

Perspectives on Nigerian Peoples and Culture

Perspectives on Nigerian Peoples and Culture

Edited by

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Makurdi, 2016

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Dedication
Our Students

Acknowledgements

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Foreword

To understand a people one must first of all understand their culture. Culture is the sum total of what nature gives to humanity. The Nigerian nation has over 250 ethnic groups and cultures and often times there are clashes between these ethnic nationalities. At present there are problems between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria, the Niger-Delta crises and the Boko Haram Insurgency. The question is thus, how did the Nigerian nation evolve? Who are the Nigerian citizens and what is their economy like?

Indeed, the issue of the evolution of the Nigerian state needs to be put straight. One must also remember quickly that the Nigerian economy is at the low ebb due to the dwindling oil prices at the International Market. Another problem that bedevils the Nigerian state is the issue of ecological and environmental challenges. All these issues need urgent solutions and the book edited by Dr. John E. Agaba and Dr. Chris S. Orngu has attempted a solution.

The book *Perspectives on Nigerian Peoples and Cultures* is a compendium that ex-rays the Nigerian state. It has captured basic topical issues about the Nigerian peoples and culture. The book has examined the evolution of the Nigerian state and discussed the notable ethnic groups in Northern and Southern Nigeria. Other notable topics examined include, the culture zones in Nigeria, Traditional Crafts and Cultural Festivals, Nigerian geography, Peoples and Linguistic classification, Citizenship education in Nigeria, Nigerian economy and the environmental challenges in Nigeria.

The contributions one would observe have delved into the various topics which are their areas of Interest with the aim of proffering solutions to some of the nagging problems confronting the Nigerian state. These contributors, who are seasoned academics of history, have made giant strides and monumental

contributions both to the academic community and the Nigerian state as a whole as their proffered solutions appear to be quite appropriate.

This book is of immense benefit to all Nigerians. Thus students and Lecturers of History, Political Science, Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Anthropology, Geography and indeed miscellaneous readers must all patronise it.

Prof. S.D. Shishima

Dean, Faculty of Arts,

2016

Blurb

For us to be able to achieve our desire for unity in diversity, we need to first and foremost, appreciate our history as a people and then we also have to appreciate and tolerate our divergent cultures. This is the inescapable reality that highlights the need for the study of Nigerian peoples and culture.

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Chapter One

Conceptual Perspectives of Culture

Chris S. Orngu

Introduction

The intellectual engagement of this chapter proceeds on the desire to provide a historical and conceptual background to the understanding of Nigeria's cultural make-up. This will properly guide our knowledge in relation to the country's cultural dynamism and its latent effervescence. To make progress in this direction, it is logical to, first and foremost, provide a historical sketch of the country's cultural diversity and then to highlight the conceptual architecture that underpins a deeper appreciation of what 'culture' entails in both the specific and broad mental constructs.

Background to Nigeria's Cultural Diversity

The Nigerian state is a colonial creation. It is a product of a historical accident that arose out of European adventurism with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Thus, while the European explorers discovered the undeveloped estate that later became Nigeria, the missionaries established the presence of Europe in the area to pave the way for the eventual arrival of the European traders with their aggressive trade interest. First, the European explorers, second, the European Christian Missionaries and, third, the European traders played very important roles in the chronological sequence of events that led to the colonization and creation of the Nigerian state.¹ It was the aggressive economic interest and the

¹ For a comprehensive historical account of this development, see E. E. Ayandele, "External Relations with Europe in the Nineteenth Century: Explorers, Missionaries and Traders," in O. Ikime (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan, Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Ltd, 1980; also see C. S. Orngu, *Socio-Political Conflicts and Nigeria's External Relations, 1953-2005*, Lagos, Bahiti and Dailia Publishers, 2014. For an instructive and elaborate account of Africa's contact with the white race, see Armstrong Matiu Adejo, *Reparations: Africa's New Charge in a Changing World*, Makurdi, Peach Global Publications, 2004. See particularly Chapter Three.

contestation for the avaricious acquisition of the natural wealth of the native peoples that encouraged the convocation of the inglorious Berlin Conference of 1884-85.² Arising from the Berlin Conference, the European interlopers adopted more carefully articulated control mechanisms to bring their effectively occupied territories under their control. It was at the Conference that the British got the imprimatur from the circle of European collaborators to occupy the area that later became known as Nigeria.

What the above development entailed was that the vast area that would soon become Nigeria had become the property of the British colonial powers and thus had to be brought under their effective control. To achieve this, the British colonial administrators quickly established a colony and protectorate of Lagos and Niger territories under the administration of the Royal Niger Company through the instrumentality of a Charter. The exigencies of the moment ultimately challenged the British colonial administrators to come up with more viable ways of optimizing their control over the Nigerian territories at the barest minimum cost. The Niger Committee of 1898, headed by Lord Selborne was, therefore, inaugurated by the British colonial administrators to, among other things, find the means for achieving greater control over the expansive area at the barest minimum cost. As a way out of the financial deficit in the administration of the expansive areas – the Northern and Southern Protectorates, the Selborne Committee recommended the use of available funds from the richer Southern Protectorate to soften the large-scale financial short-falls of the Northern Protectorate. Very significantly, the Selborne Committee recommended an installmental amalgamation process which

² The Berlin Conference was convened to draw the geopolitical map of Africa and to settle the contention of claims and counter-claims over territories by the European powers. For more on this, read C. S. Orngu, "Ethnicity, Identity Politics: Challenges for Nigerian Federalism," in V. Egwemi, T. Wuam and C. S. Orngu (eds), *Federalism, Politics and Minorities in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor G. N. Hembe*, Lagos, Bahiti and Daila, 2014, pp326-27.

eventually took place in three phases. The first phase of the amalgamation took place in 1900, the second phase was in 1906 and the last and final phase took place on January 1, 1914. It was the last phase that brought about major challenges in defining the political future of Nigeria in the light of cultural diversity and ethnic pluralism.

From the above background, it is indisputable that Nigeria is an agglomeration of various ethnic groupings. These ethnic groupings significantly differ in their historical, social and cultural make-ups. This reality points to a complex problematic of tangible socio-political proportions that constantly manifests in socio-cultural conflicts, ethno-religious intolerance, imagined or real political marginalization and many others within the Nigerian milieu. Most of these problems arise and persist mainly because of our improper appreciation of the cultural values, religious beliefs and political inclinations of others. Yet, we all belong to the same political entity that is administered from one centre; we have a common currency; one federal constitution; one national anthem; one national team; one national assembly and several other institutions.

For us to be able to achieve our desire for unity in diversity, we need to first and foremost, appreciate our history as a people and then we also have to appreciate and tolerate our divergent cultures. This is the inescapable reality that highlights the need for the study of Nigerian peoples and culture.

Culture: Some Conceptual Perspectives

In our attempt to give a conceptual impetus to the appreciation of the term *culture*, it is proper to submit that there is a seemingly irrefutable consensus among scholars of different intellectual orientations on what the term connotes. This is because culture is commonly interpreted to mean the way of life of a people and this could be material or non-material. To that extent, it becomes plausible to argue that a people's over-all life patterns are

conditioned by the adherence to a specific order, which forms an implicit code of conduct.³ Eating habits, choice of foods, relationship with others, behavioural and attitudinal patterns, among other things, can be said to be components of culture.⁴ Clearly, therefore, culture relates to the way and manner with which a given people do the things that are peculiar to them. This goes to explain why culture may be correctly defined as the totality of a people's way of life that manifests through the channels of their belief system, justice system, behavioural patterns, feelings, emotions, morality, possessions and institutions. This validates the claim that culture is a social inheritance that gives structure to people's lives.⁵

It has been correctly argued that human beings are systematically conditioned to conform to culturally defined and constructed patterns of behaviour, thought and belief.⁶ The process of learning to fit in or adapt to a culture is referred to as cultural socialization, which implies that a culture can be learned or adapted to. Perhaps, this explains why E. Nwabueze argues that culture takes the normative, learned and transmitted dimensions.⁷ Whereas the normative aspect of culture entails the goals to be pursued, how to pursue them, the values to be espoused and what constitutes morality, the learned culture involves acquired values, belief systems and rules of conduct. The transmitted dimension of culture is symbolic.

Some scholars view culture as the totality of group expression, a historical process and a dynamic entity.⁸ As a platform of cultural

³ C. S. Orngu, "Cultural Imperialism and the Dilemma of Cultural Diplomacy in Africa," Paper presented at the 4th International Toyin Falola Annual Conference (TOFAC), Durban, South Africa, 3-5, July, 2014, p.3.

⁴ For more on this, see H. I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, New York, International Arts and Science Press, 1976.

⁵ See E. Nwabueze, *Democratization and the Dialectics of Culture in Contemporary Nigeria*, Abuja, NICO, 2011, p.8.

⁶ C. S. Orngu, "Cultural Imperialism and the Dilemma of Cultural Diplomacy ..." p.4.

⁷ E. Nwabueze, *Democratization and the Dialectics of Culture in Contemporary Nigeria*, Abuja, NICO, 2011, p.8.

⁸ For instance, see O. O. Okpoh, Jr. and S. I. Ugbegili, *Themes on Nigerian History, Peoples and Cultures*, Ibadan, Vast Publishers, 2013, p.4.

expression, cultural identity manifests through certain styles of clothing, totems, tattoos and other aesthetic markers. Other channels of group cultural expression are language, graphic arts, sculpture, drama, dance, music, rituals, etc. The strength of cultural identity resides in group cultural expression. But fundamentally it transcends individual human life.

As a historical process, culture is viewed as a factor of development and the establishment of institutions on the basis of specific historical events.⁹ This relates to the interdependence of cultural and institutional factors in social transformation, political development and economic growth. To that extent, this historical process views culture as a functionally related system that is codified within a cybernetic model of featuring some basic functional imperatives.

As a dynamic process, culture changes intermittently in line with the changing social, political and economic realities of a people. Cultural dynamics constitute the inevitable aspect of human existence and can take the forms of cultural socialization, cultural adaptation, cross-cultural encounters or cultural imperialism. While cultural socialization, cultural adaptation and cross-cultural encounters may take a consciously voluntary process, cultural imperialism essentially comes in the form of the super-imposition of a 'superior' culture over an 'inferior' culture.¹⁰ In the Nigerian experience, the forms of cultural synchronization in the global system with its concomitant Euro-

⁹ See F. B. Fiapshev, L. M. Tsikanova and A. A. Fiapshev, "Culture as a Source of Historical Process and a Factor of Economic Development," *Journal of National Interests, Priorities and Security*, 11 (248), March 2014, pp.45-50; also see N. Nunn, "Culture and Historical Process," *Economic History of Developing Regions* Vol. 27, 2012, pp.108-125. For more on this, consult Tebellini Guido, "Culture and Institutions: Economic Development in the Regions of Europe," *Journal of the European Economic Association*, No. 4, 2008, pp. 677-716

¹⁰ The argument here is that contemporary global realities accentuated by noticeable changes in various dimensions, especially in the 21st century, have widened the gulf between the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the superior and the inferior, etc. in this dualistic thesis, African societies have remained at the receiving end. To that extent, African cultures, including those of Nigeria, have been compelled to assume an inferior position in the relations with Western cultures. Whereas the Western cultures are considered 'superior,' African cultures have inevitably assumed the 'inferior' posturing.

Americanization of the country's indigenous cultures profoundly illustrate forced cultural dynamism.

Conclusion

The discussions generated in this chapter have sufficiently shown that culture is the totality of a people's way of life that manifests through the channels of their belief system, justice system, behavioural patterns, feelings, emotions, morality, possessions and institutions. Equally, the discussions have sufficiently demonstrated that Nigeria's cultural make-up is diverse and dynamic. The cultural diversity of the country is linked to the nature of the colonial scheme that brought the various ethno-cultural entities under one institutionalized political and administrative system.

Chapter Two

Notable Ethnic Groups in Northern Nigeria

Terwase T. Dzeka and Emmanuel S. Okla

Introduction

Nigeria has over 250 different ethnic groups, all with their own languages and heritage. The 3 major ethnic groups are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. However there are other notable ethnic groups scattered across the country's two major geographical divides in the North and South. The notable ethnic groups in the north includes Hausa, Kanuri, Fulani, Tiv, Nupe, Igala, Idoma, Jukun, Igbira, and Berom. In this chapter we shall discuss the notable ethnic groups in the northern part of Nigeria. The core emphasis of this segment shall be to highlight the peoples traditions of origin, migration pattern, belief system, and their socio-political and economic activities.

The Hausa Ethnic Group

Hausa is the largest ethnic group in northern Nigeria and by extension the whole country. The term Hausa also refers to a language spoken indigenously by Savannah peoples across the far North from Nigeria's Western boundary Eastward to Borno State and into much of the territory of central Nigeria.¹ Hausa influence has spread to most parts of West Africa and beyond. Next to Swahili, the Hausa language is more widely spoken than any other single indigenous language throughout the continent of Africa.²

¹ countriesstudies.net/nigeria/38.htm 20/5/2016 5pm

² F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.102

There are conflicting legends about the origin of the Hausa States in Nigeria. However, the most popular account traced their origin to a certain Bayajida who emigrated from Baghdad to Kanem Bornu and married the daughter of the Kanuri ruler. Bayajida who was forced to flee Kanem Bornu due to squabbles relocated to Biramta-Gabas, where his wife bore him a son.³ He left his family for Daura where he killed a sacred snake "sarki" which had for years deprived the people of water from a well, except on Fridays. In appreciation of the great feat achieved by Bayajida, the Queen of Daura married him and later gave birth to a son called Bawo. It was Bawo's seven (7) children that became the founders of the original Hausa states known as Hausa Bokwai. The original 7 states are Biram, Daura, Katsina, Zaria, Kano, Rano and Gobir. With the passage of time another 7 states emerged known as the Banza Bokwai. These states are Kebbi, Zamfara, Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Ilorin and Kwararafa.⁴

The various Hausa States emerged as city states and developed well structured centralized political system headed by the King, Sarki and other principal officials. An elaborate judicial department was also put in place, headed by the Alkali and the qadi.⁵

The earliest form of worship in Hausaland was animism i.e pagan idol worship. It was not until the 14th century that Fulani missionaries from Mali started serious work of conversion of people from paganism to Islam in Hausaland. However the people continued to mix paganism with Islam until the advent of the Islamic Jihad of the early 19th C led by Usman Dan Fodio. This development transformed Hausaland into a theocratic state governed by Islamic law. With this development the people's social life such as marriage and education became highly influenced

³ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.103

⁴ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.103

⁵ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.106

by Islamic and Arabic culture. Hence in marriage, the women were put in purdah and were compelled to wear veil in public.⁶

The Hausa architectural style and building design was heavily influenced by the Arabic world. The major occupation of the Hausa is farming. The people also engaged in handicraft such as weaving and dyeing of clothes.

The Fulani Ethnic Group

The Fulani originated in the upper Senegal and were believed to have descended from the union between Tukulor women and Berber traders.⁷ By the 7th century A.D the Fulani had firmly established themselves in West Africa.⁸ The Fulani were among the first people to embrace Islam in West Africa. However, for centuries the Fulani were scattered throughout West Africa and belong to no identifiable kingdom.⁹ By 14th century, Fulani scholars of Islam and pastoralists began to settle in Northern Nigeria. They helped in propagating Islam while discouraging the Hausa from idol worship.¹⁰ By early 19th century the Fulani in Northern Nigeria led by Usman Dan Fodio, an Islamic scholar launched a Holy War, Jihad on Hausa states with the purpose of converting the people to Islam and putting an end to paganism. Usman Dan Fodio's campaign received wide spread support from his kinsmen and even Hausa who were fed up with the corrupt leadership style and high handedness of their leaders.¹¹

The Jihad dramatically altered the political equation of Hausa land as Fulani's who supported Usman Dan Fodio in his campaign took over the seat of power across the land. Ever since, the entire Hausa land was brought under the rulership of the Fulani with Sokoto being the headquarter of the Islamic caliphate.

⁶ www.ecoi.net/.306469-de.htm/ 20/5/2016 6pm

⁷ F. K. Buah, West Africa since A.D 1000, Macmillan, 1973 p.8

⁸ F. K. Buah, West Africa since A.D 1000, Macmillan, 1973 p.8

⁹ F. K. Buah, West Africa since A.D 1000, Macmillan, 1973 p.8

¹⁰ F. K. Buah, West Africa since A.D 1000, Macmillan, 1973 p.8

¹¹ F. K. Buah, West Africa since A.D 1000, Macmillan, 1973 p.113

There are two categories of Fulani, the Fulani Bororo whose main occupation is cattle rearing and the Fulani Gida i.e. town dwellers who engaged in urban crafts and trade.¹²

The Fulani's over the years have emerged as critical element in the politics of Northern Nigeria and the country at large. The Fulani has blended so well with the Hausa that it is today difficult for an outsider to distinguish between these 2 sets of people.

The Kanuri Ethnic Group

They are also known and referred to as Beri Beri by their Hausa neighbours. The Kanuri's are predominantly found in Borno and Yobe State. A substantial number of them are also found in Kano and Nasarawa State. They are predominantly farmers and fishermen and are known for their long facial marks. The Kanuri's have their kiths and kins across the borders of Nigeria in Chad, Cameroun and Niger. Most Kanuri's are sunni moslems, while a few are animists.¹³ The Kanuri's speak variety of dialects such as Manga, Tumari and Bilma.¹⁴

The Kisra legend or tradition of origin traced the founder of the earliest known Kanuri kingdom to a prince called Kisra who migrated with his followers to the east of Lake Chad from eastern Africa as a consequence of the destruction of the city of Meroe (in the present day Sudan) by the people of Axum in about A.D. 350.¹⁵ By the 9th century, Kanuri kingdom had fused with several petty states and developed into a great empire known as Kanem at the east of Lake Chad. However by the 15th century, the seat of government was relocated to Bornu in the west of Lake Chad.¹⁶

Ali Ghaji and Idris Alooma were two great leaders who contributed so much to the fortune of the Kanem – Bornu empire. The Kanuri empire lasted for over a thousand years (A.D

¹² F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.8

¹³ www.invisible-dog.com/nigeria-boko... 21/5/2016 4pm

¹⁴ www.revolvy.com/main/index.php%3Fs%...

¹⁵ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.91

¹⁶ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.90

774 – 1810), placing it as one of the longest lasting dynasties in world history.¹⁷ It was the sacking of Mai Ahmad, the last Kanuri ruler of the Sefawa dynasty in 1808 from the seat of power at Ngazargamu by Fulani Jihadists and the subsequent death of Mai Ahmad in 1810 that closed the chapter of the Sefawa dynasty.

However, Muhammad Al-Kanemi, a devout Islamic scholar and warrior rally support for Bornu with his troops from Kanem by dislodging the Fulani jihadist.¹⁸ Al-Kanemi argued that it was wrong of Usman dan Fodio to launch Jihad against a fellow Islamic state which had all along been practicing the purest form of the Islamic faith.

Following the death of Mai Ahmad in 1810, Al-Kanemi became the Sheik or Shehu of Bornu and ruled the territory until his own death in 1835. The new line of leadership he established replaced the Sefawa dynasty and persisted till date.¹⁹ Thus, the throne of the paramount ruler of Bornu, the Shehu stool is the exclusive preserve of the descendants of Muhammad Al-Kanemi.

The people of Bornu had continued with the practice of Islam as the dominant faith within their domains. The Kanuri because of the environment of the Lake Chad basin were basically farmers, traders, salt producers and fishermen. The encroachment of the Sahara desert and the shrinking of the Lake Chad had negatively impacted on the economy of Kanuri land coupled with the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency which had displaced most of the populace and stifle economic activities in the area.

Nupe

The Nupe speaks the language generally classified as Nupoid group which is identified with the sub-family group of languages

¹⁷ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.100

¹⁸ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.99

¹⁹ F. K. Buah, *West Africa since A.D 1000*, Macmillan, 1973 p.99

of the Benue-Congo.²⁰ The Nupe ethnic stocks are found in 3 states of Nigeria, Niger, Kwara and Kogi. Bida, the seat of the Etsu Nupe the paramount ruler of Nupe people is regarded as the traditional headquarters of Nupe land.

The formation of Nupe Kingdom was largely attributed to Tsoede, also known as Edegi. Tsoede who was born in 1465 was the son of a Nupe mother and an Igala father who was raised at the Palace of Attah Igala in Idah. Having being equipped with charm and magical power by his father, he eventually returned to his mother place to establish the Nupe Kingdom through force of arms and conquest of other neighbouring areas. Those he conquered include the Yoruba in the south and the Kamberi and Kamuku in the North. He ruled the entire Nupe land from his administrative headquarters of Nupeko until his death in 1591 during one of his military expansionist missions north of the Nupe Kingdom.²¹ Long before the 19th century, the Nupe people had historical links with the Hausas of Katsina, Kano and Borno people, who pioneered the establishment of some of their towns such as Abaji, Egga, Kutigi and Enagi. In terms of culture, the Nupe borrowed substantially from their neighbours across the River Niger such as Yoruba, Igala, Gwari and Borgu.²² It is pertinent to state, that the Nupe did not only borrow culture from her neighbours but also donated some aspect of her culture to them. For instance, while they borrowed the kingship system of Igala land, they in turn introduced the Egugu masquerade in Yorubaland. It was also from Nupe land that Islam spread to the neighbouring Yoruba towns like Offa and Ibolu communities.²³

By the early 19th century the existing political structure in Nupe land was altered due to the outbreak of the Fulani Jihad. The Nupe indigenous rulers were dislodged from their offices by Fulani Jihadists who took over their positions. Malam Dendo,

²⁰ leadership.ng/features/391211/nupe... 21/5/2016 5pm

²¹ Kwekudeee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot... 21/5/2016 6pm

²² Kwekudeee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot... 21/5/2016 6pm

²³ Kwekudeee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot... 21/5/2016 6pm

a Fulani Jhadist emerged on the seat of the paramount ruler of Nupe in Bida in 1804 and declared himself as the leader of the people. Mallam Dendo who derived his flag of authority from the Emir of Gwandu presided over the affairs of Nupe people under the supervision of Gwandu emirate.²⁴ By 1832, Dendo's son mounted the stool of his father and was installed as the first Etsu Nupe. Ever since, the Fulani's has continued to preside over the Nupe people.

The economy of Nupeland, though largely agrarian is supplemented with fishing and cottage industries such as traditional soap making, blacksmithing, brass work, wood work and tailoring.

Jukun

The Jukun who speak six dialects, Wukari, Donga, Kona, Gwana and Pindiga, Jbu and Wase Tofa are located in Taraba, Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau, Adamawa and Gombe States, and some parts of northwestern Cameroon.²⁵ The Jukun states presided over chunks of Gongola and Benue river basins over a long period of time stretching from the 14th to the 18th century A.D.²⁶

One of their traditions of origin claims that they are of the same stock with the Kanuri of Borno. It is, thus, stated that they migrated with the Kanuri to Borno where they left them and then continued their movement southwards before settling along the Gongola and Benue river basins.²⁷ Whereas between the 14th century and the 15th century, Jukun suffered so much in the hands of Kano and Zaria who occasionally raided her territories and exerted much tributes, as from the 16th century up to the 18th century Jukun became a formidable military force that posed serious threat to Borno, Kano, Zaria, the surrounding areas of Jos Plateau and to some parts of the Cross River basin.²⁸

²⁴ Kwekudeee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot... 21/5/2016 6pm

²⁵ www.facebook.com/.../6076159331251 21/5/2016 6.30pm

²⁶ T. Falola et al, History of Nigeria I, Longman, Lagos 1989, p.46

²⁷ T. Falola et al, History of Nigeria I, Longman, Lagos 1989, p.46

²⁸ T. Falola et al, History of Nigeria I, Longman, Lagos 1989, p.46

As Jukun became very influential, many communities in the central parts of Nigeria area from the upper Benue to the middle Niger adopted the Jukun institutions in one way or the other. Thus, the Tiv, Idoma, Igala and Igbira derived so much from the Jukun traditional belief system, economic activities and act of governance.

By the turn of the 18th century, internal wrangling and intrigues coupled with constant raids from the Chambas had weakened the Jukun Kingdom and rendered her vulnerable to the Fulani Jihadists who greatly plundered her territories in the 19th century.²⁹ However, the robust centralised political system of the Jukun, represented by the Aku of Wukari survived the Islamic Jihadist onslaught and is still thriving till date.

The Jukuns are divided into two major groups, the Jukun Wanu and Jukun Wapa. The Jukun Wanu are fishermen residing along the banks of the river Benue and Niger where they run through Taraba State, Benue State and Nassarawa State. The Jukun Wapa are the homeland Jukun that lives around Wukari.³⁰ Even though the traditional stool of Aku of Wukari was able to survive after the Fulani conquest of Jukun, the initial cohesiveness of the people were disrupted as shown in the case of the Jukun in Adamawa State who were brought under the rulership of the Fulani emir of Muri.

Prior to the advent of colonialism, Jukuns were predominantly traditional worshipers. The coming of Christianity has significantly altered the people's belief system, as most Jukuns, including their paramount ruler have embraced the Christian faith.

Ebira

The Ebira also known as Igbira are heavily concentrated in the central senatorial district of Kogi State, not far from the Niger-

²⁹ T. Falola et al, History of Nigeria I, Longman, Lagos 1989, p.51

³⁰ www.nairaland.com/2306155/history-j... 21/5/2016 7pm

Benue Confluence. People of Ebira ethnic group are also found in other Nigerian states such as Kwara, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Nassarawa, Edo, Benue and the Federal Capital Territory. Ebira Tao is the largest of the several Ebira groups.³¹ The other sister groups are Ebira Koto and Ebira Ozum (Kogi State), Ebira Fulani (Kogi State), Ebira Etuno (Edo State), Ebira Agatu (Benue State) Ebira Oloko (Ondo, Oyo and Osun States)³²

The earliest homeland of the Ebira according to oral traditions was around Wukari in the defunct Kwararafa empire. The Ebira along side with the Igala and Idoma were believed to have migrated out of Wukari following a chieftaincy dispute in the area at about 1680 A.D. The Ebira in the course of their migration later split into various groups and settled in different locations as discussed earlier between 1680 and 1750 A.D.³³

The Ebira are known for their cultural festivals such as “Echane” an annual masquerade festival dedicated to women, “Eche Ori”, a new yam festival, and “Eknechi” a night masquerade festival which marks the end of the Ebira calendar year and the beginning of a new one.³⁴

The throne of the paramount ruler of Ebira land known as the Ohonoyi of Ebira land is located in Okene, a hilly and rocky terrain which served as a fortress for the Ebira people against enemies incursion especially in the 19th century. The Ebira are predominantly moslems and well verse in agriculture and crafts such as pottery, dyeing and blacksmithing.

Igala

People of Igala ethnic group though largely domiciled in Kogi State are also found in Delta, Anambra and Edo States. Various traditions link the Igala with the Yoruba, Benin and Jukun. Similarities as well as differences in the institution of divine

³¹ www.nairaland.com/1309274/history-e... 21/5/2016 7.30pm

³² www.nairaland.com/1309274/history-e... 21/5/2016 7.30pm

³³ www.nairaland.com/1309274/history-e... 21/5/2016 7.30pm

³⁴ www.nairaland.com/1309274/history-e... 21/5/2016 7.30pm

kingship, methods of succession, royal regalia; and languages among the Igala, Yoruba, Benin and Jukun have led, amongst other things, to a controversy about the origin of Igala kingship and political institutions.³⁵

However, it is incontrovertible that the present dynasty ruling in Igala is of Jukun origin. C. A. Temple in his compilation on the ethnic groups of Northern Nigeria observed that the Igala descended from the Apawho who had lived in the neighbourhood of Ibi for many years but have to flee from the Jukun in canoe down the Benue in about 1490 A.D under their Chief Idoko.³⁶ It was Idoko son, Ayegba Om' Idoko who joined forces with the head of Akpoto Omeppa to defeat the Jukun near Idah after sacrificing her daughter Inikpi.³⁷ Ayegba Om' Idoko who emerged as the first Attah of Igala ruled the Igala Kingdom from Idah while his elder brother Atiyele migrated east to establish Ankpa Kingdom.³⁸ However, Idah has since continued to serve as the traditional headquarters of Igala land.

The traditional Igala society is largely agrarian, although fishing is also a mainstay of the people's economy especially the Igalas of the riverine Idah area. Igala practice a number of different religions, including African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam. The people through their culture and language are closely related to the following ethnic groups, Idoma, Igbo, Itsekiri, Bini, Yoruba and Nupe.

Biom

The Birom are largely located in Plateau State but are also found in Bauchi and Kaduna States. They speak the Birom language which belongs to the large Niger-Congo family of languages.³⁹ The Birom ethnic group which currently constitute the largest

³⁵ Eujournal.org/.../3625_21/5/2016_9pm

³⁶ Igala Traditions of Origin " Post-graduate lecture by C. C. Jacobs, Department of history, Benue State University 2001.

³⁷ Igala Traditions of Origin " Post-graduate lecture by C. C. Jacobs, Department of history, Benue State University 2001.

³⁸ Igala Traditions of Origin " Post-graduate lecture by C. C. Jacobs, Department of history, Benue State University 2001.

³⁹ Omvoice.com/lifestyle/plateau-stat..._22/5/2016_4pm

indigenous group on the Jos Plateau migrated into their present abode from Central Africa as Bantu migrants who took their journey from Ethiopia through Sudan to Chad, and then to Niger before settling down at Gobir close to Sokoto from where they moved before finally settling down at Riyom from where they eventually spread to Xwang, Forom Zawan, Kuru, Gyel, Haipan, Fan and Gashish.⁴⁰ The Birom are predominantly farmers and hunters who celebrate their occupation through series of cultural festivals such as Mandyang (rain festival – usually marked between March – April), Nshor (hunting festival – usually marked between April – May) Nzem Berom (music, dance, arts cultural day mandatory marked every first week of April).⁴¹

The Birom political system prior to the advent of colonialism functioned more as a chieftain under the Gwoms (village heads) and Da Gwoms (village heads) until the establishment of the stool of the paramount ruler for the entire Birom land known as Gbong Gwom Jos in 1935.⁴²

The Idoma

People of Idoma ethnic group are largely found in Benue State and other states such as Cross River, Nassarawa, Enugu and Kogi State. The Idoma legend of origins and ethnicity is about the most complex aspect of their pre-colonial history.⁴³ Different accounts abound on the people's origin and migrations. However, it is evident that the evolution of an Idoma ethnicity began in the 16th century from Apa in Kwararafa empire to various places within the Lower Benue.⁴⁴ This migration was in waves and phases. The first wave of Idoma migrations which involved the Ugboju, Adoka and Otukpo people occurred

⁴⁰ Blackrootsentertainment.blogspot.co... 22/5/2016 9:30pm

⁴¹ Blackrootsentertainment.blogspot.co... 22/5/2016 9:30pm

⁴² www.bymnigeria.org/./gbong-gwom-stool 22/5/2016 10:00pm

⁴³ O. O. Okpeh Jh "Origin, migrations and settlement of the Idoma in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.56

⁴⁴ O. O. Okpeh Jh "Origin, migrations and settlement of the Idoma in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.64

between 1535 – 1625. The second wave which involved the core of western Idoma districts such as Otukpa, Orokam, Owukpa and Ichama took place between 1685 – 1751.⁴⁵ While the first wave was instigated by the Tiv migrants who dislodged the Idoma from their first settlement in Benue valley Apa I, the second wave of migrants to enter Idomaland came in through Igalaland following intensified chieftaincy tussles in Idah.

By about the last quarter of the 19th century, the process of the consolidation of new territories in which the Idoma found themselves had been completed. This consolidation was however at the expense of other numerically smaller ethnic groups like the Igede, Akweya and Ufia on whose territories the Idoma settled while the Igede were pushed to the eastern fringes of the Idoma territories, the Ufia and Akweya were encircled by the Idoma and today constitute a bilingual micro-nationality in the heart of Idomaland.⁴⁶

The people operated a decentralised and communal based system of government throughout the precolonial period. However, the British colonial government which firmly announced its presence in Idomaland following the suppression of the Ogbuloko revolt in 1928, introduced chieftaincy institution in Idomaland, first at the district level before the creation of the seat of the paramount ruler of Idomaland, Och'Idoma in 1946 at Otukpo. This political innovation was not established essentially to engender unity among the people but for administrative convenience, especially for the enhancement of the British indirect rule system.

The major occupation of Idoma people over the years is farming, supplemented with fishing and hunting. The people are also verse in handicraft such as blacksmithing, wood work, basketing and cloth weaving. Since the advent of colonialism

⁴⁵ O. O. Okpeh Jh "Origin, migrations and settlement of the Idoma in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.65-66

⁴⁶ O. O. Okpeh Jh "Origin, migrations and settlement of the Idoma in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.67

and the spread of Christian activities in the area, most of the people have embraced Christianity at the expense of African traditional religion.

The Tiv

The Tiv ethnic group, though predominantly domiciled in Benue state are also found in Nassarawa, Taraba, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory. The Tiv which form part of the Bantu continuum⁴⁷ lived within the Cameroun – Obudu complex between 1475 and 1505 before moving down the hills into the Benue Valley through four waves of migration that lasted between 1475 – 1900.⁴⁸ The migration of the proto Tiv into the Lower Benue Valley was not spontaneous but occurred in phases and periods. The phases lasted as follows, the first phase 1475 – 1535, the second phase 1535 – 1595, the third phase 1595 – 1775 and the fourth phase 1775 – 1900.⁴⁹

The reason for migration from Swem around the Cameroon – Obudu Plateau has been attributed to diverse factors such as inter and intra ethnic hostilities, population explosion and the gradual decline of the Kwararafa military efficacy in the Lower Benue Valley.⁵⁰ The migrations of the Tiv into the Benue Valley was accompanied with series of warfare against the Jukun, Chamba, Idoma, the Alago, the Hausawa/Katsinawa and the Kamberi.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Joe Iyo "The Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C. 1475 – 1900 A.D" in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.37

⁴⁸ Joe Iyo "The Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C. 1475 – 1900 A.D" in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.40

⁴⁹ Joe Iyo "The Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C. 1475 – 1900 A.D" in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.41

⁵⁰ Joe Iyo "The Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C. 1475 – 1900 A.D" in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.40-41

⁵¹ Joe Iyo "The Origin, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria, C. 1475 – 1900 A.D" in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, p.48-52

The Tiv in their interaction with their neighbour had imbibed so much in terms of farming techniques and technology, cultural practice and political system. The Tiv who emerged from Swem as an egalitarian society by the 19th century instituted a political system, Tor Agbande (Drum chief) which they copied from the Jukun. The Tor Agbande held sway at the kindred level where they offered both political and military leadership to their people.⁵² With the advent of colonialism, the British in their attempt to implement the indirect rule system created the offices of district heads and subsequently that of the paramount ruler of Tivland, Tor Tiv by 1945. The seat of the Tor Tiv is in Gboko which in contemporary time is regarded as the traditional headquarter of Tivland.

The Tiv are predominantly farmers. A significant portion of the population are also engaged in trading and merchandise. The advent of Christianity in Tivland has significantly altered the people's belief system in favour of the Christian faith. Nongu u Kristu u i ser u sha Tar (Universal Reformed Christian Church) NKST one of the largest indigenous Christian Mission in Nigeria is a proof of the tremendous impact of Christianity in Tivland.

Conclusion

So far we have discussed the various notable ethnic groups in northern Nigeria by tracing their history(ies) from their sources of origin to their current abode. The narratives which flows from the precolonial period up to the contemporary era has profiled the unique identities of the notable ethnic groups of northern Nigeria. It is significant to state here that having lived within the same geographical belts and interacted with themselves, some of the ethnic groups also shares a lot of similarities in terms of politics and socio-cultural practices. As it is commonly said,

⁵² T. A. Varvar "Pre-colonial social and Political Structure in Tivland" in Y. A. Ochefu et al, A History of the peoples of Benue State, Aboki Publisher, Makurdi 2007, Pp.146-151

variety is the spice of life, the divergence in the peoples way of life, culture and belief system, essentially connotes great heritage for Northern Nigeria.

Chapter Three

Notable Ethnic Groups in Southern Nigeria

Toryina A. Varvar and Faith O. Akor

Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with several ethnic groups. These ethnic nationalities or groups occupy different territories that formed the area known as Nigeria. While geographical factors such as good climate, soil, presence of mineral resources and others such as better security, search for land, religion, trade and migration etc provide explanation to the spread of ethnic groups in different parts of the country. The uniqueness or the geographical attributes of the immediate localities played major roles in the people's culture, economic activity as well as political organizations. Also, through geographical determinisms, certain ethnic groups developed centralized political systems while others developed what is described as non-centralized or segmentary political organizations. The focus of this study is on notable ethnic groups in the southern Nigeria particularly, the Yoruba, Igbo, Benin and Itsekiri among others with particular emphasis on their culture, economy and political organization.

The people of Nigeria are classified under two major geographical groups, namely the forest peoples and the grassland (savannah) people¹. Therefore the people of Southern Nigeria belong to the geographical group called the forest people. The forest south is comprised of the mangrove swamp forests of the

¹ R.K. Udo, "Environments and peoples of Nigeria: A Geographical Introduction to the History of Nigeria" In O. Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, HEBN Publishers, Ibadan, 2012, p. 16.

Niger Delta and coastal Greeks which have provided protection for refugee cultures. The major ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria include the Yoruba and Edo (Benin) people in South West of Nigeria, and the Igbo, Ibibio, Ekoi people of the Southeastern Nigeria.

The Yoruba

The Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria are concentrated in Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Kwara, Ekiti and Lagos State. The Yoruba do not consider themselves as belonging to one language or cultural group. Rather, they consider themselves to belong to smaller units or monarchical states which later became known as Yoruba. These were the Egba, Ijebu, Ekiti, Ibadan, Ife, Ijesha, Oyo and so on². It was from the 10th C that the Yoruba's, who possessed strikingly similar values and traditional practices, began to emerge as one people. In addition to linguistic homogeneity; the Yoruba share a common tradition and trace descent from a common ancestor called "Oduduwa" who is believed to have established the Ife dynasty³.

The origin of the Yoruba people is an issue of controversy. One oral tradition holds that the Yoruba had always been in Yorubaland. This tradition describes Ile-Ife as the centre of the world where all human beings were created. God the Supreme Being noticed the earth was covered with water and decided to create the earth and man. He therefore sent his servant *Obatala* sometimes also known as *Orisanla* to create the earth and man. But this messenger of God was drunk on his way to the earth. Another servant of God, *Oduduwa*, who watched this development took over the functions of *Orisanla* and created the soil, man and beast. This tradition credits Ile-Ife as the cradle of civilization not only of the Yoruba but the entire world.⁴ There is

² M. Omolewa, Certificate History of Nigeria, Longman, London, 1986, p.53

³ R.K Udo, "Environment and Peoples of Nigeria" ... P.16

⁴ M.Omolewa, Certificate History of Nigeria...P. 55

however, another tradition which states the Yoruba came from Mecca. Their leader, Lamundo, was said to have been expelled from Mecca after he became an idolator and forced to flee southwards. After many days of travel, his men led by Oduduwa arrived at Ile-ife where they decided to settle. It seems clear, however, that in spite of these stories of migration there were some indigenous inhabitants who had always lived at Ile-Ife. It seems that the Oduduwa group seized control of Ile-Ife on their arrival. However, the two groups agreed to live together. Oduduwa is said to have proceeded to marry Omonide who gave birth to a daughter and a number of sons. All the sons are said to have left their father to found kingdoms. Oduduwa is therefore believed to be the father of the Yoruba people while Ile-Ife served as the spiritual home of the Yoruba's.

Culture of the People

The Yoruba people stand out as a deeply religious group with great respect for superiors and elderly people. The Oni of Ife is regarded as the spiritual ruler of all Yoruba's. They have a tradition of living in large towns, the largest of which include Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Oshogbo, Ilorin, Abeokuta, Ilesha and Ede. They are the most urbanized group in Nigeria. The growth of these large urban centres derived in part from the need for defenses but also largely as a result of the highly centralized political organization of the people. The extended family is the basic social unit of the Yoruba. And since they live together, each extended family has a territorial existence (the large traditional compound) within the town as well as a distinct area of farmland in the rural areas. They worshipped several deities such as the *San'go* (god of thunder) and other festivals such as Osun festivals⁵. The people are reputed for their craftsmanship, they excel in wood carving and other crafts such as bronze working, iron smelting. The

⁵ M. Omolewa, *Certificate History of Nigeria...*, p.57.

famous terracotta and bronze heads of Ife which are reputable in Nigerian cultural history were produced by the Yoruba. They have several dances, rituals and myths which display their rich culture.

Economy of the People

Like the economy of other forest people in Nigeria, the Yoruba are predominantly an agricultural people. They cultivate crops such as yams, sweet potatoes, cassava and other tuber crops. They are also hunters and engaged in lumbering as an economic activity because of the presence of trees. They are wood carvers and sculptors and also specialized in iron working. They exchange these products both within and outside their locality through long distance trade.

Political Organization of the Yoruba People

While the origin of the Yoruba remains vague, there is a clear picture of the political and social organization of Yorubaland. Certain rulers were recognized throughout the whole of Yorubaland, the most important of these being the Oni of Ife, who was regarded as the spiritual ruler of all Yoruba and *Alafin* of Oyo who was the political leader of the Yoruba people during the ascendancy of Oyo to power over the whole of Yorubaland.⁶ There was a monarchical structure of government. At the head was the traditional ruler, the Oba. He was selected only after divine approval had been obtained during a consultation with God through the Oni. Once crowned, the Oba becomes sacred. He is considered as the representative of God on earth, and an associate of the Supreme Being, '*Igba Kaji Orisa*'. His authority was strengthened by the use of many rituals and myths and by wearing clothes such as flowing gowns and beaded crown which reflected glory on his imperial majesty. His words were law for

⁶ G.I.C. Eluwa, M.O. Ukagwu, J.U.N. Nwachukwu, A.C.N Nwaubani (eds), *A History of Nigeria*, Africana Publishers Limited, Onitsha, 1988, p.62.

the people. The monarchy was centralized. Agents of the crown (Oba) were found in outlying regions where they served as representatives of the king. The monarch (Oba) was assisted by an advisory council which consisted of civil and military nobility as well as executive agencies.

Another arm in the administration was the Ogboni (secret) cult. The cult was first established at Ile-Ife to assist in administration, to protect the people against the newcomers, and to help in the integration of the entire community. The Ogboni pass laws and take part in election of Oba. Their duties were political, administrative, social and religious. Other institutions in the Yoruba political organization are the Oro and Egungun. The Oro was a cult which carried out the order of the Ogboni elders. Egungun was a cult believed to represent the ancestors. Its members conducted visitation to the people from time to time to punish the wicked ones. Both Oro and Egungun performed duties of arrest and punishment in the society. It will be seen that although the king was in charge of affairs, he was not alone. He was assisted by powerful and influential people, therefore could not be despotic. There were also checks and balances on his powers. Thus, the political administration of the Yoruba's can be said to be both monarchical and democratic in nature. It ensured participation in government by all, working for the same goal of bringing greatness to the people.

Later with the ascendancy of Old Oyo to dominance over the rest of states or kingdoms of Yoruba, Oyo became the strongest states in the whole of Yorubaland and incorporated many areas of Yoruba into her administration. In the Oyo political organization, the Oba was the Alaaḡin of Oyo, Alaaḡin was the occupant of the throne and the owner of the palace. He was seen three times a year.⁷ These were during the Ile, Ori and Bere festivals. Alaaḡin was the chief executive of the Kingdom. All

⁷ A.S Jegede, O.A Olutayo, O.O Omolajo and B.E Owumi, Peoples and Cultures of Nigeria, Samlad Press, Nigeria, 2012. P. 35

powers came from the Alaaḥfin, but he was hemmed in by a number of checks. The alaaḥfin was assisted by council of seven, the oyo-mesi. These were members of the nobility whose duties included the selection of kings. As king makers, they were very powerful. They also had the duty of ensuring that the alaaḥfin did not exercise arbitrary authority. The leader of the Oyomesi was known as the Bashorun. The Bashorun was the prime minister and chancellor of the kingdom. He acted as the president of the council, and had the chief choice in the selection of a new alaaḥfin.

Following the Oyomesi council in the Oyo political organization were the Eso and Ilari. The Eso were a military caste or constabulary of the empire. The ilari were the Alaaḥfin's representatives in the districts. At the head of the army (Eso) was their leader himself a war general, the *Are Ona kakanfo*. To avoid a situation in which he could pose a threat to the alaaḥfin, the *Are Ona Kakanfo* lived in the outskirts of the town, usually in the most troublesome spot. This arrangement would keep him busy and discourage him from spending his time envying the power and influence of the alaaḥfin and the civilian officers. The Ogoni cult also served as a check on the excessive powers of the king and the Oyomesi and it also restrained the people. The whole system was therefore a carefully worked out arrangement of checks and balances. Oyo was able to use its calvary to expand its territory.

The Igbo People

The Igbo speaking people are located East of the lower Niger valley⁸. They constitute one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria. They occupy a continuous stretch of territory roughly bounded on the north by the Igalla, Idoma and Ogoja peoples, in the east by the Ibibio peoples in the south by the Ijo and in the west by the Edo. Today, the Igbo inhabit the entire Imo and Anambra,

⁸ G.I.C Eluwa and Others, A History of Nigeria...P61

Ebonyi and Enugu States, while significant fractions of them are found in Rivers and Edo states of Nigeria.

The Igbo origin has been a matter of serious speculation among scholars. Some are of the view that, the Igbos had always lived where they now live and that they came from nowhere. Others are of the view that Igbo origin could be located outside their present territory. Such scholars as G. T. Basden, M. D. W. Jeffreys Major A. G. Leonard, and Robin Horton believe that the Igbo are a part of early Egyptian or Hebrew people. After a comparative study of the religion and language of these peoples, the writers come to the conclusion that, the Igbo are part of the "lost race of Israel".⁹ They assert that the Igbo settled in North Africa at the time of Moses Perhaps around 2000BC and migrated into their present location as a result of Islamic jihads. However, despite these oral traditions on Igbo origins, many of the Ibos accept the tradition that they all first lived in the area known as *Nri-Awka-Orlu* complex and that later some of their forefathers moved away from the complex to other areas. This view is popularized by G. I. Jones, P. A. Talbot, K. O. Dike and others. The Igbo are believed to have settled in some parts of what is now Igboland at about 2,500BC.¹⁰ G. I. Jones described the Nri-Awka, and Isuama (Odu) area as the "core Igbo centre" or areas where they first settled when they arrived. From these core centres, the Igbo are said to have migrated to Nsukka Udi highlands while another wave of migration moved southwards towards the coast, the descendants of whom are the present day Uratta, Ikwerre, Etihe, Asa, Ndoki. Also from the core centre of Isuama, the Ngwa, Umuhia, Ohafia, Arochukwu, Edda and Irem groups moved to the southeast and east.

Culture of the People

The Igbo's have a rich culture which is being practiced by the

⁹ M. Omolewa, History of Nigeria...P.81

¹⁰ R.K. Udo, Environment and Peoples of Nigeria...P. 17

people. They believe in the existence of Supreme Being and therefore worship different deities as their gods, the most notable being *amadiha* (god of thunder). They settle in dispersed family compound. An average Igbo compound has a shrine meant for the worship of gods. They expressed other forms of their culture through arts work such as iron smelting or blacksmithing, they make human and animal figures from the melting and casting of bronze or aluminium. They also have series of festivals which the people perform as a way of reenactments of their past historical experiences. Some of these include the masquerades festival, the Ofala festival and others. Some of the good cultural artifacts in Igboland were discovered at *Igbo-Ukwu* accidentally while digging a well in his compound. Their elders were mostly the custodians of tradition and cultural values in the society, mostly ritualists, medicine men and diviners.

Economy of the Igbo People

The economic system of the Igbo can be discussed under three major headings; agriculture, trade and local manufacturers. Agriculture was the most important single occupation of the Igbo. Both the Igbo man and woman were farmers. They produced enough yams, cassava, cocoyam, palm oil, palm kernel fruits and vegetables. Agriculture was responsible for its very high population density. The chief crop of the Igbo was the Yam followed closely by the cocoyam. Trade was not as important as agriculture, it was however an important aspect of Igbo economic life. Ecological differences and varied vegetation appear to have been the major reason behind the development of local and regional trade amongst the Igbo. For example, as the soil of the northern and central Igboland appeared to have been overworked by the concentration of population, the settlers took to trading and manufacture in order to supplement agriculture. In the southeast and west of Igboland, the soil appeared fertile with scanty population. The people produced enough of food items.

Mineral products like iron ore are found in Awka, salt is found in Ubanu and lead in Abakaliki were exported by the various Igbo groups who traded on them. Also manufactured products, like crafts, blacksmithing material produced by the Awka, Nkwere and Abiriba were items of Igbo regional trade.

Political organization of the Igbo People

The political organization of the Igbo people belongs to the category generally referred to as stateless, or non-centralized. This is so because; their political system lacked a central authority with powers over the entire Igboland or Igbo people. Such political systems are generally described as segmentary or egalitarian because of lack of central authority usually headed by a single person. It is worthy to clarify that, the Obi or Igwe stood as leaders in Igboland, but these political leaders did not have control over the whole of Igbo people. They were rather representatives of their various domains.

Two types of democracies operated in Igboland during the pre-colonial period¹¹. These are the direct and representative democracy. The largest political unit was the village group which had a population of only a few thousand people. Within the village group, authority was never concentrated in the hands of any individual or family. Although there were chiefs, usually elderly men, there was no ruling aristocracy which wielded authority as specialized full-time occupation. Rather, the village was ruled by a council of elders, usually heads of the major extended families. At the bottom of Igbo political arrangement was the Household made up of man, wife and children. This was closely followed by the sub-lineage or the extended family. The sub-lineages were made up of various households who could trace their descent to one common ancestor. The sub-lineages formed the lineage whose origin centred on the remote ancestor.¹² Here the

¹¹ O. Otite, *Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, Shaneson C.I Limited, 2000. P.37

¹² A.S. Jegede and Others, *Peoples and Cultures of Nigeria*...P. 45

heads of the various households discussed matters at the sub-lineage group or level. These heads of various levels or units were known as the *Okpara* (first son). They were spokesmen at every level and offered sacrifices to the gods on behalf of the units. The lineage assembly made up of all adult males of the units deliberated on matters affecting the sub-lineages. The age-groups and secret societies assisted the lineages assembly in the government of the lineage units. The age-grades organized themselves for work, war and government. Those who were still youths cleared paths and public places, streams and also served as police.

Above the lineage assembly was the village assembly which was made up of all the adult members of the village with an inner council made up of the lineage heads known as the *Amaala* or *Oji-afa*. They decided on matters affecting the entire village. The sub-lineage unit, the lineage assembly and the village were levels of direct democracy where every adult male, or female in some cases were directly involved in the affairs of the group. The village-group assembly was made up of the representatives of the member-villages. The representatives included *Ofo*-holders, members of secret societies, and senior titled men; decisions reached at this level were implemented by the age-grades and secret societies.

The Bini People

The word Bini is broadly used to cover the capital city, to describe the kingdom, the empire, the language and the people.¹³ The Bini people are located in the forest belt of southern Nigeria. The people had an empire that embraced both the Edo-speaking (bini proper) and a large non-Edo speaking population. The Bini empire thus incorporated the Bini, Esan, Kukuruku, Orra, Akoko, Isoko etc. There are two separate traditions which seek

¹³ R.K. Udo, *Environment and Peoples of Nigeria...*:P15

to account for the origin of the Bini people and the Kingdom. The first of this tradition which is also the most ancient is called the *Osarubua* legend. This account claimed that the Bini kingdom was founded by the youngest son of the Bini High God known as Osarubua. According to this version, the Bini left Egypt for West Africa sometimes in the remote past. After a brief stay in the Sudan, they headed southwards and made a head-stop at Ile-Ife, from where they came to their present abode.

Culture of the Bini People

The Bini people just like their neighbors occupy the forest region. They have a rich culture and settled in clustered or urban areas. Through their environmental endowments, the people produced arts works of iron, bronze, and wooden materials. A lot of art works from carved wood was produced by the Bini people. Bronze and iron working flourished in this area. Beads were also manufactured by the people for political and religious significance. A lot of cultural festivals were celebrated by the people, the prominent amongst which is the Igue festival. They believe in worship of different deities as gods.

The Economy of the Bini People

The major economic activity of the Bini people was agriculture. This engaged both the men and women in the society. They cultivated crops like yam, cassava and sweet potatoes. Because of the presence of raw materials, the people were great artisans. They manufactured furniture, and other art works of various figures and sizes. They also traded in agricultural products. The people work iron and bronze most of which were used for the decoration of the Oba's palace.

Political Organizations of the Bini People

The Bini had an imperial system of political organization which at the centre was the Oba who was a divine monarch or priest

king. He was prevented by innumerable taboos from leaving in the palace except on occasions when ceremonies fundamental to the well-being of the state were ascribed to him and it was popularly believed that he did not eat or die. He had legislative, executive and judicial powers and had monopoly right to impose and communicate capital sentences. He controls the grant of politically important titles. He controlled the minor chiefs and could proclaim peace or war and was said to own all the land in the Bini etc. Next to the Oba in the imperial political system was the Bini state council which was made up of senior titled chief under the leadership of *Iyase* – the prime minister.¹⁴ The council was summoned by the Oba on the enactment of a new law and the proclamation of war or peace. But day to day administration, the Oba consulted the prominent titled chiefs. The kingdom was ruled by an absentee resident who resided at the imperial capital.

The Itsekiri People

The Itsekiri are found in the Western Delta area of Nigeria. The Itsekiri tradition of origin is diverse. Most of the Itsekiri villages have their own tradition of origin. Some claim that they came from Ode, an area of Ijebuland, while some claim they came from Bini. But some also claim they have always been where they are now and descended from *Umaale* who is now deified and worshiped as an ancestor. The Bini tradition has it that the founder Ginua (*Iginuwa*) a Bini prince left Bini with a retinue of his supporters. He thereafter proceeded to found 'Ode' as a capital of a new settlement. In their new place of abode, they are said to have met a man called Itsekun who had Ginualand to build his capital. It was this new settlement, called *Ode itsekiri* that later became the capital of Warri kingdom. From this capital, other

¹⁴ O. Otite, *Ethnic Pluralism ...* P. 36

main settlements grew. These include Gbolokposo, Obodo, Erere and Elume.

Culture of the Itsekiri People

Society amongst the Itsekiri people like the rest of the coastal Delta states was divided along the lines of clan (*Ibe*). The society lacked instrument of central control, and in fact only the high priest representing the cult of national god exercised authority over the whole clan. The people had great respect for age. Secret cults played significant roles such as the maintenance of law and order. They have societies like the Ekpe, Ekine and Sekiapu which put on special displays of dancing and drumming. They had festivals which re-enacted the people's historical experience and rich culture.

Economy of the Itsekiri People

It is generally believed that the Itsekiri Kingdom rose and developed as a result of the trans-Atlantic trade, particularly the trade in slaves. However, before the emergence of slave trade, the Itsekiri exchanged products of the Delta; fish, crayfish, salt and earthenware with agricultural products of the hinterland. The Itsekiri were famous in canoe building and had the timber for canoe manufacture. Salt was an important item in the Itsekiri hinterland trade. The Itsekiri like other Delta groups made salt. They also specialized in pot-making and were the only suppliers of pots in the entire Delta area. The pots were used in the salt industries, for grinding tobacco and for household purposes. The advent of overseas slave trade helped to expand the Itsekiri trade by providing it with more commodities for exchange within the hinterland. Even during the heydays of slave trade, slaves did not constitute the mainstay of Itsekiri economy. The internal trade, within Itsekiri involved trade articles like palm oil, ivory, pepper and cloth.

Political Organization

The Itsekiri had evolved a compact system of government with ode-Itsekiri as the capital. The *Olu* was at the apex of the administration, and a supreme council of '*Ojoye*'.¹⁴ The *Ojoye* council was made up of the sons of the seventy Bini notables who accompanied Ginuato Itsekiri land. Apart from the council, the king had the help of other imperial officers who helped him in the day to day administration of the Kingdom. These included *Ologbatsere* (prime minister and chief adviser to the Olu), *Iyatsere* (war chief), *Uwangué* (custodian of Olu's regalia and chief spokesman in council). Olu had the right to confer titles on worthy and deserving citizens; such titles became hereditary. Olu was both a spiritual and political head of the Itsekiri people. He offered sacrifices to the departed rulers and important deities of the kingdom. The village council was headed by the *Olara-aja* (the eldest man of the land) and the *Okpanran* (priest). Disputes which could not be settled by village elders were sent to the Olu's council.

Conclusion

The study has examined the peoples of Southern Nigeria, with particular reference to notable ethnic groups in the area like the Yoruba, Igbo, Bini, and Itsekiri with regards to their culture, economic and political organization. The geographical attributes of the forest belt region were stressed as very important in influencing the culture of the people in southern Nigeria.

Chapter Four

Culture Zones in Nigeria

Armstrong M. Adejo and Elijah Terdoo Ikpanor

Introduction

The evolution of what became Nigeria comprised different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. These, among others, included 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 several ethnic identities in the Benue Valley. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates gave birth to Nigeria in 1914. Thus, Nigeria has diverse ethnic groups (over 500 ethnic nationalities) with a population of over 170 million people who have a very rich culture. There are major and minor ethnic groups in each zone in Nigeria. In Northern part of Nigeria which comprises of North-West, North-East, and North-Central Geo-political zones, the major ethnic groups are the Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, Tiv, Jukun, Nupe, Idoma etc. Most minor ethnicities are found in the North-Central region, also known as the Middle Belt Region. The Southern part of Nigeria on the other hand is made up of South-West, South-East and South-South. The major ethnic groups in this part of the country are; the Yoruba, Igbo, Ijaw, Urhobo, Itsekiri and Bini etc. The attention of this chapter therefore focuses on discussing the culture of some ethnic groups within these regions.

Environment as an Index of Culture Variation in Nigerian Zones

Cultures of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria have been influenced

in varying ways by the environment. The major impact of geography on these groups and on human activities has been underscored by Toyin Falola. He states that the distribution of ethnic groups in the country is geographical in outlook. Areas that could support life were well occupied while people avoided environments that were hostile. For instance, there was a large concentration of small groups in Central Nigeria. Several of these groups enjoyed a large measure of political autonomy. This concentration and political pattern have been attributed to the rugged topography, hostility of more powerful neighbours and rampant slave raid. Today, central Nigeria is noted as an area of dense population. Other similar areas are the North-East, especially around the Chad and to some extent, the Niger Delta. Whereas, the South-East and South-West are heavily populated.¹

For many centuries different Nigerian groups have been exposed to influences from across the Sahara and Europe. The location of groups has been a factor in the source and type of influence they had. Those in the North were exposed to contacts and influences from North Africa and the Middle East. Groups in the South, especially in the coastal region had interactions with the Europeans from the 15th century onwards. These contacts partly explain the cultural variations within these zones.

Apart from the above mentioned points, natural features such as rivers and mountains have also defined the type and kind of cultural activities found within an area. The rivers, especially the River Niger and the Benue enabled people to travel, fish, and farm and to settle along fertile banks. As a result of this, economic specialisation emerged. Groups had to interact and engage in trade in order to have access to products of diverse origins. This in the final analysis led to inter-group relations amongst the peoples of Nigeria.

¹ T. Falola, *et al*, *Nigeria before 1800*, Ibadan, Longman Nigeria limited, pp. 17-19.

The peoples of Northern Nigeria and their Culture

The Northern part of Nigeria in the present times is made up of three geo-political zones, comprising 19 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The Region is dominated by the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group who are predominantly Muslims. The Hausa/Fulani are also widely distributed in other parts of the country. The Kanuri are mainly found in Borno and Yobe states; the Nupe in the Niger and Benue valleys. The Tiv are concentrated in the lower Benue Valley together with the Idoma, Nyifon, Alago and Jukum as well as the Chadic speaking groups like the Ngas, Kamwe, Mwaghavul, Bura-Pabir, Bada, Gera, Goemai, Karekare, Chamba, Kutep, etc. all found in Upper Benue Basin together with others like; the Hagi, Gude, Fali, Kilba, Gabun, Homa, Lala, Gudu etc. Some of these ethnic groups are very small in population and are found mostly in the Middle Belt Region. In fact all the ethnicities of the Northern Region have unique but rich culture and tradition that differentiate them from each other. Despite these differences, a reasonable population of Northern Nigeria use Hausa Language as lingua-franca. By and large, the culture of the Northern Nigerians people would be discussed under three geo-political zones.

North-West

The Hausa are predominantly found in the North-Western part of Nigeria comprising states like; Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi. Other ethnic groups in this zone includes; Jabba, Zuru, Fulani, Gbagi, Zaria, Bajju, Maguzaw etc. The Hausa are mostly Muslims and they were substantially Islamized even before the Sokoto Jihad of 1804.² By the time of the Jihad, a distinction could be made between the pagan Hausa and the Muslim Hausa. Immigration and conquest marked Hausa

² M. Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in the West African History*, Zaria: ABU Press, 1979, p.12.

history. The Hausa people themselves are groupings of a number of different people who have been incorporated into the 'original' stock through conquest and assimilation. Homogeneity of the Hausa stems from a common language and religion (Islam).

The origin of Hausa is already captured elsewhere in this text and cannot be overemphasized in this chapter. However, The Hausa people are widely spread over a large area of the central Sudan, due mainly to religious, political and economic activities. Their language is also widespread. It is recorded that not only Hausa language is classified under the Chadic sub-group of Afro-Asiatic or Hamito-Semitic family, but it is also spoken over a very wide area by so many nationalities. The Hausa language is a *lingua-franca* of most northern states of Nigeria. Surprisingly, it is recorded that seventy-five per cent of Hausa speakers are non-Hausa.

The social and political organization of the Hausa people is found on strict status differentiation. We have the *Sarakuna* (Chiefs in Hausa language) and *Masu Sarauta*. The former are at the top of the hierarchy, while the *Masu Sarauta* are holders of offices. Those who hold hereditary offices constitute the sub-class of *Masu Sarauta Na Asali* while those who hold office of allegiance form the *Masu Sarauta Na Calka*, and they constitute the middle class. There is the third class called *Talakawa*, which is made up of farmers and peasants, petty civil servants, craftsmen, traders etc. Similarly, it is on record that every Hausa migrant community has the equivalence of a central figure or ruler in Hausaland called *Sarkin Hausawa*, just as we have among the professional guilds, e.g. *Sarkin Mako* of the blacksmith, *Sarkin Makada* of the drummers, the Imam etc.

In the area of economy, farming, industry and commerce constitute the three major components of Hausa economy. The main agricultural crops found in this zone are: maize, millet, guinea corn and beans among many others. Their agriculture has always been at the forefront of the Nigerian economy. Hausa

are also known for their craft products such as: leather, blacksmithing, sculpture, perfumes and several textile wares. They are also famous for commerce and they are one of Africa's famous merchants. Hausa women enjoy enormous economic freedom more than any other women in Nigeria. They are free to run their private businesses and enjoy absolute control over their income. Historically, Hausa cultures provide that a wife is justified to claim a fee for labour rendered to her husband in the process of economic production. It is also on record that some women are far richer than their husbands.

Apart from the Hausa people, the second largest group in this region are the Fulani people who live side-by-side with the Hausa and others. The Fulani ethnic group is largely nomadic. They profess Islam while others maintain syncretic practice. In the pre-colonial period, the Fulani, under Shehu Usman Danfodiyo's leadership, were able to revive Islam in most parts of the Hausa land.³ As devout Muslims, they were very instrumental in assisting Shehu Usman Dan Fodiyo in the execution of the popular Sokoto Jihad which helped in the socio-political as well as the religious changes of Northern Nigeria in the course of the nineteenth century. Following the Jihad, they functioned basically as administrators and sometimes as cultivators.

The Fulani are of two categories, namely; Fulanin Daji (nomadic Fulani) and Fulanin Gida (sedentary Fulani). The former, who have maintained their nomadic way of life, move from one place to another in search of pasture or grazing land for their livestock. The latter have settled in towns and villages teaching, farming, trading etc. The Fulani are widely distributed in West Africa most especially in the Sahel, wandering from one spot to another with their herds of cattle. The pastoral Fulani's life is principally basic and simple. They strive to maintain their

³A. N zemeke, and E. Erhagbe, (eds.) *Nigerian Peoples and Culture*, Benin: Mindex Publishing Company, 1997, p.28.

tradition and culture wherever they went. They generally adhere to a code of behaviour referred to as 'pulaaku' which suggests they must exhibit the following qualities of shyness, bravery, ownership of cows etc.⁴

The basic settlement of the Fulani consists of a man and his dependents known as 'wuru'. It is social but ephemeral given that such settlements have no women and serve simply as shelters for the nomads who tend the herds. As the modern nation state restricts the range of nomadism, the Fulani have adopted ever increasingly complex ways to move herds among their related families. The families may reside in stable communities, but the herds move according to the availability of water. The nomadic Fulani therefore have two major types of settlements; the dry season and wet season camps. The dry season camp last from about November to March; the wet season camp last from March to the end of October. Households are patrilocal and range in size from one nuclear family to more than one hundred people.⁵ Family tend to remain in wet-season camps while sending younger males or increasingly hiring Non-Fulani herders to accompany the cattle to dry season camps.

In terms of industrial arts, the Fulani are only known for leather working and some craft production. Many of their former slaves who have assumed Fulani ethnicity follow the basic crafts of other West African; silver and gold smiting, iron working, basket making and similar crafts. There is also division of labour among the Fulani, herding cattle is a male activity. Tending and milking cattle, however are women work. Women may also sell dairy products; their graceful movement with containers of milk or cheese is a common sight in many northern Nigerian towns. Adolescent male traditionally have been in charge of moving

⁴ Ugowe, C. *The Nigeria Legacy: A Handbook of a Black Africa Culture and Civilization*. Lagos, Hugo Books, 1995, P.47

⁵ Onwuejeogwu, M. *African Civilizations: Origin, Growth and Development*, Lagos: Uto Publications, 2000, Pp.66.

herds whereas their elders deal with political decisions and negotiate with sedentary people for safe movement of herds through farmlands.

North-East

North-Eastern Nigeria is made up of states like; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Yobe, Gombe and Taraba. The ethnic configuration in this zone include; Balewa, Fulani, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Mumuye, and Babur etc. However, the Kanuri people are the predominant ethnic group in this part of the country.

The socio-political organization of the Kanuri people is based on kingship. The Kanuri people marry at early, usually from at about age 20 for males, and for women at about the age of 14 years. The preferred marriage for a man is to a young virgin of between 10-14 years of age. But this is a very expensive form of marriage and most men cannot afford it as a first marriage when they are in their late teens to mid-twenties. The more common first marriage is to a divorcee for whom the bride-wealth payment is much lower. The rate of divorce is extremely high in Kanuri, approaching 80 percent of all marriages. In case of divorce, children stay with their father. Marriage between cousins sometimes occurs, a form that also reduces bride-price.⁶

The Kanuri people are sedentary agriculturalist, although almost all the men practice some other occupation as well. Their economy is complex with commerce, transportation and construction constituting the other main elements of the private business sector. Millet is the staple food, supplemented by guinea corn (sorghum) while Groundnuts (peanuts) are grown for sale. Hunting is of minor significance but fish are an important resource to villages along the shores of Lake Chad and Yobe River. Horses are symbols of prestige. Most households use donkeys and draft animals. Sheep and goats are commonly kept. For beef,

⁶ Martin, B. 'Kanem Borno and Fezzan Notes on the Political history of a trade route' in *Journey of Africa History*, 1969, Vol. 1. No. 10

most Kanuri rely on the pastoral Shuwa and Fulbe (Fulani) cattle herders with whom they exchange grain and craft work for the beef they need.⁷ In few areas Kanuri keep large herds of cattle. Kanuri diet consist large quantities of millet, served either as porridge or as dumplings. A vegetable soup also containing meat, groundnut oil, salt and other condiments especially red peppers are poured over the millet. The diet is universal but the soup contents vary according to socioeconomic class. Cooked foods are sold in the markets and a wide range canned foods are available to city dwellers while Goats and sheep are slaughtered for religious ceremonies.

North-Central

The Central Zone covers the whole area conventionally described as the Nigerian Middle Belt or sometimes referred to as ~~Kassena~~ Bauchi. The zone is made up of states like; Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). North Central zone could be described as the home of minority ethnic groups. This is because a majority of the ethnic groups within this zone are very small in population as compared to others in the North, West and East parts of Nigeria. For example, Jukun, Mumuye, Tere, Kaka, Koro, Anaguta, Zarama, Vomni, Mbula, Chuomu, Lan, Njirai, Vemgo, Wula, Higgi, Gade, Rubu, Amo, Kurama, Berom, Kakanda, Tarok etc. while the Tiv, Gwari, Nupe and Idoma people have a considerable population. Linguistically, majority of the languages spoken in central Nigeria belong to the Niger-Congo family of Kwa, Benue-Congo and Adamawa-Ubangian families. However, there are also pockets of Chadic speakers especially amongst the peoples of the Upper Benue Valley.

In religion, the peoples of Middle Belt Region are predominantly Christians, although there are pockets of Muslims

⁷ Smith, A.A *little New Light: A Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith*, Vol. 1, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1987, P. 10.

and traditional religionists. The belief of these people is that, there is a supreme being who created the entire universe. On this basis, God is known to them in different languages of their ethnicities. For instance, among the Kurama people God is called *Ashilior Bakashili*, Among Tiv, he is known as *Aondo*, to the Idoma He is *Owaidho* while the Rukuba call him *Katakuru*. The Gwari call him *Shekiki, Shasha, Esse, Sheko or Soka*. The Nupe call him *Soka*. Among the Jukun, he is referred to as *Chido* or *Shido*, etc. The people of this zone also believe in other forces such as ancestral spirits, witchcraft and magical powers. The Igala, Jukun and Tiv are well known for their strong beliefs in witchcraft, magic and sorcery. It is also worth noting that the zone is the most representative of religious balance in Nigeria, in that Islam and Christianity as well as other religions cohabit excellently. It is also recorded that members of the same family can belong to different faiths and still co-habit as brothers and sisters in the same household.

Politically, the zone is also different from the rain forest people who are known for empires and monarchies. Historically, before the rise of the northern emirates, ushered in by the 19th Century Jihad, and the advent of the warrant chief system brought by colonialism, the people in this zone were never used to culture of centralized governments. Only few ethnic groups such as Igala, Nupe and Jukun had developed elaborate monarchical structures. In antiquity this zone is known for its petty chiefdoms or village lineage-based democracies.

The main economic pre-occupation of the people in this zone is farming, perhaps as a result of the rich Benue Valley and the Niger-Benue influence. Because of the richness of the soil in this zone, the people are encouraged to cultivate cereals, tubers and plant crops. In the process of crop cultivation, the people made use of hoes (both big and small) and cutlasses that are locally produced. The farmers often work on a cooperative basis (among the Tiv and Idoma it is known as *ihumbe* and *Oluma*

respectively) in preparing pieces of land for cultivation. This exercise involves cutting down the bush, allowing it to dry after which it is set ablaze. This is followed by mounding which is a laborious aspect of farming. Consequently, a lot of food is prepared for the hoeing party by the wife or wives of the owner of the new farm. Women apart from providing food for the work party are usually responsible for subsequent weeding in order to ensure good harvests. Berom farmers both men and women usually fence their farms with cacti to prevent the menace of domestic animals such as goats and sheep that often destroy crops. Apart from farming and rearing of domestic animals for consumption, hunting also forms a good part of the people's social organisation for the purpose of obtaining protein. Much of this game meat is also sold at the local markets. Hunting can be done on an individual or group basis. Some of the locally available game includes cane rats, monkeys, antelopes and porcupines. Other animals found in this region include tigers, elephants, lions and buffaloes especially in the pre-colonial times. However, over-killing or indiscriminate hunting methods using bows and arrows and spears have led to the near total disappearance of these endangered animals. Local traps are fabricated by blacksmiths and are used to catch cane rats and antelopes among others. Animals were not only used for food but were also used in conjunction with other plant resources for medicinal purposes. Other livelihoods of the peoples of Central Nigeria include blacksmithing, pottery making and wood carving done especially at leisure times.

The Peoples of the Southern Nigeria and their Culture

Southern part of Nigeria is also made up of three geo-political zone of South-West, South-East and South-south. The South-West is dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group while the South-East is the Igbo. South-South on the other hand had a lot of minority ethnic groups just like the central Nigeria. They have

occupied an area that is referred to as the Niger Delta Region. An area that is naturally endowed with ocean of crude oil which has been sustaining the Nigeria economy since the oil boom period. It is on the basis of this wisdom that each zone in Southern part of Nigeria is isolated and discussed.

South-West

South-East is made up of states like; Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. The zone is the principal habitat of Nigeria's ethnic groups referred to as the Mennonites. These include the Yoruba, the Ndoki, Oduel, Urhobo, Bini, Itsekiri and Isoko among others.⁸ The Yoruba ethnic group dominated other groups; they are linguistically classified under Kwa language, which belong to the Yoruboid of the Niger-Congo Phylum.

The Yoruba ethnic group is rich with culture of a typical African society. Their origin is shrouded in myths and legends. One among these legends is that, the *Oduduwa* is the founder of the Yoruba nation. The legend alleged that, he descended from heaven sent by God to create the earth. That *Oduduwa's* first point of arrival on earth was Ile-Ife, hence the notion that Ile-Ife is the centre of the earth. Other ethnic groups as well have their own legends. The Bini had the Ogbafe's version as well as the Ogiso version which discuss differently the origin of the Bini people.⁹

Generally, the peoples of South- West Region are politically organised on village groups or clans with each developing distinct dialect. While the Yoruba ethnic group has a different pattern; their basic political units are in the town. A town is made up of lineage organised in order of seniority determined by the order of settlement. Each lineage has a hereditary title assumed by its leader. In most cases political heads of the town is called *Baale* or

⁸ J. Egharevba, *A Short History of Benin*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1960, p.17.

⁹ A. N zemeke, and O. Erhagbe, (eds.) *Nigerian Peoples and Cultures*, 2nd Edition, Benin City: University of Benin, 2002, Pp. 77-89.

Oba. For the purpose of administration, the town is divided into wards under the leadership of ward chiefs called (*Ijoye, Adugboor Olariltun*). Wards are further subdivided into administrative units, i.e. Compounds (*Agbale*) headed by the eldest man (*Baale*). There is no distinction between judicial and legislative power but a hierarchy of power from *Baale Ijoye* and the highest *Oba*.¹⁰

The cultures of this zone are also remarkable for their sophisticated artistic traditions and skills such as the science of metallurgy, iron smelting and bronze-smelting in such communities as Ife, Oyo etc. The people of this zone are as religious as elsewhere in the nation. There is a general belief in the existence of the Supreme God who is called different names e.g. *Olodumare* or *Olorun* among the Yoruba, *Oṣandua* among the Bini, *Oṣandua* among the Esan, *Oghena* among the Etsako, etc. Supreme God is believed in this zone to have created the world with no direct involvement in the affairs of men, but have unlimited power as well as benevolence and punitive measure.

Finally, because of the forest vegetation of this region, the major occupation of the people is fishing, cultivation of root crops as well as trees like rubber, cocoa, kola-nut etc. the people also planted tobacco on a very large scale for the purpose of commercialisation. Cocoa and palm products were the main exportable cash crops in Nigeria before the discovery of crude oil. The people of this region also cherish gorgeous attires, like *Aso-Oke, Ofi, Aran, Agbada* etc. Dressing among this people is gender sensitive; the main dress among these groups is the wrapper usually worn with a jumper or broad shirt for men and blouse for women. Men wore *Buba, Esiki, Sapara* which are regarded as under wear. There is also *Dandogo, Agbada, Gbariye, Sulia, Oyala* which are over wear. Women wore *Iro, Buba, Gele* while *Tobi* and *Sinmi* serves as their under wear.¹¹

¹⁰ T. Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspective*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p.19.

¹¹ T. Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspective*.. p. 20.

South-East

South-eastern part of Nigeria is made up of such states like; Abia, Anambra, Ebony, Enugu and Imo. The Igbo are the predominant group in this region, although there are pockets of other ethnic groups like; the Ijaw, Ibibio and Efik. The Igbo are grouped into at least five sub-cultures. They are; the Igbo of the Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the South-Eastern Nigeria, the Igbo of the North-Eastern Nigeria, the Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. Despite some cultural diversity among them, they do share a common basic culture in their language with a cluster of dialects that are mutually intelligible. They also share a common political system based on decentralization of power and delegation of authority exercised by the holders of the staff of authority, the *Ofo*.

In the political arrangement, the people of this zone are highly decentralised. Historically, the groups mostly had democratic systems of government and several kingdoms such as Niri, Akwa, Akpa (Calabar), Aro confederacy and Opobo which had huge influence in this zone. At the level of the village in Igbo land, public administration is under the control of the village assembly which comprises every able-bodied male adult. At the core is what is called the inner council (*Ama Ala*) which consists of lineage heads, title holders, and other elders on the basis of their personal qualities. Title holders express great authority and they are men of great repute. Examples include; the *Ozo*, *Idiè Mazi*, *Ozika*, *Nze Dikpa*, *Isi*, *Okpara*, *Ezji* and a few others. Similarly, others that hold powers include priests, elders, diviners, medicine men, the *Okpara*s members of secret society and age grades. They all have recognized roles to play within the Igbo political set up.

There are at least three most important family events in this region. They are birth, marriage and burial. Igbo traditional marriage, known as *Igbankwu* is not just an affair between the future husband and wife, it involves parents, the extended family and the whole village. The would-be groom parent will bring

palm wine and kola nuts to the bride's family and other items such as goats, chickens etc as requested by the family. We wish to state that the wedding ceremony varies from village to village. Birth is also celebrated among the Igbo but the naming ceremony is usually performed on the 28th day. Many customs surround the burial rites such as paying last respect to the dead, singing traditional songs and traditional dances, acrobatic displays by masquerades etc.

This zone is also remarkable for its sophisticated artistic traditions and skills such as the science of metallurgy, iron smelting and bronze-smelting in such communities as Nkwere, Awka, Abiriba, etc. The idea of iron work in this zone has been dated in the village of Igbo-Ukwu where an excavation of the grave of a man of some importance and wealth dates back to the 9th Century which produced some of the earliest bronze castings, glass beads, bowls and ornaments. The objects found at Igbo-Ukwu are also for ritual as well as secular purposes and included a large collection of objects and regalia mostly made through the "lost wax" technique and through smiting and casting method. In terms of style, the artefacts found at Igbo-Ukwu are not similar to the Bini, Ife or any other Nigerian arts; they are originally local in shape and content. The findings at this site indicate a very well developed economy with surplus to engage in artistic production.

South-South

This zone is made up states like; Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta. Languages spoken by the peoples of this area are classified under the Benue-Congo, a sub-family of the large Niger-Congo family of African languages. Although there are pockets of the kw speaking group as well. South-South, otherwise known as the Niger Delta Region, is a consummation of minority ethnicities like Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio, Andoni, Ogoni,

Abua, Ikwere, Annang, Iyala, Nkum, Nkoro, Ibani etc.¹² Among these groups, the Ijaw ethnic group accounts for a sizeable percentage of Nigeria's population. They are located along the coastal belts of Southern Nigeria from the Forcados to Bonny River, long and extensive years of interaction with various neighbours have greatly influenced their traditions thereby leading to differences in the cultural assumptions of component Ijaw groups. They are mostly identified as Western Delta Ijaw (*Gbaramatu, Mein, Iduwini, Arogo, Egbema (Bassan), (Apoi Ijaw)*); the Central Delta Ijaw (*Apoi, Furupagha, Olofiama Ijaw*); and the Eastern Delta Ijaw (*Bonny, Elem Kalabari, Nembe (Brass), Okrika*).

The communities within this zone, especially peoples from the cross-river area, are organised in segmented political system deriving their stability social controls from the various forms of societies or associations and age-grade organisation like; *Ekpo, Idang, Ekon*, and *Ekpe* of the Ibibio group. The *Ekpe* or leopard society, *Obong Ekpiri, Akata, Ukwa, Emanaka, and Ekangmen's* society among the Efik people. It should be noted that, the real seat of moral authority in the past, rested in the council of priest or the heads in each village. Among these secret cults, *Ekpe* is most widely, and initiation into it attracts certain amount of fee according to the grade of the entrant. Among the Ijaw cosmology, a High God (*Tamuno*) is acknowledged.¹³

An ancestral cult similar to that of the Igbo also exists. Being riverine people, there is a strong belief in the water goddess (*Owu*) that plays certain roles in human affairs.

In the area of economy, the peoples of the South-South Region are found the riverine environments that do not warrant the large-scale production of cash and food crops. As a result of this, majority of the earliest settlers depended on fishing and manufacturing of salt which they traded for vegetables and other

¹² O. Ikime, 'The People and Kingdoms of the Delta Province', in O. Ikime, (eds.) *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1980, pp. 89-96.

¹³ E. Alagoa, 'Peoples of the Cross River and the Eastern Niger Delta' in O. Ikime, (eds.) *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980, pp. 56-60.

food stuffs with the people of the hinterlands. Commodities of trade from the far West (Yorubaland) reached the Eastern Delta states by relay system from Ijaw groups on the Benin River, and from the Itsekiri kingdom of Warri, through the Bassan Ijaw of the Central Delta. It was because of this experience that trade routes developed from this earlier internal trade that the Eastern Delta States participated successfully in the overseas trade in slaves and other goods.

Finally, canoes are the means of carrying the transportation that enhanced the trade across the length and breadth of the Niger Delta. Most people in the Delta knew about the making of canoes but not all the areas had the right timber for this purpose. It is on this basis that the Apo iljo was known for canoe building. They sold their canoes to other parts of the delta. Salt making was another lucrative business and was in two ways. There was simple evaporation of the sea water and there was a method which salt was made from the roots, shoots and leaves of the mangrove tree. These were burnt and the ash solution filtered and evaporated e.g. the Itsekiri, Gbaramatu Ijo, Bassan and Numbe people were known for salt production of this kind. Other Delta peoples bought salt from these known centres and merely supplemented supplies with their own locally made one.

Conclusion

Nigerian peoples and cultures have been discussed in this chapter with particular reference to different geographical regions. The contention of this work is that, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation. There are few major ethnic groups in Nigeria while most of the ethnicities are rather minority groups. The minority ethnic groups are found most especially in the North-Central Nigeria otherwise known as the Middle Belt Region and South-South Zone of the country. The position of this work is that; each ethnic group at least has its own unique culture which is fundamentally influenced by the forces of its

geographical region. It is on the premise of this understanding that, the concept of cultural variation in different Nigerian zones has been analysed. Culture as a totality of the people's ways of life is dynamic as a result of natural forces, external influence as well as inter-group relations.

Chapter Five

Traditional Crafts and Cultural Festivals in Nigeria

Emmanuel C. Ayangaor

Introduction

There is the need to revisit our understanding of the word 'culture' because of its several meanings. To the Sociologist, culture is "a way of life of a people" acquired through learning, as a member of a community. We do not, in this paper, intend to see culture in those very general terms. Doing so would render our assignment unmanageable. Secondly, there many other disciplines that already deal adequately with the different sectors of human life subsumed under that general concept of culture. We would, therefore, prefer to adopt the *literary* meaning of culture. Here, Culture is seen as "documentary evidence of man's creativity."¹ We shall see culture as, essentially, the Literary Arts, Performing Arts and the Visual Arts. In these Arts, man mirrors himself and his society and through them, thereby enabling other to gain adequate glimpse of the culture of any given society through the Arts.

But what do we mean by the Literary Arts, Performing Arts and The Visual Arts? The *Literary Arts* include both oral and written material such as folktales, poetry, short stories, novels and drama (as in dramatic literature). It should be immediately clear that, until recently, the most common manifestation of literary artistic creativity among preliterate Africans was their oral narratives. The *Performing Arts* include music, dance, drama (acting), and puppetry. Because the performing arts fall under

what a learned colleague once called the “noise sector of culture,” they are often the most noticed aspects of African culture. Indeed, to a layman in Nigeria, this is all that there is to culture! The *Visual Arts* refer to paintings, drawing, sculpture (molding, carving and constructing), pottery, textiles, and several other useful crafts. We shall, therefore survey the production and presentation of all these manifestations of culture in Nigeria under Traditional Festivals. Nigerian communities are mainly agrarian and make use of simple farming techniques. Nigerian farmers depend on unpredictable weather, pests and undetermined soil fertility for a good harvest. They pray to God, gods, spirits and ancestors, who can control those unpredictable influences and come to their assistance? A poor harvest, pestilence or drought can all easily bring about famine and death in their communities. So, they pray to these offering sacrifices as well so that there will be a good life for them. The question of good health, fertility of crops and the fecundity of human beings are paramount. The leaders of the community want to be safe from their human enemies, predatory or poisonous animals, insects and all sorts of evil influences. The observation of taboos, performances of magical rites, the wearing and using of magical emblems (talisman), the organization of communal festivals etc. are some of the ways of relating with the supernatural forces for the purposes of gaining maximum benefits from them for their people. When all these are done, it is believed that evil has been expelled from the land and the blessings of their gods and ancestors assured.

This does not mean that every celebration is religious in nature. We distinguish sacred/religious festivals from the secular or profane ones. In sacred festivals, the gods and spirits are communicated with by means of prayer, libation, sacrifice, incantation and exorcism. These activities may be carried out in such places like shrines, sacred grooves, at special trees, caves, and hills and wherever these are considered to be the home of

these forces. In some communities, the gods and the ancestors may present themselves in the form of masquerades, and as guests to their living descendants. They are prayed to, offered gifts and treated in the way only reserved for the most honoured visitor. During times of festivals, more activities than theatre take place. Not on theatrical events are prayers and sacrifices, feasting, wrestling contests, the taunting of social misfits and engaging in various antics. We often find "total theatre" during most of these traditional festivals. There is music, singing, dancing, costuming, puppetry, drama, incantations and narratives.

J. N. Amankulor defines Festival as

...Festival theatre in traditional African societies means dramatic activity which occurs within the context of a festival celebrated in African villages or similar settings. Such dramatic activity must portray typical beliefs, ideas and customs of an African society. It is, in other words, a communal drama in which the people mirror, within the festival environment, their religious, secular and aesthetic philosophy.²

In other words, the study of theatre enables us to understand African culture. This is so because Africans project aspects of their culture through the audio and visual language of theatre.

Characteristics of a Traditional Festival

Cultural festivals are complex social events that often have very important religious, educational, historical and political functions in the lives of African peoples. Even those modern Africans who reject the religious aspects of these festivals still find them very useful in mobilizing members of their communities for purposes of development. They also find them good occasions during which they take off their time and to enjoy the attractive musical, dance and acrobatic displays of the musicians, dancers and masquerades. Festivals are times when people chose to drink and eat in excess. Most cultural festivals come up annually but

there are some that are so important that they come up every three to ten or more years. There are those that come up once in a lifetime. Very often, the oracle or a special god concerned has to approve or give the date for the festival should come up. It is possible for the spirit or god concerned to cancel a festival, but this rarely happens. There are also those festivals that are not regular and are hosted on demand. Some (evil) cleansing festivals are usually staged whenever a major calamity befalls the community. Similarly, marriage, personal or even communal achievements and initiation festivals are held whenever someone is to assume an important social position.

Festivals are organised and presented in the following stages: (a) Pre Festival stage, (b) Festival Proper and (c) Post Festival stage. In the pre festival stage, members of the community are expected to carry out religious, artistic or sanitary preparations. The date of the festival once obtained has to be sent to all those concerned. The town or village has to be cleaned, shrines, drums and costumes repaired. Musicians and dancers have to carry out rehearsals. Hunters have to hunt for more meat, palm wine tappers go for more palm wine and, where burukutu is taken, steps are taken to acquire and soak grain and to start the fermentation process. Each household in the community is involved for there must be adequate food for *feasting* on the festival day itself.

On the day of the festival itself, series of events are put up. It is not unusual for the priest or the Chief to make the required offerings to ancestors or spirits and to, thereafter, proceed with the celebrations. Some of the more religious aspects of the festival may be carried out in secret although there are usually many public elements that involve all most of the people.

After the festival ceremonies proper, which may last from one day to ten days when it is concluded, there are the important post festival activities. It is not unusual for a special thanksgiving made to ancestors and gods for a successful festival as well as the

removal of whatever sanctions that was in place before and during the festival. Indeed, only at this time is it possible for those who were busy entertaining the public to have their own turns at feasting privately. It is not unusual for the paramount Chief to summon his assistants for a meeting to review what had happened. Any donations that had been made to the participants can now be shared out among members.

The venue where Festivals are featured can be at the village squares, market places, palaces, shrines, cult houses and at any other appropriate places. Only cult members may watch performances at cult houses. There is always a preferred site for staging performances during any festival.

The entire festival is run by a group of people usually headed by the Chief himself. It is not unusual to for the paramount chief to delegate this to a particular a special sub chief. Leaders of masquerade groups, dance groups, age grades, priests, palm wine tappers etc help him. Members of various secret societies may be placed in charge of security during the festival. They will prevent theft, molestation and unkind treatment to children, women or strangers. These are the singers, dancers, acrobats, puppeteers, masquerades, and musicians etc. We can add priests and other laymen who give a hand or say some words during the event. Every member of the community is expected to actively participate, however. Those who will, or cannot are expected to watch and applaud performances and perhaps donate, spray, money on distinguished artistes. The distinction between the audience and the performers during an African festival is not clear, especially at public performances. Members of the audience can sing along with the singers or even rush in to join them dance. Chiefs are known to descend from their thrones to do a step or two with the dancers even where the performance is put up in their own honour. We may find among the audience tourists who are there to enjoy themselves. Well known festivals attract many tourists. This is why traditional festivals are considered an

important tourist attraction.

As we noted earlier such events like traditional wrestling, storytelling, juggling and fashion parade as well as magical displays, fishing competition, acrobatic displays may be presented during the festival.

Different Types of Festivals

J. N. Amankulor has identified about six different types of festivals namely

1. Fertility or Birth Festivals
2. Farming Cycle Festivals
3. Title taking or Initiation Festivals
4. Religious Worship Festivals
5. Funerary and Mortuary Festivals
6. Occasional and Children's Festivals.

J. N. Amankulor, "Festival Theatre"

- (i) Fertility or Birth Festivals. The festival is the occasion for prayer for the fecundity of women. Women are normally expected to bear children. The children are expected to remain alive and to grow up into healthy members of the community. It is not unusual that during this festival request is also made to the gods and ancestors for plentiful food, which they would eat and remain alive. Even with food there is the fear of evil spirits who may snatch their children from them. If there is so much religious activity seen among our people it is for the fact that they realise how helpless they are in confronting all sorts of evil or negative forces that can ruin man's hope. Only God, the gods, or our ancestors can spiritually help us overcome problems of lack of food, infertility in our women and sickness among our children.
- (ii) Farming Cycle Festivals. These can be likened to fertility festivals but they are different. They are concerned with

ensuring that there is adequate food for the sustenance of the entire family or community. At the time of planting his crops it is the prayer of the farmer that his efforts should not be in vain. Lack of rain, or of too much rain, pests and crop failure due to inexplicable evil causes, are challenges he can only face with the assistance of supernatural forces. Hence, the communal festival. Hence the invitation of the ancestor to intercede on the behalf of their living descendants. At the time of harvest there comes the "thanksgiving" festival when the living express their happiness to the gods and ancestors for having got them this far. It is the norm to offer the first portions of the first harvest to the gods before members of that community begin to fresh foodstuff. The New Yam festival among the Igbo and the Igede is a good example of this sort of festival.

- (iii) Title taking and Initiation Festivals are staged -to celebrate individual achievements such as the purchase or award of a chieftaincy, the promotion of an age group. The entire community may be involved rite of passage festivals whether it is an individual title taking. In Tivland, enlistments into the Ibiamegh cult or the purchase of a horse were occasions for such festivals.
- (iv) Religious Worship Festivals have definite have religious attributes. Communities worship deities during such festivals which are led by their priests. The Igbo priests of Ala, or Ani, the goddess of the earth and the Idoma have Ej' Alekwu festival when dead ancestors come to visit and place their living descendants. and worshippers of these gods celebrate. There are special festivals when the spirits of our dead parents are worshipped. There are also festivals during which gods or goddesses are worshipped. Ani, Ala, (Igbo goddess of the earth) is very popular among them. The Idoma have Ej' Aje. The Yoruba have

- Ogun, god of Iron which is worshipped by drivers, blacksmiths etc. Note Osun is founder goddess of Osogbo town. Osun Festival is the occasion during which she is worshipped.
- (v) Funerary and Mortuary Festivals. These festivals are held to celebrate the passing away of elders of good repute. This is deemed necessary if their souls are to be converted from wandering spirits of the dead into the benevolent ancestral spirits. Failure to carry out this festival may lead to the return of the dead man's spirit to harm the living for having failed to give it a befitting send off. This is often called the Second Burial Ceremony. It is an important institution among the Idoma of Benue State.
- (vi) Occasional or Children's Festivals. This is often an occasion to celebrate an event which members of the community feel good about. The arrival of an important visitor to the village, the winning of an inter village war or even a land case etc can throw the whole community into a festive mood. That is why it is an occasional festival.

Children's festivals are their own plays which often continue well beyond the village's major festival. The community permits children to frolic about without the usual parental restraint.

Other Festivals. Nigeria has had several centuries of contact with the Islamic Arab world and the Christian European world. Therefore, there are celebrated in Nigeria such non traditional festivals like Easter and Christmas among the Christians and the *Id d Fitri* and *Id d Kabir* and *Id d Maulud* festivals of the Muslims. In addition to these, the Nigerian Government has approved public holidays for New Year's Day, Good Friday, May Day and Independence Day.

Selected Nigerian Traditional Festivals

The U hola Festival is featured among the Zuru (or Dakarkari) people of Kebbi State. The Zuru people use this occasion to pray to their gods, ancestors and spirits. The rain god is requested to cease rains to enable crops ripen better thereby producing higher yields in preparation for the U hola. Young Zuru men and women do their last dance before marriage while the much younger boys begin a seven year bridal service with their prospective parents-in-law by working on their farms— *Galmo*— for the hand of their daughter in marriage. The Festival is also a time for feasting, dancing, singing, wrestling and fashion display. The Festival provides the avenue to praise the valiant, and castigate the profligate children thereby ensuring the social adherence to group norms and unity. It is expected to come up annually subject to the approval of the gods who must be consulted before it is put up. Secondly, there should be not mass deaths or similar calamity within the community U hola will be banned for that year. All families must slaughter an animal on the eve of the festival and donate food to all who call on *them* on the festival day. Boys between 5 and 15 years old are placed on a special diet of porridge and meat during the festival period. It is after each annual U hola that fresh batches of young men join the *Galm* bridal service.

The Fulani Sharo

The Fulani (Fulo, Fula) are found throughout the West Africa sub region. They are understood to have migrated into Nigeria from the Futa Jallon districts of the Guinea Bissau area. We have the town Fulani as well as the “cattle Fulani”. These latter are nomadic pastoralists who graze their cattle throughout the West Africa region. They live a very hardy nomadic life. The *Sharo* Festival is found among the nomadic Fulani. It essentially consists of a session of public floggings to test the endurance of young

men. They are expected to bear the pain without as much as flinching when whipped. If they cry or show any signs of pain they remain disqualified to be considered as men who can get married.

It comes up twice a year during the major Sallah Festival and at the period of the guinea corn harvest in December January. Any open shade preferably at the corner of a market is suitable. Girls dress in their best. Fulani musicians play their music accompanied by hand clapping dancers who stamp their feet. The girls do most of the singing and clapping, however. From time to time a Fulani boy embraces a girl of his choice and they do a short dance. The Sharo is actually an initiation ceremony into adulthood. Those who cannot stand the pain remain children.

Igue Festival of Benin is the most popular and colourful festival of the Edo people of Edo state. It consists of up to nine smaller events or mini festivals. It is celebrated by the *Oba* of Benin and all Edo people to mark the end of the year and for the ushering in of a new year. The *Oba* dresses in his full regalia and dances with the scimitar; the king's sword.

It is an occasion for the *Oba* and Edo people to thank the gods for their protection during the year. The *Oba* sacrificed animals to propitiate the spirits, the gods and souls of dead *Obas*. Evil spirits are exorcised from the land. Finally, it is on this occasion that the *Oba* re-enacts important events in the history of the kingdom.

The festival used to take place in September every year but it was in the 1980s that the late *Oba* Akenzua changed the Benin "end of the year" to December. The Igue Festival is now celebrated every December of the year. We shall only list some of these events without detailed descriptions because to do so will cover too much time and space.

- (i) *Otue Ugerhoba*: When chiefs and their special dancing groups visit the palace wearing their full ceremonial dresses to pay homage, and pledge their continued loyalty to the Oba,
- (ii) *Ugerhoba*: On this occasion the Oba confers traditional chieftaincy titles to his loyal deserving citizens.
- (iii) *Iran*: This event recalls the battles fought between the indigenous and pro royalist elements. The Ife dynasty of the Benin ruling family won the battle against Chief Ogiamen.
- (iv) *Otue Iguba*: Chiefs of various grades dance to the Obas palace to wish him a successful celebration of the Igue Festival.
- (v) *Iguba*: The Oba sacrifices to the guardian spirit of the Oba himself.
- (vi) *Ugie Ewere*: Ewere leaves are presented to the Oba to wish him good luck and the people purify their city by carrying lighted firebrands to drop into the river. The Oba appears in the public with all his wives; the only time he does this throughout the year. The Igue festival reminds the Edo people those important events in Benin history.

Osun Festival is held every year at Osogbo which is in Osun State. Osun is a Yoruba goddess who changed into River Osun. A hunter called Timehin once discovered the Osun River during a drought. He informed his village chief, the Owa of Ipoletown, who later moved to the banks of this river for the water. Thus Chief Laroaye became the first Ataoja of Osogbo after entering into an agreement with the goddess Osun that in return for her protection and blessings, he would annually offer sacrifices to her and feed the sacred fishes in her river. The fishes are Osun's messengers. As for the promised protection and blessings, Osogbo had been saved from wars. Women who pray to Osun for children and drink or bathe in her waters are blessed with

children. Hence, the popularity of the festival. It is also an occasion during which the sons and daughters of the land flock back to their city to renew their solidarity as well as to feast. The Ataja of Osogbo participates fully in the festival visiting shrines and eventually to the bank of River Osun for the offerings to the goddess. The Osun festival attracts worshippers of Osun from South America and Osun peoples at home and abroad every August. It should be noted that a German lady, Susanne Wenger, was converted as a worshipper of Osun and has contributed her artistic talents in building an enclave for her goddess.

The Great Ofala Festival of the Onitsha Igbo are unique because they operate a monarchical rather than a republican system. They have historical relations with Igalala to the north and Edo to the west. They are generally a proud people. The Obi is considered divine although the office is not hereditary. He is rarely seen in the public by his subjects. In the olden tribal days the Obi was the Commander in Chief of the Onitsha army. He is subjected to several taboos.

Four days to the Ofala festival in September, the Obi goes into a period of mourning for the souls of all the departed. The Oracle had been consulted on the future of the town, the health of the Obi and whether there shall be famine or prosperity in the land. After this confinement the Obi returns to his palace and his people flock to the palace to welcome him... and watch him begin the Ofala festival. The Festival, which looks like a New Yam festival is largely on the importance the Obi as a monarch. Royal music is played and only the Obi and his closest Chiefs in the hierarchy dance to it.

***Kwagh-hir* Puppet**

The Meaning of *Kwagh-hir*, It can be directly translated as "thing magic" but is better understood as tales of the supernatural. In the past this was merely the verbal art of storytelling which the

Tiv speak of as “u tan kwagh hir”. One also hears of “kwagh alom” meaning the exploits of the trickster hare (Brer Rabbit). Since about 1960 kwagh hir art has become transformed into dramatised folk tales that make use of puppets and masquerades for performances. It is this theatrical form of puppet theatre that we are concerned with here.

The performance of the modern kwagh hir involves the use of puppets, drumming, dance, masquerades, mime, singing, narrations and acrobatics. Because it is a composite art the kwagh hir is able to attract and hold the attention of audiences throughout the night. Its popularity has raised eyebrows from Churches and educational organizations as it keeps their members away from going to churches on Sundays or schools on Monday. Government support has helped it to survive and become the most popular Tiv art form to date.

A kwagh hir group can have up to a hundred members. There are over ten drummers, over ten singers, over ten miscellaneous musicians/instrumentalists over ten puppeteers, over five acrobats, over five floor managers, over five backstage assistants who arrange the props and, help puppeteers change between performances. There are usually up to three or four security persons. And there is usually the play director and one or two announcers; someone *hastokep* in close touch with the backstage and the musicians so that they play the right sort of music that herald in the performers.

Since 1969 Government support of Kwagh hir has been crucial to its growth and development. Its banning in Tivland, its exposure to the University community in the 1970s, its recording in both sound and on film, its performance during the 1977 Second World Festival of Black and African Arts and Civilization, its annual performance by Benue State government, its sponsorship to Europe in 1984 etc has helped to make it one of the greatest artistic and touristic attractions Benue state has. Because the people themselves are prepared to pay to watch its

performances an investor can sponsor such performances with the likelihood of recovering his investments and even making a profit. He can also produce home videos and sell them. Once he is able to do all this in a business manner he should make his profits. As for tourism, the annual kwagh hir festival of Benue state should be well timed such that tourists are given adequate notice to book for visits to Benue. The yet to be tapped resource of kwagh hir is its music. Many people are in love with it and a good recording engineer can give it the needed rearranging to suit modern standards of discerning local and foreign consumers.

Conclusion

Let us not forget that apart from Entertainment traditional festivals expected to Lead, Persuade and Educate our people to live the good life. Festivals remain one of the ways of culture transmission, culture change and national development in the Nigerian State.

Chapter Six

Evolution of the Nigerian State

Saawua G. Nyityo and Akosu Ezekiel Agaigbe

Geographical Location

Nigeria is situated between latitudes 4°N and 14°N. It is bounded in the north by Niger Republic, the south by the Gulf of Guinea, in the east by Cameroon and in the west by Benin Republic. Nigeria's current population estimate has been put at 160 million people. The story of her evolution into a nation state has been broken into three main phases, namely: the establishment, expansion and British colonial administrative control, the consolidation of British colonial rule after the 1914 amalgamation and the sustained efforts of Nigerians to end colonialism. Below is a step by step summation of the phases that led to the emergence of the Nigerian state in 1960.

The Pre-Colonial Picture

The conventional picture of Nigeria before the 1914 amalgamation is that of a closed society with limited interactions between its parts namely, North and South of the country. This notwithstanding there was a certain degree of compactness about the territory that encouraged the movement of peoples, goods and ideas North and South across the zones.

To begin with, the desiccation of the Sahara desert in Pre-historic times warranted the South ward migration of peoples. Again, the sustainability of the Sudanic belt for the development of settled life also allowed for population expansion, the

development of iron working, agriculture and the emergence of organized society.¹

It was therefore not surprising that population movements from the Sudanic belt into the forest zone facilitated the exploitation of the later especially through the application of iron technology. Conversely, there had been movements from the South to North in more historical times. Even the Trans-Saharan trade network of many Sudanic States had depended to a large extent on products from the forest zone or the Middle Belt.² In addition, many Southern polities and peoples have at different times before 1800, expanded northwards or exerted pressure on groups to the North. The Jukum Kingdom of the Middle Belt for example had at different times in the seventeenth century made incursions northwards to as far as Kano and Katsina. The Benin Kingdom of the forest zone and the Igbo peoples to the east exerted pressure upon the peoples, politics and the economy of the immediate north and in the Middle-Belt such as the Igala, Idoma and Tiv.³

In a nutshell, the Yoruba groups of the South West interacted with groups in the north and along the Atlantic coast such as the Ijaw and Egun, and with the Bini to their east. Benin Kingdom also interacted with the far flung areas of the Lagos area and with their immediate neighbours in the Delta Region including the Igbo.

Moreover, the Nigerian geographical space spanning over the basin of the lower Niger, South of the Bussa rapids with the rivers Niger and Benue, their tributaries and the enormous delta spreading out into several creeks and lagoons was also a veritable ground for inter-group relations. The unity of these waterways encouraged a network of relationships within the basin. These

¹ J.F. Ade Ajayi & E.J. Alagoa (1980) "Nigeria before 1800: Aspects of Economic Development and Inter-group Relations" In Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann, Ibadan Pp.224-235.

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*

river networks provided channels of contact between peoples and ideas cutting across the North and South. One must not fail to recognize the east-west movements of peoples and ideas also.

Thus, it is the pre-colonial background highlighted above that provided the basis for the widening of the scale of interaction among the Nigerian peoples. Their common interests and inter-relationships dating from pre-colonial times also indicate that they possessed different cultural, political and administrative institutions for many centuries. They were encumbered in this extensive area by considerable geographical and other obstacles. Consequently, any attempt to examine the evolution of the Nigerian state would require that we pay some attention to the issues that unite us as a country without losing sight of how to resolve our important differences.

The Evolutionary Process

In his inaugural lecture delivered in 1973, Professor Tekena N. Tamuno was able to establish four distinct stages in the recent history of Nigeria. They include the following:

The first stage covers the establishment and expansion, since the late nineteenth century, of British administrative control in several parts of Nigeria. The second deals with the consolidation of British rule after the 1914 amalgamation. The third is firmly rooted in the sustained efforts of Nigerians to end colonialism. The fourth began with the triumphal note of achieving independence but soon plunged into the anxious moments of a national crisis⁴.

Beginning with the first stage, which Professor Obaro Ikime refers to as the era of British Conquest;⁵ he further explained that it was characterized by a piecemeal takeover of the country

⁴ Tekena N. Tamuno, (1973). *History-Makes-in Modern Nigeria: An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 25 October 1973*, Pp.1-17

⁵ Obaro Ikime, (1977). *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, Longman, London.

by the British. He was able to document in detail, the responses of the various Nigerian peoples that came in contact with the British during the closing decades of the 19th century up to the first decade of the 20th century. The process began with the peaceful penetration in the Nigerian coastal areas for the purposes of commodity commerce. Social and commercial engagement during this period was based on mutual respect for African traders and European merchants. Trade disputes arising from such interaction were settled according to African laws and customs. Through the use of "gun-boat politics", the situation later changed in favour of the British. This process ultimately led to the signing of treaties of protection and conquest of Nigeria by the British.

It later paved the way for important administrative decisions in the evolution of the colonial state in Nigeria. In order to secure a central direction of policy and, by so doing, pull economic resources together, the British government from 1898 adopted a policy of gradually amalgamating its various administrative units in Nigeria.⁶ In May 1906, the Lagos colony was amalgamated with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The consent of the Nigerian people was not sought in regard to the amalgamation project as the primary concern of government in 1906 was economic. When it came to sources of funding the costs of the new administration, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was adjudged to be better off compared to the financially weak colony of Lagos. Thus the amalgamation was designed to enable government to cover the costs of administration and development. In particular, it needed the funds to extend the railway line from Lagos to the hinterlands. It must be borne in mind that the 1906 amalgamation, however, did not result in administrative fusion.⁷

The second stage in the evolution of the Nigerian state deals

⁶ For details see T.N. Tamuno, (1972). *The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase 1898-1914*, London.

⁷ T.N. Tamuno, (1980). "British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century" in Obaro Ikime(ed) *Ground of Nigerian History* Pp. 393-409.

with the consolidation of British rule after the 1914 amalgamation. Just as it did in the amalgamation of the colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the British did not seek the opinion of the Nigerian people before it amalgamated the Southern and Northern Provinces in 1914. Heretofore, the primary aim of the British was economic. According to Professor Tekena Tamuno, "compared with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the protectorate of Northern Nigeria proves a relatively poor neighbour."⁸ He went on to argue that:

Without direct access to the sea, with a large area and population, with costly railway construction and river dredging projects, the protectorate of Nigeria experienced serious financial difficulties and [was] slightly relieved by annual grants-in-aid from the imperial treasury.⁹

Although he gave an extended account of the north's financial insolvency, it is pertinent to state that there was at least one item which he failed to mention and which constituted a major source of funding for development projects: Colonial taxation. Based upon their admittedly large demographic figures, coupled with an experienced regime of taxation policy and practice, Northern Protectorates often secured large funds from its tax receipts. But the North's actual earnings from the central treasury were often not fairly stated. Such omissions often placed the North at a disadvantage.¹⁰ But when this was questioned by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and reiterated at the Ibadan Constitutional Conference of 1957, it became the basis upon which two thirds of seats in the Federal House of Representatives in Lagos were allocated to the North.¹¹

One significant outcome of the 1914 amalgamation was that it gave the northern and Southern Provinces a common political

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Trevor Clark, (1991). *A Right Honourable Gentleman. The Life and Times of Alhaji Sir. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa*, Hudahuda Publishing Company, Zaria.

¹¹ *Ibid*

head without encouraging the development of a uniform style of administration in either group of provinces. Even the amalgamation of departments such as education, police and prison service proceeded gradually between the 1920s and 1930s without encouraging the development of large administrative units within Nigeria. No central secretariat emerged before the 1920s. Despite this very cautious development, amalgamation still made heavy demands on Nigeria's financial and staff resources.

However, with retrenchment and prudent spending, Nigeria during the 1930s had enough staff and money for implementing further administrative reform. The former Southern provinces were split into Eastern and Western provinces,¹² while Northern provinces were left intact by Governor Bourdillon. He believed that the people of Northern provinces were more homogeneous in culture than those in the southern provinces. Consequently, the Nigerian inheritors of the state amalgamated in 1914 accepted and consolidated the foundations laid by generations of British officials. Thus amalgamation has had its lasting impact on the history of Nigeria – imposing on Nigerian people the difficult task of Nation building.

The third stage in the evolution of the Nigerian state had to do with the sustained efforts of Nigerians to end colonialism. This is the era of decolonization. It accounted for the emergence and growth of Nigerian nationalism. First was the desire of the people for self rule which signified freedom from foreign control. This found expression in the various resistance movements by the indigenous people to conquest and domination. This pattern of resistance was expressed long after the establishment of British rule. It meant the sporadic outbreak of violence or different forms of passive resistance that were rather subtle and psychological in nature. The other grievances of the nationalists included racial

¹² See Sessional paper No.46 of 1937: Reorganization of the Southern Provinces Cited in T.N. Tamuno British Colonial Administration in Nigeria.

intolerance and discrimination, limited opportunities for Nigerians in the administrative sector, open economic exploitation of Nigerians by foreign enterprises with the connivance of the British Colonial administration.¹³ Several organizations were established by Nigerian peoples for the purpose of pursuing their nationalist agenda. Political movements including press organizations were also founded to pursue the objectives of the nationalists. Organizations such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association founded by Marcus Gravery, the National Council of British West Africa (NCBWA) initiated by Joseph Casely Hayford and Dr. Akinwande Savage had done great work to make sure that their idea was translated into practice. Much nearer home was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) and the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM).

Majority of members of the NYM were Southerners. This was due to the hostility of the British administration and of the Emirs acting under the administration. This notwithstanding, the NYM had vibrant supporters in Jos where its members comprised both northerners and southerners. The party's national outlook was best demonstrated by a joint memorandum with the Jos Tribal League to Governor Richards in 1943.¹⁴ The memorandum deplored the policy of administering Northern Nigeria as a distinct administrative unit, the non-representation of northern Nigerians in the Legislative Council and so on.¹⁵ Other Nigerian nationalists such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Dr. Joseph Sarwuan Tarka, Alhaji Aminu Kano, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello all formed or led political parties such as the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), The Action Group (AG), The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), The Northern Elements Progressive Union

¹³ G.O. Oluasanya, 1980, "The Nationalist Movement in Nigeria" in Obaro Ikime (ed) Groundwork of Nigerian History Hemneman. Ibadan: Pp. 545-569

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

(NEPU) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in that order to fight for Independence.

The Second World War had a great impact on the development of political consciousness and therefore on the nationalist movement in Nigeria. Thus, the combined impact of party political propaganda, sporadic protests, railway workers strikes led by Michael Imoudu weakened the colonial powers economically and militarily and therefore undermined the strongest weapon for the maintenance of colonial territories. The newspapers, particularly the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Times* of Nigeria, played a significant role in whipping up political consciousness and galvanized the Nigerian people to struggle for independence. They embarked on a sustained campaign against the moral basis of colonial administration-forcing the British administrators to enter into negotiations via constitutional conferences. This ultimately led to the attainment of independence in 1960. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe became the first indigenous Governor General; Right Hon. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was appointed as prime minister. In 1963 Nigeria attained a republican status and could then be referred to as the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The fourth stage began with the triumphal note of achieving independence but soon plunged into anxious moments of national crisis of 1966-1970. This too was overcome, leading to another phase of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation which demonstrated our resolve in overcoming major challenges. The military held power for decades but we have now entered on a new phase of democratic governance and national stability. The process of democratic consolidation is work in progress. When that is achieved, Nigeria would have placed itself squarely on the path of national rebirth and development.

In conclusion, the process of the evolution of the Nigerian state has been long and tortuous. It has been summed up in phases culminating in the emergence of the Nigerian State as an

independent entity in the comity of nations. It has a definite role to play in shaping the destiny of her people, the big brother status on the African continent and becoming a key player in the international community. But in playing its role, it has significant obstacles and challenges that it can overcome by itself. It was General Yakubu Gowon, the former Nigerian head of state who declared that "to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done." He had reflected on the Nigerian past, weighed its challenges but looked ahead to greatness. Nation building and national greatness imply that we emphasize the factors that unite while attempting to resolve those that divide us.

Chapter Seven

Nigeria's Geography, Population and Linguistic Classification

John E. Agaba and Thaddeus T. Ityonzughul

Introduction

This chapter examines the meaning and the geography of Nigeria. In doing this, the chapter recognizes and acknowledges that "Nigeria" is a derivative of an African word. It also identifies the person that suggested the name "Nigeria". The chapter in short, presents the geographical coordinates and boundaries of the country under review. The chapter also sheds some light on the climate and vegetation of the country Nigeria. The study reflects the population of Nigeria making reference to the first census and the most recent one. The analysis also attempts a linguistic classification of the various Nigerian ethnic groups and draw a useful conclusion based on the examined issues.

Coinage and Geography of Nigeria

The name Nigeria is derived from '*Nig an*', an African word meaning great river. "Nigeria" therefore means "land of the Mighty River" or the country of the Great Waters.¹ Nigeria is the most populous country on the African continent, but only came into being in its present form in 1914 when the two Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated by Sir Frederick Lugard. Sixteen years earlier Flora Shaw, who later married Lugard, first suggested in an article for *The Times* that the several British Protectorates on the Niger be

¹ Sefra, J.E and Aguilar-Cauz, G. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 8. U.S.A. Encyclopedi a Inc. 2010, P. 200.

known collectively known as Nigeria.² Although Nigeria was the creation of European ambitions and rivalries in West Africa, it would be erroneous to assume that its peoples had little or no history before its final boundaries were negotiated by Britain, France and Germany at the turn of the twentieth century. For this newly created country contained not just a multiplicity of "pagan tribes", but also a number of great kingdoms and had evolved diverse systems of socio-political organizations independent of contact with Europe.³

We should be cognizant of the fact that, within the frontiers of Nigeria were the great kingdom of Kanem-Borno, with a known history of more than a thousand years, the Fulani Empire which for the hundred years before its conquest by Britain had ruled most the Savannah of Northern Nigeria, the kingdoms of Ife and Benin, wood art had become recognized as amongst the most accomplished in the world, the Yoruba Empire of Oyo, which had once been the most powerful of the states of the Guinea Coast, the city of the Niger Delta, which had grown in response to European demands for slaves and later palm oil, as well as politically decentralized and culturally homogenous Ibo peoples of the Eastern region and small ethnic nationalities of the Plateau and the Middle Benue Region.⁴

Geographically, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a country in West Africa, located between latitudes 4°N and 14°N and longitudes 3°E and 15°E meridian, bordered on the North by Niger and Sahara Desert, on South by the Gulf of Guinea, regarded to be an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, on East by Chad and Cameroon and on West by Benin Republic.⁵ The country can be classified into two major zones, namely: the Tropical Rainforest area and the Savannah Grassland zone. Each of these zones has its distinct geographical features which since time

² Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. "who coined the Name Nigeria?" cited in Crowder, M. *The Story of Nigeria*. London: Faber and Faber, 1966, p.21.

³ Crowder, M. *The Story of Nigeria*...p.21

⁴ Crowder, M. *The Story of Nigeria*... P 21

⁵ Uwechue, R. et'al (eds.) *Africa Today*. London: African Books Ltd. 2nd Edition, p. 1441.

immemorial have contributed tremendously to their peopling and the forms and patterns of culture which emerged from their interactions with their environment on the one hand, and between themselves on the other hand.⁶ For the purpose of clarity and easy comprehension, these zones are analyzed one after the other as presented in the succeeding discourse.

Firstly, the rain forest zone: This is made up of all the southern states and its major features include the abundance of rain, which extends for not less than seven months during the raining season, fairly luxuriant vegetation, characterized by thick forest and a variety of rivers, streams, tributaries which criss-crosses many communities in the zone. The zone is noted for the production of timber, oil palm, cocoa, rubber, yams, cashews, rice, fish, and citrus, among others. The zone also has petroleum, coal, marble, clay, limestone and salt to mention but a few.⁷

Secondly is the Savannah Zone. This covers the rest of the country, stretching from the upper part of the Niger-Benue Trough to the Niger-boundary. The indicators of these zones include the prevalence of the dry North East Trade Winds from the Sahara Desert, hot and dry weather for most part of the year and open Savannah Vegetation. The crops that thrive well in this zone are potatoes, tomatoes, rice, onions, groundnut, cotton, soya beans, millet and many more. Cattle and other animals are also reared effectively in this zone. This zone is richly endowed with some minerals like coal, tin, tantalite, uranium, gold and the like.⁸

In addition to the core zones is the Middle Belt Zone. This zone is transitionally located between the savannah and the entire forest zones. The Middle Belt zone covers the entire North-Central states perhaps, because of its transitional nature, it combines the climate and vegetation features of the savannah

⁶ Okpeh, O.O. and Ugbegili, S.I. *Thameson Nigerian History Peoples and Cultures* Makurdi: vast publishers, 2013, pp. 10-11.

⁷ Udo, R.K. "Environments' and peoples of Nigeria: A geographical introduction to the History of Nigeria", in Ikime O. (ed.) *Groundwork of Nigeria History*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980, pp. 1-8

⁸ Ilseje, N.P.A *New Geography of Nigeria*. Lagos: Longman, 1996, pp. 2-5.

and the rain forest zones respectively.⁹ The fragmentation of the country into zones does not in any way lay claim that each zone is entirely an 'Island of her own'. Instead, the balance in resource endowments between the aforementioned zones created complementarity and interdependence, a medium that helped in no small measure in uniting the peoples of the country through several years of contacts and interactions during the pre-colonial period, which challenges the notion that Nigeria is a mere geographical expression.

In their joint study of the History of Nigeria, T. Falola, A. Mahadi, M. U homoibhi and U. Anyanwu bring to the fore that both the forest zone and the savannah are subdivided into three types as appear here under:

- (i) Mangrove Swamp Forest: This is found in the Cross River and the Delta. The water here is blackish and the common tree is the red mangrove.
- (ii) Fresh Water Swamp Forest: The trees that flourish here are the mahogany, sassa wood, various palms and the *abura*. Moisture-loving plants thrive well here.
- (iii) Tropical Rain Forest: This is the most extensive. It is evergreen and could sustain different kinds of plants.¹⁰

The savannah, too, falls into three major zones, from South to North: Guinea, Sudan and Sahel. For clearer understanding, these zones are analyzed below.

- (a) The Guinea Savannah: This sub zone enjoys the greatest amount of rains and a shorter dry period. It has more trees than the other two zones and the grass is coarse. The Guinea Savannah is prominent in Nigeria and occupies almost half of the country's landscape.
- (b) The Sudan Savannah: The major characteristics of this

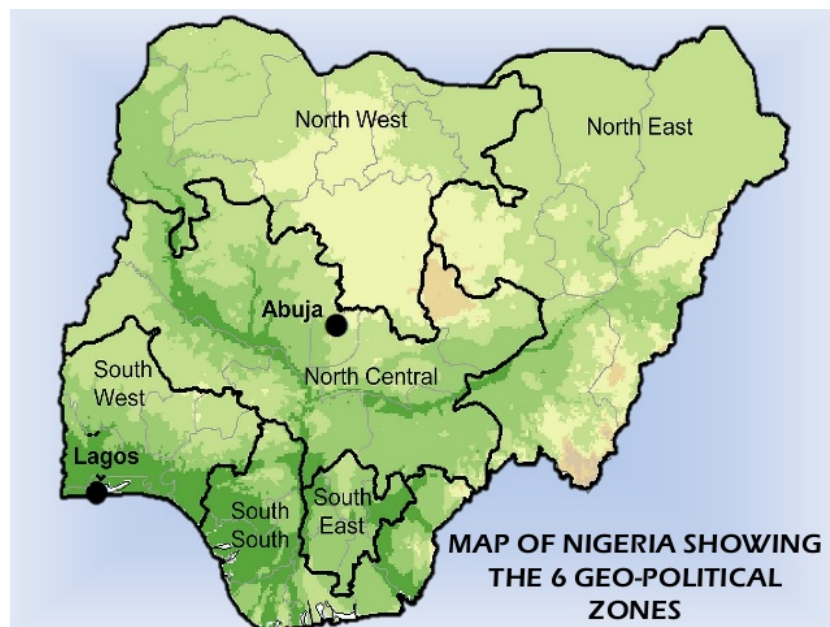
⁹ Okpoh, O.O. and Ugbegili, S.I. *Themes on Nigerian History Peoples and Cultures* Makurdi: vast publishers, 2013, pp. 12

¹⁰ Falola, T. *et al.* *History of Nigeria: Nigeria Before 1800 AD*. Vol 1, Ikeja: Longman, 1999, p. 14.

zone is an annual average rainfall of 560-1,020MM. There may be no rain for several months in the year and the relative humidity is high.

- (c) The Sahel Savannah: This is located in the extreme north-east. Generally, it has the highest months of dry season. Acacia with light foliage and thorns as well as shrubs are common in this zone.¹¹ Having analysed the geographical features of the country, the section that follows discusses Nigeria's population on growth between the 1950s-2006 with projection to 2015.

Map of Nigeria Showing the Six (6) Geo-political Zones



Source: <https://www.com.ng/search7q=map+of+nigeria+showing+the+geo-political+zones> Accessed on 13.06.2016

¹¹ Falola, T. *et al* *History of Nigeria*...P. 14

The Population of Nigeria

The population of Nigeria is the total number of people who are resident in Nigeria. The country's population is determined by the population census. Population census started in Nigeria before the Nigeria independence. The first elaborate population census in the country was conducted in 1952/53. This census indicates that, there are more than 200 distinct ethnic groups in Nigeria, most of whom have distinct customs, traditions and language.¹² The larger and politically dominant groups include the Yoruba, the Igbo and the Hausa, and the Fulani. Other prominent but less numerous groups include Edo, the Ibibio, of the Cross River State, the Berom, Angas, Maghavul, the Torok of Plateau State, Tiv, Idoma, Igede of the Benue Valley, the Nupe, Gbagi, Igala & Igbira of the Middle Niger, Valley, and the Kanuri of the Lake Chad Basin. There is a large concentration of the smallest ethnic groups in the Middle Belt where there are more than 180 different groups in a significant feature of the distribution of ethnic groups in Nigeria.¹³

It is on record that a considerable demographic data is lacking in the country. This is because no much effect had not been made in the past to collect such data through censuses, vital registration and sample surveys, but the few attempts that were made did not yield the desired results. Nigeria has attempted over a dozen censuses in its history, including those in 1866, 1871 and 1896 but were restricted to only Lagos Island and part of this mainland, which included some more urban towns in the colony.¹⁴

S.I. Ugbegili reflects in his thesis that in 1931, the procedure for the conduct of the census in the Southern Protectorate was different from that of the Northern part of the country.¹⁵ In the

¹² 1991 census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Analytical Report at the National level, April, 1998, p.3.

¹³ Udo, R.K. "Environments and Peoples of Nigeria ... p.15.

¹⁴ 1991 population census ... P.15-6.

¹⁵ Ugbegili, S.I "A History of HIV/AIDS pandemic in Nigeria 1980-2006". Ph.D Thesis, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2009, p. 32.

former, the population estimates were based on tax, records and so the aged, infants and tax evaders were likely excluded. On the other hand, for the latter, two types of enumerations were carried out. The first consisted of estimates from "existing records" and the second was intensive enumeration of only 5 selected towns and 201 villages. The tax riot in Calabar and Warri Provinces prevented enumeration in the major towns of these areas, while the locust invasion in 1931 resulted in the diversion of some census staff to anti-locust duties in some of the Northern provinces.¹⁶ In 1941 there was no attempt to conduct a census because of the Second World War. The 1952/53 census was the first elaborate and near-scientific census conducted in Nigeria. It however, lacked simultaneity and probably under-enumerated the population of Nigeria.

The first post-independence census was carried out in 1962. The results were cancelled and another attempt was made in 1963.¹⁷ The result was also contested at the Supreme Court which ruled that it lacked jurisdiction over the administrative functions of the Federal Government. In 1973 no attempt was made for census enumeration.¹⁸ In 1988, an effort was made to establish a nation-wide system of continuous and comprehensive registration of vital events on an experimental basis. This was being expanded in phases. Returns from the experimental areas indicated that in 1990, 51.9 percent of all expected live births and 13.4 percent of all expected deaths were registered.

In addition to the above, different efforts were made to generate reliable demographic data through numerous sample surveys such as 1965/66. Demographic Sample Survey (DSS) conducted by the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS), the 1981/82. Nigeria Fertility Survey (NFS) conducted by the National Population Bureau (Now National Population Commission) as part of the World Fertility Survey (WFS) Programme and the

¹⁶ 1991 population census...Pp.15-6.

¹⁷ Ekanem, I. *A critical Appraisal of 1963 census* Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1972.

¹⁸ 1991 population census... P.15-6.

National Integrated Survey of Households (NISH) in 1983 and the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) in 1990. The NDHS was part of the world wide Demographic and Health Survey Programme Conducted by FOS and coordinated by the then Institute for Resources Development and Macro International Inc (IRD/MI). These surveys provided a more reliable information on family planning, fertility, mortality and health practices.¹⁹

The year 1991 witnessed another population census, in November, while a Post Enumeration Survey (PES) followed in December 1991. The successful conduct of the 1991 population census clearly reserved the fate of census taking in Nigeria. More importantly, it provided a rich set of socio-economic and demographic data that will improve National Development Planning for Nigeria.²⁰ According to the projections of NPC, based on the 1991 National Population Census figure of 88,992,22 and using the growth rate of 2.83% per annum, Nigeria's population was estimated at 124 million for 2005, however, approximately two-thirds of the population live in rural areas, which are areas mostly lacking in many modern amenities. The total population of 88,992,220 was made up 44,529,608 males (50.04%) and 44,462,612 females (49.96%). The population figure was much less than the speculated pre-census estimates of 120 million based on the 1963 census.²¹

The most recent population census took place in 2006, which was more comprehensive as it covered population and housing that were expected to provide reliable and detailed data on the size, structure distribution and socio—economic, and characteristics of the country's population for effective planning, policy intervention and monitoring goals. It sought to know the housing conditions of the population which would provide a

¹⁹ 1991 population Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Analytical Report at the National level, April, 1998, p.6

²⁰ National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey, FRN, Ministry of Health, Abuja, August 2006, p.2

²¹ Ugbegili, S.I. "A History of HIV/AIDS..." p.34

reliable indicator of citizen's well-being.²² The 2006 census was conducted in two phases, first Housing Listing and House Numbering Operations and second actual population enumeration phases. However, there were no questions on ethnicity and religion in 2006 census. The census results of 2006 published in March 2009 by the National Population Commission (NPC) as approved and gazetted by the president, late Umar Musa Yar'Adua as presented in the table below.

Table 1: Final Figures of 2006 Census

| S/N | State | Total Population |
|-----|-------------|------------------|
| 1 | Abia | 2,845,380 |
| 2 | Adamawa | 3,178,950 |
| 3 | Akwa-Ibom | 4,177,828 |
| 4 | Anambra | 4,653,066 |
| 5 | Bauchi | 1,704,515 |
| 6 | Bayelsa | 4,253,641 |
| 7 | Benue | 4,171,104 |
| 8 | Borno | 2,892,988 |
| 9 | Cross River | 4,112,445 |
| 10 | Delta | 2,176,947 |
| 11 | Ebonyi | 3,233,366 |
| 12 | Edo | 2,398,957 |
| 13 | Ekiti | 3,267,837 |
| 14 | Enugu | 2,365,040 |
| 15 | Gombe | 3,927,563 |
| 16 | Imo | 4,361,002 |
| 17 | Jigawa | 6,113,503 |
| 18 | Kaduna | 9,401,288 |

²² Timoh, J.B. & Adeagbo, J.D. "Population Census and Social Services Allocation Strategy for Sustainable Development" in Aguama, H.D. *et al* (ed.) *Contemporary Issues and Challenges of Sustainable Development in the New Millennium* The Nigeria Experience. Lagos: Sam Artrade, pp. 374-387.

| | | |
|----|--------------|--------------------|
| 19 | Kano | 5,081,584 |
| 20 | Kastina | 3,256,541 |
| 21 | Kebbi | 3,314,043 |
| 22 | Kogi | 2,365,353 |
| 23 | kwara | 9,113,605 |
| 24 | Lagos | 1,869,377 |
| 25 | Nasarawa | 3,954,772 |
| 26 | Niger | 3,751,140 |
| 27 | Ogun | 3,460,877 |
| 28 | Ondo | 3,416,959 |
| 29 | Osun | 5,580,894 |
| 30 | Oyo | 3,206,531 |
| 31 | Plateau | 5,198,716 |
| 32 | Rivers | 3,702,676 |
| 33 | Sokoto | 2,294,800 |
| 34 | Taraba | 2,294,800 |
| 35 | Yobe | 2,321,339 |
| 36 | Zamfara | 3,278,873 |
| 37 | FCT Abuja | 1,406,239 |
| | Total | 140,431,790 |

Source: Obase, 2009:26, "Final Census Figures Now Out" in *Newswatch*, March 23, 26 and 27. Extracted (modified) from Jibo, M. *et al* (eds.) *Nigerian Journal of Political and Administrative Studies* (NJPAS). p. 60.

However, the population trends in Nigeria from 1970 and projected to 2015 shows the total population in millions over the years; annual population growth rate; percentage and actual population of urban and rural areas; percentage of children under fifteen years of age, population of adults aged sixty-five years

and above, and the over-all human development index value for Nigeria. This is shown in the table below:

Table 2: Demographic Trends in Nigeria

| Demographic Trends | 1970-1975 | 1999 | 2001 | 2015 |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total population in millions | 54.9 | 110.8 | 117.8 | 161.7 |
| Annual population growth rate (%) | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| Urban population (% of total population) | 23.4 | 43.1 | 44.8 | 55.5 |
| Urban population (actual) | .. | 47m | 52.7m | |
| Rural population (% of total population) | .. | 56.9 | 55.3m | |
| Population of less than 15 years of age (%) | .. | 45.2 | 44.8 | 40.6 |
| Population aged 65 years of age and above (% of total) | .. | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.4 |
| Population aged 65 years and above (actual) | .. | 3.3m | 3.6m | 4.0m |
| Human Development Index (value) | .. | .455 | .463 | |

Source: UNDP Human Development Reports 2001 and 2003.

Table 2 shows statistics on population trends in Nigeria, extracted from the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) Report on Human Development, 2003. It shows that the population of Nigeria in 1975 was 54.9 million. In 2001, the total population was 117.8 million, and this was projected to be 161.7 million in 2015. The annual growth rate was 2.3% in 2001. It was projected to be 2.3% in 2015, from this report it is evident that there is an apparent reduction in the annual population growth rate from 2.9% to 2.3%, as projected for 2015.

It is pertinent to note that population census is a complex exercise to embark upon as it involves a lot of activities. One of the crucial pre-census activities is demarcation of the country into *Enumeration Areas* (E.As) to generate what is referred to as *Census frame*.²³ Demarcation of the country into small

²³ Egwemi, V. "The Politics of Population Census in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the 2006 Population Census", in Jbo, M. (ed.) *Nigerian Journal of Political and Administrative Studies* Makurdi: Sefers Academic press Ltd, p.57.

enumeration areas prevents the omission or duplication of settlements, housing units and households during the census exercise. Other pre-census activities include **designing of census questionnaires, organizing workshops on census methodology, definition of census concepts, public enlightenment and education, the pretest of the census questionnaires and a trial census.** In spite of these complex activities population census in Nigeria is an exercise that will continue to be of relevance assumed by Osaghae thus:

As long as population figures continue to be used for revenue allocation, creation of new states and local governments, siting of government establishments and so on, the census will continue to be a sensitive political issue.²⁴

The implication of the above historical representation is that population census is of paramount importance to any nation both developed and developing nations because it directs the government on its policies in different aspects of the National economy. In this wise, the Federal Government of Nigeria is planning to undertake another census in 2016, which it is hoped when well done, shall help in directing and refocusing the national economic policies that will enable her to actualized the vision 20:20:20 economic blue print objective for sustainable economic growth and development in the 21st century. Now that the discussion on the country's population, another issue that requires our attention is the linguistic classification of the Nigerian peoples.

Linguistics Classification of Nigerian Ethnic Groups

Here, the study debunks the myth that Nigeria as a constitution of multi-ethnic groups is an '**Artificial creation**' of the British colonialists or a '**Mere geographical expression**'. It also refutes the

²⁴ Osaghae, E.E. *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence* Ibadan: John Archers publisher Ltd, 2002.

false impression that Nigeria as a “Tower of Babel” implies that Nigerians never had anything in common before colonialism.²⁵ Articulating on this matter, M.A. Afolabi quotes Appiah who argues that: whatever Africans share, we do not have a common Traditional religion or conceptual vocabulary”.²⁶ In the like manner, M. Crowder demonstrates that, Nigeria today is inhabited by a large number of ‘tribal’ groups ranging in size from a few thousand to many millions, speaking between them several hundred languages.²⁷ Though at first, their variety of customs, language and social organization is bewildering. They can be classified into a number of linguistic groups which give a fair good indication of their cultural affiliations.²⁸ Of course, linguistic affiliation does not necessarily imply common descent, since contact between the two very different groups can result in the assimilation of the linguistic system of one by the other. For example, Joseph H. Greenberg classifies these languages in the following thus:

- (1) **The Niger-Congo Family:** This is one of the largest groups of languages of Nigeria’s inhabitants, which in turn belong to the larger Congo-Kordofanian family. The Niger-Congo Family is divided into a number of sub-families as follows:
 - (a) **Kwa Sub Family:** Those who belong to this group are the Yoruba and Edo-speaking peoples of the Western Region, and the Ibibio of Eastern Region, and the former Mid-Western State and the Twi-speaking people of modern Ghana. In this category, we also have Kalabari, Okrika, and Nembe of the Niger-Delta Region.

²⁵ Afolabi, M.A “Inter- Group Relations in the 20th century Nigeria: A Historical Survey” in Akinwunmi, Okpeh, O.O and Gwamna, J.D. (ed.) *Inter- Group Relations in Nigeria During the 19th and 20th centuries* Makurdi: Aboki pub. 2006, p. 140.

²⁶ Afolabi, M.A. “Inter-Group relations ...p.140.

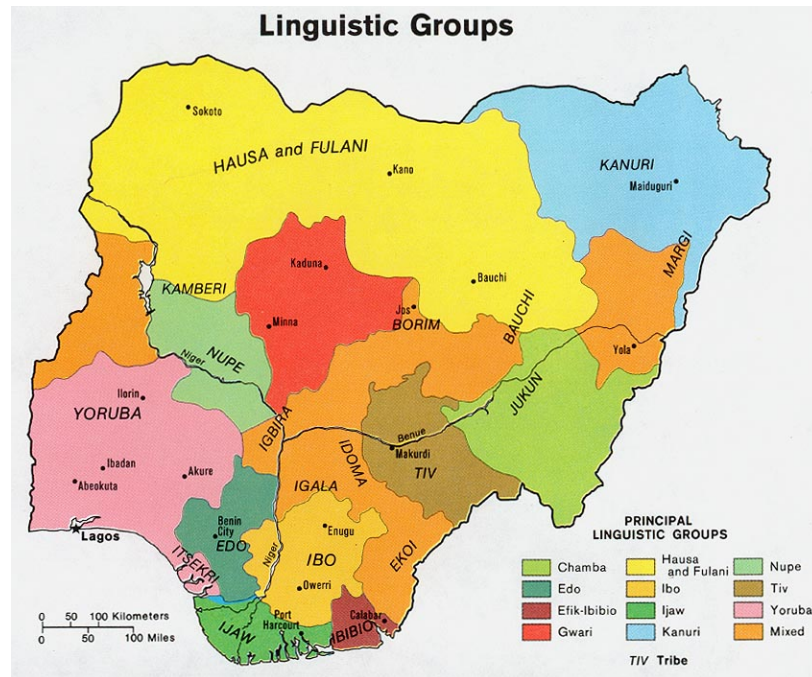
²⁷ Crowder, M. *The Story of Nigeria* London: Faber & Faber, 1961, pp. 24-25.

²⁸ Crowder, M. *The story of Nigeria*...p. 25.

- (b) **Cross River Group:** This family group is made up of most of the other inhabitants of Eastern Region, the best known of whom are the Ibibio and Efik, which fall into the huge family defined by Greenberg as the Benue-Congo. This also includes many of the major ethnic groups of the Middle Belt such as Tiv, Idoma, Igede, Alago, *et cetera*
- (c) **Adamawa Eastern Sub-Family:** This language is spoken by the small tribes who occupy the Cameroun foothills in Benue and Adamawa Provinces. The light skinned, nomadic Fulanic appear to contain a large Caucasoid admixture speak a language of the Niger-Congo Family, though it corresponds more closely to the Western Atlantic language like Serer and Wolof spoken in Senegal where the Fulani first made their home in West Africa.
2. **Nilo-Saharan Family:** According to Greenberg, this language group is spoken by the people of North-Eastern Nigeria, particularly by Fulani, Kanuri, Dinka, and Luo.
3. **Afro-Asiatic Family:** This is divided into Chadic, Semitic and Berber. Of these, Chadic languages predominate with more than seventy languages. Semitic represented by various dialects of Arabic spoken in North-East and Berber by Tuareg-speaking communities in the extreme North-East. The Hausa language is the most well-known Chadic language spoken in Nigeria.²⁹

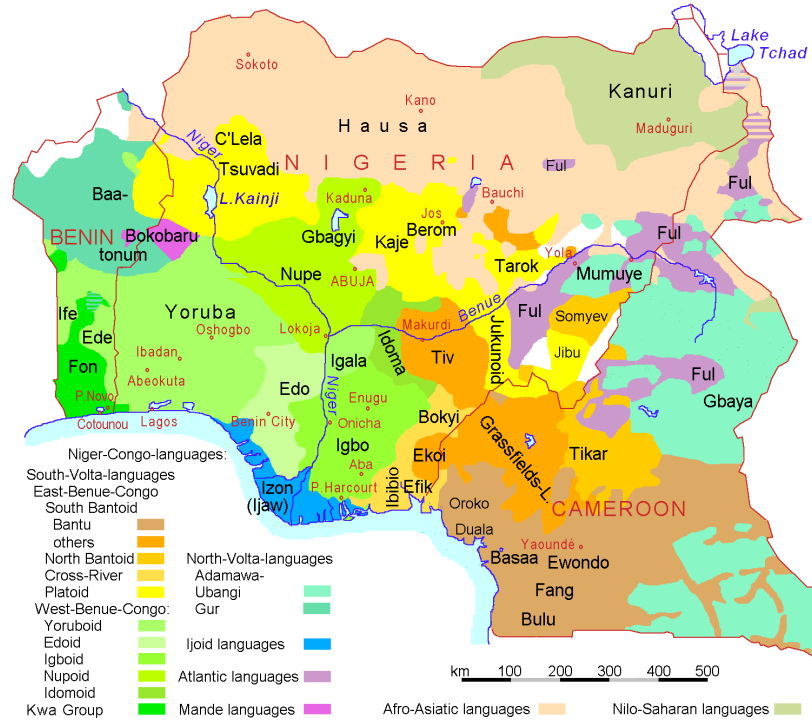
²⁹ Greenberg, J.H. *Studies in African Linguistic Classification* cited in Crowder, M. *The Story of Nigeria*... p.25-26.

Map of Nigeria Showing the Language Groups



Source: <https://www.ng/search+map+of+nigeria+showing+the+linguistic+groups> Accessed on 13.06.2016

Map of Nigeria Showing the Linguistic Classification



Source: <https://www.google.com/?client=firefox-bq=linguistic+map+of+nigeria&gl=cr>. Accessed on 13.06.2016

Conclusion

From the preceding analysis, it is clearly evident that Nigeria has had a valid history even prior to the colonial incursion. This is because the country was organized and had her diverse socio-political systems before colonial rule. The chapter also isolated the country into two zones analyzed and emphasized that, in between the two zones, there is a transitional zone known as the Middle Belt zone. It should be noted that the geography of these zones over time has influenced human activities and these activities have also affected the environment as well. In addition,

this study has discussed the Nigerian's population making inferences from the first population census to the recent census of 2006. We should be cognizant of the fact that in most cases population censuses are characterized with manipulations of figures by either the enumerators or officials of the commission, which sometimes have led to contention, petitions, violence and even outright cancellation. Furthermore, the work has attempted a linguistic classification of the country into three major language families of the Niger-Congo, the Nilo-Saharan, and Afro-Asiatic. In doing this, the work identified the Nigerian ethnic nationalities that falls in each of the language family.

By and large, this chapter has clearly shown that differences in geographical locations, languages among others naturally occasioned and duly established the culture of inter-dependency amongst the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, and consequently reinforces the national integration project hinged on the popular national slogan tagged "***Unity in Diversity***", having stayed with one another for over a century.

Chapter Eight

Citizenship Education in Nigeria

Victor Iyanya and George Ode

Introduction

Leadership and followership have manifested in diverse forms and under varied circumstances over time and space. Some examples of leadership positions include, class monitor, head-teacher, school principal, vice-chancellor, state governor and executive president, just to mention a few. On the other hand, some of the nomenclatures that express varied forms of followership include, members, devotees, supporters, disciples, spectators, and citizens, among other things. Just as each of the terms listed above can be used more appropriately in reference to specific manifestations of followership and leadership respectively, so does the term citizenship refer more aptly to followership under a particular kind of socio-political environment.

Citizen as defined by the Collins English dictionary, simply refers to a member of a nation-state who owes allegiance to the state, and is in turn entitled to protection by the state.¹ Since the details of what constitutes the citizen's terms of allegiance and what constitutes his protective entitlements are perceived differently across time and space, the degrees of implementation tend to vary from one country to another depending largely on the political philosophy that governs respective states. Generally speaking, nation-states that lean more in the direction of socialism tend to hold the government and the government more

¹Collins English Dictionary Unabridged 7th (ed) HarperCollins Publishers (2014)

accountable to one another, as compared to nation-states that practice liberal democracy.

Citizenship as a concept has been in existence from the very distant past. In the ancient Greco-Roman and Egyptian societies for instance, the term was merely used to differentiate those whose biological ascendancy could be traced to the original settlers, from the captured slaves who were considered to be sub-human.² This perception and usage of the term has however altered significantly in contemporary times, following the evolution of modern nation states, and the emergence of more clearly defined responsibility of the respective governments to the governed, and vice versa. Citizenship is therefore seen more from the perspective of the amply stated or implied social contract, which binds the government of a sovereign nation state to its citizens, and also binds the citizens to the government.³ The failure of any government to fulfil its part of this contract gradually weakens its legitimacy, and this manifests in various forms of civil disobedience. However, once citizens are convinced that a government has sufficiently fulfilled its responsibilities they tend to be more patriotic. One way in which we can demonstrate patriotism in Nigeria is to join hands with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC in the fight against corruption and bribery. This should be done while bearing in mind that the main causes of bribery and corruption include, government official bureaucracy, undue influence, unnecessary delay, false style of living, and frequent creating of artificial scarcity of essential commodities.

Nigerians are therefore expected to avoid bribery and corruption. Students, lecturers, police, soldiers, friends, families etc. should cooperate with relevant government agencies to tackle

² Max Weber, *Citizenship in Ancient and Medieval Cities* MN: Minnesota University (1998) Press Pp. 43-49

³ Guy Ankerl, *Towards a Social Contract on a Worldwide Scale: Solidarity Contracts* Geneva: Research Series – Institute of Labor Studies (1980) Pp. 4-5

these ugly practices in the Nigerian society. Similarly, cultism should be stamped out of our tertiary institutions of learning. This is because cultism is an evil association that is capable of destroying one's career and can also ruin one's life. Even beyond the individual level, cultism can be a stumbling block to Nigeria's quest for peace and prosperity.

Furthermore, a patriotic citizen is expected to stir clear of vices like political violence and examination all forms of malpractices. Political thuggery and gangsterism have become too frequent in Nigeria simply because the Nigerian politicians usually recruit, train and arm our teeming youth and then use them as thugs in their political campaigns. It is however interesting that some of those that were used as thugs are now turning round to intimidate their former pay masters. Thugs who have been trained in the art of using modern weapons are now using the weapons at their disposal negatively. This partly explains the recurrent militancy in the north east and Niger delta regions respectively. Some of them even end up as armed robbers that terrorize our highways, towns and cities. Examination Malpractices on the other hand has become endemic in our nation's institutions. Many students have perfected ways of cheating in examinations. Some students now use the products of modern technological innovation like the GSM handsets, calculators, to perpetrate cheating in examinations. Consequently, governments at various levels have enacted laws and penalties to curb examination misconducts. In addition from the legal consequence students should understand that cheating in examinations will ultimately bring disgrace to parents, friends, relations and themselves.

⁶ Okpoh, O.O. and Ugbegili, S.I. *Thameson Nigerian History Peoples and Cultures* Makurdi: vast publishers, 2013, pp. 10-11.

⁷ Udo, R.K. "Environments' and peoples of Nigeria: A geographical introduction to the History of Nigeria", in Ikime O. (ed.) *Groundwork of Nigeria History*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980, pp. 1-8

⁸ Iloje, N.P.A *New Geography of Nigeria*. Lagos: Longman, 1996, pp. 2-5.

Education Etymologically, the word education is of Latin origin where it derives from *educare*, which means to rear, breed or nurture. The two main categories of education are formal and informal education, respectively.⁴ While the latter is usually acquired on-the-go without the need for any criteria, the former is only possible where certain minimum prerequisites are guaranteed. Citizenship education is imparted through both systems of education.

Citizenship Education entails all efforts made by respective countries (through formal and informal means) to keep the citizens adequately informed about the terms of relationship between the government and the citizens.⁵ Such information usually spells out in unambiguous terms citizen's responsibilities to the state which is known as 'Civic Responsibilities. It also defines the responsibilities of the government to the citizens. Both sides of responsibilities are collectively known as 'Social Contract', and it is only when this social contract is well respected by both the government and the citizens that a government can be described as having legitimacy.⁶ Once a government begins to lose legitimacy, the main political actors begin to fear for their safety in the midst of ordinary citizens. They therefore require greater degree of security men and devices around themselves. Such security men tend to be oppressive towards other citizens, and this often worsens the degree of mistrust between the political actors and the citizens.

Platforms for Acquiring Citizenship Education

As a corollary of the foregoing, it can be deduced that citizenship education is acquired through formal and informal means. Since this sort of education is targeted at the entire populace with the

⁴ Paul Smeyers, "History of Education: Western European Perspective" in (ed) Torsten Husen & Neville Postlethwhite *International Encyclopedia of Education* Oxford: Pergamon Press (1994)

⁵ Bryan Turner, *Citizenship and Social Theory* California: Sage Publishers (1994) Pp. 3-5

⁶ Patrick Riley, *Will and Political Legitimacy: A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel* Harvard University Press (1982) Pp. 12

exception of aliens, it means that diverse approaches need to be adopted in order to reach every social class, cultural segment and political divide, within the society. Citizenship education is usually achieved through certain key platforms, which include, the home, school, mass media, government propaganda, and political parties. Each of these platforms are discussed more extensively as presented below.

Home

The home in this case refers not only to one's nuclear family, but the entire extended biological relations and neighborhood where one was raised as a growing child. A growing child begins to learn informally and subconsciously about social contract between the government and the governed, as he or she listens to what the adults say and do as part of their expectations from government, and responsibilities to same.⁷ A growing child will for instance watch adult members of his nuclear family, extended family, or even visiting neighbors, talk about issues such as participation in voting, census, heavy tax burden, law enforcement agents, e.t.c. The child may pose questions from time to time on each of these issues out of curiosity. In other cases, explanations are offered to others while the child is present. Ultimately, the child begins to have the basic understanding about some of these issue without necessarily understanding their complex relationship in terms of social contract between the state and its citizens. By and large, the level of citizenship education that is attainable in any given home depends⁸ on the social status of the parents. Children born to elite parents are more likely to be better informed about citizenship from their homes than children from underprivileged background.

⁷ Carol Darling, & Dawn Casidy, *Family Life Education: Working with Families Across Lifespan* Winsconsin: Waveland Press (2007) Pp. 13-18

⁸ Jenny Wales, & Paul Clarke, *Learning Citizenship: Practical Teaching Strategies for Secondary Schools* New York: RoutledgeFalmer (2004) P. 2

School

The school remains the most credible platform for offering a well-rounded formal education on all subjects including citizenship education.⁹ In Nigeria for instance, every knowledge pertaining to citizenship education that is considered appropriate for a primary school pupil is usually contained in the social studies curriculum. As the child advances further into adolescent stage in the secondary school preparatory to his attainment of adult status at the age of eighteen (18), he is introduced to the basic elements of governance and citizenship. Those who gravitate towards the arts and social science are usually more grounded in the *modus operandi* of governance, especially when they study the subject known as 'Government'.¹⁰ For those who may not be inclined to study in this direction, they take advantage of their improved ability to read, write, and speak English confidently. With this ability, they easily learn about the basic elements of governance and citizenship through interpersonal interactions in addition to messages frequently put out through print and/or electronic media.

Mass media

Even though citizenship education is supposed to be done without any iota of prejudice by the media houses as part of their social responsibility, media houses are more often than not, influenced by their ownership structure, which in turn dictates their respective in-house policies. Consequently, citizenship education as disseminated by the print and electronic media houses tend to be lopsided in their presentation of citizenship education.¹¹ They do this by emphasizing more on the responsibility of government to the citizens when their in-house policy is not favorably disposed towards a particular government

⁹ Jenny Wales, & Paul Clarke, *Learning Citizenship: Practical Teaching Strategies...* P. 15

¹⁰ James Curran, "Rethinking Media as a Public sphere" in (ed) Peter Dalgren, & Collin Spark, *Communication and Citizenship* London: Routledge (1991) Pp. 27-57

¹¹ Stephen Wright, Nigeria: *Struggle for Stability and Status* California: Westpoint Press (1998) Pp. 2-7

in power. On the other hand, they tend to emphasize more on civic responsibilities when they are favorably disposed towards a particular government in power. Even though, a well-informed and discerning reader/listener should be able to detect such imbalance in reportage, not all members of the public are of the same status. Majority of the listeners and/or readers in most developing countries including Nigeria, unfortunately rely almost entirely on whatever information they get from the mass media.

Government Propaganda

Government propaganda makes use of every available avenue of getting the desired information across to the people. This is done for instance through radio, television, newspapers, posters, banners, hand bills, and lately the internet. The bottom line is that each of them is sponsored and paid for with tax payer's money. And this is done with the intention of swinging public opinion in favor of the government. Although the ministry of information usually takes responsibility for government sponsored propaganda in Nigeria, but beginning from the late 1980s, the federal government established an agency known as Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), which has now metamorphosed to National Orientation Agency (NOA). In carrying out its functions over the years this agency has been placing undue emphasis on the duties of the citizen to the state, while de-emphasizing the duties of the state to the citizen.¹² This is arguably done deliberately in a bid to create a docile and submissive followership, while creating a soft-landing government in the event that it fails in carrying out its responsibilities to the citizens.

¹² Robert Stevenson, *Communication, Development and the Third World: The Global Politics of Information (Communication)* UK: Longman (2007) Pp34-62

Political parties

Political parties usually engage in citizenship education both intentionally and unintentionally. They do this intentionally when they occasionally organize public lectures, workshops, symposia, e.t.c, aimed at sensitizing the voting public on the responsibility of government to the citizens.¹³ In some rare cases, they also educated the citizen on their own responsibility to the state during such talk-shows. On the other hand, they carry out citizenship education unintentionally when in their frantic effort to discredit rival political parties, they rehash all the responsibilities of a government to the governed. This is commonly done at the time of electioneering campaigns

Conclusion

It has so far been demonstrated that citizenship education is acquired both formally and informally in Nigeria as in all other places. This is usually done through the home, schools, mass media, and government propaganda and the activities of political parties, respectively. While the school system provides the objectively most balanced citizenship education, the mass media provides the most effective citizenship education in terms of wide coverage. In order therefore for Nigeria to achieve optimal citizenship education, teaching sessions on the subject of citizenship education recorded from schools should be disseminated through the print and electronic media for public consumption.

Chapter Nine

The Nigerian Economy and National Development

Mike Odugbo Odey and Sylvester Igbasue Ugbegili

Introduction

Geographically, Nigeria is the largest country in Black Africa, with a population of about 160 million and 923,770 square kilometers which is about 356,688 square miles, and coastline running up to 583 kilometers. Nigeria is the 2nd largest economy in Africa with annual GDP of about 71 Billion US Dollar. Nigerian is the 13th largest Oil producing nation in the world, with about 32 billion barrels of Oil reserves which may last for the next 40 years and gas reserves that could last for over 100 years if well managed, according to experts. That is to say that Nigeria has all it takes to be one of the most developed nations in Africa and the World at large. However, more than half of the Nigerian population still live in absolute poverty, with life expectancy of about 50 years on average, and nearly 10 million children of school age who have never been to school. More than half of the Nigerian population depend on subsistence agriculture as their only live line.¹

Before the advent of the British colonial administration in the 19th century, common allegiance was almost unconceivable because of the existence of too many ethnic groups/identities and cultural diversities in Nigeria. However, by the beginning of the First World War (1914), after the conquest of these several

¹ Martin Wroe and Malcolm Doney, "Nigeria By Numbers", *The International Development Magazine*, Issue 32, Fourth Quarter 2005, Pp.8-9.

ethnic groups, it was apparent the unification of all the diverse groups was imperative to pave way for national development. According to the British colonial government, Nigeria had about 416 ethnic groups by 1926 out of which about 297 groups, about (70%) of which inhabit the Central Nigeria area each with their tendencies of socio-economic and political interests.²

Back in 1898, the blueprint of the unification (amalgamation) of these diverse ethnic groups had cautiously been worked out, mainly against the backdrop of its economic benefits by which the rich coastal region was expected to support the land-locked and poor northern region. By 1906, the full implementation of the amalgamation policy had begun with the unification of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with the Lagos Colony which were previously under different administrative heads. This culminated in 1914 when the Northern and Southern Protectorate and Colony were merged together under Sir Fredrick Lugard as Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

By 1936, Nigeria existed as a country in three distinct parts/regions: North, East and West. In 1963, Nigeria existed as four regions, with the addition of Mid-West. This regional arrangement metamorphosed into 12 states in 1967, and later 19 states in 1976, in 1987, Nigeria had 21 States and currently 36 states since 1996. However, at every stage, most ethnic groups are gripped with the fears of domination by other ethnic groups, which is an encumbrance to national development. On October 1st 1960, Nigeria was granted political independence and free from the British colonial domination. In 1963, Nigeria became a Republic. Seven years later, Nigeria had a major civil war between 1967 and 1970 and later still, several other national crises (either as religious-ethnic, political or constitutional) nature which could have throw the country into another civil war and slowing down national development.

² Achakpa P. M. and Aliyu Y., "Uneasy Peace: A Report of Violent Conflicts" in, *Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Abuja*. A publication of Health/Justice, Development and Peace Commission, Caritas, Abuja, 2004.

The National Development Question: Nigeria Under The Military 1966 to 1999

The concept of national development is usually seen as economic growth. However, it is not limited to or synonymous with economic issues. It is seen as a process and changes in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which experts argue should be at least up to 5 % annually to be considered as reasonable growth. Economic development means several things such as expansion of output in units of production and when factors or strategies of production are used more efficiently to boost production. At a macro-level, economic growth may also involve increase in labour force, more working hours and use of more arable land in agricultural production. At the micro-level, it involves shifts in production strategies from one crop to another as well as higher capacity utilization which was previously underutilized. Thus, even without technical innovations, there could be economic growth in an economy, which may not necessarily imply development. In other words, economic growth and development do not mean the same thing because genuine development must begin from a certain level of simple change and proceed to complex development, such as from subsistence agricultural production to industrial revolution which is more dynamic and robust. More importantly, development implies multidimensional things and touches all aspects of human society and life. For instance, national development as used here is supposed to be a process of change in the country which translates into more meaningful living standards of the majority of the people through the enhancement of one's self esteem, the ability to freely exercise one's power of choice and freedom from servitude. It means the ability to meet one's daily basic needs for the majority of the people and ensuring the life span of people essentially constitute the core issues of development³. Thus,

³ M. P. Todaro, *Economic Development in the Third World*. Longman, 1977.

national development can only make sense when people are less poor, where there is social justice and equity, and when women and men have equal opportunities. In simple terms, without social progress or reasonable changes, economic development would make no sense to anybody. This is an abbreviated explanation of the concept of economic and national development which according to the UNDP involves reasonable life expectancy of Nigerians, good health status and the longevity, higher educational knowledge and attainment as well as reasonable level of income or cash liquidity for decent standard of living.

Ab initio, it may be observed that both democratically elected civilian and the military governments in Nigeria have not substantially brought about the much expected economic growth and development with the framework of the above concept of national development since independence to date so far. The truth of this claim is shown in the fact that national development has not been translated into broader issues of better living standards or social wellbeing, equality and happiness of the vast majority of the people since 1999. National development in Nigeria can be examined in several ways as follows:

The Role of the Nigerian Military in National Development from 1966 to 1999

The first Military intervention in the Nigerian politics was in a coup led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogu in 1966. Since then, the military had remained in power till 1999 when General Abdulsalam Abubakar handed over to General Olusegun Obasanjo as elected president. For a period of 33 years between 1966 and 1999, the military phenomenon in Nigeria was punctuated by a democratically elected government under Shehu Shagari in October 1979 to 1985.

The military coup in January 1966 which ushered in the regime of General Yakubu Gowon; one of the longest military

regimes in the nation's history (1966-1975) led to the cessation of Igbos in Eastern Nigeria and the (1967-1970) civil war and the unprecedented massive destruction of lives and property. By the end of the war when Nigerians woke up to the reality of the 3 Rs: Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation, it was like beginning the process of nation building & economic development all over. Then came the regime of Murtala Muhammed (July 1975-February 1976) but it was short-lived and followed by that of Olusegun Obasanjo (February 1976-September 1979). The euphoria of the second civilian Government in Nigeria under Shehu Shagari (October 1979-Dec. 1983) quickly died down and it were, everybody was ready for another round of national crisis, especially of political and religious nature setting back the process of national development. The next coup was masterminded by General Muhamudu Buhari and Idiagbon on 31 December, 1983 and the regime lasted up to August 1985 and was mainly regarded by most Nigerians as government of "Muslims" especially when at last the government was handed over to another Northerner, Ibrahim Babangida on August 27th 1985 to August 1993, that was about eight years. It was under IBB that the Federal capital was moved from Lagos to Abuja before he reluctantly handed over power to another Northerner-General Sani Abacha for about five years beginning from November, 1993 till June 1998 almost leading the nation to a brink of disintegration because of the claim that Abiola, a Southerner won the general presidential elections but was denied; giving way subsequently to the saga of June 12th, 1994 and the Interim National Government of Shonekan came up till May 1999.

Considering **the achievements of the military towards national development**, some have argued that they succeeded in restoring law and order and made way for national integration and development. As their traditionally assigned role, the military further claimed they wanted to maintain professionalism and

were able to check the reckless and unacceptable accumulation of the nation's wealth in a few hands *vis-a-vis* the utter neglect of the vast majority of the people. They also ensured human rights and paved way for faster national development and above all, has kept the Nation's corporate existence especially after the civil war. The Nigerian military has also checked the poor performance of almost all the civilian regimes, the corruption of the political class, the fear of domination of one region over the other amidst the fear successive democratically elected political leaders may probe the past military leaders.

According to Major-General Gbor, the positive impact of the successive Nigerian military engagements in party-politics appear to be more on the military themselves rather than the much desired national development⁴. Among other things, the military did much to enhance their professionalism and national defense, although most Nigerians have accused the military of neglecting to modernize the military barracks as well as lack of capacity building of the armed officers and men, the primitive accumulation of wealth of military officers and slow promotions from the rank and file to the top. Most Nigerians are happy to remember that it was the Nigerian military that created the 12 and later the 36 states of the Federation out of the colonial regional governments to bring development closer to the grassroots speed up national development. It was also the Nigerian military that brought about the 1976 Local Government Reforms and the creation of 774 Local Government Councils in the country. The military must also be commended for establishing a new Federal Capital in Abuja by moving out of Lagos traffic-jam. The military has also successfully engaged in the development of infrastructure across the country and changed the National currency to Naira and Kobo from the British Pound Sterling as well as the promotion of national integration by

⁴ Gbor John, W.T., *Military History: Nigeria from Pre-colonial Era to the Present*, Longman, Lagos, 2004, P:18

establishing the National Youth Service Scheme, the Federal Character Commission and Unity Schools, Universal Primary Education, and establishments of Teachers' Colleges, Secondary Schools, Colleges of Education and more Universities. Other achievements still include the establishment of the Refineries, the Iron and Steel Rolling Plants, Hospitals, the Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation, Accelerated food production through the River Basin Development Authorities.

It was the military that brought about the devaluation of the Nigerian currency and the destruction of the middle class and the civil society which are very important in a growing economy like Nigeria's. The implication of this is the unprecedented growth of poverty among the vast majority of Nigerians over time all traceable to the long presence of the military in governance. It is against this background that *Osioma Nwdisè* summed up the lessons to be kept in view regarding the contributions of the Nigerian military in national development by saying that:

The overall result is that it has been devastating to national development, its people, laws, values and structures. Military rule is an inverse function. They solved some problems and created new ones such as armed robbery, terrorism, institutionalize corruption and unitary federalism.⁵

National Development in Nigeria Under Democratically Elected Government Since 1960

Bade Onimode describes the nature of the colonial economy which was handed to the newly independent country - Nigeria, as "mixed within the Keynesian framework and characterized by structural distortions and peripheral capitalism and overdependence on foreign trade mechanism."⁶ He further argues

⁵ (*Osioma*, cited by Fegokwu, In Gbor, (Ed). 2004:297.

⁶ Bade Onimode, "The Performance of the Economy" in Kayode, M.O. et al (Eds.), *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years*, vol. II, *The Economy*, Heinemann, London, 1989.

that most of the new economic policies in Nigeria since independence were essentially policies of underdevelopment which were incapable of promoting national development. In fact, they rather continued to entrench neo-colonial dependence policies. These include Oil policy in 1967, Indigenization policy in 1977, Income policy, Austerity measures, National Economic and Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), National Poverty Eradication Programme, (NAPEP), National Directorate of Employment, (NDE) and so on. In between all these, different programmes of government have also been articulated to achieve the aims including Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, River Basin Authorities, Poverty alleviation and Reduction. These policies were duplications of previous ones and too much of everything without specific direction over the last 55 years. The implication of this after 1960 is shown in the slow growth rate performance in the nation's economy and high growth rate of poverty across the country.

The level of poverty in Nigeria and to what extent to which poverty has been reduced is another way by which to explain national development, especially under democratically elected governance since 1999 to date. As Kofi Annan has argued "good governance is perhaps the single most important factor by which to eradicate poverty and promote development"⁷

This is linked to "democracy which is a universal right that does not belong to any country or region, and that participatory governance, based on the will of the people, is the best path to freedom, growth and development"⁸. Apart from that, under democratic governments, there are more chances of social security which on the long run facilitate economic development through foreign investments. Although, democratic governments usually have numerous challenges and

⁷ UNDP Report, 2001 in, M. Ndulo, (Ed.), *Democratic Reform in Africa: Its Impact on Governance and Poverty Alleviation*, James Currey, Ohio University Press, 2006. P.151.

⁸ R. Cameron, *A Concise Economic History of the World: From Paleolithic Times to the Present*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1989.

conflicting demands to contend with from the federating units but they tend to succeed and grow faster especially nations that are Oil-rich like Nigeria. There is no justification why a democratically elected government like Nigeria should not develop in all ramifications. However, the country is acclaimed to be one of the richest nations in the world but remains one of the poorest with over 75 percent of the population living in absolute poverty, constituting a population of individuals who do not know where their next meal will come from throughout the year. This contradiction is partly linked to the fact that over 80 percent of Nigeria's 924,000 sq km land mass is available for agricultural production, which if fully utilized would be a springboard for national development itself. However, out of this, only about 20 percent of land area is used for agriculture.⁹ And to make matters worse, non-oil resources is about 35 percent of Nigeria's real GDP growth since 2000¹⁰.

More specifically, in the last fifty years, the performance of the Nigerian economy has been more or less a staggering experience despite the discovery of Oil on the Nigerian Shores in 1957 which has brought about the general syndrome of what is termed *Dutch Disease*, implying a course in disguise. Several analysts see the general performance during the period as wasted years and loss of battle against poverty¹¹. Although all the post colonial governments in Nigeria at federal, states and LGAs recognized the importance of the agricultural sector and situate it the National Development Plan or the fiscal plans of State governments budgets each year respectively¹², the role of Petroleum/Oil has become an overriding phenomenon in all aspects of national life and the GDP per cent of agriculture began

⁹ Aworh, O.C. 1999. "Nigeria's Food Security: A Time to Act". In, *Nigerian Agriculture Magazine* Vol.3, No. 1, April/May, pp 8-11.

¹⁰ Norbrook, N. 2010. "Economy Overview: Unfinished Business," Nigeria at 50. In, *The African Report*, No. 25, pp.16-18.

¹¹ *The World Bank Poverty Assessment, Nigeria: Poverty in the Midst of Plenty, The Challenge of Growth with Inclusion*, 1996.

¹² Kayode, M. O. et al (Eds.), *Nigeria since Independence: The First 25 Years: The Economy*, vol.II. Heinemann, London, 1989.

to fall from 60 per cent in 1957 to 53 per cent in 1960 and further down to 34 per cent in 1974 worsened further by the civil war accentuated by the droughts of the 1970s. From the beginning of the 1980s, Nigeria was importing more than 50 per cent of her food requirements which is a serious contradiction of the policy of a nation that made self sufficiency in food production a cardinal objective towards national development.

Another significant way by which to assess the performance of economic growth and national development is to look at the **National Development Plans: From (1962-1968); (1970-1974); (1975-1980); (1981-1985) involving all** national development plans and fiscal policies covering the different sectors of the economy are subsumed, ranging from Agriculture to Manufacturing, Commerce & Industry, Communication, Power & Energy Banking. **The 1st Development Plan (1962-1968)** represented continuity of colonial policy of expansion of commodity production from the four Regions for export without any co-ordination or drive towards transformation of the traditional economy to a modernized one. With a puny allocation of N 1.4 billion out of which N 183.3 million was allocated to agriculture as capital expenditure covering all levels of Government, nothing much was done to put the economy to work as anticipated especially under the circumstances of war that was looming in the air. **The 2nd National Development Plan (1970-1974)** marked the years of the popular 3Rs (Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation) in Nigeria as an attempt to move the nation away from the ruins of the civil war. **The 3rd National Development Plan (1975-1980)** was thus incapable of revamping the battered economy and worse of all, the agricultural sector-the livewire of the economy was unable to provide adequate food and raw materials for industries. Thus indeed, the concept of self-sufficiency in food production remains mere academic exercise, even after the launching of three related programmes of National Accelerated Food Production

Programme (N AFPP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the Green Revolution programme in the subsequent Development plan. These strategies created awareness among Nigerians, but because they lack coherent planning and weakness at implementation stages did not achieve the desired results towards national development. For the OFN in particular, it meant different things to different groups of Nigerians: the urban wage earners, the agricultural experts, and the rural farmers. According to UNDP classification of Human Poverty Index, Nigeria ranks 80 out of 100, with 52 per cent of the population without improved water supply, over 70 per cent live on less than one US Dollar per day. Furthermore, 80 per cent of Nigerian children and women are malnourished. On the whole, this has pushed the nation's poverty level from 46 per cent in 1996 to about 76 per cent as the current poverty regime in both urban and rural areas¹³.

Conclusion

From this abbreviated assessment of the Nigerian national development under the military and democratically elected governments, macro and micro economic issues were examined, in broad strokes. The National Development Plans and performance of major sectors of the Nigerian economy were also reviewed up to 1999 with emphasis on poverty reduction as an important index for discussing national development. Indeed, as far as the Nigerian sustainable economic and national development are concerned, a lot is yet to be done. And this will depend on the political will of the government in power, especially on what constitutes "good governance which is the sum-total of a transparent exercise of economic, political, social and administrative authority in the equitable management of the state as well as its fiscal and monetary policy, its resources and

¹³ UNDP Human Development Report on Nigeria, 2001.

how people articulate their interests to make sustainable progress¹⁴).

In conclusion, it will be wrong to say that military or democratically elected government *per se* has the final answer to national development. In fact, there are several instances in the history of other countries which may be considered as exceptions to the rule that, for example sometimes, national development may be faster under military dictatorships than democratic regimes because of corruption, the inability of political office holders to do what is expected, politicization of development issues etc. In the past, there was remarkable development in some countries in the Global South despite the fact that they were under military dictatorships such as Brazil, South Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan etc unlike in Zaire, Uganda, Nigeria and Ghana as constitutional democratic nations. Be that as it may, good governance and the entrenchment of democratic principles are some of the most strategic factors for promoting rapid socio-economic development which currently constitutes the central element in the UN Human Development Index with focus on higher literacy/educational achievements, life expectancy and income generating capacity to bridge socio-economic inequalities. Finally, one may insist that without good governance, there can be no sustainable development or meaningful progress in the Nigerian development process. This is because, throughout human history, the role of government remains as strategic as ever before in the development process of nation-states.

¹⁴ J. Klugman, (Ed.), *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies Vol. 1: Core Techniques and Cross-Cutting Issues*, The World Bank, Washington D.C. 2002, P.269

Chapter Ten

Environmental Challenges in Nigeria

Chris S. Orngu and David M. Igba

Introduction

Environmental concern remains one of the critical areas of contemporary scholarship and the trend is bound to persist far into this new millennium.¹ It has also attracted scholars from a wide range of fields of specialization to the extent that many tend to forget that the most critical elements of the environment are geographical.² Geography is concerned with a complex set of processes and relationships which generate environmental problems in man's interaction with the environment. Indeed, without a sound grasp of the geographical underpinnings of the earth's surface, that is, our living environment, the desire to solve environmental challenges associated with human activities through sound environmental management would continue to be elusive. In Nigeria the Spatial-temporal distribution of environmental challenges are enormous. Nevertheless, in term of frequency, the anthropogenic challenges are more prevalent in the country. The socio-economic crisis of environmental challenges stems from man-environmental interaction. In many cases, the socio-economic crisis is the result of development styles that destroy both human potentials and the environment.³ This chapter, therefore, discusses the meaning, types of environmental challenges in Nigeria, causes, spatial distribution of environmental

¹ See the instructive work of G. E. K. Ofomata and P. O. Phil-Eze (eds.), *Geographical Perspectives on Environmental Problems and Management in Nigeria*, Enugu: Jamoe Publisher Limited, 2007, p.1

² See G. E. K. Ofomata and P. O. Phil-Eze (eds.), *Geographical Perspectives on Environmental Problems and Management in Nigeria*, Enugu: Jamoe Publisher Limited, 2007, p.1

³ As contained in the *International Development Research Centre for Earth's Sake: A Report from the Commission on Developing Countries and Global Change*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 1992.

challenges in Nigeria and suggests ways of addressing environmental challenges in Nigeria.

According to B. A. Mary, environmental challenges could be described as any crisis event that surpasses the ability of an individual, community or society to control or survive its consequences.⁴ He notes further that an environmental challenge can be said to be an unexpected accident resulting from natural or man-made factors (or combination of both) that has a negative impact on the daily lives and living conditions of human's flora and fauna.⁵ In his own perspective, S. W. Peters defines an environmental challenge as any form of harm, danger, peril or any risk of loss in the environment.⁶ He describes it further as any situation in nature or in the environment which is destructive or probably detrimental to man or any other component of the environment.⁷ It results from the deterioration of environmental quality. According to G. Kwame, environmental degradation in our physical world has been going on for centuries as the human beings began to find ways of living on earth, which explains the fact that it emanates from natural processes that result from the interaction of man and the environment.⁸

Types of Environmental Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria is faced with series of environmental challenges. However, the most common environmental problems in Nigeria are anthropogenic in nature.⁹ They result from human

⁴ B.A. Mary, Vulnerability to Disaster and Sustainability Development: A General Framework for Assessing Vulnerability. In M. Mohan & C. Caroline (Eds.), *Disaster Prevention for Sustainable Development: Economic and Policy Issues*, Washington D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1999, p.25.

⁵ B.A. Mary, Vulnerability to Disaster and Sustainability Development: A General Framework for Assessing Vulnerability. In M. Mohan & C. Caroline (Eds.), *Disaster Prevention for Sustainable Development: Economic and Policy Issues*, Washington D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1999, p.25.

⁶ S. W. Petters, Natural and Man-Made Hazards. In S. W. Petters et al (Eds), *Environmental Education*, Lagos: Nigeria Conservation Foundation, 1995, P.151.

⁷ S. W. Petters, Natural and Man-Made Hazards. In S. W. Petters et al (Eds), *Environmental Education*, Lagos: Nigeria Conservation Foundation, 1995, P.151.

⁸ G. Kwame, *Social Studies* New Delhi: PHL Learning Private Limited, 2008, P.75.

⁹ For instance, see F. O. Ibimilua & A. I. Ibimilua (Eds.) *Environmental Challenges in Nigeria: Typology, Spatial Distribution, Repercussions and Way Forward*, *American International Journal of Social Science*, Vol.3, No.2, 2014, P.248.

interference (interaction) with environment. They occur as a result of human intent, negligence, error or failure of human-made system. Anthropogenic hazards can be broadly classified under the titles of sociological, technical, transportation and others. Examples of sociological challenges are crime, arson, juvenile delinquency, civil disorder, terrorism, arms raise, and war. Likewise, technical environmental challenges include the industrial, structural collapse, power outage, fire, as well as hazardous materials.

Challenges resulting from transportation emanate from road, airspace, rail, sea travel, and pipe lines. Other types of environmental challenges are pollution, air and water contamination, household hazards, overgrazing, overfishing, dangerous agricultural practices and household waste.¹⁰ According to A. Fatubarin, man-made problems of the environment are those problems created within the environment by man, as a result of the activities of man in the environment. He further stated that man-made hazards in Nigeria are to a large extent, technology or culture dependent.¹¹

Human activities in Nigeria have also resulted into environmental challenges like biodiversity loss, oil spillages, bush burning, urban housing problem, water scarcity, as well as pollution (water, soil, air, marine, noise, thermal, radioactive and vehicular). Broader worries have also arisen about the environmental challenges of deforestation, urban flooding, destruction of aquatic habitats, over-exploitation of forest resources, illegal mining activities and dereliction, road transportation mishaps as well as solid waste problems (municipal, agricultural, industrial, hazardous radioactive and biomedical). Other forms of environmental degradation are desert encroachment, Ozone layer depletion, global warming,

¹⁰ F. O. Ibimilua & A. I. Ibimilua (Eds.) Environmental Challenges in Nigeria: Typology, Spatial Distribution, Repercussions and Way Forward, in American International Journal of Social Science, Vol.3, No.2, 2014, P.248.

¹¹ A. Fatubarin, *Man and his environment*, Ilesha: Keynotes, 2009, P.13.

poor environmental sanitation, unlawful exploitation of fossil fuel resources, oil spillage, gas flaring and many other challenges relation to oil exploration and production. The environmental challenges are aggravated by poverty and rapid increase in human population.

Causes of Environmental Challenges

Environmental challenges are caused mainly by natural forces and human influences, or a combination of the two. Natural causes of environmental challenges include climate, geologic, atmospheric, disease and biological factors. R. Coenraads¹² identified the major causes of natural disasters as geological events meteorological incidents as well as biological disasters. According to him, geological events are triggered by the inherent working of our planet while meteorological events are caused by the variation in global weather patterns and biological incidents are caused by actions of living agents. In similar vein, S. W. Peters¹³ submits that while some natural disasters (e.g. volcanic eruption, earthquake and hurricane) arise from earth's inherent instability, others (e.g. mudflow, landslides and flood) emanate from mass displacement of earth's materials. Similarly, R. Wright and D. F. Boorse have accounted for the causes of natural hazards under the categories of hydrological, meteorological and geological forces.¹⁴

Anthropogenic challenges are caused mainly by human interference with the environment. T. G. Miller, Jr. & S. E. Polman have identified population growth, wasteful and unsustainable resource use, poverty, as well as insufficient knowledge of how nature works as the major causes of environmental problems.¹⁵ Also G.E.R. Ofomata & Phil-Eze

¹² R. Coenraads, *Natural Disasters and how we cope*, Australia: Millennium House Pty Ltd. 2009, p.65.

¹³ S. W. Petters, Natural and Man-Made Hazards. In S. W. Petters et al (Eds), *Environmental Education*, Lagos: Nigeria Conservation Foundation, 1995, p.151.

¹⁴ R. T. Wright & D. F. Boorse (Eds), *Environmental Science: Toward a Sustainable Future*. New Delhi: PHL Learning Private Ltd. 2011, p.95

¹⁵ T. G. Miller, Jr. & S. E. Spodman, *Living in Environment: concepts Connections and Solutions*, Belmont, C. A.: Brooks/Cole, 2011, p.125.

identify the poor application of the principles of environmental management as a fundamental cause of some of the environmental challenges in Nigeria.¹⁶ Human activities like agriculture, fishing, livestock rearing and hunting are mounting pressures on the environment.

Furthermore, other activities like mining and exploration for petroleum, land reclamation, overfishing, overgrazing, deforestation, hunting, as well as use of pesticides and herbicides are responsible for many environmental challenges.

Spatial Distribution of Environmental Challenges in Nigeria

Environmental problems in Nigeria are not restricted to any particular sector of the country. Like the harmattan wildfire, it acts across all regions of the country-rural and urban. Also it cuts across the different geopolitical zones of the country. The table below clearly shows the distribution of environmental challenges in Nigeria.

Table 1: Environmental Challenges in Nigeria

| S/No | Natural | Man-made | Area most affected |
|------|-----------------------------|----------|---|
| 1 | Drought and desertification | | Sudan-Sahel Belt (Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Kano, Bauchi, Adamawa, Kastina, Zamfara And Kebbi States). |
| 2 | Flooding | | Coastal belt, flood plains of major rivers, cities with inadequate drainage |
| 3 | Catastrophic soil erosion | | Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ondo, Eekkiti, Akwa-Ibom, Ebonyi states |
| 4 | Destructive storms | | All states |
| 5 | Dust Storms | | Sudan-Sahel Belt |
| 6 | Coastal Erosion | | Lagos, Ondo, Delta, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa and Cross River States |
| 7 | Earth Tremors | | South Western States. |

¹⁶ G. E. Ofomata & P.O. Phil-Eze, Introduction, in G. E. K. Ofomata & P.O. Phil-Eze (Eds.), *Geographical Perspectives on Environmental Problems and Management in Nigeria*, Enugu: Jamoe Publisher Limited, 2007, p.10.

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|---|
| 8 | Pest Invasion | | All States |
| 9 | Human disease epidemic | | All States |
| 10 | Animal disease epidemic | | All States |
| 11 | | Dam Failure | Niger, Borno, Sokoto etc |
| 12 | | Building collapse | All States |
| 13 | | Oil Spillage | Niger Delta |
| 14 | | Land, water and air transport accident | All States |
| 15 | | Bomb Explosion | Lagos |
| 16 | | Civil Strike | Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Taraba, Benue etc. |
| 17 | | Fire Disaster | All States |
| 18 | | Wildfires | All States |

Source: F. O. Ibimilua & A. I. Ibimilua (Eds.) "Environmental Challenges in Nigeria: Typology, Spatial Distribution, Repercussions and Way Forward," in *American International Journal of Social Science*, Vol.3, No.2, 2014, p.248.

The above table shows natural and anthropological challenges in Nigeria. It also shows areas most affected.

Addressing Environmental Challenges in Nigeria

In order to save the environment from further degradation of the rich and exhaustive resources, it becomes inherent to address the challenges so as to be able to achieve environmental sustainability. Thus, overcoming environmental challenges demands the enhancement of agricultural production without compromising the natural ecosystem, strengthening of local governance for biodiversity, management of environmental resources (land, water, minerals, energy, forest wealth and biodiversity), as well as management and control of hazards. Other environmental management techniques are the conservation of wildlife, biodiversity, energy, and population resources.

P. H. Raven, L. R. Berg & D. M. Hasselhal have convincingly reasoned that the elements which contribute to addressing environmental problems include scientific assessment, risk analysis, public education and involvement, political action and long term evaluation.¹⁷ However they opined that solving environmental problems rarely proceeds in such a straight forward steps. The subsidiaries approach for addressing environmental problems include the conservation of natural resources, pollution abatement, control of bush fires, planned industrial development, evaluation and monitoring of radioactivity, as well as resource sharing.

Addressing environmental challenges also requires the role of the government (at national, state and local levels), non-governmental organizations, and community based organizations, as well as individuals. It also necessitates the collaborative efforts of international organizations, law enforcement agencies, academics and technocrats, the youth, the press as well as natural and multinational companies.¹⁸

Conclusion

The continued existence and well-being of all living things, plants and animals depend to a large extent on the ability of man to enhance, protect, conserve, and manage the natural resources in the environment. These life supporting means are threatened by natural and anthropogenic challenges or a combination of the two. In Nigeria, different challenges are associated with various climatic, vegetation, and geologic zones. Also, there are disparities between urban problems and those of the rural areas. Specific problems like oil spillage, coastal erosion, flooding and pollution are also rampant in the oil producing areas. Major solutions to the environmental challenges in Nigeria are environmental education, governance of nature, formulation and

¹⁷ P. H. Raven & L. R. Berg (Eds) *Environmental*, New Jersey: Wile, 2010, P125.

¹⁸ P. H. Raven & L. R. Berg (Eds) *Environmental*, New Jersey: Wile, 2010, P125.

implementation of stronger laws or/and penalties, as well as the use of environmentally sound technology for the monitoring of the environment.

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