



From the MixCache.com library

SAMPLE COPY

The Politics of Nigeria

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: The Birth of Modern Nigeria: From Amalgamation to Independence
- Chapter 2: The First Republic and Early Political Instability
- Chapter 3: Military Coups and the Era of Military Rule
- Chapter 4: The Nigerian Civil War: Causes and Consequences
- Chapter 5: Paths to Civilian Rule: Second and Third Republics
- Chapter 6: The Fourth Republic: Democratic Consolidation Since 1999
- Chapter 7: Federalism and the Nigerian State Structure
- Chapter 8: The Executive Branch: Powers and Responsibilities
- Chapter 9: The Legislature: National Assembly and Lawmaking
- Chapter 10: The Judiciary and Legal System
- Chapter 11: State and Local Governments: Subnational Politics
- Chapter 12: The Electoral System and Institutions
- Chapter 13: Political Parties: History, Structure, and Evolution
- Chapter 14: Political Ideologies and Manifestos in Nigeria
- Chapter 15: Ethnicity and Identity Politics
- Chapter 16: Religion and Its Role in Political Life
- Chapter 17: Corruption and Governance Challenges
- Chapter 18: The Security Landscape: Insecurity and Its Effects on Politics
- Chapter 19: Economic Policy and Political Economy
- Chapter 20: Civil Society, Media, and Political Participation
- Chapter 21: Women, Youth, and Marginalized Groups in Nigerian Politics
- Chapter 22: Foreign Policy and International Relations
- Chapter 23: Electoral Violence and Democratic Integrity
- Chapter 24: Federalism in Practice: Resource Control and Revenue Allocation
- Chapter 25: Prospects and Future Trajectories for Nigerian Democracy

Introduction

Nigeria is often described as the “Giant of Africa,” a title befitting its status as the continent’s most populous nation and one of its largest economies. Yet, beyond its demographic and economic prominence lies a country of extraordinary political complexity and diversity. Nigerian politics cannot be understood without reference to the country’s intricate historical journey, layered social fabric, and the ongoing evolution of its institutional structures. Since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria has traversed a tumultuous path marked by hope, upheaval, resilience, and transformation, all of which have helped to define its current political landscape.

The journey from amalgamation in 1914—when British authorities unified the Northern and Southern Protectorates—to the era of self-governance has shaped both Nigeria’s federal structure and its identity. The early post-independence years were characterized by optimism and the promise of unity, but this period was short-lived. Political instability soon took root, leading to a succession of military coups and a devastating civil war. These experiences profoundly impacted Nigeria’s political institutions and the culture of governance, setting the stage for enduring debates over nationhood, citizenship, and the distribution of power.

Contemporary Nigerian politics is structured around a federal, presidential system closely modeled on those found in the United States, with clear separations among executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Yet, the practice of federalism in Nigeria transcends static blueprints, shaped instead by ethnic, religious, and regional complexities. The persistent influence of these social cleavages is visible in alliances, party formation, and the conduct of elections. The country’s roughly equal split between Christianity and Islam, coupled with a rich tapestry of over 250 ethnic groups, means that questions of identity are rarely far from the surface of political contestation.

Despite the restoration of democratic rule in 1999 and the ongoing efforts to strengthen institutions, Nigeria’s democracy faces formidable challenges. Corruption, insecurity, weak institutions, electoral malpractices, and periodic outbreaks of violence continue to undermine governance and public trust in the political process. Economic disparities, youth disenfranchisement, and human rights concerns further compound the intricacy of the Nigerian political environment. Nevertheless, the resilience of civil society, the increasing engagement of marginalized groups, and the gradual embedding of democratic norms offer grounds for guarded optimism.

Understanding Nigerian politics, therefore, requires more than mapping out its

governmental organs and constitutional provisions. It calls for a nuanced appreciation of the historical contexts, power dynamics, and social realities that shape its functioning. This book seeks to provide readers with a comprehensive guide to Nigeria's political system, tracing the evolution of its institutions, exploring the interplay of its societal forces, and offering critical insights into the key challenges and prospects facing the country. By examining both the persistent obstacles and the pathways to reform, this guide aims to foster a deeper understanding of one of Africa's most influential political systems.

Through a blend of historical overview, institutional analysis, and critical discussion of key contemporary issues, "The Politics of Nigeria: A Guide to Politics and the Political System in Nigeria" invites readers—whether students, scholars, or interested citizens—to engage thoughtfully with the complexities and dynamism of Nigerian politics. The pages that follow are an invitation to explore not only the structures and actors that have shaped modern Nigeria, but also the possibilities for its future.

SAMPLE COPY

CHAPTER ONE: The Birth of Modern Nigeria: From Amalgamation to Independence

The entity we know today as Nigeria is a relatively recent creation, a product of European colonial ambition and administrative convenience. Before the arrival of the British, the vast and varied landscape was home to a multitude of distinct political entities, ranging from centralized kingdoms and empires in the north and southwest to decentralized communities in the southeast. These pre-colonial societies, with their own intricate systems of governance, trade networks, and cultural practices, had existed for centuries, some dating back millennia.

In the northern part of the territory, powerful states like the Kanem-Bornu Empire and the Hausa city-states had long established complex administrative structures and engaged in extensive trans-Saharan trade. Islam had also taken root in many of these areas, influencing their legal and political systems. Further south, the Yoruba kingdoms, most notably the Oyo Empire, developed sophisticated political organizations with checks and balances on the power of their rulers. The Edo Kingdom of Benin was another formidable power, renowned for its centralized governance and impressive artistic achievements.

In contrast to the centralized systems of the north and southwest, the Igbo communities in the southeast largely operated on a decentralized basis. Political authority was often shared among elders, age grades, and various community associations, reflecting a more egalitarian social structure. While some Igbo areas had kingship systems, power was often distributed and subject to checks by councils of chiefs. This diversity of political organization across the different regions would later present a unique challenge for the colonial administration.

European contact with the coastal areas began in the 15th century, initially focused on trade, including the infamous transatlantic slave trade. British influence gradually increased over the 19th century, driven by abolitionist sentiments and the desire for legitimate commerce in goods like palm oil. This growing influence led to the annexation of Lagos in 1861, marking the formal beginning of British territorial control.

The Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century intensified European powers' efforts to claim and formalize their control over African territories. The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was a pivotal moment, where European nations carved up the continent and recognized Britain's claim over the area that would become Nigeria. Following this, the British government and chartered companies, like the Royal Niger Company led by George Goldie, consolidated their hold over different regions.

By the turn of the 20th century, the British had established three separate administrative units: the Lagos Colony, the Southern Nigeria Protectorate, and the Northern Nigeria Protectorate. However, administering these distinct territories with their diverse populations and pre-existing political structures proved to be a cumbersome and costly undertaking. The idea of unifying these entities began to gain traction within the British colonial administration.

The economic motivation for amalgamation was significant. The Southern Protectorate, with its bustling ports and lucrative trade in palm oil and other resources, was economically more prosperous than the vast, arid Northern Protectorate. The British saw an opportunity to use the revenue generated in the south to offset the administrative costs of governing the north. This financial rationale was a key driver behind the decision to merge the territories.

The man tasked with overseeing this monumental task was Sir Frederick Lugard. Having served as the High Commissioner of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, Lugard was a strong advocate for unification. He believed that a single, unified administration would be more efficient and effective for British rule. In 1912, he returned to Nigeria with the specific mandate to bring the northern and southern protectorates together.

The amalgamation was formally declared on January 1, 1914, with the creation of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Lugard became the first Governor-General of the newly unified territory. While the British administration maintained a degree of regional autonomy, particularly in the north where the system of Indirect Rule was more firmly established, the amalgamation created a single political entity out of disparate historical and cultural landscapes.

The system of Indirect Rule, which Lugard championed, involved governing through existing traditional rulers and institutions. In the north, where centralized emirates were already in place, this system was relatively easier to implement. The British largely co-opted the emirs, allowing them to retain their titles and authority as long as they were loyal to the colonial administration and assisted in collecting taxes and enforcing British policies.

In the southwest, the Yoruba political structure, with its Obas and councils, also lent itself, albeit with some adjustments, to the Indirect Rule system. The Obas served as intermediaries between the British and the people, though the British presence and oversight were undeniable.

The application of Indirect Rule in the southeast, however, proved more challenging. The decentralized nature of Igbo society, which lacked the hierarchical structures found elsewhere, meant that the British had to create "warrant chiefs." These were individuals appointed by the British to serve as intermediaries, a move that often

lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the local population and sometimes led to resistance. The imposition of these external authorities disrupted existing social and political dynamics.

The amalgamation, while administratively convenient for the British, brought together over 250 distinct ethnic groups with different histories, languages, and cultures under one umbrella. This forced union, driven by external interests, would have profound and lasting consequences for Nigerian politics. The diverse regions, previously independent or loosely connected entities, were now bound together in a single colonial state.

The colonial administration, in its efforts to govern effectively and cheaply, often exacerbated existing ethnic and regional differences. The distinct administrative structures maintained for the Northern and Southern Protectorates, even after amalgamation, reinforced regional identities. The use of different administrative approaches, particularly the relative success of Indirect Rule in the more centralized north compared to the challenges faced in the decentralized southeast, contributed to varied experiences of colonial rule and differential levels of development.

The imposition of a centralized government over diverse pre-colonial systems, combined with the strategy of indirect rule that utilized and sometimes altered existing hierarchies, laid the groundwork for future political dynamics. The process of bringing together such disparate groups into a single political entity, without a shared history of nationhood, created inherent tensions that would continue to shape Nigeria's political landscape long after independence.

The colonial period, from the amalgamation in 1914 until independence in 1960, was a time of significant transformation. The British introduced Western education, infrastructure like railways and telegraph lines, and a new legal system. These changes, while facilitating colonial rule and economic exploitation, also sowed the seeds of nationalism and a desire for self-determination among educated Nigerians.

Early nationalist movements began to emerge, advocating for greater representation and eventually independence. These movements often had a regional or ethnic character, reflecting the divisions that had been highlighted and sometimes deepened by colonial policies. The different levels of exposure to Western education and economic opportunities in the north and south also contributed to differing political trajectories and priorities among the emerging Nigerian elite.

As the clamor for independence grew in the post-World War II era, the British gradually introduced constitutional reforms that provided for increased Nigerian participation in governance. These reforms, however, often reinforced regional divisions by creating legislative and executive bodies based on the three main regions: Northern, Western, and Eastern. This regionalization of politics would become a significant factor in the

lead-up to independence and beyond.

The journey from the amalgamation of 1914 to independence in 1960 was a complex process of forging a single state out of a multitude of nations. It was a period shaped by British administrative goals, the diverse responses of Nigerian communities to colonial rule, and the rise of nationalist aspirations. The legacy of this era, particularly the challenges posed by the country's diversity and the structures of governance inherited from the British, would profoundly influence the political trajectory of independent Nigeria.

SAMPLE COPY

This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.

Visit [MixCache.com](https://mixcache.com) to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY