

## CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NIGERIA AND WEST AFRICA.

### 2.0 OVERVIEW SURVEY.

Right from the innocent days, the days and years of prehistory, the activities of man have been a connatural political activity. Life of man was profoundly political in every sense, as experienced and manifested in every sphere of activity. A deeper insight of this political participation and propensity of man, perhaps informed the Aristotelian definition of man as a political being. Down the century streams of geopolitics and political activity came the formation of an organic political system- the globe. The global political history was a compendium of five distinguishable political continents. These continents were further reducible into regions that were intrinsically linked to the international system.

Regionalism and regionalization became a conscious activity of states and state actors who politically represent the mass realities of their respective populace. In regionalism, people and nations develop an attitude, a philosophy, a cause; while in regionalization, they form politically discreet parts of the international system that is also guided by international college of actors and politicians.

On the process and framework of regionalization, often guided by regionalism is the classification of regions, sub-regions, states and parastatals. These form a dynamic political ecology of man right from the cradle of civilizations to the post-cold war era of mutual assured protection, which to a great extent anchors the philosophy of globalization. The difference lies on the level of participation<sup>53</sup> of the people and states on the very issues that politically divide

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<sup>53</sup> Participation: The meaning of Participation in this context and application is not ordinary meaning of sharing; it involves profound conscious and political activity of man in knowing, determining and sharing (in) his immediate, past and future concerns. It is such intelligibility that expresses the abstractive relationship between sensible and intelligible species that defines all political and epistemological processes.

and rule them. Nigeria forms part of this political statutory process in the sub-region of West Africa. An overview of the sub-region of Western Africa may buttress this point and, may serve as foreplay of the environment on which Nigeria is a strategic actor.

## **2.1 WESTERN AFRICA: REGIONAL STUDY:**

It is right to establish that Nigeria shares political sovereignty in the sub-region of Western Africa. Therefore, a precise definition of the Western African geopolitical dimension is important in this work.

The term Western Africa is used to designate the geographic region of the African continent located on the south of the Sahara and east and north of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>54</sup> Western Africa or West Africa as conventionally understood in this research, is latitudinally divided into two parallel belts: the western portion of the Sudan which is a geographical area that stretches across the whole width of Africa, and the Guinea coastal region. Each belt is further divided into distinct geographical landscapes, cultures and history.<sup>55</sup>

The states of West Africa are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Geologically, crystalline rocks referred to as the West African shield, sedimentary rocks and volcanic rocks underlie West Africa. These rocks contain abundant and diverse deposits of mineral resources, for example, the African Shield contains iron ore, gold, rutile, bauxite, chromite, manganese, diamond, copper lead, zinc and uranium while the

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<sup>54</sup>The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 29, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, USA: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1998, p.790

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

sedimentary rock contains petroleum and natural gas, coal, phosphates, gypsum, uranium and zinc.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.1.1 CLIMATE:

The Climate of West Africa displays a gradual change from hot, wet and humid southwards and very hot and dry northwards. These climatic changes are dominated by two air masses. One is derived from quasi-permanent high pressure cell generally located over the Sahara and which causes the hot, dusty, northeast harmattan while the other air mass is derived from a similar cell located over the tropical Atlantic and which causes cloud cover, heavy rainfall and high humidity in West Africa.<sup>57</sup> (See fig. 1)

Fig. 1 West African Climate Zones.

<b>ZONE A.</b>	<b>Location:</b> Beneath the dry easterlies and north of the ITCZ	<b>Weather Characteristics:</b> Temperature, isolation and evaporation are high; humidity is low; skies are clear but dusty.
<b>ZONE B:</b>	South of the ITCZ	Very high humidity, clear skies, high temperatures, small puffy cumulus clouds but no rain.
<b>ZONE C:</b>	Easterlies and westwards	Thicker moist air system with thunderstorms and line walls more westwards to bring about high winds, intense rainfall, occasional hailstones, and exciting lightning displays.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 790-791.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 796.

<b>ZONE D.</b>	Southwesterly air system	Deep cloud cover, persistent and often heavy rainfall, high humidity and lower temperatures.
<b>ZONE E:</b>		High humidity and cumulus cloud with little rain. <sup>58</sup>

## 2.2 FEDEFRAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA:

### 2.2.1 Climate and Geography:

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is situated on the Southern coast of West Africa, extending about 650 miles (1,050 km) from north to south and 700 miles (1,130km) east to west. Facing the Bight of Benin in the southwest and Bight of Biafra in the Southeast, Nigeria is bordered by Niger on the North, Lake Chad on the Northeast, Cameroon on the Southeast, which contains Nigeria's highest point of 2,042 miles (6,699ft), and Benin on the West.<sup>59</sup>

The Niger and Benue rivers, the two geostrategic rivers that flow across the country meet in central Nigeria, at a confluence in Lokoja (Benue State) and flows southwards into Niger Delta, where Benin is located. North of the coastal lowlands is a hilly region of rainforest and savanna. At the foot of the great plateau is a region of high wooded and

<sup>58</sup> The weather zonation moves northward from January to September and retreats southward from September to December. The climate on any spot depends upon this seasonal migration of the weather zones.

At specific locations temperature characteristics vary with the seasonal passage of the ITCZ and its associated weather zones. Zones A and B bring higher and more extreme ranges while zones C, D and E are accompanied by lower and more even temperatures.

Fig. 1 is plotted from Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 29, p. 796.

<sup>59</sup> The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 8, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, USA: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1998, p. 702.



savanna plains which includes the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (which was created by a decree in 1976).<sup>60</sup>

Lagos has a tropical climate with high temperatures and rain throughout the year.

Relatively, the North is drier and hotter than the South. Nigeria has broadly two major seasons: Dry and Rainy seasons, which vary across regions.

There are rainforests behind the coastal swamps. The Plateaus have large tropical savanna areas with forested river valleys. The North has dry grasslands and semi-arid areas of the Sahel.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.2.2 Federal Statistics:

The summary of Nigeria's geographical statistics is as follows:

Area: 923,770sq km (356,668sq miles)

Population: 116,900,000

FCT: Abuja.

Government: Federal Republic.

Major Ethnic groups percentages: South-West: Yoruba 21, North: Hausa and Fulani 29,

South-East: Igbo 19, Ibibio 4, Kanuri 4, and Ijaw 10.

Languages: English (Official) and other ethnic languages.

Religions percentages: Christianity 40% and Islam 50% and ATR 10%.

National currency: Naira= 100 Kobo

National Flag: Green-White-Green (Green represents Nigerian forests and while White at the centre stands for Peace).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Philip's *Encyclopedia Comprehensive Edition*, London: George Philip Ltd, 2001, p. 482.

<sup>61</sup> Philip's *Encyclopedia Comprehensive Edition*, p. 482.

<sup>62</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies [IISS], *Strategic Survey 2001/2002* UK: Oxford University Press, 2002, see 'Strategic Geography, 2001/2002', pp. Xx-xxi; see also IISS Publication: *The Military Balance 2002/2003*, 'Nigeria', p. 327.

### 2.2.3 Economy:

Nigeria is a developing country with great economic potentials. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 1995 p. capita is US\$ 1,220. It is the world's eleventh largest producer of crude oil, which accounts for the 95 percent of its export revenue. Nigeria is also the World's third-largest producer of palm oil and palm kernels, fourth largest producer of groundnuts, sixth largest producer of cocoa, and seventh largest producer of rubber.

Agriculture employs 43 percent of the labour force. Cattle rearing are predominant in the North while fishing is active in the South. <sup>63</sup>

Major Nigeria mineral deposits include: crude oil, Natural gas, coal, tin, columbite, and limestone which occur in many areas and states and is widely used for manufacturing cement and for use in steel industry.

### 2.3 NIGERIA: History and Politics:

There are differing approaches, starting points (*terminus a quo*) in computing and analyzing the political and historic trends of the evolution of Nigeria. Some analysts started from the point of amalgamation (1914) while others started at the beginning of the century (1900) and even beyond. This work shall adopt a comparative model for analysis of the mainstream historical events in the development and politics of Nigeria, the starting point of analysis being January 1, 1900. In 1900, Nigeria became a British Protectorate and thus began the process of state formation. However, it does not mean that before this date, there was no administrative machinery, on the contrary,

there was in the colony of Lagos a well established career service of qualified officials, including Nigerian and other African doctors, lawyers, police officers, customs and prison officials, printers, stenographers, and clerks. At Calabar,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

the Niger Coast Protectorate possessed the rudiments of administrative and clerical staffs, as did the Royal Niger Company in its stations on the river like Asaba and Lokoja. In the rest of what became Nigeria some of the more elaborate and complex societies included official hierarchies with duties of day-to-day government. ...these latter survived the British occupation... in modified form as part of the limited and subordinate system of government later to be known, somewhat paradoxically, as indirect rule...<sup>64</sup>

The significance of the choice of the January 1, 1900<sup>65</sup> in this research work is assumed from the fact that it was on this date that the word 'Nigeria' first came into official use to describe the new protectorates<sup>66</sup> of Southern and Northern Nigeria. By the Orders in Council, Nigeria became a British Protectorate on this day.

In analyzing the historical sequence, a three-fold comparable political schema shall be employed as viz:

- Pre-European Period
- Post-Independence Federal Republic of Nigeria
- West Africa British Commonwealth States.

### 2.3.1 Pre-European Period:

The evolution, formation and development of the state of Nigeria are historically recent; but the trend and politics of the people of Nigeria dates back to decades of centuries ago. Archaeological discoveries around the Nigerian village of Nok have uncovered some of the oldest and most beautiful works of African sculpture. This civilization flourished around 500 BC and AD 200. It was Neolithic culture that revealed the great transition

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<sup>64</sup> I.F. Nicolson, The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, p.1.

<sup>65</sup> January 1, 1900: views are varied as to when centuries begin; many authorities and sources prefer to date a year later, that is, January 1, 1901 as the first day but in this thesis, January 1, 1900 is preferred.

<sup>66</sup> Protectorate: in international law, a relationship between two states in which the weaker one surrenders the management of its more important foreign affairs in return for protection by a stronger nation. The term implies only a partial loss of sovereignty on the part of the protected state, which usually retains a large measure of control over its domestic affairs. In such a relationship, the protected state is often referred as a "protectorate" (The Encyclopedia Americana International Edition, USA: Grolier Incorporated, 1991, p. 675; a country or region under the protection of another (The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, USA: Trident Press International, 1999, p. 1014.

from the Stone to the Iron Age.<sup>67</sup> There was continual rise and fall of nations, empires through the years. In the eleventh century AD, the Kanem-Bornu kingdom extended authority from Lake Chad into Nigeria and the Hausa consequently founded several city-states. In the southwest, the state of Benin and the Yoruba kingdom of Oyo flourished in the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD. They were outstanding and economically influential in brass, bronze and ivory sculptures. In the North, the Songhai Empire dominated in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>68</sup>

In the sixteenth century there were the following states: Benin, Bornu, Daura, Gobir, Igala, Jukun, Kano, Kebbi, Katsina, Nupe, Oyo, Rano, Yauri and Zazzau. ... In the eighteenth century, the Oyo authority was at its zenith and during the nineteenth century until the arrival of the British, the Fulani empire extended over much of the present North.

The first Benin state is believed to have existed during the tenth century; the ancient Kingdom of Ife was in power in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and the old Kingdom of Oyo was at its peak in the late fourteenth century. The Nupe destroyed Old Oyo in the mid-fifteenth century, and the new empire of Oyo rose in the early nineteenth century. A new Benin Kingdom reached its height in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>69</sup>

That was the political scenario before the advent of the Europeans that radically changed the cause of the political history of Nigeria.

### **2.3.2 Europeans en route West Africa: Colonialism.**

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive on the Nigerian coast in the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD. European interest then was essentially commercial, first for spices and later for slaves. Consequently, they established trading links with Benin late in the century.

Nigeria, overtime, became central to slave trading with major European powers competing for control:

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<sup>67</sup> The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 29, p. 901.

<sup>68</sup> Philip's Encyclopedia, p. 482.

<sup>69</sup> F. L. Bliz, The Politics and Administration of Nigerian Government, Lagos: African Universities Press, 1965, pp. 2-3.

The first Europeans to make their appearance in today's Nigeria were travellers and explorers, whose tales brought slave-traders in their wake. Starting around 1482 with the Portuguese, this motley collection of freebooters bought healthy young slaves from the native kings of the coast for resale. At first they were exchanged for gold in the Gold Coast, later shipped to the New World at a handsome profit. After the Portuguese came the French, Dutch, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Spaniards and the British.<sup>70</sup>

In 1807, Britain renounced the Slave trade but other European countries continued the trade; but by 1861, Britain seized Lagos to stop the trade. By 1885, Britain controlled all of southern Nigeria and gradually extended her control northwards. These commercial and economic activities together with other economic and political reasons gradually brought about the scramble and partition of (West) Africa from about 1870 to 1914 AD. The Berlin Conference of 1885 consolidated British claim and influence over the Niger Districts. Forsyth observed the event in this way:

But the mood in Europe changed in 1884. Germany's Chancellor Bismarck, having previously been lukewarm as Gladstone to the Idea of West African colonies, called the Berlin Conference. In the same year Germany annexed the Cameroons, lying to the east of present-day Biafra. The point of the conference was ostensibly to enable Bismarck to back activities in the Congo basin- activities being carried out by the Baptist missionaries and merchants from Manchester and Liverpool. ... The result of all this was the Berlin Act, which provided that any European country which could show that it had a predominant interest in any African region would be accepted as the administering power in that region, *providing it could show that its administering was a reality.*<sup>71</sup>

By 1900, the Niger Districts, which were administered by the Royal Niger Company, were taken over by the British Crown. In 1906, Britain conquered the whole of Nigeria and divided the country into three regions: the Colony of Lagos, the Protectorate of

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<sup>70</sup> F. Forsyth, The making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd, 1978 p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. pp. 14-15.

Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. In 1914, the two Protectorates were amalgamated.<sup>72</sup> Under the British rule, the Nigerians were gradually introduced to modern state structures and institutions.

Nigerian Advisory Council of thirty Europeans and six Nigerians were created with no legislative or executive powers. The Constitution of 1922 increased the Legislative Council to thirty-six Europeans and ten Nigerians. The Council legislated for the Colony (Lagos) and the Southern Provinces while the Governor legislated for the Northern Provinces.

The Richards Constitution of 1946 formed Legislative Council of forty-five members for Nigeria. Twenty-eight of them were Nigerians, four elected and twenty-four nominated. A regional House of Assembly was set up in each of the three regions, with a House of Chiefs in the Northern region. In 1951, a change in the Constitution provided for a Council of Ministers of eighteen members, out of which were twelve Nigerians. The Council was made up of equal representations from each of the regions. A House of Representatives was also created with 142 members consisting of 136 Nigerians.<sup>73</sup> This means that in 1951, Macpherson constitution provided for the establishment of federal and regional legislative bodies that are expected to have greater involvement in the governmental and political process of the country.<sup>74</sup> Following the constitutional and structural reforms of 1946, which founded the federal character of Nigeria on regional basis, several subsequent reforms have rather strengthened this structure as reviewed by Bliz and Lapido in these lines:

In 1954 Nigeria introduced the Lyttelton constitution, its third in eight years. This time, at Nigerians' urging, it was a fully federal one, comprising the three geographic regions, the Southern Cameroons, and the Federal Territory of Lagos. Each region had a governor, premier, cabinet, legislature and civil

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<sup>72</sup> F. Bliz, The Politics and Administration, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>74</sup> A. Ladipo, Politics and Administration in Nigeria, Nigeria: Spectrum Books Ltd, 2000, pp. 51-52.

service, with the significantly weaker federal government represented in Lagos by a governor-general, bureaucracy, House of Representatives and senate.<sup>75</sup>

The Constitution of 1954 strengthened the federal character of Nigeria by declaring Nigeria a Federation, by recognizing the limited autonomy of the Regions, and by continuing the Regional representation on the Council of Ministers. ...[who] were now nominated by the party having a majority in the Federal election.<sup>76</sup>

The Lyttleton constitution of 1954 built on these hesitant modifications of the colonial government to such a point that one could talk of the emergence of doctrines and institutions of parliamentary government.<sup>77</sup>

In 1957, the post of a Prime Minister was created, ratified and filled by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa in September 1957. Other domestic reforms included an appreciable increase in the size of the House of Representatives to 320. The Senate also consisted of twelve members from each region, including the Southern Cameroons and four members each from the Federal Territory [Lagos] and special members.

Similar structural changes occurred on the regional level. The Western and Eastern regions were granted Authority of internal self-government in 1957, while the Northern regions lagged till 1959. However, following UN-supervised referendum, the Trust territories of Northern Cameroons annexed with the Northern region of Nigeria in June 1, 1961. The Southern Cameroons [formerly in Nigeria] joined with Cameroun to form a Federal Republic on October 1, 1961. On October 1, 1963, Nigeria became a full Republic with Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe as President.<sup>78</sup>

On the whole, the British-Nigeria colonial government was variously described as 'administrocracy', 'a dictatorship' and 'an authoritarian system of government' for two principal reasons:

One is that it was an alien rule imposed on the people of Nigeria following military conquest. The second feature was the concentration of all powers (executive, legislative and judiciary) in the hands of appointed officials who, being responsible only to the government of the imperial country, were under no obligation to govern with the consent of the colonized peoples. It is this aspect of the rule by officials that the term 'administocracy' seeks to underline, while those who prefer dictatorship and authoritarianism are most interested

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<sup>75</sup> The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 29, p. 904.

<sup>76</sup> F. Bliz, The Politics and Administration, p. 5.

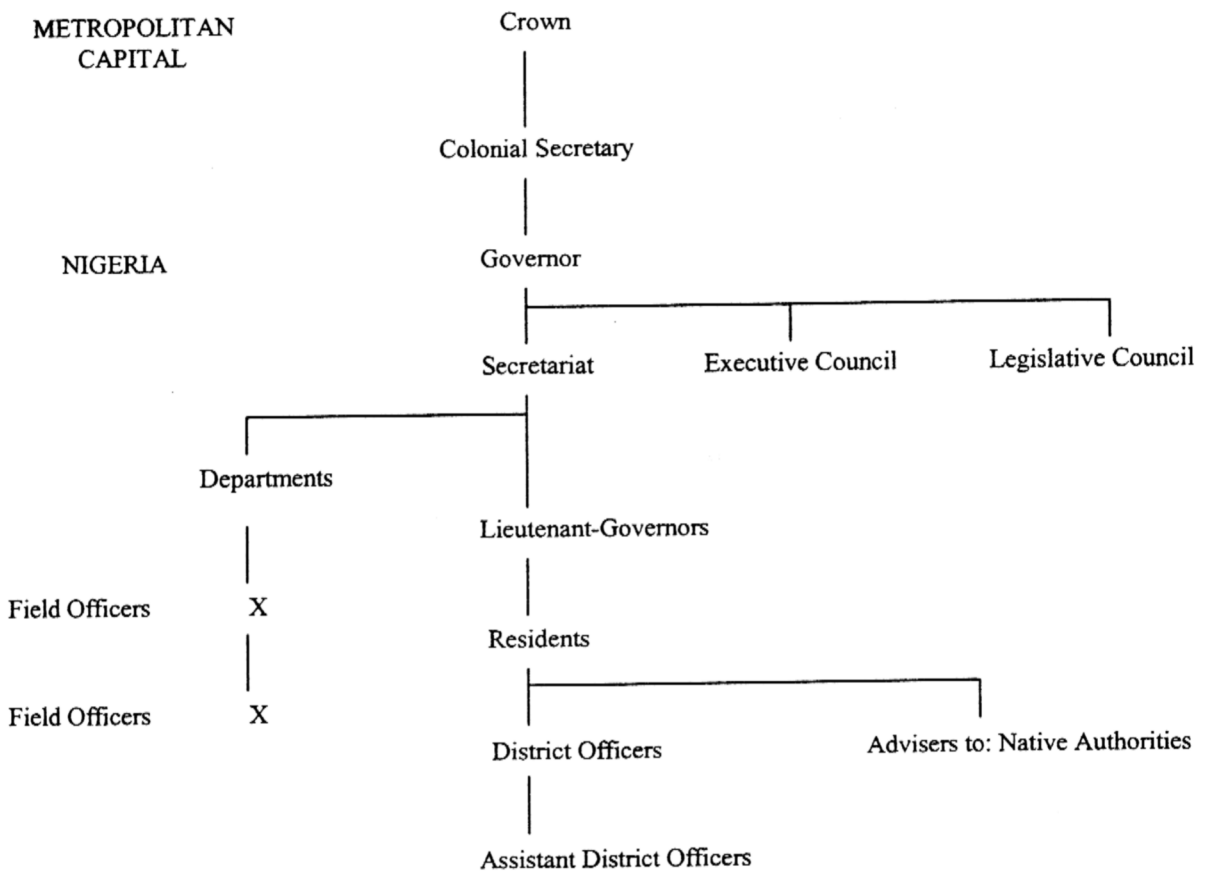
<sup>77</sup> A. Ladipo, Politics and Administration in Nigeria, p. 52.

<sup>78</sup> The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 29, p. 904.

in emphasizing the total neglect of the consent of the governed.<sup>79</sup>

The administrative structure of the imperial colonial government is set below (see table).

### 2.3.3 THE STRUCTURE OF COLONIAL GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA.<sup>80</sup>



Such was the political calculus of the pre-Independence British-Nigeria founded on the system of indirect rule with its obvious merits and shortfalls as observed by Ladipo:

Indirect rule had its advantages. It was cheap in terms of British manpower and investment; it was peaceful. But it also fossilized the feudal structure, confirmed the repression by the privileged Emirs and their appointees, prolonged the inability of the North to graduate into the modern world, and stultified future efforts to introduce parliamentary democracy.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> A. Ladipo, *Politics and Administration in Nigeria*, p.33.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>81</sup> Forsyth, *The Making of an African Legend.* p. 17.



## 2.4 POST-INDEPENDENCE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA:

Etymologically, the word 'federation' comes from the latin word 'foedus' which means treaty or agreement. As a transliteration of the word –foederatio- it means the union of states based upon a treaty or agreement.<sup>82</sup> Nigeria became a federation with the Lagos constitutional conference of 1954. A federation can be described as:

A federation originally meant a group of neighbouring countries who agreed to unite together as one country and set up a single government to rule the whole; but those countries, since they did not want to lose their separateness, retained their own original governments and only handed over to the new government certain powers.<sup>83</sup>

The federation of Nigeria is unique in that it became a federal state [1954] only after it had become a sovereign state. However, it became a Federal Republic on October 1, 1963. The Federation started as a Unitarian colonial state but was gradually disintegrated into three/four political regions. In 1967, General Gowon disbanded and replaced these regional political units with twelve states integrated as the federation of Nigeria. The issue of state creation derived consistently from the very nature of the federation. It often springs from a response to the pressure, agitations and demands of some groups who are dissatisfied with their position in the country, at other ends it was a response to the demands of the minority or even a pressure from the group that wanted to maximize their share and position in and of the federal resources [often with political bias]. Successive Nigerian governments increased the number of states, after a due political process has been completed and approved by the competent authority. In 1976 and 1987 the number of states increased to nineteen and twenty-one respectively and later to thirty and thirty-six and a Federal Capital Territory [FCT]. Also the local governments that function as the

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<sup>82</sup> E.A. Keaty, and H. Thomas, West African Government for Nigerian Students, London: Hutchinson Educational Ltd, 1973, p.14.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

third tier of the government have increased tremendously from 449 in 1990 to 777 in 2002.

It should be noted that post-independence Nigeria, has a twain political and historical structure- the Federal Military Government [FMG] made up of the Head of State, the Armed Force Ruling Council [AFRC], the Federal Executive Council, the civil service and a federal judiciary, made up of federal high courts, courts of appeal and the Supreme Court. The locus of power was the Head of State and the AFRC, who possessed all law-making capabilities that could not be challenged in any court of law.

The second structure is the democratic civilian government based on the constitution. This is based on the constitutional power-sharing between the three tiers of government, the federal, the state and the local governments. It is marked by the supremacy of the constitution [the rule of law], the decentralization of power and party politics.<sup>84</sup> This division of power is well defined between the various arms of government as explained below.

#### **2.4.1. Division of Power.**

Executive power is well defined between the various arms of government. The division of such authorities is to enhance efficiency, ease administrative bureaucracies and effect dynamic governance.

##### **2.4.1.1 Executive lists:**

This includes the list of the subjects that are exclusively controlled by the Federal Government or Federal Executive (Council of Ministers); and of which the states and/or regions have no authority. It includes the Army, the Nigerian Police, the Postal services,

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.lupinfo.com/country-guide-study/nigeria/nigeria121.html>

Railways, main trunk roads, airports, seaports, mining, banks, customs and excise, immigration, and foreign affairs.

#### 2.4.1.2 Concurrent Lists:

This includes the list of matters on which both the Federal Parliament and the State/Regional Legislatures could make laws; but on matters where there are conflicts of interests, the Federal interest prevails in the overall national interest. The subjects included universities, prisons, labour, drugs and poison, and public order.<sup>85</sup>

#### 2.4.1.3 Residual Powers:

These are powers exercised by the states only. It includes matters that are not included in either Executive List or Concurrent List. It involves matters of regional or state concern and only the state Legislatures could make laws concerning them; and only the State Executive Council could enforce or control them. Such matters included schools, hospitals, forestry, local government and native authorities, agriculture, and native or customary courts.<sup>86</sup>

#### 2.4.2 **NIGERIA: Regime Politics:**

On January 14, 1966 barely three years following the republic, young military officers staged the first military coup in Nigeria as a reaction to the intolerable, deplorable and perhaps inhuman conditions that had developed in the country. In the coup, Prime Minister, Sir Tafawa Belewa, Chief Akintola Premier, Western Nigeria, Brigadier Maimalari, Commander Second Brigade, Colonel Largenma, Commanding Officer,

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

Fourth Battalion, Lt. Colonel Pam, Adjutant General, Army Headquarters and Lt. Colonel Unegbu, Quartermaster General and the Sarduana of Sokoto, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, Federal Minister of Finance and many others were reported killed or missing. President Azikiwe was overseas when his government was overthrown by the military. The senior military officers organized under Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi [who later became the Head of State] and gained control of the coup. The new Administration quickly dispatched military officers as military governors. The posting is as follows; Major Katsina was the governor of Northern region, Lt. Col. Francis Fajuyi, Western region, Major Ejoor, Midwestern region and Lt. Colonel Ojukwu, Eastern region.<sup>87</sup>

The January Coup arguably was sufficiently successful to have rectified the decaying political power-structure while still retaining power, discipline and respect. Rather, Nigeria, “which was being treated for an overdose of compromise... by Ironsi’s regime, which inherited power after the revolution.”<sup>88</sup> To this extent, ethnic rivalries deepened tinged with a wide feeling that the coup was a tribal plot than a defence of national integrity. A coup plot to overthrow General Ironsi government soon appeared in Nigeria.

Madiebo describes the plot as follows:

The plot to overthrow General Ironsi’s Government was slow, deliberate and systematic. Said to have been conceived in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, it was worked out in detail by Northern Nigerian civil servants and politicians and executed by the entire Northern civilians and their military counter-parts.<sup>89</sup>

General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi was killed in the coup and was succeeded by Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State. Shortly after the assumption of office, General

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<sup>87</sup> Major-General Madiebo, A., The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran war, Enugu (Nigeria): Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980, p.22.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

Gowon in a broadcast to the nation, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1966, assured Nigerians of his commitment to return the nation to civil rule:

As soldiers my colleagues and I are ready to go back to the barracks any day, but the work of national reconstruction must be completed; public confidence in our institutions restored and civil leaders demonstrate to the nation that they are ready to take over and project a better country that it had just before January 1966.<sup>90</sup>

The regime was marked by continued tension and ethnic massacres. As the political tension exacerbated, a conference of leaders was immediately convened at *Aburi* in Ghana in 1967. The place was considered a neutral ground to discuss and respect the sensitivity of the issues at stake. The neutrality will also enhance impartial reactions, with a view to finding positive steps and strategies to solve the prevalent political impasse. At the conference Ojukwu's position on regional autonomy seemed more convincing and agreeable than else. Unfortunately the resolutions were never implemented later on. General Gowon rather created twelve states to replace the four regions. Some sections/regions did not consider this step as soluble step to the burning political issues. Consequently, on May 30, 1967, Ojukwu supported by eastern leaders announced secession and the creation of a new state of *Biafra*.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, three years of civil war ensued between Nigeria and the new state of Biafra (1967-1970). The war ended on 12 January, 1970.

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<sup>90</sup> Achike, Okay, Groundwork of Military Law and Military Rule in Nigeria, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980, p.186.

<sup>91</sup> Encyclopedia Americana, vol. 20, 1991, pp. 340-341; see detailed Text of the Nigerian-Biafran war by Major-General Alexander Madiebo, The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.

On October 1, 1970, the tenth Independence anniversary of Nigeria, the Government of Gowon reassured its commitment to national peace, stability and progress in a nine-point programme to the people of Nigeria. The Government Programme was expressed in this way;

01. the reorganization of the armed forces;
02. the implementation of National Development Plan and the repair of the damage and neglect of the war;
03. the eradication of corruption in our national life;
04. settlement of the question of the creation of more states;
05. the preparation and adoption of a new constitution;
06. the introduction of a new revenue allocation formula;
07. conducting a national population census;
08. the organization of genuinely national political parties; and
09. the organization of elections and the installation of the popularly elected governments in the states and in the centre.

Conversely, marking the Independence Day of 1974, General Gowon argued that the promise of the return of the nation to civil rule by 1976 would be postponed *indefinitely* since according to him “to return the country to civilian rule without accomplishing the nine-point objective of the military would be utterly irresponsible and would leave the nation in the lurch.”<sup>92</sup> Many quarters in Nigeria received the statement in bad taste then. Confidence in the regime dwindled and this to some extent caused a strategic crack in the regime security posture. It ignited both tribal and national power politics across different sections of the country especially among politicians.

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, also cf. *London Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1974, p. 6.

Consequently, on July 29, 1975, a military coup headed by Brigadier Ramat Murtala Mohammed ended the Gowon's administration. This regime was short-lived. Murtala Mohammed was killed on February 13, 1976 after creating six more states (19 states). He was succeeded by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) who restored the second republic on October 1, 1979 under the Presidential government of Shehu Shagari (1979-1983).

The Second Republic was saddled with lots of problems, economic restructuring, social inequalities and religious conflicts, all in an attempt to decipher an appropriate democratic culture for Nigeria.

Economically, the World Oil glut decreased considerably the oil-based national revenue and consequently clogged the wheel of development and national progress. There was nationwide inflation, unemployment, depreciation of national life and currency and gradually corruption crept into the public service coupled with the undesirable yoke of international debt inter alia. Some of these domestic economic problems became the cost and illusion of the third republic, inaugurated on October 1, 1983.

On the December 31, 1983, the military struck again with an iron bar that claimed the third Republic by force. The charge was that the young civil rule had "failed to produce the minimum of good government".<sup>93</sup>

The federal military government was inaugurated under General Muhammad Buhari. Like other military regimes, the administration pledged to stamp out corruption in public service and to revamp the dilapidated economy. The regime was remarkably noted for its spirited and strong pursuit of national discipline in a national programme launched as "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI). Among other harsh measures towards economic recovery embarked upon by the regime was the immediate expulsion of about 700,000

aliens in March 1985, in a bid to trim down the population.<sup>94</sup> The power politics by the military continued.

On 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1985, Major-General Ibrahim Babangida in another military disaster overthrew the government of General Mohammadu Buhari. Compromise and diversification of the economy marked his regime as encapsulated in the Structural Adjustment Programme [SAP], the objective of which is stated as follows:

- a) to restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and imports;
- b) to lay the basis for a sustainable non-inflationary or minimal inflationary growth;
- c) to achieve fiscal and balance of payment viability over the period; and,
- d) to reduce the dominance of unproductive investments in the public sector, improve that sector's efficiency and enhance the growth potential of the private sector.

Consequently, the regime got entangled and choked in a spirited effort to move the country forward among other power-packed failures especially, with the annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential elections. The President resigned or "stepped aside" for an Interim National Government (ING) in 1993.

The Interim National Government under Chief Ernest Shonekan was a child of necessity. It was a period of national stalemate until November 1993 when General Sani Abacha fizzled out the administration in a "palace coup".

Abacha's regime was unbridled in corruption, human right abuses and embezzlement of public funds.

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<sup>93</sup> Encyclopedia Americana, vol. 20, p. 341.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



After the death of Sani Abacha (who was dreaded nationwide) in July 1998, General Abubakar Abdulsalami effectively returned the country to democratic rule on May 29, 1999. This marked the civil administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo which is expected to successfully hand over power to a new democratic government by May 2003. This is the precise political history of Nigeria since independence in October 1, 1960. This means that out of the forty-two years of Nigeria's independence (by October 1, 2002), civil rule is only nine to ten years while the thirty-two years were marked by military misrule and despotism in Nigeria.

Conclusively, the political history of Nigeria is extensively the history of regime politics; than of a sustained democratic process. It is veritable to restate the obvious that military coup in Nigeria is tantamount to corrupt civil regimes. General Madiebo convincingly states that the military resort to coups only when the politicians themselves have prepared the stage for it. He insists that it is only the Nigerian politician who can put an end to coups in Nigeria. This can be achieved not through any constitutional reforms or legislation but through good governance, clear democratic process and via a people-oriented government. On the other hand, he agrees that military government is an aberration, a major deprivation of the people's rights to civil governance and should be avoided at all cost. This is because, according to him, "military men are unqualified for the task of government and either lean too heavily on advice which may not always be in the best interest of their people or, worse still, attempt to rule without it."<sup>95</sup>

Thus, it should be borne in mind, that Nigerian politics is by all standards a young democracy. It requires time in order to re-orientate the entire political structure, institutions and process. It also requires time for Nigerians to understand properly the

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<sup>95</sup> Alexander Madiebo, The Nigeria Revolution and the Biafran War, p. 386.

relevance and meaning of true democracy. This is apparently the case with most African countries.

Therefore, in order to assess properly the role of Nigeria in African regionalism, it is important to evaluate briefly the political process, and structural institutions in selected African states. The work is based on four major commonwealth countries: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia and of course Nigeria which has been considered exhaustively within the limits of this presentation. This is particularly important, because of diverse political experience, regime politics and colonial origins which have at times undermined giant political strides towards effective regional integration in Africa.

Also the commonality of African patriotism and nationalism translated into Pan-Africanism is a great coalescence. Regionalism cannot be effective except worked out as a mutual, cooperative and integral efforts of the major states [if not all] in the region. Nigeria therefore works in collaboration with other states in the region to achieve an acceptable integration. Thus, the review of the political process of these selected states becomes very necessary. They form a compact historical precedence to regional integration. Their similar colonial experiences rather serve as a cohesive factor than divisive one. The work shall proceed by determining the extent of political advancements in these states as the framework for determining the possibility of effective regional integration process.

## **2.5. BRITISH WEST AFRICAN STATES IN THE POST WORLD WAR II:**

The Political history of the world in the aftermath of the World War II was one of great underpinnings. Its global consequences left many states in massive reconstruction and reconsolidation of the dilapidated and violated territorial integrity/capitals and national

resources. The impacts of the World War set the podium for a new political philosophy harnessed and compact in a new international system. The new system begot new political thinking, new power politics among nations.

Major countries of the British West Africa (that is, West African countries under British colony) were not left in this naïve political experience. There were greater and increased concern and informed opinions about the politics of dependent and Trust states. The Charter of the United Nation articles 73 and 75 were typical of this international advancement. The referred Articles emphasized the advancement and promotion of self-governance of trust and colonial territories. The Thesis shall advance the impact of this new strategic posture on the West Africa British Commonwealth Countries with the exception of Nigeria, which is considered exhaustively treated within the limits of this presentation. The countries shall consist of:

- The Federal Republic of Nigeria
- The Republic of Ghana
- The Republic of Sierra Leone and,
- The Republic of Gambia.

### **2.5.1 Gold Coast in the Post World War II:**

The influence of the World War on the Gold Coast (Ghana) was quite remarkable. It, among other things, changed the political framework for democratic Governance.

The Gold Coast (as it was called prior to Independence) government pursued a five-year Development Plan under the administration of Sir Alan Burns from 1942-1947. Burns administration was essentially directed to restructuring and consolidating the Local Government system or the Native Authority System. He opined that the best policy to

bring about self-rule governance was the indirect rule. He argued in this way: "I am most anxious to see the Native Administrations take their full share in the government of this country because I believe that indirect rule by Government through the Native Authorities is the best training-ground for the self-government which we are aiming at".<sup>96</sup> Despite the gruesome nature of the post world war scenario, Alan Burns effected constructive reforms. In 1944, the government established the Native Courts Ordinance and the Native Authority Ordinance. The former apart from effecting some radical reforms on the local government tribunals also removed their abuses and established new courts of high repute. By 1951, 135 modernized courts had displaced and replaced about 300 old courts.<sup>97</sup>

The Native Authority Ordinance bridged the great divide between the Central government and the local traditional councils. The Chiefs and their councils were brought nearer to the government. The law empowered the central government direct control over the Native Authority and, grouped a number of chiefs into one authority and jurisdiction. The idea was to develop the chiefs and their local councils into vital organs of modern local government system.<sup>98</sup> Another giant stride towards the self-government programme was the constitutional reform of 1946. The Constitution provided for an *African majority* in the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council consisted of thirty-one members: six official members and twenty-four unofficial members and the Governor who presided but had no vote.

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<sup>96</sup> W.E.F. Ward, Government in West Africa, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1965, p. 162.

<sup>97</sup> E.A. Keaty, and H. Thomas, West African Government, p. 129.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. ; see also W.E.F. Ward, Government in West Africa, p. 162.

Of the twenty-four unofficial members, nine were elected by the Joint Provincial Council, four by the Ashanti Confederacy Council, and five by Adult Suffrage from the municipalities of Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi and Kumasi.<sup>99</sup>

The Legislative Council also consisted of six nominated members who were mainly Africans and Extraordinary members who could be appointed on advisory and technical matters.

1946 Constitutional advance was a great and constructive step in the right direction. It “replaced the old official majority not only by a majority of Africans, but by a majority of elected members. It brought Ashanti members into the Council for the first time. Africans controlled the finance committee of the council.”<sup>100</sup>

The major weakness of the constitution is that all “policy was begun by the governor and his permanent officials and the executive council; and the executive council and officials were responsible to the governor alone. The Legislative council did not control policy, it did not make policy; all it could do was to criticize policy.”<sup>101</sup>

There was a steady and greater participation and involvement of Africans in the domestic politics of the Gold Coast. The demands of rioters in 1948 were in line with this growth, they impressed upon the administration of Gerald Creasy for rudimentary constitutional and political changes. On January 1949, the government constituted an all-African Commission presided over by Henley Coussey to review the Watson report on the 1948 Riot and make substantive recommendation to the government. The recommendations of the Commission were eventually incorporated in the 1951 Constitution.

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<sup>99</sup> Provincial Council is a body consisting of the Paramount Chiefs(chiefs recognized by the Governor as being of the highest rank) of the Colony and members of Native Authorities of the Colony which had no Paramount Chief.

<sup>100</sup> Ward, Government in West Africa, p. 163.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

### **2.5.2 1951 CONSTITUTION:**

The 1951 Constitution as a growth over and above the 1946 Constitution, it provided for an Executive Council [EC] consisting of three ex-officio ministers and eight African ministers from the Legislative Assembly. They were to be appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Assembly.

The Assembly consisted of three ex-officio ministers, six special members and seventy-five African elected members: Colony 37, Ashanti 19, and Northern territories 19. The ministers were essentially to introduce and defend government measures in the Legislative Assembly. The Constitution as such paved the way to the irreversible process of decolonization in the Gold Coast.

### **2.5.3 Nkrumah Constitution:**

In the 1951 elections, the Conventional People's Party led by Dr Nkrumah had a landslide victory over the other parties. The Party won 34 seats out of the 38 seats contested. By this victorious feat, Dr Nkrumah was asked by the Governor to form a government. Acting accordingly, he incorporated six ministries reserved for Africans and left two other ministries for Ashanti and Northern territories. Ex-officio ministers controlled Defence, External Affairs, Finance and Justice Ministries.

In March 1952, Nkrumah was conferred the title of Prime Minister, an honour and office no African in any British colonial territory ever had. At the time, the office had no executive powers. However, due to several representations made by Dr Nkrumah and pressure of opinions from the public demanding substantial constitutional powers for the office, a new constitution styled the "Nkrumah Constitution" was introduced. This constitution provided adequately for such executive powers for the office of the Prime

Minister. The Legislature was broadened to consist of a Speaker and 104 members, who were elected directly from the ruling party. It was called the National Assembly. It clearly extinguished the ex-officio positions, nominated or special memberships. The Cabinet consisted of at least eight members of the Assembly appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister.<sup>102</sup>

The 1954 constitutional changes represented the last phase of the decolonization. Major changes included the change of three European ex-officio members of the Executive council with African politically appointed Ministers, the removal of 37 members of the Assembly elected to represent the traditional native authorities and the extinction of ex-officio and nominated members of the Legislative Council.<sup>103</sup>

In May 1956, the Secretary of State for the Colonies announced that the Gold Coast Government Constitutional proposal that was controverted by opposition (the National Liberation Movement) from Ashanti was to be put into General Elections. Again the Conventional People's Party (CPP) won with 72 out of 79 seats. It was another landslide victory by the CPP.

On the third of August, the Assembly passed a unanimous motion for Independence within the Commonwealth under the name of Ghana. Independence Constitution to this end was promulgated on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1957.

In 1960, Ghana became the first African country to become a Republic within the Commonwealth. The electorate adopted a Republican Constitution in a plebiscite and the Assembly enacted and promulgated it into law superimposing the 1957 constitution.<sup>104</sup>

In 1966, Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup. By 1969 the second Republic was instituted by military regime of Kofi Busia.

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<sup>102</sup> E.A. Keaty, and H. Thomas, West African Government, pp.134-135.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 135-146.

Ghana like Nigeria was also tormented by military coups and interventions until June 1979 when a coup of junior officers under Lt. J.J. Rawlings returned the country to the third republic, which was headed by Hilla Limann. In 1981, Rawlings overthrew the government that had seemed incapable of revamping deep economic recession. He broadly pursued democratic socialist programmes with a wide ranging structural adjustment programmes with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

President Rawlings after introducing a new constitution, submitted himself alongside his ruling party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for a general elections 1992. He was quite victorious in both the presidential race and the majority of the seats in the legislature. In July 1992, under the close supervision of the World Bank and IMF, Rawlings administration embarked upon series of economic reforms that became the success measure of the IMF Structural Adjustment Programme for developing nations. It gained for Ghana, a period of economic and political stability. In December 1996, Rawlings was reelected for the second term to demonstrate his political prowess. At the beginning of 2001, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), under John Kuffour, won the election and continued the path of economic progress of the nation despite continued northern tribal conflicts that afflict the administration till date.<sup>105</sup>

## **2.6. SIERRA LEONE IN THE POST WORLD WAR 11:**

The Republic of Sierra Leone is bordered on the north and east by Guinea, on the south by Liberia and on the west by Atlantic Ocean. It has an area of about 27,699 square miles. Its size is smaller than Benin but bigger than Togo and Gambia.

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<sup>105</sup> [www.wtgonline.com](http://www.wtgonline.com) 'Ghana: History and Government'.



The Population of Sierra Leone is larger than the size of the country. It is important to note that one of the world's largest natural harbours is found in Freetown, the Capital of Sierra Leone.

Pedro de Simtra was the first Portuguese explorer and European to sight and map this harbour of Freetown in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The original Portuguese name of Serra Lyoa (Lion Mountains) was used to refer to the range of hills that surround the harbour and so, the name Sierra Leone was a common derivative of the etymology.<sup>106</sup>

### **2.6.1 Sierra Leone: History and Politics:**

The post World War II scenario was not only critical for Sierra Leone but for the whole world. Sierra Leone, under Hubert Stevenson and, still grappling with the hard realities of the times, sought consciously a constitutional framework for implementing its ten-year educational programme of self-government. As this could not be quickly realized, the 1974 constitution ruled till 1951 when the British Government in London began to modernize and reform the constitution, in line with the world's renewed policy on decolonization and promotion of self-government. The major process here was constitutional reforms among other political processes.<sup>107</sup>

George Beresford-Stooke inaugurated the Constitution of 1951. It made provision for non-African majority membership of the LC. It was composed of: seventy-four ex-officio members, seven elected African members representing the seven districts in the Colony; fourteen elected African members from the Protectorate and two unofficial members representing commerce. The LC is as such composed of thirty members.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 29, 1998, p. 905.

<sup>107</sup> Ward, Government in West Africa, p. 171.

<sup>108</sup> E.A.Keaty, West African Government, p. 131.

The EC consisted of six unofficial members and four official members appointed from the LC. In consonance with the provisions of the constitution, the Government upon the request of the LC appointed five members of the EC to control the five government departments:

01. Health, Agriculture and Forest
02. Local Government, Education and Welfare
03. Works and Transport
04. Trade, Commerce, Posts and Telegraphs
05. Lands, Mines and Labour.

A sixth member was however appointed to advise the government on business relations;<sup>109</sup> but not in charge of any department. These official members were later in April 1953 converted to Executive Ministers of the Government. In 1956, the Legislative Council was also changed to House of Representatives.

The Protectorate Government was also affected by the wind of political reform in Sierra Leone in the aftermath of the World War II. The Protectorate Assembly (formed 1946) was charged with discussing the laws which are to be made in the LC as they had no legislative powers. The Assembly was composed of: the chief commissioner, nine official members, two representatives from each of the twelve district councils and six unofficial appointed members.<sup>110</sup>

Historically however,

From 1896 onwards, the protectorate was governed in the usual colonial way by the district commissioners responsible to the governor; there were five districts each containing a number of chiefdoms. Two ordinances, the Protectorate Ordinance of 1901 and the Protectorate

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132; see also W.E.F. Ward, *Government in West Africa*, p. 171

<sup>110</sup> Keaty, *West African Government*, p. 132.

Native Law Ordinance of 1905, introduced the ideas of indirect rule; the district commissioners began to work indirectly through the chiefs and their councils, and the Government tried to develop these traditional units into native authorities capable of undertaking the task of modern local government. In the nineteen-thirties, the policy had succeeded so far that the native authorities had become the main units of local government: they were levying their own taxes and drawing up their budgets of revenue and expenditure, subject to Government's approval.<sup>111</sup>

From 1946-1957, the Protectorate Assembly became functionally comparable with the Nigerian regional councils of 1946 and Gold Coast Provincial council of 1927. It considered bills for the LC and discussed government estimates. It served a vital means of effecting mutual relationship and cooperation between the government and the representatives of the Protectorates.

#### **2.6.2 POST INDEPENDENCE SIERRA LEONE:**

With the Independence Constitution of 1961, Sierra Leone became fully independent. There were successive military coups in 1967/68, which installed Siaka Stevens at the Head of civil government. In 1985, Stevens's administration was succeeded by General Joseph Saidu Momo whose regime was marked by severe economic crunch and austerity measures. The situation degenerated into civil unrest and tension through many parts of the country. In April 1992, Captain Valentine Strasser led a successful military coup that toppled the Momo administration and instituted the National Provisional Ruling Council that piloted the political affairs of the country. The government priorities were retarded by the exacerbating civil war in Liberia between main Liberian rebel faction and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a home-grown Sierra Leonean opposition movement to both President Momo and Strasser too. The RUF in the 1990s made a considerable stride by overrunning key mineral installation vital to the country's economic growth. The

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<sup>111</sup> Ward, Government, p. 172.

administration however employed the services of the ECOMOG troops and other western alliances to make peace. In 1996, Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio who quickly returned the country of democratic civil rule overthrew Strasser administration. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah the leader of Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) won the elections. He was deposed in May 1997 when the rebels of RUF led by Major Johnny Koroma seized power. In March 1998, the Nigerian forces supported by the United Kingdom in an operation designated as "Sandline Affair" restituted President Tejan Kabbah. In July 1999, the Sierra Leonean Government reach an agreement with the RUF rebels which integrated Fonday Sankoh leading member of the RUF. It is however estimated that Sierra Leone catastrophic decline is far below international standard level of development and prosperity. In the present political dispensation, Sierra Leone is still grappling with obvious problems of economic recession and civil disturbance in remote places of the country.<sup>112</sup>

## **2.7. Republic of Gambia: History and Politics:**

The world pacific arrangement since 1946 did not exclude the compromise and political reforms of Gambia. Gambia that had made no constitutional reforms since 1902 began a dramatic transition with current political changes.

In 1947, Gambia, adapting to the new changes in the international order, made a consistent advance toward democratization by electing to the legislative council a representative from Bathurst and Komo St Mary. The Council consisted now than ever of the governor, three ex-officio members, and unspecified number of nominated members and one elected member. This apparently is democracy in process.

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<sup>112</sup> [www.wtgonline.com](http://www.wtgonline.com) "Sierra Leone: History and Government".

In November, 1951, following some constitutional changes, the legislative council broadened its membership to eight unofficial members, four appointed members representing the four divisions of the Protectorate and one member for commerce. All the elected members were also appointed members of the EC. Constitutional reforms continued through 1953 to 1954. This enhanced consistent and steady broadening of the membership of this council and creation of new offices, which ensured greater participation of the people in the very affairs that rule them.

The 1953 constitutional changes were incorporated in the 1954 reforms, which provided the basis for the realization of the self-government programme. Other changes in the 1954 Constitution were the election of fourteen unofficial members into the LC and the election of a Speaker, while the governor remained the president.<sup>113</sup>

By September 1959, the British government approved the new constitutional proposals and it took effect as 1960 Constitution. The Constitution transformed the Legislature into House of Representatives and the extension of Universal adult suffrage to the Protectorate. It also provided the establishment of Public Service Commission, while the Governor remained the President of both the Executive and Legislative councils.

Four years later, in 1963, Gambia had developed to the level of self-government in many aspects of its internal affairs. Its major changes include, the upgrading of the EC to a Cabinet consisting of a Prime Minister and more than six ministers. These were the final preparatory changes following its Independence on February 18, 1965 adopting constitutional Monarchy. It became a republic in April 1970 as a Commonwealth nation. Sir Dawda Jawara became the President in 1972 and was re-elected in 1977.

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<sup>113</sup> Keaty, West African Government, p.133.

Gambia in the post Independence period has survived fairly on Parliamentary government. In 1980 through 1981, there was extensive unrest that continually threatened the Presidency of Sir Dawa Jawara. With the intervention of Senegal in 1981 in support of Jawara, Gambia in 1982 formed a confederation of Senegambia, in which Senegal and Gambia retained their sovereign status but agreed to military integration and economic and political cooperation. President Diouf of Senegal announced the Confederation under his leadership and assisted by President Jawara as deputy. The confederation was later dissolved in 1989 although close ties still exist between the two countries. In 1992 President Jawara was confirmed for another term despite his neglect of the root cause of the 1981 coup attempt which included poor conditions for the military, and the unequal distribution of the country's national wealth. In 1994, Lt. Yahya Jammeh took over the government in a military coup of young officers; while the president was on visit in the United Kingdom. In September 1996, he officially resigned and contested presidential elections under the banner of Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC). He won the election and on January 1997, his party won majority seats in the National Assembly. In his strategic efforts towards national reconstruction, he has since change his successor's pro-Western economic policies and established new trading partners that include, Libya, Taiwan, Cuba, Iran and Nigeria. The recent presidential and legislative electoral polls (2002) saw him and APRC quite victorious. He has since continued his administration.<sup>114</sup>

This is the political platform of the West African British Commonwealth states. It is clear that they have quite a lot in common in the political chronology.

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<sup>114</sup> [www.wtgonline.com](http://www.wtgonline.com) "Gambia: History and Government".

The Historical background prepares the work for the evaluation of Nigeria's role in West African Regionalism which is the subject of the next chapter.