

## NIGERIAN PEOPLE AND CULTURE GST 110 CLASS NOTE

### CONCEPTS OF NIGERIAN CULTURE AND CIVILISATION

#### Introduction

It is a triumph of mind over matter, of reason over instinct, and of the distinctly human over mankind's animal nature. These are what have made possible civilization, as well as culture, its constant and necessary companion. A thorough understanding of what civilization and culture are requires knowledge of all the qualities that make up human nature and a full understanding of all historical developments. Since this is not possible, it is necessary to explain these terms by the use of definitions and descriptions. Both civilization and culture are fairly modern words, having come into prominent use during the 19th century by anthropologists, historians, and literary figures. There has been a strong tendency to use them interchangeably as though they mean the same thing, but they are not the same.

Although modern in their usage, the two words are derived from ancient Latin. The word civilization is based on the Latin *civis*, "inhabitant of a city." Thus civilization, in its most essential meaning, is the ability of people to live together harmoniously in cities, in social groupings. From this definition it would seem that certain insects, such as ants or bees, are also civilized. They live and work together in social groups. So do some microorganisms. But there is more to civilization, and that is what culture brings to it. So, **civilization is inseparable from culture. Civilization is also an advanced human society with developed government, culture, industry, and social norms. Characteristic of civilization includes: urban centers, agricultural manipulation, storage, irrigation, written language, standard of measurements, craftsmanship technology, social stratification, state government, common religion/ideological outlook and a shared culture.**

The word culture is derived from the Latin verb *colere*, "to till the soil" (its past participle is *cultus*, associated with cultivate). But *colere* also has a wider range of meanings. It may, like *civis*, mean inhabiting a town or village. But most of its definitions suggest a process of starting and promoting growth and development. One may cultivate a garden; one may also cultivate one's interests, mind, and abilities. In its modern use the word culture refers to all the positive aspects and achievements of humanity that make mankind different from the rest of the animal world. Culture is the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society. It is also the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture has grown out of creativity, a characteristic that seems to be unique to human beings.

One of the basic and best-known features of civilization and culture is the presence of tools. But more important than their simple existence is that the tools are always being improved

and enlarged upon, a result of creativity. It took thousands of years to get from the first wheel to the latest, most advanced model of automobile.

It is the concept of humans as toolmakers and improvers that differentiates them from other animals. A monkey may use a stick to knock a banana from a tree, but that stick will never, through a monkey's ingenuity, be modified into a pruning hook or a ladder. Monkeys have never devised a spoken language, written a book, composed a melody, built a house, paved a road, or painted a portrait. To say that birds build nests and beavers their dens is to miss the point. People once lived in caves, but their ingenuity, imagination, and creativity led them to progress beyond caves to buildings.

Civilization, then, is the “city” of human beings, at any given stage of development, with all of its achievements: its arts, technology, sciences, religions, and politics. The word city may seem strange, but it is used advisedly because the emergence of a civilization and its cultural growth have always originated in specific localities—in specific cities, in fact. To speak in broader terms—of modern Western civilization, for instance—is to gloss over the fact that before such a concept was possible there were first the civilizations of Jerusalem, ancient Alexandria, Athens, Rome, and Constantinople. These in turn were followed by the civilizations of Florence, Milan, Venice, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Vienna, Geneva, Munich, New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and many more. If there is a Western civilization, it is made up of ingredients from all of these original city civilizations.

Nigeria is a West-African country bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroun. The capital of the country used to be in Lagos until subsequently relocated to Abuja on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, 1991. The name ‘Nigeria’ was suggested by a British journalist Flora Shaw in 1914 after the amalgamation of both Northern and Southern protectorates. This name ‘Nigeria’ was influenced by the Niger River which dominated much of the country’s landscape.

Nigeria became an independent nation in 1960 October and subsequently became a republic in 1963. It currently practices a federal system of government as against the initial parliamentary system. The first military coup took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 1966 with counter coup six months later – a situation which later degenerated to a bloody civil war of 1967.

Nigeria is still a primarily rural country, with only 48 percent of its population living in cities. Urban areas, however, doubled their share of the population between 1970 and 2006. The country has a long history of urban development, particularly in northern and southwestern Nigeria where substantial cities existed centuries before colonial rule. The largest Nigerian cities are Lagos, Kano, Onitsha, Enugu, Kaduna, Ibadan and the FCT, Abuja. Lagos, one of the world’s largest cities, grew as colonial Nigeria’s capital and leading port. Despite its loss of

the federal capital in 1991 to Abuja, Lagos remains the country's economic and cultural center. Ibadan, founded as a 19th-century war camp, was the largest pre-colonial city in sub-Saharan Africa, thanks to massive rural-to-urban migration. Its economy is based largely on agriculture and trade. Kano grew to prominence as the center of a prosperous agricultural district and as a major terminus of trans-Saharan trade. It remains a major commercial, transportation, industrial, and administrative center. Other important cities include places like Ogbomosho, Oyo, and Ife; the Hausa cities of Zaria, Katsina, and Sokoto; and the newer, colonial-era cities of Jos, Port-Harcourt and Calabar.

## **RELIGION**

Many religions are followed in Nigeria. Thus, the constitution guarantees religious freedom. Therefore Christianity is predominantly in the Southern part while Islam is the core religious practice of the Northern Nigerians. Native religions, in which people believe in deities, spirits and ancestors worship, are however spread throughout the country. Muslims and Christians may also intertwine their beliefs with more unorthodox indigenous ones. Some of the common deities include: Amadioha, Aro, Okike, Anyanwu and Ikuku from Eastern Nigeria; while Ogun, Osun, Oya, Songo, Obatala, Egungun and Ifa oracle are some traditional gods in the Yoruba (South-Western part) part of the country. In Kogi state, among the Ebira, Igala, Nupe, Okuns and Ebira-Koto respectively, they worship Egbunu, Ishepa, Egu

The major Christian celebrations are Christmas and Easter (which goes with Lenten fast) while Muslims observe Ramadan (fasting) and the two Eids. All of these celebrations are observed with national public holidays. Northern Muslims do not actively work on their weekly prayer day (Friday), while Christian south hold their holiday on Sunday.

Adherence to Islam, Christianity, or indigenous African religions is central to how Nigerians identify themselves. Religious affiliation estimates vary, however, due to the lack of census data and the fact that many of Nigeria's Muslims and Christians adhere to beliefs and practices associated with indigenous religions. Recent estimates suggest that 50 percent are Muslims, 40 percent are Christians, and 10 percent adhere to traditional religions.

In the late 19th century, Christianity became established in southern Nigeria. In the Yoruba southwest, it was propagated by the Church of England, while in the Igbo southeast the Roman Catholic Church dominated. Today, close to half of the southwestern peoples and far more than half of the southeastern peoples are Christians, divided into Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, and Baptist sects. Christianity is also widespread in the middle belt, but it is virtually absent in the far north except among migrant populations. In recent years, Protestant fundamentalism has grown, particularly in the middle belt. Nigeria also has many independent African churches, such as Cherubim and Seraphim, which

incorporate African cultural practices such as drumming, dancing, and *polygyny* (multiple wives) into Christianity.

## **NATIONAL PRIDE**

Nigeria is varyingly considered the super power on Africa continent and consequently the people generally proud ones. It has the largest population of Black concentration anywhere in the world with the strength of about one hundred and seventy million (170,000,000) citizens. It is also considered the largest contributor to the United Nations and ECOMOG peace keeping missions in Africa.

The nation is endowed with vast quantity and quality of natural resources and it is the sixth largest oil-producing nation in the world as well as properly educated and industrially developing society.

Nigeria's defense forces, which peaked at 300,000 at the end of the civil war in 1970, had 78,500 personnel in 2004, which was still large and expensive compared to the region's other countries. Nigeria has participated in peacekeeping operations of the United Nations (UN). It has also provided the majority of soldiers for the joint West African peacekeeping force in Liberia (since 1990) and Sierra Leone from 1997 until 2000, (when a UN peacekeeping force that included many Nigerian troops took over). Military service in Nigeria is however voluntary.

**THE FAMILY:** Extended families are still the norm and are in fact the backbone of social system. Grandparents, Uncles, Aunties, Sisters, Brothers etc all work as unit through life. Family relationships are guided by hierarchy and seniority. Social standing and recognition is achieved through extended families. Similarly, a family's honour is influenced by the actions of its members. Individuals turn to the extended family for financial aids and guidance; and the family in turn is expected to provide for the welfare of every member. Although the role of the extended family is diminishing somewhat in the urban areas, there remains a strong tradition of mutual caring and responsibility among members.

## **HIERACHY**

Nigeria is a hierarchical society. Age and position earn and demand respect. Age is believed to confer wisdom, so older people are granted respect. The oldest person in a group is revered and honoured. In a social situation, they are greeted and served first. In return, most senior person has the responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.

## COMMUNICATION STYLES

Due to ethnic make-up of the country, communication styles vary. In the south-west, where the people are from the Yoruba tribe, people's communication employs proverbs, sayings and songs to enrich the essence of what they say. This is especially true when speaking their native language; though, many of this characteristic has been carried in their use of English usage. The Yoruba often uses humour to prevent boredom long meetings or serious discussions. They believe that embedding humours in their message guarantees that what they say is not readily forgotten.

Nigerians living in the south of the country tend to speak more directly. It is also noted that their tone is slightly louder than people elsewhere. They may raise their voice and become emotionally excited when they feel passionately about a topic. However, a harsh tone is considered unwelcoming and even hostile. Nigerians prefer facial expressions that imply empathy and believe that indifferent facial expression indicates ignorance or detestable feelings.

Communication commences with informal enquiries of family and personal welfare. Such social niceties go a long way in soft-landing. Therefore, foreigners who take the time to get to know a Nigerian as a person are considered friendly and welcome into Nigerian's inner circle of family and close friends.

Communication in Nigeria may also be indirect and rely on non-verbal cues. Parents sometimes use gestures when communicating with their children. People may smile to mask their true feelings especially when disappointed, confused or embarrassed.

## ARTS AND LITERATURE

Nigerian culture reflects African, Islamic, and European influences. In northern Nigeria, Islam has shaped architecture and calligraphy. As Islam traditionally forbids the representation of people and animals, art forms such as ceremonial sculptures are virtually absent in the north. In the south, indigenous peoples produced their own art long before Europeans arrived. Portuguese figures first appeared in Benin bronzes dating to the 16th century. Since the dawn of the colonial era, Western influences have challenged, threatened, and in certain ways enriched Nigerian culture.

Nigeria's modern literature grows out of a tradition of storytelling and historical remembrance that has existed for millennia. Oral literature ranges from the proverbs and dilemma tales of the common people to elaborate stories memorized and performed by professional *praise-singers* attached to royal courts. In states where Islam prevailed, significant written literatures evolved. The founder of the Sokoto caliphate, Usman Dan

Fodio, wrote nearly 100 texts in Arabic in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. His prose and poetry examined issues such as good government and social relations from an Islamic moralist perspective. The legacy of this Islamic tradition is a widely read modern literature comprised of religious and secular works, including the Hausa-language poetry and stories of Alhaji Abubakar Imam.

Nigeria's rich and diverse artistic heritage goes back more than 2,000 years. The earliest noteworthy pieces are finely produced terra-cotta sculptures produced by the Nok culture in the vicinity of the Jos Plateau between 500 BC and AD 200. These, together with bronze heads from Ife dating from the 13th century and bronze plaques, bronze statues, and ivory carvings from Benin from the 11th century and later, are generally considered Nigeria's most important artistic legacy. Many such pieces, however, reside in Western museums, where they were taken during the time of colonial conquest. The Nigerian government has demanded the return of looted art, particularly from Benin, with little success.

Also important to Nigeria's artistic heritage are wooden masks and *fetishes* (objects of worship or ceremony). Some of the finest examples are from cultures such as the Ijaw, Ibibio, and Igala from southeastern Nigeria. Authentic examples of this art command high prices from collectors in the West, accounting for the frequent theft of ceremonial objects from shrines and museums in Nigeria. Modern artists typically draw on both African and Western influences. Members of the Oshogbo School, founded by Ulli Beier in the early 1960s, have explored Yoruba spirituality in several media. Leading Oshogbo artists include painter and musician Taiwo Olaniyi, also known as Twins Seven Seven; painter and writer Amos Tutuola; and sculptors Asiru Olatunde, Adebisi Akanji, and Susanne Wenger Alarpe. The development of modern Nigerian art has also been strongly influenced by students of the Zaria and Nsukka schools, dating respectively from the late 1950s and early 1970s. The Zaria school first explored the possibilities of synthesizing themes and techniques derived from both traditional and modern sources. The Nsukka school produces work that is known for its strong social and political content.

## HISTORY OF NIGERIA

Nigeria is an amalgam of ancient Kingdoms, Caliphates, Empires and City-states with a long history of organised societies. Its boundaries were drawn as a result of trade (from slavery to pepper or ivory) and overseas territorial ambitions of Western European powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name Nigeria was adopted in 1898 to designate the British Protectorates on the River Niger.

### Description of the Coat of Arms

At the top of the coat of arms is an eagle, red in colour and mounted on a wreath which is rendered in the national colours. The eagle and wreath rest on a black shield with a Y-shaped silver coloured wavy band in the middle of the black shield. Two white horses support the shield on either side. The base on which the shield rests is *coctus spectabilis*, a wild flower that grows in many parts of the country. Underneath all these is the motto of the country: "Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress."



Nigeria Coat of Arms

Symbolism	of	Coat	of	Arms	Elements
The	red	eagle	depicts	Nigeria's	strength.
The black shield signifies the fortuitous qualities of the land in agricultural, mineral and solid resources.					
The Y-shaped silver coloured wavy band in the middle of the black shield represents the two major rivers in the country, River Niger and River Benue.					
The two white horses signify dignity.					
White vertical stripe sandwiched between two green stripes of equal dimensions. White stripe denotes peace and unity and is also symbolic of the Niger River bisecting the countryside.					
The green stripes represent agriculture.					

## **Nigeria today: The Fourth Republic**

On May 29, 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This follows his victory at the presidential polls conducted in 1999 and 2003. Elected civilian Governors for all the 36 states also took oaths of office on that day. Nigeria's Fourth Republic consists of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches of government. On May 29, 2007, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was sworn in as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. His coming into office after the eight-year rule of Chief Obasanjo marked the first time Nigeria would transit successfully from one civilian administration to the other since the country's independence in 1960.

## **Looking back: the Birth of Nigeria**

In 1914, the protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were merged by Sir Frederick Lugard. The whole country then became known as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Lugard became its first Governor General and ruled till 1919. Nigeria voted for independence in 1959; federal elections were held.

## **The First Republic (October 1, 1960 - January 15, 1966)**

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from Britain. An all-Nigerian Executive Council was headed by a Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. On November 16, 1960, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, a pioneer of West African nationalism, became the first Governor-General of a Federation of three Regions of the North, East and West, with Lagos as the Federal Capital. Each of the Regions was headed by a Premier with a Governor as Ceremonial Head. On October 1, 1963, Nigeria became a Federal Republic and severed whatever ties were left with Britain. She decided, however, to remain in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Governor-General's position was, therefore, re-designated as President.

Eight military regimes succeeded, beginning in 1966, interspersed between the fourth and fifth military regime by a return to civilian rule with the Second Republic between October 1979 and December, 1983. The final military regime left power on May 29, 1999, when the current Fourth Republic was installed and the president democratically elected president.

It was under the Second Military Regime (July, 1966 To July, 1975) that some of Nigeria's major development programmes were established, such as the extensive expansion and exploitation of Nigeria's mineral resources culminating in the 'Oil Boom', which in no small measure changed the economy, the taste and living standard of many Nigerians. It was also, unfortunately, a time of war: on August 9, 1967, Nigeria declared full-scale war on "Biafra" after its forces had invaded and captured the Mid-West State. With Biafra's collapse in 1970,



the region was reunited with the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a period of reconciliation and reconstruction followed.

Other highlights of this period included the introduction of various forms of bursaries, scholarships and Students Loan Scheme in the 1970s; a government review programme for the improvement in salaries and wages; the *Nigerianisation* Decree compelling all foreign firms operating in Nigeria to nationalise or leave; the changing of road traffic from left to right-hand drive; the changing of the national currency to Naira and Kobo and the establishment of organised federal councils for the arts, sciences, sports and agriculture. Corruption was a major cause of strife under the military regimes and it took years for Nigeria to get its house in order.

### **Second Republic leads to a return to military rule**

In October 1979, after more than 13 years of military rule, Nigeria was returned to democratic rule. The National Party of Nigeria emerged victorious in the presidential election and Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Shagari was elected the first Executive President. It was not to last. The hunger and poverty that characterised the last days of the Second Republic prompted the Armed Forces to take power in December 1983. Major General Muhammadu Buhari was installed as the new Head of State.

On December 31, 1983, the military overthrew the Second Republic. Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the leader of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the country's ruling body. He accused the civilian government with economic mismanagement, widespread corruption, election fraud, and a general lack of concern for the problems of Nigerians. He also pledged to restore prosperity to Nigeria and to return the government to civilian rule but proved unable to deal with Nigeria's severe economic problems.

The Buhari Administration identified indiscipline as the bane of the nation's ills. It launched different phases of the "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI), which has become a household word in many Nigerian homes. This too, did not last. Enter the Sixth Military Regime: a bloodless coup d'état on August 27, 1985 ousted the government of Major General Muhammadu Buhari. The Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the SMC's 11th-ranking member, Army Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, in August 1985.

Babangida cited the misuse of power, violations of human rights by key officers of the SMC, and the government's failure to deal with the country's deepening economic crisis as justifications for the takeover. During his first few days in office, President Babangida moved to restore freedom of the press and to release political detainees being held without charge. As part of a 15-month economic emergency, he announced stringent pay cuts for the military, police, and civil servants and proceeded to enact similar cuts for the private sector. Imports of rice, maize, and later wheat were banned. President Babangida demonstrated his

intent to encourage public participation in government decision-making by opening a national debate on proposed economic reform and recovery measures. The public response convinced Babangida of intense opposition to an economic recovery package dependent on an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan.

### **The Abortive Third Republic**

President Babangida promised to return the country to civilian rule by 1990; this date was later extended until January 1993. In early 1989, a constituent assembly completed work on a constitution for the Third Republic. In the spring of 1989, political activity was again permitted. In October 1989 the government established two "grassroots" parties: the National Republican Convention (NRC), which was to be "a little to the right," and the Social Democratic (SDP), "a little to the left." Other parties were not allowed to register by the Babangida government.

In April 1990, mid-level officers attempted to overthrow the Babangida government. The coup failed, and 69 accused coup plotters were later executed after secret trials before military tribunals. The transition resumed after the failed coup. In December 1990 the first stage of partisan elections was held at the local government level. While turnout was low, there was no violence, and both parties demonstrated strength in all regions of the country, with the SDP winning control of a majority of local government councils agreed to hand power to an "interim government" on August 27, 1993. Babangida then attempted to renege on his decision. Without popular and military support, he was forced to hand over to Ernest Shonekan, a prominent non-partisan businessman. Shonekan was to rule until new elections, scheduled for February 1994. Although he had led Babangida's Transitional Council since early 1993, Shonekan was unable to reverse Nigeria's ever-growing economic problems or to defuse lingering political tensions.

With the country sliding into chaos, Defense Minister Sani Abacha quickly assumed power and forced Shonekan's "resignation" on November 17, 1993. Abacha dissolved all democratic political institutions and replaced elected governors with military officers. Abacha promised to return the government to civilian rule but refused to announce a timetable until his October 1, 1995 Independence Day address. Following the annulment of the June 12 election, the United States and other nations imposed various sanctions on Nigeria, including restrictions on travel by government officials and their families and suspension of arms sales and military assistance. Additional sanctions were imposed as a result of Nigeria's failure to gain full certification for its counter-narcotics efforts. In addition, direct flights between Nigeria and the United States were suspended on August 11,

In December 1991, gubernatorial and state legislative elections were held throughout the country. Babangida decreed in December 1991 that previously banned politicians would be allowed to contest in primaries scheduled for August 1992. These were cancelled due to

fraud and subsequent primaries scheduled for September also were cancelled. All announced candidates were disqualified from again standing for president once a new election format was selected. The presidential election was finally held on June 12, 1993, with the inauguration of the new president scheduled to take place August 27, 1993, the eighth anniversary of President Babangida's coming to power.

In the historic June 12, 1993 presidential elections, which most observers deemed to be Nigeria's fairest, early returns indicated that wealthy Yoruba businessman M.K.O. Abiola had won a decisive victory. However, on June 23, Babangida, using several pending lawsuits as a pretence, annulled the election, throwing Nigeria into turmoil. More than 100 persons were killed in riots before Babangida 1993, when the Secretary of Transportation determined that Lagos' Murtala Muhammed International Airport did not meet the security standards established by the FAA. The FAA in December 1999 certified security at MMIA, opening the way for operation of direct flights between Lagos and U.S. airports.

Although Abacha's takeover was initially welcomed by many Nigerians, disenchantment grew rapidly. A number of opposition figures united to form a new organization, the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), which campaigned for an immediate return to civilian rule. The government arrested NADECO members who attempted to reconvene the Senate and other disbanded democratic institutions. Most Nigerians boycotted the elections held from May 23-28, 1994, for delegates to the government-sponsored Constitutional Conference.

On June 11, 1994, using the groundwork laid by NADECO, Abiola declared himself president and went into hiding. He re-emerged and was promptly arrested on June 23. With Abiola in prison and tempers rising, Abacha convened the Constitutional Conference June 27, but it almost immediately went into recess and did not reconvene until July 11, 1994.

On July 4, a petroleum workers union called a strike demanding that Abacha release Abiola and hand over power to him. Other unions then joined the strike, which brought economic life in around Lagos area and in much of the southwest to a standstill. After calling off a threatened general strike in July, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) reconsidered a general strike in August, after the government imposed "conditions" on Abiola's release. On August 17, 1994, the government dismissed the leadership of the NLC and the petroleum unions placed the unions under appointed administrators, and arrested Frank Kokori and other labour leaders. Although striking unions returned to work, the government arrested opponents, closed media houses, and moved strongly to curb dissent.

The government alleged in early 1995 that some 40 military officers and civilians were engaged in a coup plot. Security officers quickly rounded up the accused, including former Head of State Obasanjo and his erstwhile deputy, retired Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. After a secret tribunal, most of the accused were convicted, and several death sentences were handed down. The tribunal also charged, convicted, and sentenced prominent human rights

activists, journalists, and others--including relatives of the coup suspects--for their alleged "anti-regime" activities. In October, the government announced that the Provisional Ruling Council and Abacha had approved final sentences for those convicted of participation in the coup plot.

In late 1994 the Abacha government set up the Ogoni Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal to try prominent author and Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and others for their alleged roles in the killings of four prominent Ogoni politicians in May 1994. Saro-Wiwa and 14 others pleaded not guilty to charges that they procured and counselled others to murder the politicians. On October 31, 1995, the tribunal sentenced Saro-Wiwa and eight others to death by hanging. In early November Abacha and the PRC confirmed the death sentence. Saro-Wiwa and his eight co-defendants were executed on November 10.

In October 1, 1995, Gen. Sani Abacha announced the timetable for a 3-year transition to civilian rule. Only five of the political parties which applied for registration were approved by the regime. In local elections held in December 1997, turnout was under 10%. By the April 1998 state assembly and gubernatorial elections, all five of the approved parties had nominated Abacha as their presidential candidate in controversial party conventions. Public reaction to this development in the transition program was apathy and a near-complete boycott of the elections.

On December 21, 1997, the government announced the arrest of the country's second highest-ranking military officer, Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Oladipo Diya, 10 other officers, and eight civilians on charges of coup plotting. Subsequently, the government arrested a number of additional persons for roles in the purported coup plot and tried the accused before a closed-door military tribunal in April in which Diya and eight others were sentenced to death.

Abacha, widely expected to succeed himself as a civilian president on October 1, 1998, remained head of state until his death on June 8 of that year. He was replaced by Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, who had been third in command until the arrest of Diya. The PRC, under new head of state Abubakar, commuted the sentences of those accused in the alleged 1997 coup in July 1998. In March 1999, Diya and 54 others accused or convicted of participation in coups in 1990, 1995, and 1997 were released. Following the death of former head of state Abacha in June, Nigeria released almost all known civilian political detainees, including the Ogoni 19.

During the Abacha regime, the government continued to enforce its arbitrary authority through the federal security system--the military, the state security service, and the courts. Under Abacha, all branches of the security forces committed serious human rights abuses. After Abubakar's assumption of power and consolidation of support within the PRC, human rights abuses decreased. Other human rights problems included infringements on freedom

of speech, press, assembly, association, and travel; violence and discrimination against women; and female genital mutilation.

Worker rights suffered as the government continued to interfere with organized labour by restricting the fundamental rights of association and the independence of the labour movement. After it came to power in June 1998, the Abubakar government took several important steps toward restoring worker rights and freedom of association for trade unions, which had deteriorated seriously between 1993 and June 1998 under the Abacha regime. The Abubakar government released two imprisoned leaders of the petroleum sector unions, Frank Kokori and Milton Dabibi; abolished two decrees that had removed elected leadership from the Nigeria Labour Congress and the oil workers unions; and allowed leadership elections in these bodies.

### **Abubakar's Transition to Civilian Rule**

During both the Abacha and Abubakar eras, Nigeria's main decision making organ was the exclusively military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) which governed by decree. The PRC oversaw the 32-member federal executive council composed of civilians and military officers. Pending the promulgation of the constitution written by the constitutional conference in 1995, the government observed some provisions of the 1979 and 1989 constitutions. Neither Abacha nor Abubakar lifted the decree suspending the 1979 constitution, and the 1989 constitution was not implemented. The judiciary's authority and independence was significantly impaired during the Abacha era by the military regime's arrogation of judicial power and prohibition of court review of its action. The court system continued to be hampered by corruption and lack of resources after Abacha's death. In an attempt to alleviate such problems, Abubakar's government implemented a civil service pay raise and other reforms.

In August 1998, the Abubakar government appointed the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct elections for local government councils, state legislatures and governors, the national assembly, and president. NEC successfully held these elections on December 5, 1998, January 9, 1999, February 20, and February 27, 1999, respectively. For the local elections, a total of nine parties were granted provisional registration, with three fulfilling the requirements to contest the following elections. These parties were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP), and the predominantly Yoruba Alliance for Democracy (AD). Former military head of state Olusegun Obasanjo, freed from prison by Abubakar, ran as a civilian candidate and won the presidential election. Irregularities marred the vote, and the defeated candidate, Chief Olu Falae, challenged the electoral results and Obasanjo's victory in court.

The PRC promulgated a new constitution based largely on the suspended 1979 constitution, before the May 29, 1999 inauguration of the new civilian president. The constitution

includes provisions for a bicameral legislature, the National Assembly, consisting of a 360-member House of Representatives and a 109-member Senate. The executive branch and the office of president will retain strong federal powers. The legislature and judiciary, having suffered years of neglect, must be rebuilt as institutions.

### **The Obasanjo Administration**

The emergence of a democratic Nigeria in May 1999 ended 16 years of consecutive military rule. Olusegun Obasanjo became the steward of a country suffering economic stagnation and the deterioration of most of its democratic institutions. Obasanjo, a former general, was admired for his stand against the Abacha dictatorship, his record of returning the federal government to civilian rule in 1979, and his claim to represent all Nigerians regardless of religion.

The new President took over a country that faced many problems, including a dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructure, and a military that wanted a reward for returning quietly to the barracks. The President moved quickly and retired hundreds of military officers who held political positions, established a blue-ribbon panel to investigate human rights violations, ordered the release of scores of persons held without charge, and rescinded a number of questionable licenses and contracts let by the previous military regimes. The government also moved to recover millions of dollars in funds secreted in overseas accounts by corrupt government officials, particularly the former military dictator Gen. Sani Abacha.

Most civil society leaders and most Nigerians see a marked improvement in human rights and democratic practice under Obasanjo. The press enjoys greater freedom than under previous governments. As Nigeria works out representational democracy, there have been conflicts between the Executive and Legislative branches over major appropriations and other proposed legislation. A sign of federalism has been the growing visibility of state governors and the inherent friction between Abuja and the various state capitals over resource allocation.

Problems of communal violence have confronted the Obasanjo government since its inception. In May 1999 violence erupted in Kaduna State over the succession of an Emir resulting in more than 100 deaths. In November 1999, the army destroyed the town of Odi, Bayelsa State and killed scores of civilians in retaliation for the murder of 12 policemen by a local gang. In Kaduna in February-May 2000 over 1,000 people died in rioting over the introduction of criminal Shar'ia in the State. Hundreds of ethnic Hausa were killed in reprisal attacks in south eastern Nigeria. In September 2001, over 2,000 people were killed in inter-religious rioting in Jos. In October 2001, hundreds were killed and thousands displaced in communal violence that spread across the Middle-Belt states of Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa. On October 1, 2001, President Obasanjo announced the formation of a National

Security Commission to address the issue of communal violence. Currently, Nigeria has three major political parties. National elections and state gubernatorial elections occurred in 2003. Nigeria re-elected Obasanjo as President.

### **The Yar'Adua Administration**

In the presidential election, held on 21 April 2007, Yar'Adua won with 70% of the vote (24.6 million votes) according to official results released on 23 April. The election was highly controversial. Strongly criticized by observers, as well as the two primary opposition candidates, Muhammadu Buhari of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and Atiku Abubakar of the Action Congress (AC), its results were largely rejected as having been rigged in Yar'Adua's favour. After the election, Yar'Adua proposed a government of national unity. In late June 2007, two opposition parties, the ANPP and the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), agreed to join Yar'Adua's government. On 28 June 2007, Yar'Adua publicly revealed his declaration of assets from May (becoming the first Nigerian Leader to do so), according to which he had ₦856,452,892 (US\$5.8 million) in assets, ₦19 million (US\$0.1 million) of which belonged to his wife. He also had ₦88,793,269.77 (US\$0.5 million) in liabilities. This disclosure, which fulfilled a pre-election promise he made, was intended to set an example for other Nigerian politicians and discourage corruption.

President Yar'Adua was absent at the United Nations General Assembly Meetings in September 2009. Local media sources claimed the president has travelled to Saudi Arabia for treatment of his illness, however Mr Ojo Madueke the Nigerian Foreign Minister was present at the United Nations meeting to represent the Country.

In June and July 2007, several governors who served with him before 2007 were charged by EFCC, the anti-corruption commission. Many decisions of the former government like the hike in prices of petroleum products and VAT have been overturned by his government. Many see this as a sign that he is not a puppet of the former president Olusegun Obasanjo.

### **Goodluck Jonathan's Administration**

**Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan** (born 20 November 1957) is a Nigerian politician is President of Nigeria. He was Governor of Bayelsa State from 9 December 2005 to 28 May 2007, and was sworn in as Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 29 May 2007. Jonathan is a member of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). On 13 January 2010, a federal court handed him the power to carry out state affairs while President Umaru Yar'Adua received medical treatment in a Saudi Arabian hospital. A motion from the Nigerian Senate on 9 February 2010 confirmed these powers to act as President. On 24 February 2010 Yar'Adua returned to Nigeria, but Jonathan continued as acting president. Upon Yar'Adua's death on 5 May 2010, Jonathan succeeded to the Presidency, taking the oath of office on 6 May 2010.

## **President Muhamadu Buhari**

**President Buhari** came back as a Civilian President after the presidential election win in 2015. He reignited his fight against Corruption, the one he started in 1983. His administration launch the Nigeria Innovation Fund to address investment opportunities in the domestic technology sector, data networking, datacenters, software, Agric-tech, Bio-tech, etc. In terms of infrastructure, the govement invested over a billion dollars in three flagship projects: Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Second Niger Bridge, Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Expressway. The government is also investing in Electrification Projects, Ports, Housing, Oil and Gas, Agriculture, Social Investment and Poverty Alleviation.



## PRE-COLONIAL CULTURAL LOCATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS (Art, Language, Clothing and Courtesy)

This section concentrate on diffusing the notion that civilisation is predominantly Eurocentric ie civilisation would have gotten to Nigeria (even if development was slow) even if there was no phase of colonisation.

Early Nigerian history relates to the period of history in [Nigeria](#) prior to the Common Era. Recent archaeological research has shown that people were already living in Nigeria (specifically the [Iwo-Eleru](#)) as early as 11,000 BC and perhaps earlier at Ugwuelle-Uturu ([Okigwe](#)) in south-eastern Nigeria. [Microlithic](#) and [ceramic](#) industries were developed by savanna pastoralists from at least the [4th millennium BC](#) and were continued by subsequent agricultural communities. The Efik/Ibibio/Annang [Efik](#), [Ibibio](#), and [Annang](#) people of single ancestor of the coastal southeastern Nigeria are known to have lived in the area several thousands of years before Christ.

[Archaeological](#) research, pioneered by Thurstan Shaw and Steve Daniels, has shown that people were already living in south-western Nigeria (specifically Iwo-Eleru) as early as 11,000 BC and perhaps earlier at Ugwuelle-Uturu ([Okigwe](#)) in south-eastern Nigeria, where [microliths](#) were used. [Smelting](#) furnaces at [Taruga](#) dating from the 4th century BC provide the oldest evidence of [metalworking](#) in archaeology.

The earliest known example of a [fossil](#) human skeleton found anywhere in West Africa, which is 13,000 years old, was found at Iwo-Eleru in western Nigeria and attests to the antiquity of habitation in the region.

Microlithic and [ceramic](#) industries were also developed by savannah [pastoralists](#) from at least the [4th millennium BC](#) and were continued by subsequent [agricultural](#) communities. In the south, [hunting and gathering](#) gave way to [subsistence farming](#) around the same time, relying more on the indigenous yam and oil palm than on the cereals important in the North.

The stone axe heads, imported in great quantities from the north and used in opening the forest for agricultural development, were venerated by the [Yoruba](#) descendants of [Neolithic](#) pioneers as "thunderbolts" hurled to earth by the gods.

### Iron Age

[Kainji Dam](#) excavations revealed [iron-working](#) by the 2nd century BC. The transition from Neolithic times to the [Iron Age](#) apparently was achieved without intermediate bronze production. Others suggest the technology moved west from the [Nile Valley](#), although the

Iron Age in the [Niger River](#) valley and the forest region appears to predate the introduction of metallurgy in the upper savanna by more than 800 years.

The earliest identified iron-using Nigerian culture is that of the [Nok culture](#) that thrived between approximately 900 BC and 200 AD on the [Jos Plateau](#) in north-eastern Nigeria. Information is lacking from the first millennium AD following the Nok ascendancy, but by the [2nd millennium AD](#) there was active trade from [North Africa](#) through the [Sahara](#) to the forest, with the people of the savanna acting as intermediaries in exchanges of various goods.

## Language

Nigeria has more than 300 ethnic groups with diverse languages, culture and beliefs, but is predominantly divided into three major ethnic groups, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Historically, there was no Nigeria until the amalgamation in 1914 therefore before then there were empires where villages came under; these are Songhai Empires consisting majorly of the northern states, the Oyo Empire holding the south-west fort and the Benin Empire for the South-east.

Long before 1500 much of modern-Nigeria was divided into states identified with contemporary [ethnic groups](#). These early states included the [Yoruba kingdoms](#), the [Igbo Kingdom of Nri](#), the [Edo State kingdom of Benin](#), the [Hausa](#) cities, and [Nupe](#). Additionally numerous small states to the west and south of [Lake Chad](#) were absorbed or displaced in the course of the expansion of Kanem, which was centered to the northeast of Lake Chad. [Bornu](#), initially the western province of Kanem, became independent in the late 14th century. Other states probably existed but the absence of archaeological data prevents accurate dating. In the southeast, the earliest Igbo state was Nri which emerged in 900 AD. Despite its relatively small size geographically it is considered the cradle of Igbo culture.

The Archaeology of Igbo-Ukwu has been revealed in [bronzes](#) dating from the 9th century A.D., which were discovered during excavations by [Thurstan Shaw](#) and his team in 1959 and 1964 in [Igbo-Ukwu](#), an [Igbo](#) town in present-day [Nigeria](#). A total of three sites have been excavated, revealing bronze artifacts along with [pottery](#) and thousands of [glass beads](#), materials demonstrating trade with such distant cultures as the Egyptians.

These bronze artifacts had been made by Igbo Ukwu's ancient residents from local copper and other materials. They have been confirmed as the first people in West Africa to work copper and its alloys, centuries before other cultures.

## Nok Culture

The earliest identified Nigerian culture is the [Nok culture](#) that thrived between 1500 BC and 200 AD on the [Jos Plateau](#) in northeastern Nigeria. Information is lacking from the first millennium BC following the Nok ascendancy, but by the [2nd millennium](#) BC there was active trade from [Ancient Egypt](#) via [Nubia](#) through the Sahara to the forest with the savanna people acting as intermediaries in exchanges of various goods.

The **Nok culture** appeared in [Northern Nigeria](#) around 1000 BC and vanished under unknown circumstances around 300 AD in the region of West Africa. It is thought to have been the product of an ancestral nation that branched to create [Benue-Congo](#) peoples such as the [Edo](#), [I'tr'doma](#), [Igala](#), [Igbo](#), [Nupe](#) and [Yoruba](#).

The Nok culture was considered to be the earliest [sub-Saharan](#) producer of life-sized [Terracotta](#). The terracotta figures are hollow, coil built, nearly life sized human heads and bodies that are depicted with highly stylized features, abundant [jewellery](#), and varied postures.

Little is known of the original function of the pieces, but theories include ancestor portrayal, [grave markers](#), and [charms](#) to prevent crop failure, infertility, and illness. Also, based on the dome-shaped bases found on several figures, they could have been used as finials for the roofs of ancient structures.

Iron use, in [smelting](#) and [forging](#) for tools, appears in Nok culture in Africa at least by 550 BC and possibly earlier. Christopher Ehret has suggested that iron smelting was independently discovered in the region prior to 1000 BC.

The Nok culture was discovered in 1928 on the [Jos Plateau](#) during tin mining. In 1943, near the village of Nok, in the center of Nigeria, a new series of clay figurines were discovered by accident while mining [tin](#). A worker had found a head and had taken it back to his home for use as a [scarecrow](#), a role that it filled (successfully) for a year in a [yam](#) field. It then drew the attention of the director of the mine who bought it. He brought it to the city of [Jos](#) and showed it to the trainee civil administrator, [Bernard Fagg](#), an [archaeologist](#) who immediately understood its importance. He asked all of the miners to inform him of all of their discoveries and was able to amass more than 150 pieces.

Afterwards, Bernard and Angela Fagg ordered systematic excavations that revealed many more profitable lucky finds dispersed over a vast area, much larger than the original site. In 1977, the number of terra cotta objects discovered in the course of the mining excavation amounted to 153 units, mostly from secondary deposits (the statuettes had been carted by floods near the valleys) situated in dried-up riverbeds in [savannahs](#) in Northern and Central Nigeria (the Southwestern portion of the Jos Plateau).

The archaeologist [Bernard Fagg](#), in his studies on the Nok culture, identified the Nok culture with central Nigerian groups such as the Ham (Jaba) ethnic group of Southern Kaduna State, based on similarities between some of the cultural practices and dressing of those modern central Nigerian groups and the figures depicted in the Nok art.

## **Songhai Empire**

The Songhai state has existed in one form or another for over a thousand years, if one traces its rulers from the settlement of Gao to Songhai's vassal status under the [Mali Empire](#) to its continuation in Niger as the [Dendi Kingdom](#).

The [Songhai](#) is thought to have settled at Gao as early as 800 BC, but did not establish the city as their capital until the 11th century, during the reign of Dia Kossoi.

Sonny Ali was credited to have founded, established and enriched the empire through his brutality and tyranny, but his successor Askia Mohammed Ture (also known as Askia the Great) is said to have influenced the empire with his Islamic religion thus the dominance of the religion to the empire.

At its peak, the Songhai city of [Timbuktu](#) became a thriving cultural and commercial centre. Arab, Italian, and Jewish merchants all gathered for trade. A revival of Islamic scholarship also took place at the university in [Timbuktu](#). However, [Timbuktu](#) was but one of a myriad of cities throughout the empire. By 1500, the Songhai Empire covered over 1.4 million square kilometres.

## **Oyo Empire**

Oral history recorded under the [Oyo Empire](#) derives the Yoruba as an ethnic group from the population of the older kingdom of [Ile-Ife](#). Archaeologically, the settlement at Ife can be dated to the 4th century B.C.E, with urban structures appearing in the 12th century (the urban phase of Ife before the rise of Oyo, ca. 1100–1600, a significant peak of political centralization in the 12th century) is commonly described as a "golden age" of Ife. The [oba](#) or ruler of Ife is referred to as the Ooni of Ife.

## **Oyo and Ile-Ife**

The settlement at Ife appears to have entered this "golden age" with the appearance of urban structures by the 12th century. This seems to be the formative period of the Yoruba people as reflected in [oral tradition](#) and due to it, Ife continues to be seen as the "spiritual homeland" of the Yoruba. The city was surpassed by the [Oyo Empire](#) as the dominant Yoruba military and political power in the 17th century.

## Benin Empire

The Benin Empire (1440–1897) was a pre-colonial empire; with its capital [Benin City](#) now located in [Edo](#) state in what is now [Nigeria](#).

The original people and founders of the Benin Empire, the [Edo people](#), were initially ruled by the [Ogiso](#) (Kings of the Sky) dynasty who called their land [Igodomigodo](#). The rulers or kings were commonly known as Ogiso. Igodo, the first Ogiso, wielded much influence and gained popularity as a good ruler.

The Oba had become the paramount power within the region. Oba Ewuare, the first *Golden Age* Oba, is credited with turning Benin City into City States from a military fortress built by Ogiso, protected by moats and walls. It was from this bastion that he launched his military campaigns and began the expansion of the kingdom from the Edo-speaking heartlands.

Oba Ewuare was a direct descendant of Eweka I great grandson of Oduduwa, Oni of Ife.

A series of walls marked the incremental growth of the sacred city from 850 AD until its decline in the 16th century. In the 15th century Benin became the greatest city of the empire created by Oba Ewuare. To enclose his palace he commanded the building of Benin's inner wall, a seven-mile (11 km) long earthen rampart girded by a moat 50 feet (15 m) deep. This was excavated in the early 1960s by Graham Connah. Connah estimated that its construction, if spread out over five dry seasons, would have required a workforce of 1,000 laborers working ten hours a day seven days a week. Ewuare also added great thoroughfares and erected nine fortified gateways.

Excavations also uncovered a rural network of earthen walls 4 to 8 thousand miles long that would have taken an estimated 150 million man hours to build and must have taken hundreds of years to build. These were apparently raised to mark out territories for towns and cities. Thirteen years after Ewuare's death tales of Benin's splendors lured more Portuguese traders to the city gates.

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diplomacy on behalf of the Igbo people, and possessed divine authority in religious matters. One of the better-known remnants of the Nri civilization is its art, as manifested in the [Igbo Ukwu bronze items](#).

Archaeological evidence suggests that Nri [hegemony](#) in Igboland may go back as far as the 9th century, and royal burials have been unearthed dating to at least the 10th century. Eri, the god-like founder of Nri, is believed to have settled the region around 948AD, with other related Igbo cultures following after in the 13th century. The first [eze Nri](#) (King of Nri), Ìfikuáńim, follows directly after him. According to Igbo oral tradition, his reign started in 1043. At least one historian puts Ìfikuáńim's reign much later, around 1225 AD.

In 1911, the names of 19 eze Nri were recorded, but the list is not easily converted into chronological terms because of long interregnums between installations. Tradition held that at least seven years would pass upon the death of the eze Nri before a successor could be determined; the interregnum served as a period of divination of signs from the deceased eze Nri, who would communicate his choice of successor from beyond the grave in the seven or more years ensuing upon his death. Regardless of the actual date, this period marks the beginning of Nri kingship as a centralized institution.

## **Pre-Colonial Cultural Locations and Characteristics (Art, Language, Clothing and Courtesy)**

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## **TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF ECONOMICS, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

In traditional Africa, peace is not an abstract poetic concept, rather, a down to earth practical concept. In African Traditional Religion (ATR), peace is conceived not in relation to conflict and war, but in relation to order, harmony and equilibrium. Peace is associated with religious values in that everything associated with peace in the society is believed to be divinely established and the obligation to maintain it is religious. It is also a moral and social value since good conduct is required of human beings if order, harmony and social equilibrium are to be maintained.

Peace transcends the absence of conflict in that African tradition looks at the absence of pestilence, untimely death, poor harvest, unsafe journey, slave raid and sundry vices as the presence of peace.

The practical aspect of peace in traditional Africa is also traceable to human conduct. Traditional beliefs, social and cultural interaction imply that certain types of conduct that conform to the norms, traditions and customs of the society at large are maintained. At the centre of tradition is human life. Africans have a sacred reverence for human life, for it is believed to be the greatest gift of God. To protect and preserve their lives, all humans are inserted within given community and it is within this community that one works out one's destiny and every aspect of individual existence. The promotion of life is therefore the determinant principle of African traditional morality and this promotion is guaranteed only in the community. Living harmoniously within one's community is therefore a moral obligation for the sustenance of societal peace.

The promotion and enhancement of life is the central principle of African traditional understanding of peace. Human life is considered to be peaceful in Africa when it is marked by spiritual, material and social blessings. This is what is meant by peace in African Traditional Religion (ATR). "Peace is good relationship well preserved; health, absence of pressure and conflict, being strong and productive." Peace is the totality of well-being, fullness of life here and here-after; the sum total of all that man may desire, an undisturbed harmonious life. However, if one possesses all the good things of life and lacks a harmonious relationship with neighbors or members of one's community (living or dead), one cannot be said to have peace. Mere procession of material wealth or progress that is not accompanied by integral moral life is neither regarded nor envied by traditional African societies.

Moreover, any action that is capable of hindering another from attaining fullness of life is considered a breach of peace. Selfish and unjust persons, even when they are not violent, are anti-social and therefore regarded by Africans as enemies of peace.

In many African societies, there may be specific period of the year marked out for promotion of peace. During this period, which sometimes last for up to a week or more,

litigations are suspended while quarrels and all forms of violent and unjust acts are avoided for fear of incurring the wrath of the gods, ancestors and deities. This sacred period sometimes precedes the planting seasons and it is believed that any breach of peace at a time like that will lead to poor harvest.

### **Wars and Conflict in Africa**

Wars were not usually fought for the sake of might. Even in the event of provocation by a neighboring community, attempt was first made to negotiate and resolve the problem without resorting to armed conflict. This being value traditional Africa attached to human life. There were of course, several inter-clan wars and raids in Africa before the European slave trade, colonial conquests and current globalization trends have raised violent conflict to a dimension never dreamt of in traditional Africa. Hence, violence and breach of peace has become permanent feature of contemporary African reality. Traditional Africa viewed war as morally unacceptable, since it was a total collapse of social order and harmony. In fact, Robert Smith, observed wars in pre-colonial Africa and opined that they were mere 'skirmishes' and not wars. Wars were said to be suspended in planting and harvest seasons. Thus, amicable solutions might have been sought before resumption of violence could be considered.

Other domestic and social conflicts were managed such that resolution was possible. The concept of village square and Kings' yard meetings were common features in the olden days, where issues were raised and resolved amicably and transparently. Most of the time, aggrieved parties were called together and they were made to drink palm wine together in the same calabash and kola nuts were broken and shared between them. These gestures symbolized an end to impasse and everybody went home happy.

### **CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA**

Since justice is the prerequisite for peace, peace then is a major condition for development. Africans hardly ever talked of development without founding it on peace. In a culture that sees development as divine blessing, it is impossible to think of true progress in the midst of moral, social and cosmic disorder. Due to the superstitious nature of traditional Africa, peace was considered a divine gift. Thus, all effort was put in place to maintain the social equilibrium that guaranteed smooth interaction with divinity.

Development was viewed from social or moral, economic and personal or spiritual perspectives. The social and moral aspect deals with the maintenance of social order and sanctity of social justice and moral obligations. From economic viewpoint, high yield on farm produce, hunting expenditures, and profitable trade relations are considered factors of development in traditional African society. Finally, the spiritual tenet of the people required the belief that all occurrences – good or bad – was ordained and sanctioned by a Supreme Being. The idea of 'chance or coincidence' was alien to traditional Africa. Therefore, a

breach of social order and harmony was believed to attract the wrath of the gods who in turn have the capability to hinder development.

### **The Political Institution**

The maintenance of law and order in society constitutes the major demand in the efficient use of traditional political power. Government in whatever form is expected to provide the management, direction and control required for efficient law and order.

In the traditional political system, two paramount systems can be identified: the monarchical and non-monarchical. What is important to emphasise in the two is that they are a mixed-bag in contents and contexts in the political system. It may describe a kingdom (monarchy), republican (stateless) or city-state. The capacity of the political system is to enter into socio-political and economic relations with other neighbours. This becomes an important issue in traditional political practices.

As we have noted earlier, we identify the nuclear family as the smaller unit of social and political organisation. This is in the sense that the oldest male family member is conferred with the title as head of a family unit. In this capacity, he controls the political, economic affairs and the fortunes of family members. Besides, he is regarded as the custodian of the family tradition and ancestral cults. In this position, he acts as the intermediary between the family's ancestors and the living members.

At the village level (based on extended family structure) the family is fused into a larger village political state. This is because, the village is regarded as a state, and each is independent of each other. And by this arrangement, each village state maintains its territorial independence, tolerating no interference in its internal affairs. Also, recognising no other authority except the one within its territorial boundary.

What we have described above is the general impression of social and political organisation among the people, east of the Niger. However, there are some differences in the way these institutions function in order to create social order in the society. We shall now take some of the groups in the area under discussion to bring into focus the socio-political organisation at the village/state levels. The material we are going to use will be taken from the publication by Nwanna Nzewunwa on the Pre-Colonial Nigeria, East of the Niger. The publication contains the historical and ethnographic materials on the major ethnic groups. I must remind you that the major groups are the Efik, Ibibio and Igbo.

## **The Efik-Ibibio Political Institution**

Among the Annang and Efik-Ibibio, the unit of political authority is vested in the extended family structure (lineage). It is called the Ekpuk (lineage or extended family). The nucleus is called Itibe Ekpuk, meaning literally the Royal Family. This is similar to the title given to the founding family Ekpuk. While the founding family, (the Ekpuk) produces the Okuku Obong Obio and Amanayabo, whose office is marked by elaborate investiture, the Igbo exercised headships carrying honorific and religious status with insignificant political influence.

The traditional governance at the village level is the joint responsibility of the lineage heads or elders of the lineages (Ekpuk). In Cross River, the Okuku (the founding family) directs other lineage heads, like Amanayanabo. The office of Okuku and Amanayanabo is said to have been autocratic, and from time to time he exercised right of life and death over his subjects.

Between the founding family and lineage heads is sandwiched the office of Akpan Okuku, whose responsibilities are those of communication between Okuku and lineage heads. The Akpan Okuku is usually the most senior member among the lineage heads in the village council. And as the president of the village council, he is conferred with executive, judicial and administrative powers. The Annang village system of government does not allow anybody to rise to prominence as no one could possess power beyond his lineage level (Ekpuk).

It can also be observed that the political process of governance among the Efik-Ibibio groups differs in the distribution of power. For instance, the esop idung (village council) main function is religious. The political and judicial functions are handled by men who are appointed for this purpose. The functions they play, are regarded to be those of holding ministerial appointments. Such functions include other aspects of traditional economy.

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It is necessary to emphasise the fact that among the Efik-Ibibio, the bond of lineage and the village did not lie strictly in kinship/blood ties as in the case among the Igbo and Annang ethnic groups. This is explained by the fact that the lineage and village members belong to diverse ancestry who had migrated into the area from different settlements. Unity in the villages simply lies in the political autonomy, obligations, and the territorial isolation of the villages.



## **The Igbo Political Organisation**

The traditional political system is based on the lineage structure. It consists of flexible democratic political systems, characterised by autonomous federations of lineages or villages, organised through lineage heads, age-grades and title societies. The age-grade and titled people cut across lineage lines. The body charged with decision-making processes is made up of representatives from lineages within the autonomous political groupings.

The body of decision-makers can be grouped into five categories: first, traditional archetype where decisions are made by consensus among the lineage representative based on age, wealth or privilege, but have no overriding influence in selection. The second is a slight modification of the first in which members of title societies and lineage elders constitute the political decision-making group (this system is found among the Awka Igbo). The third is found among Cross River Igbo in Abriba, Ohafi a and Arochukwu, where secret societies dominate the political scene. The fourth category operates where age grade and lineage heads form the decision-making body. This is common in Asaba, Aguleri and Abriba. The fifth is found among the Niger Igbo (Ogbani, Oguta Abo, Onitsha and Osomari), where the political structure is hierarchical.

### **System of Decision-Making**

We have indicated in our discussion that the units of political organisation among the peoples east of the Niger are the village and lineage levels. In the execution of political decisions or policies at the level of the lineage, two factors are used– the human and the supernatural. Also, the political and religious functions are distributed among the lineage representatives. Other organs of political and religious institutions can also be used in decision-making processes. For example, age grades are used in carrying out the legislative, executive and judicial decisions at the lineage and village levels. The use of age- grades is also classified. The oldest grade is normally co-opted into the village council when the need arises. In most cases, the role of the oldest grade is specified in the administration of oaths, offering sacrifices and initiating male members into secret cults. The role of the middle age-grade which is made up of successful business people is to assist the youths in military and social services. The lowest grade, the children, are used for public sanitation. Beyond these functions, the age grades organise public entertainments from time to time and assist in the maintenance of law and order and social control at both the village and lineage levels.

### **Exclusive Clubs**

The term exclusive club is synonymous with secret society. The existence of exclusive club is a common feature in governance. The most prominent are the Ekpe and Ekpo (Ekpe means leopard and Ekpo — ghost or masquerade). The Ekpe and Ekpo are graded; each grade has its own peculiarities in dress, dance and rituals. Admission and advancement into and within any of the two clubs involves an elaborate ritual and monetary investments.

The Ekpel Ekpo represents the supreme authority in the maintenance of law and order. The two societies also represent a form of insurance policy for the living members, and a source of elaborate funeral ceremony for dead members. The functions of Ekpe/Ekpo include security duties and other civil intelligence responsibilities at the village and family levels.

In the case of the Igbo, the masquerade (mmuo) club operates. In the Delta and Riverine areas, people used the owu. Memberships into masquerade clubs are however restricted. It is necessary to emphasise that both the executive and masquerade clubs as a rule, are often exclusively for men. Women play no significant political and religious roles.

## **Religion**

Religion represents the pivot on which the system of social control is anchored for effective implementation. In fact, the concept of life among the Annang, Ibibio, Efik and Igbo can be mirrored in peoples idea about god, spirit world, deities, ghosts and witches. According to their spiritual essence, all laws have supernatural/ancestor essence, and the lineage heads and eldest family member derive their political, judicial and social authorities from the invincible ancestors.

## **Social Control**

Social control is made possible through the use of exclusive clubs (secret societies). Also the use of folk play in which young men and women entertain the public and use satirical and abusive songs against social deviants represent the popular technique for social control. Similarly, oath-taking, divination and oracles and other forms of social control, are designed to serve the purpose of controlling social deviants. Another known form of social control is the rites of passage. For example, the puberty rites of the Annang called Mbobo is aimed at ensuring that no teenage girl had sexual experience before Mbobo ceremony which leads to marriage.

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The adjudication of justice starts from the nuclear family. This is the first court over which the head presides to settle minor cases among immediate family members.

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## **Yorubaland**

### **Political structure**

The Oyo Empire developed a highly sophisticated political structure to govern its territorial domains. Scholars have not determined how much of this structure existed prior to the Nupe invasion. Some of Oyo's institutions are clearly derivative of early accomplishments in Ife. After reemerging from exile in the early 17th century, Oyo took on a noticeably more militant character. The influence of an aggressive Yoruba culture is exemplified in the standards placed on the oba (king) and the roles of his council.

### **The Alaafin of Oyo**

The oba (meaning 'king' in the Yoruba language) at Oyo, who was referred to as the Alaafin of Oyo, (Alaafin means 'owner of the palace' in Yoruba), was the head of the empire and supreme overlord of the people. He was responsible for keeping tributaries safe from attack, settling internal quarrels between sub-rulers, and mediating between those sub-rulers and their people. The Alaafin of Oyo was also expected to give his subordinates honors and presents. In return, all sub-rulers had to pay homage to the Oba and renew their allegiance at annual ceremonies. The most important of these was the Bere festival, marking the acclamation of successful rule by the Alaafin. After the Bere festival, peace in Yorubaland was supposed to last for three years.

### **Selection of the Alaafin**

The Oyo Empire was not a hereditary monarchy, nor an absolute one. The Oyo Mesi selected the Alaafin. He was not always directly related to his predecessor, although he did have to be descended from Oranyan (also known as Oranmiyan), a son of Oduduwa (also known as Odudua, Odua ) and to hail from the Ona Isokun ward (which is one of the three royal wards). At the beginning of the Oyo Empire, usually the Alaafin's oldest son succeeded his father to the throne. But, this sometimes led to the oldest son, i.e. the first-born prince, the Aremo, hastening the death of his father. Independently of the possible succession, the Aremo was quite powerful in his own right. For instance, by custom the Alaafin abstained from leaving the palace, except during the important festivals, which in practice curtailed his power. By contrast, the Aremo often left the palace. The two councils which checked the Alaafin had a tendency to select a weak Alaafin after the reign of a strong one to keep the office from becoming too powerful.

### **The Ilari**

The Alaafin of Oyo appointed certain religious and government officials, who were usually [eunuchs](#). These officials were known as the *ilari* or half-heads, because of the custom of shaving half of their heads and applying what was believed to be a magical substance into it.

The hundreds of Ilari were divided evenly among the sexes. Junior members of the Ilari did menial tasks, while seniors acted as guards or sometimes messengers to the other world via sacrifice. Their titles related to the king, such as *oba l'olu* ("the king is supreme") or *madarikan* ("do not oppose him"). They carried red and green fans as credentials of their status. All sub-courts of Oyo had Ilari who acted as both spies and taxmen. Oyo appointed these to visit and sometimes reside in Dahomey and the Egbado Corridor to collect taxes and spy on Dahomey's military successes, so that the Alaafin of Oyo could get his cut. Similar officials had existed in [Ife](#), as attested by terracotta art depicting them.

### The Councils

While the Alaafin of Oyo was supreme overlord of the people, he was not without checks on his power. The Oyo Mesi and the Yoruba Earth cult known as [Ogboni](#) kept the [Oba](#)'s power in check. The Oyo Mesi spoke for the politicians while The Ogboni spoke for the people backed by the power of religion. The power of the Alaafin of Oyo in relation to the Oyo Mesi and Ogboni depended on his personal character and political shrewdness.

The [Oyo Mesi](#) were seven principal councilors of the state. They constituted the Electoral Council and possessed legislative powers, similar to today's [United States Congress](#). The Bashorun, Agbaakin, Samu, Alapini, Laguna, Akiniku and an Ashipa are the seven members of this council. They represented the voice of the nation and had the chief responsibility of protecting the interests of the empire. The Alaafin was required to take counsel with them whenever any important matter affecting the state occurs. Each man had a state duty to perform at court every morning and afternoon. Each mesi had a deputy whom they would send to the Alaafin if his absence was unavoidable.

They controlled the military. The head of the council, the Bashorun, consulted the Ifa oracle for approval from the gods. New alaafins of Oyo were seen as appointed by the gods. They were regarded as *Ekeji Orisa*, meaning "companion of the gods." The Bashorun was a sort of prime minister. He had the final say on the nomination of the new Alaafin. ***The Oyo Mesi developed as a check on the Alaafin's power.*** The Bashorun's power rivaled that of the Alaafin. For example, the Bashorun orchestrated many religious festivals; in addition to being commander-in-chief of the army, this gave him considerable independent religious authority.

### The Ogboni

The Oyo Mesi does not enjoy an absolute power or influence, and while the Oyo Mesi may wield political influence, the Ogboni represented the popular opinion backed by the authority of religion, and therefore the view of the Oyo Mesi could be moderate by the Ogboni. And most interestingly, there are checks and balances on the power of the Alaafin and the Oyo Mesi and thus no one is arrogated absolute power. The Ogboni was a very

powerful secret society composed of freemen noted for their age, wisdom and importance in religious and political affairs. Its members enjoyed immense power over the common people due to their religious station. A testament to how widespread the institution was is the fact that there were Ogboni councils at nearly all sub-courts within Yorubaland. Aside from their duties in respect to the worship of the earth, they were responsible for judging any case dealing with the spilling of blood. The leader of the Ogboni, the Oluwo, had the unqualified right of direct access to the Alaafin of Oyo on any matter.

### **Removing an Alaafin of Oyo**

Chief among the responsibilities of the Bashorun was the all-important festival of Orun. This religious divination, held every year, was to determine if the members of the Mesi still held favor with the Alafin. If the council decided on the disapproval of the Alafin, the Bashorun presented the Alafin with an empty calabash, or parrot's egg as a sign that he must commit suicide. This was the only way to remove the Alafin because he could not be legally deposed. Once given the parrot's egg, the Bashorun would proclaim, "the gods reject you, the people reject you, the earth rejects you." The Alafin, his eldest son, and the Samu, his personal counselor and a member of the Oyo Mesi all had to commit suicide in order to renew the government all together. The process and suicide ceremony took place during the Orun festival.

### **Military**

There was a high degree of professionalism in the army of the Oyo Empire. Its military success was due in large part to its cavalry as well as the leadership and courage of Oyo officers and warriors. Because its main geographic focus was north of the forest, Oyo enjoyed easier farming and thus a steady growth in population. This contributed to Oyo's ability to consistently field a large force. There was also an entrenched military culture in Oyo where victory was obligatory and defeat carried the duty of committing suicide. This do-or-die policy no doubt contributed to the military aggressiveness of Oyo's generals.

### **Structure**

The Oyo Empire, like many empires before it, used both local and tributary forces to expand its domains. The structure of the Oyo military prior to its imperial period was simple and closer aligned to the central government in metropolitan Oyo. This may have been fine in the 15th century when Oyo controlled only its heartland. But to make and maintain farther conquest, the structure underwent several changes.

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The Oyo Empire was not a hereditary monarchy, nor an absolute one. The Oyo Mesi selected the Alaafin. He was not always directly related to his predecessor, although he did have to be descended from Oranyan (also known as Oranmiyan), a son of Oduduwa (also known as Odudua, Odua ) and to hail from the Ona Isokun ward (which is one of the three royal wards). At the beginning of the Oyo Empire, usually the Alaafin's oldest son succeeded his father to the throne. But, this sometimes led to the oldest son, i.e. the first-born prince, the Aremo, hastening the death of his father. Independently of the possible succession, the Aremo was quite powerful in his own right. For instance, by custom the Alaafin abstained from leaving the palace, except during the important festivals, which in practice curtailed his power. By contrast, the Aremo often left the palace. The two councils which checked the Alaafin had a tendency to select a weak Alaafin after the reign of a strong one to keep the office from becoming too powerful.

## **The Ilari**

The Alaafin of Oyo appointed certain religious and government officials, who were usually eunuchs. These officials were known as the *ilari* or half-heads, because of the custom of shaving half of their heads and applying what was believed to be a magical substance into it. The hundreds of Ilari were divided evenly among the sexes. Junior members of the Ilari did menial tasks, while seniors acted as guards or sometimes messengers to the other world via sacrifice. Their titles related to the king, such as *oba l'olu* ("the king is supreme") or *madarikan* ("do not oppose him"). They carried red and green fans as credentials of their status. All sub-courts of Oyo had Ilari who acted as both spies and taxmen. Oyo appointed these to visit and sometimes reside in Dahomey and the Egbado Corridor to collect taxes and spy on Dahomey's military successes, so that the Alaafin of Oyo could get his cut. Similar officials had existed in Ife, as attested by terracotta art depicting them.

## **The Councils**

While the Alaafin of Oyo was supreme overlord of the people, he was not without checks on his power. The Oyo Mesi and the Yoruba Earth cult known as [Ogboni](#) kept the [Oba](#)'s power in check. The Oyo Mesi spoke for the politicians while The Ogboni spoke for the people backed by the power of religion. The power of the Alaafin of Oyo in relation to the Oyo Mesi and Ogboni depended on his personal character and political shrewdness.

The Oyo Mesi were seven principal councilors of the state. They constituted the Electoral Council and possessed legislative powers, similar to today's United States Congress. The Bashorun, Agbaakin, Samu, Alapini, Laguna, Akiniku and an Ashipa are the seven members of this council. They represented the voice of the nation and had the chief responsibility of protecting the interests of the empire. The Alaafin was required to take counsel with them whenever any important matter affecting the state occurs. Each man had a state duty to perform at court every morning and afternoon. Each mesi had a deputy whom they would send to the Alaafin if his absence was unavoidable.

They controlled the military. The head of the council, the Bashorun, consulted the Ifa oracle for approval from the gods. New alaafins of Oyo were seen as appointed by the gods. They were regarded as *Ekeji Orisa*, meaning "companion of the gods." The Bashorun was a sort of prime minister. He had the final say on the nomination of the new Alaafin. ***The Oyo Mesi developed as a check on the Alaafin's power.*** The Bashorun's power rivaled that of the Alaafin. For example, the Bashorun orchestrated many religious festivals; in addition to being commander-in-chief of the army, this gave him considerable independent religious authority.

### **The Ogboni**

The Oyo Mesi does not enjoy an absolute power or influence, and while the Oyo Mesi may wield political influence, the Ogboni represented the popular opinion backed by the authority of religion, and therefore the view of the Oyo Mesi could be moderated by the Ogboni. And most interestingly, there are checks and balances on the power of the Alaafin and the Oyo Mesi and thus no one is arrogated absolute power. The Ogboni was a very powerful secret society composed of freemen noted for their age, wisdom and importance in religious and political affairs. Its members enjoyed immense power over the common people due to their religious station. A testament to how widespread the institution was is the fact that there were Ogboni councils at nearly all sub-courts within Yorubaland. Aside from their duties in respect to the worship of the earth, they were responsible for judging any case dealing with the spilling of blood. The leader of the Ogboni, the Oluwo, had the unqualified right of direct access to the Alaafin of Oyo on any matter.

### **Removing an Alaafin of Oyo**

Chief among the responsibilities of the Bashorun was the all-important festival of Orun. This religious divination, held every year, was to determine if the members of the Mesi still held

favor with the Alafin. If the council decided on the disapproval of the Alafin, the Bashorun presented the Alafin with an empty calabash, or parrot's egg as a sign that he must commit suicide. This was the only way to remove the Alafin because he could not be legally deposed. Once given the parrot's egg, the Bashorun would proclaim, "the gods reject you, the people reject you, the earth rejects you." The Alafin, his eldest son, and the Samu, his personal counselor and a member of the Oyo Mesi all had to commit suicide in order to renew the government all together. The process and suicide ceremony took place during the Orun festival.

### **Military**

There was a high degree of professionalism in the army of the Oyo Empire. Its military success was due in large part to its cavalry as well as the leadership and courage of Oyo officers and warriors. Because its main geographic focus was north of the forest, Oyo enjoyed easier farming and thus a steady growth in population. This contributed to Oyo's ability to consistently field a large force. There was also an entrenched military culture in Oyo where victory was obligatory and defeat carried the duty of committing suicide. This do-or-die policy no doubt contributed to the military aggressiveness of Oyo's generals.

### **Structure**

The Oyo Empire, like many empires before it, used both local and tributary forces to expand its domains. The structure of the Oyo military prior to its imperial period was simple and closer aligned to the central government in metropolitan Oyo. This may have been fine in the 15th century when Oyo controlled only its heartland. But to make and maintain farther conquest, the structure underwent several changes.

## **INDIGENE/SETTLER PHENOMENON AND CONFLICT IN NIGERIA**

Beginning in colonial times, there have been varying attempts to manage or exploit Nigeria's ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities through various forms of federalism. Since 1996, the country has been divided into 36 states and 774 Local Government Areas. The concept of 'indigeneity' took root in Nigeria's 1979 constitution and lives on in the current 1999 constitution. This system categorizes all Nigerians as indigenes or non-indigenes (the latter also labeled 'settlers') in a region based on where their parents or grandparents were born. The mechanism's intent was to ensure ethnic parity in education and employment, as well as to protect traditional cultures. But in 2006, Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group separately reported that the principle has instead systematically marginalized millions of Nigerians and encouraged ethno-linguistic identity politics, which has fanned the flames of inter-communal violence. The mere definition of which groups are indigenous to a region creates many controversies; disputed historical migration patterns and intermarriage often make clear delineations impossible. The policy has become a tool for indigenes across the country to exclude competing 'settlers' from scarce educational, employment and political opportunities, even if these are life-long residents of the community. Not surprisingly, this has led to fierce resentment among the excluded.

In diverse Plateau State, indigeneity has been used by Christian politicians to maintain dominance through exclusion of Muslim Hausa and Fulani 'settlers'. The Jarawa ethnic group is also classified as 'non-indigene', although it also fails to qualify for indigenous status anywhere else in Nigeria. Since 1999 to date in Plateau State, inter-communal fighting arising from disputes over indigeneity, land and religion has resulted in over 550,000 internally displaced persons. April 2006 fighting between members of the Pan and Goma ethnic groups over issues of indigeneity resulted in over 100 killed and 8,000 displaced persons. In 2011, entire villages were massacred; women and children were killed in their hundreds.

The British claim to lands in today's Nigeria was internationally recognized in 1885. Initially administered as a concession of the Royal Niger Company from 1900, Nigeria as a formal British colony, was ruled as three distinct political units; the Northern Protectorate, the Southern Protectorate and Lagos Colony. In 1906 the Lagos Colony and Southern Protectorate were merged. In 1914 the three units were amalgamated into one nation. That is, the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Partly in recognition of the major ethno-linguistic differences between Igbo and Yoruba in the south, the Southern Protectorate was split in 1939 into Eastern and Western Provinces. This was given constitutional backing when in 1947 Nigeria was divided into Northern, Eastern and Western regions, and a move which gave prominence to the three dominant groups: Hausa-Fulani in the north, Igbo in the east and Yoruba in the west. Each of the former three regions had minorities who formed

themselves into movements agitating for constitutional safeguards against opposition from the larger ethnic group that dominated the affairs of the region. The minority 'problem' became a major political question when it became clear that Nigeria would adopt a federal system of government. Since each region was dominated politically by one ethnic group, minorities began aspiring to separate existences. This question was important in the 1954 federal and 1957 constitutional conferences. The north and east refused fragmentation, while the west supported the creation of a mid-western state.

Ethnicity has been one of the regular features of African societies of which Nigeria is part. Nigeria has had more than its share in ethnic-induced violence. The issue of ethnicity has become the most viable factor, which explains the social reality of post-colonial Africa. During colonization of African people, colonialists failed to put the issue of cultural differences of various ethnic groupings into consideration before lumping them together in (colonial) state formation. The oversight has constituted and remained one of the greatest challenges of post-colonial Africa.

In the past decades, the Nigeria's experience has shown that the country has a long list of ethnic violence and hostilities various ethnic groupings. Some of these conflicts include the ones in Jos, Umuleri/Aguleri, Ijaw/Itshekiri, Ife/Modakeke, Tiv/Jukun, among others. This is not to say that conflicts did not exist prior to this period. The history and oral tradition of most African societies contain elements of conflicts and ethnic conflicts, and intra-ethnic conflict situations. The problem at present confronting the contemporary African societies is the rage and magnitude of these ethnic problems. The issue of ethnicity has remained a very visible feature of the Nigeria nation.

#### CAUSES OF INDIGENE/ SETTLER CRISES IN NIGERIA

- The main cause of indigene/settler dichotomy has been discovered by various scholars to be resource based. Ethnicity is being often employed as a tool by the political elites in their pursuit of state power and resources. The flag of ethnicity is flown in the allocation of state resources and power sharing.
- Primordial loyalties, prevailing subjective perception and sentiment are other issues that characterise ethnicity. People tend to feel physically safe and psychologically secured among the group they perceive as members of their ancestral root. Therefore, intrusion is perceived with a high degree of suspicion and mostly repelled if meager resources also have to be shared.
- Fear of dominance and external imperialism is also a factor responsible for the consciousness of dissimilarity among people who had hitherto lived together for ages. This is evident in the relationship between Hausa-Fulani and the Vum peoples of Sango-Kataff in Plateau State.
- In the last few decades, Nigerians have been going through difficult times of ethnic conflicts, violence and antagonism. The weak state structure, characterised by

endemic poverty, winner-takes-all philosophy, institutional deficiencies, among others, propel inter-ethnic rivalry. The general attitude of the political elites reinforces the inter-ethnic hatred that is experienced in Africa.

- A major issue again is imperialism and colonialism impacted on ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, which are traceable to the colonial masters' systems of administration, arbitrary delimitation and partitioning.

These conflicts have defied the long adopted western models and paradigms of conflict management. African traditional alternatives to conflict resolution might remain imperative for adoption in the new millennium.

In fact, it is paramount for the people and government of Africa to live above primordial sentiments and subjective perception as well as enemy-image among various ethnic nationalities that dominate the state of affairs on the continent. It is no gainsaying that the problem of ethnicity can be regarded as a veritable source of underdevelopment and bad governance in the country.

Thus, ethnic conflict has been at the forefront of international political debates for the past decade, which aroused concerns about practical solutions to reconcile diverse ethnic groups in the modern democratic state. In examining the concept of ethnic conflict and the impact of variables such as governance, civil-military relations, economics and religion on ethnic identity in Nigeria, advocacy for a 'power-sharing model' that promotes integration and cooperation, will serve as a means of overcoming differences and establishing a basis for dialogue.

A lot of factors have led to the change in economy of nations starting with families. These changes occur both at the levels of individual and the society at large. These changes are what are termed as social mobility and social change.

### **SOCIAL MOBILITY**

This is the form of movement of an individuals or groups in social positions over time. It may refer to class, ethnic groups, political, religion or entire nation; and may measure health status, literacy or education, but more commonly refers to individuals or families and their change in income or economic status. It also typically refers to **vertical mobility** – movement of individuals or groups up (down) from one socio-economic level to another, often by change in jobs marriage and other positions. It also explains **horizontal movement** from one position to another within the same social level.

Social mobility is defined as movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between layers or tiers in an [open system](#) of [social stratification](#). Open stratification systems are those in which value is given to [achieved-status characteristics](#) in a society. The movement can be in a *downward* or *upward* direction. *Absolute* social mobility refers to the overall numbers of people who end up in a different layer of stratification from that of their parents. *Relative* social mobility refers to the differences in probability of attaining a certain outcome, regardless of overall structural changes; a society can have high absolute mobility and low relative mobility. The availability of at least some social mobility can be important in providing pathways to greater equality in societies with high [social inequality](#).

Mobility is most often [quantitatively](#) measured in terms of change in [economic mobility](#) such as changes in [income](#) or [wealth](#). Occupation is another measure used in researching mobility, which usually involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data. Yet other studies may concentrate on social class. Mobility may be *intragenerational*, within the same generation, or *intergenerational*, between one or more generations. Intragenerational mobility is less frequent, representing "rags to riches" cases in terms of upward mobility. Intergenerational upward mobility is more common, where children or grandchildren are in economic circumstances better than those of their parents or grandparents.

As defined by Barber, social mobility refers to movement, either upward or downward between higher or lower social classes; or more precisely, movement between one relatively full time, functionally significant social role and another that is evaluated as either higher or lower.

This movement is to be conceived as a process occurring over time, with individuals moving from one role and social class position to another because of what has happened to them in various kinds of social interaction. Mobility arises in social interaction, as each individual reacts to others in a changing series of social roles.



In this sense, mobility provides the individual with more or less of the benefits which his economy and society have to offer. A rickshaw puller's son becomes a lawyer; a clerk's son becomes a doctor. In each case, a change in role between father and son provides the latter with more of the good things of life.

Mobility is enabled to a varying extent by economic capital culture. Capital could come in the following forms:

**Information/Knowledge** (such as high education)

**Human capital** (such as competence and effort in labour)

**Social capital** (such as support from one's social network)

**Physical capital** (such as ownership of tools or means of production)

**Symbolic capital** (such as worth of an official title, celebrity)

In western modern state, example of policy issue is taxation, welfare, education and public utility; each exercising great influence over the state. In other societies, religious affiliation, caste membership or geographical locations may be of central importance in the discourse social mobility.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF MOBILITY**

**Intra-generational Mobility** within a generation is defined as the change in social status over a single life time. It occurs from personal development of an individual within a family over time. The last born of a family who along the line becomes the bread winner of his entire house-hold is said to have achieved intra-generational mobility.

**Inter-generational Mobility** across generation is defined as a change in status that occurs from the parents to the children's generation. For instance, a professor who is the son of a school teacher can be said to have achieved inter-generational mobility.

These definitions have proven particularly useful when analyzing how social status changes from one time-period to another. Sociologists usually focus on inter-generational mobility because it is easier to depict changes across generation rather than within one.

**Vertical mobility:** this is the movement of individual, groups, families and societies up and down the socio-economic scale. These include gaining or lose of properties, income, status and positions. When one gains, it is said to be **upward mobility** while **downward mobility** relates to lose. For example, a school teacher who gets promoted to the position of a school principal is said to be upwardly mobile on his job, both in income and status. Upward mobility is the change in person's social status resulting in higher position in other status

system. However, downward mobility implies a person's social status falling to a lower position in his status system.

**Horizontal Mobility:** It is the movement of individuals across small similar socio-economic position. This may involve the change of occupation or remaining in the same occupation but in different organization, or may be the same organisation but at different location. Example is a minister of education who is transferred to preside over finance ministry or a VC of a university going to another university to work.

**Lateral Mobility:** It is the geographical movement between neighborhoods, towns or regions. Lateral mobility combines both vertical and horizontal mobility and it happens as a result of economic, religious or other social reasons. Spatial mobility is the rate of movement or migration made by a given population within a given time.

**Structural and Exchange Mobility:** This is the type of forced vertical mobility that results from a change in the distribution of status within a society, owing more to changes in society itself than to individual effort. Example is the declaration of "Free and Compulsory" secondary education. In such case, the parents in the society have no option than to get their wards enrolled. In the long run, the society is better for it but the school age students are the beneficiaries.

#### **Factors Responsible for Social Mobility:**

##### **The following factors facilitate Social Mobility:**

##### **1. Motivation:**

Each individual has a desire not only to have a better way of living but also wants to improve upon his social stand. In open system such as capitalism, it is possible to achieve any status. This openness motivates people to work hard and improve upon their skills so that they can attain higher social status. Without such motivation and efforts on the part of the individual social mobility is impossible.

##### **2. Achievements and Failures:**

Achievement here refers to extra ordinary, usually unexpected performance, which attracts the attention of a wider public to the abilities of a person. Not all achievements will result in social mobility. Achievements affect status only if they are remarkable. For example, a poor man who has acquired wealth or an unknown writer who has won a literary prize will improve his status.

Failures and misdeeds have a similar effect on downward mobility. Fraudulent bankruptcy will remove a member of the upper classes from blue books; he will receive no dinner invitations from his peers and he will become ineligible as a marriage partner. If he is already married, his wife may divorce him. He will have to resign from his clubs and all

positions he holds. But he will not become a member of the lowest stratum, although it will be difficult for him to find new association.

### **3. Education:**

Education not only helps an individual to acquire knowledge but is also a passport for occupational position for higher prestige. To become a doctor one has to have education in science subjects. Similarly, to appear in a competitive job interview, one has to be at least a university graduate.

It is only after acquiring minimum formal education that individuals aspire to occupy higher positions. In the modern industrial society in which status can be achieved, education is basic requirement.

### **5. Migration:**

Migration also facilitates social mobility. People migrate from one place to another either due to pull or push factors. A particular place may not have opportunities and facilities to improve upon. Hence, people are forced to migrate to other places to earn their livelihood. The new places where they migrate to may have different openings and opportunities.

### **6 Industrialization and modernization:**

Industrial Revolution ushers in a new social system in which people are given status according to their ability and training. No importance is given to caste, race, religion and ethnicity. Industrialization results in mass production at cheaper rate. This forces the artisans out of their work. In search of jobs they migrated to industrial towns.

The process of modernization involves use of scientific knowledge and modern technology. It also refers to rationality and secular way of life. With the improvement in technology, people engage in occupations of low prestige like scavengers discard their traditional occupations and take up occupations which are not dirty and have no polluting effects.

## **SOCIAL CHANGE**

This refers to an alteration in social order of a society. It may refer to the notion of social progress or socio-cultural evolution, the philosophical idea that the society moves forward by dialectical evolutionary means. It may refer to a paradigmatic change in the socio-economic structure; for instance, a shift away from feudalism and towards capitalism. Accordingly, it may also refer to social revolution such as the women suffrage or the civil rights movement.

Social change may be driven by cultural, religious, economic, scientific, or technological force. More generally, social change may include change in nature, social institutions, social behaviour or social relations.

### **THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

Basically, change comes from two sources: one source is **Random** or **Unique Factors** such as climate, weather or the presence of specific group of people. This is the kind of changes are natural and mostly act of God. Another source is **Systemic Factors**. These are human factors that bring about change. Example is the change from military dictatorship to civilian rule (democracy), compulsory education, religious migration, infrastructural revolution, urbanization, conflict etc.