NEBOLISA CHIDINMA RITA

19/SMS09/043

SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

GST 203

ASSIGNMENT

Summarize chapters 2 and 15 of “Salient Issues in Politics”

**CHAPTER TWO: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE**

When analyzing the historical background of the Nigerian state and government, two eras are considered: the pre-colonial era and the colonial era.

The Nigerian state was creation of the British colonial master during the colonial rule. Before the advent of the British colonial rule, the Nigerian state comprised of states, kingdoms, chiefdoms and empires. Some examples include; the Borno Empire, the Sokoto Caliphate in the North, the Igbo segmentary societies in the East, the Oyo Empire in the West etc. Each entity has different historical, cultural and social compositions.

According to archaeological evidence, the history of Nigeria dates back to the Paleolithic period, when people began to reside in the region. The stone artefacts which were discovered by archaeologist reinforces the fact that Nigerians were active during the stone age civilization The stone age comprised of three eras; the Early Stone Age, the Middle Stone Age and the

The early man who resided in Nigeria did a lot of things to survive. They went hunting for animals and gather fruits to eat. He discovered cutting and chopping tools which were referred to as *Oldowan-type tools.* These early men proceded to making hand axes. Similar tools were found in outside Nigeria at a site in St. Acheul in Northern Nigeria. The early men then progressed to make the heavy chopper which was used for cutting as well. More inventions were made in other ages. However the peak of the Nigerian early man inventions was from 500BC to 200AD. What makes this period unique was the making of sculptures. The figures were found in villages such as Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Benin etc.

The three major ethnic groups had distinct traditional political systems. This will be examined below.

The Yorubas trace their orign to Oduduwa as their founder. They regard Ile-Ife as the the ancestral home of the Yorubas. There are different versions of the origin of the Yoruba people. Johnson, in his book titled “History of the Yoruba”, traced the origin of the Yoruba to the North-Eastern area of Africa, in Egypt. Another version of the origin of the yorubas is the Oke-Oramfe version which is the mythical version of the origin of the Yoruba people.

The Yoruba region comprised of different kingdoms which were similar in structure and organization. Each town had a king who was called “Oba” who lives in a palace called “Aafin”. The Oba was the political and spiritual head of the kingdom, and held the supreme authority in the kingdom. The Oba was entitled to many privileges but limitations were placed on him which were called “eewo”. If violated, the Oba could die. The Oba had lesser rulers who were of different categories. They include “sese ofun”, Baale, Oloja, Ijoye, Idile. The hierarchy of administration in the Yoruba political system includes: at the lowest level was the Baale, the middle level were the ward heads and at the apex level were the group of civil chiefs called “Igbimo Ilu” headed by the Oba. The Oyo Empire was a good example of the pre-colonial administration with four organs. The first organ was the Alaafin Administration comprising of the Alaafin and his retinue of officials. The second organ is the Ogboni cult’s administration. The third was the army which was led by the Are-Ona-Kakanfo.

The Igbos trace their origin to Israel because of the similarity in culture between the Igbos and the Hebrews. Others believe that the igbos have been in their present location for a long time. Another version of the origin of the igbo is the Nri version. The Igbo society was acephalous and its inhabitants lived a segmentary lifestyle. The system was decentralized as there was no traditional ruler that existed just like in the Yoruba kingdom. However, some socio-political institutions to perform administrative duties. These institutions include the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies. The family was headed by the Ofo title holders. Among the Ofo title holders one of them is the most senior who is called the Okpara. The Okpara hold the Ozo title and presided over the council of elders’ meeting. The age group is an association that comprises of individuals who are of the same age group. Such individuals perform minor roles in the society like clear the paths etc. The Oha-na-eze serves as a form of general assembly wer society matters were debated on by everyone in the society. There was also the secret society which comprised of the diviners or intermidiaries between the gods and the people.

The hausa land originally began as fourteen states but were divided into two; the Hausa Bakwai and the Hausa Banza. The origin of the hausas is credited to a man named Bayajidda. Initially, The “Sarki” was the head of a hausa state and had a retinue of officials. However after the Jihad of 1804, a centralized political system was established. The rulers were called the Emir and they presided over the caliphate. The hausa empire was divided into two emirates; the Sokoto and the Gwandu. The Emir was equivalent to the Oba of the Yoruba kingdom. He had a cabinet with a retinue of officials which were; Sarkin Fada, Waziri, Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Sarkin Dan Doka, Sarki Ruwa, Sarkin Pawa, and the Yari. The Emirate was divided into districts and were headed by low-level officers namely; Hakimi, and the village head. The hausa empire’s legal and judicial systems were based on the Islamic legal system called the Sharia.

The Portuguese were the first individuals to arrive in Nigeria before the British. This occurred during the Atlantic-Slave Trade in the 15th century. This was the medium through which the British first came in contact with Nigeria. From this period, Nigeria’s relations with Britain was based on their costal regions. After the abolishment of slave trade, the British employed the gun-boat diplomacy which helped them to occupy the region. As a result of the scramble for Africa by European powers, the Berlin conference was called in order to partition the continent through peaceful means.

Nigeria was officially born in 1914 after undergoing series of amalgamation. The major reason for the 1914 amalgamation was to use the wealth of the South to govern the North.