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