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DEPARTMENT: PERFORMING ARTS

COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTION (GST203)

ASSIGNMENT: In about 3-pages review chapter 2, “an historical analysis of the evolution of the Nigerian state” in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics.

 The exact time when man began to live in Nigeria is unknown but there are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000 -9,000BC. The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment, he had to hunt for animals and gather fruits. The early man advanced from the Stone Age so he had to make hand hoes and axes. These tools were made during the Stone Age but they were refined during the middle stone age and late Stone Age. Though there is evidence of more advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal age.

Nok culture/civilization: The discovery of terracotta head of a monkey by tin miners in nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as wamba,kastina ala and jema. Through the use of carbonating it was discovered that the Nok culture existed between the 5th and 2nd century.

Benin civilization: The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory used as FESTAC symbol in 1977.

Ife civilization: Ife is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Art historians believe that Ife art originated from Nok culture because of the similarities (the neck, wrist and ankles). They also believed that it was from Ife that Benin learnt bronze sculpture.

Igbo Ukwu civilization: Some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area (a burial chamber, a pit, and a compound wall) in the middle of the 9th century AD.

Historical background of pre colonial political system in Yoruba land

The Yoruba’s are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and are united by language. Oduduwa is believed to be the first leader that led the Yoruba to Ile-Ife and subsequently he and his sons and grandsons to find other Yoruba kingdoms.

The Oyo Empire

1. It is a typical example of the Yoruba pre-colonial era. Where the Alaafin was the head of the empire, Oyomesi a council of seven members headed by the Bashorun , the prime minister and the Oyomesi had the power to remove any Alaafin who appeared to be dictatorial.

2. The Ogboni cult administration: The Ogboni cult had a very vital position in Yoruba society, it played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaafi n. it was a kind of counter power to the Oyomesi as well.

3. The army: the army was headed by the Are-Ona-Kakanfo, it was very organized. They were modeled after the central government. They were administered by princes, minor kings and Baale, they were all subject to the Alaafin.

Historical background of pre-colonial political system in Igbo land

The Igbos are best known for their acephalous way of life. They consist of 5 groups

The Igbo of the eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the south eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the north eastern Nigeria, the western Igbo, the northern Igbo. They practiced direct democracy. They were ruled by the family headed by an Ofo title holder (okpara), age grade members, Oha-na-eze. The religious lives of the igbos were surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions.

Historical background of pre colonial political system in Hausa land

Hausa land before 1804 was made up of fourteen states, and they were in two groups Hausa Bakwai(legitimate states) and Hausa Banza (illegitimate states).

The Sarkin was known as the head of state, Sarkin Kasar the ruler of any Hausa sate combined both political and religious functions. Between the 25th and 15th century Islam adopted new political institutions like; Galadima, Madawaki, Magaji, Dogari, Yari Sarkin, Sarkin Yau. And the Sharia law started taking place. After the jihad war by usman Dan Fodio the emir became an absolute Monarch, and the Hakimi was appointed by the emir to administer at the villages.

Colonial administration and indirect rule in Nigeria

After three centuries of slave trade, came the so called period of legitimate commerce. This was another golden opportunity for the Europeans to get more directly involved in the affairs of the African state. The struggle among the European powers for colonies led to the partitioning of Africa among them in the 19th century. Each of the European powers showed was given the opportunity to establish colonies where it had vested interest. To achieve this, a number of measures were to be taken, for example, removal of all visible opposition to the imposition of the colonial rule, expansion and consolidation of British authority over the territory later known as Nigeria.

 Before the year 1990, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1990 the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British colonial office. After the first and second amalgamation, Britain governed Nigeria by means of a system referred to as indirect rule. Indirect rule may be a way the Britain used in the ruling their colonies through local traditional rulers. The British officers defined the frame work of the policies to be adopted and left the implementation to the local personnel or rulers.