. This points to a difference in the information gathering capabilities of the *Iwe Irohin Eko* in comparison to the two English-language papers. Besides those associated with the mission, it was most likely educated Africans, who worked on the Niger in connection with trading firms, that knew about the eventful meeting of the Finance Committee in Onitsha. Tightening conditions on the Niger meant fewer were able to continue working as independent traders. Nevertheless, many remained on the Niger and worked as clerks for European firms.¹¹² Through their occupation, as well as family ties and other connections they cultivated, these potential insiders were connected with other Saros and members of the elite on the coast, including the publishers of English-language newspapers.¹¹³ The fact that Andrew Thomas, who certainly entertained some connections with members of the elite or intelligentsia, was seemingly left out when news of the crisis on the Niger was spread might indicate that he was positioned at the periphery of West-African information networks.¹¹⁴ This again highlights the

¹¹² M. Lynn, *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 142-4.

¹¹³ Cf. Mann, *Marrying Well*.

¹¹⁴ Henry Johnson was amongst the pastors suspended by Brooke, Eden and Robinson; his brother, Nathaniel Johnson, was in charge of Palm Church, Aroloya. There might have thus nevertheless been a way for Thomas to obtain first-hand information about the crisis via his pastor. However, whereas Henry Johnson is associated with James Johnson, who held more radical views, Nathaniel Johnson is considered to have been a conservative. This difference in political orientation of the two brothers may have thus resulted in Nathaniel Johnson not sharing news about his brother's fate with Andrew Thomas, if he even had them. Cf. E. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson*, pp. 152-3; J. Webster, *The African Churches*, p. 73. On the association of Henry Johnson with James Johnson (with whom he shared no family ties), see E. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson*, p. 252; J. Webster, *The African Churches*, p. 66.

importance of newspapermen actively maintaining connections to potential contributors or sources of 'information' when seeking to run a newspaper (see chapter 2). Moreover, this illustrates that although it was not only members of an exclusive circle of elites that contributed to print culture in the late nineteenth century, elite patronage and connections remained essential when running a newspaper and when seeking to participate in discussions in the press (see also chapter 4).

Another explanation for the *Iwe Irohin Eko's* minimalistic reporting on these events could be found in the political stance adopted by the paper, namely a shying away from issues arousing "race-feeling", and an unwillingness to smear the Anglican church given a profound belief in the brotherhood in Christ.¹¹⁵ Such political motivations for not publishing on the matter seem, however, unlikely, as they would have meant that the paper changed its respective stance within less than a year: in October 1891 the paper published a progress report by W. E. Cole on the recently established United Native African Church, a breakaway church from the Anglican CMS.¹¹⁶

Given the paper's reluctance to report on the crisis on the Niger, it might be suggested that when convening publics, *Iwe Irohin Eko* took a patronizing stance towards Yoruba readers, similar to the missionary paper *Iwe Irohin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba*, a periodical initiated by missionaries and published in the 1860s in Abeokuta.¹¹⁷ The latter paper's aim was to induce people to obtain knowledge by reading, and West-African newspapermen similarly sought to promote literacy with their newspapers.¹¹⁸ In this context, a newspaper was considered more an authoritative guide than a means to stimulate discussion. It might have

¹¹⁵ J. Webster, *The African Churches*, p. 67.

¹¹⁶ The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* published the open letter in November 1891, and noted that it was reprinted from the *Iwe Irohin Eko*. A Native Church in Lagos, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7. November 1891, p. 8.

¹¹⁷ For a patronising stance of Saros towards other Lagosians, see P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, pp. 48-9.

¹¹⁸ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 11. For the Prospectus of this missionary-led newspaper, see CMSA, S. IV, P. 4, Reel 70 C A 2 O68 Original Papers-Missionaries, Rev John Andrew Maser 1853-1879: To the Public, 9. January 1860.

thus been against this background of feeling superior to their readers, that the publishers of *Iwe Irohin Eko* withheld information on the crisis from their pages – perhaps out of concern about how readers would react to the news in print, such as turning their back on Christianity. The aforementioned desire of the paper to learn more about the matter may therefore also indicate that publishers did not address this issue as they did not yet feel confident enough to be able to give their readers appropriate guidance.

The ways in which *Iwe Irohin Eko* convened publics might have also shaped its reporting on the crisis in other ways. It was most likely people of stature and authority in Lagosian society that felt most affected by the dismissal of pastors, as well as the resignation of Bishop Crowther. For a readership that was conceptualised as still aspiring to higher social status due to its eagerness to acquire literacy, the news of the crisis on the Niger may have thus appeared of less relevance. Between 20 September and 18 October, *Iwe Irohin Eko* chose to mainly print news relating to Abeokuta, or news on the Kingdom of Dahomey – news which was, due to the ongoing wars, and according to the paper's prospectus, significant to all people speaking Yoruba. A similar notion of inappropriateness might have been at play when the paper published editorials on the lack of police in Lagos only in English (see above). These might have been irrelevant for people who lived outside the immigrant centres, as government urban development, and thus presumably also government policing, hardly reached beyond them.¹¹⁹

The ways in which *Iwe Irohin Eko* sought to convene publics in the pages of its papers seem to have lost their appeal soon after the crisis on the Niger, and thus the broader political project of the paper – to encourage discussions side by side in English and Yoruba – seems to have failed. The last complete issue available for this analysis is that of 1 November, the subsequent issue to the 18 October, analysed above. The November issue does not provide any new information on the crisis on the Niger. Available circulation figures suggest that *Iwe Irohin*

¹¹⁹ S. Brown, 'A History', pp. 328-9.

Eko's reach began to decline in 1891, and the paper stopped publication in 1892.¹²⁰ The decline of the paper thus also points to the limits of 'cultural nationalism'. In this moment of crisis, when the elite's anglicised way of life was called into question, a newspaper convening publics in Yoruba could not succeed, despite the elite celebrating other Yoruba publications such as books. Just as many among the elite assumed Yoruba names and dressed in Yoruba fashion while never rejecting education or Christianity, which would constitute a more profound embracing of Yoruba culture, the form of civil society on paper *Iwe Irohin Eko* could offer was unlikely to supersede the forum of discussion the English-language press provided.¹²¹ In addition to failing to convene readers successfully, Andrew Thomas' other responsibilities may have no longer allowed him to publish the paper – a reason regarded to have caused Richard Beale Blaize to discontinue the *Lagos Times* in 1892.¹²² Thomas seems to have prioritised the printing of other material, as his printing press was still in operation in 1893.¹²³ Moreover, in 1891 John Payne Jackson started the *Lagos Weekly Record*, a paper that quickly gained popularity in Lagos. The paper took a more radical stance with regard to protest movements, a fact which was nurtured by Jackson's friendship with Edward Blyden.¹²⁴ The *Iwe Irohin Eko's* model of a bilingual "civil society on paper" could thus not take root in Lagos, and the more fast-paced discussions spurred by newspapers were to continue exclusively in English until the emergence of the missionary magazine *In Leisure Hours* in 1910, and the African-owned *Eko Akete* in 1922.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 252, 259.

¹²¹ Cf. J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*, pp. 294-295.

¹²² 'Newspaper Difficulties in West Africa', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 6. February 1892, p. 9.

¹²³ J. Payne, *Payne's Lagos Almanack and Diary for 1883* (London, 1883), p. 60; J. Payne, *Payne's Lagos Almanack and Diary for 1893* (London, 1893), p. 36.

¹²⁴ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 34-6; F. Omu, 'The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa. The West African Example', *Journal of African History*, 9:2 (1968), p. 289.

¹²⁵ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 256; I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas's 'Life story of me, Sẹgilọla' and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), p. 27.

Conclusion

It was from within a group of mission-trained immigrants to Lagos that English-language newspapers were started in Lagos during the 1880s. Amidst tightening conditions in the palm produce trade, in which this elite was engaged, and when facing a decline in their political influence, elite men turned to the press. Social configurations in Lagos however demonstrate that despite it being members of the anglicised elite who stood behind the initial emergence of newspapers, contributions to Lagos print culture cannot be ascribed to them exclusively. Moreover, an investigation into Andrew Thomas' engagement with newspapers shows that it was not only members of an exclusive elite who started newspapers. This chapter has suggested that it was connections to Lagosians living beyond the centres of immigrant settlement that inspired Andrew Thomas to start the bilingual Yoruba newspaper *Iwe Irohin Eko* in 1888. In illustrating the activities of Andrew Thomas, this chapter further contributes to extant literature that shows that social configurations in late nineteenth-century Lagos were complex and bridged an often assumed divide between immigrant communities and others living on the island.

When an initial call for a Yoruba paper was voiced in 1883, it was seen as an instrument of considerable power. By reaching the "masses", it could make valuable contributions to the progress and development of Lagos. A certain acquaintance with the Yoruba language was a commonality which various groups of immigrants to Lagos shared with Lagosians more generally. The use of Yoruba was advocated by some prominent Lagosians in the 1880s and became more pronounced in the 1890s due to the rise of 'cultural nationalism'. When the *Iwe Irohin Eko* was published in 1888 for the first time, it was generally greeted as an equal contributor to the public sphere by other West African newspapers, whereas a minority of papers did not acknowledge its political agency and rather saw it as contributing to the preservation of culture and traditions alone.

In a close study of newspaper reporting, this chapter has shown the importance of *Iwe Irohin Eko* besides reaching out to polities north of Lagos in an attempt to unite people speaking the Yoruba language. An analysis of editorials and letters to the editor indicates that the paper was seeking to stimulate discussions in English and Yoruba, side by side, in its pages. This goal was applied to newspaper content originally published elsewhere; the paper also rendered content already published in the English language press in Yoruba in its own pages. *Iwe Irohin Eko* was thus further disseminating discussions in English, allowing Yoruba readers to eavesdrop, and at the same time, empowered them, by publishing Yoruba contributions in English, to participate in discussion previously restricted to English-speakers. Moreover, the paper did not constitute a counter public, as it was not assuming an oppositional or subordinate stance in relation to other English-language newspapers published in Lagos.

Through a close reading of newspaper reporting on the suspension of African pastors from the ranks of the Church Missionary Society, as well as the resignation of the first African Anglican Bishop, Samuel Crowther, this chapter has provided further insight into concurrent dynamics in the public sphere. On the one hand, the *Iwe Irohin Eko* had an agenda-setting capacity with regard to issues affecting Lagos, that is to say, its reporting was picked up or referred to by English-language newspapers. On the other hand, the *Iwe Irohin Eko's* reluctant reporting on the so-called 'crisis on the Niger' suggests that the paper may be considered to have been on the periphery of broader networks facilitating the exchange of information on the West African Coast. This illustrates that although Lagosians such as Andrew Thomas could contribute to print culture in the late nineteenth century, the success of a newspaper still rested to a large extent on the connections and contributions of a more exclusive circle of elite Lagosians.

Iwe Irohin Eko offered a concept of "civil society on paper" that differed from the English-language press. *Iwe Irohin Eko*, through and beyond its pages, proposed a different conceptualisation of how community should work, and who should have a say in the

discussion of its future direction. It thus offered a model of how a Saro-led monopoly on political agency could be challenged with a more inclusive concept of Lagos politics. It offered an alternative at a moment when the anglicised elite's way of life was challenged amidst a racial backlash. However, the way in which the paper sought to convene publics ultimately failed to win wider acceptance – the paper's circulation declined in 1891, and the paper stopped publication in 1892. John Payne Jackson's *Lagos Weekly Record* was established in 1891 and gained popularity rapidly; his paper thus consolidated how "civil society on paper" could work in the English-language, until *Eko Akete* emerged in 1922.

Chapter 4 – Convening and Contesting Publics in the 1920s:

Biography and Discursive Registers

Introduction

This and the subsequent chapter focus on the ways in which newspapermen and contributors were convening publics in the 1920s and 1930s. In this period, Lagos witnessed far-reaching social and political changes. It saw a diversification of the middle classes and with it an increase in the number of Lagosians who sought to participate in discussions in the press. At the same time, the pace of Lagos politics changed, not least due to the introduction of a limited franchise to the Legislative Council and with the so-called Eleko-question dominating politics. Moreover, the political ground was shifting more profoundly when colonial political rationalities seemed to change for the educated elite – the colonial state was turning to Native Authorities as partners in empire. These changes brought with it a variety of new ways in which publics were convened in the Lagos press. Editors and contributors changed and expanded the repertoire with which they sought to appeal to and address audiences – newspapers gave expression to a variety of identities, thus potentially convening a variety of publics and communities.¹

Karin Barber highlights the importance of genre for gaining insight into the process of convening publics, as new genres emerge when “writers/composers of texts convoke new audiences (or old audiences in new ways)”.² Besides looking into a text’s specific textuality, Barber also points to situating such processes within historical forces and trends which affect

¹ Cf. K. Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics. Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 145; I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas's 'Life story of me, Sẹgilọla' and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 47-48; S. Newell, ‘Articulating Empire. Newspaper Readerships in Colonial West Africa’, *New Formations*, 26 (2011), pp. 29-30; D. Pratten, ‘Creole Pioneers in the Nigerian Provincial Press’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures* (Ann Arbor, 2016), p. 76.

² K. Barber, *Anthropology of Texts*, p. 138.

it.³ The next two chapters build on Barber's approach to the process of convening publics. These studies are moreover informed by recent literature on the public sphere which draw attention to its power dynamics.

Approaching the public sphere as an arena of contested meanings and the press as a space in which not everyone could be published,⁴ this and the subsequent chapter are interested in the frictions between competing, parallel or conflictual ways in which publics were convened. That is to say, these chapters study instances in which the way newspapermen and contributors were convening publics was contested and challenged, and in doing so, they seek to give insight into power dynamics in the public sphere. They will, in other words, reveal how editors and contributors sought to make their voice heard, how they sought to carve out a niche for themselves in the public sphere and what kinds of challenges they faced when doing so. Chapter 5 will study how publics were convened and contested around specific issues using the example of the Eleko-question. The present chapter brings together more contextual aspects with selected textual features to illustrate the politics of convening publics.

The first part of this chapter illustrates the social and political changes Lagos was undergoing in the 1920s. Moreover, it looks into the biographies of newspapermen to give insight into the ways in which Lagosians embarked on convening publics in the press, and to illustrate the challenges they faced when doing so. By highlighting the trajectories of how four Lagosians – Adeoye Deniga, Ernest Ikoli, Adamu Animashaun, and Herbert Macaulay – came about to publish newspapers, it illustrates broader issues at play in the public sphere.⁵

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 223

⁴ Geoff Ely and Nancy Fraser, amongst others, approach the public sphere as an arena of contested meanings, from which some interlocutors were excluded. G. Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures. Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass. 1992), pp. 304-306; N. Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in *Ibid.*, pp. 115-6.

⁵ This study thus also puts individual biographies of newspapermen or newspapers into context. Cf. K. Barber, 'Experiments with Genre in Yoruba Newspapers of the 1920s', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 151-178; J. Brennan, 'Politics and Business in the Indian Newspapers of Colonial Tanganyika', *Africa*, 81:1 (2011), pp. 42-67.

The second part of this chapter turns to how editors and contributors justified the way in which they were convening publics, and how this was challenged or contested. In doing so, it situates the various ways in which newspapermen and contributors embarked on convening publics in the changing political and social environment. Moreover, it examines “press controversies” between opposing political factions, bringing to the fore and interpreting the terms or discursive registers used by contributors and newspapermen to contest the ways others convened publics. This part of the chapter also analyses Yoruba-language newspaper’s allusions to class rhetoric. In doing so, it gives insight into the nuances and changes in the ‘vernaculars’ of publics – into the ways in which their overarching narratives changed over time, and how this reflects broader changes in the public sphere.

Investigating the complex ways in which newspapermen were embarking on carving out different niches for themselves in the public sphere, this and the subsequent chapter paint a complex picture of political activity in the interwar period in Nigeria.

Part 1: Becoming a Newspaperman

Social and Political Changes in the 1920s

In the 1920s, 11 new newspapers emerged in Lagos, a city that would grow from ca. 100,000 to 126,000 inhabitants over the course of the decade.⁶ Since the start of publishing activity in Lagos in 1863, this decade saw almost twice as many new newspapers produced as in previous decades.⁷ In very general terms, this vibrant publishing activity in English and Yoruba is attributed to the political ferment of World War I, and a cultural revival in the 1920s.⁸ Moreover, pioneer newspapermen such as James Bright Davies and John Payne Jackson died in the late 1910s, and a generational change in the ownership of newspapers brought with it new impulses.⁹ In the 1920s, publishing also became more and more motivated by economic considerations, and the decade saw the emergence of five new printing presses.¹⁰

This rise in publishing activity was mirroring changes in the demography of Lagos, in particular the growth and diversification of the middle classes.¹¹ The composition of the Lagos elite had changed since the late nineteenth-century: status and wealth were associated more and more with government jobs, and less with trading (see chapter 3).¹² Education, and in further consequence literary attainments, were thus even more strongly seen as an access route to

⁶ Four out of these eleven newspapers featured a language other than English. P. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 33; I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press. An Outline of the Origins and Development of the Newspaper Press in Nigeria, 1859 to 1965* (Apapa, 1968), pp. 116-8; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 252-3.

⁷ In the 1880s six new newspapers were published, five in the 1890s, three in the 1900s, and five in the 1910s. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 252-3.

⁸ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 53; G. Eluwa, 'Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa', *African Studies Review*, 14:2 (1971), pp. 205-218.

⁹ One new impulse was, for instance, the dissemination of newspapers beyond Lagos. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 74.

¹⁰ Some wealthy Lagosians, such as Samuel Herbert Pearse turned to printing in order to diversify their business activities. A. Olukoju, 'Accumulation and Conspicuous Consumption. The Poverty of Entrepreneurship in Western Nigeria, ca. 1850-1930', in E.K. Akyeampong, R.H. Bates, N. Nunn and J.A. Robinson, eds., *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective* (New York, 2014), pp. 222-3; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 74.

¹¹ P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, 2000), pp. 81 et seqq.

¹² The ranks of the elite were dominated by merchants in the late nineteenth century. K. Mann, *Marrying Well*, p. 25.

elite status.¹³ Starting from the 1910s, more and more parents, who had acquired wealth when they joined the cash-economy, and who were not necessarily educated themselves, could afford to send their children to school.¹⁴ Those gaining access to education in this way were, although aspiring to an elite lifestyle, often closely linked to the social realities of the illiterate, rural and urban workers and peasants – a life-style following local (so called “traditional”) patterns of social organisation.¹⁵ With the 1920s approaching and an expanding colonial state, civil servants were in high demand by the government, and those with education in English were at the same time sought after by commercial firms operating in Lagos.¹⁶ This attracted people from beyond Lagos to the city, and if a prestigious and competitive position in the civil service could not be secured, the completion of standard six – and often even without completing it – ensured that the majority of those that had attended school could secure employment with one of the European commercial firms, or a less attractive teaching position.¹⁷ Job prospects, however, worsened in the early 1920 due to an

¹³ Cf. K. Barber, ‘Introduction’, in K. Barber (ed.), *Africa's Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, 2006), pp. 1–24.

¹⁴ R.O. Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960* (London, 1973), p. 98; J.D.Y. Peel, *Aladura. A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (London, 1968), p. 41; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 82.

¹⁵ P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 86; See also P. Gutkind, R. Cohen and J. Copans, *African Labor History* (London, 1978), p. 32. See also chapter 5.

¹⁶ The number of “educated” Africans, which refers to the ability to read and write, had increased in absolute numbers, but actually decreased in relation to the overall population in comparison to 1911. However, the number of “imperfectly educated” Africans, meaning those “able to read only”, had increased considerably to 37.8% of the population of Lagos, according to the census of 1921. The absolute number of “educated” Africans – whether imperfectly or not – was more than double in 1921 when compared to 1911. However, their overall relative number was fluctuating between 16% and 28% between 1891 and 1921. In 1921 their number was the highest in the overall population, but this number only surpassed the one of 1891 by roughly 2 percentage points. P. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria. A Sketch of Their History, Ethnology and Languages, with an Abstract of the 1921 Census* (London, 1926), p. 185, Table 17.

¹⁷ Cf. J. Coleman, *Nigeria. Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1971), p. 132; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 84–85. In the literature, first-class clerks are considered as members of the elite. R. Okonkwo, ‘The Nigeria Civil Service Union, 1919-1922’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26:3 (1993), p. 620. The number of people applying for clerical positions was continuously increasing, but there were large fluctuations with regard to the percentage of successful entries. The highest rate of applicants was accepted in 1915 when 86% out of 292 applicants were successful, and the lowest rate was accepted in 1922, a year of recession, when only 70 (or 8%) out of 927 applicants passed the entrance examination. TNA: PRO: CO 657/8 Sessional Papers 1920-1922: ‘Nigeria: Sessional Papers. Annual Report on the Education Department, Colony and Southern Provinces, from January, 1920, to March 1921’, pp. 2-3; TNA: PRO: CO 657/3 Sessional papers 1914-1916: ‘Nigeria: Sessional Papers. Annual Report on the Education Department for the year 1913’, p. 98-9.

economic slump and then again towards the end of the decade. Nevertheless, education as well as literacy were still regarded as means to affect status improvement, and to “appear literary and well-informed”¹⁸ was fashionable among the young people and formed part of a sometimes time-consuming lifestyle.¹⁹

Those striving for status change through education, and those maintaining a literary lifestyle sought to attain some sense of belonging or connection with a community or social world that had emerged in the nineteenth-century on the West African coast in the context of mission education.²⁰ Those “hovering on the outskirts of the elite”²¹, found various ways to make use of this coastal literary culture for their own aspirations in colonial society – not least in the form of tin-trunk literacy, and in creating unique kinds of community.²² Part of this engagement with literacy formed the seeking of status recognition as well as respectability by peers, for instance in literary clubs and associations, or by having an article published in the press.²³ The latter could prove difficult, however. Up to the early 1920s, the discussions of the elite in the press were largely maintained as exclusive interactions – in Lagos, some of those who had established the first newspapers were still running them up to the 1920s, or their papers were continued by their kin.²⁴ On the one hand, newspapermen portrayed their papers as inclusive to new readers, encouraged them to send in contributions, and to suggest topics for discussion in the press – which was greatly facilitated by the anonymity granted to contributors. At the same time, however, they maintained the exclusivity of this realm, for

¹⁸ O. Awolowo, *Awo. The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 68, 70.

¹⁹ R. Watson, “What is Our Intelligence, Our School Going and Our Reading of Books Without Getting Money?’ Akinpelu Obişesan and His Diary’, in K. Barber (ed.), *Africa’s Hidden Histories. Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, 2006), p. 72.

²⁰ K. Barber, ‘Introduction’, pp. 5–6; R. Watson, ‘What is Our’, p. 59.

²¹ S. Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana. ‘How to Play the Game of Life’* (Manchester, 2002), p. 8. This group is also referred to as intermediaries, brokers, or sub-elites. Cf. B. Lawrance, E. Osborn and R. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks. African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, 2006).

²² Barber, ‘Introduction’, p. 7; Newell, *Literary Culture*, p. 8.

²³ J. Iliffe, *Honour in African history* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 254; O. Adebayo, ‘Reading the Diary of Akinpelu Obişesan in Colonial Africa’, *African Studies Review*, 51:2 (2008), p. 86.

²⁴ James Bright Davies and Georg Alfred Williams died in 1920 and 1919, and Thomas Horatio Jackson continued his father’s newspaper in 1915. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 43, 50-51.

instance by publicly rejecting contributions, criticising the language of texts or objecting that the grievance addressed was too personal and not of public interest.²⁵

The increase in publishing activity in the 1920s is also attributed to a change in the pace of Lagos politics. On the surface, Lagos appeared to be divided into two camps with regard to political questions: the 'radicals' and the 'conservatives'.²⁶ Both camps consisted of a coalition of educated and 'traditional' Lagos elites, that is, those whose authority was rooted in the hierarchy associated with the Oba or King of Lagos. Conservatives and radicals had been taking different positions on various issues – contemporaries often traced the start of divisions back to the so-called "water rate question" (1908-1916), in which Lagosians became divided over the question on how to protest the government's plans to introduce a rate to be paid for pipe-born water.²⁷ The most prominent controversial issues in the 1920s were conflicts between different groups of Muslims and the so-called Eleko-question, which centred around the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as the Oba of Lagos by the government.²⁸ The latter issue substantially contributed to a hardening of opposition between the two camps (see chapter 5). In very general terms, the conservatives were more cautious in their political demands and entertained good relations with the government, and the radicals were dominated by Herbert Macaulay and his political programme. The Lagos press was usually aligned to or sympathetic with one of the camps, and political conflicts often found expression in "press controversies" between newspapers.

In the 1920s, the political ground was shifting more profoundly – an important feature of political discourse in 1920s Lagos were questions of representation and representativeness.

²⁵ S. Newell, *The Power to Name. A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, 2013), pp. 52, 58.

²⁶ Cf. K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics', p. 200. Describing these groups as 'radicals' and conservatives' has replaced the terms 'pro-government' and 'anti-government' in the earlier literature. For instance, James Coleman describes Kitoyi Ajasa as pro-government, Thomas Horatio Jackson as nationalist, and Herbert Macaulay as anti-government. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 185, 197.

²⁷ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 98 et seqq.

²⁸ See chapter 5.

Not least encouraged by developments in India after the end of the First World War – the Government of India Act made provisions for some elective representation for Indians²⁹ –, the idea of a National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), already voiced in the 1910s, enjoyed a new lease of life on the West African Coast and in Lagos starting from 1918-1919. The congress gave expression to the dominant political aspirations of the time, namely to reform the colonial state constitutionally. In March 1920, delegates from all four British West African territories met for the inaugural congress in Accra, and demanded, amongst other things, elective representation in the Legislative Council and the Municipal Governments.³⁰ The congress' claim to speak for all Africans under colonial administration was, however, contested. In the Gold Coast, the congress faced prominent criticism by Nana Ofori Atta, the Paramount Chief of Akim Abuakwa, who claimed that he could not be superseded by any other body, and who insisted that he had not accorded his blessing to the Congress.³¹ The most scathing criticism of the congress' aims in Nigeria came from Governor Clifford, who questioned the congress' representativeness of the people of Nigeria.³² This criticism was in line with what Vivian Bickford-Smith describes as the "Betrayal of Creole Elites", that is to say, it was a signal to the educated elite that the colonial government had turned to traditional leaders as partners in empire, corresponding to the policy of Indirect Rule.³³ When Clifford had taken over the governorship from Frederick Lugard in 1919, his attempts at government reform, which might be considered liberal when compared to Lugard's policies,³⁴ met with staunch opposition in the Colonial Office, which had already warmed to policies of Indirect

²⁹ Cf. G. Eluwa, 'Background to the Emergence'.

³⁰ G. Olusanya, 'The Lagos Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4:2 (1968), p. 324.

³¹ G. Eluwa, 'The National Congress of British West Africa. A Study in African Nationalism', *Présence Africaine*, 77 (1971), pp. 139; 'A Gold Coast Chief and a Great Issue', *African Messenger*, 17 March 1921, p. 3a.

³² H. Clifford, 'Nigerian Council. Address, 1920', in H. Clifford, *Addresses Delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Nigerian Council, 1920, 1923. Nigeria 1923-1925*, pp. 20-21.

³³ V. Bickford-Smith, 'The Betrayal of Creole Elites, 1880-1920', in P.D. Morgan and S. Hawkins (eds.), *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 194-227; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 105-107.

³⁴ Cf. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 124.

Rule. In his criticism of the congress, Clifford demonstrated that he had bowed to the pressure of the Colonial Office, in particular when emphasising the representativeness of the “natural” rulers of the people, such as the Shehus of Bornu or the Emir of Katsina.³⁵ Nevertheless, Clifford introduced a limited franchise to the Legislative Council in 1922 – Nigerians in Lagos and Calabar could elect four members to the Legislative Council. As a consequence, electioneering, which was adapted to the new political rationalities, developed into an important concern for Lagos politics and the press.³⁶

An Economy of Recognition

Looking into the biographies of four individuals who sought to publish newspapers in the 1920s allows us to evaluate structures and mechanisms characterising the public sphere at the beginning of the period under review, and thus to understand the background against which changes were to unfold. Although Adeoye Deniga, Ernest Ikoli, Adamu Animashaun and Herbert Macaulay’s trajectories of how they came to publish a newspaper differ, they seem to have in common that all of them had made a name for themselves before bringing out a paper – or, at least, benefitted from the reputation of an eminent personality. Their careers as newspapermen thus suggest that good connections to the elite facilitated, and a certain social status was required when seeking to see texts published in the press, or when seeking to start the publication of a newspaper. Amongst the four, only Herbert Macaulay could claim elite status by virtue of birth – the other newspapermen seemingly had to accrue social recognition, status, eminence or prominence in order to find their way into the public sphere. Once admitted to participate in discussions, these attainments alone, could, however, not

³⁵ Whereas Clifford sought to expose government policies to some extent to the scrutiny of the public, Lugard sought to conduct government in isolation of such influences, in particular in isolation from educated Africans. In his interpretation of the amalgamation of Nigeria, Clifford initially sought – in contrast to Lugard – not to extend the system in operation in Northern Nigeria to the south, but rather to “level up” the North by extending southern policies, suggesting that the more direct form of rule established in Lagos, as well as various forms of criticism present in Lagos, were more conducive to economic development. W. Adebaniwi, ‘The City, Hegemony and Ethno-Spatial Politics. The Press and the Struggle for Lagos in Colonial Nigeria’, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 9:4 (2004), pp. 25-51; K. Oke, ‘The Colonial Public Sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943’ (M.Phil thesis, Univ. of Vienna, 2013), pp. 11-16.

³⁶ Cf. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 227.

guarantee the success of newspapers. A look into the books of Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* illustrates that despite his popularity, his paper was facing a chronic shortage of revenue (see also chapter 1).

Adeoye Deniga

Born in 1881 in Lagos³⁷ to a policeman and a trader from Ondo, Gabriel Adeoye Deniga could not be counted among the exclusive circle of Lagos elites.³⁸ Deniga started work as a messenger in the civil service, and then moved on to working as a teacher at various schools starting from 1902 and as headmaster of the Wesleyan Tinubu primary school between 1910 and 1911.³⁹ He was taking up publishing in 1909, with a book teaching the Yoruba alphabet with the help of proverbs and with a pamphlet honouring Eshugbayi Eleko, the Oba or King of Lagos.⁴⁰ In the same year, Deniga also ventured his first attempt at publishing a journal with *The Lagos Astrological Mercury*, a handwritten paper with a low circulation. In the following years, he started two more attempts at publishing a periodical: *The New Age Herald* (1910) and the *Herald Alore* (1913), a bilingual monthly, were also short-lived papers. Throughout the 1910s Deniga infrequently published pamphlets in both English and Yoruba,⁴¹ and publicly referred to himself as essayist.⁴² However, available biographical evidence suggests that he was making a considerable part of his living by working as a letter writer.⁴³

³⁷ D. Brokensha, M. Rieger, J. Vansina, P. Curtin and J. Crossey, 'News and Notes', *African Studies Bulletin*, 8:1 (1965), p. 98. Brokensha states that Deniga was born in Ondo, but in a letter to the editor of the *Times of Nigeria* Deniga clarifies that he was born in Lagos to parents originating from Ondo. A. Deniga, 'To the Editor Times of Nigeria', *Times of Nigeria*, 23 May. 1921, p. 3.

³⁸ Judging from his name, and the fact that he is not listed by Kristin Mann as member of the elite.

³⁹ I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Press*, pp. 100–101; TNA: CO 592/9 Southern Nigeria Protectorate Sessional Papers Annual Reports: 'Report on the Twenty-second Annual Competitive Exhibition of School Work, 1910', pp. 4-5; 'Mr. Adeoye Deniga', *The Times of Nigeria*, 7 Mar. 1921; 'Public Notice', *The Lagos Standard*, 15 Apr. 1908.

⁴⁰ 'News', *Lagos Standard*, 11 August 1909, p. 3.

⁴¹ I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Press*, pp. 100–101; F. Omu, 'The Anglo-African, 1863-65', pp. 58–59. The pamphlets published by Deniga were addressing religious as well as other, diverse matters. Amongst the pamphlets were, for instance *Memoirs of the Crowned Heads of Lagos* (1909), *Twelve Business Commandments* (1910), and *Marriage and the Church* (1914).

⁴² 'Preliminary Announcement', *Lagos Standard*, 6 April 1910, p. 2.

⁴³ In 1911 he was registered as a letter writer, and for 1915 he narrates an episode when a young man came to seek his advice when planning to take up this profession. 'The Charge of Larceny against the Akarigbo of Ijebu Remo', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 5 August 1911, p. 5; A. Deniga, 'Not Guilty. Continued',

With his publishing as well as lecturing activities, Adeoye Deniga could gradually make a name for himself in Lagos, in particular after he received recognition in newspapers published outside of Lagos. In 1915 the *Lagos Standard* praised his industry and his involvement with the newly opened Penny Library,⁴⁴ but when assessing his “African Leaders Past and Present”, the paper finds few gentle words for Deniga’s work and notes that “it has, we repeat with all kindness to and friendly feelings to the lecturer, the least rhetorical effort of all lectures we have heard or read but the most instructive lessons.”⁴⁵ Three months later, Deniga sought to defend the youth of Lagos against the charge that they would only strive to become clerks and look down on handicrafts and farming – a recurring complaint in the Lagos press. He pointed out that nowadays it was harder to make a living in such professions than 25 years ago.⁴⁶ The *Lagos Standard* published his defence, but the paper’s regular contributor Janus set out to prove Deniga wrong, and condescendingly suggested that unless Deniga could suggest something practical, “he had better leave the solution of this difficult problem to wiser and more experienced heads.”⁴⁷ In 1916, however, the *Gold Coast Leader* offered Deniga their “warmest congratulations” and wished one of his pamphlets “the cordial reception it deserves”.⁴⁸ And in 1917, the *Lagos Standard* finally found words of praise for Deniga, commended him and assured him that “[y]ours is the path that leads to the heights that great men reached and kept by unswerving zeal and persevering energy.”⁴⁹ In 1918, Deniga worked as sub-editor for the *Lagos Weekly Record*, which might be considered as another appreciation of his literary skill, as the *Record* was a highly respected newspaper at that time.⁵⁰ The

Lagos Standard, 16. June 1915, p. 5. Moreover, in 1920, Deniga was listed as the Secretary of the Lagos Letter Writer’s Union. ‘The Lagos Letter Writer’s Union’, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 24 April 1920, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Janus, ‘Lagosian On Dits’, *Lagos Standard*, 3 March 1915, p. 4.

⁴⁵ ‘Letters from Hell’, *The Lagos Standard*, 3 March 1915, p. 4.

⁴⁶ A. Deniga, ‘Not Guilty’, *The Lagos Standard*, 9 June 1915, p. 7; A. Deniga, ‘Not Guilty. Continued’, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Janus, ‘Lagosian On Dits’, *Lagos Standard*, 30 June 1915, p. 4.

⁴⁸ ‘General News’, *Gold Coast Leader*, 3 June 1916, p. 3.

⁴⁹ ‘Jottings. The Poet and His Wit’, *Lagos Standard*, 14 February 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁰ ‘The Lagos Weekly Record’, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 6 July 1918, p. 4; F.Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 59. The *Gold Coast Leader* congratulated Deniga on his appointment, commended that he understood the taste of the readers. ‘Lagos’, *Gold Coast Leader*, 31 August 1918, p. 7.

recognition of his literary attainments was important for Deniga's self-conception. In a biographical sketch published in the *Times of Nigeria*, and most likely composed by Deniga himself, he prided himself with the fact that upon sending a complimentary copy of his "African Leaders Past and Present" to then Governor Lugard, he received an "Appreciatory letter" through the Governor's Private Secretary.⁵¹

Starting in 1919, Deniga picked up interest in the idea of organising associational activity bringing together people from the four British West African territories.⁵² He became involved with the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) – referred to as the dominant nationalist organisation of the 1920s⁵³ – and found further recognition in this course. Gabriel Olusanya suggests that Adeoye Deniga was only chosen to form part of the Nigerian delegation to the NCBWA's inaugural conference in Accra when more prominent Lagosians Eric Moore and Orisadipe Obasa did not reply to invitations to join.⁵⁴ However, in the first reports that reached Lagos from the conference, Deniga was featured prominently, as he had impressed the *Gold Coast Independent*: "The professor, although young[,] has read widely and can boast of extensive knowledge of local affairs and literature. ... Undoubtedly he is a very valuable asset to that country."⁵⁵ From then on Deniga was known as "the Professor"⁵⁶ – he was now more widely and more substantially recognized, but in Lagos circles he had not yet achieved eminence. In the aftermath of the congress it was still doubted whether choosing

⁵¹ 'The Government and the National Congress of British West Africa', *Times of Nigeria*, 7 March 1921, p. 6.

⁵² By July 1919, Deniga had published a pamphlet of his lecture on the 'Necessity for a British West African Conference'. 'Mr. Deniga's Lecture', *Lagos Standard*, 16 July 1919, p. 7. This lecture was part of a wider effort by the organizing committee to popularize the idea of the NCBWA in Lagos. J. Campbell, 'The Truth about the Local Nigerian Branch of the British West African Conference, now known as the National Congress of British West Africa', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10 July 1920, p. 5.

⁵³ I. Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement* (London, 1974).

⁵⁴ G. Olusanya, 'The Lagos Branch', p. 329. Olusanya moreover suggests that James George Campbell, the second representative for Lagos, was equally only a number-two choice.

⁵⁵ 'The Gold Coast Press and the Nigerian Delegates to the British West African Conference', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 17 April 1920, p. 8.

⁵⁶ He was referred to and called himself "Professor". The Passer By, 'United West Africa', *Nigerian Pioneer*, 11 June 1920, p. 8b; A. Deniga, 'Letters to the Editor', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 27 November 1920, p. 7.

him as a delegate for Nigeria was appropriate.⁵⁷ After returning from the congress, Deniga contributed continuously to the Lagos press, and in 1922 he started publishing *Eko Akete*, a bilingual English-Yoruba weekly newspaper (see below), which he could maintain until 1929, despite occasional financial difficulties.⁵⁸

Ernest Sesei Ikoli

Compared to Deniga's various attempts at publishing a newspaper, Ernest Sesei Ikoli's path to journalism appears to have been less cumbersome. Born in Brass in the Niger Delta in 1893, he attended the prestigious government secondary school King's College in Lagos and assumed a teaching post after completing his education, becoming Assistant Master in Mathematics and Science in 1913. Ikoli joined the *Lagos Weekly Record* in 1919, after he quit his placement when the European Principal of King's College "belittled" him in public at a football match – an incident which resulted in a short "press controversy", an exchange of letters to the editor of the *Weekly Record* in which he was praised for his intellectual ability.⁵⁹ After two years as assistant editor with the paper, he started his own venture, the *African Messenger* in March 1921. He was financially backed by Frederick Baron Mulford, an English representative for the firm Lagos Stores Ltd. and a football-fan.⁶⁰ The *African Messenger* was printed at Awoboh Press, which had just been established by Samuel Herbert Pearse, a member of the Legislative Council and a former produce merchant, as part of his aim to restructure and diversify his business.⁶¹ Beyond these connections to eminent Lagosians, it was at the latest in September 1921 that Ikoli was moving in Lagos' highest social circles: he was one of the guests at what must have been one of the social highlights of autumn 1921. Ikoli was among the guests at a dinner at the Imperial Restaurant given to welcome Herbert Macaulay, who had just returned

⁵⁷ S. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 192; G. Olusanya, 'The Lagos Branch', pp. 322, 328.

⁵⁸ F. Omu, 'The Anglo-African', p. 253.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Lagos Weekly Record*, 7. June 1919, p. 5, 14. June pp. 6-7, 28. June, p. 7.

⁶⁰ Mulford is credited with popularizing football in Lagos. 'The Government and the National Congress of British West Africa', *The Times of Nigeria*, 7. March 1921. It is also interesting to note that the *African Messenger* contained a regular sports column starting from 1921.

⁶¹ A. Olukoju, *Accumulation and Conspicuous Consumption*, pp. 222–223; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 55–56.

to Lagos triumphantly after Chief Oluwa had won the Apapa land case against the Secretary of Southern Nigeria at the Privy Council in London (see chapter 5).⁶²

Adamu Animashaun

Lacking Ikoli's high-calibre connections to members of the educated elite, Adamu Animashaun seems to have relied on the social recognition associated with a long established newspaper when starting his publishing activities. Born ca. 1885 in Sokoto, Adamu Animashaun was captured between 1893-95, and eventually sent to Lagos where he was sold to Idris Animashaun, the headmaster of the first government Muslim school.⁶³ After a brief formal education he worked as a shopkeeper for Idris Animashaun, and offered night classes for Arabic, English and Yoruba until he opened a bookshop of his own in 1913.⁶⁴ Adamu Animashaun started his printing activities in 1914 by publishing an English and Arabic Almanack [sic] – which was acknowledged in the Lagos press –, Islamic religious works and materials used for instructing children in Arabic and religion.⁶⁵ In December 1918 Idris Animashaun died, and Adamu assumed his post as secretary for the Jamat group of the Lagos Muslims, and thus assumed a position of respectability among Muslims (see below).⁶⁶ Around the same time Animashaun became involved with the publication of the *Times of Nigeria*⁶⁷ – it was printed at his 'Muslim Printing Office', but remained under the editorship of James Bright

⁶² 'Resume of Local Welcome Receptions to Date', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10 September 1921, p. 4. The so-called Apapa land case centred around the compulsory acquisition of land in mainland Lagos by the government in 1913. The land was to be used by European merchants and the government granted Chief Oluwa (Amodu Tijani) only partial compensation. Chief Oluwa contested the verdict of the Nigerian Supreme Court and the Privy Council decided that the government had to offer full compensation to be distributed among the affected community. B. Ibhawoh, *Imperial Justice. Africans in Empire's Court* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 121-147. See also chapter 5.

⁶³ G. Gbadamosi, 'The Establishment of Western Education Among Muslims in Nigeria 1896-1926', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4:1 (1967), pp. 107.

⁶⁴ 'Night Classes', *Nigerian Chronicle*, 5 March 1909, p. 6.

⁶⁵ H.O. Danmole, 'A Visionary of the Lagos Muslim Community. Mustapha Adamu Animashaun, 1885-1968', *Lagos Historical Review*, 5 (2005), p. 27.

⁶⁶ H.O. Danmole, 'The Crisis of the Lagos Muslim Community 1915-1947', in A. Adefuye, B. Agiri and A. Osuntokun (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State* (Lagos, 1987), pp. 290-305; 'Legal Notice', *Lagos Standard*, 12 March 1919, p. 6; 'Publications Received', *Nigerian Chronicle*, 25 December 1914, p. 3.

⁶⁷ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 43, 253; H.O. Danmole, 'Crisis of Lagos Muslims', pp. 29-30, 34.

Davies, a journalist celebrated throughout the West African Coast.⁶⁸ Bright Davies died in early 1920 and it seems likely that it was only starting from then that Animasaun played a more pronounced part in the content and editorial outlook of the *Times of Nigeria*, which announced a “Change of Hands” and the new proprietorship of Animashaun in February 1920. Animashaun, however, did not assume the editorship of the paper, rather, he initially employed Walter Edwin, a journalist from Sierra Leone for this position.⁶⁹

This brief look at three individuals seeking to find inclusion in the public sphere as speakers suggests that at the beginning of the 1920s, one still had to earn one’s stripes with the established elite in order to achieve this goal. Ernest Ikoli was closely connected to the Lagos elite through his position at King’s College, and thus, as a product of this training centre for the elite, could establish himself, by all appearances, with comparative ease after a two-year ‘apprenticeship’. For the other two editors, the wider West-African print network could provide them with credentials needed to achieve speaker-status. Adeoye Deniga’s respectability in Lagos was partly based on recognition he received in the Gold Coast. Animashaun built his aspirations on the established and respected name of the *Times of Nigeria*, and, similar to Deniga, relied on respectability earned in the broader print-network when appointing Walter Edwin as editor of his newspaper.

Herbert Macaulay

Respectability and eminence alone could, however, not guarantee the success of a newspaper.

As chapter 1 has illustrated, publishing was an economically trying trade for journalists and editors alike. Although, according to Nnamdi Azikiwe, regarded as the best in Nigeria,⁷⁰ Ikoli’s

⁶⁸ Cf. *Times of Nigeria*, 6. October 1919, p. 8. Until the end of 1919 James Bright Davies is, in accordance with the newspaper ordinance, given as printer and publisher of the paper, and it is stated that the paper was printed at the Muslim Printing Office.

⁶⁹ ‘Change of Hands’, *The Times of Nigeria*, 24 February 1920, p. 3. Formally, Walter L. Edwin was the editor of the paper until November 1920, and Animashaun is described as “supervising” the publication of the *Times of Nigeria*.

⁷⁰ N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey. An Autobiography* (London, 1970) p. 67.

paper, for instance, faced financial difficulties merely two years after its inauguration.⁷¹ And even the most prominent Lagosians had difficulties maintaining their newspapers, as Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* illustrates. Although Macaulay's paper quickly became the most prominent newspaper in Lagos,⁷² we have seen in chapter one that the paper could hardly make ends meet. Moreover, the circumstances in which Macaulay resumed the publication of a newspaper illustrate other motivations to do so besides seeking to consolidate one's position as interlocutor in the public sphere.

In contrast to individuals who were still in the process of establishing themselves when establishing newspapers, Macaulay was an eminent member of society long before starting his *Lagos Daily News* in 1927. He was prominent by virtue of his family – his grandfather was Samuel Crowther, the first African bishop of the Anglican Church (see chapter 3). His father had been head of the first secondary school in Lagos, and thus likewise an established member of Lagos society.⁷³ Macaulay's career resembled those of many Black Victorians: he was employed by the colonial administration in the 1880s. He later won a government stipend to be trained as Civil Engineer in Plymouth. Returning to Lagos in 1893, Macaulay again frequented the parties and events of the elite, and occasionally entertained guests by playing the violin.⁷⁴ It is assumed that Macaulay started contributing to the press while still in government employment, which he left in 1898.⁷⁵ He became active in politics at the latest in 1910, when promoting the formation of a Lagos branch of the London-based Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ASARPS).⁷⁶ Two years earlier, in 1908, he had caused a

⁷¹ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 63.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁷³ R. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought. Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1968), p. 377; P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, pp. 49–55.

⁷⁴ I.B. Thomas, *Life History of Herbert Macaulay, C. E.* (Lagos, 1946), pp. 3-5, 11-12.

⁷⁵ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 65.

⁷⁶ R. Okonkwo, 'The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society. A Re-Examination', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 15:3 (1982), pp. 423-4.

first political stir when he published a pamphlet pointing out irregularities in the finances of the railways and accused the governor of maladministration.⁷⁷

The 1920s not only saw an increase in the number of newspapers, but also the emergence of daily newspapers for the first time. It was in this context that Herbert Macaulay started publishing a newspaper. Discussions to establish a daily paper had apparently been held between Ernest Ikoli, Adeyemo Alakija, a prominent lawyer, and Richard Barrow, a representative for a European trading firm, at the latest since 1925 (see chapter 2). At that time, Ikoli's *African Messenger* was facing financial difficulties. The proposed venture, the *Nigerian Daily Times*, was conceived mainly with a European readership or one that was close to the government in mind.⁷⁸ This group was, however, not, in fact, the first to publish a daily newspaper. It was Victor Babamuboni, a bookseller, who published the the first daily in West Africa when he launched the *Lagos Daily News* in November 1925.⁷⁹ However, Babamuboni's paper ceased publication after three months and Macaulay bought the paper in 1927. The *Daily News* under Macaulay continued to celebrate the fact that it was the first daily in Nigeria – a small victory over Alakija and Ikoli who opposed many of Macaulay's political causes (see below and chapter 5).⁸⁰

As mentioned before, Macaulay was a seasoned contributor to the Lagos press before starting his own venture. He was commended for his academic treatment of subjects, but could, however, also be fierce in his attacks, in particular when turning against fellow Lagosians. At least that's what many editors thought – according to Fred Omu, by 1927 Macaulay had “quarrelled” with almost all of them. Omu's account further suggests that acquiring the *Lagos Daily News* was a way for Macaulay to make sure that his pieces (still) got published.⁸¹ Besides

⁷⁷ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 182-3.

⁷⁸ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 57, 62-3.

⁷⁹ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 64. In October, Adeyemo Alakija published a notice in the Lagos press, clarifying that they were not associated with a rival newspaper – presumably Babamuboni's paper. 'The New Daily Newspaper for Lagos', *Eko Akete*, 31. October 1925, p. 2.

⁸⁰ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 64.

⁸¹ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 65.

featuring his fierce criticism, the paper moreover served as a mouthpiece for Macaulay's political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP, see below).

The background against which Herbert Macaulay set out to become a newspaperman points to the limits of the economy of recognition which newspapermen faced when embarking to convene publics via their own newspapers. Although remnants of such dynamics were still at play in the 1920s, newspapermen and contributors were justifying their convening of publics in new ways, and thus also challenging justification based on such notions of respectability. The second part of this chapter will look at the ways in which the convening of publics was contested and challenged in more detail.

Part 2: Discursive Registers and Changes in the ‘Vernacular’ of Publics

Amidst the social and political changes outlined in the first part of this chapter, newspapermen and contributors were convening publics in new ways in the 1920s. However, such processes did not unfold without frictions. The next part of this chapter looks into the different ways in which contributors justified how they were convening publics and, at the same time, highlights the discursive registers they alluded to when challenging how others evoked publics. Situating such processes in their social and political context, this part of the chapter also gives insight into axes along which the composition of this discursive field was negotiated, namely political ideology, religion and class. It thus illustrates the complexities of Lagos politics and the power dynamics at play in the public sphere.

Ensuring Representativeness and Challenging Misrepresentations

The ways in which changing political rationalities manifested themselves in the 1920s seem to have informed the ways in which newspapermen embarked on convening publics in new ways. Although Hugh Clifford had dismissed the aspirations of the educated elite for more representation in government in 1920, as the first part of this chapter has illustrated, he advocated the introduction of a limited franchise in Lagos and Calabar in 1922. The franchise was, however, tied to income, and thus only a fraction of Lagosians was actually able to cast a vote.⁸² Many among the educated elite were eligible to vote, and some have argued that the introduction of elections can be considered as a victory for them, that their campaigning with the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) was met with some success. However, the fact that the colonial state had more generally turned to Native Authorities as partners in empire seemed to suggest that claims to political leadership had to be adapted to this policy.

⁸² Available evidence suggests that at least 3882 people, and thus about 4% of Lagos' population, were eligible to vote, that is to say they were male, 21 years or older, and had an income of at least £100 the year preceding the election. R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Trenton, 2004), p. 46; I.B Thomas, *Life History of Herbert Macaulay, C. E.* (Lagos, 1946), p. 120; NNAI: Comcol I 587 Vol I Legislative Council Election, 1923-1938: 'Legislative Council Election. Public Notice, 1. June 1923'.

Newspapermen and politicians alike sought to present themselves as representing more than just the educated elite. As the following section illustrates, the elite seemingly pursued such attempts at re-legitimizing their claim to political leadership when they turned to a Yoruba readership and reached out to include various sections of the community in politics.

It almost seems as if Clifford's criticism of the NCBWA's representativeness, in particular Clifford's contention that a selected few could not speak for the people of Nigeria,⁸³ formed part of Deniga's impulse to start his second attempt at publishing a bilingual newspaper with *Eko Akete* in July 1922. On a personal level, Deniga's nomination as delegate to the NCBWA's inaugural meeting might have meant for him that he could now claim, at least in terms of politics, that he was a member of the "select few", that is, the elite. However, and particularly given his experience as headmaster of a primary school, he was aware of an important distinction between the elite and ordinary Lagosians: whereas the elite lead discussions in English, the majority of Lagosians read in Yoruba rather than English.⁸⁴ Deniga emphasised the importance of cultivating a literary tradition in Yoruba when advocating his paper and stressed the importance of this for the youth. At the same time, and beyond such 'cultural' and 'cultural-nationalist' aims, it was his goal to inform people of "what was going on", thus aiming to reach people beyond a 'select few', and to include hitherto neglected potential audiences in political discussions lead by them in the English language press. As Karin Barber shows, Deniga and editors of subsequent Yoruba newspapers were addressing a "Lagosian public of the lower class" (see also below).⁸⁵ Correspondingly, and seemingly in reaction to the criticism the

⁸³ Cf. H. Clifford, 'Nigerian Council. Address, 1920', in H. Clifford, *Addresses Delivered by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Nigerian Council, 1920, 1923. Nigeria 1923-1925*, pp. 20 et seqq.

⁸⁴ T. Awoniyi, *Yoruba Language in Education, 1846-1974* (Ibadan, 1978), p. 65; K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos' in T. Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honour of J. D. Y. Peel (Carolina, 2005)*, p.198; B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London, 1974), pp. 89-90.

⁸⁵ K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics', pp. 187-8, 199, 200; Otito Koro, 'A brief report. Meeting held to explain the object of starting "Eko Akete"', *Eko Akete*, 26 Aug. 1922, pp. 3-4.

Congress faced, Deniga publicised, starting with one of the first issues of *Eko Akete*, the various activities of the NCBWA in Yoruba.⁸⁶

This reaching out to a Yoruba readership developed into a broader concern of the Lagos press, which is described by Karin Barber as a project of “political populism”.⁸⁷ Shortly after Deniga had launched *Eko Akete*, English-language newspapers, such as the *Nigerian Pioneer* and the *African Messenger* started featuring Yoruba columns in their pages, and thus to compete with Deniga for a re-discovered Yoruba readership. Barber describes how the *Nigerian Pioneer* strategically employed Yoruba to counter news published by political rivals in Yoruba.⁸⁸ Similarly, the *African Messenger* emphasised in its Yoruba column that it was they who were standing for the truth.⁸⁹ Holding against the political messages of rivals as well as representation and representativeness gained further importance in the course of electoral campaigns for the Legislative Council elections which were held in 1923. In time for the first election, established elite men such as Herbert Macaulay, a Civil Engineer, Thomas Horatio Jackson, a second-generation newspaperman, Crispin Curtis Adeniyi-Jones, a medical doctor, and Joseph Egerton-Shyngle, a lawyer, founded the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP).⁹⁰ In Lagos, the party successfully mobilised broad sections of the community by turning to various interest groups, such as the market women and other trade guilds, as well as various societies and clubs, and winning their support.⁹¹ Moreover, the party managed not merely to mobilise the support of the local (or so-called “traditional”) aristocracy, but also to insert themselves into local political structures by styling the party as the successor of the Ilu

⁸⁶ In the first installation on the NCBWA, Fanokun explains the aims and organisation of the congress. Fanokun, ‘Egbe Ajohun Enia Dudu ni Iwo Orun ti Africa ti o Nbe Labẹ Ijoba Gẹsi’, *Eko Akete*, 22 July 1922, p. 7.

⁸⁷ K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 204.

⁸⁸ K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, pp. 200–201.

⁸⁹ ‘Kini Gomina Clifford ti Şe?’, *The African Messenger*, 5 October 1922, p. 7.

⁹⁰ All these men, except Jackson, are listed as members of the elite by Kristin Mann. K. Mann, *Marrying Well. Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 128–132.

⁹¹ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge 1975), p. 138.

Committee – a cabinet of advisors for the Oba or King of Lagos.⁹² The NNDP won all Lagos seats to the Legislative Council in 1923.⁹³

In this context it can be argued, as Barber shows with reference to *Eko Akete*,⁹⁴ that the elite sought to include broad sections of the community as well as a re-discovered Yoruba audience in politics and the public sphere in a top-down fashion. Although the majority of those mobilised in this way were not able to cast a vote, their mobilization could nevertheless secure an expansion of the ‘electoral base’ for the elite. They not only contributed funds to the cause, but their large numbers moreover enabled the elite to stage powerful demonstrations in the streets of Lagos.⁹⁵ Not least against the background of this broad support, the party portrayed itself as representing the people of Lagos at various instances.⁹⁶ Including the broader community into politics was thus envisioned as a way to strengthen the elite’s claim to political leadership in a reconfigured political arena as this ought to demonstrate that they were speaking for the masses, and not just a select few.⁹⁷

At the same time, other dynamics were unfolding in the public sphere – groups beside the established elite were also laying claim to discursive registers of representation and representativeness and used such references in other ways when convening publics. In contrast to an elite that was already participating in discussions in the press, different sections of the community referred to such discursive registers to justify their efforts at participating in discussions in their own right – and possibly for the first time. The Lagos Muslims might be

⁹² P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change. The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (Berkeley, 1974), p. 203; P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 136–138; NNAI: CSO 26/09607 The Nigerian National Democratic Party. Formerly the Ilu Committee: ‘Chief Detective Inspector R.B. Reis to Assistant Commissioner of Police, 15. June 1923’. For the importance of structures of local (so-called “traditional”) politics see also chapter 5.

⁹³ Cf. T. Tamuno, *Nigeria and Elective Representation 1923-1947* (London, 1966), Appendix A.

⁹⁴ According to Barber, *Eko Akete* was discreetly allied with the NNDP. K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 202.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Cf. ‘Address of Welcome From the Nigerian National Democratic Party’, *Lagos Daily News*, 19. June 1931, p. 2.

⁹⁷ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas's 'Life story of me, Sęgilọla' and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 16, 27, 29, 32.

considered to form such a community. Adamu Animashaun played a central role in efforts to convene publics along such lines; he set out to convene publics against the background of a more generally changing urban Muslim identity.⁹⁸

The Lagos Muslims formed the largest religious community in Lagos up to the middle of the twentieth century.⁹⁹ Moreover, Islam was inextricably linked with the politics of the Lagos Obaship: the Oba was awarding titles within the religious hierarchy, and the aforementioned Ilu Committee, which fulfilled law and order functions in town, was well connected with the mosques of the town.¹⁰⁰ Muslims were, however, underrepresented among the established elite. Given that schools were strongly linked to Christian missions, they were at a disadvantage in terms of access to education, and, in further consequence, few Muslims could be counted among the educated elite.¹⁰¹

In the 1920s, the Lagos Muslims emerged more prominently as interlocutors in the public sphere. The *Lagos Standard* had published an irregular column for Muslims in 1894, but these and successive contributions were mainly offering outsider perspectives on Islam. Up to the 1920s, pieces by Muslims published in the press mainly engaged with such outsider perspectives, and hardly turned to speak to fellow Muslims – thus pushing and pursuing their own agendas only to a limited extent.¹⁰² This was to change in the 1920s, when Adamu Animashaun took over the *Times of Nigeria*. Animashaun's paper not only turned to fellow Muslims, but also served as a vehicle to pursue agendas in the wider public sphere. As

⁹⁸ Cf. C.A. Waterman, 'Aṣíkò, Sákàrà and Palmwine. Popular Music and Social Identity in Inter-War Lagos, Nigeria', *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 17:2/3 (1988), p. 241. Waterman associates this "new" identity for instance with the formation of Ahmadiya and Ansar ud Deen in Lagos (see below). It might be argued that there was a feeling among the elite that Muslims as a group were appearing more self-confident and calling attention to themselves. A Christian, 'The African Messenger and Lagos Mohamedans', *Times of Nigeria*, 29 August 1921, p. 4; 'A Growing Power', *African Messenger*, 25 August 1921, p. 3.

⁹⁹ P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, p. 39, table 8.

¹⁰⁰ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 101, 137.

¹⁰¹ G. Gbadamosi, 'The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria 1896-1926', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4:1 (1967), pp. 89–115; S. Reichmuth, 'Education and the Growth of Religious Associations Among Yoruba Muslims. The Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26:4 (1996), p. 366.

¹⁰² Cf. S. Katz, 'Prestige, Piety and Debate in Early Nigerian Newspapers', *Islamic Africa*, [forthcoming 2018].

secretary to or spokesperson for the Jamat group of the Lagos Muslims, Animashaun became a central figure in disputes between Lagos Muslims in the 1920s, which the first part of this chapter has already briefly mentioned. What follows illustrates that Animashaun sought to challenge what he considered one-sided narrations of the conflict in the press with his publication. To legitimize and substantiate his aspirations, he was alluding to a notion of representativeness when stating his motivations for taking up the publication of a newspaper. The origins of conflicts in the Muslim community are not clearly attributed to one cause and it seems that as with other social conflicts, the overarching reasons lie in competing interests “for positions which would generate either more rewards or political power”, as H. O. Danmole suggests.¹⁰³ Beyond power and rewards, questions of doctrine, different views on how to reform established structures as well as finding modes to accommodate the demands of young, educated Muslims were at issue. Moreover, the decade saw the emergence of new religious groups, in particular the Ahmadiya and the Ansar ud Deen, and thus further opportunity for frictions.¹⁰⁴

In the 1920s, and in particular in 1922, the most heated conflicts among Muslims were fought over the control of the Central Mosque. At stake were not only access to the mosque for prayers or meetings, but also control over the congregational collections at the Friday

¹⁰³ H.O. Danmole, ‘The Crisis of the Lagos Muslim Community 1915-1947’, in A. Adefuye, B. Agiri and A. Osuntokun (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State* (Lagos, 1987), p. 290. One newspaper article sees the reason behind why some “continue to put fuel to the controversy” as motivated by “getting a living for themselves and their friends or to keep up an already lost prestige”. ‘Sheik Adam I. Animashaun and the Mahommedan Controversy’, *Times of Nigeria*, 11 July 1921, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Some sources mention disagreement over religious matters such as the meaning of the fasting prayer for the year 1915 as sparking discord, one mentions financial disagreements in a social club, and some newspaper articles suggest that it was differences over the so-called water-rate (see below). H.O. Danmole, ‘Crisis of Lagos Muslims’, p. 293; H. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah. A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast* (London, 1963), p. 94; ‘How Came the Question of A Constitution to be Included in the Matter of the Jamat Muslims and the Lemomu Braimah’, *Times of Nigeria*, 16. May 1921, p. 4. Some sections of the community sought to regulate affairs by drawing up a constitution for the Central Mosque. Others, in particular under the banner of the Ahmadiya, sought to strengthen efforts at providing western education for Muslims. H.O. Danmole, ‘Crisis of Lagos Muslims’, pp. 293–296; ‘The Jamat Muslimin and the Lieutenant-Governor’, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10. January 1920, pp. 2-3; ‘Ahmadia Movement Progressive Programme’, *African Messenger*, 28 September 1922, p. 3; S. Reichmuth, ‘Religious Associations’, p. 371.

prayers.¹⁰⁵ The conflict for control was fought most fiercely between two opposing camps, the Lemomu party of Imam (Lemomu) Braimah, and the Jamat (community) party, Animashaun's faction. Confidently speaking for the majority of Muslims, the Jamat party had sought to depose Lemomu Braimah as early as 1918, accusing him of conduct unworthy of an Imam, and stating that the majority had lost confidence in him. In the literature, Lemomu Braimah is portrayed as government-friendly and an ally to the British Administration. He was honoured with a Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Medal in 1898, and was supporting the introduction of a rate to be paid by the people of Lagos for pipe borne water in 1916 (see also part 1 of this chapter). The Jamat, on the other side, had opposed the introduction of the so-called "water-rate", and knew not only the majority of Muslims, but also the majority of the Lagos population behind them in this regard. The Lagos Market Women, for instance, supported the Jamat and their stance towards Lemomu Braimah.¹⁰⁶ The conflict between the factions was intertwined with other political controversies: since differences of opinion had arisen over the so-called "water-rate question" in 1916, the Lemomu party was closely aligned with 'conservative' Lagosians who supported many government measures. Among those conservatives were Kitoyi Ajasa, editor and proprietor of the *Nigerian Pioneer*, and Henry Carr, the Resident of the Colony of Lagos.¹⁰⁷

Although the Jamat were turning to 'modern' instruments and mechanisms to achieve their political goals,¹⁰⁸ other groups of Muslims, in particular the Ahmadiya, managed to present themselves more successfully as a modernizing force among the Muslim community. In 1919,

¹⁰⁵ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 103; H.O. Danmole, 'Crisis of Lagos Muslims', pp. 294, 296; H. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah*, p. 95. 'The Jamat Muslims and The Central Mosque', *Times of Nigeria*, 2. May 1921, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, p. 235.

¹⁰⁷ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 102–104.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Adebani, 'Colonial Modernity and Tradition. Herbert Macaulay, the Newspaper Press, and the (Re) Production of Engaged Publics in Colonial Lagos', in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 125-148.

the Jamat turned to the Supreme Court of Nigeria to achieve Lemomu Braimah's deposition.¹⁰⁹ In face of the pending court case against the Lemomu, the government intervened in late 1919, early 1920 and sought a solution out of court: they suggested the drawing up of a constitution as well as the installation of an Executive Committee to regulate the affairs of the different camps, in particular with regard to the Central Mosque.¹¹⁰ It was in this course that Adamu Animashaun, by then already secretary of the Jamat, made his political mark. He argued for the necessity of a constitution, a measure which was dismissed by Lemomu Braimah as it had no precedent in Koranic law and in any Muslim country.¹¹¹ The main momentum with regard to a changing urban Muslim identity was, however, lying with associations initiated by young, educated men, many of whom had attended the first government Muslim school. Associations such as the Ansar ud Deen and the Ahmadia advertised western education for Muslims, the translation of the Friday prayer into the local language, and women's attendance at mosques.¹¹² Conservative Lagosians as well as the authorities commended such initiatives, emphasising their exceptionality.¹¹³ Animashaun's purchase of the *Times of Nigeria* was considered a strategic acquisition in response to this line-up: the newspaper was seen as a means to represent the Jamat Muslims' side of events to the community and the government.¹¹⁴ In an unpublished biography of

¹⁰⁹ 'Mohammedan Crisis. Judgment of the Court in the Action Instituted by the Jamat Muslimin', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 30. August 1919, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ H.O. Danmole, 'Crisis of Lagos Muslims', pp. 293-6; 'The Jamat Muslimin and the Lieutenant-Governor', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10. January 1920, p. 2.

¹¹¹ For the dismissal of the Lemomu see 'The Jamat Muslimin and the Lieutenant-Governor', p. 2. The *African Messenger* condescendingly described Animashaun as "suddenly thrown to the fore during the later stages of the quarrel between the Jamat and their Lemomu for the sinister role he played in securing certain advantages for the Jamat section, he became at once their idol, and powers were ascribed to him which he by no means possessed." 'Getting Disillusioned', *African Messenger*, 2. November 1922, p. 4.

¹¹² Cf. S. Reichmuth, 'Religious Associations', pp. 370-372.

¹¹³ The *African Messenger* was referring to an official who welcomed the Ahmadia movement as it was regarded as spreading a reasonable message, in contrast to the Jamat. 'Political Insincerity', *African Messenger*, 13. July 1922, p. 4. Henry Carr, the Resident, commended the Ahmadia's efforts when opening a school built by the association. 'Ahmadia Movement Progressive Programme', *African Messenger*, 28. September 1922, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ H.O. Danmole, 'Crisis of Lagos Muslims', p. 30; 'Sheik Adam I. Animashaun Returns from Up-Country', *Times of Nigeria*, 16 August 1920, p. 4; 'Notice', *Times of Nigeria*, 18. October 1920, p. 5.

Animashaun, this circumstance is given as the reason why Animashaun started the publication of the *Times of Nigeria*:

In the year 1919 when the matter of Mohammedans was very serious, Government seemed to mis-understand by the [mis]representations of the matter by the Residence [sic] of the Colony and other Christian Leaders. No press was allowed to express the real fact of the Matter. The youngman [Animashaun, author's note] suggested that it is necessary to have a press, and he advised the Mohammedans. ... he employed the Editor and Workmen paying them from his own pocket, publishing papers showing the affairs of Mohammedans.¹¹⁵

Similar concerns over misinterpretation and misrepresentation were voiced in various articles published in the *Times of Nigeria*.¹¹⁶ Faced with political opponents that had good relations with well-established members of the elite and thus powerful allies in discussions in the press, it was Animashaun's aim to disseminate the Jamat's take on events to a wider audience with the help of the *Times of Nigeria*. Knowing the majority of Lagos Muslims behind him, turning to the publication of a newspaper thus seems to have formed part of a changed political behaviour. The newspaper was conceived as a tool to access a sphere of public life considered crucial for achieving political goals.¹¹⁷

"Education", "Mass Support" and Contesting Political Leadership

The effort by Adamu Animashaun and the Jamat Muslims to publish a newspaper shows that an increasing number of Lagosians considered the public sphere constituted by newspapers central to politics. Against this background, the act of convening publics could be deemed as a claim to political leadership, as the following section will demonstrate. The stakes were high, and the ways in which publics were convened was contested. What follows below investigates "press controversies" between political factions, and in doing so seeks to bring to the fore discursive registers which served newspapermen and contributors to contest the ways in which publics were convened.

¹¹⁵ HMP: Box 19: 'Biography of Adam Animashaun formerly known as Mustapha', pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁶ Cf. 'The Jamat Muslims and the Central Mosque', *Times of Nigeria*, 2. May 1921, p. 4; 'Can the Mahommedan Controversy be Amicably Settled? We Say Yes', *Times of Nigeria*, 23. May 1921, p. 4; 'The Nigerian Pioneer. The Jamat Muslims', *Times of Nigeria*, 11. July 1921, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Cf. T. Kersey, *Constrained Elitism and Contemporary Democratic Theory* (London, 2016), p. 51.

As outlined in the first part of this chapter, Lagos appeared to be divided into two political camps and most “press controversies” were fought between supporters of the different factions. As outlined above, those supportive of Herbert Macaulay and his political ends are generally referred to as radicals, and his opponents as conservatives.¹¹⁸ The latter’s views found expression in the *Nigerian Pioneer*, which was edited by Kitoyi Ajasa, and later on in the *Nigerian Daily Times*, which was supported by other conservative-leaning Lagosians such as Adeyemo Alakija.¹¹⁹ The newspapers associated with the radicals were the aforementioned *Eko Akete* and *Times of Nigeria*, as well as the *Lagos Weekly Record*, and later in the 1920s Macaulay’s *Lagos Daily News*. With his *African Messenger*, Ernest Ikoli sought to pursue a middle path between the often opposed views, aimed to contribute to a better understanding between the governing and the governed, and took pride in being supported by both the European and African “sections” of the community (see also chapter 5).¹²⁰ However, Ikoli seemed to frequently side with the conservatives. Their views found expression in the *Nigerian Pioneer* and the *Nigerian Daily Times* which both opposed the concerns of the aforementioned Jamat Muslims. The *African Messenger* was in this matter more sympathetic with the side taken by the *Pioneer*, but criticised the paper when it launched unwarranted attacks against the Jamat leadership.¹²¹

Probing into “press controversies” between these factions illustrates not only that publics were convened in various ways around specific issues, but also that they could be convened by contesting how others summoned publics, or seemingly by challenging an interlocutor’s right to convene publics in the first place. In other words: such contestations were highly complex, and while engaging in them, editors and contributors also challenged the ways in which others

¹¹⁸ Cf. K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 200. These labels replaced earlier descriptions of these factions as pro-government and anti-government. James Coleman for instance describes Kitoyi Ajasa as pro-government and Thomas Horatio Jackson as anti-government. Cf. J. Coleman, *Nigeria. Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 185, 197.

¹¹⁹ See chapters 2 and 5.

¹²⁰ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 56; Cf. ‘The Birth of a Newspaper’, *African Messenger*, 10. March 1921, p. 2; ‘Our Third Year of Publication’, *African Messenger*, 8. March 1923, p. 6.

¹²¹ Cf. ‘The Congress Movement’, *African Messenger*, 12. May 1921, p. 3.

convened publics, which in turn formed part of the way in which they convened publics. The following section highlights some of the discursive registers newspapermen alluded to when looking to achieve their aims. In doing so, it seeks to give insight into what was at stake besides making political points in the press.

The expression of political opposition could be intertwined with the questioning of the educational credentials of interlocutors. This also constituted a more general feature of the ways in which some sought to convene publics in the Lagos press. This can be illustrated by looking at how the activities of the NCBWA were received in the Lagos press, in particular shortly after the congress held its foundational meeting in Accra. The conservative *Nigerian Pioneer*, which gave expression to voices disapproving of the composition and conduct of the members of the Nigerian delegation to the Congress, questioned Deniga's credentials for representing "the elite of Nigerian opinion" and expressing "the matured opinions of educated people in Lagos and elsewhere". According to the paper he had expressed "claims and doctrines no sane educated Nigerian would subscribe to" during a public meeting following the conference. Moreover, the *Pioneer* criticised the decision to nominate Deniga and Rev. James George Campbell, who was apparently, like Deniga, not the first choice to become a NCBWA delegate for Nigeria: "The clique who committed the blunder of sending such men as representatives of Nigeria should now regret their action and atone for what is nothing short of a crime against the race."¹²² Underlying this criticism was the apparent affront that Nigeria had not been represented by more established members of the elite. The *Pioneer* identified Dr. John Randle, a medical doctor and founder of the conservative People's Union, as one of the early proponents of aims similar to those espoused by the NCBWA.¹²³ The fact that Randle had not been part of the delegation led the paper to further substantiate Deniga and Campbell

¹²² The Passer By, 'United West Africa', *The Nigerian Pioneer*, 11. June 1920, p. 8b.

¹²³ When doing so, the paper denies Dr. Akinwade Savage – who supported the radicals until the fall of 1920 – any stake in bringing the idea of West African unity to fruition. HMP: Box 41: C. Blaize, *The Real Truth of the Eleko Question*, [n.d.], p. 1; P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 128, 132.

as unsuitable representatives. This disapproval of Deniga and Campbell's attributes as delegates was intertwined with political opposition: John Randle was associated with the conservatives, whereas Deniga and Campbell were linked to the radical camp.¹²⁴

Discrediting a speaker's educational background or standard was not a new feature in the public sphere when seeking to undermine a person's claim to speak. For instance in 1913, Dr. Orisadipe Obasa, a medical doctor, belittled a contribution to the *Lagos Standard* by challenging the "mental calibre" of the contributor and suggesting that he did not belong to the "thinking section of the community", seemingly because it differed from his political opinion.¹²⁵ What appears to be evident is that such allusions resemble the kind of colonial discourse that distinguished between elites and individuals that were conceived as unqualified upstarts. For instance, Frederick Lugard, in his 1919 report on the amalgamation of Nigeria distinguishes between "educated gentlemen, able and willing to take part in the development of the city" and those individuals in which "education seems to have produced discontent, impatience of any control, and an unjustified assumption of self importance". He further specifies who was considered an educated gentleman by associating gentlemanliness with qualifications, such as being a doctor or a barrister, which only members of the established elite could boast.¹²⁶

Lugard's reference to an "unjustified assumption of self importance" points to what was apparently at stake when employing or alluding to such discursive registers. On the occasion of two contributions to the *Times of Nigeria* in February 1921, which resulted in a libel case against the paper, the *Nigerian Pioneer* not only discredited the educational qualifications of

¹²⁴ Cf. G. Olusanya, 'The Lagos Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4:2 (1968), pp. 321-333.

¹²⁵ Obasa of Ikija, 'An Open Letter to the Editor of the Lagos Standard', *Nigerian Chronicle*, 28. November 1913, p. 6. At issue was the delegation to the West African Lands Commission, and in particular financial irregularities in connection with their trip to England.

¹²⁶ *Parliamentary Papers* (1919), Cm 468, Nigeria. Report by Sir F. D. Lugard on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, and Administration, 1912-1919, pp. 6, 60, 67. Lugard specifically refers to "half-educated school boys" when reviewing the development of education in Southern Nigeria, and speaks of "native gentlemen" when referring to the state of the township of Lagos.

those contributing to the *Times of Nigeria*, but moreover stirred fears about how education could be employed wrongly. The *Times of Nigeria* was charged for publicly insulting the Christian religion. Commenting on the court proceedings, the *Nigerian Pioneer* states:

Those present were staggered when an insignificant boy of doubtful education went into the box and owned up to having written the article complained of, and positive amusement was caused when he announced himself as “SUBEDITOR” [emphasis in original]. Those in court gasped to think that this ignorant and half educated individual[,] as the Counsel for defence styled him when addressing the Court, should dare to pose as a leader of thought in the community. The harm done by irresponsible writers in Lagos is incalculable, and act as a decided set back to education, on which so much public money is spent.¹²⁷

In a related matter, the *Nigerian Pioneer* attacks the proprietor of the *Times of Nigeria*, by pointing out: “A little knowledge is dangerous; even if, that knowledge is “The English” language. To persons of the stamp and style of Mr. A. I. Animashaun [the editor of the *Times of Nigeria*, author’s note] we counsel resort to night schools for more enlightenment and good manners.”¹²⁸ For those employing such discursive registers, what seems to have been at stake was the concern about who was assuming positions of political leadership when emerging as interlocutor in the press.

Concerns about who was assuming leadership positions was not solely expressed in reference to education, but was also intertwined with allusions to other discursive registers. As Karin Barber observes, the established elite was alarmed by people they styled the “mob” or the “rabble”, and the capacity of this group to act organized and articulate.¹²⁹ Among the elite, some were troubled by politicians who convened publics by making reference to and claiming to speak for “the majority” of Lagosians.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ ‘Police Court News’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 11. March 1921, p. 6a.

¹²⁸ ‘The Resident of the Colony and the Times of Nigeria’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 1. April 1921, p. 6.

¹²⁹ K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 198.

¹³⁰ Cf. K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 198; ‘At it Again!’, *Nigerian Daily Times*, 24. June 1931, pp. 6–7; S. Newell, *The Power to Name. A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, 2013), p. 52.

It was usually the radicals who convened public along such lines, while the conservatives opposed their views by insisting on their more sophisticated insights and sense of responsibility. At the same time, they discredited the masses by suggesting they were wicked and irresponsible.¹³¹ For the conservatives, the person who exemplified such “sophisticated insights” was Henry Carr, the Resident of the Colony. By virtue of his position, he acted as informant on the state of “native affairs” for the administration. His career resembled that of many among the established elite, but he was for a long period of time the highest-ranking African in the colonial administration. After obtaining an honours degree from Durham University through Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, Carr filled the post of chief clerk and later sub-Inspector of schools before the turn of the century. He was appointed Assistant Colonial Secretary for Native Affairs in 1900, a position he held until 1906, when this post was abolished under a newly organised Colonial Secretariat. He then served as Inspector of Schools until he was made Provincial Commissioner of the Colony in 1918, a post which was later re-named Resident of the Colony.¹³² The literature suggests that Carr was not thinking highly of the Oba of Lagos and that he was less than sympathetic towards local (“traditional”) political organisation.¹³³ In fact, he was in favour of abolishing the office of the Oba of Lagos as he viewed its continued existence as a betrayal of British citizenship.¹³⁴

¹³¹ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 108, 113, 133; ‘The Congress Movement’, *African Messenger*, 12. May 1921, p. 3; TNA: CO 583/175/16 Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers 1930: ‘Enclosure A’, p. 33; see also: K. Oke, ‘The Colonial Public Sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943’ (M.Phil thesis, Univ. of Vienna, 2013), pp. 47-8, 52-3.

¹³² R. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought. Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1968), pp. 416, 418. Herbert Macaulay contested Carr’s position as Resident, as this was a position in the administrative machinery of Indirect Rule and thus not applicable in the Crown Colony of Lagos. Macaulay suspected the post was created to remove Carr from the Education Department where he had risen through the ranks, and would have been in a position to supervise European civil servants. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 114. On the position of the Resident, see F. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, 1922), pp. 100, 128, 201.

¹³³ Cf. R. July, *Modern African Thought*, pp. 420–421. Macaulay pointed out Carr’s dislike of the Eleko. ‘Conspiracy in High Quarters!!’, *The African Messenger*, 27. October 1921, p. 4-5. Even Governor Clifford agreed that Carr was “somewhat of a partisan” in this matter. TNA: CO 583/94 63713 Eshugbayi (Eleko): ‘Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Council held at Government House, Lagos at 10.15 am on the 1st December, 1920’, p. 266.

¹³⁴ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 78: 102, 133.

Carr's disinclination towards the King of Lagos was not supported by the majority of Lagosians, who pledged allegiance to the Oba (see chapter 5). However, those associated with Kitoyi Ajasa and his *Nigerian Pioneer* again and again emphasised the leadership of Carr and were conservative to the extent that they insisted on what might be described as a gentlemanly order of things. They emphasised that Carr was the highest educated African, and that people should follow his lead. For instance, the aforementioned Orisadipe Obasa stated:

It is an admitted fact that, but for the circumstance that the position now occupied by Mr. Carr is occupied by an African, and an African who combines knowledge of his fellows with sterling character and great ability, the many attempts, often very subtle, to hoodwink the authorities and subvert justice under the cry of "majority," would have succeeded, to a large extent, if not completely, to the detriment of loyalty, truth and every quality that makes for true national or individual progress and greatness.¹³⁵

Notions held by this group thus suggests that they were seeking to maintain a structure of politics that was noticeable at the turn of the century, when more liberal governors seemingly sought to include Africans they deemed worthy in matters concerning governance. As chapter 3 has illustrated, those who could distinguish themselves, not least in terms of education, could fill positions of influence in the colonial administration, viewed themselves as Black Englishmen, and assumed they were entitled to leadership positions in the community.¹³⁶ If the first part of this chapter has illustrated how such notions were seemingly carried into the 1920s when describing that an economy of recognition was at play when Lagosians sought to start a newspaper, the ways in which Lagosians convened publics by referring to discursive registers such as mass support highlights how such notions were challenged.

The radicals vehemently contested attempts to convene publics in such ways, and even the more neutral *African Messenger* suspected a pattern behind the activities of those claiming their insights were more sophisticated. In a contribution which lauded the general ideals of the NCBWA, but showed regret about the mere "hobbling along" of the congress in Nigeria,

¹³⁵ Orisadipe Obasa, 'Knaves generally overreach themselves by umputing their own designs to others', *Nigerian Pioneer*, 4. November 1921, p. 9.

¹³⁶ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 78.

the *African Messenger* depicted this strategy of the *Nigerian Pioneer*, and more broadly its political stance as a “moral inquisition”, whose leaders “see nothing but harm, disloyalty and lawbreaking in any effort at advancement by the people. Loyalty and sanity are in Nigeria synonymous with an acceptance of the principles and policy of this reactionary and inquisitorial group.”¹³⁷ This, however, did not mean that the *Messenger* would not employ a similar line of argumentation on another occasion. When it came to physical confrontations between Muslims of the Jamat and the Ahmadiya in 1922, the *African Messenger* attacked Adamu Animashaun and took a very similar line to the *Nigerian Pioneer*, describing Animashaun, as “half fanatic and half impostor”, “archplotter and humbug”, and – what might be a reference to his publishing activity – as a “sixpenny toy hero of a deluded people”.¹³⁸

Another way to substantiate a challenge to convening publics around notions of mass support was invoking colonial legislation and calling for the maintenance of law and order. When explaining why criticising the Resident of the Colony, Henry Carr, was so harmful, the *Nigerian Pioneer* states:

The effect on the populace especially the illiterate is very harmful. Attack on persons highly placed leaves the impression on the masses that anybody can be vilified with impunity. The issue of the *Times of Nigeria* in question contained three distinct cases of [seditious] libels. In the interest of the rising generation [this] sort of thing calls for the restraining hand of Government.¹³⁹

In a similar vein, the *African Messenger's* regular contributor Ayiluka saw the need for a “Censor of Newspapers and Pamphlets” in face of the “present mania for becoming Editors and pamphleteers must be stopped.” And, referring indirectly to *Eko Akete* and the *Times of Nigeria*, Ayiluka continued: “There are instances of professors and patriarchs famous by being silent on subjects they do not know of. Our local ones certainly [sic] are not of this class. In ill-

¹³⁷ ‘The Congress Movement’, *African Messenger*, 12. May 1921, p. 3.

¹³⁸ ‘Getting Disillusioned’, *The African Messenger*, 2. November 1922. The *Times of Nigeria* was sold at six pence per copy.

¹³⁹ ‘Rambling Notes and news’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 25. March 1921, p. 6.

paged, ill written and ill-arranged twenty four farthings pamphlets, they ‘speak’ to the people.”¹⁴⁰

Probing into press controversies and highlighting the discursive registers newspapers alluded to when convening or contesting public points to underlying issues at stake when engaging in such manoeuvres. As noted above, Karin Barber highlights that the elite felt alarmed by people they styled the “mob” or the “rabble” – and this was mirrored in their contestation of public being convened along such lines. This section has shown that they did so by alluding to discursive registers associated with educational standards and supposedly more sophisticated insights. Furthermore, this section has suggested that what was underlying such manoeuvres was a more general concern about political leadership. Although the literature suggests that political leadership was in the hands of what has here been referred to as the ‘established elite’ until the 1930s,¹⁴¹ contestations of how public were convened in the press in the 1920s suggests that by then, they were already feeling that their claim to political leadership was under threat.

The Lower Classes vs. Upstarts and Changes in the ‘Vernacular’ of Publics

In the context of an expansion and diversification of the middle classes, such critiques of educational qualifications and morality bring further shifts in strategies of how to appeal to the Lagos reading public into view. One such strategy was the allusions to class-rhetoric, which will be assessed below. This section will also illustrate that negotiations about who should have a say in the public sphere were not restricted to the English-language press. Intertwined with other discussions, such contestations and negotiations were staged across the different newspapers and thus also included Yoruba-language newspapers.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Here and There by Ayiluka’, *African Messenger*, 16. August 1923, p. 9. “Professor” refers to Deniga, and “Patriarch” alludes to James George Campbell, a regular contributor to the *Times of Nigeria*, and delegate to the NCBWA in 1920.

¹⁴¹ Cf. L. Frank, ‘Ideological Competition in Nigeria. Urban Populism Versus Elite Nationalism’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 17:3 (1979), p. 442.

Shortly after its launch in 1922, Adeoye Deniga's *Eko Akete* started advocating for a petition demanding the reinstatement of the Oba of Lagos. This was a political project of the radicals in the course of the so-called Eleko-question (see chapter 5). This effort progressed slowly initially, but then gained new momentum when *Eko Akete* started publication.¹⁴² The *African Messenger* reacted in an editorial to *Eko Akete*'s drawing attention to the monster petition and denied the paper's initiative any merit. The *African Messenger* wondered why this scheme was accompanied by so much "sensation and fanfare";¹⁴³ it looked down on this effort, and by extension, it denied *Eko Akete* the capacity to set the political agenda. Moreover, the *African Messenger* put itself on a pedestal when it claimed to form part of a group more responsible than those behind such efforts at publicity. According to the *Messenger*, the petition would not help the Oba, and it was rather – as already observed by the "more thoughtful section of the community" – just another manoeuvre to gain political points.¹⁴⁴

If the *African Messenger* was in this instance only making a very slight allusion to the fact that they were looking down on the Yoruba paper, one contributor to the paper, Ayiluka, was giving such sentiments a more pronounced expression. And *Eko Akete*, which was gradually cultivating its role as speaking for and to Lagosians of a lower class, was similarly making a clear distinction to those 'further up'.¹⁴⁵ In 1921 Ayiluka had given one of Deniga's pamphlets a not very favourable review, which negatively highlighted the "high flown and fl[a]ttering

¹⁴² After announcing the proposed monster petition in December 1921 the issue was only taken up again in March 1922. However, it was only in July 1922 and with the publication of *Eko Akete* that the issue was awarded with publicity in the press again. 'Rambling Notes & News', *Nigerian Pioneer*, 23 December 1921, p. 12; 'Rambling Notes & News', *Nigerian Pioneer*, 31. March 1922, p. 12; 'Minute by the Governor', *Eko Akete*, 20. January 1923, pp. 4-5. See also F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 225. It seems that it was *Eko Akete*'s initial aim to lament that the announced petition had not yet been brought "within the range of practical politics", and to urge the members of the respective committee to take action. However, according to the last sentence of the English article, the paper had learned "since writing the above" that the committee had taken up working actively on the petition. Within the same issue, it is only information on the active steps taken by the committee that is published in Yoruba. 'The People's Petition for Prince Eleko', *Eko Akete*, 22. July 1922, p. 2; 'Iwe Ẹbẹ fun Eleko', *Eko Akete*, 22. July 1922, p. 4.

¹⁴³ 'The Eleko of Lagos and a "Monster Petition"', *African Messenger*, 10. August 1922, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ See also K. Barber, 'Translations, Publics', p. 201. Barber highlights a letter to *Eko Akete* according to which not everyone would need to be a lawyer and that other professions were making valuable contributions too.

terms” employed for certain persons featuring in the publication, and suggested that “if this unfortunate trait in the book ... will in a future edition be obliterate, we may wait anxiously for a treat”.¹⁴⁶ In 1923 Ayiluka asked, upon learning that a meeting to collect money in support of *Eko Akete* was to be convened: “What particular right has *Eko Akete* to call upon the public for support? What particular service more than a tailor or a carpenter has *Eko Akete* done in this country that every other month there must be a begging letter, a begging notice in the paper?”¹⁴⁷ Deniga himself replied to this contribution, called Ayiluka an “upstart”, suggested there was nothing wrong with calling for public patronage, and, seemingly corroborate his pride in doing so noted, presumably with reference to the backing the *African Messenger* enjoyed at its inception¹⁴⁸: “Surely not everybody can afford to run headlong into debt by raising a large sum of money *on loan* with which to effect the *debut* of a weekly newspaper as we understand, is the case with a local contemporary years ago [all emphasis in original, author’s note].”¹⁴⁹

In fact, appealing to an imagined lower class, as well as claiming to speak for it, was a project the Yoruba press deliberately engaged in. Karin Barber shows how the use of Yoruba in the 1920s was advocated on the basis of class, and not so much on ‘cultural nationalism’.¹⁵⁰ In this context, the Yoruba press seemed to allude or appeal to a sense of solidarity among a heterogeneous group of urban wage earners who were conscious of their position of comparative disadvantage to the established elite.¹⁵¹ In the Yoruba papers, English was associated with clerks and professionals, Yoruba linked to artisans and skilled manual labour. The Yoruba press moreover cast the latter group, and the “common” people more generally,

¹⁴⁶ ‘Here and There by Ayiluka’, *African Messenger*, 6. October 1921, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Here and There by Ayiluka’, *African Messenger*, 29. November 1923, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ See first part of this chapter. This is most likely a reference to the fact that Ikoli’s *Messenger* was supported by elite Lagosians and a European businessman.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Ayiluka in Tears!!!’, *Eko Akete*, 8. December 1923, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ K. Barber, ‘Cultural Editing, Memorialisation and Popular Voices in Early Yoruba Print Culture’ (paper presented at the Mellon-Sawyer Seminar on Ethnicity in Africa, University of Michigan, 2011), p. 14; K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, pp. 201-204.

¹⁵¹ P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, p. 113.

as the protagonists of visions for progress and as the backbone of national cohesion – seemingly in contrast to the established elite.¹⁵² Furthermore, text production itself is integrated into this narrative by granting it artisanal value.¹⁵³ Cultural preservation and memorialisation formed another important strand in the project of the Yoruba press. In this context, it again turned to the lower classes and empowered “the illiterate, impoverished street singer” as “bearer of textual value”.¹⁵⁴ *Eko Akete* could thus not be offended by Ayiluka’s equation of those behind the paper with tailors and carpenters, but rather feel validated in their self-set goals and aspirations.

This allusion to class-rhetoric in the Yoruba press of the early 1920s was emerging at a time which saw a number of protests by employees of the colonial state, and the isolated formation of professional organisations.¹⁵⁵ Most notable amongst those organised interests was the Nigerian Civil Service Union, which petitioned the colonial state for an increase of the salaries of African civil servants between 1919 and 1922, and whose activities were documented in the English-language press.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, J. Adeyinka Olushola began to organise workers in the Nigerian Labour Corporation in 1922 – seemingly in contrast to the elite-dominated Civil Service Union.¹⁵⁷

Allusions to this class rhetoric were varied and changed over time – exemplifying nuances in the ways in which newspapermen sought to carve out a niche for their ventures in the public sphere. *Eko Akete’s* “Professor” Adeoye Deniga had drawn attention to the plight of the artisans and workers even before starting his Yoruba paper. As mentioned in the first part of

¹⁵² K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 202.

¹⁵³ K. Barber, ‘Cultural Editing’, p. 10.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ A. Hughes and R. Cohen, ‘An Emerging Nigerian Working Class. The Lagos Experience 1897-1939’, in P. Gutkind, R. Cohen and J. Copans (eds.), *African Labor History* (London, 1978), p. 39. In 1919 there were strikes at the Lagos docks and strikes by the railway employees at Iddo, 1920 saw a strike in the Marine Department, and strikes of daily paid men in the Railways and Public Works Department. The Lagos Mercantile Clerks Association, inaugurated in 1911, seems to have been a short lived organisation – the Nigerian Civil Service Union, however, had been in existence since 1912. *Ibid.*, p. 38; R. Okonkwo, ‘The Nigeria Civil Service Union, 1919-1922’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26:3 (1993), p. 609; ‘News Notes & Comments’, *Lagos Standard*, 28. June 1911, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ R. Okonkwo, ‘Nigeria Civil Service Union’, pp. 611-13.

¹⁵⁷ A. Hughes and R. Cohen, ‘Nigerian Working Class’, p. 44.

this chapter, in 1915 he pointed out how it was harder to make a living off handicrafts and farming nowadays when compared to 25 years ago.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, *Eko Akete* was, for instance, reporting on the *Labour Bulletin* published by Olushola in connection with his Nigerian Labour Corporation in 1923, and Deniga was one of the speakers at the inaugural meeting of the African Workers Union in 1931. This association was initiated by Isaac Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson, who later founded the West African Youth League, and who, amongst other things, sought to popularize Marxist ideas in West Africa.¹⁵⁹ Karin Barber shows, however, that it was *Eko Igbehin*, published by E.M. Awobiyi, that to some extent reflected the “view from below” more than other papers. The paper was not at ease with elite society in 1926, and more clearly distanced itself from those “upstarts” that showed off their English and thus sought association with a clerkly class.¹⁶⁰

When comparing Deniga’s *Eko Akete* to I.B. Thomas’ *Akede Eko*, the former in turn appears to be further removed from a clerkly class than Thomas’ paper. When advertising a banking scheme initiated by Tete Ansa in 1929, *Eko Akete* translated¹⁶¹ it into Yoruba in a way that was drawing on cultural practices familiar to a readership that strongly identifies with and was involved in a way of life that followed local, or so-called “traditional” lines. Toyin Falola observes that banks and co-operative societies were generally appealing to a (new) elite, particularly as a certain education was required to understand their mode of operation.¹⁶² *Eko Akete* explained Tete Ansa’s scheme in terms of ‘help’ (iranwọ/iranlọwọ) for farmers,

¹⁵⁸ A. Deniga, ‘Not Guilty’, *Lagos Standard*, 9. June 1915, p. 7; A. Deniga, ‘Not Guilty. Continued’, *Lagos Standard*, 9. June 1915, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 208; A. Hughes and R. Cohen, ‘Nigerian Working Class’, p. 44; L. Spitzer and L. Denzer, ‘I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League. Part II: The Sierra Leone Period, 1938-1945’ *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 6:4 (1973), pp. 565-601.

¹⁶⁰ K. Barber, ‘Cultural Editing’, pp. 13-14.

¹⁶¹ Given that the English texts of an advertisement for another scheme by Tete Ansa are identical in both papers, it might be assumed that the way in which the advertisement for the bank was rendered in Yoruba was up for the two papers to decide. This in turn suggest that the papers appealed to their readerships in different ways. Cf. *Akede Eko*, 7. March 1929, p. 5; *Eko Akete*, 2. March 1929, p. 5.

¹⁶² T. Falola, ‘“My Friend the Shylock”. Money-Lenders and Their Clients in South-Western Nigeria’, *Journal of African History*, 34:3 (1993), p. 405.

businessmen and traders.¹⁶³ This was an allusion to *esusu* and *ajo* forms of saving and providing credit, that is to say local forms of saving and credit, current in South-Western Nigeria, which can be traced back to before the advent of colonial rule.¹⁶⁴ *Akede Eko*, on the other hand, advertised the scheme by associating it with progress, development, social change (*ilọsiwaju*) – usually associated with literacy, and thus clerkly ‘upstarts’.¹⁶⁵ This difference in advertising is mirrored in other commercials published in the two papers: *Akede Eko* was seemingly more successful in winning big overseas concerns such as Woerman Line, a shipping line promoting their services within and beyond Nigeria, and two importers of cars, namely Nigerian Motors and The African Trader’s Company.¹⁶⁶ The target group these advertisements were aiming for was the “educated African”, and thus a clerkly and professional class, which was generally seen as reachable through the local English-language press.¹⁶⁷

Judging from the advertisements in both papers it might be suggested that by 1929, *Eko Akete* seems to have adhered more ardently to the project of “going down the social scale”, as embraced by the Yoruba press in the early 1920s.¹⁶⁸ *Akede Eko*, in contrast, seems to have

¹⁶³ Cf. *Eko Akete*, 2. February 1929, p. IV: “... The Industrial and Commercial Bank Ltd. tabi Bank Oṣiṣe ati ti Oniṣowo wa fun lati fi ṣe iranwo fun gbogbo Enia Dudu ti nwon je Agbe, Oṣiṣe ati Oniṣowo.”

¹⁶⁴ For this, participants get together to contribute regularly an agreed sum of money and in this way save money collectively, or provide each contributor with all collectively saved funds in turn. T. Falola, ‘My Friend the Shylock’, pp. 404-5.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. J.D.Y. Peel, ‘Olaju. A Yoruba Concept of Development’, *Journal of Development Studies*, 14:2 (1978), pp. 141, 148-149. Cf. *Akede Eko*, 7. February 1929, p. 3: “Ko si iṣekiṣe ti enia le da owo le l’ode aiye wa l’oni laini ‘Kudi’ (owo) l’owo lati ma fi bu omi-rin iṣe na, ire ilọsiwaju iṣe na yio ma di tipa-doyin. Nitori eyi ati jubelo ni awon Egbẹ Ile-Owo ti awon Enia Dudu ti da oruko won s’oke iwe yi se da Ile-owo titun yi silẹ fun irọlorun gbogbo awon enia yala l’Agbe tabi ni awon Oniṣowo tabi fun olukuluku enia ti nwon ba nwa ire ilọsiwaju enia-dudu l’aiye ilaju t’oni.”

¹⁶⁶ In all issues in the period under review (January – April 1929), *Akede Eko* published on its frontpage an advertisement for Woermann Line (mainly in English), and Nigerian Motor’s Limited published a full page advertisement for the new Ford car on the following page (in Yoruba). The African Trader’s company published a full page advertisement on a Chevrolet car the next subsequent page in all but one issues in the period under review (in Yoruba). Cf. *Akede Eko*, 3. January 1929, pp. I,II, 1. In contrast, *Eko Akete* mainly published smaller advertisements for medicines, local medicine stores or local shops on its cover pages.

¹⁶⁷ West Africa Publicity was paying for advertisements of European brands in the *Lagos Daily News* (see chapter 1). It might thus be assumed that the same company was paying for similar instalments in *Akede Eko*. I.B. Thomas seems to have succeeded to portray his paper as reaching those educated Africans that read the West African press “eagerly ... from cover to cover”, and thus attracted advertising revenue from West Africa Publicity. NNAI: CSO 26/3 22305 West Africa Publicity Limited. Trade Advertisements in Nigerian Post Office: ‘Are you Selling ??????????????’ [n.d.].

¹⁶⁸ K. Barber, ‘Translation, Publics’, p. 201.

presented itself as being in closer proximity to those referred to as upstarts, and despised by *Eko Igbehin* – a group of readers eager to associate not only with the language of the clerky and professional class, but also eager to associate with the consumer goods they were assumed to purchase. Allusions to class-rhetoric might for *Akede Eko* thus just have been a declaration of solidarity with limited performativity in terms of a working class identity, and such allusions might have been, more broadly, a trend among rather than a concerted project of the Yoruba press. It might also be suggested that modifications in associating with class-rhetoric reflect changes in how newspapers were carving out niches for themselves, and thus, in turn, a changing public sphere: after the initial necessity to distinguish itself from the English-language press and its readers, the Yoruba press might have been able, by the end of the 1920s, to re-approach a potential readership usually associated with the English-language press. This in turn suggest that, by then, the public sphere overall was imagined as a more diverse space in terms of readership than at the beginning of the century, and that the Yoruba press could turn to other ways to distinguish itself from other papers.

Conclusion

In the 1920s, the number of people aspiring to elite status through education was increasing in Lagos. Many of such aspirants sought to attain some sense of belonging or connection with a community or social world that had emerged in the nineteenth-century on the West African coast in the context of mission education, and, with regard to the press, constituted a public sphere. Looking into the careers of editors Adeoye Deniga, Ernest Ikoli, Adamu Animashaun and Herbert Macaulay has suggested that that up to the 1920s, this circle was imagined rather exclusively: when embarking on convening publics in the press, individuals had to boast a certain degree of status within this literary community. Whereas Ikoli could rely, as a product of a training centre for the elite, that is King's College, on his connections to eminent Lagosians, it seems that Deniga and Animashaun's ability to establish themselves was not least

based on the recognition they received within the broader West African printing network. Deniga's reputation in Lagos was enhanced by the recognition awarded to him in the Gold Coast, and Animashaun strengthened his bid to enter the Lagos printing sphere by continuing an established journal and with the help of an editor from Sierra Leone. Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* illustrates other reasons behind turning to the press and, moreover, that eminence alone was not a guarantee for success. Macaulay was a member of the elite by virtue of birth and was a prominent politician long before he started his newspaper. Nevertheless, his reputation alone could not ensure the financial security of his paper.

In addition to social changes, the period under review witnessed far-reaching political changes. In what has been described as a "betrayal of the creole elites" the colonial state turned to Native Authorities as partners in empire, and the elite's calls for more representation in the government were met with a denial of their capacity to represent the people even though they were granted a limited franchise for the Legislative Council. Against this background, contributors and editors drew on various discursive registers when setting out to convene publics in new ways. Adeoye Deniga initiated a more general turning to a Yoruba readership and, when starting his bilingual journal, not only sought to preserve Yoruba culture, but intended to include Yoruba readers in the political projects of the elite. This was taken up by the English-language press, which started wooing Yoruba readerships in designate Yoruba-columns, and likewise sought to include them in discussions in the press. Such efforts arguably served the established elite to reinforce their claim to political leadership – they substantiated their claim to represent more than just the anglicised elite. This grooming of larger constituencies was also important in the context of campaigning for the Legislative Council elections, which only granted a limited number of Lagosians a vote. Not least in reference to their capacity to mobilise large sections of the community, parties that succeeded at the polls claimed to be representative of the people of Lagos.

At the same time, new groups were emerging and with increasing confidence insisted on their voice being heard in the public sphere in their own right. These groups similarly alluded to notions of representation and representativeness when seeking to carve out a niche for themselves in the public sphere. Adamu Animashaun, secretary of the Jamat Muslims, started the publication of a newspaper to counter “misrepresentations” published by allies of an opposing faction of Lagos Muslims in the local press. In doing so, Animashaun’s *Times of Nigeria* also enabled Lagos Muslims to emerge more prominently as interlocutors in the public sphere.

Moreover, Animashaun’s efforts to ensure that the Jamat’s position was communicated in the press demonstrates that the public sphere was considered central for politics by an increasing number of Lagosians. Accordingly, participating in discussions in the press became the bone of contention, and the ways in which newspapermen and editors sought to convene publics was contested and challenged. In reference to discursive registers associated with education and educational credentials, some among the established elite sought to reinforce Victorian notions of respectability and discredited those that sought to convene publics by alluding to “mass support”. Such discursive registers mirrored colonial discourses about education; the ways in which some sought to convene publics was moreover contested by urging the colonial state to take action against them. This not only suggests that some among the elite were alarmed by people they styled the “mob”, but also that already in the 1920s members of the anglicised elite felt that their claim to political leadership was under threat, even though they could hold on to it until the 1930s.

Discursive registers alluding to class rhetoric were employed in both English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers, and contestations along such lines could be staged across the different papers. As Karin Barber has shown, the Yoruba press started to carve out a niche for itself in the early 1920 by employing such discursive registers. The Yoruba papers associated

English with clerks and professionals, and linked Yoruba to artisans and skilled manual labour, styling text-production itself as artisanal work. This chapter has shown that allusions to this class rhetoric were varied and changed over time, and seem to have become, by 1929, largely a declaration of solidarity with limited performativity. This in turn suggests that at the latest by the end of the period under review, the public sphere was imagined as a more diverse discursive field, enabling the Yoruba press to turn to other ways of carving out niches for itself, as the next chapter will further illustrate.

Chapter 5 – The Eleko-question, Polarised Politics and the Press

Introduction

In continuation of studying the way in which Lagosians convened publics in the 1920s and 1930s, this chapter approaches such processes through the lens of a specific political issue. It focuses on reporting on the so-called Eleko-question, and situates it in its social and political context. The issue was a central concern of Lagos politics in the 1920s and early 1930s, and revolved around the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as the Oba or King of Lagos. At stake were various issues – it brought to the fore questions about the forms in which local social and political institutions could continue to function under colonial rule, about how to contest the colonial state, and also questions about political leadership. The Eleko-question became intertwined with other political issues, such as the aforementioned National Congress of British West Africa and the Apapa land case and it made headlines in Nigeria and Britain. Moreover, it was one of the issues dividing Lagosians into seemingly discrete camps – the aforementioned ‘radicals’ and ‘conservatives’. The former supported Eshugbayi’s claim to the Lagos throne, the latter wanted to see someone else assume the Obaship or sought to abolish the institution altogether. An analysis of reporting on the Eleko-question gives further insight into the nuanced ways in which newspapermen and editors were convening publics. It illustrates the complexity of Lagos politics in the interwar period and thus points to the limits of describing this period as characterised solely by a polarisation between two political camps.

Just as the previous chapter, the present study highlights moments of friction, of contestations and challenges in the public sphere. Through the lens of the Eleko-question, it investigates internal divisions in the public sphere. In particular, it studies the possibilities and constraints newspapermen faced when seeking to convene publics around this polarising issue. In doing so, this chapter pursues one of the analytical dimensions Andreas Koller highlights in his

assessment of approaches to the comparative historical research on the public sphere.¹ It gives insight into processes of differentiation or segmentation in this discursive field. The Eleko-question can also be regarded as having introduced a “new political dynamic” or affected a change in political discourse, and such an approach, in turn, promises to provide further insights into processes of segmentation in the public sphere. Wale Adebaniwi illustrates how Herbert Macaulay deftly convened publics around the Eleko-question, how he successfully convened publics through his particular brand of reconciling “tradition” and “modernity”.² David Pratten illustrates how attempts to engage with newly emerging political dynamics could fail. In his study of newspaperman J.V. Clinton, and his *Nigerian Eastern Mail*, which was published in Calabar, he shows that merely reflecting more radical anti-colonial discourses in the late 1930s could not guarantee the successful convening of publics. Clinton was not directing such discourses, and one could say he became marginalised in the public sphere when readers criticised his conservative interpretation of debates and events – they eventually abandoned Clinton’s paper for the more radical press.³ This chapter brings together more and less successful efforts at convening publics in the Lagos press and in doing so highlights more general dynamics in the public sphere.

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part illustrates the importance of the office of the Oba of Lagos for local social structures and politics. Despite Lagos’ status as a Crown Colony, it was this local, or so-called “traditional” social structure, which centred around the Oba, that ensured the working of essential institutions such as the Lagos markets. This part illustrates the way in which the Eleko-question was intertwined with other political issues, and how the

¹ A. Koller, ‘The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction’, *Social Science History*, 34:3 (2010), pp. 261-290. See especially pp. 269 et seqq.

² W. Adebaniwi, ‘Colonial Modernity and Tradition. Herbert Macaulay, the Newspaper Press, and the (Re) Production of Engaged Publics in Colonial Lagos’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 125-148.

³ D. Pratten, ‘Creole Pioneers in the Nigerian Provincial Press’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), pp. 75-101.

two opposing political factions related to it. Moreover, it outlines the new dynamics and discourses that were emerging in politics in the course of the Eleko-question and associated issues. This part of the chapter furthermore investigates how newspapermen convened publics around the issue, highlights cleavages between radicals and conservatives as well as attempts to convene publics around notions of a 'third way'.

The second part of this chapter presents a close study of newspaper reporting on the close of the Eleko-question, the return of Eshugbayi to Lagos in 1931 after almost six years in exile in Oyo, and his resumption of the Obaship. In its analysis, it focuses on the English-language *Lagos Daily News*, and the bilingual Yoruba paper *Akede Eko*, both of which were associated with the radical political camp. This part of the chapter thus offers further insight into the nuanced ways in which publics were convened around the Eleko-question. In particular, it illuminates how *Akede Eko* related to agendas pursued in the *Lagos Daily News*. In the course of doing so, this part of the chapter moreover highlights more general dynamics between the English-language and Yoruba-language press.

Part 1: The Eleko-question and Changing Political Dynamics

The Importance of the Oba of Lagos

The way in which the colonial administration engaged with the Eleko-question was fraught with inconsistency, and, more importantly, reveals a discrepancy which existed between the government and the people of Lagos with regard to the importance they accorded to the office of the Oba of Lagos.⁴ With the annexation of 1861, the Oba of Lagos had transferred his political and economic authority over the affairs of the island and its surroundings to the British Crown. Constituting thus a Crown Colony, there was no provision for a Native Authority in the government of Lagos. This was at least the baseline of the colonial administration's interpretation of the Treaty of Cession. The relationship of the educated elite to Native Authorities was complex, and some among the elite equally subscribed to the government's view on the position of the Oba after the Cession. On the one hand, the educated elite opposed Indirect Rule, in particular as Native Courts threatened their own claim to political leadership. On the other hand, supporting the case of the Oba of Lagos provided them with an opportunity to claim a connection with the 'masses' as the following will illustrate.⁵ For the majority of people living in Lagos, the Oba was a crucial political figure, and some considered that they only owed allegiance to him.⁶

Eshugbayi took over the position of Oba from his father Oyekan in 1901, and during his tenure he became known as the Eleko (the "owner" of Eko, which is the Yoruba name for Lagos).⁷ Officially, he was recognised as the head of the Dosunmu-Oyekan family, the family that had

⁴ Cf. P. Cole, 'Lagos Society in the Nineteenth Century', in A. Aderibigbe and J.F.A. Ajayi (eds.), *Lagos. The Development of an African City* (Ikeja, 1975), p. 29; P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge 1975), p. 103; T. Tamuno, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State. The Southern Phase, 1898-1914* (London, 1978), p. 202.

⁵ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 140; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, 2000), p. 106. For a discussion of power struggles between the educated elite and chiefs in Yorubaland in this period see, for example O. Vaughn, *Nigerian Chiefs. Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s* (Rochester, 2000), chapter 2.

⁶ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 102; T. Tamuno, *The Evolution*, p. 205.

⁷ Cf. I.B. Thomas, K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas's 'Life Story of Me, Sęgilọla' and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), p. 14.

produced previous Obas, and he received a “compassionate allowance” from the government.⁸ His status was, however, interpreted variously, ranging from cooperating with him and making use of his influence over the people of Lagos when advantageous to the colonial administration, to withdrawing his recognition and stipend and finally expelling him from Lagos in 1925.⁹

The Oba’s authority to collect tributes or taxes was terminated with the Cession, and Lagos chiefs were subsequently mainly relying on fees from followers and stipends granted by the administration to make a living and maintain social relations.¹⁰ The Oba’s legal authority, however, was cut back gradually, and African forums for settling dispute persisted. These judicial functions were of particular importance for the indigenous population for whom the Oba remained an important (ultimate) instance for arbitration,¹¹ yet were never institutionalised under the emerging colonial legal system.¹² In the nineteenth-century, the Oba was also considered as a peacemaker between different chiefs in Lagos, but after the turn of the century, he was only allowed to appoint chiefs and headmen of quarters after seeking the administration’s approval.¹³

The most comprehensive effort at collaborating with the Oba was made under Governor William MacGregor, who established the Central Native Council in 1901. This institution was

⁸ HMP: Box 41: ‘H. C. Moorehouse to Prince Eleko, 19. October 1920’, in C. Blaize, *The Real Truth of the Eleko Question*, [n.d.], pp. 5–6; ‘Resident of the Colony to Prince Eleko, 5. November 1920’, in *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

⁹ Although the Oba of Lagos was not part of the administrative machinery, the government’s approach to Eshugbayi is reminiscent of colonial approaches to Indirect Rule in other contexts, in particular as his income was tied to government recognition. Cf. M. Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects. Contemporary Africa And the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, 1996), p. 52 et seqq.

¹⁰ P. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change. The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (Berkeley, 1974), pp. 209, 211; P. Cole, ‘Lagos Society’, p. 43.

¹¹ O. Adewoye, ‘Prelude to the Legal Profession in Lagos 1861-1880’, *Journal of African Law*, 14:2 (1970), p. 107; P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, p. 209, P. Cole, ‘Lagos Society’, p. 32; K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City. Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington, 2007), p. 19. In such cases, British Justice served as an instance to appeal to. It was mainly for immigrants and on the occasion of commercial and land cases that disputes were brought to courts installed by the colonial administration.

¹² Baker notes that Lagos had no customary courts. P. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 219.

¹³ R. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York, 1928), p. 663.

part advisory body and part means to gain knowledge about African laws and customs.¹⁴ The council's heyday was during the tenure of MacGregor. His successor, Walter Egerton, was blamed by Lagosians for the council's demise in 1910.¹⁵ The Council lost significance at the latest in 1912,¹⁶ when Frederick Lugard assumed the Governorship of Southern Nigeria, and was embarking on the project of amalgamating Southern and Northern Nigeria. Lugard not only disregarded the council as a safety valve for mounting discontent,¹⁷ he more generally denounced that the Oba played a meaningful role in the affairs of Lagos.¹⁸

For the community, in contrast, the Oba constituted a central figure of social, cultural and political life – Herbert Macaulay styled him “Paramount Native Chief of the Island of Lagos” when granted an interview with Governor Lugard in 1913.¹⁹ Similarly, when under attack, the Oba insisted in 1920 that he was regarded to be the social and political head of the people of Lagos,²⁰ and referred to the government-created Central Native Council as further proof of his

¹⁴ T. Tamuno, 'The Role of the Legislative Council in the Administration of Lagos, 1886-1913', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4, 4 (1969), p. 563; T. Tamuno, 'The Development of British Administrative Control of Southern Nigeria, 1900-12. A Study in the Administration of Sir Ralph Moor, Sir William MacGregor and Sir Walter Egerton' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. London, 1962), p. 192; T. Tamuno, *Nigeria and Elective Representation, 1923-1947*, (London, 1966), p. 29. According to Cole, chiefs were presenting demands of the people to government, and translating the wishes of the government to the people. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 24; T. Tamuno, 'British Administrative Control', p. 193

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 382; T. Tamuno, *Nigeria and Elective*, p. 29, cf. M. Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, 2nd edn (London, 1962), p. 265.

¹⁶ R. Buell, *The Native Problem*, p. 663. It seems that the Council was only coming together occasionally and in moments of crisis after 1912. One such instance was, for instance when the Eleko was suspended for some time in 1919. H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat. The Moral Obligation of the British Government to the House of King Docemo of Lagos (British West Africa). An Open Letter* (London, 1921), p. 7.

¹⁷ For instance, in 1908 the chiefs called a meeting of the Central Native Council to voice their opposition to a proposed Water Rate, a tax for pipe-borne water. It was only after this protest by some of the Lagos Chiefs went unanswered that the educated elite got involved under the auspices of the People's Union, a political party which was formed on this occasion. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 179–180; T. Tamuno, 'The Role of', p. 563.

¹⁸ When petitioned for an increase of the Oba's stipend, Lugard noted that the Oba was not taking part in the public work of the community, unlike others, who were, for instance, working on the Boards of Health and Education. H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat*, p. 47.

Margery Perham and Richard Buell, contemporaries of Lugard and in principle supportive of his political programme of Indirect Rule, pointed out the inconsistency in the administration's approach to the Eleko, and were wondering why the position of the Eleko was not incorporated in the administration more productively. R. Buell, *The Native Problem*, p. 666; M. Perham, *Native Administration*, p. 271.

¹⁹ H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat*, p. 46.

²⁰ HMP: Box 41: C. Blaize, *The Real Truth*, p. 5.

importance.²¹ Some administrators acknowledged the importance of the Oba, for instance Henry Lewis Ward-Price, who concluded in 1930 that it would not be possible to abolish “native institutions” such as that of the Oba, as they were “too deeply rooted in the people’s minds”. According to Ward-Price, the Yoruba people would not let go of such a custom of organisation, which included a head chief and his advisors, and would even carry on “within the law, with the more or less empty shell of the old institutions”.²² The literature points out the Oba’s ceremonial functions, his continued quasi-judicial powers in settling disputes. Pauline Baker moreover emphasises the Oba’s lasting importance when noting that in the 1950s, the Oba was still regarded as a father figure by some inhabitants of Lagos.²³

In practice, the government was still quite aloof from the everyday lives of the majority of Lagosians in the 1920s, which might be illustrated with reference to the markets in town. At that point more than a quarter of Lagosians was engaged in trade,²⁴ a profession that was dominated by women, who were particularly engaged with trading foodstuffs.²⁵ The government had initiated and embarked on improving the infrastructure of markets as early as the late nineteenth-century. Such initiatives were, however, met with limited success, as procedures were often delayed and the new structures found limited acceptance by

²¹ Ibid., pp. 8–9.

²² Weston Library, MSS Arf. s. 22225/2 Ward-Price: ‘Report of a Commission of Inquiry regarding the House of Docemo’, 1933, p. 12.

²³ Baker is referring to the inhabitants of Isale Eko in particular, and argues that for the 1950 general elections the support of the Lagos chiefs was regarded as decisive factor. P. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, pp. 214, 218-9. For Cole, Lagosians respect for the chiefs was deepening after the Cession of Lagos. P. Cole, ‘*Lagos Society*’, pp. 23-24, 29.

²⁴ In a table on professions in Lagos given by Talbot in the 1921 census, traders form with 27.5% the largest group, followed by artisans and craftsmen with 10%. P. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria. A Sketch of their History, Ethnology and Languages, with an Abstract of the 1921 Census* (London, 1926), p. 193. Talbot’s numbers may be considered as a minimum value, as such numbers do not account for farmers and others who additionally engaged in small-scale trade. A. Hopkins, ‘An Economic History of Lagos, 1880-1914’ (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London, 1964), p. 26.

²⁵ In addition to the import-export trade, trade in foodstuffs was flourishing as Lagos was in this regard dependent on outside supply since the late nineteenth-century century. A. Hopkins, ‘History of Lagos’, pp. 78–79.

Lagosians.²⁶ Lagos markets officially came under the authority of the Lagos City Council in 1922, which henceforth, however only on paper, oversaw the establishment and maintenance of markets, including the levying of a fee from stallholders. It was only in the early 1930s that the council started to exercise its powers, and thus to intervene into markets more directly.²⁷ At least up until then, the organisation of markets thus continued to follow locally established mechanisms that were organised in a hierarchy of which the Oba formed the ultimate authority. This hierarchy encompassed all aspects of the market, from sanitation, policing and the settling of disputes to the organisation of sellers according to the products they were offering.²⁸ Besides professional groups such as the market women or drummers associations, other groups and organised interests were forming part of the social structure revolving around the Oba. As already pointed out in chapter 4, the Lagos Muslims formed part of this structure in multiple ways, most importantly through the Oba's (nominal) power to grant promotions within the Islamic hierarchy, by conferring titles such as Balogun, Bashorun, Seriki Musilimi, and Bey.²⁹

To those Lagosians who counted themselves among the circle of elites that had emerged in the late nineteenth century, such structures might have been of little importance. However, those who sought to join the literate elite in the 1920s and 1930s remained connected to such structures. Their relatives, who in many cases had financed their education, formed part of such structures centering around the Oba.³⁰ It might be suggested that this constellation

²⁶ A market hall that had been opened in Faji in 1878 was still used only by a few persons ten years later – the majority of traders preferred to sell their goods outside the hall. S. Brown, 'A History of the Peoples of Lagos, 1852-1886' (Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern Univ., 1964), pp. 319-322.

²⁷ P. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change*, p. 232.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chapter 3, and in particular pp. 230-231, 242. Baker describes the market women as a "sub-system" of local politics. W. Karanja-Diejomaoh, 'Perceptions of Marriage, Family and Work in Nigeria. A study of Lagos Market Women' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 1981), p. 68. See also P. Cole, 'Lagos Society', p. 16.

²⁹ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 101.

³⁰ A. Hughes and R. Cohen, 'An Emerging Nigerian Working Class. The Lagos Experience 1897-1939', in P. Gutkind, R. Cohen and J. Copans (eds.), *African Labor History* (London, 1978), pp. 31-32. Judging by the narrations of various market women, which suggest that it was them that enabled many to attend schools, it might be suggested that for such 'newly literate' Africans structures in which their relatives

played into the fact that the plight of the Oba received more attention in the press in the 1920s.

The Eleko-question, Politics and the Public Sphere

The issue of the Eleko brought to the fore, as Wale Adebaniwi and Kunle Lawal show, questions about the forms in which local social institutions could continue to function under colonial rule. Contestations in the course of the Eleko-question might be seen as negotiations over the importance, functioning and shape of a local institution and as attempts to guard it from colonial influence.³¹ Moreover, the matter generated an unprecedented cooperation between the educated and “traditional” elite.³² Local political instruments such as mass meetings were mobilized alongside institutions revered in Britain such as the Privy Council.³³ At the same time, the Eleko-question contributed to the deepening of political opposition in Lagos. The issue was intertwined with various other causes and offered the elite a new platform for expressing their political demands. It might however also be suggested that the Eleko-question and associated issues changed the way in which political demands could be voiced more generally.

Questions involving the position of the Oba had been discussed in the press before they reached their high point in the 1920s, albeit receiving comparatively less attention up until then. One issue discussed in the press was the stipend the government granted the King. Only four years after Eshugbayi had assumed the Obaship, in 1905, unofficial African members of the Legislative Council petitioned for an increase of his stipend, and the issue was brought up again and again over the years.³⁴ The issue of the stipend was associated with respect for the

were imbedded in were of considerable importance. Karanja-Diejomaoh, ‘Perceptions of Marriage’, p. 235.

³¹ W. Adebaniwi, ‘Colonial Modernity’, pp. 125-148; K. Lawal, ‘The Role of the Ilu Committee in the Politics of Lagos Society. 1900-1950’, *Odù*, 35 (1989), p. 196.

³² P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 89-97.

³³ W. Adebaniwi, ‘Colonial Modernity’, p. 131.

³⁴ T. Tamuno, *The Evolution*, p. 145. The issue of the stipend was brought up in various capacities, for instance in the form of a letter to the editor (1906), again by unofficial members of the Legislative

Oba, his dignity, and ensuring that he was able to fulfil his social functions or obligations.³⁵ The Government seemingly used the stipend as leverage to pressure the Eleko into politically desirable behaviour. It was for instance withdrawn after his protests against the water rate in 1916.³⁶

As chapter 4 has pointed out, political cleavages in Lagos were often traced back to disagreements over how to contest the imposition of this tax to be paid for water. Protest against this government measure initially saw the educated elite and the Eleko working together. However, when the government threatened to prosecute protesters as committing a seditious offence in 1916, some amongst the educated elite, and with them some local Chiefs and Lagos Muslims, the so-called conservatives, abandoned the issue, much to the frustration of the Eleko and others involved in the protest, the so-called radicals. Issues arising subsequently, such as conflicts between Lagos Muslims as illustrated in chapter 4, consolidated divisions along such lines, as did the Eleko-question.³⁷

The ultimate threat to the Oba seems to have been deportation, which was rumoured, for instance, in 1918.³⁸ And in 1919, the Oba became involved with contestations among the Muslim community (see chapter 4). He appointed members of the Jamat to positions of authority, namely Bashorun, Seriki Muslimi and Bey. Conservative Lagosians, which supported the Lemomu party, protested this decision, sent a deputation to the government and insisted that the Oba lacked the power to confer these titles. Governor Clifford initially followed their

Council (1910), in the press on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Cessation of Lagos (1911), and by a deputation of the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to the Acting Governor (1912). Cf. Tamuno, *The Evolution*, pp. 204-205; Olujumoke, 'To the Editor...', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 2. June 1906, p. 6; 'Lagosian On Dits', *Lagos Standard*, 16. August 1911, p. 4.

³⁵ T. Tamuno, *The Evolution*, pp. 204-5.

³⁶ 'Weekly Notes and Comments', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 19. July 1919, p. 6; 'The Question of a Native Court for Lagos', *Times of Nigeria*, 23. October 1917, p. 4.

³⁷ Cf. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 98 et seqq.

³⁸ 'Lieut: Governor Boyle and Prince Eleko. Rumoured Threat of Deportation of the Prince', *Times of Nigeria*, 6. August 1918, p. 5.

recommendation and suspended the Oba, however only temporarily, as a counter-deputation could convince him to reconsider.³⁹

Less than a year later, the Eleko was making headlines again, only this time not only in Lagos, but also in Britain. At issue were again his stipend and his status as Oba of Lagos, and the issue heated up when the Oba was not complying with a demand made by the administration. The Eleko-question became intertwined with two other political issues of the time, namely the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), and, more importantly, with the Apapa land case. Lagos politicians for instance connected the plight of the Eleko to the Congress when soliciting support for the establishment of a Lagos branch: Dr. Akinwande Savage suggested that if the Congress were to succeed “we shall be able to put a stop to the sufferings which Eleko endures” – a reference to the low stipend granted to the Oba.⁴⁰ The congress in turn sympathised with Chief Oluwa (Amodu Tijani), who sought to be compensated for land appropriated by the colonial administration in the Apapa land case. And as one of the land-owning or white-capped chiefs, Oluwa owed allegiance to the Oba – he was a member of the Oba’s council, thus connecting all three concerns.⁴¹

The Apapa land case exemplified more general fears of Lagosians with regard to the administration’s policy on land, an issue which in itself was highly laden with potential anti-colonial feeling. At stake were competing claims to land ownership. In essence, the colonial administration, on the one hand, denied chiefs’ claims to individual ownership of land, either by referring to the Cession, which supposedly transferred all land to the British Crown, or through their interpretation of “native” customary law, which supposedly regarded land ownership as communal, and granted chiefs rights as trustees at the most. On the other hand the chiefs, who had profited from a market in land that had developed in Lagos before the

³⁹ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 101–102; ‘Prince Eleko’s Position’, *Times of Nigeria*, 3. November 1919, p. 4.

⁴⁰ ‘Report of a Mass Meeting held at Enu-Owa on 16th October, 1920’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 29. October 1920, p. 8.

⁴¹ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 17.

Cessation, insisted on their ownership of land and even contested aspects of the Cessation of Lagos, as to them the Oba had ceded land that belonged to them without their consent.⁴² In 1913, a group headed by educated Lagosians as well as Chiefs toured some Yoruba cities to collect evidence on the land tenure system of the Yoruba. A publication summarised their findings: land was held in family ownership and not through occupancy.⁴³ Anything else was regarded to “overthrow immemorial rights”.⁴⁴ In the Apapa land case, the government had acquired land in Apapa to be used by European merchants in 1913, and offered a symbolic payment to occupants. Chief Oluwa, one of the Lagos Idejo Chiefs (one of the so-called white capped or land-owning chiefs), went to court demanding full compensation, insisting on his individual right to the land, but was only granted compensation according to seigneurial right to the land in 1915. The government was of the opinion that the land was part of the territory ceded to the Crown in 1861, and the Supreme Court decided that according to customary right the land belonged to the community and not to Oluwa, granting him only administrative rights.⁴⁵ Chief Oluwa travelled to London in 1920 to appeal to this decision at the Privy Council. When in London, he became associated with the NCBWA.⁴⁶

The activities of Oluwa were covered in the British press, and not least Hugh Clifford seems to have been concerned that political demands voiced by West Africans were taken unjustly serious in Britain.⁴⁷ The Oba was represented at and affected by events unfolding in London in

⁴² K. Mann, ‘African and European Initiatives in the Transformation of Land Tenure in Colonial Lagos (West Africa), 1840-1920’, in S. Belmessous (ed.), *Native Claims. Indigenous Law Against Empire, 1500-1920* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 223–242. For an account of the Cessation and immigration to Lagos see introduction and chapter 3.

⁴³ People’s Union Lagos, *The Land Tenure Question in West Africa: Being a brief report of the meetings held at Abeokuta, Ibadan, Oyo, Oshogbo, Ilesha, Ife and Ede by the Deputation despatched to the Yoruba Hinterland for the purpose of collating evidence on Native Land Tenure System* (Lagos, 1913), p. v.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. i.

⁴⁵ B. Ibhawoh, *Imperial Justice. Africans in Empire’s Court* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 128–129.

⁴⁶ Cf. H. Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic. African American Agency, West African Intellectuals, and the International Trade Union* (Leiden, 2014), p. 88; ‘Report of a Mass meeting Held at Enu Owa on 15th October, 1920’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 29. October 1920, p. 8.

⁴⁷ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 126. In a speech to the Nigerian Council, governor Clifford indicated that he was only addressing the “blended folly and vanity” characterising the actions of the NCBWA as it was unjustly taken serious by some in Great Britain. H. Clifford, *Addresses Delivered by Sir*

the course of the Chief's stay. Herbert Macaulay, who was working as private surveyor since he had resigned his civil service position, and was thus intimately familiar with the grievances of the chiefs with regard to land, had accompanied Oluwa to England as his secretary, tour guide and interpreter.⁴⁸ Not least for theatrical effect, Macaulay had been carrying the office staff of the Oba of Lagos, which Queen Victoria had presented to the then reigning King of Lagos in 1852, in front of Chief Oluwa wherever they were going. According to custom, the Oba had entrusted Chief Oluwa with this insignia to show that he was approving of the chief's mission.⁴⁹ It seems that some in Lagos interpreted this as meaning that Macaulay "was working miracles in England, and that he would come back to drive the white men out of Lagos."⁵⁰

The Oba of Lagos became affected by the activities of Macaulay and Oluwa in London, when the two gave an interview to the *Daily Mail*, explaining some of the grievances they had with regard to how the administration in Lagos was treating the King. The newspaper report may be interpreted to have suggested that Macaulay and Oluwa claimed that the Oba was the King of all Nigerians.⁵¹ The administration in Lagos read it that way, and might have been

Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, to the Nigerian Council, 1920, 1923. Nigeria 1923-1925, p. 20. *The Times* of London reported on Oluwa's case being heard in the Privy Council for the first time, on Oluwa visiting the House of Commons, that he attended a reception given by Muslims in East Putney, and in connection with other members of the NCBWA. 'Native Chief in Whitehall', *The Times*, 6. July 1920, p. 5; 'An African Chief in the Commons', *The Times*, 15. July 1920; 'A Mosque for Putney', *The Times*, 7. February 1921, p. 12; 'Colour-Bar in West Africa', 19. February 1921, p. 7. *The Daily Mirror* apparently published a picture of Oluwa in the Privy Council. H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat*, p. 16.

⁴⁸ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 124; I.B. Thomas, *Life History of Herbert Macaulay, C. E.* (Lagos, 1946), pp. 3, 18. Macaulay had been campaigning around the issue of land since 1913.

⁴⁹ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 126, 129, 248 – note 19; I.B. Thomas, *Life History of*, p. 19.

⁵⁰ TNA: CO 583/94 63713 Eshugbayi (Eleko). 'Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Council held at Government House, Lagos at 10.15 am on the 1st December, 1920', p. 265.

⁵¹ The article in the *Daily Mail* on the one hand specifies that the Oba was "acclaimed by the seventeen million Nigerians **as the titular King of Lagos**" [my emphasis]. On the other hand, however, the newspaper also states, in an attributive clause, that he was the "chief negro in a possession three times the size of the United Kingdom". This could be read as suggesting that the Oba was the head of all Nigerians. Moreover, Macaulay is quoted in the report as saying that the Oba was promised a pension equal to the net revenue of Lagos in the treaty of cession, but that the current holder of the position was only receiving £300 a year. Following this quote the net revenue of the British government is noted, thus suggesting that Macaulay was asking that the Oba should be paid four million sterling. 'A King's Pay. Chief Oluwa of Lagos Grumbles', in *Daily Mail*, 8. July 1920, p. 6. See also H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat*, p. 6.

concerned about such statements as they assumed that the British public was particularly receptive to West African affairs at the moment, not least because of the demands of the NCBWA.⁵² As a consequence, the Oba was asked to repudiate the alleged claims made by Macaulay, and when he did so by sending a corresponding statement to the Lagos press, this was deemed inadequate.⁵³ The administration demanded that the Oba should send his bellman around town, informing people that he was not the King of all Nigerians, and not entitled to the revenue of all Nigeria. The Oba refused to do so,⁵⁴ and asked for a chance to speak to Oluwa upon his return, and to then take action.⁵⁵ The Oba thus disobeyed the government's request, and his recognition, and hence his stipend, was withdrawn in December 1920.⁵⁶ Unlike merely a year ago, Clifford could not be convinced to reconsider this time. Deprived of his income in this way, the Oba was dependent on his chiefs and supporters to continue his social and political functions (see below).

In July 1921 the Privy Council decided the Apapa land case in favour of Chief Oluwa's appeal, a decision which would prove important both legally and politically.⁵⁷ Even though the Privy Council insisted on the communal ownership of land, and downplayed notions of individual land ownership which had come to prevail in Lagos, Chief Oluwa was acknowledged a "full usufructuary title" on behalf of his community, and thus accorded a compensation higher than

⁵² Kunle Lawal also sees this impression of the Eleko being complicit in ridiculing the colonial administration before the public in Britain as the immediate cause of the ensuing crisis. K. Lawal, 'Ilu Committee', p. 197.

⁵³ Cf. W. Adebani, 'Colonial Modernity', p. 134.

⁵⁴ Henry Carr reported to the Governor that according to the Oba, the townspeople would not allow him to do so, which suggests that the Oba was under considerable moral pressure to support any of Macaulay's actions. TNA: CO 583/94 63713 Eshugbayi (Eleko). 'Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Council held at Government House, Lagos at 10.15 am on the 1st December, 1920', p. 264. Carr continues that "the issuing of the disclaimer by the Eleko's bellman would mean, in the eyes of the people, that the Eleko repudiated Macaulay; and this act on his part would not be tolerated by the people." Ibid., p. 266.

⁵⁵ HMP: Box 41: 'Eshugbayi Eleko to Private Secretary, Government House 29. November 1920', in C. Blaize, *The Real Truth*, p. 11.

⁵⁶ Cf. 'Eshugbayi commonly known as "Eleko"', *Nigerian Pioneer*, 24 December 1920.

⁵⁷ B. Ibhawoh, *Imperial Justice*, p. 133. According to Ibhawoh, the legal principle laid down in this case had implications for Australia, Canada and New Zealand, and served elites on the West African Coast to gain political points by attempting to bring the government before court in other matters.

what the Lagos administration had previously paid.⁵⁸ In Lagos and on the West African Coast more generally, the decision was celebrated as a victory.⁵⁹

Patrick Cole argues in his 'Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos' that the outcome of the Apapa land case was important for the consolidation of a coalition between the educated and traditional elites of Lagos. Lawyers and surveyors were working towards the goals of the traditional elite, and in this course found new avenues to express their own grievances with the colonial administration – particularly after the administration's dismissal of the National Congress.⁶⁰ Beyond this convergence of interests and this moment of political opportunity for the elite, it might be argued that the significance of the victory was also lying in the fact that it rewarded hopes Lagosians held towards British justice – the Privy Council decision was interpreted to confirm their own notions of justice in this matter. The judgment of the Privy Council symbolised for Lagosians that the local colonial administration was held to account to standards *they* associated with Britain, in particular to notions of fair play and justice they associated with the British judiciary. That is to say, to them it might have appeared that their confidence in British justice to address grievances they had against the local colonial administration, had paid off.⁶¹ Henry Carr, the Resident, was concerned before the Privy Council delivered its judgement and observed that Lagosians thought that "the local

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 130–131.

⁵⁹ A group of congratulators from the Gold Coast noted: "We are proud of the courageous stand made by you in the good fight you have fought from which you have triumphantly emerged a Victor. We are also strengthened in confidence that under the British flag there is justice. Though men often suppress justice it eventually asserts its power when constitutionally sought for." Techia Menson et al, *Lagos Weekly Record. Chief Oluwa Supplementary Edition*, 10. September 1921, p. 3. The Lagos Traders Association in Sierra Leone stated: "You did not undertake the task of obtaining redress for your self and your country from a selfish motive, nor did you undertake it from pride, or a feeling of revenge, but from a patriotic spirit and a desire to have justice done to you and your people, that have been groaning under the painful thought, that when justice cannot be obtained in Africa, the door is closed to them forever, and they must abide the inevitable. You undertook the task of showing that this is not true. You proved to the world again by this effort that 'there is always more room and fresh air at the top'. 'The People's Charter of Ownership Rights to Land in Nigeria', *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, pp. 89–97.

⁶¹ Such notions could be expressed in following way: In the aforementioned interview with the *Daily Mail*, Chief Oluwa stated with regard to grievances concerning the Oba: "our people are grieved", and then: "We have confidence. We are all loyal to the British throne." 'A King's Pay. Chief Oluwa of Lagos Grumbles', in *Daily Mail*, 8. July 1920, p. 6. W. Adebaniwi, 'Colonial Modernity', p. 138.

Government was powerless and that it had not the support of public opinion in England; consequently the latter would allow the former to be driven out".⁶² Thus, the sense of a "prevailing of British justice", which the judgment conferred, could also mean that people – "the masses" – felt affirmed in their sense of order which was grounded in local social relations and institutions. With regard to the land question, this meant that local notions of "immemorial rights", with regard to land, which had been – as shown above – canonized in 1913, were upheld.⁶³

With regard to the politics and the public sphere this seems to have meant that descriptions of social reality by "the masses" were validated more generally, and, as a consequence, should not be marginalised in discussions in the Lagos press. And the way in which the masses "described" reality, that is to say their understanding of how social organisation should be conducted, was informed by local Yoruba practices and institutions. The Privy Council decision in the Apapa land case seems to have validated particular ways of engaging with political issues and thus complicated the way in which newspapermen set out to convene publics and appeal to potential audiences.

Wale Adebani shows how Herbert Macaulay captured this momentum in a political programme which he describes as articulating alternative visions of modernity, or as a domestication of modernity: Macaulay styled himself the defender of existing local practices in a changing or 'modernizing' city.⁶⁴ The previous chapter has, using the example of the Jamat Muslism, illustrated how groups were emerging as interlocutors in the public sphere in their own right. The current chapter shows, moreover, how certain topics could no longer be ignored by the press. To be precise, it shows how in the course of the Eleko-question and

⁶² TNA: CO 583/94 63713 Eshugbayi (Eleko). 'Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Council held at Government House, Lagos at 10.15 am on the 1st December, 1920', p. 265.

⁶³ 'The People's Charter of Ownership Rights to Land in Nigeria, *Lagos Weekly Record. Chief Oluwa Supplementary Issue*, p. 5. In a biography of Herbert Macaulay, the victory is moreover interpreted as meaning that Chief Oluwa was "transferring to the Governor the land in question in 'full ownership'." I.B. Thomas, *Life History*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ W. Adebani, 'Colonial Modernity', pp. 128, 131, 132.

associated issues political discussions in Lagos were infused with a new dynamic: a new interpretive frame was validated, informed political discourses and thus the way in which publics were convened. The section below illustrates that although this frame was pervasive, only few could direct it.

Polarisation in the Public Sphere

Despite highlighting broad divisions in Lagos politics, this and the preceding chapter have given insight into the nuanced ways in which Lagosians were convening publics in the press. And even Fred Omu, who shows how different newspapers were falling in line with one of the two political factions, points to the fact that newspapermen convened publics around a third, middle position.⁶⁵ What follows illustrates different ways in which Lagosians sought to convene publics around the Eleko-question. It investigates how such attempts were challenged, and explores what more general dynamics constrained newspapermen when seeking to move beyond a polarisation in the public sphere.

The news about the Privy Council Decision in the Apapa land case was initially a cause for celebration and for a ceasefire in the press. Press reporting following this success suggests that Oluwa, Macaulay, the lawyer Joseph Egerton-Shyngle, and the Oba were credited with the victory in the Apapa land case. When Macaulay and Oluwa had landed in Lagos after their return from London, a large number of people welcomed them at the landing stage. A procession took them straight to the Oba's place and the two were later invited back to the palace to narrate their experiences at a special mass meeting.⁶⁶ Praise songs were composed in their honour, and dances and plays were still performed two weeks after their arrival.⁶⁷ The

⁶⁵ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 234.

⁶⁶ 'Arrival of Chief Oluwa and Mr. H. Macaulay', *Times of Nigeria*, 29. August 1921, p. 4; 'Mass Meeting at Eleko's Palace', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10. September 1921, p. 4. Chief Oluwa was moreover considered a crowd puller with regard to movie screenings, as an advertisement for the Enterprise Cinema illustrates. A special performance was advertised with the attendance of Oluwa and the White Cap Chiefs. 'Enterprise Cinema', *African Messenger*, 13. October 1921, p. 3.

⁶⁷ I.B. Thomas, *Life History*, p. 19; 'Native Dances and Plays in Galore', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10. September 1921, p. 4. See also C.A. Waterman, 'Aṣíkò, Sákàrà and Palmwine. Popular Music and Social

educated elite joined the celebrations, Chief Oluwa as well as Herbert Macaulay were presented with various speeches, and dinners, a ball and various “at homes” were held in their honour.⁶⁸ Moreover, Macaulay was invited to hold a speech under the auspices of the NCBWA,⁶⁹ and his essays were serialised and commended in Ikoli’s *African Messenger*.⁷⁰ Although initially reacting cautiously when the news of Oluwa’s victory reached Lagos, even the conservative’s *Nigerian Pioneer* congratulated the Chief on his success, and, moreover printed congratulations expressed towards Oluwa by the Alake of Abeokuta.⁷¹

However, shortly after Macaulay and Oluwa had returned victoriously, the Eleko-question heated up again in the press, and political divisions were hardened. Already while Macaulay and Oluwa were still in England, Henry Carr, the Resident, had presented his concerns to the Governor, namely that the “area over which the Eleko held sway” was “seething with disloyalty”. Carr had argued for a removal of the Eleko in order to “quieten down the present

Identity in Inter-War Lagos, Nigeria’, *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 17:2-3 (1988), p. 255, note 7; ‘Arrival of Chief Oluwa and Mr. H. Macaulay’, *Times of Nigeria*, 29 August 1921, p. 4.

⁶⁸ For instance, J. W. Vaughan, B.C. Vaughan and P.H. Williams organised a reception for 200 people, including the White Cap Chiefs, leading Muslims and Christians, at B.C. Vaughan’s “country seat” at Ebute Metta. “At Home” at the “Heaven”, *African Messenger*, 1 September 1921, p. 2; ‘Conversazione and Ball at the Empire Hall’, *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10 September 1921, p. 4. See also: *Lagos Weekly Record. Chief Oluwa’s Supplementary Edition*, 10. September 1921, pp. 3-4, 6-7.

⁶⁹ ‘Deputation to Mr. Herbert Macaulay C.E.’, *African Messenger*, 22 September 1921, p. 6.

⁷⁰ The *African Messenger* published a series of essays under the title ‘Squandermania Plague in Nigeria’. Cf. *The African Messenger*, 22. September 1921, pp. 4-5; 6. October 1921, pp. 4-5, 27. October p. 3. The *African Messenger* was full of praise for Macaulay’s writings. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 56; ‘Here and there by Ayiluka’, *African Messenger*, 20 October 1921, p. 3.

⁷¹ The conservative *Nigerian Pioneer* reacted cautiously when the first rumours of Oluwa’s success reached Lagos: “Suffice it to say that as the Oluwa has been successful on his appeal, which is after all his private affairs, he should be congratulated.” The paper continued that there was nothing to gain or lose for the government with this decision as it was, after all, the trustee of the people: “It must not be lost sight of that, whatever revenue or money the Government of Nigeria is possessed of, is held solely in trust for the people and solely for their benefits.” ‘Oluwa’s Appeal’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 1. July 1921, p. 7. Subsequently, the paper reported rather neutral about the victory and celebrations in Lagos. It published the news of the decision in its London letter and the initial lack of reporting on celebrations was excused by the necessity to go to print early. Subsequently the paper referred to entertainments organised by members of the elite and congratulations expressed towards Oluwa by the Alake of Abeokuta. ‘London Letter’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 19. August 1921, p. 7; ‘Rambling Notes and News’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 26. August 1921, p. 6; ‘Rambling Notes and News’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 9. September 1921, p. 7; ‘Abeokuta Notes and News’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 23. September 1921, p. 8. Only a contribution by J.M. Stuart Young congratulated Macaulay in this context, stating that he had distinguished himself in Britain “by his patriotism, his unflinching courtesy, and his *savoir vivre*”. ‘My Page by O Dazi Aku’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 23. September 1921, p. 9.

state of affairs”.⁷² When another attempt to deport the Eleko became public about two months after Macaulay and Oluwa’s return in 1921, Macaulay penned a fierce attack against those behind it and sparked a press controversy. He accused the Resident to be the mastermind behind this attempt to oust the Eleko, and saw prominent conservative politicians involved in this conspiracy. Macaulay’s attacks were published in Ikoli’s *African Messenger*, and stand in stark contrast to his previous, commended contributions to the paper.⁷³ His main opponent in the ensuing controversy was Dr. Orisadipe Obasa, a medical doctor and amongst those requesting the Eleko’s removal; Obasa’s responses were published in Kitoyi Ajasa’s *Nigerian Pioneer*, which staunchly supported conservative viewpoints (see also chapter 4). At one point, Macaulay equated Obasa with those “unfledged race of irresponsible Nigerian Youths who so often infest our public places and drinking saloons, and who with their blazing tongues of falsehood so frequently dishonour their parents, elders, and rulers”.⁷⁴ Moreover, Macaulay took the call for deporting the Eleko personal – he felt personally threatened, that those behind this campaign were seeking to deport him too.⁷⁵

Although an ‘either you’re with us or you’re against us’ dynamic – conservatives and the *Nigerian Pioneer* on one side, radicals as defenders of African liberties and rights on the other⁷⁶ – seems to have been dominant in the public sphere, some newspapermen and contributors nevertheless sought to convene publics in less polarising ways. They did so despite the fact that this episode of the Eleko-question further deepened cleavages. With his

⁷² TNA: CO 583/94 63713 Eshugbayi (Eleko). ‘Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Council held at Government House, Lagos at 10.15 am on the 1st December, 1920’, p. 266.

⁷³ Cf. H. Macaulay, ‘Conspiracy in High Quarters!! Is there a Star Chamber at No. 6 Tinubu Square?’, *African Messenger*, 27. October, 1921, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁴ H. Macaulay, ‘Knavery’, *African Messenger*, 10. November 1921, p. 4.

⁷⁵ ‘What does it all mean?’, *African Messenger*, 20. October 1921, p. 4; ‘A Political Outburst’, *Times of Nigeria*, 17 October 1921, p. 4. According to Macaulay, the deputation asked for the deportation of the Oba and himself, according to Obasa, the deputation was concerned only with the Oba. Macaulay cited a remark by the Lieutenant Governor on the deputation to prove his point. According to the statement, the deputation suggested that the Oba was “being used by people who were in opposition to the Government, as a means to gain their own end” and that he had become “the focus of an Anti-Government movement” and that they were thus asking for his deputation. This statement however does not directly corroborate Macaulay’s claim that the deputation wanted him deported too. H. Macaulay, ‘Knavery’, *African Messenger*, 10 November 1921, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Cf. N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey. An Autobiography* (London, 1970), p. 67.

attacks on Obasa, Macaulay seems to have overstepped the mark, and to have alienated former allies.⁷⁷ According to Fred Omu, Ikoli and Macaulay broke in November that year over the issue of Macaulay's attacks on prominent members of the community.⁷⁸ It seems that it was following this row that Ikoli's *Messenger* specified the "middle path" between the different views it sought to pursue: in principle supportive of the Eleko, but not at any cost, and particularly not if dubious proposals were brought forward by Macaulay. The previous chapter mentioned how Ikoli's *Messenger* was looking down on efforts by *Eko Akete* to support a petition calling for the re-instatement of the Eleko in 1922. The *Messenger* suggested that this was not a desirable path of action to take, while at the same time insisting that they had the Eleko's best interests at heart.⁷⁹ When the *African Messenger* later learned that Macaulay was involved with the petition, this served Ikoli to distance himself and his position from that of Macaulay. He first praised Macaulay's past achievements, but then recommended that he, who in his view had done much harm with his pen, should retire to isolation and do penance, and salve his conscience instead of writing "sensational, stupid and thoroughly vulgar pamphlets".⁸⁰ It would however be too simple to consider Ikoli as having

⁷⁷ This remark denounces Obasa's seniority (he was a medical doctor) and thus qualities, which other members of the elite might have regarded as untouchable even in the course of fierce argument. This may be illustrated with the *African Messenger's* stance towards Henry Carr: in an editorial the paper notes that although they had had the "unpleasant duty to range ourselves in opposition to Mr. Carr on various questions, and it has been our painful task to assail him at times with poisoned missiles, but that has not diminished the high regard and admiration we have for him. ... there is a silent admiration for a man who by his force of character, his sterling honesty, his high sense of responsibility and duty has raised the African 100% in the eyes of Europeans." 'The Local Press and the Resident of the Colony', *African Messenger*, 9 February 1922, p. 4. Orisadipe Obasa was a medical doctor, and became a nominated member of the Legislative Council in August 1921. C. Tetty, 'Medical Practitioners of African Descent in Colonial Ghana', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 18:1 (1985), p. 142; 'Local and Provincial News. The New Member for the Legislative Council', *Lagos Weekly Record*, 3. September 1921, p. 7.

⁷⁸ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 56-7, 72 note 58. In addition to the strong words Macaulay found for Obasa, another reason for Ikoli to distance himself from Macaulay might have been the fact that Macaulay had attacked Samuel Herbert Pearse, the owner of Awoboh press, where Ikoli's *African Messenger* was printed (see chapter 4).

⁷⁹ 'The Eleko of Lagos and a "Monster Petition"', *African Messenger*, 10 August 1922, p. 4.

⁸⁰ E. Ikoli, 'Signs of the Time', *African Messenger*, 16 November 1922, p. 6.

switched sides to the ‘conservatives’.⁸¹ As already illustrated in chapter 4, the *Messenger* sought to cater to a clerkly class of people aspiring to positions of stature in the community. Nnamdi Azikiwe for instance recounts that he was inspired by Ikoli due to the fact that he, as someone from the Southern Provinces, had managed to “write his name on the hall of fame of leaders in a metropolis like Lagos”.⁸² Omu describes Ikoli’s paper as respectable, and Nnamdi Azikiwe moreover remembers it as the being the best paper at that time – the way in which Ikoli convened publics in his paper was met with success.⁸³

In a similar way, Akinwade Savage is often counted among the ‘conservatives’ in the literature. However, it might be argued that he too seems to have sought to carve out a version of a third way between the political camps with his *Nigerian Spectator*.⁸⁴ Savage was supporting the Eleko and the radical camp up to 1920.⁸⁵ However, when the government asked the Oba to send his bellman around town to repudiate statements made by Macaulay in London, as illustrated above, it seems that it was Savage who advised the Oba not to do so. For this, he was ostracised by some among the radical camp, and some held him responsible for the subsequent withdrawal of the government’s recognition and stipend.⁸⁶ According to Patrick Cole, Savage joined forces with the conservative camp in 1920, and Omu too counts him and his paper among the conservatives.⁸⁷ Omu moreover suggests that he started to publish his *Nigerian Spectator* in 1923 following the introduction of elections for the Legislative Council, and to oppose Macaulay’s Nigerian National Democratic Party.⁸⁸ However, in 1925, H. Antus Williams, at that time sub-editor of the *Nigerian Spectator*, offers a different interpretation: he

⁸¹ Omu suggests Ikoli switched sides when he considers Ikoli’s paper as one of Macaulay’s staunchest critics. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 57.

⁸² N. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, p. 67.

⁸³ *Ibid.*; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 57.

⁸⁴ Omu counts him amongst those opposed to Macaulay and the NNDP. The following shows, however, that his stance was more complex. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 234.

⁸⁵ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 132. See also above and the way in which Savage connected the NCBWA to the plight of the Eleko.

⁸⁶ HMP: Box 41: C. Blaize, *The Real Truth*, p. 1.

⁸⁷ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 238; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 234.

⁸⁸ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 60, 234.

insists that while Herbert Macaulay and Kitoyi Ajasa stand unchangeable on opposite sides, Akinwade Savage was endeavouring to become the “third way”.⁸⁹ This is seemingly corroborated by Nnamdi Azikiwe. If the conservatives sought to maintain gentlemanly ideals of West African Saro elite culture on the one hand as argued in chapter 4, and the radicals portrayed themselves as the champions of African liberties on the other, Savage could, by bringing together what Azikiwe describes as ‘cosmopolitanism’ with possible support for the Eleko, potentially convene publics around a notion of a ‘third way’ too.

Looking at the Yoruba press illustrates that it was nevertheless difficult to overcome this polarisation. Expressing views which questioned Macaulay or his supporters’ stance were quickly challenged and decried as siding with the conservatives. What follows also illustrates that although the Yoruba press is often assigned to one of the two camps, it too was convening publics in ways that moved beyond the opposition between conservatives and radicals.⁹⁰ In 1925, the Oba’s recognition had still not been reinstated and tensions were running high. The visit of the Prince of Wales to Nigeria in May was getting people’s hopes up that his this could be an opportunity to advocate the Eleko’s cause. Hopes were, however, disappointed, and when, after the departure of the Prince, Governor Clifford was leaving Lagos for his redeployment to the Gold Coast, the *Lagos Weekly Record* attacked the official and his stance with regard to the Eleko one last time. Thomas Horatio Jackson, the editor of the paper, had been closely involved with the radicals, was involved with the foundation of the NNDP and a staunch supporter of Eshugbayi Eleko.⁹¹ *Eko Akete*, Adeoye Deniga’s paper, which had been advocating Eshugbayi’s cause since its inception (see chapter 4), was displeased with this and other recent attacks by the English-language paper, pointed out that attacking the Governor for not reinstating the Eleko was not helping his cause, but rather complicating

⁸⁹ ‘Action and Reaction’, *Eko Akete*, 21. March 1925, p. 7-8.

⁹⁰ Omu considers only *Eletì Qfẹ* as taking a stance other than supporting Macaulay and the NNDP. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 234.

⁹¹ Cf. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 104. Lawal moreover notes that Jackson was a member of the Illu Committee which supported the Eleko. K. Lawal, ‘Illu Committee’, p. 190.

matters (see also introduction).⁹² Moreover, the Yoruba paper accused the *Weekly Record* to strive for cheap publicity,⁹³ that they were playing to the gallery, and only publishing these attacks for their personal, monetary gain.⁹⁴ For turning against the English-language paper in this way, the Yoruba paper was in turn confronted with accusations of having been bought over by a ‘certain faction’ – meaning the conservatives.⁹⁵

Eko Akete was, however, not deterred by this. It continued to pursue and seemingly prided itself with advocating a ‘third way’.⁹⁶ Following the accusation from the radical *Weekly Record*, the paper published a letter to the editor signed with the pen name Kekere Ilu (most likely Deniga himself), which congratulated *Eko Akete* for its professionalism. Moreover, Kekere Ilu stated that the paper had put their weight behind Macaulay and was lending Jackson support against the background of both of them treading the right path, but that, when things were taking a different turn, the paper had no option than to realign with those treading the path of fairness.⁹⁷ About a month later, in an editorial, the paper self-assessed their actions as calling the *Weekly Record* to order and objected to accusations of having committed a betrayal.⁹⁸

The above has illustrated the complexities of Lagos politics, and the challenges newspapermen faced when convening publics in a highly polarised public sphere. Gabriel Olusanya suggests that some political projects, such as the National Congress of British West Africa ultimately

⁹² ‘Tolotolo yinbɔn idi – Kilopo?’, *Eko Akete*, 9. May, 1925, pp. 6-7. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi.

⁹³ ‘Iwe-Irohin *Lagos Weekly Record* Joye o ja’le-onile-bo-tire-l’ehin. Baba k’o s’oni l’orant’a o se!!!’, *Eko Akete*, 20. June, 1925, pp. 6-7. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi.

⁹⁴ The paper suggested that the *Record* was making huge profits with such attacks, and noted that it would not be out of place to say that all those who purchased the paper had wasted their money. ‘Tolotolo yinbɔn idi – Kilopo?’, *Eko Akete*, 9. May, 1925, pp. 6-7. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi.

⁹⁵ ‘Ka ga a, ka go o, ede ni ko ye’de’, *Eko Akete*, 16. May 1925, p. 6. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi.

⁹⁶ The Yoruba paper published the aforementioned statement by H. Antus William that the *Spectator* was pursuing a ‘third way’. This suggests that *Eko Akete* identified with this political stance too. Cf. ‘Action and Reaction’, *Eko Akete*, 21. March 1925, p. 7-8.

⁹⁷ Kekere Ilu, ‘Si Oni Iwe-Irohin EKO AKETE’, *Eko Akete*, 30. May 1925, p. 4. Translation with the help of Gbenga Adekambi.

⁹⁸ ‘Iwe-Irohin *Lagos Weekly Record* Joye o ja’le-onile-bo-tire-l’ehin. Baba k’o s’oni l’orant’a o se!!!’, *Eko Akete*, 20. June, 1925, pp. 6-7.

failed in Lagos not least due to the fractured political scene.⁹⁹ This analysis has moreover highlighted that interpretive frames and personalities seeking to direct them were intertwined in complex ways – the political ground could shift rapidly as the Macaulay-Ikoli episode illustrates. Challenges to or disagreements with Macaulay were not considered in their own right, but rather linked to the conservatives and their leading personalities. It might thus be suggested that alternatives to Macaulay’s political programme could not gain momentum as long as Kitoyi Ajasa and other conservatives such as John Randle and Orisadipe Obasa monopolised opposition to him. It seems that only when the conservative’s political centre of gravity, the People’s Union, dissolved following John Randle’s death in 1928, the Eleko-question, and thus a main driver of Macaulay’s political momentum, was resolved, and the *Nigerian Pioneer* stopped publication following Kitoyi Ajasa’s death in 1937, that alternatives, which, as the above has shown, had been formulated since the 1920s, could gain wider ground.¹⁰⁰ It was then that the Nigerian Youth Movement, founded by Ikoli and others, could bring together a range of political positions which differed from Macaulay, such as the ‘conservative’ Adeyemo Alakija and the radical momentum of Nnamdi Azikiwe,¹⁰¹ and successfully compete against Macaulay’s party in 1938. By then, new interpretive frames had emerged and new ways along which Lagos politics could become polarised, became discernible.

⁹⁹ G. Olusanya, ‘The Lagos Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa’, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4:2 (1968), pp. 321-333. See also chapter 4.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Trenton, 2004), p. 48, note 20. Tekena Tamuno similarly suggests that it was the weakness of Macaulay’s opponents that sustained the NNDP’s dominance of Lagos politics. T. Tamuno, *Nigeria and Elective*, p. 55.

¹⁰¹ R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 49-51.

Part 2: “Ojo To Pa Oni-Yere, Ẹwa Lo Bu Ku U”¹⁰² – Something Beautiful Will Come out of Something Ugly

This part of the chapter studies reporting on the close of the Eleko-question in 1931, when Eshugbayi Eleko returned to Lagos after almost six years in exile in Oyo and resumed the Obaship. It thus offers further insight into the nuanced ways in which newspapers convened publics around the issue. In particular, the analysis focusses on reporting in the English-language *Lagos Daily News*, and the bilingual Yoruba paper *Akede Eko*, both of which were associated with the ‘radical’ political camp and those supporting the cause of Eshugbayi Eleko. It further complicates the relationship between Yoruba papers and the political camps, and, moreover, gives insight into more general dynamics between the English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers.

Whereas the cancellation of the Oba’s stipend seems to have had a comparatively limited effect on social configurations in Lagos, the threat of deporting the King was causing anxieties among Lagosians. Since the government had stopped paying the Oba’s stipend in 1920, the people of Lagos had, through the Ilu Committee, provided the King with a £35 monthly “stipend” – thus paying him £10 more than the government had done in the past.¹⁰³ Thanks to this, the Oba was still able to perform the social functions associated with his office. Herbert Macaulay suggested that the Oba was able to fulfil those functions as long as he was residing in his palace, that he would no longer be able to do so should he be deported.¹⁰⁴ Between 1921 and 1925 neither those seeking to reinstate Eshugbayi Eleko as Oba, nor those seeking to

¹⁰² ‘Olofintoto’, *Akede Eko*, 11. July 1931, p. 3. Translation with the help of Olushina Stephens and Akeem Oyedeji. See also; “Ojo pa mi, ojo ko pa ewa ara mi danu” – The rain beats me, but the rain cannot wash off the beauty of my body. A. Jombadi and J. Jombadi, ‘A Pragmatic Study of Yoruba Proverbs in English’, *International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning*, 1:2 (2014), p. 17.

¹⁰³ K. Lawal, ‘Ilu Committee’, p. 198. As with previous constraints on his stipend, the Oba was restricted in the way he could perform his functions, which included accommodating visitors and sending presents to friends. However, in the eyes of his followers, his authority or duty to fulfil his role was in no way infringed upon. Cf. H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat*;

¹⁰⁴ Cf. H. Macaulay, ‘Knavery’, *African Messenger*, 10 November 1921, p. 4.

deport him were met with success. Governor Clifford, under whose tenure the Eleko's recognition was withdrawn, left the matter unresolved until his departure from Nigeria in 1925.¹⁰⁵ During this time the issue received attention and caused controversy intermittently, and was intertwined with various other local political issues.¹⁰⁶ A few months after Clifford's departure, and before Nigeria's designated new Governor, Graeme Thompson, arrived in Lagos, Frank Baddley, the Officer Administering the Government, took action on the matter. In August 1925, he deported Eshugbayi Eleko to Oyo and accepted the nomination of Ibikunle Akitoye as new Oba of Lagos.¹⁰⁷ It seemed that the 'conservatives' had won in the end – following Baddley's decision, a spontaneous deputation consisting of Kitoyi Ajasa, Adeyemo Alakija, Ernest Ikoli and others "requested to be allowed to congratulate the Government".¹⁰⁸ The 'radicals' sought to overturn this decision. Local legal means to protest Eshugbayi's deportation were soon exhausted and the people of Lagos again, under the leadership of the 'radicals', set their hopes on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to rectify the injustice they had, in their view, endured at the hands of the local colonial administration. After five years of legal battles in London, the Privy Council ruled, in March 1931, that the Supreme Court in Nigeria had to re-assess the case. The Lagos press was jubilant at this first victory. When Donald Cameron, the newly appointed governor arrived in Nigeria in June 1931, there was even more reason to celebrate: just two weeks after he was sworn in, Cameron decided that the government would no longer pursue the issue, and that Eshugbayi was free to return to Lagos.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Since 1920 Clifford had, apparently, been invited more than once to "consider the advisability of the deportation of Eshugbayi Eleko". He however declined to do so. TNA: CO 583/135 39701 Eleko of Lagos: 'Officer Administering the Government to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15. August 1925', p. 123.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ TNA: CO 583/135 39701 Eleko of Lagos.

¹⁰⁸ TNA: CO 583/135 39701 Eleko of Lagos: 'Officer Administering the Government to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15. August 1925', p. 132.

¹⁰⁹ Donald Cameron was sworn in as Governor on 17 June, and the government announced that Eshugbayi was free to return to Lagos on 2 July. 'Address by His Excellency the Governor, delivered at a Meeting of the Legislative Council of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Lagos, on 20th July, 1931', *Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. August 1931, p. 1; 'Government Announcement', *Lagos Daily News*, 2. July 1931, p. 1.

The news was celebrated in the Lagos press, while Eshugbayi's opponents remained calm. Between the end of March, when the Privy Council decided that Eshugbayi's case had to be re-assessed at the Supreme Court in Lagos, and the beginning of July 1931, when the Eleko returned to Lagos, every other issue of the *Daily News* contained at least one article relating to the Eleko or his case – in the bilingual *Akede Eko*, reporting on the Oba was even more frequent.¹¹⁰ Some examples of the *Daily News*' coverage included reprinting the detailed proceedings leading up to the Privy Council's decision (requiring the addition of two pages to its usual four-page format), covered the arrival of the Eleko's lawyer in Lagos, the financial position of the King, and reprinted an article from the *Children's Newspaper* which attributed Eshugbayi's "troubles" to him being a King's son.¹¹¹ The account books of Herbert Macaulay's *Daily News* show that issues featuring reports on the Eleko sold well – March and April 1931 were particularly successful months in terms of sales.¹¹² More generally, publication activity increased as a consequence of Eshugbayi's victory, as Patrick Cole observes.¹¹³ *Akede Eko* announced and advertised a play by Adeoye Deniga called 'The Oba's Staff',¹¹⁴ the *Lagos Daily News* advertised the book "Eleko Case in the Privy Council" – which was published in English and Yoruba – as a "book for future reference",¹¹⁵ and Adeoye Deniga moreover published a book on the return of the Eleko's lawyer to Lagos.¹¹⁶ When the Eleko had finally returned to Lagos, this celebratory mood was expressed in various other forms which complemented the newspaper's reporting. I.B Thomas, the editor of *Akede Eko*, was getting the second edition of

¹¹⁰ The *Lagos Daily News* published 69 issues between 31 March and 4 July 1931. 31 one of these issues, and thus almost half of them, reported in some form on the Eleko. *Akede Eko* published 15 issues between 28 March and 4 July, and 15 of those issues reported on the Eleko.

¹¹¹ 'Prince Eleko's Pittance', *Lagos Daily News*, 9. May 1931, p.1; 'Poor King's Son', *Lagos Daily News*, 11. May 1931, p. 1.

¹¹² HMP: Box 7: 'Expenses and Receipts, 1930-1931'.

¹¹³ P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 156. See also K. Barber, 'Translation, Publics, and the Vernacular Press in 1920s Lagos' in T. Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honour of J. D. Y. Peel* (Carolina, 2005), p. 199.

¹¹⁴ 'Opa Eleko', *Akede Eko*, 4. April 1931, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ 'Eleko Case in The Privy Council', *Lagos Daily News*, 1. June 1931, p. 3; 'Now on Sale', *Akede Eko*, 13. June 1931, p. 6. This book was most likely written by E.A. Akintant, not least because it was for sale at the *Eletì Qfẹ* office.

¹¹⁶ HMP: Box 41: A. Deniga, *Abọ Lọya Eleko soju Ẹmi*, 24. April 1931.

his “Life History of Herbert Macaulay, C.E.” ready for sale,¹¹⁷ local artists created banners welcoming the Oba home, people were apparently buying a specific *aṣo ẹbi* in anticipation of celebrating the Oba’s return,¹¹⁸ goldsmiths produced coins depicting the Eleko and Herbert Macaulay, and the Odeon record label sold recordings of praise songs for the two.¹¹⁹ Press controversies with regard to the King’s return were limited and comparatively tame (see below). The last issue that was contested hotly in the Lagos press before the Oba’s return was the the question of who was entitled to speak for the community of Lagos when welcoming the new governor – Henry Carr, the Resident, or Herbert Macaulay’s Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) – and followed well-established patterns (see chapter 4).¹²⁰

The following close examination of the *Lagos Daily News* and the *Akede Eko* reveals that their reporting diverged on the subject of the return of the Eleko, and it might be suggested that the two papers related to the political projects of Macaulay’s NNDP in different ways. Both papers were clearly delighted about the turn of events, and this was, in general, reflected in their reporting, as illustrated above. Only the *Nigerian Daily Times*, which leaned towards the ‘conservatives’, sought to balance the exuberance of joy in the Lagos press. It was for instance addressing that, as a consequence of Eshugbayi’s return, the current Oba had to vacate Iga Idunganaran, the King’s palace.¹²¹

One difference in reporting between the two papers under review was that the *Daily News* styled itself as advocate for public peace by calling for calm in view of the Eleko’s return,¹²² whereas this seems to have been a minor concern for *Akede Eko*. When it announced the Eleko’s return for the next day on 3 July, the English-language paper – on it’s front page – dramatically announced a “great desideratum and indispensable condition for all of us at

¹¹⁷ ‘Now Ready!’, *Akede Eko*, 1. August 1931, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ HMP: Box 41, File 2: ‘Selina Johnson to Herbert Macaulay, 13. June 1931’.

¹¹⁹ Cf. ‘Odeon’ [advertisement], *Akede Eko*, 3. October 1931, p. 13.

¹²⁰ Cf. ‘At it Again!’, *Nigerian Daily Times*, 24. June 1931, pp. 6–7.

¹²¹ ‘Prince Sanusi Olusi’, *Nigerian Daily Times*, 4. July 1931, p. 6.

¹²² Cf. K. Oke, ‘The Colonial Public Sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943’ (M.Phil thesis, Univ. of Vienna, 2013), p. 64 et seqq.

present". It urged readers to "HALT AND READ!", and advised the public that upon Eshugbayi's return the following day, singing and dancing in town should not be accompanied by drums in the public streets, and that the community should cooperate with the police for the maintenance of peace and order. The text closed by declaring to members of the National Democratic Party and its supporters that they were "strongly warned" not to make use of taunting songs, parables, and insinuations. This appeal was signed by Herbert Macaulay and other prominent members of the NNDP, thus charging it with further importance.¹²³ *Akede Eko* duly quoted this appeal, but relegated it to the back of the paper, that is page ten, and, more importantly, decided not to translate it into Yoruba.¹²⁴ The paper thus seems to have sympathised or to some extent associated itself with the cause of the English-language paper, but it did not join what appears to have been a campaign by the *Daily News*. Instead, starting in earnest with the issue published the week following the Eleko's return, the Yoruba-paper extensively covered people's joyous celebrations in the streets of Lagos, their dancing and singing, and in one text even suggested that people were dancing to the sound of the *Korogun*-drum (see below).¹²⁵

Those publishing the *Daily News* soon felt confirmed in their capacity to campaign for public peace, and that the role they had assumed was significant. About two weeks after Eshugbayi's return, Governor Donald Cameron noted in a speech to the Legislative Council that he had been warned that festivities for the Oba's return might be disruptive, that the situation "might be charged with a certain element of danger to the public peace". He continued by

¹²³ C. Adeniyi-Jones, E. Moore and H. Macaulay, 'HALT AND READ! To All Whom it May Concern', *Lagos Daily News*, 3. July 1931, p. 1; 'No Political Processions At Present', *Lagos Daily News*, 24. July 1931, p. 1.

¹²⁴ 'Halt and Read!', *Akede Eko*, 4. July 1931, p. 10.

¹²⁵ On 4 July, *Akede Eko* was addressing the Eleko's return only briefly, but already then it encouraged Lagosians to dance and celebrate, and spoke of the great joy with which the news of his return was received. 'Olofintoto', *Akede Eko*, 4. July 1931, p. 3. The week after the Eleko's return the paper reports that people were singing and dancing all over town with pure happiness, and a contributor writing under the pen name Irohin ko to Afojuba notes that over a thousand people were dancing to a song and the sound of the Korogun drum all over town. Cf. 'Olofintoto', *Akede Eko*, 11. July, p. 3; 'Bo de Kameron lo m'Qba wa bo wa'la t'owo t'owo – Korogun', *Akede Eko*, p. 4; 'Tani l'awa o ni Baba? Sayi! A ni Baba', *Akede Eko*, pp. 6-7. Translation with the help of Akeem Oyediji.

acknowledging the efforts of “certain gentlemen of Lagos” who helped to ensure that public order was, in the end, maintained.¹²⁶ Apparently claiming responsibility for this, the *Daily News* underlined its own as well as the NNDP’s contributions to the maintenance of peace: in an editorial published shortly after Cameron’s speech, the paper emphasised its repeated appeals to people to refrain from political processions.¹²⁷ Although *Akede Eko* did not join the English-language paper’s appeal to call for calm, it nevertheless stressed that there was no danger to public peace when the people celebrated the return of their King – but the paper only did so after Cameron’s speech.¹²⁸

Efforts by the *Lagos Daily News* to style itself as watchdog of public peace was probably owed to colonial policing of the English paper’s content. In 1928, Herbert Macaulay had been charged over the *Daily News’* reporting of the Eleko’s appeal to the Privy Council in the so-called ‘Gunpowder Plot’. When people in Lagos learned of a ruling of the Privy Council against a decision of the Lagos Supreme Court, they were jubilant, and took to the streets, dancing and singing abusive songs about political opponents. Macaulay’s paper published a rumour according to which Eshugbayi was to return to Lagos soon, but that he was under threat as there was a plan to assassinate him. This report was credited with causing “outrages” being perpetrated against Eleko’s political opponents, one of them being jeered at and called a murderer. Macaulay and others involved in publishing the paper were charged and found guilty of publishing a rumour with intent to incite one class of the community against another – Macaulay was imprisoned.¹²⁹ Likely as a consequence of this, the Attorney-General’s Office closely followed what Macaulay’s paper was reporting with regard to the Eleko. In May 1929,

¹²⁶ ‘Address by His Excellency the Governor, delivered at a Meeting of the Legislative Council of Nigeria, held in the Council Chamber, Lagos, on 20th July, 1931’, *Nigerian Pioneer*, 14. August 1931, p. 1.

¹²⁷ The paper had also called upon people to refrain from political processions for a month. ‘No Political Processions at Present’, *Lagos Daily News*, 24. July 1931, p. 1.

¹²⁸ Cf. ‘Olofintoto’, *Akede Eko*, 25. July 1931, p. 3; ‘Ajọ Igbimọ Aṣ’ofin Ilu, Legislative Council. (Lati ọwọ Balogun Dodondawa), *Akede Eko*, 25. July 1931, p. 4; ‘Ajẹ ke l’ana, ọmọ ku l’oni’, *Akede Eko*, 25. July 1931, p. 7.

¹²⁹ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 195-6.

the Acting Attorney General wrote to Macaulay requesting that he publish a correction – the paper reported the official stating that the Eleko was dependent on the “paltry” allowance given to him by the government, to which he objected.¹³⁰ Moreover, some Lagosians were following the paper closely, and were eager to point out its transgressions. Later in the same month, Kitoyi Ajasa, S.H. Pearse, Ernest Ikoli and others petitioned then Governor Graeme Thompson to restrain the “pernicious influence” of the *Daily News*¹³¹ – they appealed to the government to take action “to put a stop effectually” to publications bringing members of the community into disrepute, preferably by imposing fines and suspending publication of the paper.¹³²

Given the highly charged situation surrounding Eleko’s return in 1931, the *Daily News*’ warnings seem to have been appropriate indeed: the *Nigerian Daily Times* acknowledged the “warnings of the party leaders”, but, nevertheless, pointed out some disturbances which occurred during the celebrations of the Eleko’s return. Moreover, the paper suggested that the pro-Eleko faction was behind such incidents. In reaction to this, the *Daily News* prided itself with calling the attention of authorities to irresponsible merry-makers on another, however related occasion,¹³³ and the paper moreover distanced itself from those “hooligans” which were arrested by the police.¹³⁴

The fact that *Akede Eko* was simply “culling” the English appeal to calm and not translating it into Yoruba suggests that the main aim behind publishing it was not to reach as many people as possible, but that it was rather serving another purpose.¹³⁵ On other occasions, such as

¹³⁰ Macaulay had reported on the Eleko’s application for leave to appeal to the Full Court of the Privy Council. HMP: Box 41, File 4: ‘Acting Attorney General to the Editor Lagos Daily News, 16. May 1929’.

¹³¹ TNA: CO 583/175/16 Licensing: Publication and Control of Newspapers 1930: ‘Officer Administering the Government to Lord Passfield’, 13. September 1930, p. 1.

¹³² Ibid.: ‘Address presented by Kitoyi Ajasa, 2. May 1929’, appendix A, p. 33.

¹³³ Cf. ‘The Hooligans at Work’, *Nigerian Daily Times*, 7. July 1931, p. 6; ‘Halt’, *Nigerian Daily Times*, 17. July 1931, p. 6; ‘Conviction of Gambari Hooligans’, *Lagos Daily News*, 20. July 1931, p. 1; ‘Police Court News’, *Nigerian Daily Times*, 20. July 1931, p. [5].

¹³⁴ ‘Native Songs – No Surprise’, *Lagos Daily News*, 7. August 1931, p. 3.

¹³⁵ The paper had published previous appeals by Herbert Macaulay to the people to stay calm in Yoruba. Cf. ‘Olofintoto’, *Akede Eko*, 9. May 1931, p. 3.

meetings of the party, the paper had reported news relating to the NNDP in Yoruba.¹³⁶ Furthermore, there seems to have been no direct collaboration between the papers with regard to this campaign to safeguard public peace. This instance of not-translating thus stands in contrast to other Eleko-related occasions when the *Daily News* explicitly referred to *Akede Eko* for Yoruba versions of important texts, such as the government's announcement that it would withdraw its proceedings against the Eleko in July 1931.¹³⁷ There was, thus, no concerted effort by the papers, by publishing warnings in their pages, to reach as many people as possible and thus secure the public peace. Looking at both papers together therefore suggests a limited demonstration of obedience and lawfulness emerging from the radical political camp. It was limited as efforts to that end revolved around the *Daily News*, they were restricted to the English-language, and thus limited in their reach. Moreover, it seems that appeals published in the *Daily News* were directed more at colonial officials and political opponents than towards their own constituency.¹³⁸ This suggests that with regard to reporting on the Eleko's return to Lagos, the two papers were pursuing different agendas.

One explanation for this difference in reporting might be that the Yoruba paper saw no need to fully join in this project of calling for peace, in particular, as it seems to have been subject to considerably less scrutiny from officials and denunciation by potential political opponents. Karin Barber shows for 1929 that it was unlikely that a colonial official, who was the addressee of an open letter in Yoruba published in *Akede Eko*, was part of the intended audience of the text. Attacking Frank Baddley, who was disliked not least for his role in the expulsion of the Eleko in 1925 (see above),¹³⁹ seems to have served more showcasing the bravery of the letter writer than actually attracting the official's attention. Barber more importantly for the present

¹³⁶ Cf. 'Irohin kikun nipa ipade Egbẹ Dẹmọ', *Akede Eko*, 27. June 1931, p. 6; 'Irohin Ipade Egbẹ Dẹmọ', *Akede Eko*, 26. June 1929, p. 10.

¹³⁷ 'The Akede Eko', *Lagos Daily News*, 4. July 1931, p. 1.

¹³⁸ Cf. K. Oke, 'Colonial Public Sphere', pp. 64 et seqq.

¹³⁹ Frank Baddley was, as Officer Administering the Government, responsible for Eleko's deportation. TNA: CO 583/135 39701 Eleko of Lagos: 'Officer Administering the Government to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15. August 1925', pp. 119-133.

context suggests that it was unlikely that the official in question took note of the text.¹⁴⁰ Colonial records suggest that there were instances in which reporting in Yoruba aroused the attention of administrators, but it seems they were few, as were complaints by individuals or organisations about the Yoruba press (see also chapter 2).¹⁴¹ Moreover, the Yoruba paper seems to have deliberately used English to suggest, or actually achieve, reaching out to administrators – for instance when, in May 1931, calling attention to the necessity for re-opening the post office in Shaki in English.¹⁴²

Newspaper reporting on the return of the Eleko thus illustrates that the relationship between political projects as communicated in the English-language press and reporting in the Yoruba press was complex. Beyond their generally shared political stance, the papers at times seem to work hand in hand, to even engage in a division of work, for instance when the *Lagos Daily News* points to *Akede Eko* for Yoruba translations of important texts relating to the Eleko-question. Moreover, and given that both newspapers were subject to different levels of official scrutiny, their collaboration could, in theory, result in a powerful alliance. As the Yoruba paper was enjoying considerable leeway in what it could publish, it could print texts which might have resulted in prosecution if they were published in English – it could thus form a powerful organ to reach constituencies unnoticed from official scrutiny. Against this background then, the fact that the Yoruba paper published the appeal and warning signed by the NNDP

¹⁴⁰ I. B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel. I.B. Thomas's 'Life story of me, Seḡilola' and Other Texts* (Leiden, 2012), p. 46.

¹⁴¹ On the one hand, a file on press criticism compiled in Oyo Province only refers to Yoruba papers twice. The file contains one complaint by the Oyo Progressive Union about *Akede Eko*. In the other instance, an article by one Agbaro, son of Toyeye is translated into English, but no action is taken. NNAI: Oyoprof 1: 3835 Oyo Native Administration Press Criticism: 'P. Afolabi to Oyo Native Authority Council, 11. July 1944', p. 220; 'Oyo News. From the Hands of Agbaro, son of Toyeye', pp. 193-197. On the other hand, officials were concerned about *Eko Akete's* reporting on the Eleko when the paper first started publication in 1922. Officials inquired into the spread of the paper to Abeokuta and Ondo. When Residents replied that they had not come across copies of the paper, no further action was taken. NNAI: CSO 26 03975 Eko Akete. Moreover, Intelligence Reports seem to have referred to Yoruba-language newspapers. Cf. NNAI: ABP 736 Vol I Oke-Odan, Ajilete and Ilobi Intelligence Report.

¹⁴² 'Why will not the Shaki Post Office be re-opened', *Akede Eko*, 2. May 1931, p. 7. In one instance, *Akede Eko* starts its 'Owo News' column in English when thanking a District Officer and then continues the column in Yoruba. 'Owo News', *Akede Eko*, 25. July 1931, p. 9.

leadership in English might have amounted to a mere safeguard, suggesting to colonial officials that they were supporting efforts at the maintenance of peace.

The analysis of *Eko Akete's* reporting on the Eleko-question in the first part of this chapter has, however, also shown that Yoruba papers were pursuing agendas of their own. When reporting on the return of the Eleko, and in contrast to the *Daily News's* efforts at calling for calm and restraint, *Akede Eko* repeatedly conveyed the idea that celebrating this victory was the natural thing to do. Contributors to the paper were emphasising, for instance, how with the return of the Eleko, something beautiful had come out of something ugly, that the people had to celebrate after all the sacrifices they had made.¹⁴³ Then, in reporting on the celebrations themselves, the paper went into great detail in its descriptions, for example, noting that Lagosians had taken to the streets to welcome Eshugbayi despite rain, that they were wearing white cloth and red caps – one contributor was reminded of the Eyo masquerade when observing people's processions. Two weeks after the Eleko's return, the paper's focus shifted to the presentations of various groups to the Eleko at the Iga Idunganran (and some at Herbert Macaulay's residence) – the different constellations of people making efforts in this regard were each considered newsworthy. Among the highlights in this regard seem to have been Egun from Ijebu Ode coming to greet the Eleko as well as two Europeans making their way to the Iga.¹⁴⁴ It is also interesting to note that contributions under the pen name "Irohin ko to Afojuba" – a Yoruba saying meaning being told is nothing compared to seeing it with one's own eyes – gradually evolved from celebration coverage in Lagos to a more formal, recurring column under the title "Irohin Iga Idunganran" – News from the King's palace.¹⁴⁵ *Akede Eko* thus not

¹⁴³ 'Olofintoto', *Akede Eko*, 11. July 1931, p. 3. According to Lawal, people were bearing the costs of the celebrations through subscriptions paid to the Ilu Committee. K. Lawal, 'Ilu Committee', p. 199.

¹⁴⁴ 'Eleko wa n'ni'le Eshugbayi l'awa fe l'oba awowo a wo, eni r'oba ni'ga to f'aju d'oba o!!!', *Akede Eko*, 25. July 1931, p. 9; 'E je ka pari Qte yi o, Ka m'enu Eko s'okan, Qle o y'omo enia, ara'le mi o, Qte o y'omo enia – *Ohun orin Begbaji*', *Akede Eko*, 1. August 1931, p. 7; 'Olofintoto. Awon Oyinbo funfun meji do bale korobata niwaju afin-oba Eleko', *Akede Eko*, 22. August 1931, p. 3; 'Awon Egbu "Onfo Akasa" ni Iga Idunganran', *Akede Eko*, 15. August 1931, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. 'Irohin Iga Idunganran', *Akede Eko*, 5. September 1931, p. 9. Translation with the help of Olushina Stephens.

only seemed to join and participate in people's celebrations, but, moreover, to encourage them. In the pages of the Yoruba paper, the return of the Eleko was an occasion to celebrate and shape a sense of pride.

Akede Eko supported Herbert Macaulay, more so, the paper venerated him and praised his efforts to secure the Eleko's return to Lagos. Nevertheless, the paper sought to convene publics in a way that differed from Macaulay's *Daily News*. Although I.B. Thomas, the editor of the Yoruba paper, states that he had been adopted by Macaulay, politically speaking, the Yoruba press was directing the discourses independently and almost in contradiction to the political projects pursued by Macaulay. As illustrated in the first part of this chapter, Thomas Jackson, a prominent supporter of the Eleko and editor of the *Weekly Record*, similarly could not count on *Eko Akete's* unquestioned support and was called to order by the Yoruba paper in 1925. Looking into the nuanced ways in which Lagosians convened publics around the Eleko-question thus highlights the limits of describing political dynamics in Lagos in terms of conservatives versus radicals, and at the same time highlights the political work of newspapermen accomplished when convening publics around various nuanced positions in relation to the Eleko-question.

Conclusion

This chapter has given insight into dynamics in the public sphere by focussing on the ways in which newspapermen and contributors engaged with the Eleko-question in their reporting. This issue, which was a central topic of Lagos politics in the 1920s and early 1930s, revolved around the recognition and status of the Oba or King of Lagos – the Eleko. Officially, the Oba had ceded Lagos, and thus all political and economic authority to Britain in 1861, when the island became a Crown Colony. The Oba was thus only recognised as a private person and the head of the royal family. The way in which the administration engaged with the Oba was, however, fraught with inconsistency. For instance, the administration at times sought the cooperation of the Oba in their bid to rule Lagos. For the majority of the people in Lagos, the Oba was a central social, political and cultural institution, in particular as the government was still quite aloof from everyday life in the city. The administration's control over the Lagos markets, was, for instance, only implemented in the 1930s, ten years after the administration had assumed nominal control of them. The conduct of markets – an institution central to economic and social life – relied on local forms of social organisation, and was part of a hierarchy which was headed by the Oba.

The issue of recognition for the Eleko had occupied the press since the beginning of twentieth-century – Lagosians debated and sought to have the “compassionate” allowance the Oba received from the administration increased. As this was the only income available to the office holder after the annexation of Lagos, an appropriate allowance was crucial for his ability to perform social and cultural functions. In the 1920s this question received unprecedented attention. The Eleko-question became intertwined with other local conflicts and was connected to other political demands of the time. The most prominent among these issues was the Apapa land case. This issue revolved around the question of land rights, and in particular the compensation to be paid by the government for a piece of land acquired in 1915

in Apapa. Amodu Tijani was appealing a decision of the Lagos Supreme Court at the Privy Council in London in 1920, and in an interview with a British newspaper addressed, amongst other things, the issue of the Eleko's stipend. The administration in Nigeria took issue with the points raised in that interview, and suspended the Oba's recognition. Henceforth the Oba's stipend was cancelled, and he relied on the financial support of his subjects. Those who opposed the cause of the Eleko could celebrate a success in 1925, when colonial officials deposed and deported him to Oyo, where he would stay until his this decision was overturned in 1931.

This chapter has argued that the decision of the Privy Council in the Apapa land case had far-reaching consequences for political discussions in Lagos. When Amodu Tijani won his appeal against the administration in Nigeria in 1921, a new political dynamic was validated. This came to mean that descriptions of social reality which were usually associated with the lived experience of "the masses", could no longer be marginalized in the public sphere. The Privy Council decision was perceived as confirming local notions of justice which were formulated in reference to Yoruba understandings of social order. This decision thus informed the ways in which political demands and positions were formulated. When Lagosians sought to overturn the deportation of the Eleko, they again turned to the Privy Council, hoping for a similar confirmation of their understanding of justice in this case.

This chapter has provided an analysis of the ways in which contributors and newspapermen engaged with the Eleko-question in their reporting, and in doing so has further illustrated complex dynamics in the public sphere. The discussion of the Eleko-question following the victory in the Apapa land case seems to have further consolidated divisions between two political camps, the 'radicals' and the 'conservatives'. The former, under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay and Thomas Horatio Jackson, pledged unquestioning support for Eleko – Wale Adebani shows how Herbert Macaulay could successfully direct the aforementioned

new political dynamic. The conservatives, spearheaded by Henry Carr and Kitoyi Ajasa either supported a contender's bid for the Lagos throne or sought to abolish the position altogether. This chapter has illustrated how newspapermen were convening publics in a way that sought to overcome such a polarisation of politics. Ernest Ikoli and Akinwade Savage sought to convene publics around different notions of a 'third way'. Ikoli and his *African Messenger* convened publics around a stance which was in principle supportive of the Eleko, but not at any cost, and particularly not in support of all points brought forward by Macaulay. The paper thus brought together a stance which appealed to an aspiring clerky class with respect for 'traditional' authority in new ways. Savage's notion of a 'third way' convened publics around a notion of 'cosmopolitanism' reminiscent of Sare elite culture with potential support for the Eleko. Looking at the Yoruba paper *Eko Akete*, which is associated with the radical camp in the literature, has illustrated the difficulties and challenges newspapermen faced when seeking to convene publics in such ways. When taking a stance that questioned the course taken by radicals such as Macaulay or Jackson, they were accused of siding with the 'conservatives'.

This analysis of reporting on the Eleko-question has highlighted that interpretive frames and personalities seeking to direct them were intertwined in complex ways. The political ground could shift rapidly when alliances were called into question. Challenges to the political programme of the 'radicals' were not considered in their own right, but rather linked to the conservatives. This chapter has highlighted the limits of describing Lagos politics in terms of 'radicals' versus 'conservatives'. It has suggested that although alternatives to Macaulay's political programme were formulated since the 1920s, they could only gain wider ground once 'conservative' politicians such as Kitoyi Ajasa and Orisadipe Obasa no longer dominated opposition to it.

When analysing reporting on the return of the Eleko to Lagos in 1931, this chapter has given further insight into the nuanced ways in which supporters of the Eleko convened publics in the

press. Upon the return of the Oba, the English-language *Lagos Daily News* urged Lagosians to keep calm and restrain themselves in their celebrations. More so, the paper styled itself the protector of public peace in Lagos. In contrast, and although duly referring to such calls for calm, the Yoruba-language newspaper *Akede Eko* encouraged Lagosians in their celebrations. On the one hand, this further illustrates that the Yoruba press was pursuing political projects fairly independently from those assuming the leadership of the 'radical' camp. On the other hand, this chapter has suggested that the paper's different reporting might have been the result of different levels of colonial scrutiny. While the *Daily News* was apparently closely monitored by officials, Yoruba language newspapers such as *Akede Eko* enjoyed considerable leeway. These different levels of surveillance suggests that, in theory, English-language and Yoruba-language newspaper could form powerful alliances in their bid to woo the Lagos reading public.

Chapter 6 – Progress, Politics and Colonial Information

Management in the 1940s

Introduction

This chapter studies different ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics in the 1940s. In 1947, E.A. Akintan re-launched his bilingual Yoruba newspaper *Eletì Ofè* after a 15-year hiatus, which draws our attention to this particular moment in time. Moreover, the Public Relations Office in Lagos conducted a survey of radio listeners in 1948, and replies to it provide a unique insight into how Lagosians viewed the press. This chapter thus focuses on reporting between 1946-1948 and also highlights how newspapermen and contributors engaged with colonial information management. In doing so, it illustrates how the press navigated a newly configured political scene and new political dynamics. Political discourses were more radical when compared to the 1920s and 1930s – instead of improvement and reform, political demands now centred around self-government. Lagos continued to grow and change, and with it the reading public. The Saro elite no longer dominated politics, more and more Lagosians aspired to middle class status, and, furthermore, Nigerians from various parts of the country came to the city in pursuit of the same goals. New political leaders emerged and mobilized people around a variety of issues such as labour, race, ethnicity or youth. Nevertheless, politics was seemingly dominated by opposition between the Nigerian Youth Movement and the National Council for Nigerian and the Cameroons. Nationalism was, as Frederick Cooper reminds us, only one of the future trajectories on offer. The Richards constitution for instance suggested that ‘regionalism’ was another path along which Nigeria’s political future could develop. The 1940s were also a period in which the colonial state intensified its interventions into discussions in the press. After the war and wartime propaganda, the administration continued to invest considerable effort into maintaining close relations with the press. Besides harnessing media for policy goals such as

development, the administrations sought to appease and tame the educated elite. Through two case studies, this chapter highlights continuities and changes in the dynamics of the public sphere.

After giving an overview of political developments and dynamics in the 1940s, the first section of this chapter studies the ways in which radio listeners viewed the press. This not only offers insights into the ways in which Lagosians navigated the information environment after the war, but also into what they considered to be the importance of the press amidst the political dynamics of the time. Moreover, and by highlighting newspapermen's engagement with information management by the Public Relations Office, this chapter illustrates how newspapermen challenged what Stephanie Newell describes as the "hegemony of representation" the colonial state sought to establish.¹

The second section of this chapter focusses on E.A. Akintan's Yoruba paper *Eletì Ofẹ*, which he relaunched in 1947 after a 15-year hiatus. It studies the ways in which Akintan set out to convene publics with his paper. In particular, it highlights how Akintan adapted his editorial policy of pursuing a 'third way' in Lagos politics compared to the 1920s and illustrates how he, nevertheless, became involved with 'politics' inadvertently. With these different perspectives on the ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics in the 1940s, this chapter highlights the complexity as well as the political possibilities that were on offer in this moment in time.

Politics in the 1940s

In the late 1930s and the 1940s, various factors contributed to the further complication of the political make-up in Lagos. The social composition of the city continued to change, and even more new personalities as well as representatives for new groups sought to make their voice

¹ S. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom in Colonial West Africa', *Media History*, 22:1 (2016), p. 114.

heard in the public sphere. Lagos was still a city dominated by Yorubas,² but as the Provinces – in particular in the East of the country – were catching up with Lagos in terms of education, more and more non-Yorubas, eager to join the aspiring middle classes, were migrating to Lagos. Job prospects associated with defence construction during the Second World War further accelerated this trend.³ As associational activity continued to flourish, those coming to Lagos held close ties, for instance through improvement unions and other associations organised along ethnic lines, to their home towns and regions of origin.⁴

Moreover, and particularly with the onset of the Second World War, broad sections of the community were mobilised into politics more generally – not least due to ever increasing encroachments of the colonial state on the lives of people and in particular on the economy.⁵ During the war, export, imports, and production were controlled by the state, the cost of living rose dramatically, and this and other war-related measures were met with protest and organisational activity in Lagos.⁶ In the course of such protests, personalities such as the labour union leader Michael Imoudu and the head of the market women, Alimotu Pelewura, gained national recognition.⁷

Political ideas which found expression in the newspapers had become more radical since the 1930s – politicians no longer demanded “representation” and “imperial reform” as in the

² P. Baker, *Urbanisation and Political Change*, p. 36. Before 1963, the city's Yoruba population was never less than 70% of people living in Lagos.

³ S. Johnson, 'Grass Roots Organizing. Women in Anticolonial Activity in Southwestern Nigeria', *African Studies Review*, 25:2-3 (1982), p. 141.

⁴ J. Coleman, *Nigeria. Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 213-5; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects. An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, 2000), p. 125.

⁵ Cf. J. Allman, 'Between the Present and History. African Nationalism and Decolonization', in J. Parker and R. Reid (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013), p. 227.

⁶ Sheryl Johnson shows how the Lagos Market Women protested an income tax law introduced mainly to raise revenue for war expenditure. They moreover protested government imposed food price controls and attempts to intervene in the distribution of food through the so called Pullen-scheme. S. Johnson, 'Grass Roots Organizing', pp. 141-3. See also P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 126. According to Insa Nolte, living costs rose by up to 75% in many places between 1939 and 1942. She sees the spread of the union movement as a result of this. I. Nolte, *Obafemi Awolowo and the Making of Remo. The Local Politics of a Nigerian Nationalist* (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 123. In 1942, trade unions protested for a cost of living allowance. H.O. Davies, *Memoirs* (Ibadan, 1989), p. 105.

⁷ P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 155; S. Johnson, 'Grass Roots Organizing', p. 143.

1920s, but insisted on self-determination and self-government instead.⁸ The invasion of Abyssinia by Italian forces, and the passivity of the international community in face of this in 1935, as well as the German demand for the reinstatement of its former colonies, are considered as important catalysts for radicalisation within Africa, but also in broader Atlantic circles.⁹ Penny Von Eschen shows how African-American political discourse increasingly saw racial politics through anticolonial eyes, and David Pratten illustrates how for Nigerian newspapermen and audiences the interpretation of anticolonial politics through a racial lens was gaining importance.¹⁰ The first years of the Second World War are considered a further important turning point; the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and its insistence on the right of self-determination became *one* of the concepts around which politicians formulated demands.¹¹ In the 1940s, the question to be resolved in this respect was *when* self-government should be realised – the West African Student’s Union demanded “Self-Government Now” in April 1942, in 1943 Nnamdi Azikiwe envisioned independent and sovereign political entities in West Africa for 1958.¹²

Another factor in politics was generational change. This was, on the one hand unfolding indeed when a wider range of personalities joined politics and took over from the Saro elite. On the other hand, “youth” was invoked by young and old when making claims to political leadership. Philip Zachernuk shows that such claims to youth were the product of and came to exemplify the changing intellectual climate of the interwar period. Those speaking for and to the youth were mobilised to do so in part as economic and job prospects made their futures

⁸ Cf. P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 99.

⁹ Cf. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 209; I. Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement* (London, 1974), p. 346-8; D. Pratten, ‘Creole Pioneers in the Nigerian Provincial Press’, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016), p. 86; P. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire. Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, 1997), p. 11.

¹⁰ D. Pratten, ‘Creole Pioneers’, pp. 87-91; P. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, pp. 7-8. See also: P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 108, 140.

¹¹ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 229; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 99. See also F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society. The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996) and F. Cooper, *Africa Since 1940. The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002).

¹² J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 240.

seem insecure. Eyo Ita, a prominent activist ascribed “race energy” to youth and thus connected it to other strands along which political mobilization occurred – the “youth” were “Do-somethings” as opposed to those staying inactive.¹³ As alluded to in chapter 5, political opposition to Herbert Macaulay was no longer monopolised by elite Saro gentlemen.¹⁴ Those among the ‘conservatives’ who had possessed ‘radical’ potential all along, could now engage in unfolding it.¹⁵ In 1938 the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) competed successfully against Macaulay’s Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in the elections for the Legislative Council. The NNDP’s constitution had remained unchanged since the 1920s, whereas the NYM demanded “complete autonomy within the British Empire” and thus better captured the political momentum.¹⁶ Moreover, the NYM turned its attention to issues of relevance beyond Lagos. In 1938 it organised protests in Lagos as well as in cocoa farming areas further north against the so-called Cocoa-Pool, a buying agreement by European firms intending to keep prizes for cocoa payable to farmers, low.¹⁷ Besides a claim to leadership based on “youth”, the party’s campaign also highlighted “indigeneity”, and challenged the “Nigerianness” of political contestants, and in this way the long established political leadership of the creole elite.

The complexity of the political situation can be illustrated with the arrival in Nigeria of Nnamdi (Zik) Azikiwe in 1937 and subsequent developments. Azikiwe returned to Nigeria after having studied in the United States and having published a newspaper in the Gold Coast.¹⁸ Upon his return, Azikiwe joined the Youth Movement. With his publishing activity in the Gold Coast, as

¹³ P. Zachernuk, *Nigeria*, pp. 86-7, 108-110.

¹⁴ Kitoyi Ajasa, editor and publisher of the *Nigerian Pioneer* died in 1937; his paper had stopped publication the year before. Orisadipe Obasa, who often defended Henry Carr and launched attacks against Herbert Macaulay in Ajasa’s paper, died in 1940. F. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria, 1880-1937* (London, 1978), p. 253.

¹⁵ R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties. Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Trenton, 2004), p. 56.

¹⁶ Constitution of the Nigerian Youth Movement as quoted in J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 225.

¹⁷ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 226; J. Deutsch, *Educating the Middlemen. A Political and Economic History of Statutory Cocoa Marketing in Nigeria, 1936-1947* (Berlin, 1995), p. 63; T. Falola and M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 142; J. Flint, “Managing Nationalism”. The Colonial Office and Nnamdi Azikiwe, 1932-43’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27:2 (1999), pp. 148, 150.

¹⁸ Azikiwe left Nigeria to pursue his studies in the US. He was among the first to study in the US and not in Britain. P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subject*, pp. 95 et seqq.

well as the publication of his book “Renascent Africa” he had already established himself among those championing “youth”. Azikiwe was celebrated as a hero after he had faced a law suit against his Accra based *African Morning Post* in 1936.¹⁹ When he started publishing the *West African Pilot* in Lagos in 1937, his popularity further increased. Azikiwe’s paper is credited with spreading national consciousness among Nigerians, described as important forum which provided a long-awaited outlet and stimulus for growing nationalism.²⁰ Besides its politics, the paper’s sensationalism and fierceness are credited with its success.²¹

In 1938, the Youth Movement crowned Adeyemo Alakija as its president. Alakija had been involved with the establishment of the *Nigerian Daily Times* in 1925, and he had long been associated with the ‘conservatives’ of Lagos politics.²² The fact that Azikiwe joined the movement thus constituted a cornerstone of the party’s radical credibility.²³ This is in turn considered as one of the factors that enabled the NYM to compete successfully against Herbert Macaulay and his NNDP, which had dominated politics and the Legislative Council elections since 1923.²⁴

Azikiwe’s return also stands for a change among those assuming political leadership in Lagos – for the emergence of an elite with ethnic ties other than to the Yoruba; Azikiwe was Igbo.²⁵ Studies that point out that Azikiwe’s relationship with the NYM was uneasy from the start often emphasise that ethnicity was instrumentalised in the emerging inter-elite competition.

¹⁹ Cf. V. Ikeotuonye, *Zik of New Africa* (London, 1961), p. 129.

²⁰ Cf. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 223; W. Hachten, *Muffled Drums. The News Media in Africa* (Ames, 1971), p. 149; F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 68; L. Uche, *Mass Media, People and Politics in Nigeria* (New Delhi, 1989), p. 95.

²¹ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 222-3.

²² Cf. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 44, 63.

²³ Cf. H.O. Davies, *Memoirs*, pp. 99, 103.

²⁴ Patrick Cole moreover argues that the fact that Chief Oluwa superseded the NNDP as chief supporter of the Oba of Lagos also contributed to the victory of the NYM. The NNDP lost the support of the market women who turned their support towards the broader Youth Movement. P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional*, p. 158. Johnson highlights Pelewura’s connection to the Union of Young Democrats, a more radical offshoot of the NNDP. S. Johnson, ‘Grass Roots Organizing’, p. 139. Sklar argues that “the masses”, which were still an important factor in Lagos politics, were in the process of changing. When Azikiwe teamed up with Macaulay for the formation of the NCNC in 1944, the Lagos “masses” were mobilized away from the NYM again. R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 55.

²⁵ P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, pp. 131 145.

Coleman and Sklar additionally emphasise commercial competition as a factor leading to frictions between the Youth Movement and Azikiwe. Less than a year after Azikiwe had started his *West African Pilot* in 1937, the NYM converted its party organ into a daily paper, the *Lagos Daily Service*. Ernest Ikoli, one of the founders of the movement and among its leadership, became the editor of the paper.²⁶ Accounts by Obafemi Awolowo and H.O. Davies suggest that the movement saw the need to publish an organ competing with the *West African Pilot* as Azikiwe pursued an editorial policy which was not unquestioningly obedient to the party. Azikiwe apparently emphasised that the *Pilot* “was a public forum open to all Nigerians for expression of their views on all public affairs”.²⁷ According to Awolowo and Davies, the *Pilot* published articles in which leaders of the NYM were presented in a bad light. Awolowo recounts that Azikiwe described Davies – one of the initiators of the movement – in 1938 as “simpleton”, which Awolowo considered an “open abuse and rebuke of a worthy colleague”.²⁸ When Azikiwe left the Youth Movement in 1941, contemporaries cited political tribalism as causing this, and thus, as early as 1941, ethnicity was established as a discursive register of inter-elite competition and thus ‘politics’.²⁹ Azikiwe left the party as a result of a power struggle over whom to nominate for a Legislative Council seat that had become vacant. When Ernest Ikoli, then president of the Youth Movement, and an Ijaw, was chosen over Samuel Akisanya, then vice-president of the movement, and an Ijebu-Yoruba, this was interpreted as “manifestation of tribal prejudice against Ijebus and Ibos”.³⁰ However, as Insa Nolte shows, this conflict also illustrated other social tensions within the movement. With not choosing Akisanya, the movement, which was dominated by townsmen (ara ilu), turned against a “rural

²⁶ Cf. ‘The Daily Service’, *Akede Eko*, 2. July 1938, p. 9. According to Coleman, Azikiwe’s enthusiasm for the movement started to cool down from then on. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 227.

²⁷ H.O. Davies, *Memoirs*, p. 96.

²⁸ O. Awolowo, *Awo. The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 134. For both, attacks by the *Pilot* on the movement were the main reason why the movement needed its own newspaper, spearheaded by Ernest Ikoli and H.O. Davies. O. Awolowo, *Awo*, p. 136; H.O. Davies, *Memoirs*, p. 96.

²⁹ Cf. W. Adebani, *Yoruba Elites and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria. Obafemi Awolowo and Corporate Agency* (New York, 2014), p. 5.

³⁰ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 227; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 53-4.

Yoruba” (ara oko).³¹ More generally, discourses centring on ethnicity were further encouraged in a political climate in which regionalism emerged as viable trajectory for future political developments with the division of Nigeria into regions in 1939.³² This was further encouraged with the Richards Constitution of 1946, which established three regional councils in which Africans would find some form of representation.³³

Azikiwe moreover revived discursive registers reminiscent of divisions in the 1920s along the lines of ‘radicals’ and ‘conservatives’. Despite the fact that a broad variety of political dynamics were unfolding, politics seemed to be polarised, and newspapers again mirrored such divisions. In his *Pilot* Azikiwe criticised so-called ‘moderates’ as “Uncle Tom’s” – which he associated with the Youth Movement, and sought to firmly connect his politics with notions of “new Africa”.³⁴ The NYM’s views found expression in the aforementioned *Daily Service*. Various efforts to reconcile Azikiwe with the NYM after 1941 failed, and in 1944 he teamed up with Herbert Macaulay, whom he had beaten in 1938.³⁵ As a result, the radical momentum as well as mass support were lying with the newly created National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC).

Nigeria joined a series of large scale strikes in British Africa in 1945 with a general strike in Lagos. The strike was giving expression to a variety of grievances which had been aggravated during the war (see above) and it was a consumer revolt as well as the result of worker mobilisation in trade unions.³⁶ The strike was spearheaded by Azikiwe and the NCNC and further increased Azikiwe’s popularity (see also below). When Governor Arthur Richards

³¹ I. Nolte, *Obafemi Awolowo*, p. 125. Shortly after losing the nomination, Akisanya contested for the vacant throne of Odemọ of Isara in an attempt to lay claim to urbanity and civilisation. Ibid.

³² W. Adebani, *Yoruba Elites*, p. 6; I. Nolte, *Obafemi Awolowo*, p. 137.

³³ K. Ezero, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 68-69.

³⁴ O. Awolowo, *Awo*, pp. 136, 145; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 110. Anthony Enahoro, who notes that he was more in tune with the politics of the NYM, describes the *Pilot* as the “far more vigorous publication and ... more uncompromising with British rule”. A. Enahoro, *Fugitive Offender. The Story of a Political Prisoner* (London, 1965), p. 65.

³⁵ Cf. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 241; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 56.

³⁶ F. Cooper, ‘African Workers and Imperial Designs’, in P. Morgan and S. Hawkins (eds.), *Black Experience and Empire* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 300, 303.

introduced a new constitution after the war, it was fiercely opposed by the NCNC, which in this campaign further strengthened its claim to radicalism, particularly as the NYM was more cautious in its criticism. The NCNC organised popular support against the constitution which was considered as not going far enough in terms of self-determination. The party toured Nigeria to raise awareness and collect money and support for a protest delegation to the Secretary of State in London. When this delegation to London in 1947 proved ineffective, the movement lost some of its momentum to the more radical Zikists.³⁷

The present chapter seeks to illustrate how these complex political configurations and the multiplicity of political opportunities after the Second World War, a period on the verge of mass nationalism, informed the ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics in the press. In a changing and growing city, the potential readership of newspapers had further diversified, as had the backgrounds and affiliations of those that were assuming positions of political leadership and sought to direct discourses in the press. Publics could be convened around a variety of issues and by employing a range of discursive registers referring to race, ethnicity, indigeneity, youth or town vs. countryside. This chapter illustrates how E.A. Akintan navigated this political environment when relaunching his Yoruba paper *Eletì Ofẹ* after a 15-year hiatus. But first, and by turning to radio listeners, it gives insight into the ways in which newspapers were perceived by potential readers more generally, and highlights how journalists could convene radical, anti-colonial publics in reaction to colonial information management.

“More news about [the] local press”

From the perspective of Lagos media consumers, the information environment, that is, the sources of information that were available, had changed, at the latest with the war (see also chapter 2). One medium that was becoming increasingly popular was radio. The few that

³⁷ Cf. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, 281; K. Ezera, *Constitutional Developments*, pp. 78-9; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 151.

possessed a wireless set could receive broadcasts as early as the 1920s if atmospheric conditions allowed for it. Starting in the 1930s, the British Broadcasting Corporation transmitted programmes to Lagos as part of its Overseas Service, and these broadcasts were made available to the public through rediffusion. That is to say, BBC programmes were distributed via a wired network. In the beginning, the service was experimental, and only around 500 people had access to rediffusion boxes and subscribed to the service.³⁸ In the 1940s, the number of African listeners however increased markedly – radio had become a sought after medium, complementing newspapers. According to replies to a 1941 BBC questionnaire on radio listening in Lagos, about 300 “non-Europeans” were in possession of a wireless licence; the number of Lagosians thus having access to broadcasting was estimated to be about 1,000.³⁹ By 1948, the number of Radio boxes increased to more than 3000 – with a long waiting list. According to a “careful analysis” of the Public Relations Office (PRO) in Lagos, evening programmes, which had the highest numbers of listeners, were reaching a total audience of 36,000 – which was still considered to be an under-estimation.⁴⁰ The survey moreover showed that among Africans, the largest group of listeners were civil servants or clerks – radio was thus appealing to a very similar audience as newspapers.⁴¹ According to self-reported circulation figures, newspapers were reaching about half of the above stated radio audience. However, given that their actual reach was a multiple of their circulation, it seems very likely that the press still outdid radio in terms of reach among the Lagos “reading public”.⁴²

³⁸ T. Chalmers, *Our Broadcasting Service* (Lagos, 1955), p. 4; I. Mackay, *Broadcasting in Nigeria* (Ibadan, 1964), pp. 2-3.

³⁹ TNA: CO 875/3/3 Broadcasting. B.B.C. Empire Broadcasting Service: ‘BBC Empire Broadcasting. Questionnaire on Radio Listening in Colonial Territories. Nigeria, 1941’, p. 39.

⁴⁰ There was no distinction made between ‘European’ and ‘non-European’ listeners. NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: ‘Report on Public Relations Department for the Period January 1949- March 1950’, p. 187.

⁴¹ P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 91; NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: ‘Report on Public Relations Department for the Period January 1949- March 1950’, p. 186.

⁴² According to Enahoro, the *Comet* had a circulation of 15,000 in 1945, during General Strike. A. Enahoro, *Fugitive Offender*, p. 79. According to Zachernuk, circulations increased massively in the 1950s

Starting from 1944, the radio station in Lagos made an increasing number of locally produced programmes available to listeners, and thus generated further interest in radio.⁴³ The most popular programmes were African music followed by the news, particularly popular was news in the vernacular. According to public relations officials, listeners wanted news in the morning and in the evening, and for the rest of the time they wanted to be entertained.⁴⁴ The programmes broadcast from Lagos were designed to serve the broader aims of the PRO with regard to information management such as encouraging ‘development’ and appeasing the educated elite, as illustrated in chapter 2. Programmes included the reading of press releases, “live” broadcasts of events of an official nature, monthly reports on the Lagos Town Council, daily reports on the proceedings of the Legislative Council when in session, “The Week in Review” – a locally produced summary of Nigerian and World News, as well as talks by local people.⁴⁵

In 1948, the PRO conducted a listener’s survey to further improve its radio programme. A questionnaire consisting of 35 questions on radio listening habits, favourite programmes and suggestions for improvement were sent out to all boxholders in Lagos – 99 returned forms are still accessible in the archives.⁴⁶ Some replies given in this survey explicitly refer to newspapers, and thus offer some insight into potential reader’s motivation for engaging with newspapers, as well as into what they expected from the press.⁴⁷ The answers given by

to 96, 000. P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 129. Omu suggests that a single issue of a paper could be read by up to ten people. Cf. F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 83.

⁴³ NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: *Annual Report of the Public Relations Office for the Year 1944*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ TNA: CO 875/3/3 Broadcasting. B.B.C. Empire Broadcasting Service: ‘BBC Empire Broadcasting. Questionnaire on Radio Listening in Colonial Territories. Nigeria, 1941’, pp. 42-3; NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: ‘Report on Public Relations Department for the Period January 1949- March 1950’, p. 187.

⁴⁵ NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: *Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1946*, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁶ NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: ‘Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1948’, p. 112-113. Cf. NNAI: FIS 1/1138 1454/S1 Listener Research Questionnaires Replies.

⁴⁷ Of the 99 replies under review, nine refer to the local press. The views of a 50-year old European Railway Engineer are not included in the following assessment.

listeners illustrate the intellectual climate of the period under review, and put press activity into perspective. As outlined above, newspapers were engaging in 'politics', that is to say, they served as platforms for actors in inter-elite competition. But listeners expected newspapermen to critically engage with policies of the colonial state more specifically and more extensively than before. Their answers thus highlight the more radical potential of publication activity.

For some listeners, radio seems to have fulfilled a function distinct from newspapers, and thus for them, radio and newspapers should complement each other. Answers given by Aweyemi, a 28-year old postal clerk and lover of local music, and in particularly church music, indicate that he was reading the newspapers, and didn't want more of the same on the radio. When asked for his least favourite local programme he lists "Welcome to Lagos" – a programme giving the names of those recently arrived in Lagos – for "those personae would have been read in the local newspapers".⁴⁸ Similarly, a 30-year old technician disliked the translation of foreign news every evening "[b]ecause they are already published [i]n newspapers daily".⁴⁹

Other listeners, however, commented that they would like to hear more about what the newspapers were publishing. Sometime in 1948, the PRO introduced an experimental radio programme engaging with publications in the press – "Let's Get It Straight" was envisioned to debate "important items of topical interest to Nigeria".⁵⁰ The title of the programme suggests that it was designed to complement other efforts of the PRO aimed at holding against "absurd publications" in the press, and it might be considered as an attempt to harness radio when engaging in information management (see chapter 2 and below). However, what made the programme enjoyable for listeners might not necessarily have been what the PRO envisioned. Instead of perceiving the programme as a way to 'get the straight facts', it was rather understood by listeners as an opportunity to engage with publications in the press. This might

⁴⁸ NNAI: FIS 1/1138 1454/S1 Listener Research Questionnaires Replies: 'Questionnaire', pp. 100-101.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

⁵⁰ NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: 'Notes on Broadcasting', n.d. [1948], p. 2.

be illustrated by the way in which a 48-year old trader, who particularly enjoyed news and musical programmes on the radio, remembered the title of this programme in October 1948. When asked how the broadcasting programme could be improved, he stated – presumably referring to “Let’s get it straight” – that the local programme could be improved by restoring the programme “In today’s local papers”.⁵¹ Hearing about what was published in the press was seen as desirable more generally, and was requested at times of the day at which the majority of listeners tuned in, the mornings and evenings. A 34-year old Lagosian, who engaged in trading and banking, turned on the radio particularly for local programmes, and noted that among the local programmes he particularly enjoyed, was “(questions discussions & answers) from local newspapers (daily)”. Moreover, he noted that he would like to have a local programme commenting on local newspapers at 7am and 8pm.⁵² A 54-year old teacher, when asked for comments, stated that he would like “announcements of important topics of general interest in some locally recognised Newspapers to be given between 6.30 and 6.45 am”.⁵³ Moreover, the listener review illustrates that some radio listeners were specifically interested in what “editor cum nationalists”⁵⁴ were thinking about government policy. Newspapers appear thus as having being valued for rendering a particular service or providing a specific product, and not so much as a general source of information. A 25-year old clerk who liked vernacular news and announcements, noted, when asked for comments, that he would like “a review of the editorials of our local papers daily”.⁵⁵ Another 28-year old postal clerk, who equally enjoyed particularly “native airs and music in general” gave as comments for improvement: “have a resume of editors opinions in local dailies especially on govt.-policy”.⁵⁶

⁵¹ NNAI: FIS 1/1138 1454/S1 Listener Research Questionnaires Replies: ‘Questionnaire’, pp. 23-4.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 67-68.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁵⁴ Cf. NNAI: FIS 1/64 Enlightenment of Public Through Supply of Articles to the Press: ‘M. Ajuluchuku to Mr. Cooper, 15. May 1947’, p. 783.

⁵⁵ NNAI: FIS 1/1138 1454/S1 Listener Research Questionnaires Replies: ‘Questionnaire’, pp. 77-78.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 116-117.

A 26 year old clerk, who enjoyed local news the most, commented that he would like to hear “more news about [the] local press”.⁵⁷

These replies to the PRO questionnaire underscore that newspapers were valued for their, presumably critical, engagement with the colonial state. This draws attention to journalists’ self-understanding. In her history of anonymity, Stephanie Newell shows how in the 1940s journalists were seemingly more interested in being personally identified with what they were writing, that journalists such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, even when they used pseudonyms, generally “*wanted* readers to attribute the content of their columns to a physically present, politically active person who circulated around the colonial public sphere producing a new, assertive political agency among local populations.”⁵⁸ Being politically active could mean a variety of things such as contributing to discussions of what or how the nation or other communities of social solidarity and belonging were meant to be, or, as appreciated by the aforementioned 28-year old postal clerk, challenging policies brought forward by the colonial state.

For journalists in Lagos, one of the most frequent and immediate opportunity to challenge the colonial state was in their interactions with the Public Relations Office. Their engagement with this office and colonial information management illustrates more radical ways in which journalists could contest the colonial administration. As already pointed out in chapter 2 and above, the way in which the colonial state engaged with newspapers via the Public Relations Office intensified in the 1940s. The PRO was not only seeking to influence and direct discourses in the press by holding press conferences, giving out information and suggesting topics for journalists to engage with.⁵⁹ Moreover, it was part of the tasks of the office to

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 178-179.

⁵⁸ S. Newell, *The Power to Name. A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, 2013), p. 22.

⁵⁹ In 1946, the PRO sent out more than 800 press releases, in 1948, this number had increased to 4,381. NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: *Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1946*, p. 5; ‘Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1948’, p. 110.

regularly engage with what had already been published in the press. This included sending out press releases addressing issues raised in the press, but also to 'correct' statements published in the press. In particular the latter project of the PRO, which was part of what was described as "Enlightenment of [the] public through supply of articles to the press"⁶⁰, provided ample opportunities for the press to engage in direct debates and contestations with the Public Relations Office. What gave such interactions an explosive potential was the fact that the PRO was apparently seen to act as a substitute for the colonial state.⁶¹ Stephanie Newell points out that newspapermen reacted in vocal, independent, visible and critical ways to the "hegemony of representation" the colonial state sought to establish through propaganda efforts. What follows illustrates the ways in which newspapermen convened publics when doing so.⁶² When journalists were engaging in debates with or challenged the PRO, they were eager to demonstrate that they had the intellectual and moral upper hand, as there was more than their professional reputation on the line. It might be suggested that what was also at stake was contesting the colonial state's capacity to produce knowledge.⁶³

There are prominent examples of how journalists could make the information management regime of the colonial state work for their own goals. One of them is the West African Press Delegation of 1943. As outlined above, the Information Office introduced press conferences during the war as a means to engage with the press. As these constituted chances to meet with colonial officials, newspapermen used them to bring up for discussion topics of interest to them – and not, as was hoped by Information Officers, issues relating to the war.

⁶⁰ Cf. NNAI: FIS 1/64 Enlightenment of Public Through Supply of Articles to the Press; NNAI: FIS 1/67 Enlightenment of Public Through Supply of Articles to the Press.

⁶¹ In 1948, Harold Cooper of the PRO was drawn into a "press controversy" when he was accused to have given Azikiwe preferential treatment. In particular, he was accused of facilitating access to the Governor for Azikiwe. When commenting on this instance, Harold Cooper, noted: "Many people have come to suppose that the P.R.O. is the normal channel for all communication between Government and the public". NNAI: Comcol I 3335 Press Conferences: 'Minutes of Meeting on Saturday, 9. 10. 48 of Press Conference', p. 13.

⁶² Cf. Newell, 'Paradoxes of Press Freedom', p. 114.

⁶³ F. Cooper and A. Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony', in F. Cooper and A. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 11 et seqq.

Information Officers complained about the reluctance of newspapers to take up propaganda material, and their scanty reporting about the war, and sought strategies to change this.⁶⁴ Topics of interest to newspapermen were apparently questions relating to self-government. As a consequence of this, it was argued in the local Information Office that newspapermen should be invited to London in order to encourage their reporting on the war.⁶⁵ London agreed to invite a West African Press Delegation under the auspices of the British Council. For the Colonial Office, this was seen as a chance at “managing nationalism”, and thus as a way to curb politician’s demands relating to self-government.⁶⁶ The visit seems to have had another effect, however. Already on the way to Britain the delegation drafted, under the leadership of Azikiwe, the memorandum “The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa”, which incorporated many ideas Azikiwe had published in the pages of the *Pilot*.⁶⁷ Through the members of the delegation these ideas were conveyed to a wider readership upon the return of newspapermen to West Africa. I.B. Thomas, editor of *Akede Eko* was part of the delegation, and upon his return linked the memorandum to the Atlantic Charter penned by Winston Churchill. In an editorial he informed his readers that the newspapermen had drawn up the memorandum as there was no provision for the position of British West Africa in the Atlantic Charter, and, subsequently, published the demands of the memorandum in Yoruba.⁶⁸

Newspapermen could stand up to the colonial state in powerful ways even when confronted with the most extreme measures of colonial information management. When the reporting of the *West African Pilot* was censored in July 1945, Azikiwe’s paper substituted the planned

⁶⁴ See chapter 2, note 82.

⁶⁵ Newspapermen had asked to be invited to Britain before. TNA: CO 875/7/10 Propaganda Nigeria. Progress Reports: ‘Report on the Activities of the Information Office for the Quarter Ending December, 1942’, p. 57. Officials considered inviting a delegation to Britain as a means to potentially improve relations with the press. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶⁶ J. Flint, ‘Managing Nationalism’. In his report on the visit of the delegation to Britain, Rex Niven describes the aims behind it as impressing the delegation with “practical achievements of municipal self-government”. TNA: CO 554/133/3 Memo on Post-War Reconstruction by W.A. Press Delegation to Great Britain: ‘Visit to England by West African Editors, August 1943’.

⁶⁷ Cf. K. Oke, ‘The Colonial Public Sphere’, p. 79 et seqq.

⁶⁸ Cf. ‘Iwe Adehun ti Atlantik ati Awon Enia dudu abe ijoba gesi’, *Akede Eko*, 25. September 1943, p. 2.

editorial text with a quote from Brendan Bracken on the importance of a free press.⁶⁹ Bracken had served as Minister of Information up to May of that year.⁷⁰ In doing so, the paper could make political points while being censored. When two of Azikiwe's papers were banned following reporting on the General Strike in 1945, this further increased his popularity.⁷¹ The Public Relation Office's aim to "correct" so-called "misleading statements" published in the press provided journalists with more mundane opportunities to contest the colonial state. The aforementioned experimental radio programme "Let's get it straight" can be considered as forming part of colonial efforts to manage the press. Other ways to achieve such ends was sending out 'information' to the press, the publication of periodicals by the PRO, and scolding journalists at press conferences. In Governor Richard's opinion, efforts at providing "simple explanations and counter propaganda" were however having an insignificant effect, as newspapermen could employ such retrospective clarifications and turn them against the state once more.⁷² The press was, indeed, very skilled in countering such attempts to intervene into discussions in the press – it almost seems that they were welcoming opportunities to challenge the colonial state. Even if the papers published texts sent out by the PRO, and thus followed their request to correct "absurd statements", they presented them in a way that further substantiated their own point, and thus served their own agenda. Even seemingly rather insignificant issues could in this way serve to make broader points. When delegates of the NCNC were unable to proceed to the Cameroons, as their vessel had, apparently without prior notice to them, embarked two days early, the *West African Pilot* published an article urging the Marine Department to comment on this turn of events. Following this publication, the Public Relations Office gave out a press release calling the report of the *Pilot* "another

⁶⁹ "A free press is the most watchful sentry of the state. A 'yes' press is fatal to good government." *West African Pilot*, 6 July 1945, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Cf. Bracken, Brendan Rendall, Viscount Bracken, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, May 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32020> (17. April 2018).

⁷¹ R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 60. See also: A. Enahoro, *Fugitive Offender*, p. 80.

⁷² TNA: CO 583/269/2 Pt. 2 Newspapers. Legislation 1946: 'A. Richards to Sir George Gaster, 30. July 1946', p. 4.

deliberate misrepresentation” – and argued that the delegates had been informed about the change of departure. The *Pilot* then questioned how the Marine Department could call the version given by the delegates a deliberate attempt to misrepresent – how could they prove that the delegates had received the notification of the change in schedule and had then decided to deliberately lie about it? The paper called the press release a “pitiful display of apparent psychological defeatism”. Continuing to challenge the Marine Department, the *Pilot* stated: “Merely attempting to flare up and read motives in other people’s statements is only an admission, psychologically, of defeat especially in the face of such scanty evidence as the Marine authorities have so far produced.”⁷³ *The Comet* picked up the issue, and drew out an apparent bias in the Public Relations Department: “The above release makes an assumption which is characteristic of all releases from the Public Relations Department ... that assumption is that every statement from a Government department is gospel truth. Everything else is either lie or ‘deliberate misrepresentation’”.⁷⁴ This incident thus served to contest colonial knowledge production more generally.

At times, newspapermen referred to more subtle tactics when countering the PRO’s attempt to guide the tone and content of their publications, and found ways to avoid scolding by the office. In September 1948 the *Pilot* apparently published a report alleging that the Post and Telegraphs Department was deliberately transferring Ibo-employees to the provinces in a bid to exclude them from the upcoming elections in Lagos in 1950. This “rumour” was taken seriously, and the PRO publication *Nigeria Review* published, under the heading “These are the Facts” an article that insisted that there was no truth in such statements and that the government was not seeking to influence the Legislative Council elections.⁷⁵ The PRO moreover sought to “clarify” the matter with or for journalists. As announced at a previous press conference, the Director of the Posts and Telegraphs Department was invited to join the

⁷³ Ibid.: ‘Marine Department Denies NCNC Agents’ Allegation’, *West African Pilot*, 30. July 1946’.

⁷⁴ Ibid., ‘PRO’s Latest Release’, *The Comet*, 30. July 1946.

⁷⁵ ‘These are the Facts’, *Nigeria Review*, 2. October 1948, p. 8.

conference of 9. October. It was argued that the *Pilot* must have mistaken and ordinary departmental enquiry into where people from the Eastern Provinces were posted for a circular requesting the transfer of people to the East. However, no representative of the *Pilot* was present at the conference, rendering this attempt at 'enlightenment' rather futile.

The *Nigeria Review* was considered as another way in which the PRO sought to influence discussions in the press. In addition to publishing this magazine, the Colonial Office had encouraged the idea of a British owned newspaper to rival Azikiwe's press during the war. The idea of a "Kemsley newspaper" for West Africa – a newspaper by the publishers of British titles such as the *Sunday Times* – ultimately fell through, however.⁷⁶ The PRO envisioned the *Review* as a way to counter discourses initiated in Azikiwe's papers, and prided itself with its strategies to achieve such ends. In 1946 the *Review* started to reply to Nigerian papers and "letters of appreciation and congratulation from Africans" were considered as an indication of the growing popularity and influence of the *Review*.⁷⁷ These efforts were met with hostility by the Lagos press. In August 1947, Azikiwe's *Southern Nigerian Defender* for instance attacked the *Review* after it questioned the willingness of Nigerian leaders to cooperate. This accusation in the *Review* was interpreted as reflecting the unwillingness of the government to admit their responsibility for the country, and as illustrating that the government was taking the issue of cooperation lightly.⁷⁸ The paper had turned the accusation around. As the *Defender* put it in another article: "By now all people must have made up their minds about the work they entrusted to the press – the work of redemption of their country".⁷⁹

⁷⁶ TNA: CO 583/269/ 2 Newspaper Legislation 1945: 'Minute by W.S, 23. October 1945'; TNA: CO 583/269/2 Pt. 2 Newspapers. Legislation 1946: 'A. Richards to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12. July 1946', p. 2. Viscount Kemsley was a conservative newspaper proprietor who in the 1920s purchased titles such as the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. Berry, (James) Gomer, first Viscount Kemsley, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, May 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30731> (17. April 2018).

⁷⁷ NNAI: FIS 1/471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: *Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1946*, p. 1.

⁷⁸ 'Current Affairs by Commentator', *Southern Nigeria Defender*, 22. August 1947, p. 3.

⁷⁹ 'On Land, Sea and Air by Ariel', *Southern Nigeria Defender*, 22. December 1947, p. 4.

The above has illustrated the various ways in which newspapermen could, when engaging with colonial efforts at information management, convene anti-colonial publics. They did so when faced with censorship or when newspapers were banned. Moreover, they could also convene publics in this way when making colonial concerns and engagement with newspaper reporting serve their own ends. And when challenging the Public Relations Office over seemingly minor issues, they did so by contesting the colonial state's capacity to produce knowledge more generally.

This section has given a detailed insight into *one* of the ways in which newspapermen and journalists convened publics in the highly complex political environment of the 1940s. By focussing on a Yoruba language newspaper and offering a comparative perspective, the following section will provide another case study to illustrate other ways in which journalists navigated these complex political dynamics.

Progress and Development as the New 'third way' – *Eletì Ofe* in a Reconfigured Public Sphere

E.A. Akintan re-launched *Eletì Ofe* in June 1947, after a 15-year hiatus, and in a climate in which news in the 'vernacular' were in demand, as the above radio listener surveys have pointed out.⁸⁰ An analysis of the paper's reporting in 1947-1948 illustrates how a newspaperman was seeking to carve out a niche for his paper in a re-configured public sphere. In particular, it gives insight into how Akintan sought to adapt his editorial policy and thus the way in which his paper was convening publics to the new pace of politics. While Akintan sought to avoid 'politics', that is inter-elite competition, this chapter also highlights the limits of *Eletì Ofe's* ability of doing so.

Akintan started *Eletì Ofe* in 1923 and after serving a brief apprenticeship at *Eko Akete* (see chapter 2). His paper thus formed part of broader efforts to reach out to a rediscovered

⁸⁰ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 253; 'We are born again!', *Eletì Ofe*, 21. June 1947, p. 4.

Yoruba readership, which chapter 4 has illustrated. In 1926, he published a serialized story of an orphan under the title “Itan Emi Banwo Omo Orukan”, and thus, together with I.B. Thomas, whose “Life Story of Me, Segilola” came out in 1929, was among the first to produce Yoruba novel(s) in the 1920s.⁸¹

Fred Omu associates Akintan’s paper with the ‘conservatives’, but as chapter 5 has pointed out, the political projects pursued in the Yoruba press were more complex and cannot be subsumed under one of the political camps that seemingly dominated Lagos politics in the 1920s and 1930s.⁸² Accordingly, Fred Omu is unable to explain why, in the course of the Legislative Council elections of 1923, *Eletì Oṣẹ* “refrained from effectively participating in the elections”, and only “published the manifestos of all the candidates”.⁸³ It might be more adequate to describe Akintan’s political project as potentially radical – Akintan sought to pursue a ‘third way’ with his paper, similar to efforts by other newspapermen such as Ernest Ikoli (see chapter 5). He was leaning towards opposing Herbert Macaulay, but, at the same time, he was not necessarily supporting the conservatives. His loyalties most likely lay with the Young Nigeria Party (Union of Young Nigerians), in which Ikoli was prominently involved.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Akintan can be associated with values of Victorian Lagos. In the 1910s, he was a member of the Good Templars, a movement centring on notions of respectability and guiding the ‘un-educated’.⁸⁵ Guidance more broadly was an important aspect of Akintan’s work – he was a teacher at a CMS school, and at the latest from the 1940s he engaged intensively with the instruction of the Yoruba language in his published books and pamphlets.⁸⁶

⁸¹ I.B. Thomas and K. Barber, *Print Culture*, p. 7, note 5. See also T. Falola, *Yoruba Gurus. Indigenous Production of Knowledge in Africa* (Trenton, 1998), p. 21.

⁸² F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, p. 234.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ F. Omu, *Press and Politics*, pp. 56, 233-4.

⁸⁵ Cf. ‘International Order of Good Templars’, *The Nigerian Chronicle*, 5. March 1915, p. 1. See also: N. Sawada, ‘The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society’ (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Birmingham, 2012), p. 99.

⁸⁶ In the early 1940s Akintan published, for instance *First Steps in Yoruba Composition* and *Second Step in Yoruba Composition* – both of which were re-published in 1947. Cf. Birmingham, University of Birmingham Library, The Yoruba Collection of William and Berta Bascom. From the Bancroft Library,

In the 1940s, 'press controversies' were referred to as 'press wars'. The two opposing parties were Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), and the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), which Azikiwe had left in 1941 (see above). In 1947, the two sides engaged in occasional skirmishes in the press, but the last major instance for altercations between the opposing sides before Akintan relaunched his paper was the so-called Assassination Story of 1945. Following the General Strike, Azikiwe gave publicity to a rumour according to which there was a "British inspired" plan to assassinate him.⁸⁷ Some thought he had gone too far by leading people to believe this – the ensuing controversy could only be resolved when the Alake of Abeokuta intervened.⁸⁸ When E.A. Akintan relaunched *Eletì Ofe*, Azikiwe's NCNC was about to leave the country for London to protest the Richards constitution and the "obnoxious ordinances" that came along with it (see above). The radical momentum, and with it popular support, was thus still lying with the NCNC.

While most of the newspapers published in 1947 were loyal to one of the two main political parties,⁸⁹ Akintan sought to continue his project of pursuing a 'third way' when relaunched *Eletì Ofe*. The Nigerian Youth Movement was closely linked to the popular *Irohin Yoruba*, which resumed publication after 1945.⁹⁰ By that time, I.B. Thomas' *Akede Eko* had changed its motto from pleading for the downtrodden and poor to "The Defender of the Yoruba People", and claimed to be "the only popular Yoruba newspaper in Nigeria".⁹¹ For Akintan, a seemingly

University of California, Berkley [Microfilm]. Moreover, he published lectures and essays on the Yoruba language and translations of Yoruba texts into English and vice versa. Ibid.

⁸⁷ A. Enahoro, *Fugitive Offender*, p. 80; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 60.

⁸⁸ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 286-7. According to Coleman, the ensuing "press war" lasted from July 1945 until March 1946. Ibid., p. 291.

⁸⁹ Cf. P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 132.

⁹⁰ The paper was published by the Service Press, which also published the organ of the Youth Movement, the *Daily Service*. I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press. An Outline of the Origins and Development of the Newspaper Press in Nigeria: 1859 to 1965* (Apapa, 1968), p. 117; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 53, note 31. According to Taiwo Olunlade, Obafemi Awolowo was the proprietor of the paper. T. Olunlade, 'Notes on Yoruba Newspapers 1859-2002', in T. Falola and A. Genova (eds.), *The Yoruba in Transition. History, Values, and Modernity* (Durham, 2006), p. 5.

⁹¹ Cf. T. Olunlade, 'Yoruba Newspapers', p. 5. *Akede Eko* changed its motto some time between 1938 and 1. January 1941. For *Akede Eko*'s claim to be the only popular Yoruba newspaper, see: Comcol 9/3 CrdV/P/22 Akede Eko. Lagos. Application from: 'I.B. Thomas to Director of Commerce and Industries, 8. January, 1948'.

restrained participation in politics continued to be his editorial policy as well as his ‘unique selling proposition’. Even more, tensions between the political parties might have encouraged Akintan to re-launch his paper in the first place. In its first issues, *Eletì Qfẹ* noted in its English section: “We are not out to work against anybody or anything except against lying, deceit and wickedness. All true persons are our friends. We are out to help our country in our own small way.”⁹² The new motto of the papers was: “You cannot report openly that you hate a man because he is superior to you”.⁹³ A week later, the paper narrated an encounter with a friend, who was asking ‘them’ whether they wanted to engage in politics, and if so, which side they were going to take. In answering this question, the paper suggested that they felt it as their duty as a “public organ” to go the middle way.⁹⁴ And the ‘middle way’ moreover meant to refrain from press wars. *Eletì Qfẹ* referred to the commendable example of the Indian press, whose editors voluntarily adopted a press code banning scurrilous attacks on leaders and communities.⁹⁵

It seems that without much difficulty, Akintan could adapt his notion of the ‘third way’ to the more radical political dynamics of the 1940s. Instead of advocating reform and improvement, the paper embraced self-government and thus political discourses of the time. It did so, for instance, when it published texts urging the different political organisation to work together: as, to their knowledge, none of the organisations would seek to keep the country in perpetual servitude, and all parties could “certainly work together for Nigeria’s Salvation and independence”.⁹⁶ The way in which Akintan could seemingly best convene publics in non-

⁹² ‘We are born again!’, *Eletì Qfẹ*, 21. June 1947, p. 4.

⁹³ T. Olunlade, ‘Yoruba Newspapers’, p. 5; “A-nju-won kọ ẹ wi l’ẹjọ” *Eletì Qfẹ*, 28. June 1947, p. 1.

⁹⁴ ‘Shall We Write Politics?’, *Eletì Qfẹ*, 28. June 1947, p. 4. Unfortunately, not all parts of this text are legible.

⁹⁵ The paper stated: “The tasks ahead of us as a people are heavy and t[re]mendous, and it is time that the Press can hasten or delay our march towards independence. The Nigerian press will certainly be helping to accelerate our pace if WE ALL BOYCOTT inflammatory articles against individuals or communities, as well as scurrilous, personal attacks. Let us prominently feature those items that will make for peace and harmony in our country. Let’s follow the Indian Editors in their new, desirable resolution.” ‘For the Sake of Peace and Harmony’, *Eletì Qfẹ*, 22. November 1947, p. 4.

⁹⁶ ‘We can all work together’. *Eletì Qfẹ*, 28. October 1947, p. 4.

partisan ways was around notions of progress and development. The aforementioned radio listener's survey of 1948 might illustrate the potential of convening publics along such lines. One listener noted, for instance, that he was interested in radio programmes contributing to "progress" and least liked "speeches detrimental to the progress of Nigeria". When asked for comments, he remarked that he wanted "more local programmes; series of lectures on business management, labour, advice towards improvement of Nigerians & Nigeria[n] economical[,] educationally, socially etc. Advice to Schoolchildren for improvement in character and towards a greater tomorrow. These lectures could be given by Africans and Europeans without prejudice".⁹⁷

Eleti Ofe emphasised its contribution towards the progress and development of Nigeria for instance by thanking readers for their support for the paper and assured them that in this way, they were contributing to the progress of the country.⁹⁸ A letter to the editor by Stephen Akinyode was taking the same line, thanked and greeted the editor and the paper for contributing to "our" progress/development.⁹⁹ Another feature of reporting that conveyed this focus on everything contributing to progress and development within the pages of *Eleti Ofe* was, for instance, the column "Better Your English" – which was distributed by the PRO.¹⁰⁰ The paper also provided useful information for readers such as the date for the next Bar Examination in 1948,¹⁰¹ or urged the government to sponsor industrial scholarships abroad, to provide funding for subjects in "productive trades" such as the boots and shoes industry,

⁹⁷ NNAI: FIS 1/1138 1454/S1 Listener Research Questionnaires Replies: 'Questionnaire', pp. 67-68. See also *ibid.*, pp. 11-12, 57-8, 61-2.

⁹⁸ "Ilọsiwaju ilu Nigeria nigbogo ọna rere ni ELETI OFE wa fun, ajumọse si ni işe na, ELETI OFE nikan ko le da še. Nitorina ẹ gbaruku mọ ELETI OFE ki ẹ si ran a lọwọ lati le işe fun ilọsiwaju ire ati anfani ilẹ Nigeria jakejado. A tun dupe lọwọ nyin lẹkan si, ẹ o sẹgun ọta, ẹ o rẹhin odi o, ami aşe." 'A dupe Lọwọ nyin!', *Eleti Ofe*, 16. August 1947, p. 2.

⁹⁹ "Olotu, Ẹ jọwọ ẹ fun wa ni aye lati fi ayọ ati inudidun wa han fun ilọsiwaju lati ni iru iwe yi ELETI OFE. Qwọ ayin yio ma re oke o. Amin." 'Ilọsiwaju Wa Ninu "Eleti Ofe"', *Eleti Ofe*, 9. August 1947, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. 'Better Your English – No. 9', *Eleti Ofe*, 24. January 1948, p. 4. The column was started by E.A.L. Gaskin, an Education Officer, and published in the government-run *Nigeria Review*. NNAI: FIS 471 992 Annual Report on the Public Relations Department: 'Annual Report on the Public Relations Department for the Year 1948', p. 109.

¹⁰¹ 'For your Diary', *Eleti Ofe*, 2. August 1947, p. 4.

especially given Nigeria's abundance of hides and skins.¹⁰² The paper not only embraced opportunities promising progress and development from both 'political parties', but also gave publicity to similar opportunities offered by the colonial state – as long as they affirmed their own conceptualisations of how progress and development could be achieved.

Eletí Ofe's commitment to convening publics around notions of progress could however also challenge its aim to refrain from 'politics'. This was particularly the case when, in late 1947, the paper started to report on the *Ẹgbẹ̀ Ọmọ Oduduwa*, an association of descendants of Oduduwa, the mythical progenitor of the Yoruba. The *Ẹgbẹ̀* was founded by Obafemi Awolowo in London in 1945, and the inauguration of this association in Nigeria contributed to a rekindling of the press war between newspapers associated with the NYM and NCNC.¹⁰³ As mentioned above, it was at the latest in 1941 that "ethnicity" was introduced as a factor in Lagos politics. More and more politicised associational activity along ethnic lines was promoted by certain circles thinking about the future of Nigeria in terms of regionalism or federalism.¹⁰⁴ Such "ethnic" associations built on existing organisations aiming to bring together rural and urban areas and thus people under different forms of colonial administration, and such associations were oftentimes seeking to facilitate access to educational opportunities through cooperation.¹⁰⁵ The *Ẹgbẹ̀* was a self-declared cultural organisation propagating pan-Yoruba goals, and, similar to improvement unions, sought to contribute to educational advancements.¹⁰⁶ However, it was from among members of this

¹⁰² 'Industrial Nigeria', *Eletí Ofe*, 16. August 1947, p. 4.

¹⁰³ Coleman speaks of the "cold war of 1948". J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 346-7, 471; K. Ezero, *Constitutional Developments*, p. 93; I. Note, *Obafemi Awolowo*, p. 31; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁴ Some contrast Awolowo and Azikiwe in this regard, opining that Azikiwe was more 'Nigerianist' than Awolowo Cf. K. Ezero, *Constitutional Development*, pp. 101, 102. Coleman however highlights that both, Awolowo and Azikiwe, repeatedly emphasised that the "cultural factor" should play an important role in the territorial organization of the country. J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, p. 388; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 85. See also W. Adebani, *Yoruba Elites and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria. Obafemi Awolowo and Corporate Agency* (New York, 2014), p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ J. Coleman, *Nigeria*, pp. 213-214; I. Nolte, *Obafemi Awolowo*, p. 124, 135; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 65; P. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁶ Cf R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 68.

association that Obafemi Awolowo could eventually form a political party, the Action Group, in 1951. In 1947 and 1948 the existence of the Ẹgbẹ became a bone of political contention as it was perceived a threat by some supporters of the NCNC. In fact, some Yoruba supporters of the NCNC formed the Yoruba Federal Union in June 1948 to compete with the Ẹgbẹ for public support.¹⁰⁷

When *Eletì Ọfẹ* published texts addressing the Ẹgbẹ, these were frequently highlighting the organisation's aims with regard to progress and development. The ways in which the paper was seeking to convene publics and the aims of the organisation were going hand in hand seamlessly. Both institutions seem to have subscribed to a notion of progress, development and enjoyment for all, which Wale Adebaniwi associates with "Awoism".¹⁰⁸ For instance, the paper emphasised the educational goals of the association, and published a text by S.L. Durosaro, who emphasised that the movement was not breeding hatred or seeking domineering, but rather sought to overcome the challenges faced by the Yoruba people; Durosaro listed as one of the Ẹgbẹ's achievements ten scholarships for students at the University of Ibadan.¹⁰⁹ One of *Eletì Ọfẹ's* contributions to help Yorubas overcome the challenges they faced in terms of education was that they were, as mentioned above, reprinting the column "Better your English". Six months before the Ẹgbẹ was inaugurated in Lagos, in its second issue, the paper published a text by Agunbiade Bamishe, a teacher, "craving for the coming together of the Yoruba people".¹¹⁰ In doing so, the paper spoke to

¹⁰⁷ R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. W. Adebaniwi, *Yoruba Elites*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁹ S.L. Durosaro, 'Ẹnyin Ọmọ Yoruba, Ẹ Tun Nsun Nigbati Hẹ Ti Mọ?', *Eletì Ọfẹ*, 31. July 1948, p. 1; 'Ẹgbẹ Ọmọ Oduduwa Fi Gbọrọ Jẹka, O Pegede', *Eletì Ọfẹ*, 18. September 1948, p. 2. Translation with Gbenga Adekambi.

¹¹⁰ It is interesting to note is that the writer refers to Yorubas as ọmọ Yoruba, whereas the same group of people is referred to as ọmọ Oduduwa by the Ẹgbẹ. 'Ọrọ pataki fun gbogbo Ọmọ Yoruba', *Eletì Ọfẹ*, 28. June 1947, p. 1. Wale Adebaniwi shows how referring to Yorubas as children of Oduduwa was offering a more inclusive concept of Yorubanness. It highlighted a notion of descent with which various sub-groups could identify. W. Adebaniwi, *Yoruba Elites*, pp. 50-51. The text was given prominence, as it was published on the frontpage of the paper. Moreover, the letter was split in two, thus considered as a topic of considerable interest to readers – it was seen as a way to entice readers to buy the newspaper again the following week. Another interesting detail to note is that next to this text, the paper featured a picture of Nnamdi Azikiwe. The headline above both texts wished the NCNC delegation leaving to

goals the Ẹgbẹ was going to propagate too – this illustrates that Awolowo’s Ẹgbẹ was catching the broader spirit of the time. Furthermore, the paper – as other Yoruba newspapers – had for a long time been practically working towards such goals in its pages. Yoruba papers were associated with preserving culture (see chapter 3), and, more importantly, the paper was, as were other Yoruba papers, embodying the coming together of ‘children of Oduduwa’ by hosting news from different localities and thus about Yorubas from all over the country in its pages.¹¹¹

Eletì Ọfẹ was not the official organ of the Ẹgbẹ – if any newspaper was fulfilling this task, it was the *Star of Oduduwaland*, a monthly newspaper published by Chief Ajani Olujare, who was a Secretary of the Movement in 1948.¹¹² Judging from one incident recorded in the files of the Public Relations Office, the *Star of Oduduwaland* was actively engaging in the more ‘political’ aspects that could be associated with a Yoruba association such as the Ẹgbẹ. Olujare’s paper seems to have been interested in keeping Azikiwe in check, for instance when it followed up on a story which suggested that Azikiwe – and thus Ibos – received preferential treatment by the Governor via the PRO.¹¹³

Reporting on the activities and commenting on the aims of the Ẹgbẹ inadvertently involved *Eletì Ọfẹ* with ‘politics’. Akintan, as well as I.B. Thomas, the editor of *Akede Eko*, became active members of the association soon after its inauguration. Although not assuming positions of leadership, they both identified with the Ẹgbẹ beyond their shared interests in propagating progress and the unity of the Yoruba people.¹¹⁴ Not unimpressed by the political commotion created by the inauguration of the Ẹgbẹ in Nigeria, Akintan repeatedly emphasised that the

protest the Richards constitution farewell. ‘Idagbere fun Gbogbo ikọ Igbimo NCNC’, *Eletì Ọfẹ*, 28. June 1947, p. 1.

¹¹¹ See chapters 2 and 3.

¹¹² I. Coker, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press*, p. 120; I. Nolte, *Obafemi Awolowo*, p. 134; R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political parties*, p. 68, note 78.

¹¹³ See above, note 58.

¹¹⁴ I.B. Thomas was part of the delegation from Lagos present at the inauguration of a branch of the Ẹgbẹ in Ibadan in February 1948 ‘Ẹgbẹ Ọmọ Oduduwa Mule Ni Ilu Ibadan’, *Eletì Ọfẹ*, 14. February 1948, p. 1. Neither Akintan nor Thomas are listed as “inaugural officers” by Sklar. R. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, p. 68, note 79.

association was not intending to attack anyone.¹¹⁵ It might be argued that Akintan took it personally when the *Ẹgbẹ* was attacked, as criticising the association was also putting the aims he pursued with *Eletì Qfẹ* in question. Moreover, he also felt the need to express his appreciation about the organisation's growth despite the fact that some influential people had predicted its rapid disintegration.¹¹⁶ Especially the latter remark is reminiscent of communications published in the course of press controversies in the 1920s.

Tensions between political camps were running high in the public sphere in the late 1940s. Even though Akintan and *Eletì Qfẹ* were determined to stay neutral in the ongoing controversies, they became involved inadvertently. Throwing its support behind the *Ẹgbẹ* not necessarily constituted a taking sides of the paper, particularly as many aims of the two bodies overlapped. *Eletì Qfẹ* almost seems to have become involved with 'politics' by association, which on the one hand illustrates that political opposition continued to be a dominant frame along the lines of which the public sphere was organised. On the other hand, this also illustrates that 'politics' was more ubiquitous than ever, that pursuing a 'third way' no longer seemed possible.

In its reporting, and with its focus on progress and development, *Eletì Qfẹ* was holding the colonial state to account to the promises of its re-configured *raison d'être*, that is, the promise of development.¹¹⁷ However, at the same time, and similarly to the content of newspapers in the 1930s, the pages of *Eletì Qfẹ* could give expression to various political concepts at the same time, and thus the paper was alluding to various other aspects of the broader nationalist movement. It did so in a way that was tailored to its particular interests. The aforementioned text by Agunbiade Bamishe was anti-colonial, it emphasised the equality of the Yorubas in comparison to other nations, and argued against imperialism, as it had tarnished the greatness

¹¹⁵ 'Ẹgbẹ Ọmọ Oduduwa pinnu lati ẹ bẹbẹ', *Eletì Qfẹ*, 24. January 1948, p. 1. Translation with Gbenga Adekambi.

¹¹⁶ 'Ẹgbẹ Ọmọ Oduduwa fi gbọrọ jẹka, o pegede', *Eletì Qfẹ*, 18. September 1948, p. 2. Translation with Gbenga Adekambi.

¹¹⁷ Cf. F. Cooper, *African Since 1940*.

of the Yorubas.¹¹⁸ Another text connected the progress of the Yorubas with the progress of the whole of Nigeria – the latter would follow from the former. Political aims were not necessarily restricted to a Yoruba nation,¹¹⁹ and the paper thus illustrated how “ethnic nationalism” and nationalism could go hand in hand.¹²⁰ It might moreover be argued that, despite its conservative stance, the paper was youthful in the sense that it celebrated practical achievements, such as scholarships, and urged people to get active.¹²¹ *Eletì Qfẹ̀* thus also illustrated a way along which more conservative elements could be mobilised to join the broader nationalist struggle.¹²² Furthermore, as the paper was bringing different stands of political mobilisation together in one paper, it illustrates that various potential trajectories for the political future, and when striving for a better life, were not distinct, but overlapping and going hand in hand.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how the political landscape in Lagos was further complicated in the 1940s and has given insight into the ways in which newspapermen navigated these new dynamics. Lagos continued to grow and diversify. People from various parts of the country migrated to the city, not least due to job prospects associated with wartime construction projects. As pointed out in chapter 4, the Saro elite no longer dominated politics, and personalities such as the leader of the market woman, Alimotu Pelewura, and the labour leader Michael Imoudu assumed positions of political leadership. Political discourses had become more radical in the 1930s – instead of reforms, politicians demanded self-determination and self-government. Moreover, the interpretation of anticolonial politics through a racial lens was increasing in importance, and references to ‘youth’ came to exemplify the changing intellectual climate. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who had made a name for

¹¹⁸ ‘Orọ̀ pataki fun gbogbo ọ̀mọ̀ Yoruba’, *Eletì Qfẹ̀*, 5. July 1947, p. 1. Translation with Gbenga Adekambi.

¹¹⁹ ‘Egbẹ̀ Ọ̀mọ̀ Oduduwa pinnu lati ẹ̀ ẹ̀bẹ̀’, *Eletì Qfẹ̀*, 24. January 1948, p. 1.

¹²⁰ Cf. W. Adebani, *Yoruba Elites*, pp. 51-2.

¹²¹ ‘Egbẹ̀ Ọ̀mọ̀ Oduduwa pinnu lati ẹ̀ ẹ̀bẹ̀’, *Eletì Qfẹ̀*, 24. January 1948, p. 1.

¹²² Cf. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, pp. 101-102.

himself as a radical newspaperman in the Gold Coast, and as a champion of 'youth' more generally, returned to Nigeria in 1937. He joined the Nigerian Youth Movement, which was supported by many 'potential radicals' who had been associated with the 'conservatives' in the past. The movement could better capture many of these new political dynamics and could defeat Herbert Macaulay's Nigerian National Democratic Party in the Legislative Council elections of 1938. With Azikiwe, a Nigerian with ethnic ties other than to the Yoruba assumed a central role in Lagos politics. His association with the Youth Movement was, however, short-lived; some contemporaries cite competition between Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* and the movement's *Daily Service* as one reason for the split. Azikiwe left the movement after a power struggle among its leadership. At the latest in the course of this conflict, ethnicity emerged as a discursive register of inter-elite competition and thus as a feature of Lagos 'politics'. Political competition along these lines was further encouraged when Nigeria was divided into three regions and the Richards Constitution of 1946 promised some level of African participation in government along such a rough ethnic division. Azikiwe teamed up with Macaulay in 1944 in the newly created National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Reminiscent of political polarisation between 'conservatives' and 'radicals' in the 1920s, Azikiwe claimed the radical momentum by associating the NCNC with notions of "new Africa", which he contrasted to the 'moderate' politics of the Youth Movement. Azikiwe's party gained popularity rapidly not least due to its participation in the General Strike of 1945 and its protest against the Richards Constitution of 1946.

As illustrated in chapter 2, the ways in which the colonial state intervened in discussions in the press had been increasing since the 1930s. At about this time the British Broadcasting Corporation started transmitting radio programmes to Lagos. Radio, which targeted the same audience as newspapers, and in particular locally produced programmes, became increasingly popular in the 1940s. By studying a survey conducted by the Public Relations Office (PRO) in Lagos, this chapter has given insight into the ways in which radio listeners viewed the press in

1948. The survey suggests that while some Lagosians believed that newspaper and radio content should complement each other, others enjoyed hearing more about what the newspapers published, and thus the more independent views of editors and contributors, in particular about government policy.

This interest in potentially anti-colonial reporting reflected the spirit of the time – journalist's definition of what it meant to be politically active were similarly informed by a notion of anti-colonialism. This chapter has argued that for journalists the most immediate opportunity to contest the colonial state was in interactions with the PRO. Via this office, the colonial state sought to influence and direct discourses in the press, for instance by holding press conferences and suggesting topics for journalists to report on. Moreover, the PRO attempted to clarify what it perceived as misleading statements and sent articles to the press in an effort to 'enlighten' the public along such lines. This chapter has argued that for the press, such interventions were opportunities to contest and challenge the colonial state. When going head to head with the PRO and exposing such efforts as propaganda journalists convened radically anti-colonial publics and challenged the colonial state's capacity to produce knowledge more generally.

By looking at the re-launch of *Eletì Qfẹ* in June 1947 after a 15-year hiatus, this chapter has given insight into another way in which Lagosian newspapermen navigated the complex political dynamics of the 1940s. This chapter argued that when E.A. Akintan first started the paper in the 1920s, he was seeking to convene publics around a notion of a 'third way' in Lagos politics, in a similar way to Ernest Ikoli, as illustrated in the previous chapter. When re-launching *Eletì Qfẹ*, Akintan was sought to distance himself and his paper from 'politics', and discouraged press controversies. Akintan could adapt his notion of a 'third way' to the new political dynamics of the 1940s by convening publics around notions of progress and development. In doing so, he could not only embrace opportunities by both political 'sides',

but also those offered by the colonial state, for instance by re-printing the PRO sponsored column “Better Your English”. However, convening a seemingly neutral public had its limits. When Obafemi Awolowo launched his *Ẹgbẹ Ọmọ Oduduwa* – a Yoruba cultural organisation – in Lagos, Akintan’s paper supported the association not least as its goals resembled how he convened publics in his paper. This chapter argued that *Eletì Ọfẹ* became involved with ‘politics’ inadvertently when the *Ẹgbẹ* became the bone of political contention, and the goals Akintan pursued with *Eletì Ọfẹ* seemed to be under attack too. This illustrates that ‘politics’ were ubiquitous in the 1940s. This chapter has moreover argued that *Eletì Ọfẹ* provided a forum in which contributors could convene publics by bringing together issues of Yoruba progress with themes of the wider nationalist movement and that the paper thus illustrated a way in which more conservative elements could be mobilised to join the broader nationalist movement.

Conclusion

This study has given insight into the ways in which Lagosians constituted and negotiated a discursive field centering around newspapers between the 1880s and 1940s. In particular, it has studied the politics of convening publics in the English-language and Yoruba-language press and the practicalities of newspaper production. That is to say, it has brought together an analysis of discussions in the press with a study of more contextual aspects that shaped what form those discussions could take. In so doing, this dissertation has offered various perspectives on the public sphere in colonial Nigeria. It has narrated a nuanced history of a discursive field which was, amongst other things, central for Lagos politics.

The choice for approaching newspapers in colonial Lagos against the background of the public sphere grows out of recent literature on African print cultures. Such studies have analysed newspapers and other printing and publishing activity in their own right, outside a paradigm of resistance against colonial rule. This has, in turn, made it possible to re-assess the larger structural importance of newspapers in West Africa – to conceive them as forming a forum for debate, open to strangers. Such an approach has formed the background for this study's investigation into the changing dynamics of this discursive field. Informed by recent scholarship on the public sphere, this dissertation has approached the press as a space in which not everyone could find publication and the public sphere as an arena of contested meanings. It has studied power dynamics in the public sphere, as well as challenges and contestations newspapermen and contributors encountered when embarking on convening publics in the press and has argued that Lagosians not only debated a variety of issues in the press, but that the discursive field itself was an issue of debate and negotiation.

Moreover, this dissertation has brought together and compared English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers – various newspapers and publishing activity by a range of actors – and has offered a more comprehensive insight into print culture in colonial Lagos. By focussing on

a range of case studies it has illuminated larger issues at play in this social structure revolving around newspapers. Furthermore, this dissertation has pursued a perspective which highlights the practicalities of newspaper production. In doing so, it has given insight into how more structural aspects such as commercial dynamics and information flows under colonial rule informed the publication of newspapers.

This study has also contributed to the social history of the educated elite and Lagos politics. In its study of print culture, this research has brought light to the cultural, ideological as well as economic work of the educated elite. Not least by comparing publication activity by a range of actors and in a range of newspapers, it has given insight into nuanced relationships and connections within this group, and the ways in which they negotiated generational and ideological change. Studying various ways in which newspapermen and contributors convened publics in the 1920s and 1930s, this dissertation has furthermore highlighted the political complexities of the interwar period. By approaching newspapers in colonial Lagos against the background of the public sphere, it has, moreover, allowed for insights into imperial and more global histories of communication, as it has illustrated various ways in which the Lagos press interacted with wider information infrastructures.

This dissertation has illustrated that not only the convening of a national public, but also the formulation of complex identities, identity politics, histories of social becoming, complex negotiations of what 'modern' Lagos should look like, and also commercial opportunities and constraints form part of the history of the press. Overall, its insights into print culture in colonial Lagos can be clustered around three broader themes. Firstly, it has foregrounded the importance of newspapers in addition to constituting a discursive field. Secondly, it has highlighted the work newspapermen and contributors accomplished when navigating a changing information environment and changing political contexts. It has given insight into how they maintained networks and established nuanced relationships to readers and contributors and has placed these connections in the context of an emerging imperial and

more global information infrastructure, using the example of the Reuters news agency. Moreover, this dissertation has deepened our understanding of how newspapermen and contributors were engaging with information flows emanating from the imperial metropole and the colonial state, how they were navigating publishing activity in face of interventions of the colonial state and how they challenged what Stephanie Newell describes as the colonial hegemony of representation. Thirdly, and when studying the politics of convening publics, this dissertation has highlighted axes along which Lagosians negotiated the discursive field constituted by newspapers. It has also brought to light how commercial opportunities and constraints – an often understudied aspect of print culture – informed dynamics in the public sphere. Moreover, it has provided further insight into the relationship between English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers, and thus into how Lagosians imagined a discursive field in a multilingual environment.

When studying practicalities of the newspaper business, this dissertation has illustrated the ways in which the press formed part of the political and cultural landscape in addition to constituting a discursive field. It has argued that newspapers were not only a means to achieve political ends, but as businesses, were a political end in themselves. They not only advertised projects of economic nationalism, but were also intertwined with various other economic projects, and were themselves considered examples of African industriousness. The example of Duse Mohammed Ali's *African Times and Orient Review*, which brought together the investments of Lagosians and other West Africans, illustrated that newspapers could exemplify economic pan-Africanism. Moreover, this dissertation has highlighted the ways in which newspapers contributed to nationalist projects besides the transmission of ideas. It has shown how newspapers were intertwined with African-owned banks and has thus brought the contribution of newspapers to broader projects of economic nationalism back into view.

When looking into the practicalities of 'news gathering' this thesis has given further insight into the cultural and ideological work newspapermen accomplished in a changing 'information environment'. Looking at the history of the Reuters news agency, and the ways in which newspapermen engaged with the service, this dissertation has contributed to foregrounding the accomplishments of newspapermen when establishing and maintaining information networks and other connections. This study has shown that Reuters established links to Nigeria only 20 years after newspapers resumed publication in Lagos. Nigeria was marginalized in an emerging imperial and ultimately global information and communication infrastructure. Nevertheless, Nigerian newspapermen entertained meaningful connections to newspapers, contributors and readers along the West African Coast, within the British Empire and beyond since the nineteenth century. When analysing reporting on the so-called Crisis on the Niger in 1890, this dissertation has illustrated the centrality of such connections for the ways in which newspapermen reported on issues. It has suggested that *Iwe Irohin Eko* was on the periphery of wider networks facilitating the exchange of information on the West African Coast which in turn contributed to the paper's reluctant reporting on this event.

Moreover, this dissertation has demonstrated the complex relationships newspapermen established through and beyond the pages of their papers. The literature shows that when the owners of the Lagos press reached out to contributors for 'News from the Provinces' they were, at the same time, expanding the reach of their papers. This dissertation has moreover shown that newspapers not only brought together news from various parts of the country, but that they also facilitated connections between people in different localities, seemingly circumnavigating the place of a paper's publication. In showing how newspapers were intertwined with various other commercial projects, this study has also illustrated that relationships between reader/contributors and their editors could change and grow into potential business partners. This dissertation has also highlighted that for Yoruba newspapers, maintaining relations with contributors posed a particular challenge. Regular contributors

were sought after in that city, and many skilled contributors left papers to set up their own ventures.

This dissertation has also further illustrated and highlighted the critical and independent ways in which newspapermen and contributors engaged with information flows emanating from the imperial metropole. Reuters news, which was available via the government at a comparatively low cost in Lagos between the turn of the century and up to the mid-1920s, enabled the Lagosian press to make links and comparisons between the experiences of locals and others as imperial subjects. This dissertation has, however, also shown that the appeal this service had for the Lagos press probably had limits. The Yoruba newspapers which emerged in the 1920s subscribed to the service but barely featured it in its pages, and for the English-language press Reuters failed, at the latest in the late 1920s, to provide 'news of relevance'. This dissertation has thus highlighted other factors besides the cost of the service that contributed to the disconnection of West Africa from the Empire's information broker. This further foregrounds the work accomplished by newspapermen when they intensified connections to Black American and Caribbean newspapers in the 1930s, and in this way brought together anti-colonialism with anti-racism.

Furthermore, this dissertation has given insight into the ways in which newspapermen and journalists navigated publishing activity in the face of a colonial state which increasingly sought to intervene in the press, in particular starting from the 1930s. Following the Second World War and wartime propaganda, the colonial state continued to engage in close information management via the Public Relations Office. The administration sought to harness the media for policy goals and challenged newspaper's reporting in their own publications, at press conferences, or by sending out articles to the press urging them to correct 'misleading' statements. This study has given insight into how potential readers perceived the press in a political climate which was becoming more and more radically anti-colonial. A survey of radio listeners in 1948 showed that the press was valued for their engagement with colonial policy.

By then, journalists had generally come to embrace more politically active personas. This dissertation has argued that when the Public Relations Office sought to influence reporting, the ensuing altercations offered journalists opportunities to convene radical anti-colonial publics. In disputing the reasoning behind these interventions, journalists could challenge the colonial state's capacity to produce knowledge more generally.

By looking at the biographies of newspapermen, textual features, reporting on specific issues, as well as the practicalities of the newspaper business, this dissertation has given insight into various dynamics at play in the public sphere. In particular, it has shed light on the changing politics of convening publics in colonial Lagos. It thus complicates a Habermasian notion of the public sphere as an open discursive space, and not only highlights that the public sphere was an arena of contested meanings, but also illustrates axes along which the composition of this social structure was negotiated in colonial Lagos. Moreover, this study illustrates that the creole elite, which Benedict Anderson considers central for the emergence of a new, nationalist consciousness, was not the only group imagining community in the press. It highlights moments and ways in which this elite was challenged and superseded.

This dissertation has brought attention to the structural challenges and opportunities associated with the newspaper business, which were coming to bear on dynamics in the public sphere. Newspapers were precarious businesses that could barely make ends meet. They were highly dependent on sales, and this study has shown potential ways in which newspapermen sought to increase their returns through their reporting. This allows us to put the controversial nature of newspaper reporting into greater context. Furthermore, in addition to editors, journalists and contributors, a variety of other stakeholders were involved with publishing a newspaper. Drawing on letters of employees at Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News*, this study has given insight into how resulting financial pressures could limit a paper's capacity to convene radical publics. It has suggested that while newspapers were highly dependent on sales, advertising revenue from expatriate commercial interests could placate employees the

paper otherwise struggled to pay. It has thus illustrated how newspapermen had to navigate between convening radical publics around issues such as the boycott of expatriate firms with their ability to bring out a newspaper altogether.

By looking at the ways in which newspapermen and contributors embarked on convening publics in the press, this dissertation has shown that up until the 1920s, discussions in the press were limited to an exclusive circle of elite Lagosians. It has argued that an economy of recognition was at play in the public sphere. For those who could not boast close connections to the Lagos elite, recognition in the wider West-African print network could provide them with the credentials needed to achieve speaker-status in the Lagos press. However, as shown above, eminence alone did not guarantee the success of a newspaper.

This study has illustrated that although members of the anglicised Saro elite held on to political leadership until the 1930s, they felt that their claim to do so was already under threat in the 1920s. Starting at that time, Lagosians sought to convene publics in new ways and to reach out to new groups of readers. This study has argued that such dynamics unfolded against the background of the colonial state questioning the capacity of the elite to represent the wider population. At the same time, and in laying claim to 'representativeness' in other ways, groups hitherto marginalised in discussions in the press sought to convene publics in their own right. The new ways in which newspapermen and contributors sought to convene publics did not go unchallenged. Looking at discursive registers – references to broader themes – this dissertation has illustrated how Lagosians negotiated different notions of how publics should be convened in the press. Interlocutors employed discursive registers when appealing to publics, and equally when challenging and contesting the ways in which others were convening publics. Some among the established elite sought to reinforce Victorian notions of respectability and discredited those that sought to convene publics by alluding to 'mass support'. Discursive registers associated with education and educational credentials

mirrored colonial discourses about education, and the ways in which some sought to convene publics was moreover contested by urging the colonial state to take action.

This dissertation has analysed the way in which Yoruba-language newspapers made reference to class rhetoric when convening publics in distinction from the English-language press in the 1920s. In doing so, it has given insight into the nuances of and changes in the 'vernaculars' of publics, how their overarching narrative, which served interlocutors as frame of reference for their contributions, changed over time. This study has argued that by the late 1920s references to class rhetoric had become declarations of solidarity with limited performativity, which suggests that the public sphere was by then imagined as a more diverse discursive field.

This dissertation has given further insight into dynamics in the public sphere when analysing reporting on issues associated with the so-called Eleko-question. This issue centred on the recognition of Eshugbayi Eleko as Oba or King of Lagos; his recognition was withdrawn in 1920 and he was deported from Lagos in 1925. This study has illustrated that a victory against the colonial administration in the Apapa land case in 1921 validated a new political dynamic, and thus new ways in which political demands and positions were formulated in the public sphere. For discussions in the press this meant that notions of justice, which were formulated in reference to Yoruba understandings of social order, could no longer be marginalised. When seeking justice for the Eleko, his supporters were hoping that their understanding of justice, which was formulated along such lines, would be equally validated.

This study has illustrated that the Eleko-question further divided two political camps in Lagos. Herbert Macaulay and other 'radicals' supported Eshugbayi's cause and successfully directed the new political momentum. They were opposed by the so-called 'conservatives' which opposed Eshugbayi or sought to abolish the office of the Oba altogether. This dissertation has highlighted how newspapermen were convening publics in a way that sought to overcome such political polarisation. Newspapermen such as Ernest Ikoli and Akinwade Savage sought to convene publics around notions of a 'third way' – around varying degrees of support for

Eshugbayi and different ways of appealing to the aspiring middle classes. In its examination of the Yoruba paper *Eko Akete*, this study has provided insight into the difficulties and challenges newspapermen faced when seeking to convene publics in such ways. Their attempts were often dismissed as siding with the 'conservatives'. Against this background, this study has argued that interpretive frames and personalities directing political dynamics were intertwined in complex ways, and that alternatives to this polarisation of Lagos politics could only gain wider ground when leading 'conservative' politicians no longer contributed to discussions in the press.

This dissertation has contributed to our understanding of the ways in which the public sphere was conceptualised in a multilingual environment, and the complex ways in which English-language and Yoruba-language newspapers related to each other. In the 1880s, the public sphere was envisioned as a space for discussion in the English language. With his *Iwe Irohin Eko*, Andrew Thomas sought to transform this sphere by enabling discussions in English and Yoruba side by side. This attempt was, however, unsuccessful, and thus illustrates the limits of Lagosian's 'cultural nationalism' in face of increased racial discrimination in government and trade. When Yoruba-language newspapers re-emerged in the 1920s, they no longer pursued such aims – their English-language and Yoruba-language contents no longer mirrored each other. Yoruba-language newspapers nevertheless imagined the public sphere as a multilingual discursive field – they used English and Yoruba in different contexts and in pursuance of different aims.

This dissertation has moreover shown that Yoruba-language newspapers cannot simply be associated with one of the political camps of Lagos politics – the positions papers took, and the ways in which they convened publics were more complex than that. Colonial prosecution of newspapers focussed on the English-language press, thus potentially encouraging powerful alliances between publications in the different languages. Nevertheless, Yoruba newspapers pursued their own agendas, and convened publics independently. An analysis of reporting on

the return of the Eleko to Lagos in 1931 has illustrated the nuanced ways in which *Akede Eko*, a Yoruba-language newspaper usually associated with the ‘radicals’, related to political projects pursued by this political camp. Instead of joining the ‘radicals’ and their mouthpiece, the *Lagos Daily News*, in their campaign to discourage readers from celebrating the Eleko’s return by calling for calm and restraint, the Yoruba paper joined readers in their celebrations and encouraged them. This study has nevertheless also revealed that there were limits to how much Yoruba newspapers could distance themselves from ‘politics’. This study has argued that E.A. Akintan sought to continue convening publics around a notion of a more neutral ‘third way’ in Lagos politics when he re-launched *Eletì Oṣẹ* in 1947 after a 15-year hiatus. He did so when he convened publics around notions of progress and development, which allowed him not only to embrace opportunities offered by the different political ‘sides’, but, moreover, those offered by the colonial state. When Obafemi Awolowo launched his *Ẹgbẹ̀ Ọmọ Oduduwa* – a Yoruba cultural organisation – in Lagos, Akintan’s paper commended the association and its achievements, not least as its goals, such as uniting all Yorubas, fit well with the ways Akintan convened publics in his paper. This dissertation has argued that *Eletì Oṣẹ* became involved with ‘politics’ inadvertently when the *Ẹgbẹ̀* became the bone of political contention, and Akintan saw the need to defend the association in this course. This illustrates that ‘politics’ had by that time become ubiquitous, not least as ‘ethnicity’ had become one of the discursive registers of inter-elite competition.

Although these chapters have examined newspapers over a substantial period of time, this study still faces certain limitations. Its focus on newspaper reporting has allowed for only a partial exploration of the relationship between the press and other forums for political debate, such as public meetings, since newspaper journalism provides only glimpses into the dynamics of such other arenas.

As the study at hand focusses on the discussion of Lagos ‘politics’, its exploration of the changing ways in which other social fields related to and engaged with the public sphere

remains limited.¹ Although 'politics' encompassed a broad variety of issues, this dissertation does not offer detailed studies of the changing ways in which, for instance, religious institutions related to, or the ways in which religious-based group affinity was expressed in discussions in the press.² Moreover, this dissertation does not offer a detailed analysis of the ways in which political institutions related to the press – although focusing on the discussion of the Eleko-question in newspapers, it offers no systematic analysis of the changing ways in which institutions and proceedings associated with the Oba of Lagos relate to the press more generally.

Nevertheless, this dissertation has illustrated ways in which studies can use the background of the public sphere to fruitfully contribute to histories of the press and print culture. Informed by a body of work that has called for historians to consider the importance of a text's specific textuality, it is seeking to make a case for studying textual production in its broader environment. This dissertation has sought to draw attention to other factors beyond the text which also inform textual production and the broader discursive field. It invites us to consider how the more practical everyday considerations of running a newspaper business and navigating colonial society and the colonial state informed print culture in Lagos.

¹ Andreas Koller identifies such dynamics as an analytical dimension for research on the public sphere. A. Koller, 'The Public Sphere and Comparative Historical Research. An Introduction', *Social Science History*, 34:3 (2010), pp. 272 et seqq.

² Although addressing Lagos Muslims and their engagement with the press in the 1920s, this dissertation does not offer a detailed study of discussions amongst Muslims in the Lagos press. See S. Katz, 'Prestige, Piety and Debate in Early Nigerian Newspapers', *Islamic Africa*, forthcoming 2018.

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Box 7

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Box 19

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Box 29, File 6

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