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**COURSE CODE: GST 203**

**MATRICULATION NUMBER: 19/LAW01/053**

**Assignment**

In about 3-page review Chapter Two, “An Historical Analysis of the Evolution of the Nigerian State” in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics, pages 15-32.

**AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE**

Historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves pre-colonial (period prior to the coming of the colonialists) and colonial period (era of establishment of colonial administration administration) in Nigeria. The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventures with its eventual culmination in the colonisation of Africa. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These among others , includes the Borno Empire, the Hausa States and the Sokoto Caliphate in the North; the Igbo segmentary societies in the East, Benin Kingdom and the Oyo Empire in the West and severa; ethnic identities in the Benin Valley These ethnic groupings significantly differ in the historical, social and cultural make ups.

Archaeological evidences from different parts of the country suggest that Nigeria has been inhabited since the Palaeolithic period 500,000-9000BC, even in the Stone Age. During that period, man was mostly hunters and gatherers. He soon began inventing cutting tools as he evolved. Technology became more advanced in Bronze Age, sculpting came into existence and with time became profound, discovered in sites at Ile-Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Jebba, Benin and others. These sites became landmarks of ancient civilization through excavation.

In Nok in 1936, tin miners discovered a terracotta work, more discoveries of such artefacts in Wamba, Katsina-Ala and Jema. The area were these artefacts were found is known as Nok culture. It is said to be a transitional civilization between Stone Age and Iron Age. Through carbon dating, it was discovered that Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century. Benin craftsmen carved in wood, ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. They made the ivory mask which was used as FESTSAC symbol in 1977.Terracottya and bronze heads give importance to Ife. Some art historians believe that Ife originated from Nok because of the similarities between the two and that Benin learnt its bronze sculpture from Ife. Artefacts were discovered at Igbo Ukwu in 1939 thus leading to the excavation of three sites in that area by Thurstan Shaw. This excavation sites have been dated to the middle of 9th century A.D.

The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, they trace their origin to Oduduwa, and regard Ile-ife as their ancestral home. Various versions exist of the origin of the Yoruba. The Oke Oramfe’s version of the origin of the Yoruba says that Oke Oramfe, which is believed to be the centre from which the world was created is located in Ile-Ife. In the political sphere, the Oyo Empire of the Yoruba was led by the Alaafin. The empire had built-in checks and balances, so that the ruler’s powers were regulated and limited by the Oyomesi (kingmakers); the Bashorun (prime minister). They had power to install and remove any Alaafin if found using power arbitrarily. The Ogboni cult served as the judicial arm, mediating any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafin. The imperial army was led by the Are Ona Kakanfo and charged with protecting the territorial integrity. The empire also had provincial governments led by the Baale or Ilari. Bere festival was held annually to renew fealty to the Alaafin.

The Igbos had a segmented or acephalous culture due to their lack of kings. They are sub-divided into northern, western, south-eastern, north-eastern and eastern Igbos. The most popular story behind of the origin of the Igbos is that which says the Igbos migrated from Israel, this is because of the similarities in both culture. Professor M.A. Onwuejeogwu (2000) regards Nri version as the only authentic version of origin. The Igbos practised direct democracy and were administered through institutions like family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies. Family was the smallest political unit, led by the Ofo title holder. Amongst them, the senior, Okpara, held the Ozo title and led the council of elders. The age grades were organized on a village basis, for work, war or government, clearing paths and serve as police. The council of elders enforced decisions and punished offenders. Seniority was of great importance. The Oha-na-eze was a village assembly were decisions were made. The secret societies were made up of diviners and various oracles, acting as liaison between the living and the ancestors, performing rituals or sacrifices to honour them or ward of evils. The Igbos believes in reincarnation and abhorred profaning deities. Their lives were surrounded by mysticism and superstitions.

The Hausa were made up of fourteen states before the Jihad of 1804, the first seven are called “Hausa Bakwai” and the other seven called “Hausa Banza”. Oral tradition believes that Hausa originated from Bayajidda, an Arab prince who migrated to Daura, killed a monstrous snake oppressing the natives and married the queen. He had seven sons, each became the first kings and established their respective kingdoms. Some believe Hausa originated from the Berber of Sahara or from East Africa. The Hausa were polytheists until Islam was introduced in the 11th century. Politically, the Sarki was the head of state. Sarkin Kasar was ruler of the land and chief judge of the state, aided by a counsel. After Islam was adopted, more offices like Sarkin Yau, Yari Sarki, Madawaki, Magaji, and Dogari were created. The Alkali and Qadi were judicial posts. Islam was introduced to Hausaland in 14th century. The Uthman Dan Fodio jihad led to the conquest of Hausa kingdom and was replaced with centralized emirate government led by Emir, with their headquarters at Sokoto and Gwandu, owing fealty to Dan Fodio. The emirates were divided; the Sultan appointing emirs over the emirates, who were political, administrative and spiritual leaders. They administered according to the doctrines of Islam and Sharia. They were assisted by a council appointed by Uthman Dan Fodio, which included Sarkin Fada (head of palace workers), Waziri (prime minister), Galadima (city administrator), Madawaki (head of army), Magaji (treasurer), Sarkin Dan Doka (inspector general), Sarkin Ruwa (master of water resources), Sarkin Pawa (head of butchers) and Yari (chief superintendent). Hakimi were appointed to make local government efficient, who then appointed village heads to assist them in administration. The judicial administration of Hausa-Fulani was based on the Sharia Islamic legal system was headed by Alkali, the sharia court judge and the Grand Khadi, the chief justice of the sharia courts. They settle disputes in their jurisdictions. The most serious cases were taken to the Emir for judgement.

The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to land in Nigeria through Benin kingdom. The Atlantic Ocean between Europeans and Africans. It became more important in the 15th century with the arrival of the Portuguese. Demand for slaves could be traced to the introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil, Jamaica and Haiti among others. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria. The trade got to, maturity in the 16th centuries. For almost 300 years, Nigeria’s relation with British were dominated by Trans-Atlantic slave trade, but was abolished by the British in 19th century, through the West African Naval Squadron.

After 300 years of shameful slave trade, came the so-called legitimate commerce. This was another golden opportunity for the Europeans to get more directly involved in the affairs of the African states. Europeans first introduced ‘gun-boat’ politics, which they used to formally annex Lagos in 1861; the bulk of Nigeria getting fully occupied in the 19th century. This happened through treaties that were signed with some Nigerian community leaders, and through military conquest of states and deportation of rulers.

The struggle for power among the Europeans led to partitioning of Africa in the 19th century during the 1884-185 Berlin Conference. Before the year 1900, Nigeria was still under British administration. In 1906 the southern protectorate was merged with the Lagos colony, on a purely economic basis. The 2nd amalgamation took place in 1914, where the government amalgamated northern and southern Nigeria. Sir Fredrick Lugard (later Lord) became the Governor-General of Nigeria and governed through the indirect rule system, which is delegating governmental powers to the native authorities or local rulers.