National Party (NP) Now defunct party that created apartheid and dominated politics during the apartheid era.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) The African Union program that attempts to tie foreign development aid to a commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

Southern African Development Community (SADC) A thirteen-member African regional economic and cooperation community, of which South Africa was a founding member.

Soweto A township created during apartheid to house blacks who were forcibly removed from Johannesburg.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Post-apartheid body established to document apartheid-era human rights abuses and to give reparations to victims and amnesty to perpetrators who confessed to crimes.

Tutu, Archbishop Desmond Anti-apartheid activist and leader of South Africa's Anglican church who chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Union of South Africa The 1910 name given to the British colony that integrated British and Afrikaner colonists after the Boer Wars.

United Democratic Front (UDF) Unified anti-apartheid coalition created in 1983 from the major black and white opposition groups.

voortrekkers Afrikaner pioneers who migrated into South Africa's interior to escape British colonists.

Zille, Helen Current leader of South Africa's main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance.

Zuma, Jacob Current president.

WEB LINKS

African National Congress **www.anc.org.za**
African Studies Internet Resources: South Africa, Columbia University Libraries **www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/africa/cuvl/SAfr.html**
The Democratic Alliance **www.da.org.za**
Inkatha Freedom Party **www.ifp.org.za**
Institute for Democracy in South Africa **www.idasa.org.za**
Overview of Soweto township **www.soweto.co.za**
South African Government **www.gov.za**
Truth and Reconciliation Report **www.gov.za/reports/2003/trc/index.html**

14 NIGERIA

Head of state and government: President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (since May 29, 2007)

Capital: Abuja

Total land size: 923,768 sq km

Population: 138 million

GDP at PPP: 292.7 billion US$

GDP per capita at PPP: $2,000

Human development index ranking: 158

INTRODUCTION

Why Study This Case?

Nigeria stands out in ways that are both impressive and disheartening. First, Nigeria is noteworthy for its sheer size: it is the most populous country in Africa. Second, unlike many other African countries, Nigeria is blessed with a great deal of natural wealth, from oil to agriculture. Following independence from British rule in 1960, those assets would have been expected to make Nigeria a major regional, if not global, actor.

Yet exactly the opposite happened, and Nigeria has become renowned for all that can go wrong. For most of the time since independence, the country has been under military rule. Those long periods of military dictatorship coincided with widespread corruption, with oil revenues and other resources siphoned off to line the pockets of those in power. In spite of earning billions of dollars in oil exports, Nigeria has become one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. It would seem to be an excellent example of a country in which natural resources have been used by those in power to buy supporters and repress the public.

Yet the long era of military rule may now be at an end. In 1999, Nigeria returned to civilian rule, and since then a fragile democratic system has taken hold. Still, much remains to be done. Nigeria lacks the rule of law and continues to be recognized as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The state also has questionable control over the monopoly of violence, both in terms of civilian control over the military and the country's widespread criminal and political violence. The standard of living for the average Nigerian remains very low, far below what the country's wealth should ensure. If it is to succeed, the country must confront these challenges while facing a large foreign debt, incurred while billions of dollars in oil revenue have been stolen by those in power.

If the legacy of its military rule were not enough of a challenge for Nigeria, a second concern derives from its sheer size. Nigeria is a diverse country encompassing numerous ethnic groups, whose local interests have been reinforced by corruption and federalism. For the past thirty years, military rule has largely kept fractiousness in check, but tensions and violence have surfaced with democratic rule. Most disturbing is a growing ethnic rift between the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south. At a time when many global conflicts center on religion and religious fundamentalism, the prospect of increasing tension among faiths in Nigeria leads some observers to worry

that in the long run the country will be ungovernable and will return to authoritarianism, civil war, or both. Is Nigeria doomed to be a failed state?

Nigeria thus provides a fascinating, if daunting, example of the possibilities and potential limits of state power and democracy. Can the change from military rule to democracy help bring stability and prosperity to Nigeria? Or are the problems of state capacity and autonomy such that democracy cannot help improve them—and might even make them worse? We will consider these tensions as we investigate Nigeria's political heritage, current institutions, and political prospects.

Major Geographic and Demographic Features

One of Nigeria's most impressive features is its sheer size. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa in terms of population and among the top ten in the world. Lying along the western coast of the continent, Nigeria has a diverse climate and geography. The Niger-Benue river system divides the country into distinct regions. The north is relatively arid and known for its grasslands, while the south is characterized by tropical forests and coastal swamps. Nigeria's geography and climate (particularly in the south) are favorable to agriculture, such that nearly one third of the land is arable—compared with only 15 percent of the land in China and 20 percent of the land in the United States. Until oil became a major export commodity, cocoa and nuts were a major source of foreign trade.

Nigeria's best-known region is the **Niger Delta**. The Niger River enters the sea at that point, creating a vast swampy area of over 5,000 square miles. It is the third-largest wetland in the world, after the Netherlands and the Mississippi Delta, and home to an enormous range of plants and animals. The Niger Delta is also home to approximately 30 million people, who traditionally have been engaged in farming and fishing. The complicated topography of the area has limited interaction, integration, and assimilation, thus fostering a large variety of ethnicities; by some estimates, over a dozen groups speaking about twenty-five languages inhabit the Delta. It is also one of the poorest regions of the country, with limited infrastructure and development.

But the Niger Delta is also the source of Nigeria's oil and the vast majority of the country's exports. Oil production in the Delta has contributed to the national corruption spoken of earlier, and at the local level, too, its effects have been profound. The first and most commonly cited local effect is environmental degradation. In the nearly half century since oil production began, there have been more than 4,000 spills, whose effects on the wetlands and population are a source of intense domestic and international controversy.[1] Oil production has also abetted ethnic conflicts in the region, with groups on

occasion attacking oil facilities in order to draw attention to their demands or seek ransoms. Finally, oil production has exacerbated intergroup hostility in the Delta as some groups have perceived that others have benefited disproportionately from the industry.[2] Given the importance of oil to Nigeria, the problems of this region significantly affect the security of the country as a whole.

The diversity that marks the Delta is mirrored across the country as a whole. Nigeria is home to some 250 ethnic groups. Dominant among them are the **Hausa** and the **Fulani**, who are overwhelmingly Muslim and concentrated in the north; the **Igbo** (also spelled "Ibo"), who are predominantly Christian and concentrated in the southeast; and the **Yoruba**, who inhabit the southwest and whose members are divided among the Christian, Muslim, and local animist faiths.

Nigeria's large population is a function of its growth rate. In the past twenty years, the country's population has doubled, with the result that nearly half the population is now under the age of fourteen. According to some projections, the country will increase by another 40 million people in the next decade, with Lagos becoming one of the ten largest cities in the world.[3] The presence of a large, rapidly growing, ethnically and religiously diverse population will complicate development, stability, and governance.

Historical Development of the State

Like most other less-developed countries, Nigeria has a history marked by local political organization, imperial control, and recent independence and instability. Contrary to common assumptions, however, precolonial Nigeria was neither undeveloped nor unorganized. Rather, the region was marked by varying degrees and kinds of political and social organization, some of which were highly complex and wide ranging. Although we cannot explore each of them in depth, we can point to some of the earliest and most powerful examples.

Nigeria was the setting for several early kingdoms. Over two thousand years ago, the members of the Nok society, located in what is now central Nigeria, fashioned objects out of iron and terra-cotta with a degree of sophistication unmatched in West Africa, though little else is known about their civilization. As the roots of today's dominant ethnic groups began to take shape, new forms of political organization also emerged. Around 1200 C.E., the Hausa to the north established a series of powerful city-states, which served as conduits of north-south trade. In the southwest, the Yoruba kingdom of Oyo extended its power beyond the borders of modern-day Nigeria into present-day Togo. This kingdom grew wealthy through trade and the exploitation of natural resources, facilitated by its location along the coast. In the southeast, the Igbo maintained less centralized political power, though they, too, had a

TIME LINE OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Year	Event
300s B.C.E.	Jos plateau settled by the Nok people
1100s C.E.	Hausa kingdom formed in the north; Oyo kingdom formed in the southwest
1472	Portuguese navigators reach the Nigerian coast
1500s–1800s	Slave trade develops
1807	United Kingdom bans the slave trade
1809	Sokoto caliphate founded
1861–1914	Britain acquires Lagos and establishes a series of Nigerian protectorates
1960	Nigeria achieves independence and creates the First Republic
1966	After a military coup, the Federal Military Government is established
1967–70	In Nigerian Civil War, Biafra fails to win independence
1975	General Olusegun Obasanjo comes to power and initiates a transition to civilian rule
1979	Elections bring Shehu Shagari to power, establishing the Second Republic
1983	Muhammadu Buhari seizes power
1985	Ibrahim Babangida seizes power
1993	Transition to civilian rule (the Third Republic) fails; Sani Abacha seizes power
1995	Activist Ken Saro-Wiwa executed
1998	Abacha dies; Abdulsalam Abubakar succeeds him as the military head of government
1999	Military rule ends and the Fourth Republic is established; Olusegun Obasanjo elected president
2000	Sharia law adopted by twelve northern states
2000–02	Ethnic and religious clashes leave several thousand dead
2003	Obasanjo reelected to a second term as president
2007	Obasanjo steps down; Umaru Yar'Adua elected in first civilian transfer of power

precedent of earlier kingdoms and would come to play a central role in modern Nigerian politics.

ISLAM AND THE NIGERIAN NORTH

The fortunes of these three dominant ethnic groups (the Hausa, the Yoruba, and the Igbo) and other peoples in what is now Nigeria changed dramatically as contact with peoples, politics, and ideas from outside West Africa increased. The first important impact came not from Europe, however, but from the Middle East, with the spread of Islam. By the eleventh century, Islam had found its way into the Hausa region of northern Nigeria, carried along trade routes linking the region to North Africa and beyond. By the fifteenth century, Islam had brought literacy and scholarship to the region through the Arabic language, though the religion and its influences remained largely confined to the Hausa elite. By the late eighteenth century, however, an increase in contact with Islamic regions led to an increase in conversions to the faith. The religion's growing influence was solidified by the leadership of Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817). A religious scholar, Usman played an important role in spreading Islam among the Hausa and Fulani. Usman found widespread support among the peasantry, who felt oppressed under the city-states' warring monarchies and saw in Islam's message a promise of greater social equality. Their embrace of Islam in turn alarmed those in power, eventually precipitating a conflict between the city-states and Usman. Following an initial conflict, Usman declared jihad against the Hausa city-states in 1804 and by 1808 had overthrown the ruling monarchs, establishing what became known as the Sokoto caliphate. The Sokoto caliphate became the largest empire in Africa at the time and provided a uniform government to a region previously racked by war. Islam would now play a central role in western Africa and in the eventual establishment of an independent Nigerian state.

EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

As Islam and centralized political organization spread across the north, the south experienced similarly dramatic effects with the arrival of the European powers. As far back as the late fifteenth century, Europeans had begun arriving along Nigeria's coast, purchasing from indigenous traders agricultural products as well as slaves (often captives from local wars). From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Europeans established several coastal ports to support the burgeoning trade in slaves, with the United Kingdom becoming the major trading power. During that time, more than 3 million slaves were shipped from Nigeria to the Americas. In 1807, the United Kingdom declared the slave trade illegal and established a naval presence off Nigeria's waters for enforcement, though an illegal trade continued for another half century. The precipitous decline in the region's major export contributed to the collapse of the Oyo Empire and to warfare among the Yoruba, which in

turn paved the way for an expanded British presence in the interior. The colonial presence further expanded as British industrialization generated ever-greater demand for resources, such as palm oil, cocoa, and timber. That demand radically changed the nature of agricultural production and encouraged the greater use of local slavery to produce these goods. At the same time, British missionaries began to proselytize in the coastal and southern regions, converting large numbers of Igbo and Yoruba to Christianity.

By 1861, the British had established a colony at Lagos, and by the 1884–1885 Berlin Conference other European powers had recognized the United Kingdom's "sphere of influence" along the coast. Fearing French and German encroachment in the interior, the United Kingdom quickly joined the European powers' **"scramble for Africa"** by asserting its authority far inland. Through a combination of diplomacy, co-optation, and force, the United Kingdom established control over both the north and the south. In many areas, the British relied upon a policy of indirect rule. For example, as the Sokoto caliphate was brought under British control, local leaders were allowed to keep their positions, co-opted as part of the new state bureaucracy. Furthermore, **sharia**, or Islamic law, was respected in noncriminal matters, and in that region Christian proselytizing was prohibited. Such policies helped limit local resistance but increased the power of some ethnic groups over others, giving them greater authority within the imperial administration. In areas where indirect rule was less successful, as among the Igbo, resistance was much more significant. In 1914, the various protectorates in the area under British control were unified under the name "Nigeria", though the country remained highly decentralized administratively, reflecting its distinct regional differences.

Following unification, Nigeria experienced dramatic change under British imperial rule. The British developed a modern infrastructure and constructed ports, roads, and railways to facilitate economic relations. Agricultural production continued to play an important role in exports. Within Nigerian society, development meant the establishment of Western educational policies and institutions, especially in regions where Christian missionaries were active. In general, indirect rule meant the development of a new elite more Westernized and more conscious of the complexities of imperialism. The creation of a colonial legislative council and local elections for some of the seats introduced the idea of democratic representative institutions, no matter how limited.

It might be thought that the development of a Westernized elite would serve to perpetuate imperial control. Instead, exposure to Western ideas often served as the foundation for resistance as Nigerians embraced the heretofore alien concepts of nationalism and sovereignty. Such ideas were not easily planted in Nigeria's complex political terrain. For some activists, anti-colonialism meant a greater role for Nigeria and other African states in the Commonwealth of Nations (the loose affiliation of former British colonies

opposed to complete independence). For others, it meant a reassertion of precolonial political structures that had been destroyed or weakened by British rule. As economic development, urbanization, and state centralization increased the integration of Nigeria as a whole, however, there began to emerge the tentative notion of a Nigerian nation and state that could be independent from colonial rule.

Following World War II, Nigeria saw the rapid expansion of various civil society organizations, ranging from political parties and ethnic movements to labor unions and business movements. Among the numerous political leaders who emerged during this time was Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–1996). Born in northern Nigeria, Azikiwe studied and taught in the United States before returning to Nigeria in 1938. He established a daily newspaper and in 1944 helped found the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), which advocated national unity and self-government. While the NCNC sought to appeal to all Nigerians, it drew heavily from the Igbo, while other political parties, such as the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Action Group Party (AGP), were backed by Hausa Muslims and the Yoruba, respectively.

The British government attempted to deal with the rising tide of Nigerian activism, strikes, and competing demands by reforming the local constitution, creating regional assemblies, and formalizing the decentralized nature of imperial rule through a system of federalism. Executive power remained in the hands of a British governor, but increasingly authority devolved on the local level. Thus, while Nigerian nationalism became a potent force among some political elites, the decentralization of power reinforced regional tendencies. By the late 1950s, an array of constitutional reforms had effectively created autonomous regions in the north, west, and east, with the goal of eventual national independence while remaining within the British Commonwealth. The new federal political structure consisted of three regions (Northern, Western, and Eastern), a directly elected **House of Representatives**, a Senate whose members were indirectly elected by the regional assemblies, a prime minister, and a governor general, who served as the representative of the British monarchy. Azikiwe was appointed governor general. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria formally gained its independence (creating what is known as the **First Republic**), absent much of the violence and destruction that plagued decolonization elsewhere. It also enjoyed ongoing industrialization, strong exports, and the promise of oil revenues, whose potential was just beginning to be explored.

INDEPENDENCE, CONFLICT, AND CIVIL WAR

The relative peace and the promises of an independent Nigeria quickly experienced tension, however. Elections in 1959 had given the NPC nearly half the

seats in the House of Representatives, leading it to form a coalition with the NCNC. That coalition battled over some of the most essential questions regarding Nigerian statehood, including the scope of central versus local powers and national versus regional identity. Meanwhile, the AGP fragmented as a result of internal disputes and electoral setbacks. The infighting eventually spread across the Western Region, which the AGP controlled, leading to riots, the collapse of the regional legislature, emergency rule, and a conspiracy by some AGP leaders to overthrow the central government.

The dynamics of the Action Group crisis were not unique to the Western Region. Various groups across Nigeria demanded that the federal system be further decentralized to make way for additional states, while other groups and leaders opposed such tactics, fearing these actions would undermine their own territorial authority or even lead to the breakup of the country. Fragmentation was of particular concern to the NPC. As the Northern Region was allocated over half the seats in the House of Representatives, the NPC feared that any restructuring of federalism would undermine its power. Such concerns even extended to the national census, which each side hoped would bolster its allocation of seats. Sharply contested elections and electoral alliances were marked by ethnic tensions and electoral discrepancies. Economic differences sharpened the ethnic conflict, with each group viewing the state as a means to siphon off wealth for its own people.

In the violent aftermath of the contentious 1965 regional assembly elections in the Western Region, two thousand people died. In the midst of the increasing disorder, a group of army officers, primarily Igbos, staged a coup d'état, assassinating the prime minister, the leaders of several political parties, and a number of military officials from the north. The coup leaders suspended the constitution, banned political parties, and called for a unitary government and the end to northern domination. But the coup failed to impose order, setting off civil war instead. Conflict erupted between northern and Igbo troops, and the coup leaders were in turn overthrown, and many of them were killed. Many Igbo living in the north were also massacred, and Igbo leaders who had supported the coup and an end to federalism as a way to weaken northern power now believed that their people and region had no future in a multiethnic Nigeria.

In May 1967, the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region seceded from Nigeria, declaring itself the **Republic of Biafra**. Although the Biafrans were outnumbered and outgunned, they held off the Nigerian military for three years, helped in part by international supporters, who believed that the Nigerian government was conducting a genocidal war against the Igbo. Azikiwe, who had been dismissed from his post by the military government, became a prominent supporter of Biafran independence. In 1970, Biafra was defeated. Although the defeat did not lead to the Igbo extermination that many had

feared, the war itself exacted huge costs in terms of military and civilian life: estimates range from 500,000 to 3 million fatalities.[4]

THE MILITARY ERA

The armed forces brought an end to the Nigerian Civil War, but their role in the politics of Nigeria was just beginning (see "Nigerian Heads of Government," p. 546). The 1966 countercoup in response to the takeover by Igbo army officers established the Federal Military Government (FMG), which initially claimed that it would soon return power to civilian control. General Yakubu Gowon, who came to head the FMG in 1966, argued that in advance of any such transition, Nigeria needed to undergo dramatic state and economic reform. Dominated by none of the three main ethnic groups, the FMG broke Nigeria into a number of federal states, hoping to weaken regional and ethnic power. The government also sought to move the country away from its reliance upon agriculture by stimulating industrialization through a policy of import substitution. This shift was made possible in part because agricultural exports were declining in favor of oil, which was emerging as a major source of revenue. By the 1970s, Nigeria had become one of the top ten oil-producing countries in the world. The result was rapid if uneven development of the country in numerous areas.

The FMG had come to power with a certain degree of public support, given its call for an end to divisive ethnic-based politics and the creation of an effective state. Yet in reality, military rule simply replaced one form of patronage with another, tapping oil revenues as a way to enrich those in power and their supporters. By the mid-1970s, Gowon's political authority had deteriorated in the face of public animosity in reaction to widespread corruption, crime, and stagnating economic development. In 1975, Gowon was overthrown in a bloodless coup that brought General Murtala Muhammed to power. Muhammed began to crack down on corruption and took the long-delayed steps necessary for the return of civilian rule, thereby becoming widely popular with the public. But within a year, Muhammed himself was assassinated in a failed coup attempt, which brought to power General **Olusegun Obasanjo**, who continued Muhammed's plans for the restoration of civilian rule. A new constitution enacted in 1979 ushered in the **Second Republic**, under which the old parliamentary system was replaced by a presidential system, in the hope of strengthening central authority and preventing a breakdown like the one that had occurred a decade earlier. Democratic elections were held in 1979, and Obasanjo willingly retired from political and military life; subsequently, he became active with various intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as the World Health Organization and Transparency International. Obasanjo's apparent respect for the rule of law while in power and his prominent international role thereafter have made

OLUSEGAN OBASANJO: GENERAL, PRESIDENT, AND CHICKEN FARMER

Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian of ethnic Yoruba descent from southwestern Nigeria, was a career soldier before serving twice as Nigeria's head of state, first as military ruler (1976 to 1979) and then as elected president for an unprecedented two terms from 1999 to 2007. Despite first coming to power in a military coup and only reluctantly leaving the presidential office at the end of his constitutional term limit in 2007, Obasanjo is nonetheless rightly seen as a champion of democracy and reform in Nigeria. He presided over the voluntary transition to civilian rule in 1979 at the end of his first (unelected) stint in office—a promise often made by Nigeria's coup leaders but heretofore never kept. He was imprisoned by General Sani Abacha during the 1990s and released only after Abacha's sudden death in 1998. He and other opponents of Abacha formed the **People's Democratic Party (PDP),** successfully won the presidency in the following year's election, and earned reelection in 2003. The constitution permits the president to hold office for no more than two terms of four years each, and efforts by some of Obasanjo's closest allies (not surprisingly, those who reaped political and monetary benefit from his rule) to push through a constitutional amendment allowing Obasanjo to remain in power longer failed in 2006. Obasanjo claimed he would prefer to return to his "beloved chicken farm" and left office willingly, though he remains an influential power broker in the party and state.[5]

him one of the most prominent Nigerians of the last twenty years and favored his return to politics.

The 1979 presidential elections resulted in a victory for the northerner Shehu Shagari (narrowly defeating the perennial candidate, Azikiwe) and the reemergence of several traditional parties that had dominated Nigeria before military rule. Shagari's civilian government faced numerous obstacles. In addition to the ethnic factionalism that continued to plague politics, state revenues declined dramatically in 1981 after a drop in oil prices. The resultant economic recession fostered unrest, and the government was burdened by the use of public spending and corruption to award supporters and buy off the public. Inflation and foreign debt increased, and capital fled. When the Shagari government sought to stay in power in 1983 by rigging elections, the military re-entered the picture.

After 1983, Nigeria experienced another decade and a half of military rule, a period dominated by two men: General **Ibrahim Babangida** and General **Sani Abacha**. Babangida, an ethnic Gwari and a Muslim, had the unenviable task of dealing with Nigeria's mounting economic crisis. He implemented a structural-adjustment program backed by the International Monetary Fund

and the World Bank that dramatically worsened the lives of average Nigerians by cutting back on public spending. In politics, too, while Babangida asserted that he would restore civilian rule, he increased tension by packing the military government with northerners, only deepening regional and ethnic resentments. In the late 1980s, Babangida sought to initiate a civilian transition under his control, even to the point of creating new political parties and platforms. Under growing public pressure, presidential elections for this **Third Republic** were held in 1993, but Babangida quickly annulled the results, an action that set off a wave of public protests, strikes, and the fear of a new civil war. Babangida stepped down in the face of the unrest, installing a caretaker civilian government. Within three months, Babangida's second in command, Sani Abacha, a northerner, had taken the reins of power for himself in yet another military coup.

Abacha's government lacked many of the skills that had allowed Babangida to remain in power for such a long time. While Babangida sought to co-opt his opponents as much as possible, using force only as a last resort, Abacha regularly employed violence as a means of public control. Political leaders and activists involved in the 1993 elections and ensuing crisis were arrested, and Abacha used his North Korea–trained Special Bodyguard Unit to repress and murder critics of the regime. In 1995, a number of civilian and military officials were imprisoned for allegedly plotting against Abacha, among them former President Obasanjo. The writer and environmentalist **Ken Saro-Wiwa**, a critic of the regime and of the Shell company's role in Nigeria, was also arrested and executed for his opposition to the regime (see "Ken Saro-Wiwa: Playwright and Environmental Activist," p. 549). Saro-Wiwa's execution led to Nigeria's expulsion from the Commonwealth of Nations and to sanctions by the United States and the European Union. Not only did Abacha repress the Nigerian people, but it is estimated that during his rule he also stole as much as US$6 billion from the state. This dark period ended suddenly in 1998, when Abacha died of a heart attack (some observers suspect that he was poisoned). Perhaps realizing the dangers of military rule, the general who succeeded Abacha rapidly carried out a democratic transition and released all political prisoners. In 1999, free presidential elections were held, bringing Obasanjo to power again as head of the **Fourth Republic**.

POLITICAL REGIME

Nigeria's uneven record of governance presents a compelling study of political regimes and a sober lesson in the challenges facing postcolonial countries struggling to institutionalize stable government. Nigeria has experimented with an assortment of political regimes and experienced more than its share

of political turmoil in less than fifty years of independence. The country has vacillated between authoritarian military regimes and democratic civilian republics (both parliamentary and presidential) and has had a variety of federal, state, and local political arrangements.

The most prominent form of governance in independent Nigeria has been **patrimonialism**, in which the personal rule of an authoritarian leader has been shored up by the economic privileges he bestows upon a coterie of loyal followers. Not surprisingly, the divisiveness, corruption, and illegitimacy of patrimonialism has meant that the bullets of military coups, rather than the ballots of electoral democracy, have more frequently determined Nigerian regime shifts and changes in government. Each of those shifts has shared at least two features: each new regime has come to power promising improved governance, and each has largely failed to deliver on its promise. Whether military or civilian, authoritarian or democratic, no regime has worked particularly well in Nigeria. On a brighter note, the current Fourth Republic, ushered in with the transition to civilian democracy in 1999, has successfully sponsored three elections (including the first-ever transtion from one civilian government to another in 2007), kept the military in its barracks, and survived longer than any of its democratic predecessors. Perhaps most important, Nigerians seem willing to keep trying. As one observer noted, "Although they have badly botched it up when they achieve democratic rule, Nigerians refuse to settle for anything less."[6]

Because of that tenacity, even though military regimes have ruled Nigeria nearly twice as long as civilian republics, over the years Nigerians have developed a number of important components of successful democracy. These include a diverse and vigorous media, an educated and often critical elite, outspoken human rights organizations, a growing middle class, and a respected legal profession and judiciary. In short, Nigerians have sought to establish the rules and procedures of an effective political regime, but political instability, ethnic disunity, and bureaucratic corruption persist. Long periods of authoritarian oppression have alternated with shorter periods of what appears to be democratic chaos.

ESSENTIAL POLITICAL FEATURES

- Legislative-executive system: presidential
- Legislature: National Assembly
- Lower house: House of Representatives
- Upper house: Senate
- Unitary or federal division of power: federal
- Main geographic subunits: states
- Electoral system for lower house: single-member district plurality
- Chief judicial body: Supreme Court

The primary focus of the following discussion is the nature of the current civilian democratic regime, but it also touches on the more prevalent authoritarian regimes that preceded it. For, like its two predecessors, if this dem-

ocratic regime is unable to deliver on its promises and devolves into corruption and chaos, history has shown that authoritarian rule will likely replace it. Nigerians may dislike military rule, but they have also shown little patience for bad democracy.

Political Institutions

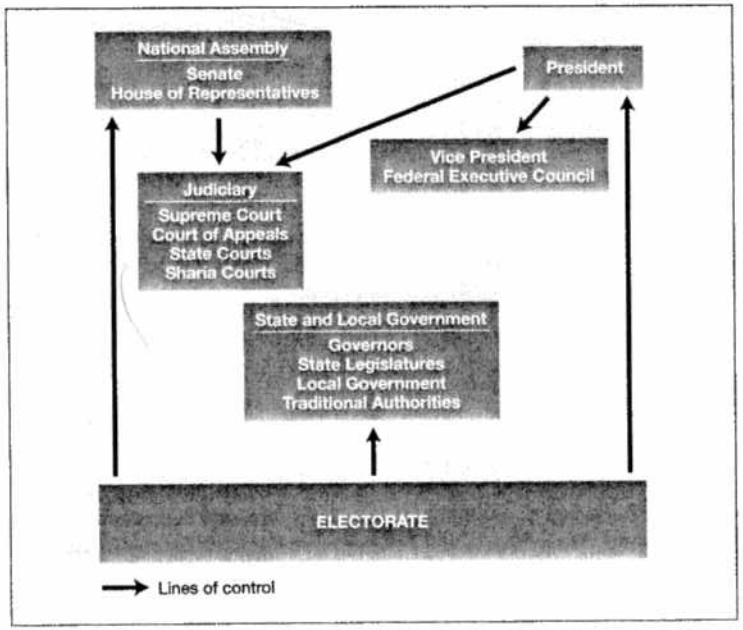
THE CONSTITUTION

Since independence, Nigeria has been governed by six constitutions (after having been governed by four during the colonial era). The problem for Nigerian political leaders has not been coming up with rules of good governance but, rather, abiding by them.[7] Well-meaning leaders have oftentimes sought in good faith to revise legal norms to better accommodate both the developmental and the democratic aspirations of the Nigerian people, as well as the realities of their ethnic and religious differences. Too often, however, neither military rulers nor civilian elites (nor foreign multinational corporations, for that matter) have felt bound by those rules.

The British established colonial Nigeria's first constitution in 1922 and then rewrote it three times to reflect the decentralized federal arrangements they imposed to accommodate the colony's regional economic and ethnic divisions. Nigeria's first national constitution, promulgated in 1960, reflected the colonial imprint in at least two important ways. First, like all former British colonies, independent Nigeria established itself as a constitutional monarchy with a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy: the British monarch remained the head of state, legislative authority was placed in the hands of a bicameral parliament, and executive power was vested in a prime minister and cabinet. Second, the federal nature of the Nigerian state was further institutionalized with the codification of the regional division of Nigeria into the Hausa- and Fulani-dominated North, the Igbo-dominated East, and the Yoruba-dominated West.

In 1963, after only three years of independence, Nigeria reconstituted itself as a republic, replacing the queen of England as head of state with its own elected but largely ceremonial president. The revised parliamentary system ostensibly remained in place over the next decade and a half, though military rule for most of that period precluded its functioning. When the military finally acceded to civilian rule in 1979, the constitution of the Second Republic established an American-style presidential system with a directly elected president (as both head of state and head of government), a bicameral legislature, and a separate constitutional court. Subsequent constitutions (of 1989, 1995, and 1999) have retained the presidential system. Nigeria's current Fourth Republic, established in 1999, is thus a federal democratic republic with a presidential executive and a bicameral legislature.

STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT



The Branches of Government

THE EXECUTIVE SYSTEM

Nigeria's frequent leadership changes are in large part a consequence of the substantial social, economic, and political challenges facing this postcolonial country. Those changes and challenges have in turn fostered the personal rule of authoritarian leaders and hampered efforts to institutionalize more legitimate executive rule. As the table "Nigerian Heads of Government" (see p. 546) indicates, in its five decades of independence, Nigeria has been ruled for most of three decades by patrimonial strongmen. Elected civilian rule has been infrequent, consistently giving way to military rulers. Generally speaking, military and civilian rulers alike have possessed substantial, if frequently short-lived, political power. Nigeria's current president, **Umaru Yar'Adua**, is only the fourth democratically elected executive to govern Nigeria and the first to succeed a democratically elected president. An ethnic Fulani Muslim from Northern Nigeria and trained chemist, Yar'Adua served as a popular governor of a Northern state, but came to office in 2007 amid charges of election fraud as the handpicked successor to Obasanjo.

Nigerian Heads of Government

Name (Tenure)	Ethnicity (Religion)	Office	Path to Power	Regime Type
Abubakor Tafawa Balewa (1960–66)	Hausa-Fulani (Muslim)	Prime minister	Elected (indirectly)	Parliamentary democracy (First Republic)
Johnson T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi (1966)	Igbo (Christian)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Yakubu Gowon (1966–75)	Tiv (Christian)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Murtala Muhammed (1975–76)	Hausa-Fulani (Muslim)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Olusegun Obasanjo (1976–79)	Yoruba (Christian)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Shehu Shagari (1979–83)	Hausa-Fulani (Muslim)	President	Elected (directly)	Presidential democracy (Second Republic)
Muhammadu Buhari (1983–85)	Hausa-Fulani (Muslim)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Ibrahim Babangida (1985–93)	Gwari (Muslim)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Ernest Shonekan (1993)	Yoruba (Christian)	Interim head of government	Appointed	Civilian puppet rule (proposed Third Republic)
Sani Abacha (1993–98)	Kanuri (Muslim)	Military head of government	Coup	Authoritarian military rule
Abdulsalam Abubakar (1998–99)	Gwari (Muslim)	Military head of government	Assumed power	Authoritarian military rule
Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007)	Yoruba (Christian)	President	Elected (directly)	Presidential democracy (Fourth Republic)
Umaru Yar'Adua (2007–present)	Fulani (Muslim)	President	Elected (directly)	Presidential democracy

As in the U.S. presidential system, the president of Nigeria is directly elected by the people and nominates his or her own running mate, who automatically becomes vice president if the president is elected. The president also appoints ministers to the Federal Executive Council, or cabinet, which is charged with initiating and implementing the policies and programs of the federal government. In a nod to Nigeria's ethnic challenges and in an effort to avoid favoritism (if not clientelism), the constitution requires the president to appoint ministers from each of the states of the Nigerian republic. This quota system, what Nigerians refer to as the **federal character principle**, is also used with federal appointments and civil service positions in the government bureaucracy.[8] Each ethnic group is allotted a certain portion of federal positions based on its regional population. The federal character principle may have spread the spoils of office among the various groups but has done little to prevent corruption. Bribery, waste, and rent-seeking remain the norm in Nigeria's largely dysfunctional civil service, which "absorbs most of the budget but delivers little in the way of service."[9]

THE LEGISLATURE

Although in practice the president and his cabinet initiate budgetary legislation and most other important bills, the constitution designates the National Assembly, Nigeria's federal legislature, as the highest lawmaking body. This bicameral legislature consists of a lower House of Representatives and an upper Senate, with both representatives and senators serving four-year renewable terms. Elections for both houses are held the week preceding the presidential election.

The House of Representatives contains 346 seats, with each member representing an individual district. The 109 seats in the Senate are divided among Nigeria's thirty-six states and the federal district of Abuja. Despite their appointed constitutional roles, both chambers of the National Assembly have served as little more than rubber stamps for the executive branch, even during periods of democratic rule. This circumstance is in part a result of the same party controlling both branches of government, but it is also a result of the legislature's lack of experience, expertise, and staff support. In recent years, however, the National Assembly has demonstrated less compliance in passing budgetary bills and has become more vocal in expressing the demands of regional and even local interests.

These regional disagreements speak to the huge political challenge an increasingly democratic Nigeria faces in overcoming its seemingly intractable ethnic divisions, as we discuss later in this case. Some critics have argued that a parliamentary system might better address Nigeria's challenges of cultural pluralism, by reducing conflict between the executive and legislative branches. Others have called for a unicameral legislature or even the rotation of the

presidency and other key executive posts among the dominant ethnic groups, as is done with civil service appointments.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Nigeria inherited a colonial legal system that combined British common law with an assortment of traditional or customary laws that the colonial government had permitted to handle local matters (including sharia, which predominated in the Northern Region). This legacy fostered a court system and rule of law that historically, even during periods of military rule, retained a degree of independence and legitimacy. However, the Abacha military dictatorship (1993–1998) flouted this independence, routinely ignoring legal checks and using an intimidated judiciary to silence and even eliminate political opponents. Although Abacha frequently used the courts to persecute many of his enemies (including those alleged to have plotted coups against him in 1995 and 1997), the most infamous case of "judicial terrorism" was the 1994 Abacha military tribunal that resulted in the execution of the noted playwright and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa.[10]

With the return to democratic rule, an effort has been made to reestablish the legitimacy and independence of the judiciary. The 1999 constitution established a Supreme Court, a Federal Court of Appeals, and a single unified court system at the national and state levels. The rule of law has been further strengthened under the Yar'Adua government, which launched an anticorruption campaign in 2007. But although the courts have had some success prosecuting former state officials for enriching themselves in office and addressing electoral fraud at the state level, their anticorruption campaigns have faltered as they draw closer to those who are still in office or remain politically influential.

The constitution also permits individual states to authorize traditional subsidiary courts, giving these customary legal systems significant judicial clout. The most controversial of the traditional systems have been the Islamic sharia courts, which now function in twelve of the predominantly Muslim northern states. As discussed later in this case, Nigerians have contended heatedly and, in some cases, violently over the role and jurisdiction of the sharia courts.

The Electoral System

As in the United States, Nigerians directly elect their president and separately elect members of both chambers of their legislature, the National Assembly. But unlike the system in the United States, in Nigeria presidents, senators, and representatives all serve four-year terms, with elections for all three offices held in the same year. In an effort to ensure that the president serves with a national mandate, Nigeria's constitution requires that the winning presidential candidate obtain both an overall majority of votes and at least 25 percent of the ballots cast in at least two thirds of the states. This requirement became an issue of contention in the 1979 election, when the Supreme Court was called upon to determine what constituted two thirds of Nigeria's then nineteen states (there are now thirty-six). Ultimately, the court ruled that Shehu Shagari's victory in twelve states—not the thirteen demanded by the opposition—sufficed, and Shagari was named president. The constitution holds that if no candidate succeeds in winning a majority of total votes and obtaining the two-thirds threshold in the first round, a second round of voting takes place a week later, pitting the top two candidates against each other in a runoff.

All 360 seats in the House of Representatives are contested in single-member districts apportioned roughly equally by population. The 109 members of the Senate are also elected from single-member districts, with each of the thirty-six states divided into three districts. The federal district, or "capital territory," of Abuja elects one senator in a single-seat constituency for the 109th seat. These winner-take-all single-member districts have allowed just three parties to dominate both chambers of the National Assembly. Several

KEN SARO-WIWA: PLAYWRIGHT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

Kenule Benson Saro-Wiwa was born in 1941 to an Ogoni family, members of an ethnic minority of southern Nigeria, on whose land in the Niger Delta rich oil reserves were discovered. By the 1980s, Saro-Wiwa had become known internationally for his novels and plays, many written in Nigerian pidgin, or "rotten" English. At the same time, Saro-Wiwa became increasingly involved in political efforts to force the Shell oil company and the Nigerian government to take greater responsibility for the environment and share a greater portion of the oil wealth with the Ogoni, whose lands the oil rigs were despoiling. With others, Saro-Wiwa founded the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1990. MOSOP challenged the government's revenue-sharing formulas, which kept the bulk of the oil wealth flowing to national government coffers. With allied groups, MOSOP also disrupted production, compelling Shell first to curtail oil extraction in the Ogoni region and ultimately to abandon its operations there altogether. By interfering in this "stream of petroleum revenues that fed the dictatorship,"[11] MOSOP raised the ire of General Sani Abacha's military government, which in 1994 ordered a brutal crackdown on Ogoni activists and sympathetic Ogoni villages. Saro-Wiwa and other activists were arrested on trumped-up charges and brought before a special military tribunal. The show trial returned a verdict of guilty, and in November of 1995 the government hanged all nine of the defendants despite an international outcry and efforts to intervene by international human rights groups and the leaders of dozens of countries.

other smaller parties have managed on occasion to win seats in the House. The success of the smaller parties reflects the geographic concentration of ethnic groups willing to vote in blocs large enough to win a plurality of votes in the less-populous lower-house electoral districts, such as the districts dominated by the Kanuri minority of northeastern Nigeria.

Local Government

Constitutionally, Nigeria is a federal republic with national, state, and local levels of governance. Although Nigeria's military governments sought to establish a unitary system, the gaping ethnic divisions within the country have prevented governments of all stripes from truly unifying the nation and centralizing political authority. These divisions reflect the ethnic diversity of Nigeria and the legacy of colonial rule.

In 1970, the Federal Military Government divided the republic into twelve states following the Nigerian Civil War, which nearly split the country permanently. The number of states grew to nineteen in 1976, thirty by 1991, and thirty-six by 1996, plus the Federal Capital Territory. The number of local government units has varied even more substantially, reflecting the uncertainty of how federalism should be constituted in Nigeria. The democratic government elected in 1979 doubled the number of local authorities to more than 700. In 1983, the military government downsized the number to 300, but it has since increased to nearly 800.

With a history of interregional instability and suspicion and relatively weak state capacity, the countervailing demands of centralization and devolution will certainly persist in Nigeria. On the one hand, the national government's control of the lion's share of oil revenues has provided the patrimonial glue that keeps the local regions dependent upon the center. But as increasingly diverse and articulate voices have entered an increasingly democratic political arena, the calls for enhanced state and local autonomy have grown louder. Those demands range from expanded state control over the budget (and for the oil-rich Niger Delta, local control over its oil revenues) and a separate military for each region to full-fledged dismemberment of Nigeria.

To date, local and even state governments have enjoyed little autonomy from the national government and have no means of generating revenue. Put simply, the central government controls the purse strings, and the Nigerian purse depends almost completely upon oil revenues. Not surprisingly, as oil revenues have expanded, so has the public sector at all levels and the levels of corruption associated with that patronage. At the same time, the expansion of oil revenues has led to increased disputes over the percentage—known as the **derivation formula**—that should accrue to the oil-producing localities.[12]

Other Institutions: The Military

Although the Fourth Republic has managed to sponsor three successive and relatively peaceful democratic elections, independent Nigeria's tumultuous history cautions us not to become too confident that the military will remain in its barracks. Nigeria's experience with military-in-government (military officers as political leaders) has left a deep impression on Nigerian politics. It is not a coincidence that most of Nigeria's most powerful leaders (including former coup leader and recent president Obasanjo) boast a military background. As is the case elsewhere in postcolonial Africa and in much of the developing world, the military has served as one of the few stable avenues of meritocratic social mobility; it has long been able to attract many of Nigeria's best, brightest, and most ambitious.

This avenue has been particularly important for the ethnic Muslims of northern Nigeria, who have been educationally and economically disadvantaged in comparison with southern Nigerians. Although the south is the source of Nigeria's oil, for many years the north controlled the army and used that control, in the form of military dictatorships, to redistribute oil wealth. Time will tell whether Nigeria's military is prepared to make its most recent withdrawal from public life permanent.

POLITICAL CONFLICT AND COMPETITION

The Party System

Politics in oil-rich, patrimonial Nigeria has been described as a "contest of self-enrichment."[13] Whether these political contests have been fought with ballots or bullets, the stakes are indeed high, the competition fierce, and corruption and violence all too common.[14] Not surprisingly, political parties and the party system have fared best under democratic regimes and have withered during periods of military rule. Political parties first began forming during the colonial period and did so quite naturally along ethnic lines even as early advocates of democracy sought to establish multicultural and issue-based platforms. Although the names of the dominant parties have changed over time, the parties that emerged during each era continued to reflect the ethnic divisions, despite efforts of democratic and even some military regimes to establish cross-ethnic national parties.

It makes more sense to discuss Nigeria's parties in terms of their ethnic identity and, therefore, their geographic location than to try to place them on a left-right political continuum. This regional party identity has exacerbated ethnic tensions and complicated efforts to establish democratic institutions and legitimize national party politics. Moreover, most state and local contests are also dominated by the region's dominant party, a circumstance that allows

the party to control the state assembly and effectively capture the seats in the national Senate and House of Representatives as well. This reminds us that in Nigeria all politics is in the first instance local, and that in communities, ethnicity and clientelist networks have traditionally meant everything.

Although democratic elections under Nigeria's Fourth Republic offer hope for the establishment of cross-ethnic parties with national appeal, strengthened democracy has also given stronger voice to persistent sectarian and even local separatist demands. The centrifugal push of communal violence between the Muslim north and the Christian south and growing violent contention over the spoils of the oil-rich Niger Delta weaken the centripetal pull of national electoral contests too often plagued by political corruption.

Elections

Colonial-era parties survived through the First Republic (1960–1966) but were banned from the onset of military rule until Olusegun Obasanjo, as leader of a military coup, seized power in 1976. Obasanjo legalized the establishment of political parties in 1978, and some 150 parties were formed in that year alone. In 1979, Obasanjo's elected successor, Shehu Shagari, sought to impose order on this political cacophony by compelling the formation of nationwide parties. The constitution of the Second Republic specified that any successful presidential candidate must win at least one fourth of the vote in at least two thirds of the states. The election commission required that all parties open membership to all Nigerians and that the parties' leadership come from at least two thirds of the states. In all, five parties were deemed viable contenders in the 1979 and 1983 elections. Military coups in 1983 and 1985 (in part the result of the widespread corruption and failure of the Second Republic) once again banned political parties.

Ibrahim Babangida, the military ruler from 1985 to 1993, charged his National Election Commission with reforming the party system to produce a two-party system. But fears that such a system would lead to a dangerous political division between the Muslim north and the Christian south led the commission once again to approve five parties. Dissatisfied, Babangida dissolved the commission and established two national parties, one neatly placed "a little to the left of center and one a little to the right."[15] The government built headquarters for each party, gave each one start-up funds, and even named them (the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention). Babangida called for local elections in 1990 and announced plans to hand over power to civilians with a presidential election in 1992.

Although the election was postponed until 1993, it took place fairly. But because the winner was a southern (Yoruban) civilian distrusted by the northern military generals, the military nullified the results and charged the apparent victor with treason. The military installed an interim puppet president, who was quickly pushed aside by General Sani Abacha. Abacha called for elections in 1996, and his military government certified five parties—all loyal to him. Not surprisingly, all five nominated Abacha as their candidate for president.

Abdusalam Abubakar, Abacha's military successor, dissolved the five parties and called for presidential elections in 1999. In another effort to foster political parties with a "federal character," the election commission approved only parties that maintained well-established national organizations. Nine parties qualified for local elections, and the three parties with the highest votes in those elections were permitted to participate in the national legislative and presidential elections. Not surprisingly, each of those parties once again reflected its regional base in one of the country's main ethnic groups: the People's Democratic Party (PDP), representing the northern Hausa; the All People's Party (APP) of the eastern Igbo; and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) of the western Yoruba.

Democracy advocates are hopeful that the 1999 election has marked a watershed for Nigerian national politics. PDP supporters—with strength in the Muslim north, home of many of Nigeria's military leaders—chose to support Obasanjo, a retired general but a southern Christian Yoruban. The AD chose to throw its support behind the APP contender rather than field its own candidate. Obasanjo won with nearly two-thirds of the vote, and a "relieved public" overlooked the many flaws in the election and largely accepted the results that ushered in the Fourth Republic.[16]

The two most recent elections have followed this trend of both growing democracy and persistent concerns with electoral corruption. The 2003 election, the first sponsored by a civilian government in twenty years, returned Obasanjo to office. In 2007, Obasanjo stepped down as required by the constitution, marking the first ever succession of democratically elected executives in Nigerian history. This cleared the way for Umaru Yar'Adua, Obasanjo's handpicked candidate to succeed him, winning a landslide victory with purportedly 70 percent of the vote (see "Results of Nigeria's Recent National Elections," p. 554). As in the 2003 elections, the PDP swept not only the presidential election but also contests for the two chambers of the legislature and state assembly races held in the same month. The victory was marred, however, by opposition and foreign observer charges of widespread electoral corruption and fraud in electoral contests at all levels. Yar'Adua's two chief rivals for the presidency sought to annul the election results,[17] and even foreign observers concluded that the elections were so badly rigged that they "lacked even the pretense of democratic plausibility."[18] After a nearly yearlong investigation, an appeals court concluded that the margin of victory was wide enough that, despite shortcomings, even a fully clean election would have still brought Yar'Adua to office.

In spite of three consecutive affirmations of the democratic process in Nigeria and the high expectations of the Nigerian people, endemic government corruption, communal and gangster violence, and persistent economic misery have tested Nigerians' patience for democratic rule. When asked in 2005 if the present system of elected government "should be given more time to deal with inherited problems," only 55 percent of Nigerians said yes, compared with 58 percent in 2003 and nearly 80 percent in 2000. Support for the democratic system remains strong, but governments of the Fourth Republic must start delivering on promises of better times if they hope to avoid the fate of the earlier republics.

Civil Society

Neither the British colonial government nor the series of military authoritarian regimes has been able to squelch Nigeria's rich tradition of activism and

Results of Nigeria's Recent National Elections

Region Ethnicity Party Election Year	North Hausa PDP	East Igbo APP/ANPP*	West Yoruba AD/AC**	Other parties	Total
Presidential Vote (%)					
1999	62.8	37.2	no candidate	—	100
2003	61.9	32.2	no candidate	5.9	100
2007	69.8	18.7	7.5	5.0	100
Senate Seats					
1999	65	24	20	0	109
2003	73	28	6	0	107***
2007	87	14	6	2	109
House Seats					
1999	212	79	69	0	360
2003	213	95	31	7	346***
2007	260	61	31	4	356

*The APP renamed itself the All Nigeria People's Party after a merger with a smaller independent party in 2003.

**The Action Congress is the result of the 2006 merger of the Alliance for Democracy and several smaller parties.

***Contested returns from some districts reduced the total number of candidates seated in both the Senate and the House in the 2003 election.

IN COMPARISON

CHOOSING BETWEEN A GOOD DEMOCRACY AND A STRONG ECONOMY

	Good Democracy (percent)	Strong Economy (pecent)
Nigeria	59	40
India	56	41
Mexico	53	41
China	50	44
Brazil	50	46
South Africa	40	58
Russia	15	74

Source: Pew Center for the People and the Press, 2007.

dissent. Even Abacha's oppressive dictatorship in the 1990s could not fully muzzle what one foreign observer referred to as Nigerian citizens' "defiant spunk."[19] In Nigeria's relatively short postcolonial history, a wide variety of formal interest groups and informal voluntary associations has emerged and persisted. Under the relaxed environment of the Fourth Republic, these groups and organizations have proliferated and strengthened. Some of them, particularly professional associations and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), have drawn their support from across Nigeria's cultural spectrum and have functioned in ways that promote national integration. Others, particularly those based on ethnic and religious identities, are among the most resilient of groups and in some cases serve to fragment Nigerian society.

Formal and informal ethnic and religious associations were the first groups in Nigerian society and remain the most cohesive. Some of these groups have long served as important vehicles of mutual trust for promoting the economic interests of their members, for example, by mobilizing savings or investing in a business. Others have formed to protect or promote the ethnic or local interests of a particular minority group. In the early years of independence, some groups provided the foundation for the subsequent formation of political parties. Among the most important of these issue-based minority associations are those that have emerged in the Niger Delta to protect the interests of ethnic and other groups in the region. The **Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People**, or **MOSOP**, established by Ken Saro-Wiwa in the 1990s to defend the interests of the Ogoni, employed a variety of legal and extra-legal political tactics to secure more financial benefits with fewer environmental costs

from foreign-operated oil interests in the Niger Delta. As conditions in the region worsen and more and broader constituencies feel they have a right to a portion of the oil revenues, groups in the Niger Delta have more readily turned to violence. Most notorious among these is the **Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)**, which has developed a reputation for "bunkering" (illegally siphoning off) oil, kidnapping foreign oil workers, and even launching daylight attacks on oil facilities in the region. The lines dividing ethnic and environmental political associations, insurgent separatist movements, youth fraternities (or cults), and common gangs are blurring in this complex and troubled region.

Likewise, the volatile potential of conflict between Christian and Muslim religious institutions and groups persists. However, this has been mitigated by the numerous divisions and differences within each religious tradition. Although Muslims of the north share a common faith and have banded together in defense of certain interests (such as the maintenance and expansion of the scope of sharia law), there are numerous schisms within the faith as well. For example, the Tijaniyah variety of Sufi Islam, practiced among lower-class Hausa Muslims, is quite distinct and in many ways at odds with the orthodox Sunni Islam practiced by the Hausa and Fulani Muslim elite. In fact, some liberal Muslim groups favor secular government and oppose the implementation of sharia. Christian-based politics in the south is similarly far from monolithic.

Modern civic associations such as trade unions and professional organizations played a prominent role in the anticolonial struggle and have been relatively active in promoting their particular, and at times more collective, interests since the time of independence. Unions representing workers in the all-important petroleum industry—for example, the National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers (NUPENG)—have been particularly influential. Formal associations such as those representing legal, medical, and journalism professionals have begun to articulate the political interests of Nigeria's growing professional class. Particularly since the end of military rule and the establishment of the Fourth Republic, NGOs promoting issues such as development, democracy, and civil rights have exerted more influence in Nigerian politics.

SOCIETY

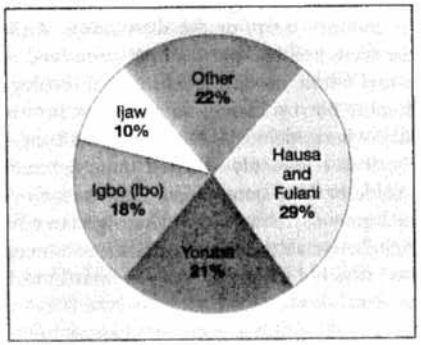
Ethnic and National Identity

It should be quite clear by now that one of the central factors defining Nigerian politics is group identity. Ethnicity is a powerful force, given the historical rivalry among Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa and Fulani peoples. In addition,

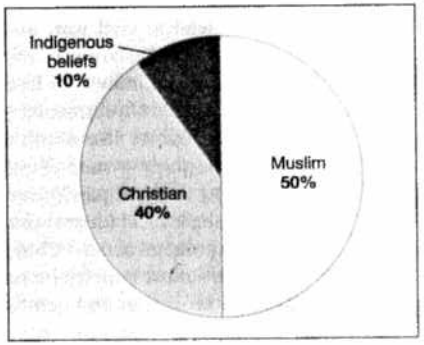
nearly one third of the population belongs to none of those groups, further complicating the ethnic map. This diversity has created significant problems for the consolidation of democracy, as there are temptations for each group to see politics in zero-sum terms. That is, an electoral victory by a Hausa candidate, for example, is viewed as a blow to the interests of the Yoruba, and vice versa. Such centrifugal tendencies were largely responsible for the collapse of civilian government in 1966 and of course for the Nigerian Civil War. Subsequent military leaders often sought to play on the fears of ethnic conflict as a justification for authoritarianism, arguing that democracy only exacerbated the fault lines between regions and peoples. Changes in the federal structure (creating more territorial divisions) and the executive system (replacing a parliamentary system with a presidential one) similarly reflected the desire to weaken local authority and shift more power to the center. Even the capital was moved, in 1991, from Lagos to Abuja, a city built from scratch in the center of the country.

How has the transition to democracy affected ethnic relations? Since the end of military rule, communal violence has risen, as the state is no longer able to suppress the public as it pleases and as the struggle for control over the state has returned to the populace. Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, it is estimated that such conflicts have taken thousands of lives and displaced over a million Nigerians. This violence often has economic motives, with its origins in conflicts over access to state funds, oil revenues, jobs, or other resources. Moreover, it is frequently asserted that political elites capitalize on these conflicts as a way to build their base of support, even to the point of inciting conflict through words and actions (such as paying supporters to attack rival groups).

ETHNIC GROUPS



RELIGION



The conflicts also have a religious component. In recent years, there has been a deepening fissure between Muslims, who are concentrated in the north, and Christians and animists, who are concentrated in the south. The catalyst has been the role of sharia, or Islamic law. Under British rule, Islamic law was preserved in the north and continued to serve an important, if limited, role. The practice was continued under independent Nigeria, and by the 1980s Islamic groups had begun to press the Ibrahim Babangida government to allow for the expansion of sharia in the north as well as in higher courts, where it then had no authority.

While the repression of Sani Abacha's regime froze much of that activism, it quickly revived with the onset of civilian rule. Muslim leaders and the Muslim public saw the expansion of sharia as a way to overcome the corruption of the military era and reassert their rights in a democratic system. Some political leaders also clearly saw the issue in a more cynical light, as a way to garner public support. Shortly after the 1999 elections, a dozen northern states made sharia the primary law, extending it to criminal and other matters. This legal system includes an extreme punishment for adultery and apostasy (leaving the faith): death by stoning. The imposition of sharia has touched off some of the worst violence under civilian rule; in one incident in 2000, clashes between Christians and Muslims in the town of Kaduna left 2,000 dead. In 2006, sixteen Christian churches in another northern city were burned down during a riot. The tension over sharia also grabbed international attention when two women were sentenced to be stoned to death for committing adultery. Although the verdicts were eventually overturned by higher courts, the seeming incompatibility between secular national law and an expansive regional use of sharia remains a serious and potentially destabilizing issue.[20]

Ideology and Political Culture

Could the conflicts between north and south, between Christian, Muslim, and animist, lead to civil war, another military coup, or the dissolution of the country itself? Perhaps. As we have seen, political parties in Nigeria tend to be built around individual leaders and ethnic groups, meaning that ideology plays a limited role compared with more narrow communal concerns, in contrast to a country like South Africa, where ideology plays a much stronger role in the party system. Similarly, it is commonly asserted that Nigerians have a low sense of patriotism or pride in their state, presumably a result of their stronger local identity and the legacy of military rule. The Nigerian novelist and political activist Chinua Achebe once described Nigerians as "among the world's most unpatriotic people," which, he argued, was a serious impediment to prosperity and democracy.[21]

In spite of these concerns, however, there are aspects of Nigerian political culture that continue to lend support to the state and the democratic

regime. A 2005 survey of Nigerians showed that despite the tensions and disappointments that have followed the return of civilian rule, nearly 65 percent continued to support democracy and reject military rule (though this is down from a high of 84 percent in 2000). Nigerians also express strong opposition to a political system dominated by a single party or leader, an attitude quite different from that in many other African democracies, where such domination is common. Over time, Nigerians have come to base their support for democracy less on economic performance and more on trustworthy leaders and similar factors—quite the opposite of what is expected in less-developed countries with weakly institutionalized democracy.[22] Moreover, in contrast to Achebe's assertion, surveys show that Nigerians exhibit a high degree of pride in their broader national identity. Those views, if sustained, may help limit communal tension and build ties across ethnic and religious divisions.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

The misfortune of the Nigerian economy has been a constant theme throughout our discussion. The economic difficulties that Nigeria has faced since independence are not unusual among less-developed countries, but they are particularly egregious given that Nigeria is one of the world's largest oil producers and has earned hundreds of billions of dollars from its steady export of the product, making up 90 percent of its foreign-currency earnings. In fact, Nigeria's economic difficulties exist not in spite of its oil resources but in large part because of them. Nigeria's predicament is an excellent example of what scholars sometimes refer to as the **resource curse**. Natural resources that are abundant and state controlled often serve to support authoritarian rule by giving the ruling regime the means to buy off the public and pay for repression. It is also argued that natural resources tend to distort an economy by diverting it from other forms of development. This situation can be seen in other oil-producing economies, such as Iran.

Each of these factors is evident in the development of Nigeria's political economic system. Like other less-developed countries, in the years following independence Nigeria opted for a system of import substitution, creating tariff barriers and parastatal industries with the objective of rapidly industrializing the country. This ambitious program was made possible by oil sales, which during the 1970s benefited from high prices. However, these programs suffered from policies directing resources toward certain industries for political reasons, without a clear understanding of whether the investments would be profitable. For example, US$8 billion was spent in the attempt to create a domestic steel industry that in the end produced barely any steel.[23] The decline in oil prices in the 1980s and the subsequent economic crisis and substantial foreign debt led Nigeria to initiate a policy of structural adjustment that moved

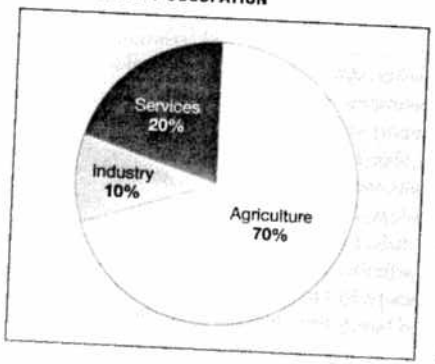
the country away from import substitution, although the economy remained highly regulated and closed to trade.

The limited reforms also did not address the fact that the country remained dependent upon oil exports and that the revenues from those exports were in the hands of the military. As the public suffered from the effects of structural adjustment, such as unemployment and inflation, the regime of Ibrahim Babandiga used its financial resources to co-opt some opponents while repressing others. Economic reforms also facilitated this patrimonialism, as newly liberalized markets or privatized state assets could be doled out in return for political support—not unlike the "insider privatization" that plagued Russia in the 1990s.

By the time of Sani Abacha's government, corruption had reached such heights as to be described by one scholar as outright "predation" under an "avaricious dictatorship."[24] The Nigerian economy not only suffered from the outright theft of state funds, but also became a center for illicit activity, including narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, and perhaps best known, the so-called 419, or advance-fee, scams (see "419 Scams," p. 561). One might argue that corruption should not be a central focus if it has helped provide funds for economic development, but the reality is that little of this wealth was reinvested in the country. Over the past thirty years, Nigeria has had a negative GDP growth rate and has suffered from a high degree of income inequality. It boasts the dubious distinction of being one of the world's most corrupt countries (surpassed only by Bangladesh and Haiti) as well as a nation with one of the world's lowest life expectancies. Nigeria ranks 159th out of 177 countries on the United Nation's Human Development Index. Corruption, inequality, and poverty are clearly connected.

The Fourth Republic thus faces an enormous challenge in righting the Nigerian economy and breaking with the practices of previous regimes. The Obasanjo and Yar'Adua governments have taken several important steps, developing a wide-ranging reform program known as the **National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)** and launching an impressive anticorruption campaign. The NEEDS program has tackled several important areas. First, it has increased the transparency of government finances, for example, by auditing the accounts of various levels of government to oversee how money is being spent and by making the findings available to the public. Second, it has prompted the government to address the corruption problem and improve the rule of law, for example, by creating an Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to pursue theft and money laundering (and seizing over US$500 million in the process).[25] Under the Yar'Adua administration, this commission took some impressive steps in tackling Nigeria's endemic corruption, arresting seven former state governors for the missappropriation of funds. NEEDS also focuses on the country's inadequate infrastructure, seeking to boost electricity production, improve transportation, increase telecommunications, and expand access to sanitation and clean drinking water. The goal, then, is to reform the state while expanding basic social expenditures across Nigeria. If successful, NEEDS could dramatically improve the lives of average Nigerians and increase domestic business and foreign investment.

LABOR FORCE BY OCCUPATION



419 SCAMS

Many readers of this case have received an e-mail message stating that if they provide financial support up front, they will receive a share of a large sum of money from overseas. Those offers are known as 419, or advance-fee, scams. Such confidence games, long known as Spanish-prisoner cons, date back to sixteenth-century Europe. What is notable about the recent permutation, however, is the frequency with which the scam has originated in Nigeria: indeed, the term "419" stems from the Nigerian legal code banning such activities. The Nigerian scams appear to have begun in the 1980s, around the time of the decline in oil prices, and were tolerated, if not abetted, by the government. The most common version is an unsolicited letter from a Nigerian claiming to be a senior civil servant. The letter writer is seeking a partner in whose account he can deposit several million dollars, money that supposedly was overpaid on a government contract. The partner is offered a share of the funds for his or her assistance but first must help defray the cost of a number of bribes or licenses. Gullible (and greedy) recipients of such letters have sent substantial amounts of money to Nigeria, billions of dollars, according to some estimates. In some cases, individuals have been lured to Nigeria to complete the supposed transaction, only to be kidnapped or killed. In addition to defrauding unwitting marks, the cons have deterred prospective legitimate investors, who are unwilling to risk having to distinguish between a business opportunity and a scam.

In recent years, the Nigerian government has cracked down on the 419 scams, with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission seizing over $700 million between 2003 and 2004 and arresting over 500 people. With the proliferation of e-mail, however, it has become much easier for scam artists to distribute their bogus stories of covert wealth, and they have moved on to new territory, focusing new variants on eBay customers, for example. Nigerian expatriates have apparently moved the scams abroad, to Europe and South Africa. The 419 scams demonstrate the lack of the rule of law in Nigeria, as well as how that condition, facilitated by globalization, can spill over into the international system.

The long-term success of NEEDS will of course hinge on one critical factor: oil. As oil prices have risen, the Nigerian government has found itself in a better financial position, but as we know from the past, such windfalls reap no long-term benefits if they are stolen or spent unproductively. Realizing this, the government has earmarked some of the oil revenues for a stabilization fund that can be drawn from if and when oil prices fall. The government has also taken on corruption within the oil industry. But huge problems remain, reflecting the enormous impact that the oil industry has on Nigeria.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND THE WORLD

Nigeria's foreign policy has undergone several shifts in emphasis since independence, reflecting international and domestic influences. The country's gradual transition from colonialism has meant that it did not undergo revolution or a protracted war of independence, either of which might have dramatically reshaped its relationship with the outside world. As a result, during the cold war Nigeria remained clearly within the pro-Western camp and retained its ties to the United Kingdom through membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. However, Western sympathy for the Biafrans during the 1967–1970 Nigerian Civil War and the West's refusal to provide arms to defeat Biafra steered Nigeria toward nonalignment. Nigeria has also sought to play an important regional role by helping to lead several international governmental organizations focused on Africa. One such body is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with a membership of fifteen West African countries. ECOWAS was created as an instrument of regional integration, not unlike the European Union in its early stages. The process of economic integration has been slow, however, although ECOWAS has actively met its obligation to intervene in armed conflicts in member states. Thus it has dispatched peacekeeping troops to help resolve civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. As the largest ECOWAS member state by far, Nigeria has borne the brunt of the peacekeeping efforts. Nigeria has similarly been active in deploying peacekeepers for far-flung UN missions, as in Lebanon and along the Indian-Pakistan border. In spite of these important responsibilities, Nigeria's international relations declined steadily under the Sani Abacha regime, and by 1995 the country had been suspended from the Commonwealth and subject to sanctions by the European Union and the United States following the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa. With democratic elections, however, Nigeria has once again gained status as a regional and, increasingly, a global actor.

In the coming decades, it is likely that Nigeria will become more important on the international scene. Whether this change will contribute to global

security and prosperity, however, is an open question. One main reason that Nigeria may grow in importance takes us back to a recurrent theme of this case, and that is oil. It is estimated that Nigeria has some 34 billion barrels of oil reserves. Whereas that is only a fraction of the reserves of major oil-producing states, such as Saudi Arabia, it nevertheless makes Nigeria one of the world's major producers. The vast majority of Nigerian oil is exported to Europe, Asia, and North America, making it an important trading partner. Instability in the Middle East and economic development in Asia may further push Nigeria into the forefront of energy production. For example, India and particularly China have shown increased interest in investing in Nigeria's oil industry, raising the possibility that the country will find itself caught in a political struggle as the United States, Europe, and Asia vie for access to its oil. Recognizing its increased status on the world stage, Nigeria has been pushing for representation as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which currently has no permanent African member (the permanent members are the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France).

A second factor is regional. As the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria stands to play a key role on the continent in helping to bolster democracy and stability. In addition to its role in ECOWAS, Nigeria has long been an important player in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was created in 1963. Within the OAU, Nigeria was a strong opponent of white rule in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa and with its own transition to democracy has stressed its commitment to democratic rule in Africa. This attitude can be seen in the recent transformation of the OAU. In 1999, its members agreed that the body should broaden its responsibilities to actively pursue a process of greater regional integration (not unlike the original intentions of ECOWAS in West Africa). In 2002, the OAU officially renamed itself the African Union (AU) and declared a new mandate for its member states, known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD. The primary goals of NEPAD are to eradicate poverty, sustain growth, integrate Africa into the process of globalization, and empower African women.

To that end, the AU and NEPAD have broken with past practices by serving as an intermediary between international donors and African states and holding the latter accountable for enforcing the rule of law and making certain that foreign aid is properly spent. Nigeria and South Africa have become the leading members of the African Union, with Nigeria taking a strong line on supporting democracy on the continent. For example, as Zimbabwe's government under Robert Mugabe slid deep into authoritarian rule over the past decade, Nigeria supported the country's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations, and both Obasanjo and Yar'Adua have been openly critical of Mugabe's dictatorial rule. Both Nigeria and South Africa can be expected to

grow in influence across the continent, with the former benefiting from its size while the latter benefits from its more developed economy. Some observers of Africa have called Nigeria and South Africa the China and Japan of Africa.

Finally, Nigeria's presence in the international system will depend to a great extent on how its democracy fares. A slide toward authoritarian rule will undoubtedly weaken the country's regional and international moral authority and in the process damage institutions like the AU and NEPAD. Another worry is that the history of conflict between northern and southern Nigeria could embroil the country in the current international struggle against violent Islamic extremism. Recent clashes among Nigerian Muslims, Christians, and animists have their impetus in disputes that date back many generations. As in many other parts of the world, however, local ethnic or religious conflicts might become radicalized and internationalized and drawn into the loose ideology of Al Qaeda and its supporters. What role, if any, such groups may have in Nigeria is unclear, although their presence in Africa is long-standing. Al Qaeda staged devastating attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and its operatives may have been active in nearby Liberia before and after 2001. Nigeria's widespread criminal activities may also be attractive to terrorists, as a means of raising funds and laundering money. Some observers express concern that the long-standing ethnic and religious tensions in Nigeria will provide a platform for terrorist activity, especially attacks on the country's oil facilities. Terrorist concerns will only be heightened if state capacity weakens under ineffectual democracy or illegitimate authoritarianism. Because of these concerns, the United States has significantly increased its military support for West African countries, including Nigeria. Closer ties with the United States increase the risk of exacerbating tensions in Nigeria's Muslim community, however, and so could play directly into the hands of terrorists.[26] Nigeria will undoubtedly become more connected to the globalizing world in the coming decade, but such a connection will require balancing domestic tensions with regional and international pressures. It will not be easy.

CURRENT ISSUES

NIGER DELTA

Nowhere do Nigeria's multitude of complex political, social, economic, and environmental problems and prospects converge more acutely than in the oil-producing Niger Delta. Home to some 31 million Nigerians who comprise more than 40 distinct ethnic groups and over 250 dialects, this region also produces over 2 million barrels of crude oil a day and has the potential to produce up

to 3 million barrels. Tragically, corrupt national and local politicians steal or squander the lion's share of oil revenues; local militias and gansters siphon oil, kidnap oil workers, and wreck production facilities; and millions of gallons of oil and other effluents contaminate the Niger's delicate tropical ecosystem (the wasteful and illegal "flaring" or burning off of natural gas alone is by some estimates the world's single-largest contributer of greenhouse gas and wastes US$500 million in potential gas revenues each year).

Although the region has been troubled for many decades, in the past few years impoverished communities in the Delta have become increasingly angry and restive. With the reestablishment of democracy in 1999, politicians began to arm local gangs to rig elections for them. International oil producers who operate in Nigeria, such as Shell and Chevron, have worsened matters by regularly providing payments to local leaders as tribute for operating in their community. This practice has increased conflict between ethnic groups in the Delta and between community leaders and unemployed youth, with each group vying for a share of the funds. A result has been the spread of armed militias, often linked to political parties, battling—often violently—over oil. Among their activities are "bunkering" (illegally siphoning oil from pipelines—perhaps as much as 40 percent of all that is produced), seizing or destroying facilities and kidnapping foreign oil-industry workers for ransom, and staging attacks on rival groups. Solving this conflict will not be easy; it will require more effective policing, local governance, central control over the actions of foreign oil producers, and addressing the economic and environmental demands of the local population most directly affected and deeply harmed by these activities.

NOTES

1. Ike Okonta and Oronto Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights, and Oil* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2001).
2. *The Niger Delta: No Democratic Dividend* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002).
3. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision Population Database* (New York: United Nations, 2004).
4. Charles R. Nixon, "Self-Determination: The Nigeria/Biafra Case," *World Politics*, 24, no. 4 (July 1972), pp. 473–97.
5. "A Troubled but Lingering President," *Economist*, 4, August 2005.
6. Blaine Harden, *Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), p. 247.
7. Julius O. Ihonvbere, "How to Make an Undemocratic Constitution: The Nigerian Example," *Third World Quarterly*, 21 (2000), pp. 343–66.
8. The 1999 constitution states that the "composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to pro-

mote national unity, and also to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no pre-dominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies." See E. Ike Idogu, "Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria," *Journal of Third World Studies* (Spring 2004).

9. "A Reporter's Tale," *Economist*, 26 February 2004.
10. For the term *judicial terrorism*, see Shu'aibu Musa, "Shades of Injustice: Travails of Muslim Activists in Nigeria in the Hands of Successive Regimes," paper presented at the International Conference of Prisoners of Faith, London, 17 February 2002 (London: Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2002), www.ihrc.org.uk/file/02feb17drmusaSHADES%20OF%20INJUSTICE.pdf (accessed 3 November 2005).
11. Howard French, *A Continent for the Taking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), p. 38.
12. Idogu, "Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria."
13. French, *A Continent for the Taking*, p. 27.
14. Ike Okonta, "Nigeria: Chronicle of a Dying State," *Current History* (May 2005), pp. 203–08.
15. Harden, *Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent*, p. 306.
16. Peter M. Lewis, "Nigeria: Elections in a Fragile Regime," *Journal of Democracy*, 14 (2003), p. 133.
17. These two opposition candidates were Muhammadu Buhari from the All Nigeria People's Party (formerly the APP) and Atiku Abuabakar from the Action Congress (a party resulting from the 2006 merger of the Alliance for Democracy and other small parties).
18. "It All Looks Horribly the Same," *Economist*, 28 February 2008.
19. French, *A Continent for the Taking*, p. 42.
23. Vincent O. Nmehelle, "Sharia Law in the Northern States of Nigeria: To Implement, or Not to Implement, the Constitutionality Is the Question," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 26, no. 3 (2004), pp. 730–59.
21. Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (London: Heinemann, 1983).
22. Bratton and Lewis, "The Durability of Political Goods?" Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 48 (April 2005).
23. "A Tale of Two Giants," *Economist*, 13 January 2000.
24. Peter Lewis, "From Prebendalism to Predation: The Political Economy of Decline in Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34, no. 1 (March 1996), pp. 79–103.
25. International Monetary Fund, "Nigeria: 2005 Article IV Consultation Concluding Statement," International Monetary Fund, March 25, 2005. www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2005/032505.htm (accessed 27 February 2006).
26. Princeton N. Lyman and J. Stephen Morrison, "The Terrorist Threat in Africa," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2004), pp. 75–86.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Abacha, Sani Oppressive Nigerian military dictator from 1993 to 1998 who came to power in a miliary coup.

Babangida, Ibrahim Military ruler of Nigeria from 1985 to 1993 who sought to establish the failed Third Republic.

derivation formula Formula for distributing percentage of oil revenunes between national and local government in Nigeria.

federal character principle Nigerian quota system designed to ease ethnic tension by requiring the president to appoint ministers from each Nigerian state.

First Republic Nigerian parliamentary democratic regime that followed independence (1960–1966).

Fourth Republic Nigeria's current presidential democratic regime, established in 1999.

Fulani Predominantly Muslim ethnic group located in northern Nigeria.

Hausa Predominantly Muslim ethnic group concentrated in northern Nigeria.

House of Representatives Lower house of Nigerian parliament.

Igbo (Ibo) Predominantly Christian ethnic group concentrated in southeast Nigeria.

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta Militant separatist group from the Niger Delta.

Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) Ethnic association founded by Ken Saro-Wiwa to promote interests of ethnic Ogoni in the Niger Delta.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) A wide-ranging Nigerian reform program designed to stem government corruption and enhance economic infrastructure.

Niger Delta World's third-largest wetland and source of Nigerian oil and economic and ethnic conflict.

Obasanjo, Olusegun Military ruler from 1976 to 1979 and two-term elected president, from 1999 to 2007, of Nigeria.

patrimonialism Arrangement whereby a ruler depends on a collection of supporters within the state who will gain direct benefits in return for enforcing the ruler's will.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) Political party that has dominated Nigerian politics since its 1998 formation; its base is in the Hausa Muslim ethnic group of northern Nigeria.

Republic of Biafra Ill-fated effort by Nigeria's Igbo-dominated eastern region to secede in 1967.

resource curse Abundant natural resources distorting an economy by preventing diversification.

Saro-Wiwa, Ken Noted Nigerian playwright and environmental activist, executed in 1995 for his defense of the land and peoples of the Niger Delta.

"scramble for Africa" Late nineteenth-century race by European countries to expand influence and establish imperial control over the majority of African territory.

Second Republic Short-lived Nigerian democratic regime, from 1979 to

1983, in which the former parliamentary system was replaced by a presidential system.

sharia System of Islamic law.

Third Republic Democratic regime proposed by General Ibrahim Babangida in 1993, but precluded by General Sani Abacha's military coup in the same year following annulled elections.

Yar'Adua, Umaru Current president (2007–present) of Nigeria.

Yoruba Ethnic group largely confined to southwest Nigeria whose members are divided among Christian, Muslim, and local animist faiths.

WEB LINKS

African Studies Internet Resources: Nigeria, Columbia University Libraries **www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/africa/cuvl/Nigeria.html**

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission **www.efccnigeria.org**

The Guardian (Nigeria) **www.ngrguardiannews.com**

IRIN News.org UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs **www.irinnews.org**

Niger Delta Development Commission **www.nddconline.org/The_Niger_Delta**

Nigeria Direct: Official Government Gateway **www.nigeria.gov.ng**

INDEX

Page numbers in *italics* refer to charts and maps. Page numbers in **boldface** refer to keyword definitions.