**FACULTY: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

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**QUESTIONS**

1. Write a detailed history of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria.
2. Using your own words, share a personal experience with at least 2 of these groups' culture, values, or perspectives listed out in your number 1 answer.

**1. History of the (3) Major Ethnic Groups In Nigeria**

**1. The Yoruba Ethnic Group**

**The Beginning**

The Yoruba people's history all started with a Kingdom named Ile-Ife which was founded by the deities Oduduwa and Obatala. Oduduwa was the first ruler of the Yoruba people and is today venerated as "the hero, the warrior, the leader, and father of the Yoruba race", and Obatala in the other hand made the first human beings out of clay. It is said the Yoruba people believe that their civilization began at Ile-Ife where the gods descended to earth in Oduduwa and Obatala.

The Youruba people gained popularity world wide for their trading with the Portuguese which gave them guns for their trade. But in the early 1800s, the Yoruba people were invaded by the Fulani which forced them to move South. In the late 1800s, they made a treaty with the Fulani people and in the 1901 they were colonized by the British people.

All who lived in the land, at least by the seventh century BC, were not known as Yorubas, regardless of the fact that they shared a common ethnicity and language group. By the 1st millennium BC the historical Yoruba develop in situ, out of earlier (Mesolithic) Volta-Niger populations.

The settlement at Ile-Ife can be dated to the 4th century BC, with urban structures appearing in the 8th-10th Centuries. "Between 700 and 900 A.D. the city began to develop as a major artistic center," And "by the 12th Century Ife artists were creating bronze, stone, and terracotta sculptures." The phase of Ile-Ife before the rise of Oyo, ca. 1100–1600, is sometimes described as a "golden age" of Ile-Ife.

**Oyo Empire**

The Oyo Empire surpassed the Ife empire to become the dominant Yoruba military and political power between 1600 and 1800 AD. The nearby Benin Empire was also a powerful force between 1300 and 1850.

In the 17th century oyo developed and became one of the largest Yoruba kingdoms, while Ile-Ife remained as a religiously significant rival to its power at the site of the divine creation of the earth in Yoruba mythology. After Oduduwa's ascension in Ile-Ife, he had a son. This son later became the first ruler of the Oyo empire.

The Oyo kingdom subjugated the kingdom of Dahomey. It traded with European merchants on the coast through Ajase. The wealth of the empire increased, and its political leaders wealth increased as well. This state of affairs continued until Oba Abiodun, Oyo's last great ruler, engaged his opponents in a bitter civil war that had a ruinous effect on economic development and the trade with the European merchants. The downfall of the kingdom came soon after, as Abiodun became concerned with little other than the display of royal wealth. Oyo's empire had collapsed by the 1830s.

Now most of the surrounding city states were controlled by Obas including oyo, Obas are elected priestly monarchs, and councils made up of Oloyes, recognised leaders of royal, noble, and often even common descent, who joined them in ruling over the kingdoms through a series of guilds and cults. Different states saw differing ratios of power between the kingship and the chiefs' council. Some, such as Oyo, had powerful, autocratic monarchs with almost total control, while in others such as the Ijebu city-states, the senatorial councils were supreme and the Ọba served as something of a figurehead.

In all cases, however, Yoruba monarchs were subject to the continuing approval of their constituents as a matter of policy, and could be easily compelled to abdicate for demonstrating dictatorial tendencies or incompetence. The order to vacate the throne was usually communicated through an aroko or symbolic message, which usually took the form of parrots' eggs delivered in a covered calabash bowl by the Oloyes.

**Modern History**

The Yoruba eventually established a federation of city-states under the political ascendancy of the city state of Oyo, located on the Northern fringes of Yorubaland in the savanna plains between the forests of present Southwest Nigeria and the Niger River.

Following a Jihad led by Uthman Dan Fodio and a rapid consolidation of the Hausa city states of contemporary northern Nigeria, the Fulani Sokoto Caliphate invaded and annexed the buffer Nupe Kingdom. It then began to advance southwards into Ọyọ lands. Shortly afterwards, its armies overran the Yoruba military capital of Ilorin, and then sacked and destroyed Ọyọ-Ile, the royal seat of the Ọyọ Empire.

Following this, Ọyọ-Ile was abandoned, and the Ọyọ retreated south to the present city of Oyo (formerly known as "Ago d'Oyo", or "Oyo Atiba") in a forested region where the cavalry of the Sokoto Caliphate was less effective. Further attempts by the Sokoto Caliphate to expand southwards were checked by the Yoruba who had rallied in defence under the military leadership of the ascendant Ibadan clan, which rose from the old Oyo Empire, and of the Ijebu city-states.

However, the Oyo hegemony had been dealt a mortal blow. The other Yoruba city-states broke free of Oyo dominance, and subsequently became embroiled in a series of internecine conflicts that soon metamorphosed into a full scale civil war. These events weakened the southern Yorubas in their resistance to British colonial and military invasions. In 1960, greater Yorubaland was subsumed into the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The historical records of the Yoruba, which became more accessible in the nineteenth century with the more permanent arrival of the Europeans, tell of heavy Jihad raids by the mounted Fulani warriors of the north as well as of endemic intercity warfare amongst the Yoruba themselves. Archaeological evidence of the greatness of their ancient civilization in the form of, amongst other things, impressive architectural achievements like Sungbo's Eredo that are centuries old, nevertheless abound.

**Major towns and cities**

Many Yoruba peoples organize themselves into villages, towns and cities in the form of kingdoms. Major cities include Ile-Ife, Oyo, Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode and Akure. Some towns and cities of the Yoruba people are collectively considered to be clans due to similarities in their origins and cultures. A number of other cities, though non-Yoruba, have histories of being influenced by the Yoruba. These cities are Warri, Benin city, Okene, and Auchi.

**The Yoruba Diaspora**

The Yoruba Diaspora has two main groupings. The first one is composed of the recent immigrants that moved to the United States and the United Kingdom after the political and economic changes in the 1960s and 1980s. The second group is much older, and is composed of descendants of kidnapped Yoruba who arrived as slaves to countries such as the United States, Cuba, Trinidad, Brazil, Grenada, and other countries in the Caribbean and South America in the 19th century.

Much like in the case of Yorubaland itself, many people who belong to the Yoruba diaspora are Christians or Muslims. Yoruba traditional worship remains influential in diaspora communities, however.

**2. Igbo Ethnic Group**

**Igboland**

Igboland is the home of the Igbo people and it covers most of Southeast Nigeria. This area is divided by the Niger River into two unequal sections – the eastern region (which is the largest) and the midwestern region. The river, however, has not acted as a barrier to cultural unity; rather it has provided an easy means of communication in an area where many settlements claim different origins. The Igbo population is characterised by the diverse Igbo culture and the speakers of equally diverse Igbo languages.

Politically, Igboland is divided into several southern Nigerian states; culturally, it has included several subgroupings, including the following ethnicities:

Anioma

Ngwa

Abiriba

Edda Egbebu

Ezaa

Ibeku

Ohuhu

The Igbos are also surrounded on all sides by other tribes (the Bini, Warri, Ijaw, Ogoni, Igala, Tiv, Yako and Ibibio).

**The Origin of Igbo's**

The origins of the Igbo people has been the subject of much speculation, and it is only in the last fifty years that any real work has been carried out in this subject: like any group of people, they are anxious to discover their origin and reconstruct how they came to be how they are. ...their experiences under colonialism and since Nigeria’s Independence have emphasized for them the reality of their group identity which they want to anchor into authenticated history.

Analysis of the sources that are available (fragmentary oral traditions and correlation of cultural traits) have led to the belief that there exists a core area of Igboland, and that waves of immigrant communities from the north and west planted themselves on the border of this core area as early as the ninth century. This core area – Owerri, Orlu and Okigwi – forms a belt, and the people in this area have no tradition of coming from anywhere else. Migration from this area in the recent past tended to be in all directions, and in this way the Igbo culture gradually became homogenized. In addition to this pattern of migration from this core area, other people also entered the Igbo territory in about the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Many of these people still exhibit different characteristics from that of the traditional Igbos – for example geographical marginality, the institution of kingship, a hierarchical title system and the amosu tradition (witchcraft). For some time some Igbo-speaking peoples claimed that they were not Igbo – the word was used as a term of abuse for “less cultured” neighbours. The word is now used in three senses, to describe Igbo territory, domestic speakers of the language and the language spoken by them.(see (A.E. Afigbo,1981: Ropes of Sand, Caxton Press,Ibadan. and T. Shaw:1970; "Igbo Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria", Faber and Faber, pp. 268-285).

The first contact between Igboland and Europe came in the mid-fifteenth century with the arrival of the Portuguese. From 1434-1807 the Niger coast acted as a contact point between African and European traders, beginning with the Portuguese, then the Dutch and finally the English. At this stage there was an emphasis on trade rather than empire building, in this case the trade consisting primarily of Igbo slaves. With the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 came a new trading era, concentrating on industry (palm products, timber, elephant tusks and spices). At this point the British began to combine aggressive trading with aggressive imperialism. They saw the hinterland as productive, and refused to be confined to the coast. In 1900 the area that had been administered by the British Niger Company became the Protectorate on Southern Nigeria, also incorporating what had been called the Niger Coast Protectorate. Control of this area then passed from the British Foreign Office to the Colonial Office. Long before it had officially been conquered, Igboland was being treated as a British colony. Between 1900 and 1914 (when Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated) there had been twenty-one British military expeditions into Igboland. In 1928 for the first time in their history, Igbo men were made to pay tax – they were a subject people.

This attempt to take over political control of Igboland met with resistance and cultural protest in the early decades of the twentieth century. A nativistic religious movement sprang up (the ekumeku) which inspired short-lived but feverish messianic enthusiasm. The rumours that the Igbo women were being assessed for taxation, sparked off the 1929 Aba Riots, a massive revolt of women never encountered before in Igbo history. However, the engine of imperialism could not be stopped, and once it had begun, Igbo culture would never be the same again.

**3. Hausa Ethnic Group**

**Hausaland**

Hausaland, sometimes referred to as the Hausa Kingdoms, was a group of small independent city-states in northern central Africa between the Niger River and Lake Chad which flourished from the 15th to 18th century CE. The origins of the Hausa are not known, but one hypothesis suggests they were a group of indigenous peoples joined by a common language - Hausa - while another theory explains their presence as a consequence of a migration of peoples from the southern Sahara Desert. The cities prospered thanks to local and interregional trade in such commodities as salt, precious metals, leather goods, and slaves. Islam was adopted by many of the rulers and elite of the city-states in the 14th and 15th century CE but was also one of the reasons for their loss of independence when the Muslim Fulani leader Usman dan Fodio (r. 1803-1815 CE) launched a holy war and conquered the region in the early 19th century CE.

**Geography & Origins**

The name Hausaland derives from the Hausa term Kasar hausa, meaning the ‘country of the Hausa language’, although the area also included other peoples such as the Tuareg, Fulbe, and Zabarma. The term ‘Hausa’ was in use only from the 16th century CE as the people called themselves according to which specific city-state or kingdom they belonged to.

Hausaland was located in the Sahel region between the Niger River and Lake Chad in north-central Africa in what is today northern Nigeria. The Sahel is the semi-arid strip of land running across Africa between the Sahara Desert in the north and the Savannah grassland to the south. Hausland, specifically, stretched from the Air mountains (north) to the Jos plateau (south) and from Borno (east) to the Niger Valley (west). This region saw the development of towns by the Hausa-speaking people from 1000 to 1300 CE.

The exact origins of the Hausa cities are not known, but theories include a migration of peoples from the southern Sahara who, abandoning their own lands following the increased desiccation of that area, established new settlements in what would become known as Hausaland. An alternative theory suggests that the Hausa people originally lived on the western shore of Lake Chad and when the lake shrank (as a consequence of the same climatic changes that affected the Sahara) they occupied this new and fertile land and then eventually spread to the immediate north and west. There is as yet, unfortunately, no archaeological evidence to support either of these two theories. As a consequence, there is a third hypothesis, which is that the Hausa had not migrated from anywhere but were indigenous to the region. Support for this theory lies in the fact that there is no tradition of migration in Hausa oral history.

There is, though, a foundation legend, known as the Bayajida or Daura legend, although this probably dates to the 16th century CE and reflects the increased influence of Islam in the region at that time. According to this tradition, Bayajida, a prince from Baghdad, arrived at the court of the ruler of the Kingdom of Kanem (or the Bornu Empire as it became by the 16th century CE). Receiving an unfavourable reception, Bayajida headed eastwards until he came upon the city of Daura. There, the queen and her kingdom were being terrorized by a great snake. Bayajida stepped in and killed the troublesome serpent and promptly married the queen. Together they had a son called Bawogari who then went on to have six sons of his own, each of which became the king of a Hausa city-state. Meanwhile, Bayajida had another son, this time with one of his concubines. This illegitimate son, called Karbogari, had seven sons, and these went on to rule seven other Hausa cities. This story neatly explains how the various cities were established but not, of course, just where Daura and its queen came from.

**Key Cities & Government**

Wherever they had sprung from, by the early 15th century CE many small Hausa chiefdoms had come together to create several walled cities which controlled their respective surrounding countryside. Traditionally, there were seven city-states (the hausa bakwai), but there were, in fact, many more. The most important were (the traditional seven are marked with an asterisk):

Biram\*

Daura (the ritual mother city of the group)\*

Garun Gobas

Gobir\*

Gwari

Jukun (aka Kwararafa)

Kano\*

Kebbi

Katsina\*

Nupe

Rano\*

Yawuri

Yoruba

Zamfara

Zaria (aka Zazzau)\*

Each city had its own king or ruler, the sarkin kasa, who was advised by a chief councillor or vizier, the galadima, and a small council of elders - typically consisting of nine members who also determined the next ruler in line. Various officials were appointed by the king to, for example, collect taxes and customs duties, lead the city’s cavalry units or infantry, maintain security on roadways, and look after certain crops. The city ruled over various smaller chiefdoms or villages in its immediate vicinity, each ruled by a chief or sarkin gari. The third tier of this political pyramid was the family clan or gida, many of which made up an individual village.

Rural Hausa populations were farmers who worked the land which belonged to the community as a whole. Over time, as the city-states became more centralised, this system was corrupted by the kings giving out parcels of land as rewards to certain individuals. Hausa agriculture also became heavily reliant on slaves, too. Meanwhile, the society within the main city of each kingdom was cosmopolitan, although dominated by the Hausa. There were slaves, craftworkers, merchants, religious officials, scholars, eunuchs and aristocrats (masu sarauta) related to or favoured by the king.

**2. Personal Experience**

**1. My Experience with the Igbos**

I have always admired the Industriousness, free spirit and boldness in the Igbo culture. I have had the privilege of being around a lot of Igbo’s in my life and I noticed a very high percentage of igbo people are very religious, hard-working and smart. Over 90% of Igbos I have encountered provide for their families by being extremely Hard-working.

Igbos have a culture of Hard work as it is well known that amongst all ethnic groups in Nigeria they have a bigger appetite for Love money. I had a very close Igbo friend back in secondary school that had only one motivation in life, which was to make money. You couldn't hold a 5 minutes long conversation with him and somehow not talk about money.

Igbos has some of the best Vegetables in the country. Their women's ability to mix ingredients which seem unmixable to produce an incredibly delicious product with unbelievable taste makes them special. I have had the opportunity of enjoying some of those mixtures in Abacha, Ukwa, roasted yam and plantain with peppered source, moi-moi and some delicious Enugu Orkpa with white garri, akpu and pounded yam not to mention their life-changing soups in oha, akwu, okazi, ofe owerri, nsala. Igbo foods changed my life.

**2. My Experience with the Yorubas**

Throughout the course of my life the number one thing i have noticed about the yoruba culture is that they are very disciplined and can be very intelligent especially in school. Back in secondary school we had multiple Yoruba students that where in an intense battle for the 1st position and would often visit the library and spend hours reading like they were getting paid for it. They relished being given assignments, random tests and being asked to solve some very difficult questions in class.

The Yorubas also have some wonderful dishes to their intelligence like Gbegiri, Ewedu, Ewa Agoyin, Igbin and Ire Eyin, Amala. Once when i went to Lagos i had the priviledge of savouring one which was that Amala with vegetable soup and two chilled pure water and my was it good. It had me thinking wow, Akpu .

Respect is an important aspect of the Yoruba tradition. In the Yoruba culture it signifies peace and orderliness. More than any other ethnic group in Nigeria, Yoruba shows the most respect for their elders where the younger person is expected to greet the older one by either kneeling down for females or prostrating for males. And I believe this to be one of the factors that contribute to them being focused and determined.

The Yorubas are also known for their superior sculpting skills amongst the three other ethnic groups in Nigeria. I have gotten to see some of their sculptures on social media and it makes me think every time how is that possible.