

Nigerian Political Institutions

Section 3: Governance and Policymaking

Differences in the Four Republics' Models

- Since 1914, Nigeria has had nine constitutions (5 colonial and 4 since 1960)
- First republic, based on the Westminster model, was relatively decentralized
- 2nd (1979) and 4th (1999) Republics use US model (presidential rather than parliamentary)
 - which model do you think would better fit Nigeria? Why?
- The role of the **ethnic rotation principle** and “**federal character**” (389)
 - Integrating Smootha's talk on liberal v. consociational democracies

Executive

- Effects of military rule on the executive (keep in mind that “the military dominated Nigeria for three-quarters of its existence”), the role of **prebendalism** (393) and its effects of the bureaucracy

Judiciary

- Specifically marginalized during the Buhari, Babangida, and Abacha regimes, especially when the Supreme Court endorsed Abacha's decision to kill environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa (and Abacha's ‘reelection’ in 1998)
 - lost the effective power of **judicial review** during these periods of military rule
- Gaining credibility recently by ruling against executive interests on occasion
- One of the biggest problems involves the implementation of *shari'a* law to resolve disputes outside of the English **common law** tradition. “In November 1999, the northern state of Zamfara instituted a version of the *shari'a* criminal code that included cutting off hands for stealing, and stoning to death for those (especially women) who committed adultery. Eleven other northern states adopted the criminal code by 2001, prompting fears among Christian minorities in these states that the code might be applied to them and creating a divisive national issue.”

State/Local Govt: generally dependent on federal revenues (90 of state income!)—federal money goes directly to state governors, which contributes to prebendalism—tax revenue is also very hard to collect (why?)

Section 4: Representation and Participation

Legislature: bicameral on the U.S. model (Senate and House, together called the National Assembly): “the executive has been consistently able to influence legislators through executive powers, party machines, and even outright bribery.” Unlike in the US, however, the National Assembly doesn't control the public purse. One of the legislature's main successes to date is its success in thwarting Obasanjo's 2006 bid for constitutional amendments that would allow him a third term in office. (at a heavy political cost to the legislators...)

Political Parties (see chart on 400-401)

Political parties in Nigeria run the risk of being ‘ethnically **zero-sum**’

- The role of social capital: exclusivist identities negate norms of reciprocity in Nigeria

The role of **INEC**, or the Independent National Electoral Commission: “To escape the ethnic-based parties of the First and second Republics, INEC required that parties earn at least 5 percent of the votes in twenty-four of the thirty-six states in local government elections in order to advance to the later state and federal levels...an ingenious way of reducing the number of parties, while obliging viable parties to broaden their appeal. The only parties to meet INEC's requirements were the PDP, AD, and the All People's Party (APP). [Overruled by the Supreme Court in 2002 – over 40 parties competed in 2007]

- “Lower ethnic tensions have come at the price of greater elite corruption”