



Structures of Governance: Nigeria

Overview

- Nigeria is a Federal Constitutional Republic
 - Comprised of Executive, Judicial, and Bi-Cameral Legislative Branches
 - Similar in structure to United States'
- Problematic History
 - Periods of political unrest and military coups
 - Often connected to country's ethnic and religious divisions.



Major Political Parties

- Political parties not primarily meant to unify citizens under a set of ideals
 - Instead formed around particular people as a way of helping them gain power
 - Almost all major parties are socially conservative
- Political Parties along ethnic/religious lines, not as much around political ideologies
 - All Progressive Congress (APC) – Currently in Power
 - President Muhammadu Buhari
 - Center-Left Ideologically
 - People's Democratic Party (PDP) – Majority party
 - Held power for most of 4th Republic
 - Center-Right Ideologically

Executive Branch

- Elected for terms of 4 years with a maximum of two terms
 - Nation-wide popular election
- Most powerful position in government
 - President acts as Head of State, Commander in Chief, and head of government
- Selects Government Ministers
 - Must be selected from variety of states, ethnic groups, and religions
 - Allows diversity of opinions in Executive Branch
 - Helps ensure laws are enforced and coordinates with state level governments



Judicial Branch

- Division between Supreme Court, Appellant Court, and Federal High Court
 - Supreme Court handles interpretation of laws according to the constitution
- Islamic Shari'ah courts
 - Primarily in the North
 - Established to add religious legitimacy to court cases
 - Laws changed so only Muslims are effected by Shari'ah laws
 - Shari'ah supersedes national power



Legislative Branch

- Bi-Cameral legislature
 - Senate – 109 Members
 - 3 from each of the 36 states, 1 from Federal Capital Territory
 - Serve 4 year terms
 - House of Representatives – 360 members
 - Representation determined by population
 - Serve 4 year terms
- Primarily pass laws for President to approve
 - Laws must pass through both houses
 - Powers similar to those of United States Congress



Local Level Government

- 36 states, each with a governor
 - Elected for 4 year terms
- State level legislative branch
 - Unicameral – Comprised of three times the number of House of Representative members
- 774 local level governments across Nigeria
 - Each has a Chairman and elected councilors
 - Primarily handles administrative issues



Citizens and the Government

- Main form of political participation is voting
- Organization of political parties more based on Patron-Client system
 - Inhibits development of political parties based on ideologies
 - Dominance of religion and ethnicity in elections
- Protests often responded to violently
 - Ex. MEND 2005



The Military

- Highly influential in Nigerian Government
 - Officers sometimes use power as means for gaining political position
 - Use of bribes and violence
- Custodial theory – When needed military steps in an established rule
 - Takes care of country until Nigeria is again ready for democracy
 - Stability more valued than democracy
 - Many periods of military rule

