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MATRIC NO.: 19/MHS01/203

DEPARTMENT: PHARMACY

COLLEGE: MHS

COURSE CODE: GST 203

REVIEW ON CHAPTER 2 AND 15 IN THE “SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS”

**CHAPTER 2**

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

The historical background of Nigeria is divided into the colonial and pre-colonial period.

The Nigerian state is a colonial result while the pre-colonial period refers to times before colonialism, these pre-colonial times consisted of different chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. The ethnic groups that made up these areas all differed significantly in history and socio-cultural make-ups.

Although the exact time early men lived in Nigeria is unknown there has been evidence to support the theory that they did settle in the area known as Nigeria today since the Paleolithic period (500,000-9000 BC). The “Nigerian early man” worked hard to survive in his environment, he needed food and had to hunt to get this. He invented tools consisting of pebbles made into chopping and cutting tools.

**MAJOR LANDMARK IN EARLY NIGERIAN HISTORY**

During the bronze and metal age, “advanced technology” was discovered in Nigeria. Sculptures were made that range greatly in size, these were discovered in the village of Nok in 1936. These areas were artifacts were discovered were then called the Nok culture or civilization area. they were all made with terracotta and possessed a distinctive artistic style. Axes were also found made of stone and iron. Other places were similar finding were made include; Ile-Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Benin, Jebba and Esie. All these locations had discoveries of terracotta, bronze, wood, ivory and brass. The Benin civilization was important for its art work. One of the masks made was used as the FESTAC symbol in 1977.The Ife civilization was important because of its terracotta and bronze heads; it was also believed that the BENIN learned the art of Bronze sculptures from Ife. Bronze artifacts were discovered in the Igbo-Ukwu area when a toilet pit was mistakenly dug. This led to the excavation of 3 areas; a burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall by an archeologist named Thurstan Shaw.

**TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL NIGERIA**

The 3 major ethnic groups in Nigeria, namely; Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani all have different stories of history and political leadership. The Yoruba people trace their history back to Oduduwa who is also called the father of the Yoruba people, Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of Yoruba people. Johnson in a book he wrote believes that the Yoruba people originated from North-Eastern Africa, which he states is Mecca. Another version originated from Oke-Oramfe which is located in Ile-Ife and is supposed to be the middle or starting point of the world. In all Yoruba land the political structures are very similar, they usually consist of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town had a king known as the “OBA” who resides in the palace known as “Aafin” His paraphernalia included a beaded crown called (Ade), a slipper (Bata), horse tail (irukere) and scepter (ase). The Oba acted as the spiritual and political leader of the kingdom. The king had rulers of lesser rank and status; thee rulers/ subordinates wore crowns made of white beads known as “sese ofun”. These rulers were called the Baale and the Oloja with the Baale’s in charge of the villages and Oloja’s in charge of the farmlands, the towns were further divided into wards which are headed by ijoye. Each compound was headed by a group of patrilineal related people known as Idile.

The igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. One of the most popular stories of origination for the Igbo’s is that they come from Israel, this is due to the supposed similarities in their customs between the Jews and Igbo’s. In Igbo land there was no centralized authority but some socio-political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, executive, administrative, military and judicial functions, such institutes included the family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies. The family is headed by an “ofo” title holder, the most senior of these title holders holds a title called “ozo”, he was known as the Okpara. Age grades were arranged on a village basis. The age grades guarded public morality, and was thus a society of companionship and protection, they were a group of people of the same or close ages. Oha-na-eze was the judicial system in charge of making the laws of a particular village, they were democratic in nature. The secret societies consisted of the diviners’ masquerades. The religious lives of the Igbos were surrounded by mysticisms and superstitions. The Igbos made rules and survived depending on each other based off democracy, there was no authoritative or declared ruler, but all were rulers in their own rights ensuring the smooth flow in society.

In the Hausa state the head of the state is known as the “Sarki”. Sarkin Kasar which means “ruler of the land”, was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa state. The Caliphate was divided into emirates and each was headed by an Emir. He had the responsibility of making laws, enforcing them and maintaining peace and order in the Emirate. He was expected to administer the emirates in accordance with provision of the Islamic and Sharia laws. In fact, he was believed to have divine right to rule. However, each Emir was assisted in the administration of the emirates by a number of advisers. These were:The Waziri( the prime minister of the emirate) The Galadima( administrator of the capital city), The Madwaki(the commander and the head of the emirate army), yari(chief superintendent of prisons in the emirate), Magaji( government treasurer in- charge of the government treasury), Sarkin Ruwa( minister in charge of water resources or the river fishing official), Sarkin Fada( the spokesman of the emir and organizer of palace workers), Sarkin Pawa( head of chairman of butchers at the Abattoir). The Emirate was divided into two (2): The Eastern Empire which consisted of Kano, Katsina, Bauchi, Yola, Zaria, and Gombe and was controlled from Sokoto by Othman Dan Fodio’s son. The Western empire which consisted of Ilorin, Argungu and Kotangora and was controlled from Gwandu by Othman Dan Fodio’s brother. Sokoto and Gwandu were the seats of the Emirs. The Emir of Gwandu controlled the Western empire while the Emir of Sokoto controlled the Eastern Empire. They appointed Emirs in each of the emirates under their jurisdiction. Each emirate was divided into districts for administrative convenience. An official known as Hakimi was usually appointed by the Emir to administer the district. The village heads were appointed by the Hakimi to help in the collection of taxes, e.g. cattle tax (Jangali) and for maintenance of law and order in the village. Islamic laws were the supreme laws of the emirates. The Emir had the capacity of making laws on matters which were not covered by Islamic laws. The Emir was authoritarian and had absolute power. Even though he had a body of advisers, he could ignore or accept their advice. The emirate system was a highly centralized one with the Emir holding almost all the power. He was an authoritarian ruler.

The Portuguese were the first people to land in Nigeria. European slave trading from West Africa began before 1650, with people taken at a rate of about 3,000 per year. The British colonized Nigeria after there was an argument for power amongst the Europeans. The Protectorate was centrally administered by the Colonial Civil Service, staffed by Britons and Africans called the British Native Staff—many of whom originated from outside the territory. Under the Political Department of the Civil Service were Residents and District Officers, responsible for overseeing operations in each region. The Resident also oversaw a Provincial Court at the region's capital. Each region also had a Native Administration, staffed by locals, and possessing a Native Treasury. The Native Administration was headed by the [traditional rulers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_traditional_rulers)—mostly [emirs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emir) in the north and often [obas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oba_%28ruler%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Oba%20%28ruler%29) in the south—and their District Heads, who oversaw a larger number of Village Heads. In 1916 Lugard formed the Nigerian Council, a consultative body that brought together six traditional rulers—including the [Sultan of Sokoto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan_of_Sokoto), the [Emir of Kano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emir_of_Kano) and the [Oba of Benin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oba_of_Benin)—to represent all parts of the colony. The policy of indirect rule used became a model for British colonies elsewhere in Africa.