

NIGERIA: A STUDY INTO THE CAUSES OF INTERNAL CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

NIGERIA: A STUDY INTO THE CAUSES OF INTERNAL CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY,
by Lieutenant Colonel Paul A. Kopelen, 42 pages.

The research sought to determine why internal conflict and instability still occur within Nigeria after forty years of independent governance. The research had to determine what factors related to the persistence of violence and internal conflict within Nigeria. The first step was an exploration of how various civilian and military governments interpreted the Nigerian constitution and how they governed. The founding constitution and subsequent constitutions defined the federal government's role in providing security, equal representation, a unified Nigeria, and economic investment at both federal and state levels. Since the constitution provided ample authority to the armed forces and federal police to maintain internal security, it was necessary to explore the Nigerian security apparatus to determine why the security forces have not been able to establish order and prevent violence. Stathis Kalyvas offered a theory about how violence can be used by a government to obtain collaboration and control. The theory argues that the government through proper application of selective violence can gain popular support. The final part of the research was an analysis of the political and social factors that influence the effectiveness of the representation system and the security apparatus. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler offer a theory about how greed and grievance create factors that may lead to civil war and internal conflict. Analyzing these factors identified several social and political conditions that are strongly related to the persistence of conflict in Nigeria.

The evidence showed that the constitution provided ample authority to federal government. Further evidence indicated that Nigeria has nominally sufficient capability to provide internal security absent other aggravating factors. The analysis of the security apparatus illuminated other political and social factors that impede the creation of domestic order. The analysis of these factors identified several social and political conditions that are strongly related to the persistence of conflict in Nigeria. Those conditions are the quest by ethnic and religious groups for ethnic conflict or religious dominance. The competition between these groups is impelled by economic disparity and perceptions of political under- representation throughout Nigeria's independent history. Analysis of these factors during select Nigerian governments showed the factors to be powerful impediments to stability and security in Nigeria. Thus, in Nigeria the various attempts at constitutional government have neither ameliorated disparities in wealth nor attenuated the competition between internal groups. Consequently, Nigeria is a polity that lacks a national identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria gained national independence on 1 October 1960. Constitutional revision and compromise defined the thirteen-year period leading to that momentous occasion. The final Nigerian constitution was a compromise between the Richard and Macpherson constitutions. Nigeria's first government, the Federation of Nigeria, was a parliamentary government.¹ With newly gained independence, hope blossomed for Nigeria to become a dominant regional power and a wealthy nation state. However, Nigeria transitioned to a republic in 1963 and that government was overthrown by a military coup in 1966. Over the next forty years, Nigeria experienced multiple civilian and military governments and constant ethnic, religious, political and economic turmoil. Therefore, the prosperous future outlined at the time of independence has not yet occurred. However, within the constitution, the seeds for prosperity have been present since Nigeria's beginning.

The founding constitution of Nigeria laid out a progressively authoritative and representative federal and state government for the people. Federal institutions and agencies with associated duties and responsibilities are part of the framework. The Federal tax and distribution framework clearly delineates all sources and forms of revenue and the associated authorities. Additionally, the constitution established constructs for the federal armed forces and police. Most importantly, the constitution clearly outlined the framework for a fair and equitable representation of the "people." However, leading up to national independence, ethnic friction and disputes among the leading political parties was very prevalent.²

The Action Group (AG), National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) political parties represented the majority of Nigerians. Each political party represented various ethnic and religious ideologies and goals. Each party

¹ Michael Crowder, *A Short History of Nigeria* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Inc. Publishers, 1966), 287.

² Ibid., 283.

negotiated over several years to lay the foundation for national independence that also met the needs of their political constituency. Since over 250 ethnic tribes comprise Nigeria, adequate representation by the political parties was a key point of contention leading up to national independence. Also, closely tied to ethnic representation was religious diversity.

Islam and Christianity are the two dominant religions in Nigeria. Other indigenous tribal religions comprise the difference. Nigeria is essentially comprised of a northern dominated Muslim culture and a southern dominated Christian culture. Differences in religious beliefs shape political party agendas and national will at the federal level of government. More importantly religious beliefs shape the perceptions of the use of force internally to maintain control when domestic conflict erupts. The use of force by the federal armed forces and police becomes the extension of political will at that point.

Nigeria's federal armed forces and police exist because of the founding constitution. The purpose of these forces is to preserve stability and security within the nation's boundaries at the behest of the federal government. The two entities are equally representative of the people and serve to protect the people of Nigeria. There are numerous examples of the Nigerian federal government employing the armed forces and federal police to maintain order. Examples include the quelling of federal census riots in 1963, inter-state police actions in 1966, and blockading rogue States in 1967.³ Therefore, the capabilities that exist within the two entities appear to be adequate to serve the purposes of the nation. However, repeated internal conflict still occurs within Nigeria. Given a robust security apparatus, equal representation at the federal and State level and enormous income, why has Nigeria been unable to mitigate violence and internal conflict?

³ Nigeria Police Force, *Nigeria Police Force - Peace Keeping Operations*, January 1, 2012. <http://www.npf.gov.ng/information/peace-keeping-operations/> (accessed January 18, 2013).

To determine the factors related to the persistence of violence and internal conflict within Nigeria, it was first necessary to explore how various civilian and military governments interpreted the Nigerian constitution and how they governed. The founding constitution and subsequent constitutions define the federal government's role in providing security, equal representation, a unified Nigeria, and economic investment at both federal and state levels. Therefore, exploring the civilian and military governments of Nigeria reveals how the provisions of the constitution enabled or hindered the establishment of a unified Nigeria.

Since the constitution provides ample authority to the armed forces and federal police to maintain internal security, it was necessary to explore the Nigerian security apparatus to determine why the security forces have not been able to establish order and prevent violence. Stathis Kalyvas in his book, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, offers a theory about how violence can be used by a government to obtain collaboration and control. The theory argues that the government through proper application of selective violence gains popular support. Thus, Kalyvas' theory provides concepts with which to assess the use of force by Nigerian governments and judge the effectiveness of the Nigerian security apparatuses. That analysis indicates that Nigeria nominally has sufficient capability to provide internal security absent other aggravating factors. Understanding the civil and military governments and the application of the Nigerian security apparatus revealed what worked within Nigeria to secure stability and security. The analysis of the security apparatus illuminated other political and social factors that impede the creation of domestic order.

The final part of the research was an analysis of the political and social factors that influence the effectiveness of the representation system and the security apparatus. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler offer a theory about how greed and grievance create factors that may lead to civil war and internal conflict. Analyzing these factors identified several social and political conditions that are strongly related to the persistence of conflict in Nigeria. Those conditions are the quest between groups for ethnic conflict or religious dominance. The competition between

these groups is impelled by economic disparity and perceptions of political under- representation throughout independent Nigeria's history. Analysis of these factors during select Nigerian governments showed the factors to be powerful impediments to stability and security in Nigeria. Thus, in Nigeria the various attempts at constitutional government have neither ameliorated disparities in wealth nor attenuated the competition between internal groups. Consequently, Nigeria is a polity that lacks a national identity. Nigeria is a nation with a diverse political vernacular peculiar to the founding constitution and subsequent state expansions.

Terminology

The study of Nigeria's political system and forms of government can be confusing without defining some key terms. The constitutional changes and the federal system of government create the need to use a set of terms that can be applied in any era. Thus, for the purpose of this paper, the term "State" refers to the thirty-six independent States that comprise Nigeria today. State is also synonymous with "regions." Regions were Nigeria's State level organizations upon gaining independence in 1960.⁴ The term "federal" refers to the national government of Nigeria or its organizations such as the national police or military. The term "nation" or "national" refers to Nigeria as a nation state recognized in the international community.

FOUNDING CONSTITUTION

Nigeria's founding constitution was shaped by three principle frameworks taken from previous colonial constitutions established under British colonial authority. The first constitution (1947), also known as the Richards Constitution, promoted three ideals for Nigeria: unity of Nigeria of both people and states, provide adequately within that unity for the diverse elements

⁴ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 8.

that constitute the country and secure greater participation by Africans in their own affairs.⁵ Creation of a legislative council comprised of a Governor (President) with sixteen officials and twenty-eight unofficial members created solidarity under one governing body with equitable representation.⁶ The new construct was the first time in Nigerian history that all three States were unified under one governing body, in this case, the legislative council. However, the Richards Constitution laid the foundation for ethnic grievance by state minorities not represented within the councils. Such grievances drive the development of political parties and shape later constitutional reforms. Closely tied to the legislative council are newly formed State councils.

A House of Assembly comprised each State council. Within each assembly, a Chief Commissioner served as President with several other official and unofficial members as representatives from within the State. The result was representation for ethnic groups within the States. However, representation of all ethnic majorities and minorities was not equal. The concerns for fair representation or the perception of disadvantage created pressure to expand the number of states in order to meet ethnic political party representation concerns. Additionally, the State councils advised the legislative council on matters pertaining to budgets and bills. Yet, under the colonial governor, State councils were only advisory; thus the Governor could ignore any or all advice from the State councils. The powerlessness of the State councils exacerbated the divisions within Nigeria instead of the creating unity the constitution sought. Additionally, the legislative powers outlined then became a significant point of contention between the political parties and their constituencies. The resulting tensions produced political pressure for constitutional change. Most importantly, the Richards constitution was a British construct and not a Nigerian one. Without Nigerian acceptance, the Richards Constitution was living on borrowed

⁵ Crowder, 273.

⁶ NGEX LLC. The Richard's Constitution of 1946 . April 29, 2013.
<http://www.ngex.com/nigeria/constitution/con1946.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

time. The lasting effects of British colonialism would drive greater State autonomy and increased authorities within the second constitution.

The second constitution (1951) also known as the Macpherson Constitution, promoted three political interests for Nigeria. The Macpherson Constitution brought a robust federal legislature providing better representation, state legislatures with specified autonomy, and a federal tax redistribution system. A new central legislative council known as the House of Representatives, consisting of the Governor (President), one hundred thirty-six representatives elected from the Regional Houses and six special members appointed by the Governor to represent unannounced interests formed the foundation of the new federal government.⁷ The intent was to rectify the lack of federal representation in the Richards Constitution. However, the executive council led by the Governor and represented by four ministers from each State did not serve to unite Nigeria. The Governor, based upon the three State Council's recommendations, appointed the ministers to the various ministries, which allowed the ministers to push State agendas instead of serving the nation. By default, these actions created a paper federal government for national interests. The result of these provisions becomes apparent during the Biafra Civil War which arose from a dispute over the allocation of resources and requests by the States for greater autonomy. Tied to the request for State autonomy was the creation of new State legislatures.

The State legislatures created a new political forum for their constituents. The Northern and Western States formed both a House of Chiefs and Assembly and the Eastern State only a House of Assembly. However, none of the States equally or fairly represented their constituents. The Northern State Assembly used indirect election methods and State Governor nominated officials. The Eastern and Western State Assembly's and House were comprised of elected

⁷ NGEX. *The Macpherson Constitution of 1951*. April 29, 2013.
<http://www.ngex.com/nigeria/constitution/con1951.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

officials. The results of disparate election methods between the States served only to divide Nigeria rather than unite it. Additionally, a common democratic election method could not develop. The disparity between indirect and direct election methods surfaced in the Kano riots of 1953. As a result, the federal government took action to revise the constitution.

States were given the authority over specific public functions such as agriculture, education, local governments, and public health.⁸ Tied to federal taxes and distribution, each State was free to allocate and invest resources, as they deemed necessary. However, without federal oversight, perceived inequities surfaced across the States. The resulting inequity produced a drive for secession among the States. To mitigate the threat of secession, the next constitution allocated revenue based upon the principles of derivation and needs.

The principle of derivation directed the federal government to return all taxes to the people. Therefore, half of all revenues from taxes on tobacco and cigarettes were to be distributed to States based upon consumption.⁹ Inequity is inherent in this method of distribution. The States were quick to realize the disparity and seek resolution. However, such resolution is not always peaceful and in Nigeria, violence often became the method of expression. In addition, the principle of needs authorized the federal government to pay grants to States based upon adult taxpayers. However, each State had disparate population ratios compared to one another. Therefore, the need for each State is different. Therefore, tensions between the federal and State legislatures increased. Between the two principles, Nigeria was set up for internal conflict rather than stability and unity at the State level. The result of the short-term conflict led to another revision to the constitution.

The third constitution (1954) also known as the Lyttelton Constitution, made a major change to the authorities of the federal government, increased autonomy of State legislatures and

⁸ NGEX. *The Macpherson Constitution of 1951*. April 29, 2013.
<http://www.ngex.com/nigeria/constitution/con1951.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

⁹ Ibid.

a revised national judicial structure formed the two tenants. The central legislature no longer dictated what the State legislatures enacted as law. Thereby, States were free to govern without interference from the central legislature. However, the Federal Governor still controlled taxation and income distribution to the States. The disconnect between governance and distribution of wealth started a cycle of disparity as each State fought to win certain positions within the executive council to gain advantage. Additionally, a struggle ensued during elections for control of the federal government, thereby allowing for continued misallocation of federal funds to specific States. Lastly, a federal territory was added for Lagos, the capitol. The necessity for a federal territory resulted from the argument between the Northern and Western States over who would own the national capitol, Lagos. The Lagos area contained several natural resources that both the Northern and Western States wanted to control for the purpose of generating State revenues and a large port for commerce that was already producing revenue. In 1957, London hosted a constitutional conference to resolve concerns from each of the States.

The conference resolved several grievances between the States. Notably, any bill that threatened the continuation of the Federal Government of Nigeria had to go before the Queen.¹⁰ However, the decree would only serve to extend the colonial shadow of governance before true independence could occur. Additionally, advised by the Deputy-Governors, the Queen appointed the State Governors. The Federal Governor appointed the three Deputy-State Governors. The construct now allowed the Federal government to directly control the States instead of allowing State Governors direct election by State constituency. The entire purpose of a truly independent Nigeria was overturned by the conference. Nigeria would fall under the governance of the Queen of England with a Nigerian Prime Minister to govern locally. Therefore, the combination of elements from the Macpherson and Lyttelton constitution along with the results of the

¹⁰ NGEX. *The Constituional Conference of 1957*. April 29, 2013. <http://www.ngex.com/nigeria/constitution/con1957.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

Constitutional Conference of 1957 created the constitution of 1960. The final result was a democratic parliamentary system of government that would take effect.¹¹

The founding constitution of 1960 instituted a parliamentary system of government. The Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Federation was appointed by the Queen of England and became the Queen's representative. Several unique authorities resided in the Governor-General. The Governor-General, with the recommendation of the Prime Minister, could dissolve the parliament at his discretion if the Federation were at war. If the House of Representatives passed a resolution with no confidence and the Prime Minister did not resign or advise dissolution, the Governor-General could. If the position of Prime Minister was vacated with no prospect of appointing a person that could command majority support in the House of Representatives, then the Governor-General could dissolve Parliament.¹² Serving to advise the Governor-General was the Council of Ministers.

Appointed by the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Government of the Federation formed the Council of Ministers for the Federation. The Ministers of Government were assigned specific departments and/or portfolios to manage within the government by the Governor-General. All appointees had to be a sitting member of the Senate or House prior to being appointed.¹³ Therefore, in theory, the Governor-General could appoint personal friends from the House or Senate as Ministers to manage specific portfolios to create a power base for the Governor's respective State. In conjunction with the Council, parliament established bills and laws.

¹¹ NGEX. *The Constitutional Conference of 1957*. April 29, 2013. <http://www.ngex.com/nigeria/constitution/con1957.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

¹² Cahoon, Ben M., "World Statesmen.org." *World Statesmen.org "A World of Knowledge at Your Fingertips"*. 2001-2003. http://www.worldstatesmen.org/nigeria_const1960.pdf (accessed May 4, 2013), 41-42.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

Parliament was comprised of the Queen (Governor-General by proxy), a Senate and House of Representatives.¹⁴ The Senate consisted of forty-four members; twelve Senators representing each State, four Senators representing the Federal territory of Lagos, and four Senators selected by the Governor-General responsible to the Prime Minister. Within the Senate, a President to the Senate shall exist elected by Senate members at large to preside over the Senate. The House of Representatives was comprised of three-hundred and five members. Seats were determined by census. One seat allocated per 100,000 people as determined by census. Therefore, each State was apportioned Representatives based upon State populations. A Speaker of the House was elected by House members at large to preside over the House.

Provisions to create new laws or bills could originate in either house and then passed to the Governor-General for final approval and implementation on behalf of the Queen.¹⁵ Parliament had the power to create laws for the peace, order and good governance of the States. If State laws were inconsistent with parliamentary laws, then parliament held sway. Additionally parliament could in times of emergency pass laws to secure peace, order and good government.¹⁶ Parliament had power to make grants for any purpose to any State and withdraw such funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.¹⁷ Creating and maintaining grants becomes extremely important in the approach States use to gain a majority in Parliament, thereby passing new laws and distributing wealth to the States. In order to interpret new laws between the federal and State governments, the Federal Supreme Court was established.

The Federal Supreme Court was comprised of a Chief Justice, no less than three Federal Justices and Chief Judge from each State, all of which were appointed by the Governor-

¹⁴ Cahoon, 27-28.

¹⁵ Ibid., 28 and 31-32.

¹⁶ Ibid., 42-43.

¹⁷ Ibid., 44.

General.¹⁸ In addition, the Governor-General appointed all judges that served on the High Court of Lagos for the Federal territory. The Court held jurisdiction across all States within the Federation. The Court could overrule all State High Court actions and served as the last Court of appeal.¹⁹ Lastly, chapter nine of the constitution outlined the method in which revenues were generated, collected, and distributed.

Several changes occurred with the final revision to the constitution. All import, excise and export duties remained at the federal level. All import duties on motor spirits and half of import duty and excise on tobacco would go to the States based upon consumption. Half the net proceeds of all other import duties were divided between the State governments with the Western State receiving forty percent and the Northern and Eastern States receiving thirty percent each. All mining and income taxes collected federally were distributed to States based upon derivation.²⁰ More importantly, the changes above, outline an opportunity from which the States to exploit the Federal government and gain new power bases, specifically through the ministerial positions, which controlled specific business interests. The desire to seek economic advantage at the State level only exacerbated the tensions thereby making unification under a national identity very difficult. The desire for State led political agendas to become a reality through Federal governance would first occur under Prime Minister Balewa.

¹⁸ Ibid., 61.

¹⁹ Cahoon, 65.

²⁰ Michael Crowder, 287.

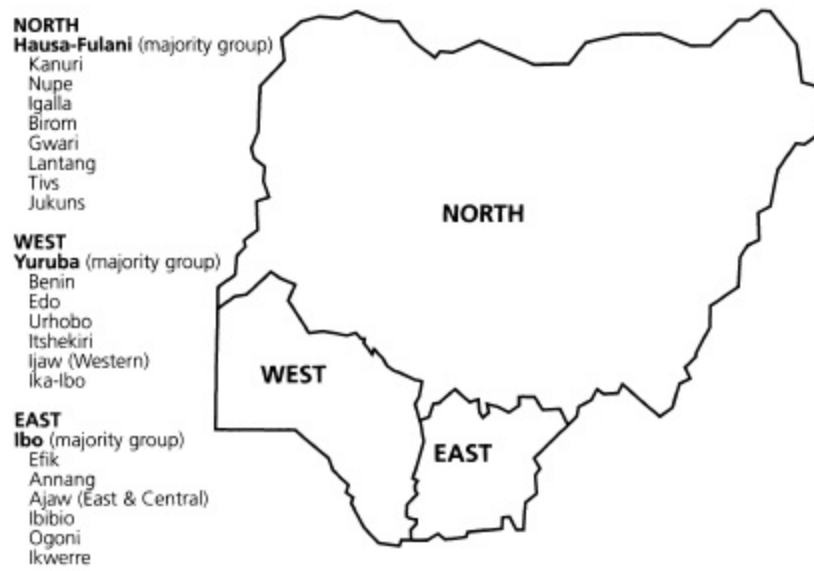


Figure 1. Original Nigerian States by Tribal Base.

CIVILIAN GOVERNANCE

Civilian Governance Balewa (January 1960 – January 1966)

The first parliamentary election occurred in 1959. To form a government alone required a political party to gain a majority of parliamentary seats. At the conclusion of the electoral process, the Muslim, Hausa-Fulani based conservative NPC had gained the largest number of seats, with one hundred forty-three votes in the House of Representatives, but not enough seats to form a new government alone. After a weeklong negotiation, the NPC and the Christian, Igbo based nationalist NCNC together garnered a majority, with a combined two-hundred and thirty-two electoral votes. In opposition was the Yoruba based Action Group with only seventy-three votes.²¹ The first election clearly indicated that no one political party could gain enough votes for a majority and establish a new parliament. Therefore, with States aligned along ethnic and for the most part political lines, the need for collaboration was very apparent. However, when either ethnic or religious majorities exists, the propensity for conflict also increases in proportion to the

²¹ Crowder, 298.

disparity between the two parties as indicated by Collier-Hoeffler.²² Given this, several historical examples of governance demonstrate where ethnic conflict expressed itself.

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa became Nigeria's first Prime Minister and head of State. Balewa was a Muslim northerner of the NPC party. Balewa had been a participating member of the 1957 Constitution Conference and thus, was familiar with the constitutional issues. Additionally, as a member of the NPC, Balewa participated with rival State political parties over which form of governance Nigeria would adopt. Therefore, Balewa was very familiar inherent economic and representation tensions in the new government.²³ Implementing the new constitution given such tensions would prove difficult. Balewa's first major test occurred in the May 1962. In preparation for the 1964 federal legislature election, a census was taken. The count led to two different results. One count in December 1962 indicated the Northern State held forty-nine percent and while another in January 1963 showed fifty-eight percent of Nigeria's population.²⁴ Since the seats in the federal House of Representatives were apportioned by population, a decline in the population in the north would require a redistribution of Northern House seats to the Western and Eastern States and, thereby, create the possibility that the Muslim Northern State would not control a majority. Therefore, Balewa immediately nullified the results and ordered a subsequent census in 1963. The new census results released in 1964 indicated the Northern State actually held fifty-three percent of the adult population. The results led to accusations of political corruption because the Northern State did not lose any seats in the House of Representatives. The Western and Eastern States challenged the results, the federal government rejected the challenge.²⁵ The political turmoil created by rejected challenge to the

²² Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* (Oxford University Press), no. 56 (2004): 563-595, 588.

²³ Crowder, 293.

²⁴ Aderanti Adepoju, "Military Rule and Population Issues in Nigeria," *The Royal African Society* 80, no. 318 (January 1981): 29-47, 30.

²⁵ Adepoju, 31.

census in turn led to violence and the military coup in 1966. In the middle of the census debacle, Balewa agreed to create out of the Western State a fourth Nigerian State, the Mid-Western State. The decision was the result of Western State Assembly representative's inability to resolve political infighting related to ethnic, economic, and political representation.

Seeking to gain a majority within the federal House of Representatives, the NPC (Northern State) and NCNC (Eastern State) parties created a coalition to oppose the AG (Western State). The purpose was threefold. The coalition created a unified front against party politics and allowed a coalition agenda to move forward within the federal House of Representatives. Additionally, the coalition allowed the political minority within the Western State to gain a voice within the federal government to push the agenda of a new State. Opposition to the AG party's democratic socialist ideology went against the coalition party's nationalist agenda.²⁶ A new state would provide proper representation of the aggrieved political party without the AG having to embrace socialism. Hence when asked to create a new state to meet the political minority requirements, Balewa approved stating, "the federal government is not interested in creating new states, but when people belonging to a particular area want a separate state and ask for the support of the federal government, we are obliged to aid them. The support for the creation of the Mid-West State is on these grounds."²⁷ Political motivations are also apparent within his response. The creation of a fourth state bifurcated the power base of the AG party and the Western State. The bifurcation allowed the NPC led Northern State to maintain a majority within the federal government. It also prevented any future alliances between the NCNC and AG. The ethnic tensions associated with change were still fresh in the minds of many Nigerians leading up to elections.

²⁶ Henry E. Alapiki, "State Creation in Nigeria: Failed Approaches to National Integration and Local Autonomy," *African Studies Review* 48, no. 3 (December 2005): 49-65, 56.

²⁷ Alapiki, 56.



Figure 2. Four States of Nigeria 1966.

During the negotiations leading up to the first election, each of the three States expressed concerns over distribution of power in a federal government and more importantly what powers the States would have. Still fresh in memory was the 1953 Kano riot between the Northern and Eastern States over federal governance.²⁸ One approach to these concerns would have been to place members from each political party in key positions within the federal government. However, Balewa appointed Hausa-Fulani Northerners to key federal positions without regard to education or capability.²⁹ On another occasion, Balewa ousted the duly elected Chief Akintola of the Yoruba State and reinstated Chief Awolowo, the previous head of State.³⁰ Balewa's actions arose from fears of an ethnic Yoruba uprising under the new and radical leadership of Chief Akintola. Additionally, the early struggle to maintain the dominance of the Muslim north only served to further reinforce State identity, what the constitution had sought to change. Balewa

²⁸ Larry Diamond, "Class, Ethnicity, and the Democratic State: Nigeria, 1950-1966," *Society for Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Cambridge University Press) 25, no. 3 (July 1983): 457-489, 472.

²⁹ Falola and Heaton, 165.

³⁰ Diamond, 479.

would not be the only federal leader to deal with ethnic based politics. Balewa's governance actually exacerbated further tensions of equal State representation between the Federal and State governments. However, a change to the constitution occurred in 1963.

The Nigerian 1963 Republican constitution established a ceremonial President in the place of the Queen and a judicial appeals system in which legal review ended at the Federal Supreme Court instead of the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council in England.³¹ These two changes began Nigeria's transformation in governance from parliamentary to a presidential federal republic.

From 1960 through 1966, Prime Minister Balewa's federal governance favored the ethnic Hausa-Fulani State over the Igbo and Yoruba States. This coupled with previous ethnic tensions during the colonial era, led to a build up of violent ethnic conflict between the Northern and Eastern States. This culminated in the October 1966 Northern Pogrom massacre of over 3000 Igbo by the Hausa-Fulani. It is important to understand that hostility between the Hausa-Fulani and the Igbo had been a burning problem for more than forty years. Nigerian politics in the years leading up to independence was characterized by negotiation and appeasement. The first republic was created to ensure inter-State cooperation and a national identity. It actually did the opposite. Since neither State agreed on all elements of the Richards constitution, the new constitution created friction immediately and the resulted in inter-state conflict. Therefore, ethnic state violence resulted from the Hausa-Fulani federal government not conceding any changes to the Igbo. The result of such an impasse led to increased tensions between the Federal government and the Igbo led State. The impasse would eventually culminate in the Biafra Civil War. However, in this instance reciprocal ethnic violence proves that control cannot be gained when it occurs. Additionally, other instances of reciprocal ethnic violence have occurred at the State level

³¹ Itse Sagay, *Nigeria: Federalism, the Constituion and Resource Control*. 2012. <http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/essays/resourcecontrol/sagay.html> (accessed May 4, 2013).

throughout Nigeria's history. The impact of which is continual internal conflict at the State level and an increased need for internal security by the federal government. During the second republic, similar patterns of internal conflict would occur.

Civilian Governance Shagari (October 1979 – December 1983)

Muslim President Shenhu Shagari took office in 1979. Shagari did not receive the required two-thirds vote necessary to win the election outright. The first runner-up, Chief Awolowo challenged the results and mandated a second election run between the two parties. However, the federal judiciary ruled Shagari the winner based upon the total popular majority vote.³² Therefore, Shagari's presidency started with increased ethnic political party tensions because Awolowo and others viewed the federal ruling as ethnically motivated, rather than constitutional. Shagari's challenge to enforcing the constitution became the distribution of wealth and equal representation of ethnic minorities. The two major factors leading to Shagari's failure were federal overspending and corruption. Shagari set forth an aggressive federally funded project to build universities, housing projects, colleges of education, and polytechnic institutions in every State, at this time numbering nineteen.³³ The goal was in line with the NPN party message of reform. NPN Stated, "In line with the constitutional provision of mixed economy for the country the NPN will pursue a policy of encouraging the fullest development of private initiative and private enterprise to the extent consistent with and complementary to Government's control of the commanding heights of the economy as defined in the Constitution."³⁴ The Statement gave Shagari's government the flexibility to control federal spending in support of these objectives. In addition, such communication provided the government flexibility to award contracts to political elites and provide recourse for rebuttal if challenged. Therefore, Shagari

³² Falola and Heaton, 202.

³³ Falola and Heaton, 202.

³⁴ Shehu Othman, "Classes, Crises and Coup: The Demise of Shagari's Regime," *Affrican Affairs* 83, no. 333 (October 1984): 441-461,445.

handpicked political elites to receive the federally funded construction contracts.³⁵ The political elites thereby expanded power bases within the States. Additionally, the corruption created further division between the elites and the common Nigerian.

Corruption spilled across the federal government. Most elements of the government were receiving kickbacks from political elites and businesses or pocketing funds directly. When Shagari was elected, the Nigerian government had a national deficit of ₦1.4b. A year later after taking office, a surplus of ₦5.5b existed. However, due to rampant corruption, two years later, the government's debt rose to ₦21.9b.³⁶ Therefore, federal overspending and open corruption created the failure of Shagari's government. The results of such failure stemmed from awarding Federal contracts to personal political elites and private businesses. Concurrently, Shagari was dealing with political parties in the formation of a new constitution.

Leading up to the 1979 constitutional rewrite, the political consensus pushed for State reformation. The signing of the 1979 constitution enacted measures to limit the creation of new States within Nigeria. Several points of law limited State expansion. A two-thirds majority by the following: Federal Senate and House of Representatives, House of Assembly of the respective affected States, and affected local government council.³⁷ Given ethnic disparity among the current States and political parties, any hope of receiving the two-thirds vote was marginal at best. These measures gave rise to political debate on both changes to the constitution and changes to the State landscape. Neither of which occurred due to the military coup of 1983. It would not be until 1999, that Nigeria would see a vast improvement in civilian governance.

³⁵ Othman, 450-51.

³⁶ Ibid., 452.

³⁷ Rotimi T. Suberu, "The Struggle for New States in Nigeria, 1976-1990," *The Royal African Society* 90, no. 361 (October 1991): 499-522, 508.

Civilian Governance Obsanjo (May 1999 – May 2007)

May 1999 saw Christian Olusegun Obsanjo become Nigeria's fourth elected president. Obsanjo set forth and created a new constitution in the hopes of dissolving the built up ethnic angst across the nation. As part of the new government, the Federal Assembly changed to contain three hundred and sixty representatives in the house and one hundred and nine representatives in the senate. Obsanjo's new federal legislature took into account the expansion to thirty-six States and more importantly, showed willingness by the new government to properly represent all ethnic political parties. Additionally, the new constitution gave the perception of moving towards ending corruption across the federal and State governments rampant since the mid-60s. Obsanjo's execution of the new government met with a warm yet mixed reception.³⁸ Obsanjo's implementation and management of the democratic government maintained relative stability and peace; however, it provided no measures to resolve economic disparity across Nigerian States. Obsanjo governance deserves applause in enabling the government to provide stability and security necessary for the democratic elections in 2007, the first time free elections occurred sequentially in Nigeria's checkered history. The transition to the next democratic government met with consternation over election processes. However, it would prove to be the first successful transition from one form of civilian governance to another.

Civilian Governance Yar'Adua (May 2007- May 2010)

Umaru Musa Yar'Adua became Nigeria's president after a tumultuous election and perceived ballot rigging.³⁹ Much like Obsanjo, Yar'Adua used democracy to push a united Nigerian agenda. Yar'Adua's intent was to remove the decades of perceived corruption within the federal government. More specifically, Yar'Adua's goal was to stop the corruption concerning

³⁸ Falola and Heaton, 235.

³⁹ BBC News, *Huge win for Nigeria's Yar'Adua*, April 23, 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6584393.stm> (accessed February 16, 2013).

national oil revenues and their distribution at both the federal and state level. In part, to dispel notions of his own corruption, he publicly disclosed his privately held investments. He was the first President to do so. His intent was to bring transparency to an embattled democratic government. More importantly, he intended to show Nigerians that as a man of the people, he could be trusted to bring forth further economic progress across Nigeria. Unfortunately, Yar'Adua died in office in 2010. Goodluck Jonathan, the Vice-President became the interim President until the next election in 2012. Jonathan was elected President in 2012. The election ushered in the third consecutive era of democracy for Nigeria. The history of Nigeria's civilian governance outlined against the original constitution has met with varied results.

Nigeria's early experience with independence and democracy met with violence: ethnic conflict, religious violence, economic disparity, and corruption. The ability to meet the principles of the constitution seems very elusive within such an environment. Additionally, the ability for the federal government to manage ethnic violence and conflict met with varied results. The idea of State expansion to reduce the disparity in ethnic minority representation did not curb ethnic tensions through 1993. In addition, progressive growth and development did not occur across all states as numerous governments had intended. Political elitism reinforced corruption at federal and state levels leading to instability and internal conflict. However, the military governance of Nigeria since 1960 may demonstrate results that are more efficient.

MILITARY GOVERNANCE

Military Governance – Ironsi (January 1966 – July 1966)

Major General (MG) Ironsi became the military head of State in 1966. The military took matters into their own hands to restore Nigeria to what the constitution mandated, a unified Nigeria with a national identity. Ironsi as the new military leader of Nigeria fell into the same trap as Balewa, but took it a step further. Ironsi dissolved the federal system, surrounded himself with only Igbo advisors, and appointed only Igbo military officers over more experienced and senior

Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba officers within the newly created provinces.⁴⁰ Balewa accomplished exactly the same agenda during his governance. Therefore, reciprocal actions by Ironsi against the southern tribes further widened growing ethnic tensions between tribal led political parties. Ironsi use of the federal armed forces as a means to accomplish his agenda against the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba becomes one tool for control during his governance.

During the first transition to military government, Ironsi removed from power the federal prime minister and the opposing State governors.⁴¹ As the federal Army's Commander in Chief, he already controlled one tool for the execution of state terror, the Army. In order to gain control of the federal and State governments, Ironsi used the federal armed forces to implement his agenda. Therefore, the surgical use of the federal armed forces is but one method of state terror using selective violence to create collaboration. In contrast, civil war violence did not occur immediately because Ironsi controlled all three States through military force, thereby preventing the outbreak of a civil war. Ironsi's actions led to reprisal by the other ethnic tribes and a violent military coup. Ironsi was deposed a few short months later and federal governance transitioned to MG Gowon, a Muslim Northerner.

Military Governance – Gowon (August 1966- July 1975)

MG Gowon, as the military ruler, expanded Nigeria from four to twelve States in 1967. Gowon's intent was two-fold. Twelve States, divided six to the north and south would redistribute political power equally between northern and southern Nigeria.⁴² In theory, the new state arrangement would prevent any one political party from gaining an advantage. In addition, twelve States would enable more ethnic minority's equal representation within the federal government. Thereby, ethnic minorities would no longer suffer subjugation under the larger ethnic majority

⁴⁰ Falola and Heaton, 173.

⁴¹ Ibid., 172.

⁴² Alapiki, 58.

States of the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba. The new state construct also took into account the tribal and ethnic historical tendencies of each geographical area to create the new borders. This method kept a majority of ethnic groups within specific states; however, it only served to further divide a Nigeria seeking unification. Unfortunately, the expansion to twelve States did not create the intended equilibrium within Nigeria. However, ethnic conflict and economic disparity became contributing factors leading up to the civil war. In 1967, civil war erupted and endured for almost three years before the military restored stability. After gaining control of the nation, Gowon sought to reinforce the ideals laid out in constitution in 1973.



Figure 3. Twelve States of Nigeria 1967.

Gowon planned the 1973 census to not repeat the tragedy of 1963. Gowon sent military escorts across Nigeria to properly oversee the census by civilian personnel. The resulting census in 1974 indicated an increasing population in the North and a decreasing population in the south.⁴³ The immediate reaction by The Southern States immediately reacted by decrying a Northern agenda bent on maintaining control of the federal government. Instead of unifying

⁴³ Adepoju, 34.

Nigeria, these results only served to increase the divide between the North and South. With the 1963 census fresh in the minds of Nigerians, the census served to reinforce the previous ethnic and political tensions and further exacerbated mistrust between civilians and the military.

MG Gowon replaced Ironsi because Ironsi had attempted to turn Nigeria into a unitary State. The coup was an attempt to resolve ethnic conflict and economic disparity across the States.⁴⁴ However, the ensuing Civil war violence as defined by Kalyvas occurred because of the political impasse between the Eastern and Western States.⁴⁵ The defined opposition became Governor Ojukwu and the Igbo led Eastern State against MG Gowon's government. The Igbo as a minority State under the federally led Hausa-Fulani government felt ethnically oppressed and underrepresented in the federal government. The result of such oppression led the Igbo to seek secession from Nigeria and formation of an independent nation. Attacks against ethnic Igbo in the Northern State by the Hausa-Fulani only served to exacerbate these ethnic tensions.⁴⁶ Governor Ojukwu and the Igbo eastern State also challenged Gowon's authority on the premise of military seniority.⁴⁷ The Muslim led Hausa-Fulani federal government responded with a federal police action to exert control through use of force to restore peace and create unity for Nigeria.⁴⁸ Ironically, the opposite occurred as the Igbo rightfully saw this as an attempt by Gowon's government to coerce submission. The Igbo used the State militia to oppose the federal armed forces and their advance into their territory.⁴⁹ The result of which was an escalation from state terror to civil war violence. With the escalation into civil war violence, the Hausa-Fulani

⁴⁴ Emmanuel Ojo, "Guarding the "Guardians": A Prognosis of Panacea for Evolving Stable Civil-Military Relations in Nigeria," *Armed Forces and Society* 35, no. 4 (July 2009): 688-708,689.

⁴⁵ Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.

⁴⁶ Raph Uwechue, *Reflections on the Nigerian War: Facing the Future* (New York: African Pub Corps, 1971),44.

⁴⁷ Ojo, "Guarding the "Guardians", 690.

⁴⁸ Uwechue, 18.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 8.

understood implementing a strategy of genocide could potentially remove the Igbo led Eastern State from the political landscape.

Upon realizing that the use of selective violence by the federal armed forces would not regain control of the Biafra breakaway State, the Hausa-Fulani government resorted to genocide strategy to remove the Igbo as a political problem. Gowon's government accomplished this primarily through the starvation of the Igbo led Eastern State. The Hausa-Fulani established a federal blockade to prevent aid and food from being sent into the Biafran State.⁵⁰ The result of which was two-fold. Motivated by ethnic and religious differences, the Hausa-Fulani exterminated over two million Igbo's.⁵¹ For over two and a half years the Hausa-Fulani exterminated the people within the Eastern State, specifically the Igbo tribe. The combined violence of these two action resulted in bringing the Igbo to negotiate a ceasefire in order to prevent the complete destruction of the Eastern State. Therefore, under Gowon's government, selective violence through state terror alone, had failed to bring the Igbo minority to submit and the violence escalated into a civil war. The civil war used genocide as one method to eventually regain control of the Igbo State. Additionally, the actions associated with ethnic genocide against the Igbo led Eastern State would leave lasting ethnic and political tensions across Nigeria for many years to come. Gowon's governance encapsulated all of the factors outlined in the Kalyvas' methodology on creating collaboration and control.

Kalyvas observes that civil war violence occurs when two parties cannot reach an agreement. In the case of Nigeria, Gowon could not coerce the Igbo led Eastern State using the federal armed and police forces. Gowon had to escalate methods in order to gain control of the rogue Eastern State. The use of the federal armed forces to implement a blockade became the means of implementing Gowon's new strategy of genocide against the Igbo led Eastern State.

⁵⁰ Uwechue, 9.

⁵¹ Adebayo Oyeboade and Toyin Falola, *Hot Spot: Sub-Saharan Africa* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2010), 74.

The end result aligns with Kaylvas' dictum of those you wish not to control, you remove permanently.

Under Gowon's governance, the Nigeria experienced significant turmoil instead of prosperity as outlined in the constitution. Ethnic and religious violence and internal conflict occurred tied to political corruption and the abuse of federal funding. All of these actions and the resulting effects forever changed Nigerian perception of civilian and military governance. However, Gowon's governance would conclude during a coup in 1975.

Military Governance – Mohammed (July 1975- February 1976)

General Murtala Mohammed endeared to resolve previous census corruption, establish a new federal capital and create more States during his initial speech after taking power.⁵² Mohammed's intent for expansion to nineteen States ties to the economic development and ethnic minority representation. Further division would allow equal sharing of federal import tax distributions enabling each State to achieve political and economic growth.⁵³ However, the division would also allow smaller resource rich States to receive increased federal income distributions as outlined in the constitution, creating slight disparities across Nigeria. Mohammed's intent was to create national unity by enabling the States through representation of ethnic minorities and distribution of wealth.⁵⁴ These actions would downplay the prominent ethnic tensions between majority and minority groups, thereby creating a sense of equality in the hope of creating some sense of national unity. These actions contributed to setting the conditions for elections to occur and the beginning of Nigeria's second democratic republic.

⁵² Adepoju, 35.

⁵³ Suberu, 500.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 502.

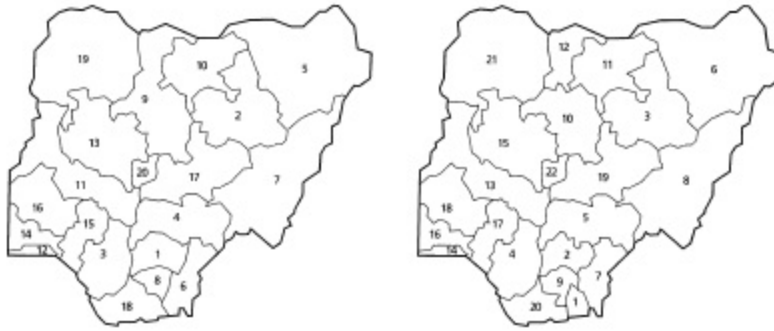


Figure 4. Nigeria Nineteen States 1976 and Twenty-one States 1987.

Military Governance – Buhari (December 1983 – August 1985)

In 1983, MG Muhammadu Buhari successfully staged a coup and established himself as the leader of the Supreme Military Council (SMC). MG Buhari accomplished this by using the federal armed forces to seize control from the democratic government and ousting the elected politicians at the federal, State and local levels. This culling across the entire political spectrum allowed for rapid replacement by military officers. Tied closely to these actions was the implementation of federal police surveillance to “watch” the federal armed forces officers.⁵⁵ This created a check and balance system that allowed Buhari to control the three levels of government and ensure another coup would not arise. Buhari’s use of selective violence was his method to control specific states not aligned to his cause. The threat of violence by the Buhari government provided enough incentive in most instances for states to collaborate with the government rather than fight against it. Buhari inability to properly reign in the military led to his demise by a military coup after two short years in office.

Military Governance – Babangida (August 1985 – August 1993)

General Babangida became the President of Nigeria in 1985. Debate over creation of new States crossed over into his regime. The argument for new States stemmed back to ethnic

⁵⁵ Falola and Heaton, 214.

representation, federal distribution of wealth, and unresolved State issues from the 1976 state changes.⁵⁶ The political bureau presented a report to Babangida indicating the qualified requirement, as outlined in the 1979 Constitution, for two additional States. Therefore, in September 1987 two new States joined nineteen others bringing the total to twenty-one. State expansion occurred again in 1991 under Babangida.

The expansion to thirty States evolved from the requirement for “even development and rapid modernization” across Nigeria.⁵⁷ Again, the premise of economic distributions to smaller States would allow rapid growth and development. Another theory indicated that new States could draw external business because a more ethnically diverse Nigeria would create more opportunities. Additionally, ethnic minorities again garnered the ability to vote at the federal level. Nigeria becomes much more fractionalized with thirty States. Ethnically driven political parties no longer maintain dominant control. The diversification drives ethnic parties to unify along common ideals under representative political parties. In turn, these amalgamated political parties provide control within the federal government. However, governance and control are two separate issues.

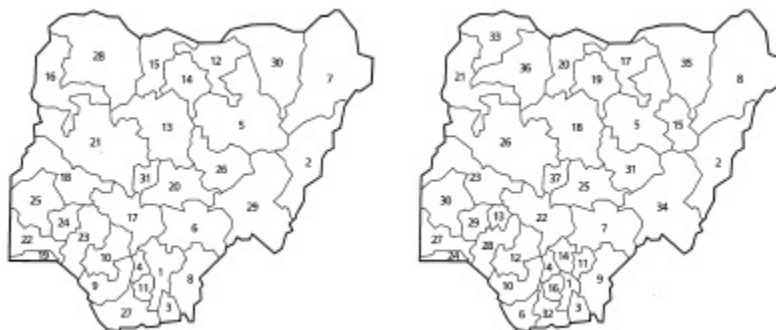


Figure 5. Nigeria Thirty States 1991 and Thirty-Six States 1996.

⁵⁶ Suberu, 518.

⁵⁷ R.T. Akinyele, "States Creation in Nigeria: The Willink Report in Retrospect," *African Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (September 1996): 71-94, 86.

Babangida's coup established Nigeria's longest-lived military government. He extended what MG Buhari started, the isolated and specific targeting of political enemy's at the Federal, State and local levels using the federal armed forces. Babangida's ability to use state terror "as needed" allowed him to create collaboration amongst the States and maintain power as demonstrated by arbitrary arrests, detention and jailing of opposition organizations without trial.⁵⁸ Coupled with a candid national agenda moving towards a new federal democracy, Babangida gave Nigerians a sense of hope and stability.⁵⁹ This became a form of soft coercion for the people. Thereby, Nigerians were inclined to support Babangida's regime and therefore, his ability to remain in power. Nigeria experienced one other significant period of military governance using state terror. The governance of Defense Minister Sani Abacha ended any progressive transition to Nigeria's third republic.

Military Governance – Abacha (November 1993 – June 1998)

In 1993, Defense Minister Sani Abacha assumed power declaring him the Head of State and Commander in Chief of all federal armed forces.⁶⁰ Abacha replaced all elected governors with federal armed forces officers and announced no clear timeline for a return to democratic government. Abacha crushed any hope of civilian governance with the dissolution of the elected Federal and State legislatures, State governors and local governments.⁶¹ In this case, Abacha threw out the constitution and installed his own form of government. Abacha installed military officers at the State and local levels of government to maintain control of a now ungoverned society. Abacha used the federal military and police to enforce his governance. Abacha used every tool of terror available. Abacha used the federal armed forces and police to assassinate any

⁵⁸ Peter M. Lewis, "Engame in Nigeria? The Politics of a Failed Democractic Transition," *African Affairs* 93, no. 372 (July 1994): 323-340, 329.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 323.

⁶⁰ Falola and Heaton, 230.

⁶¹ Lewis, 323.

political and internal military opposition. Ken Sato-Wiwa, a prolific Nigerian writer and advocate of the exploited Ogoni tribe was arrested on false charges, tried by special court and executed because of his attacks on the Abacha government.⁶² Abacha exploited ethnic majorities and minorities to temporarily divide State governments allowing federal armed forces to resolve collaboration issues and thereby maintain control in emerging hotspots.⁶³ Abacha also staged his own coups to convince Nigerians that central power needed to reside under his authority in order to prevent emergence of instability. Therefore, Abacha was the most polished user of state terror as a tool for control and collaboration over the last forty years. All of these forms of military government shared common bonds in exerting control over Nigeria.

Looking across Nigeria's democratic landscape under Balewa, Shagari, Obasanjo, and Yar'Adua, each of them attempted to resolve ethnic violence and conflict, resource disparity and corruption to some degree. Some succeeded while others failed. Nigerian Chinua Achebe defined Nigeria's inability to achieve political stability as a leadership problem. He stated "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian character. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to a challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership." Achebe's main point is the corruption that both forms of governance faced or created while in power. Directly linked to this corruption was ethnic violence and conflict tied to resource disparity amongst the States. A look at security and stability by the civilian and military governance provides additional insight as to why this occurred.

Nigeria's federal government has used selective violence through state terror as a means of creating collaboration and control since gaining independence in 1960. Civil war violence,

⁶² Daniel Jordan Smith, "The Bakassi Boys: Vigilantism, Violence, and Political Imagination in Nigeria," *Cultural Anthropology* 19, no. 3 (August 2004), 436.

⁶³ William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 1998), 206.

genocide and reciprocal extermination have occurred because of failure to gain or regain control. In Nigeria, military governance would prove that state terror was the only short-term form of violence they could use to gain control and the collaboration of the population. Additionally, the purpose proclaimed by military governance to remain in power was to meet constitutional conditions in order to transition to a democratic government. This political statement became a tool to create hope for a population under military control with an uncertain future. The ability to create collaboration amongst the states to follow the party line was a direct result of the selective use of violence against the non-conforming states. However, this did not always occur.

The Biafra Civil War is one example where the use of selective violence did not lead to control or collaboration for the civilian government of the Igbo led State. In this particular case, other factors played a significant role in preventing state terror from proving productive. More importantly, these factors manifest themselves in not only the Biafra Civil War but in all the other internal conflicts and changes to military governance Nigeria have seen. Ethnic violence and conflict, religious opposition, revenue distribution disparity and unequal federal representation were characteristics that supported the Igbo led cessation and resulting civil war.

In some cases, very little violence was used to transition to a new government, in other cases large amounts of violence were used to remove numerous political and military obstacles to eventually gain and maintain control. Each military government demonstrated that selective violence executed through state terror led to collaboration, which in turn led to control and eventually stability. Each military government demonstrated that security was maintainable by federal police and the armed forces. Each military government also demonstrated that the loss of control was not a result of the poor execution of selective violence but rather other factors that they chose to ignore. In the case of military governance, ethnic violence and conflict, economic disparity and unequal representation created the mechanisms for a change in government.

The Ironsi, Gowon, Buhari, Babangida, and Abacha governments all used state terror to gain and maintain control through collaboration yet in the process; they all divided Nigeria along

ethnic lines, bifurcated Nigeria along religious lines, and improperly distributed national income to the states. None of them attempted to unify Nigeria at the federal level through the reinforcement and integration of constitutional State rights. Therefore, each of these governments missed the founding principle of the original constitution of 1947, that of national identity through unity.⁶⁴ Other forms of violence have expressed themselves in Nigerian history. Civil war violence and genocide are two forms of violence that have exacerbated instability in Nigeria.

What Nigeria experienced was yet another reason why State identity holds stronger sway over Nigerians than a national one. Tying this to the Biafra Civil War, one can conclude that civil war violence, genocide, and reciprocal extermination are methods of violence that will not and cannot unite a nation State because of the lasting ethnic and religious undertones with regards to Nigeria. Regarding Nigeria specifically, the demonstrated use of these three methods of violence clearly indicates that Nigerians are not seeking long-term reconciliation or unification along ethnic lines. Given all of these methods of violence concerning Nigeria, they do show a pattern over time by the military governments.

The Ironsi, Gowon, Buhari, Babangida, and Abacha governments proved that selective violence in the form of State terror did create control through forced collaboration for a short period in most instances. The result of control was interim security and stability. The resultant security and stability had other undertones that precipitated a return to instability and violence in all cases. Both civilian and military governance clearly demonstrated that the application of the federal armed forces and police proved more than capable of creating and maintaining security at the federal level. Therefore, the Nigerian federal armed forces and police are the mechanism to create long-term internal security and stability for the nation. However, in order to provide long-term internal security and stability for the nation, the outlying factors of ethnic violence and

⁶⁴ Crowder, 273.

conflict, religious violence and oppression, economic disparity, and equal representation must be addressed.

INTERNAL FACTORS

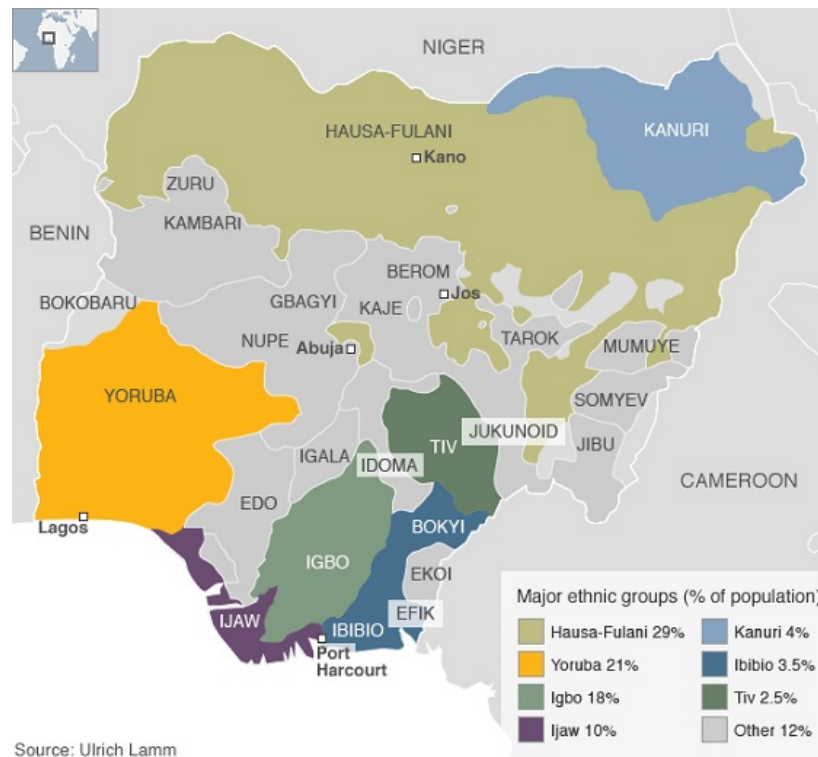


Figure 6. Major Nigerian Ethnic Groups by Area.

The extension of ethnic equality without legislative representation at the federal level of government played a part in how Gowon, Buhari, Babangida, and Abacha governed. In each case, ethnicity at the federal level divided the governments at the State level resulting in conflict and violence. In one instance, Buhari rallied the Muslim northerners to vote against Obsanjo based simply upon ethnicity and religion. The intent was twofold. Obsanjo was a Yoruba tribesman and not aligned with the Hausa-Fulani tribe and party politics. In addition, Obsanjo was a Christian. Buhari's purpose was to prevent a Yoruba candidate from taking office because it would change

the balance of power.⁶⁵ The impression of losing political power ties closely to ethnic violence and conflict. As mentioned, early Nigeria was three States aligned along ethnic lines. Therefore, ethnicity is linked to State power and, thereby, federal power. Abacha exemplified the link between ethnicity and power.

Babangida and Abacha extolled ethnic disparity by actions as national leaders. Babangida's annulment of the 1993 elections was interpreted as ethnically based since Chief Abiola was a Christian Yoruba tribesman rather than a Muslim based Northerner.⁶⁶ Subsequently under Abacha's regime, Yoruba tribesmen were targeted for detention and incarceration after suspected coup charges drew more tensions between the Yoruba and the Hausa-Fulani led political parties.⁶⁷ The patterns of ethnic disparity extended across both federal and State levels of government. Again, the results of ethnic disparity created cleavages within Nigeria, reinforced ethnically aligned State governments and prevented the establishment of a national identity. Tied to national identity is religious identity.

There are two major religious groups in Nigeria, with Muslims in the north and Christians in the south. The friction of two opposing sets of ideal, traditions, and values has expressed itself regardless of civilian or military governance. Religious differences and religious based violence occurred at both federal and State levels. One example was the wholesale replacement of all Muslim officers within the federal military. The Christian led Federal government feared a Muslim led military coup. Therefore, Obsanjo replaced all of the Muslim officers with Christians.⁶⁸ The result was instant reversal of roles in leading religious oppression across the country. These actions further serve to divide Nigeria preventing any hope of national unification. This example highlights the significant difference between the two religious cultures

⁶⁵ Ukoha Ukiwo, "Politics, Ethno-religious Conflicts and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no. 1 (March 2003): 115-138, 123.

⁶⁶ Ukiwo, 122.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 124.

and the tie into ethnic diversity. On occasion within Nigeria attempts have been made to close the divide between the two religious ideologies have occurred.

Babangida remarked the two religious ideologies have more in common than they have differences, such as belief life after death and morals of right and wrong.⁶⁹ However, the method by which to bring the two together remains elusive because of the internal factors of ethnicity and State rights. Even when the 1988 federal motion declared “no government shall overtly or covertly give preferential special treatment to any particular religion,” it still occurred.⁷⁰ The preferential treatment is an extension of ethnically aligned political parties that become the dominant ruling party. In addition, campaigns to impose Sharia law exacerbate religious tensions.



Figure 7. Nigerian States under Sharia Law 2012.

The founding constitution created a federal judiciary. The purpose was to provide common law to all Nigerians as the basis for equal treatment and creating national unity. However, the practice of Sharia law by Muslim northerners has created tension at the national

⁶⁹ Jibrin Ibrahim, "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (March 1991): 115-136, 117.

⁷⁰ Ibrahim, 119.

level of government. The reason is twofold. Disparity exists at the State levels of government because of the change in 1962 to allow Sharia Courts of Appeal to exist and enforce Sharia law.⁷¹ The result of which was continual Sharia expansion into new Muslim aligned States through 1999. The end result is that the majority of northern States live under Sharia law, essentially dividing the country in half with regards to the enforcement of law. Thereby, the attempts to unite Nigeria under a common national identity meet significant resistance because of religious ideologies. Religion and ethnic diversity now converge along political party lines and State boundaries. However, religious and ethnic diversity drive economic disparity which is aligned with political agendas.

Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in the high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers and VIPs of waste.⁷²

Economic disparity is the result of corruption linked to ethnic violence and conflict within Nigeria. Throughout Nigeria's checkered history, one factor remains constant, the failure to equitably distribute federal funding. Several governments exemplify the trend. The constitution delineated the distribution of federal funds and what funds States could manage independent of the federal government. Balewa's government disproportionately invested capital and diverted funds into the Northern State, the base of the political party.⁷³ The disparity in income distribution became an immediate item of contention between all three States. The minority States demanded equal distribution of wealth and sought a change to the constitution since it favored the north. However, the funds were gone, filtered down amongst political elite and private businesses. Additionally, Balewa was able to hoard federal funds through the use of constitutional

⁷¹ Joseph Kenny, "Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a Secular State," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26, no. 4 (November 1996): 338-364, 341.

⁷² Falola and Oyeade, 77.

⁷³ P.O. Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," *Africa Today* 37, no. 3 (3rd Quarter 1990): 18, 4.

authorities. The patterns of economic instability extend across Nigeria's history. The inherent economic disparity becomes an ethnic problem since most States are aligned along ethnic borders.⁷⁴ The problem fuels State friction between the States and between the States and the federal government.

Economic disparity has been a feature of Nigerian history, an artifact of colonialism and elitism. As Nigeria's new government took effect, ethnically aligned political parties realized how much control could result from the redistribution of federal income. The redistribution went into personal political elites, businesses, and States ethnically aligned to political parties. The results were immediate, instant turmoil between the ethnic minorities and representative political parties. When the pattern continued, violence ensued. Again, until the late 1990s, the pattern of economic disparity and corruption served two purposes. Civilian and military governments used these factors in defining the platform of political parties or to justify military government. Additionally, the redistribution of funds forced the division of the nation into smaller States because the ethnic minorities demanded representation and once represented demanded a fair share of federal revenues. The cycle repeats itself until 1999 when the recent civilian governments addressed the economic disparity and corruption. Therefore, the vicious cycle prevented formation of a national identity because of ethnically aligned political parties fueled by the redistribution of funds and corruption.

The factors of ethnic conflict, religious oppression, and economic disparity provide the mechanism that hinder Nigeria's ability to unite under a singular identity. Each of these factors creates problems within the system that federal and State governance must address. Any one of the factors provides enough tension to prevent unity. The merger of two or more of the factors is enough to create violence and conflict. Corruption results from these factors and also prevents

⁷⁴ William Ehwarieme, "The Military Factor in Nigeria's Democratic Stability, 1999-2009," *Armed Forces and Society* 37, no. 3 (July 2011): 494-511, 498.

unity. Until Nigeria's federal and State governments can move forward to mitigate the risks and hazards associated with these factors, national unity will not be obtained.

CONCLUSION

The founding constitution provided a blueprint for a prosperous and unified Nigeria. It clearly outlined a federal legislature under which each State was represented. Each state was free to create its own legislature. Each State was free to create local governments as appropriate. Each State was free to elect new governors and federal representatives through their own processes. Each State was empowered to allocate independently income received from the federal government. Each State received a portion of federal income based upon census data, essentially the needs of the people. Economic freedom allowed State identity to endure under national identity. The federal government created a judiciary to provide rule of law for the common man, thereby reinforcing national unity. Each State practiced law according to religious beliefs. In summation, Nigeria was setup for partial success. However, some elements of the constitution created disparity. The federal legislature represented only the political parties from each state rather than the ethnic parties from each State. The ethnic majority became the ruling political party within each State. Essentially, the political elite gained representation rather than the people. Instead of creating the intended unity within the states, fractures occurred along ethnic lines, exacerbating internal state tensions. Ethnic tensions in turn led to State governments dispensing funds along party lines rather than equally across the state. The creation of the have and have not's coalesced from the continued corrupt practices. In turn, instead of the reinforcing state unity, States were fractured into smaller unified ethnic groups seeking equal representation. Consequently, the federal government has had to intervene to prevent violence within the States.

One method to reduce internal state violence was dividing the existing States into newer smaller ones to represent ethnic political interests better. Over the history of Nigeria, this method has been used several times and has resulted in the thirty-six States that exist today. However,

even with representation, the ability of new states to properly govern and then fund State agendas became a problem. Each state without federal oversight enabled the previous political elite cadre to continue old practices and, thereby, empty State coffers. In turn, these actions created more disparity and friction between the States and the federal government. In the instances where the civilian government failed to achieve the mandates of the constitution, the military stepped in to correct the problems.

Military governance displaced civilian government in Nigeria when State disputes became untenable and violence ensued or when the federal government failed to provide for the people. Early Nigerian military governments responded with violence and force to protect the people by removing corrupt and ethnically aligned civilian governments. Military action sought to restore order and allow peaceful transitions to democratic governance in line with the constitution. The return to civilian rule was impeded whenever ethnically dominated military governments sought to retain control of the nation. The economic disparity created through corruption supported the ethnic conflicts of the early military governments. When the military governments understood that, the federal government had access to enormous revenues, the military elite allocated the revenues to themselves and their associated business owners to create long-term power bases that persisted after transition to civilian government. The results of such actions increased the division between political elites and the common Nigerian. In turn, no incentive exists to unify Nigeria under a common goal, rather the populace remains divided between the wealthy and the impoverished. Violence ensues whenever Nigerians realize federal funds are being diverted to political elites. Violence occurs at both the State and federal levels of government. In turn, federal armed forces or federal police action results.

The ability of the military to control the nation resulted from the selective use of violence. The governments of Ironsi, Gowon, Buhari, Babangida, and Abacha all used different amounts of violence to ensure the collaboration of opposing States and political parties. The application of violence by these governments determined the level of control. In some cases the

use of violence proved successful, in other instances its use led to disaster. However, all of these governments were able to provide security and stability for a short time. When control was lost, it was the result of internal political conditions: ethnic conflict, religious oppression, economic disparity, disenfranchisement, and corruption. The resolution of factors created opportunities for the military governments to demonstrate success and transition to civilian governance. However, when factors were ignored or exacerbated by military governance, violence increased and the nation became further divided, preventing any form of national unification. In the case of national failure, the government ignored the guidelines outlined in the constitution. However, the governments of Obasanjo and Yar'Adua were able to successfully transition.

Nigeria's successful transition between civilian governments occurred because all of the significant factors of ethnic conflict, religious oppression, economic disparity, representation, and corruption were addressed vice being ignored. Nigerians realized the federal government finally had executed a strategy that showed positive results. The successful execution of governing strategy by Obasanjo and Yar'Adua created a sense of common purpose for Nigeria. Common purpose leads to unity and in turn an identity. However, Nigeria has not created a national identity. Progress has been made since 1999 towards that goal, but the creation of more States across Nigeria over time reinforces the ethnically independent nature of the States.

Division of the nation into thirty-six States addressed the concern of ethnic conflict from the perspective of the federal government, or so such division implies. The truth is twofold. Equal representation of ethnic minorities did occur. However, the reinforcement of State identity over a national identity prevents the formation of national unity. With the increased diversity of the nation, forming a common consensus among all States becomes increasingly difficult. The tension between ethnicity, religion, and economic disparity make any negotiations difficult as a direct result of over forty years of corruption at the federal and State level. Therefore, division of the nation into smaller representative States has solved one problem but exacerbated another. There is still no national identity.

For over forty years, ethnic conflict, religious oppression, economic disparity, malrepresentation, and corruption have divided and torn Nigeria apart. The constitution intended to mitigate these factors. However, the system of representation tended to align political parties and political competition along ethnic lines and to increase tensions and violence. The expansion of the number of States from the original three to thirty-six to improve representation and mitigate ethnic conflict reduced ethnic tensions. However, the federal government remained aligned along ethnic lines. Economic disparity results from ethnically motivated distributions and corruption. Religion aligned with ethnic political parties has created a sense of dominance by one party over another. The traditions, values, and ideals of religion prevent the unification of Nigeria under a unified national identity. The advent of religious conflict across Nigeria, especially from the 1990s onward, has required the use of federal and State armies to maintain order. Therefore, as long as external factors do not intervene, Nigeria can manage a secure and stable government.

In a survey conducted in 2000, forty-eight percent of Nigerians identified themselves along ethnic lines while another twenty-one percent identified themselves along religious lines.⁷⁵ With over two-thirds of Nigerians identifying with ethnic, religious or regional groups, there is little evidence that there is a common Nigerian identity. However, steps have been made in the current Republic towards mitigating ethnic conflict, religious oppression, and economic disparity. Once the barriers to progress are sufficiently removed, Nigeria can finally develop a national identity under which true unity can occur. The result of national identity is prosperity. For Nigeria, such prosperity leads to stability, security, and credibility on the world stage.

⁷⁵ Eghosa E. Osaghee and Rotimi T. Suberu, *A History of Identities, Violence, and Stability in Nigeria* (Oxford: Univeristy of Oxford, 2005), 9.

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