

POL105

NIGERIAN CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Course video is available on our app

Series 1: Foundations of Nigerian Constitutional Development

Series Outline

- **Part 1.1: Historical Background to Nigerian Constitutional Development**
 - 1.1.1: Pre-colonial political organisation
 - 1.1.2: British colonisation and amalgamation of 1914
 - 1.1.3: Early administrative structures
- **Part 1.2: Concept and Meaning of Constitutional Development**
 - 1.2.1: Definition of constitution
 - 1.2.2: Importance of constitutional development in state-building
 - 1.2.3: The Nigerian context
- **Part 1.3: Objectives and Processes of Constitutional Development in Nigeria**
 - 1.3.1: Political objectives of constitutional reforms
 - 1.3.2: Social and economic considerations
 - 1.3.3: Sequential process of constitutional evolution
- **Part 1.4: Early Challenges and Legacies of Constitutional Development**
 - 1.4.1: Regionalism and ethnic diversity
 - 1.4.2: Colonial interests versus Nigerian aspirations
 - 1.4.3: Enduring legacies for later constitutions

Introduction

Nigeria's constitutional journey is deeply tied to its historical experiences of colonisation, amalgamation, and political restructuring. Constitutions have served as the framework through which governance was organised, rights were defined, and the state itself was shaped. For learners, understanding these foundations is crucial because they provide the background to later constitutional reforms and the eventual emergence of Nigeria as an independent and sovereign nation.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the origins and processes of Nigerian constitutional development, equipping you with the knowledge to explain its historical background, conceptual meaning, objectives, and early challenges.

We shall commence this Series by examining the historical background to Nigerian constitutional development, focusing on pre-colonial organisation, colonisation, and the amalgamation of 1914. Next, we will explore the concept and meaning of constitutional development, including the definition of a constitution and its importance in state-building. Following that, we will analyse the objectives and processes of constitutional development in Nigeria, considering political, social, and economic factors. Finally, we will wrap up by discussing the early challenges and legacies of constitutional development, such as regionalism, colonial interests, and enduring influences on later constitutions.



Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** describe the historical background to Nigerian constitutional development, including pre-colonial organisation, colonisation, and the 1914 amalgamation,
- **SLO 1.2** define the concept of a constitution and explain its importance in the Nigerian context,
- **SLO 1.3** analyse the objectives and processes of constitutional development in Nigeria, focusing on political, social, and economic considerations, and
- **SLO 1.4** evaluate the early challenges and legacies of Nigerian constitutional development, particularly regionalism, colonial interests, and their long-term impacts.

1.1 Historical Background to Nigerian Constitutional Development

1.1.1 Pre-colonial political organisation

Before the arrival of British colonial rule, the geographical area now known as Nigeria was home to diverse **pre-colonial political systems**, which refers to the structures of governance and authority that existed prior to foreign domination. These systems varied widely, reflecting the cultural and social differences among ethnic groups. For example, the Hausa-Fulani operated a centralised emirate system under Islamic law, while the Yoruba kingdoms were organised around monarchs known as Obas, supported by councils of chiefs. In contrast, the Igbo communities practised a decentralised system of governance, where authority was shared among elders and village assemblies.

These indigenous systems provided stability and order, but they also highlighted the diversity of political traditions across the region. This diversity later posed challenges when the British attempted to unify the territory under a single colonial administration.

Fill in the blank: The Hausa-Fulani emirate system was organised under _____ law.



Figure 5.1

Figure 1.1 Pre-colonial political organisation in Nigeria

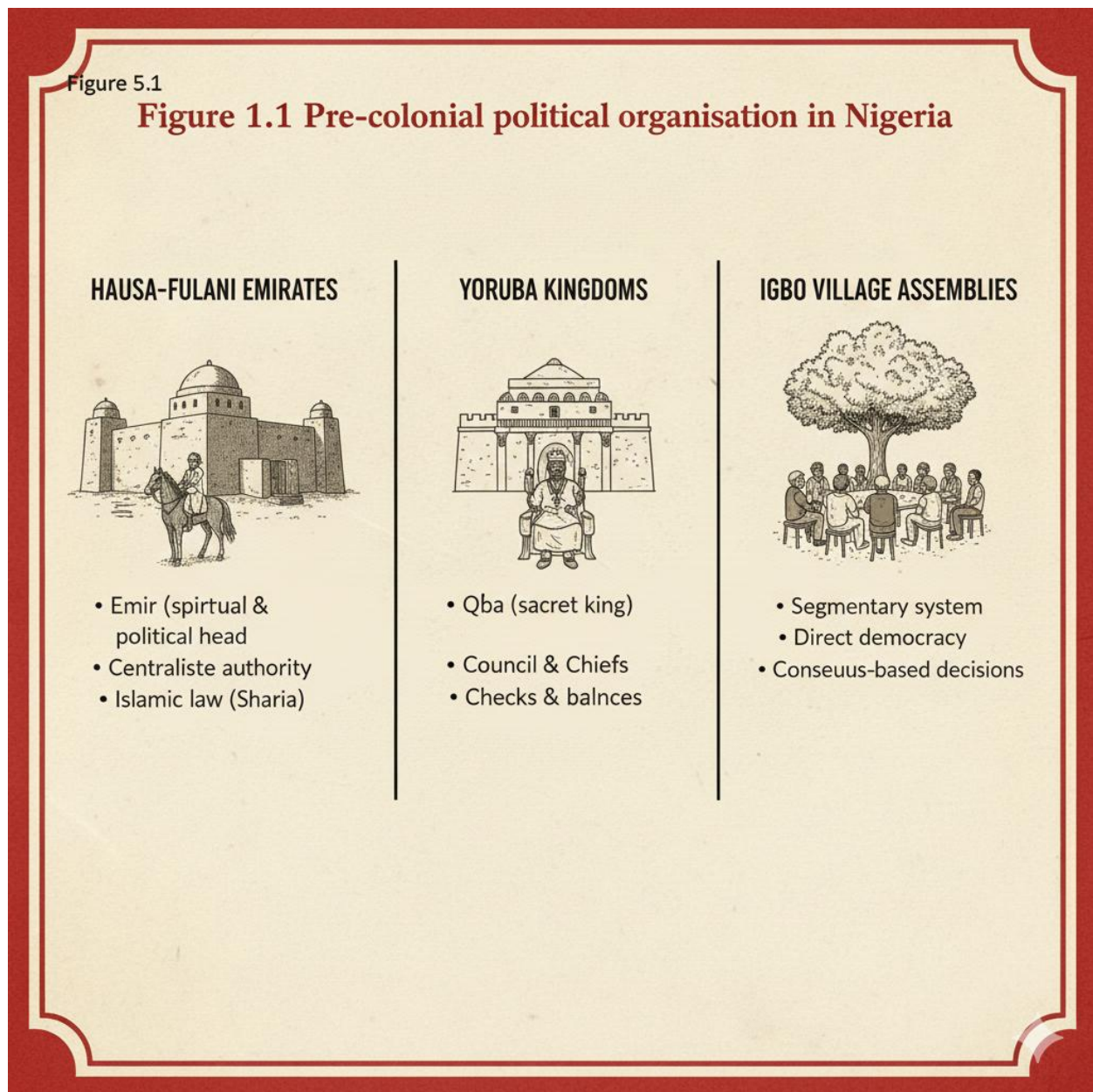


Diagram showing major pre-colonial political systems in Nigeria Caption: Figure 1.1 Pre-colonial political organisation in Nigeria”

1.1.2 British colonisation and amalgamation of 1914

The process of **colonisation** refers to the establishment of control by a foreign power over a territory and its people. In Nigeria, British colonisation began in the late nineteenth century, driven by economic interests such as trade in palm oil and other resources. By 1914, the British amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates, along with Lagos Colony, into a single entity called Nigeria. This **amalgamation** was the merging of previously separate territories into one administrative unit.



The amalgamation was primarily motivated by administrative convenience and economic efficiency, rather than the cultural or political aspirations of the people. It laid the foundation for Nigeria's constitutional development, as the new entity required structures of governance to manage its diverse population.

Fill in the blank: The amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 combined the Northern Protectorate, Southern Protectorate, and _____ Colony.



Image showing Lord Frederick Lugard, the Governor-General who oversaw the amalgamation
Caption: Plate 1.1 Lord Lugard and the 1914 amalgamation

1.1.3 Early administrative structures

Following the amalgamation, the British established **administrative structures**, meaning systems of governance designed to manage the new colony. These included the office of the



Governor-General, regional administrations, and legislative councils. However, these structures were heavily centralised and dominated by British officials, with limited participation from Nigerians.

The legislative councils introduced during this period were the earliest attempts at constitutional development, as they provided a framework for law-making and governance. Yet, they were criticised for being unrepresentative, since only a small number of Nigerians were allowed to participate.

Fill in the blank: The early legislative councils in Nigeria were criticised for being _____ in nature.

Box 1.1

Key features of early administrative structures

- Centralised authority under the Governor-General
- Limited Nigerian participation in governance
- Establishment of legislative councils

Box 1.1 Key features of early administrative structures



Pilot questions 1.1

1. Which system of governance was practised by the Igbo communities before colonisation?
2. Who was the British Governor-General responsible for the 1914 amalgamation?
3. What were the main motivations behind the amalgamation of Nigeria?
4. Why were the early legislative councils criticised?
5. Name one major difference between the Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani pre-colonial political systems.

1.2 Concept and Meaning of Constitutional Development

1.2.1 Definition of constitution

A **constitution** is a fundamental set of rules and principles that outlines how a state is governed. It defines the powers of government institutions, the rights of citizens, and the relationships between different levels of authority. In simple terms, it serves as the legal backbone of a country, ensuring order and guiding political processes. In Nigeria, constitutions have been central to shaping governance, especially during transitions from colonial rule to independence.

Fill in the blank: A constitution is the fundamental set of _____ and principles that outlines how a state is governed.



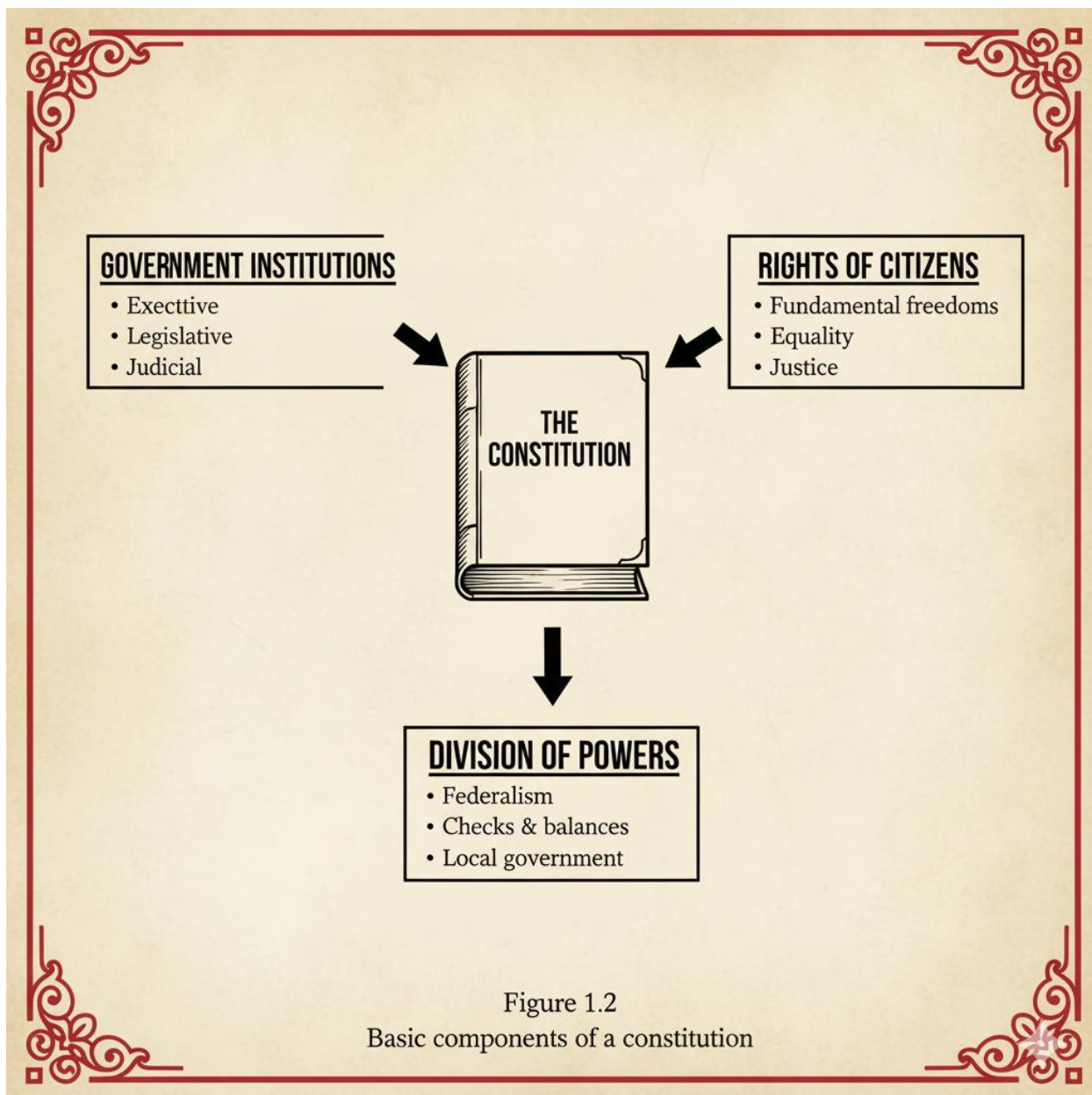


Diagram showing the basic components of a constitution (government institutions, rights of citizens, division of powers) Caption: Figure 1.2 Basic components of a constitution

1.2.2 Importance of constitutional development in state-building

Constitutional development refers to the gradual process of creating, revising, and adapting constitutions to meet the needs of a society. It is important because it provides legitimacy to government authority, protects citizens' rights, and ensures stability in governance. For Nigeria, constitutional development was necessary to manage its diverse ethnic groups, balance regional interests, and prepare the country for self-rule.

Without constitutional development, governance would lack structure and accountability. This is why each stage of Nigeria's constitutional history reflects attempts to address political, social, and economic challenges.



Fill in the blank: Constitutional development provides legitimacy to _____ authority and protects citizens' rights.

Box 1.2

Importance of constitutional development in Nigeria

- Provides legitimacy to government authority
- Protects citizens' rights
- Ensures stability in governance
- Balances regional and ethnic interests

Box 1.2 Importance of constitutional development in Nigeria

1.2.3 The Nigerian context

In the Nigerian context, constitutional development was shaped by colonial policies and the need to unify diverse regions. Each constitution introduced during the colonial and post-colonial periods attempted to address pressing issues such as representation, regional autonomy, and national unity. For example, early constitutions like the Clifford Constitution of 1922 introduced limited Nigerian participation in governance, while later constitutions gradually expanded political rights and prepared the country for independence.



Thus, constitutional development in Nigeria is not just a legal process, but also a reflection of the country's struggle to balance external influences with internal aspirations.

Fill in the blank: The Clifford Constitution of 1922 introduced limited _____ participation in governance.

Table 1.1

Early Nigerian constitutional milestones

Year	Constitution	Key Feature
1922	Limited Nigerian participation in governance	
Socialism	Cichards Constitution	
Fascism	Regional councils introduced	
1951	Wider representation and federal structure	Rejects representative and formal institutions

Table 1.1 Early Nigerian constitutional milestones

Table 1.1 Early Nigerian constitutional milestones

Pilot questions 1.2

1. What is the fundamental purpose of a constitution?
2. Why is constitutional development important in state-building?
3. In the Nigerian context, what did the Clifford Constitution of 1922 introduce?



4. How does constitutional development reflect Nigeria's struggle for unity?
5. Name one key feature of the Richards Constitution of 1946.

1.3 Objectives and Processes of Constitutional Development in Nigeria

1.3.1 Political objectives of constitutional reforms

The primary **political objectives** of constitutional reforms in Nigeria were to create structures that could manage governance effectively, ensure representation, and gradually prepare the country for self-rule. Early reforms sought to balance the interests of the colonial administration with the growing demands of Nigerians for participation in decision-making. Over time, these objectives evolved to include the establishment of federalism, regional autonomy, and democratic institutions.

Constitutional reforms were therefore not static, but dynamic responses to political pressures. Each reform reflected attempts to address issues such as ethnic diversity, regional rivalry, and demands for independence.

Fill in the blank: One of the political objectives of constitutional reforms in Nigeria was to prepare the country for _____.



Figure 1.3 Political objectives of Nigerian constitutional reforms

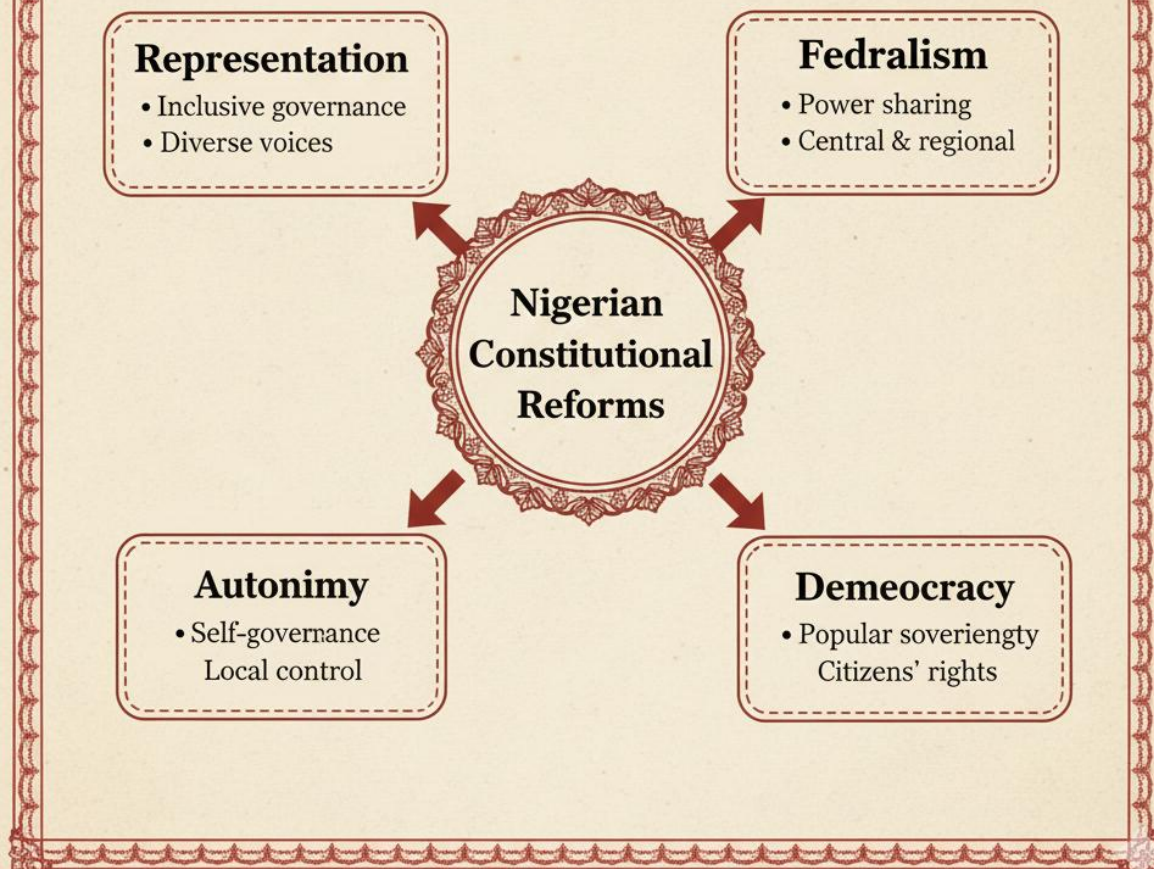


Diagram showing the political objectives of Nigerian constitutional reforms (representation, federalism, autonomy, democracy) Caption: Figure 1.3 Political objectives of Nigerian constitutional reforms

1.3.2 Social and economic considerations

Beyond politics, constitutional development in Nigeria was influenced by **social and economic considerations**, meaning factors related to the welfare of citizens and the growth of the economy. Socially, reforms aimed to accommodate Nigeria's ethnic and cultural diversity, ensuring that different groups had a voice in governance. Economically, reforms were designed to create systems that could support trade, taxation, and resource management.

The colonial administration often prioritised economic exploitation, but Nigerians increasingly demanded that constitutional reforms address issues of fairness, equity, and development. This



tension between colonial interests and Nigerian aspirations shaped the trajectory of constitutional change.

Fill in the blank: Constitutional reforms in Nigeria were influenced by both social diversity and _____ exploitation.

Box 1.3

Social and economic considerations in Nigerian constitutional development

- Ethnic and cultural diversity
- Need for fair representation
- Trade and taxation systems
- Resource management and equity

Box 1.3 Social and economic considerations in Nigerian constitutional development

1.3.3 Sequential process of constitutional evolution

The **sequential process** of constitutional evolution in Nigeria refers to the step-by-step manner in which reforms were introduced over time. Starting with the Clifford Constitution of 1922, each subsequent constitution built upon the previous one, gradually expanding Nigerian participation and addressing new challenges. The Richards Constitution of 1946 introduced



regional councils, the McPherson Constitution of 1951 expanded representation, and the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 laid the foundation for federalism.

This sequential process highlights the gradual transition from colonial control to independence. Each constitution was both a response to immediate needs and a stepping stone towards Nigeria's eventual sovereignty.

Fill in the blank: The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 laid the foundation for _____ in Nigeria.

Table 1.2

Sequential Nigerian constitutional reforms

Year	Constitution	Key Development
1922	Clifford Constitution	Limited Nigerian participation
1946	Richards Constitution	Regional councils introduced
1951	McPherson Constitution	Wider representation
1954	Lyttleton Constitution	Federalism established

Table 1.2 Sequential Nigerian constitutional milestones

Table 1.2 Sequential Nigerian constitutional reforms

Pilot questions 1.3

1. What was one of the main political objectives of constitutional reforms in Nigeria?
2. How did social diversity influence constitutional development?



3. What economic factor shaped Nigeria's constitutional reforms under colonial rule?
4. Which constitution introduced regional councils in Nigeria?
5. What key feature was established by the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954?

1.4 Early Challenges and Legacies of Constitutional Development

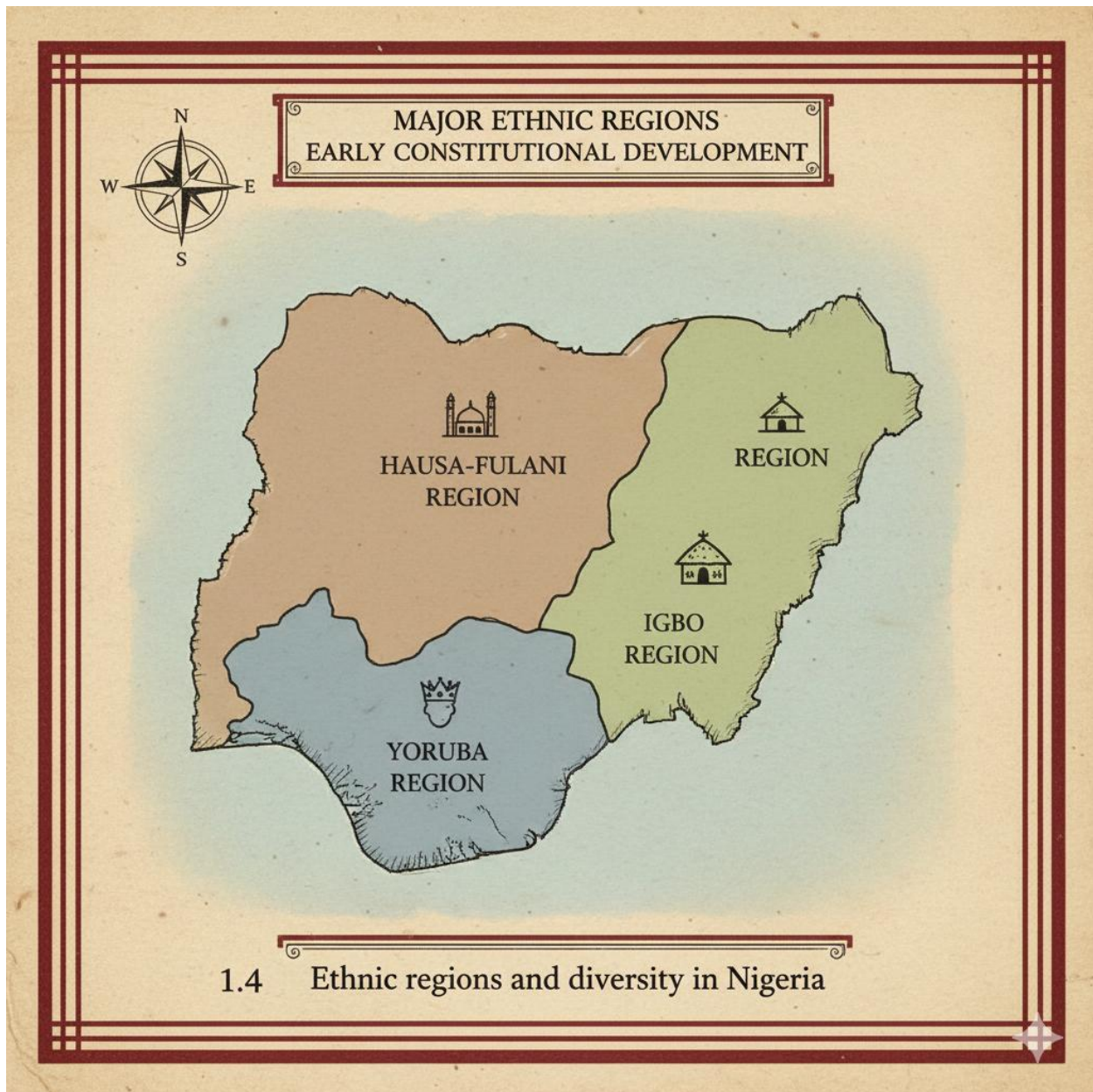
1.4.1 Regionalism and ethnic diversity

One of the earliest challenges to Nigerian constitutional development was **regionalism**, which refers to the division of the country into distinct regions with separate political and cultural identities. Nigeria's ethnic diversity, including groups such as the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, made it difficult to create a constitution that satisfied all interests. Regionalism often led to competition for political power and resources, which complicated the process of building a unified nation.

This challenge highlighted the need for constitutions that could balance regional autonomy with national unity. The legacy of regionalism continues to influence Nigerian politics today.

Fill in the blank: Regionalism refers to the division of Nigeria into distinct _____ with separate political and cultural identities.





Map showing Nigeria's major ethnic regions during early constitutional development
Caption: Figure 1.4 Ethnic regions and diversity in Nigeria

1.4.2 Colonial interests versus Nigerian aspirations

Another challenge was the conflict between **colonial interests** and **Nigerian aspirations**. Colonial interests focused on maintaining control, exploiting resources, and ensuring administrative convenience. Nigerians, however, aspired to greater participation in governance, self-determination, and eventual independence. This tension often resulted in constitutions that were compromises, granting limited reforms while retaining significant colonial authority.

The legacy of this conflict is evident in the cautious and gradual nature of Nigeria's constitutional reforms, which reflected both external pressures and internal demands.



Fill in the blank: Colonial interests in Nigeria were primarily focused on maintaining control and exploiting _____.

Plate 1.2



Colonial administrators and Nigerian leaders in constitutional negotiations

Image showing colonial administrators with Nigerian chiefs during constitutional discussions
Caption: Plate 1.2 Colonial administrators and Nigerian leaders in constitutional negotiations

1.4.3 Enduring legacies for later constitutions

The early challenges left enduring **legacies**, meaning long-lasting influences that shaped subsequent constitutions. Regionalism encouraged the adoption of federalism in later constitutions, while the struggle between colonial interests and Nigerian aspirations paved the way for independence. These legacies ensured that Nigerian constitutional development was not just a legal exercise, but also a reflection of the country's political realities and historical struggles.



Thus, the foundations laid during this period continue to shape Nigeria's constitutional framework today.

Fill in the blank: Regionalism in Nigeria encouraged the adoption of _____ in later constitutions.

Box 1.4

Enduring legacies of early constitutional challenges

- Regionalism encouraged federalism
- Colonial interference anticipates independence
- Nigerian interests delayed
- Nigerian aspirations shaped democratic reforms

Box 1.4 Enduring legacies of early constitutional challenges

Pilot questions 1.4

1. What does regionalism mean in the context of Nigerian constitutional development?
2. How did ethnic diversity complicate the creation of constitutions in Nigeria?
3. What were the main colonial interests in Nigeria?



4. How did Nigerian aspirations differ from colonial interests?
5. Name one enduring legacy of early constitutional challenges in Nigeria.

Series Summary

This Series has introduced you to the foundations of Nigerian constitutional development, highlighting its historical background, conceptual meaning, objectives, and early challenges. The purpose was to provide you with a clear understanding of how Nigeria's constitutional journey began, why it was necessary, and how it shaped the country's political evolution.

We commenced with the historical background, examining pre-colonial political organisation, British colonisation, and the 1914 amalgamation. Then we explored the concept and meaning of constitutional development, defining the constitution and its importance in state-building. Following that, we analysed the objectives and processes of constitutional reforms, considering political, social, and economic factors. Finally, we discussed the early challenges and legacies, such as regionalism, colonial interests, and their enduring influence. By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe Nigeria's historical background (SLO 1.1), define and explain the concept of a constitution (SLO 1.2), analyse the objectives and processes of constitutional development (SLO 1.3), and evaluate the early challenges and legacies that shaped later constitutions (SLO 1.4).

Glossary of Terms

- **Amalgamation:** The merging of separate territories into one administrative unit, as occurred in Nigeria in 1914.
- **Colonisation:** The establishment of control by a foreign power over a territory and its people.
- **Constitution:** A fundamental set of rules and principles that outlines how a state is governed.
- **Constitutional development:** The gradual process of creating, revising, and adapting constitutions to meet the needs of society.
- **Legacies:** Long-lasting influences or effects of past events or decisions on future developments.
- **Pre-colonial political systems:** Indigenous structures of governance that existed in Nigeria before foreign domination.
- **Regionalism:** The division of a country into distinct regions with separate political and cultural identities.
- **Sequential process:** A step-by-step progression in which constitutional reforms were introduced over time.

Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions



1. Which constitution introduced regional councils in Nigeria? (Linked to SLO 1.3)
2. The 1914 amalgamation combined the Northern Protectorate, Southern Protectorate, and which Colony? (Linked to SLO 1.1)
3. Regionalism in Nigeria encouraged the adoption of which system in later constitutions? (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Short-answer questions

4. Define a constitution in your own words. (Linked to SLO 1.2)
5. State one political objective of constitutional reforms in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
6. Identify one major difference between Yoruba and Igbo pre-colonial political systems. (Linked to SLO 1.1)

Long-answer questions

7. Analyse the social and economic considerations that influenced constitutional development in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
 - *Basic response:* Explain how ethnic diversity and economic exploitation shaped constitutional reforms.
 - *Value-added response:* Go further by evaluating how these considerations created tensions between colonial interests and Nigerian aspirations.
8. Evaluate the enduring legacies of early constitutional challenges in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 1.4)
 - *Basic response:* Discuss how regionalism and colonial interests influenced later constitutions.
 - *Value-added response:* Extend your evaluation by linking these legacies to contemporary Nigerian politics and governance.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

1. Richards Constitution of 1946.
2. Lagos Colony.
3. Federalism.
4. A constitution is a fundamental set of rules and principles that outlines how a state is governed.
5. To prepare Nigeria for self-rule.
6. Yoruba had monarchs supported by councils, while Igbo practised decentralised village assemblies.
7.
 - *Basic response:* Ethnic diversity required representation, while economic exploitation shaped taxation and trade systems.
 - *Value-added response:* These factors created tensions between colonial priorities and Nigerian demands for fairness, influencing reform outcomes.
8.
 - *Basic response:* Regionalism encouraged federalism, while colonial interests delayed independence.



- *Value-added response:* These legacies continue to affect Nigeria’s political structure, with federalism and ethnic rivalry still central to governance.

References and Attributions [Series 1]

- Figure 1.1 Pre-colonial political organisation in Nigeria. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Hausa-Fulani emirate system, Yoruba monarchy, and Igbo village assembly.”
- Plate 1.1 Lord Lugard and the 1914 amalgamation. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical portrait of Lord Frederick Lugard in colonial attire.”
- Box 1.1 Key features of early administrative structures. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising colonial administrative structures in Nigeria after 1914.”
- Figure 1.2 Basic components of a constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing constitution components: government institutions, rights of citizens, division of powers.”
- Box 1.2 Importance of constitutional development in Nigeria. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising the importance of constitutional development in Nigeria.”
- Table 1.1 Early Nigerian constitutional milestones. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table summarising Nigerian constitutional milestones: year, constitution name, key feature.”
- Figure 1.3 Political objectives of Nigerian constitutional reforms. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigerian constitutional reform objectives: representation, federalism, autonomy, democracy.”
- Box 1.3 Social and economic considerations in Nigerian constitutional development. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising social and economic considerations in Nigerian constitutional development.”
- Table 1.2 Sequential Nigerian constitutional reforms. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table summarising Nigerian constitutional reforms: year, constitution name, key development.”
- Figure 1.4 Ethnic regions and diversity in Nigeria. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled map of Nigeria showing Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo regions.”
- Plate 1.2 Colonial administrators and Nigerian leaders in constitutional negotiations. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of colonial administrators meeting Nigerian chiefs during constitutional talks.”
- Box 1.4 Enduring legacies of early constitutional challenges in Nigeria. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising enduring legacies of early constitutional challenges in Nigeria.”

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]



Part 1.1

1. Decentralised village assemblies.
2. Lord Frederick Lugard.
3. Administrative convenience and economic efficiency.
4. Unrepresentative.
5. Yoruba had monarchs, Hausa-Fulani had emirates.

Part 1.2

1. To outline how a state is governed.
2. It provides legitimacy to authority and protects rights.
3. Limited Nigerian participation.
4. It reflects Nigeria's struggle for unity.
5. Regional councils.

Part 1.3

1. To prepare Nigeria for self-rule.
2. It required fair representation of ethnic groups.
3. Economic exploitation.
4. Richards Constitution of 1946.
5. Federalism.

Part 1.4

1. Division into distinct regions.
2. It complicated constitutional creation due to competing interests.
3. Control and resource exploitation.
4. Nigerians aspired to self-rule and independence.
5. Federalism.



Series 2: Colonial Constitutions and Early Reforms

Series Outline

- **Part 2.1: The Clifford Constitution of 1922**
 - 2.1.1: Background and context
 - 2.1.2: Key features of the constitution
 - 2.1.3: Strengths and weaknesses
- **Part 2.2: The Richards Constitution of 1946**
 - 2.2.1: Historical circumstances leading to its enactment
 - 2.2.2: Major provisions and innovations
 - 2.2.3: Limitations and criticisms
- **Part 2.3: The McPherson Constitution of 1951**
 - 2.3.1: Political context and motivations
 - 2.3.2: Structural changes introduced
 - 2.3.3: Achievements and shortcomings
- **Part 2.4: The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954**
 - 2.4.1: Background and rationale
 - 2.4.2: Federal features and new arrangements
 - 2.4.3: Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy

Introduction

Colonial constitutions marked the beginning of Nigeria's formal constitutional journey. They were designed by the British administration to manage governance, regulate participation, and maintain control over the diverse regions of Nigeria. For learners, this Series is important because it explains how early reforms laid the groundwork for later constitutional changes and eventual independence.

The aim of this Series is to examine the colonial constitutions introduced between 1922 and 1954, highlighting their background, features, strengths, weaknesses, and legacies.

We shall commence this Series by studying the Clifford Constitution of 1922, focusing on its background, key features, and limitations. Next, we will move on to the Richards Constitution of 1946, considering the circumstances that led to its enactment and its major provisions. Following that, we will analyse the McPherson Constitution of 1951, with attention to its structural changes and shortcomings. Finally, we will conclude with the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, examining its federal features and legacy for Nigeria's political development.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:



- **SLO 2.1** describe the background, features, and limitations of the Clifford Constitution of 1922,
- **SLO 2.2** explain the historical circumstances and major provisions of the Richards Constitution of 1946,
- **SLO 2.3** analyse the political context, structural changes, and shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution of 1951, and
- **SLO 2.4** evaluate the federal features, strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954.

2.1 The Clifford Constitution of 1922

2.1.1 Background and context

The **Clifford Constitution** was introduced in 1922 by Governor Hugh Clifford, following the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914. Its purpose was to provide a framework for governance in the newly unified colony. The constitution was significant because it marked the first attempt to introduce limited Nigerian participation in legislative processes. Prior to this, governance was almost entirely controlled by British officials, with little or no input from Nigerians.

The Clifford Constitution was influenced by growing nationalist movements and demands for representation. Nigerian elites, particularly in Lagos and Calabar, had begun to advocate for greater involvement in decision-making. This constitution responded to those pressures, though in a very limited way.

Fill in the blank: The Clifford Constitution of 1922 was introduced by Governor Hugh _____.





Image showing Governor Hugh Clifford in colonial attire Caption: Plate 2.1 Governor Hugh Clifford, architect of the 1922 Constitution

2.1.2 Key features of the constitution

The Clifford Constitution introduced several important features. Firstly, it established a **Legislative Council**, which included both official members (British administrators) and unofficial members (Nigerians). For the first time, Nigerians were allowed to elect representatives, though this was restricted to Lagos and Calabar. Secondly, the constitution provided for limited representation, with only four Nigerians elected to the council. Thirdly, it maintained strong executive powers in the hands of the Governor, ensuring that colonial control remained dominant.



This constitution is remembered as the beginning of electoral politics in Nigeria, even though participation was restricted to a small elite.

Fill in the blank: The Clifford Constitution introduced the first _____ elections in Nigeria, limited to Lagos and Calabar.

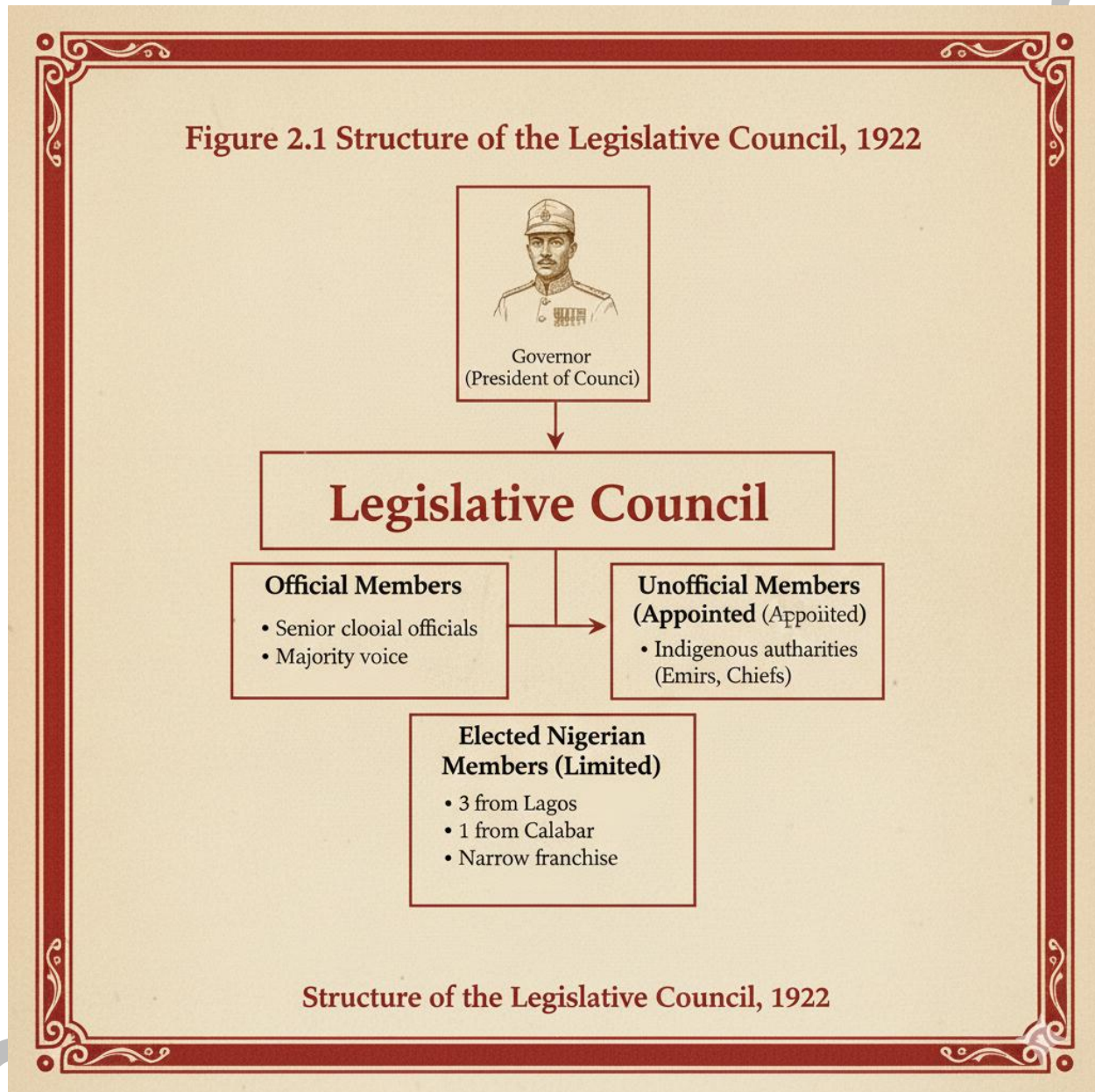


Diagram showing the structure of the Legislative Council under the Clifford Constitution

Caption: Figure 2.1 Structure of the Legislative Council, 1922

2.1.3 Strengths and weaknesses

The strengths of the Clifford Constitution lay in its introduction of electoral politics and limited Nigerian participation. It provided a platform for nationalist leaders to voice their concerns and laid the foundation for future reforms. However, its weaknesses were more pronounced.

Representation was extremely limited, with only Lagos and Calabar included. The majority of



Nigerians had no voice in governance. Furthermore, the Governor retained overriding powers, meaning that Nigerian representatives had little influence on actual decision-making.

In summary, the Clifford Constitution was a small but important step towards constitutional development. It highlighted both the possibilities and limitations of colonial reforms.

Fill in the blank: One major weakness of the Clifford Constitution was that Nigerian representatives had little _____ in governance.

Box 2.1	
Strengths and weaknesses of the Clifford Constitution	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Introduced electoral politics • Allowed limited Nigerian participation • Provided a platform for leaders • Narrow franchise	• Representation restricted to Lagos and Calabar • Indigenous authority to Lagos 1 from Lagos • Governor retained • Majority of Nigerians excluded from governance

Box 2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the Clifford Constitution **Strengths**

Pilot questions 2.1

1. Who introduced the Clifford Constitution of 1922?
2. What was the main innovation of the Clifford Constitution?



3. How many Nigerians were elected to the Legislative Council under this constitution?
4. Which two cities were allowed to participate in elections?
5. Name one major weakness of the Clifford Constitution.

2.2 The Richards Constitution of 1946

2.2.1 Historical circumstances leading to its enactment

The **Richards Constitution** was introduced in 1946 by Governor Sir Arthur Richards. It was designed to replace the Clifford Constitution of 1922, which had been criticised for its limited representation. The new constitution was enacted in response to growing nationalist agitation, increasing demands for wider participation, and the need to accommodate Nigeria's diverse regions.

The Richards Constitution sought to create a more inclusive framework by introducing regional councils, thereby recognising Nigeria's ethnic and cultural diversity. However, it was still largely controlled by the colonial administration, reflecting the tension between Nigerian aspirations and British interests.

Fill in the blank: The Richards Constitution of 1946 was introduced by Governor Sir Arthur _____.





Image showing Governor Sir Arthur Richards in colonial attire Caption: Plate 2.2 Governor Sir Arthur Richards, architect of the 1946 Constitution

2.2.2 Major provisions and innovations

The Richards Constitution introduced several innovations. Firstly, it established **regional councils**, giving the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions a measure of political identity. Secondly, it expanded the Legislative Council to include more Nigerian representatives, though most were still nominated rather than elected. Thirdly, it attempted to balance regional interests with national governance by creating a central legislative body alongside regional structures.

This constitution was significant because it acknowledged Nigeria's diversity and laid the groundwork for federalism. However, representation remained limited, and the Governor retained overriding authority.



Fill in the blank: The Richards Constitution introduced regional _____ in Nigeria for the first time.

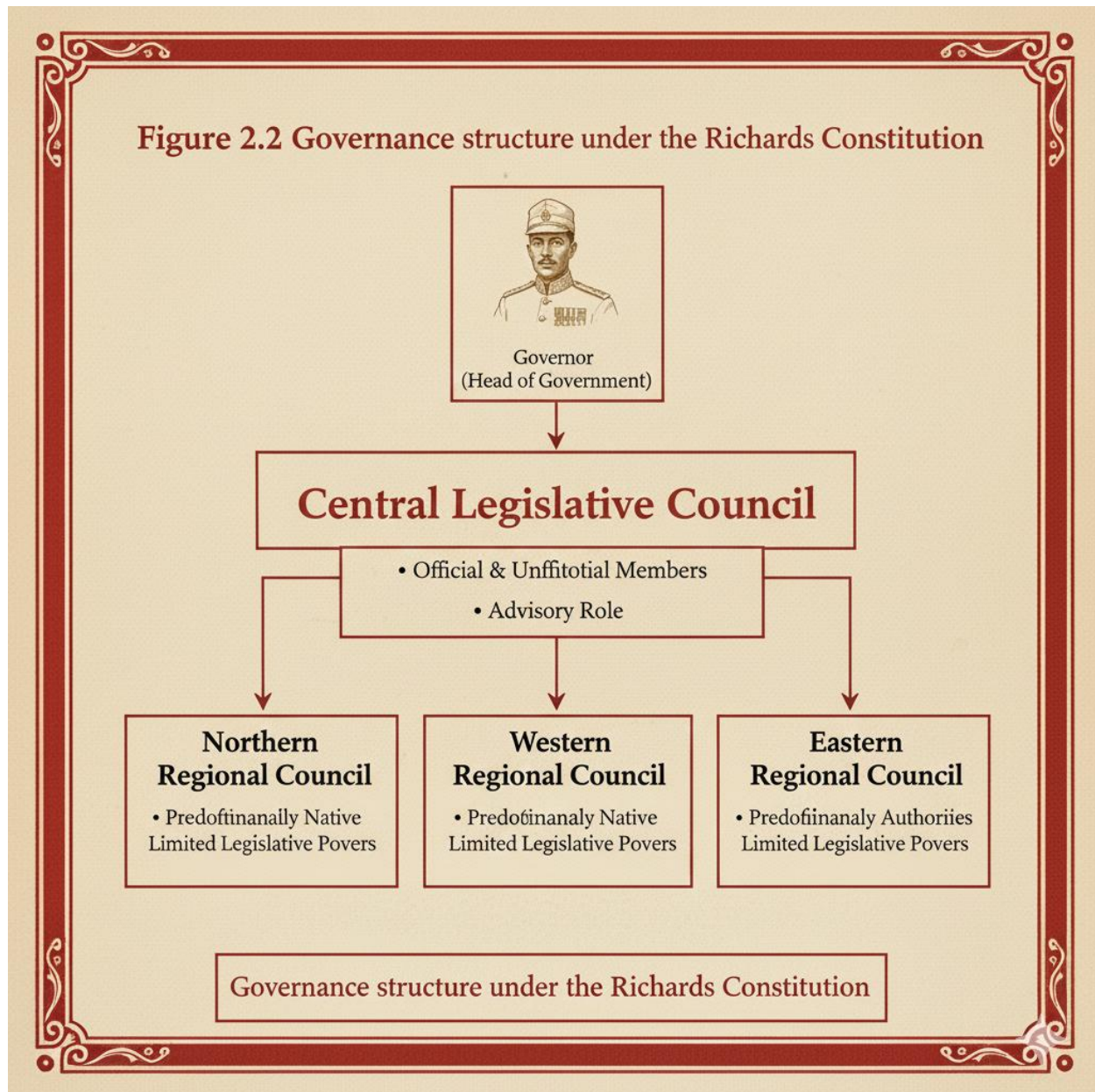


Diagram showing the structure of governance under the Richards Constitution (Governor, central Legislative Council, regional councils) Caption: Figure 2.2 Governance structure under the Richards Constitution

2.2.3 Limitations and criticisms

Despite its innovations, the Richards Constitution faced strong criticisms. Nigerians argued that it did not go far enough in granting self-rule, since most representatives were nominated rather than elected. The constitution also reinforced regional divisions, which some feared would weaken national unity. Furthermore, the Governor retained significant powers, limiting the influence of Nigerian representatives.



Nationalist leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo criticised the constitution for being imposed without adequate consultation. This criticism highlighted the growing demand for genuine participation and self-determination.

Fill in the blank: One major criticism of the Richards Constitution was that most Nigerian representatives were _____ rather than elected.

Box 2.2

Limitations and criticisms of the Richards Constitution

- Limited Nigerian participation
- Reinforced regional divisions
- Governor retained overriding powers
- Imposed without adequate consultation

Box 2.2 Limitations and criticisms of the Richards Constitution

Pilot questions 2.2

1. Who introduced the Richards Constitution of 1946?
2. What was the main innovation of the Richards Constitution?
3. Which regions were given councils under this constitution?



4. Why was the Richards Constitution criticised by Nigerian leaders?
5. Name one limitation of the Richards Constitution.

2.3 The McPherson Constitution of 1951

2.3.1 Political context and motivations

The **McPherson Constitution** was introduced in 1951 by Governor John Macpherson. It came at a time when nationalist movements were gaining strength and Nigerians were demanding greater participation in governance. The Richards Constitution of 1946 had been criticised for its limited consultation and representation, so the McPherson Constitution was designed to be more inclusive.

For the first time, Nigerians were widely consulted through regional conferences and a general conference in Ibadan. This marked a significant shift, as the constitution was not simply imposed by the colonial administration but involved Nigerian voices in its drafting.

Fill in the blank: The McPherson Constitution of 1951 was introduced by Governor John

_____.



Plate 2.3



Plate 2.3 Governor John Mactpherson and Nigerian leaders at the Ibadan conference, 1950

2.3.2 Structural changes introduced

The McPherson Constitution introduced several structural changes. Firstly, it created a **House of Representatives**, which included elected Nigerian members from across the country. Secondly, it established regional Houses of Assembly in the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions, giving Nigerians more influence at both regional and national levels. Thirdly, it introduced a quasi-federal structure, allowing regions to exercise some autonomy while still under central authority.

This constitution was significant because it expanded Nigerian participation in governance more than any previous constitution, and it laid the foundation for federalism.



Fill in the blank: The McPherson Constitution introduced regional _____ of Assembly in Nigeria.

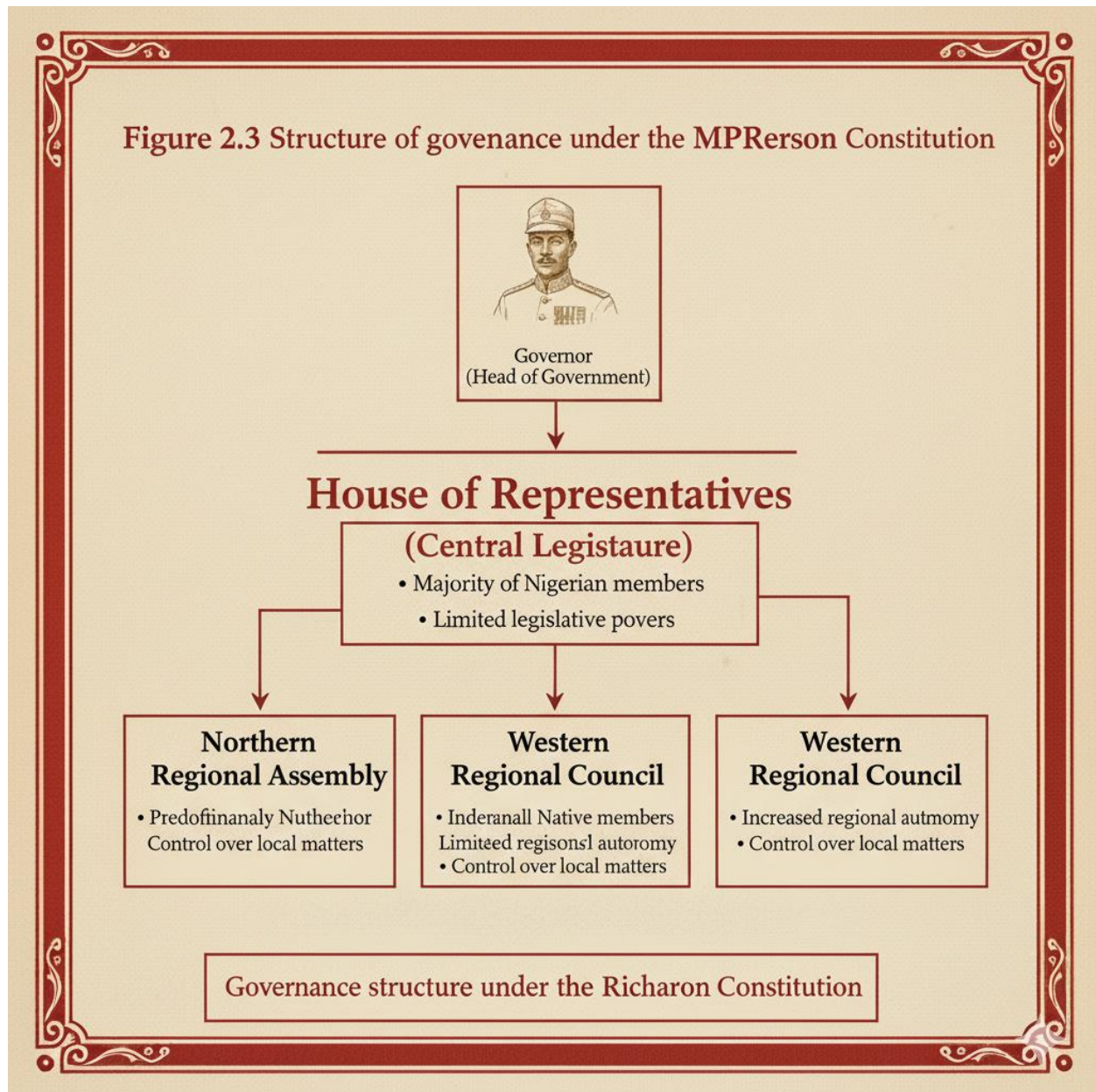


Diagram showing the structure of governance under the McPherson Constitution (House of Representatives, regional Houses of Assembly, Governor) Caption: Figure 2.3 Governance structure under the McPherson Constitution

2.3.3 Achievements and shortcomings

The achievements of the McPherson Constitution included wider Nigerian participation, the introduction of regional assemblies, and the recognition of Nigeria's diversity through a quasi-federal system. It was the first constitution to be drafted with significant Nigerian input, making it more legitimate than its predecessors.



However, the constitution also had shortcomings. Regionalism was reinforced, leading to rivalry among ethnic groups. The central government remained weak, and conflicts between regional and national interests often paralysed decision-making. Furthermore, the Governor still retained significant powers, limiting true self-rule.

Fill in the blank: One major shortcoming of the McPherson Constitution was that it reinforced _____ among ethnic groups.

Box 2.3

Achievements and shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution

Achievements	Shortcomings
• Wider Nigerian participation • Regional Houses of Assembly introduced • Quasi-federal structure established • Drafted with Nigerian input	• Reinforced regionalism and ethnic rivalry • Weak central government • Governor retained significant powers

Box 2.3 Achievements and shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution **Achievements**

Pilot questions 2.3

1. Who introduced the McPherson Constitution of 1951?
2. What was the main innovation in the drafting process of this constitution?



3. What new national body was created under the McPherson Constitution?
4. Which regions had Houses of Assembly introduced?
5. Name one major shortcoming of the McPherson Constitution.

2.4 The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954

2.4.1 Background and rationale

The **Lyttleton Constitution** was introduced in 1954 by Oliver Lyttleton, the British Colonial Secretary. It was enacted to address the shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution of 1951, which had reinforced regional rivalry and created a weak central government. The new constitution was designed to provide a clearer federal structure, giving regions more autonomy while strengthening national institutions.

This constitution was significant because it marked Nigeria's transition towards federalism, a system where powers are shared between central and regional governments. It was also a response to increasing nationalist demands for self-rule and the need to prepare Nigeria for independence.

Fill in the blank: The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 was introduced by Oliver _____, the British Colonial Secretary.



Plate 2.4

Plate 2.4



Oliver Sir Lyttleton, architect of the 1954 Constitution

Image showing Oliver Lyttleton addressing colonial officials Caption: Plate 2.4 Oliver Lyttleton, architect of the 1954 Constitution

2.4.2 Federal features and new arrangements

The Lyttleton Constitution introduced clear **federal features**, meaning powers were divided between the central government and regional governments. Each region had its own premier and council of ministers, while the central government retained authority over matters such as defence and foreign affairs.

This arrangement gave regions significant autonomy, allowing them to manage local affairs. It also created a Council of Ministers at the national level, which included Nigerian leaders, thereby increasing participation in governance. The constitution was the first to establish Nigeria as a federation, laying the foundation for independence in 1960.



Fill in the blank: The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 established Nigeria as a _____ for the first time.

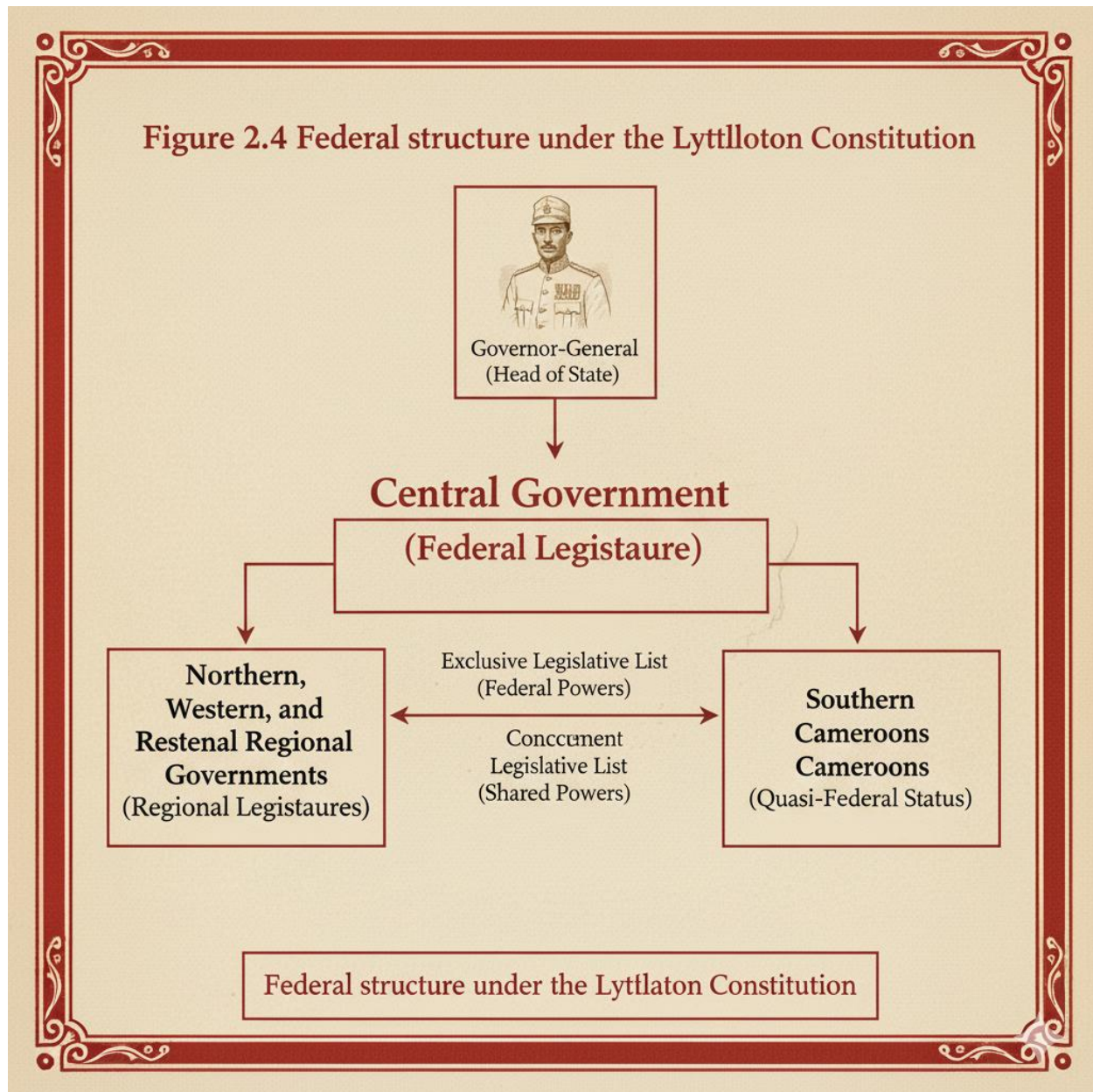


Diagram showing federal structure under the Lyttleton Constitution (central government, regional governments, division of powers) Caption: Figure 2.4 Federal structure under the Lyttleton Constitution

2.4.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy

The strengths of the Lyttleton Constitution included its clear federal structure, increased Nigerian participation, and recognition of regional autonomy. It provided a framework that was more representative and responsive to Nigeria's diversity.

However, weaknesses remained. Regionalism was further entrenched, leading to competition and rivalry among ethnic groups. The constitution also failed to fully resolve tensions between



national unity and regional autonomy. Despite these shortcomings, its legacy was profound: it laid the foundation for Nigeria's independence and shaped the federal system that continues today.

Fill in the blank: One major strength of the Lyttleton Constitution was that it increased Nigerian _____ in governance.

Box 2.4

Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Lyttlton Constitution

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Clear federal structure established • Increased Nigerian • Increased participation • Recognition of regional autonomy	• Entrenched regionalism and rivalry • Tensions between unity and autonomy remained

Legacy

- Foundation for independence in 1960
- Shaped Nigeria's federal system

Box 2.4 Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Lyttleton Constitution **Strengths**

Pilot questions 2.4

1. Who introduced the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954?
2. What was the main innovation of the Lyttleton Constitution?
3. What powers were retained by the central government under this constitution?



4. Name one strength of the Lyttleton Constitution.
5. What was its most significant legacy for Nigeria?

Series Summary

This Series has examined the colonial constitutions that shaped Nigeria's early constitutional development. Its purpose was to highlight how reforms between 1922 and 1954 gradually expanded Nigerian participation in governance while still maintaining colonial control.

We began with the Clifford Constitution of 1922, which introduced limited electoral politics in Lagos and Calabar. Then we explored the Richards Constitution of 1946, which created regional councils and acknowledged Nigeria's diversity. Following that, we analysed the McPherson Constitution of 1951, notable for its wider consultation and the establishment of regional Houses of Assembly. Finally, we studied the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, which introduced a clear federal structure and laid the foundation for independence. By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe the Clifford Constitution (SLO 2.1), explain the Richards Constitution (SLO 2.2), analyse the McPherson Constitution (SLO 2.3), and evaluate the Lyttleton Constitution (SLO 2.4).

Glossary of Terms

- **Federalism:** A system of government where powers are divided between central and regional authorities.
- **House of Representatives:** A legislative body created under the McPherson Constitution to include elected Nigerian members.
- **Legislative Council:** A colonial body established under the Clifford Constitution, combining official and unofficial members.
- **Lyttleton Constitution:** The 1954 constitution that introduced federalism and prepared Nigeria for independence.
- **McPherson Constitution:** The 1951 constitution that expanded Nigerian participation and introduced regional Houses of Assembly.
- **Regional councils:** Political bodies created under the Richards Constitution to give regions a measure of identity.
- **Richards Constitution:** The 1946 constitution that introduced regional councils and expanded representation.
- **Representation:** The act of including individuals or groups in governance through elections or appointments.

Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. Who introduced the Clifford Constitution of 1922? (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. Which constitution first introduced regional councils in Nigeria? (Linked to SLO 2.2)



3. What new national body was created under the McPherson Constitution of 1951? (Linked to SLO 2.3)
4. The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 established Nigeria as a _____. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Short-answer questions

5. State one major weakness of the Clifford Constitution. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
6. Why was the Richards Constitution criticised by Nigerian leaders? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
7. Identify one achievement of the McPherson Constitution. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
8. Name one strength of the Lyttleton Constitution. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Long-answer questions

9. Analyse the achievements and shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution of 1951. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
 - *Basic response:* Discuss wider Nigerian participation and regional assemblies, alongside weaknesses such as reinforced regionalism.
 - *Value-added response:* Extend by evaluating how these features influenced Nigeria's political rivalry and federal development.
10. Evaluate the legacy of the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 for Nigeria's independence. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
 - *Basic response:* Explain how federalism and increased Nigerian participation prepared Nigeria for independence.
 - *Value-added response:* Go further by linking its legacy to the federal system still in use today.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

1. Governor Hugh Clifford.
2. Richards Constitution of 1946.
3. House of Representatives.
4. Federation.
5. Representation restricted to Lagos and Calabar.
6. It was imposed without adequate consultation and most representatives were nominated.
7. Wider Nigerian participation in governance.
8. Clear federal structure established.
9.
 - *Basic response:* It expanded Nigerian participation and introduced regional assemblies, but reinforced regionalism and weakened central authority.
 - *Value-added response:* These shortcomings deepened ethnic rivalry and shaped Nigeria's later federal struggles.
10.
 - *Basic response:* It prepared Nigeria for independence by establishing federalism and increasing Nigerian involvement.



- *Value-added response:* Its legacy continues in Nigeria’s federal system, influencing governance and political competition today.

References and Attributions [Series 2]

- Plate 2.1 Governor Hugh Clifford, architect of the 1922 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical portrait of Governor Hugh Clifford in colonial attire.”
- Figure 2.1 Structure of the Legislative Council, 1922. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Legislative Council structure under Clifford Constitution.”
- Box 2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the Clifford Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising strengths and weaknesses of the Clifford Constitution.”
- Plate 2.2 Governor Sir Arthur Richards, architect of the 1946 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical portrait of Governor Sir Arthur Richards in colonial attire.”
- Figure 2.2 Governance structure under the Richards Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing governance structure under Richards Constitution.”
- Box 2.2 Limitations and criticisms of the Richards Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising limitations and criticisms of the Richards Constitution.”
- Plate 2.3 Governor John Macpherson and Nigerian leaders at the Ibadan conference, 1950. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of Governor John Macpherson with Nigerian leaders at the Ibadan conference.”
- Figure 2.3 Governance structure under the McPherson Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing governance structure under McPherson Constitution.”
- Box 2.3 Achievements and shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising achievements and shortcomings of the McPherson Constitution.”
- Plate 2.4 Oliver Lyttleton, architect of the 1954 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of Oliver Lyttleton addressing colonial officials.”
- Figure 2.4 Federal structure under the Lyttleton Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing federal structure under Lyttleton Constitution.”
- Box 2.4 Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Lyttleton Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Lyttleton Constitution.”

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Part 2.1 Clifford Constitution

1. Governor Hugh Clifford.



2. Introduction of electoral politics.
3. Four Nigerians.
4. Lagos and Calabar.
5. Nigerian representatives had little influence.

Part 2.2 Richards Constitution

1. Governor Sir Arthur Richards.
2. Regional councils.
3. Northern, Western, and Eastern regions.
4. It was imposed without consultation.
5. Limited Nigerian participation.

Part 2.3 McPherson Constitution

1. Governor John Macpherson.
2. Wide consultation through conferences.
3. House of Representatives.
4. Northern, Western, and Eastern regions.
5. Reinforced regionalism.

Part 2.4 Lyttleton Constitution

1. Oliver Lyttleton.
2. Clear federal structure.
3. Defence and foreign affairs.
4. Increased Nigerian participation.
5. Foundation for independence.



Series 3: Transition through Clifford, Richards, McPherson, and Lyttleton Constitutions

Series Outline

- **Part 3.1: Contextual Overview of Colonial Constitutional Transition**
 - 3.1.1: Political and social pressures for reform
 - 3.1.2: Role of nationalist movements
 - 3.1.3: Colonial administrative objectives
- **Part 3.2: Comparative Analysis of Clifford and Richards Constitutions**
 - 3.2.1: Key similarities and differences
 - 3.2.2: Contributions to Nigerian political development
 - 3.2.3: Limitations and criticisms
- **Part 3.3: Comparative Analysis of McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions**
 - 3.3.1: Innovations and structural changes
 - 3.3.2: Federal features and regional autonomy
 - 3.3.3: Achievements and shortcomings
- **Part 3.4: Overall Transition and Legacy of Colonial Constitutions**
 - 3.4.1: Gradual expansion of Nigerian participation
 - 3.4.2: Emergence of federalism
 - 3.4.3: Preparation for independence

Introduction

The transition through Nigeria's colonial constitutions represents a crucial stage in the country's political development. Each constitution introduced between 1922 and 1954 reflected both the demands of Nigerian nationalists and the objectives of the British colonial administration. For learners, this Series is important because it shows how constitutional reforms gradually expanded Nigerian participation, introduced federal features, and prepared the country for independence.

The aim of this Series is to analyse the progression from the Clifford Constitution of 1922 through the Richards Constitution of 1946, the McPherson Constitution of 1951, and finally the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, highlighting their comparative features, innovations, and collective legacy.

We shall commence this Series with a contextual overview of colonial constitutional transition, focusing on political pressures, nationalist movements, and administrative objectives. Next, we will compare the Clifford and Richards Constitutions, examining their similarities, differences, and contributions. Following that, we will analyse the McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions, considering their innovations, federal features, and shortcomings. Finally, we will conclude with an overall assessment of the transition, emphasising the gradual expansion of Nigerian participation, the emergence of federalism, and the preparation for independence.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:



- **SLO 3.1** explain the political, social, and administrative context of Nigeria's colonial constitutional transition,
- **SLO 3.2** compare the features, contributions, and limitations of the Clifford and Richards Constitutions,
- **SLO 3.3** analyse the innovations, federal features, and shortcomings of the McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions, and
- **SLO 3.4** evaluate the overall legacy of colonial constitutional transition in preparing Nigeria for independence.

3.1 Contextual Overview of Colonial Constitutional Transition

3.1.1 Political and social pressures for reform

Nigeria's constitutional transition was driven by increasing **political pressures**, meaning demands from Nigerian elites and nationalist leaders for greater participation in governance. Social pressures also played a role, as the diverse ethnic groups sought recognition and representation in political structures. The growing influence of educated Nigerians, particularly in urban centres like Lagos, created momentum for reforms that would allow them to contribute to decision-making.

These pressures highlighted the inadequacy of earlier constitutions and pushed the colonial administration to introduce new reforms.

Fill in the blank: Political pressures for reform in Nigeria were driven by demands for greater _____ in governance.



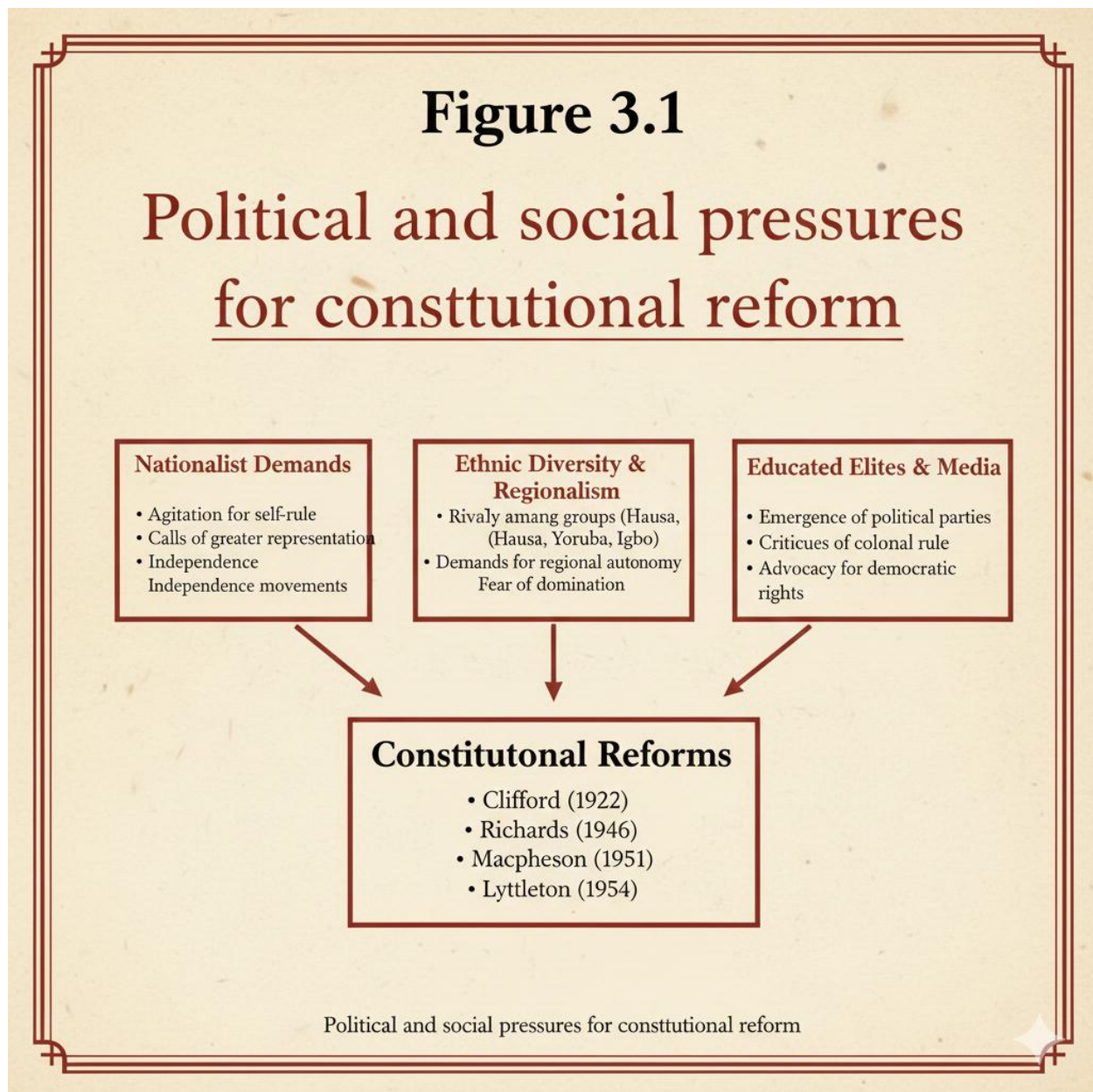


Diagram showing political and social pressures leading to constitutional reforms (nationalist demands, ethnic diversity, educated elites) Caption: Figure 3.1 Political and social pressures for constitutional reform

3.1.2 Role of nationalist movements

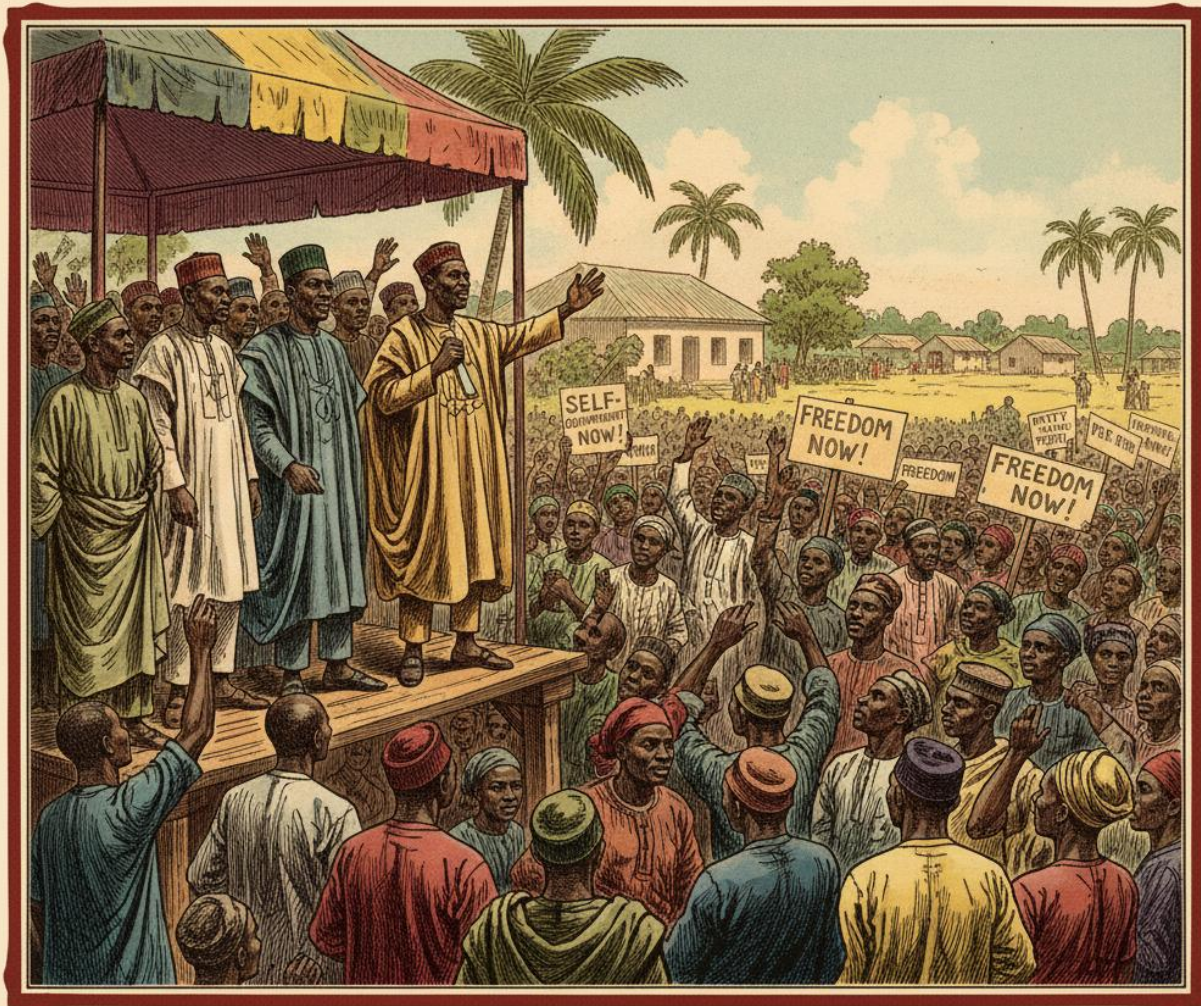
Nationalist movements refer to organised efforts by Nigerians to demand self-rule and independence. Leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and Ahmadu Bello played key roles in mobilising public opinion and challenging colonial authority. Newspapers, political parties, and civic organisations became platforms for expressing nationalist aspirations.

These movements were instrumental in shaping constitutional reforms, as they forced the colonial administration to expand Nigerian participation and gradually prepare for independence.



Fill in the blank: Nationalist movements in Nigeria were instrumental in demanding _____ and independence.

Plate 3.1



Nigerian nationalist leaders during a political rally.

Image showing Nigerian nationalist leaders addressing a political rally
Caption: Plate 3.1
Nigerian nationalist leaders during a political rally

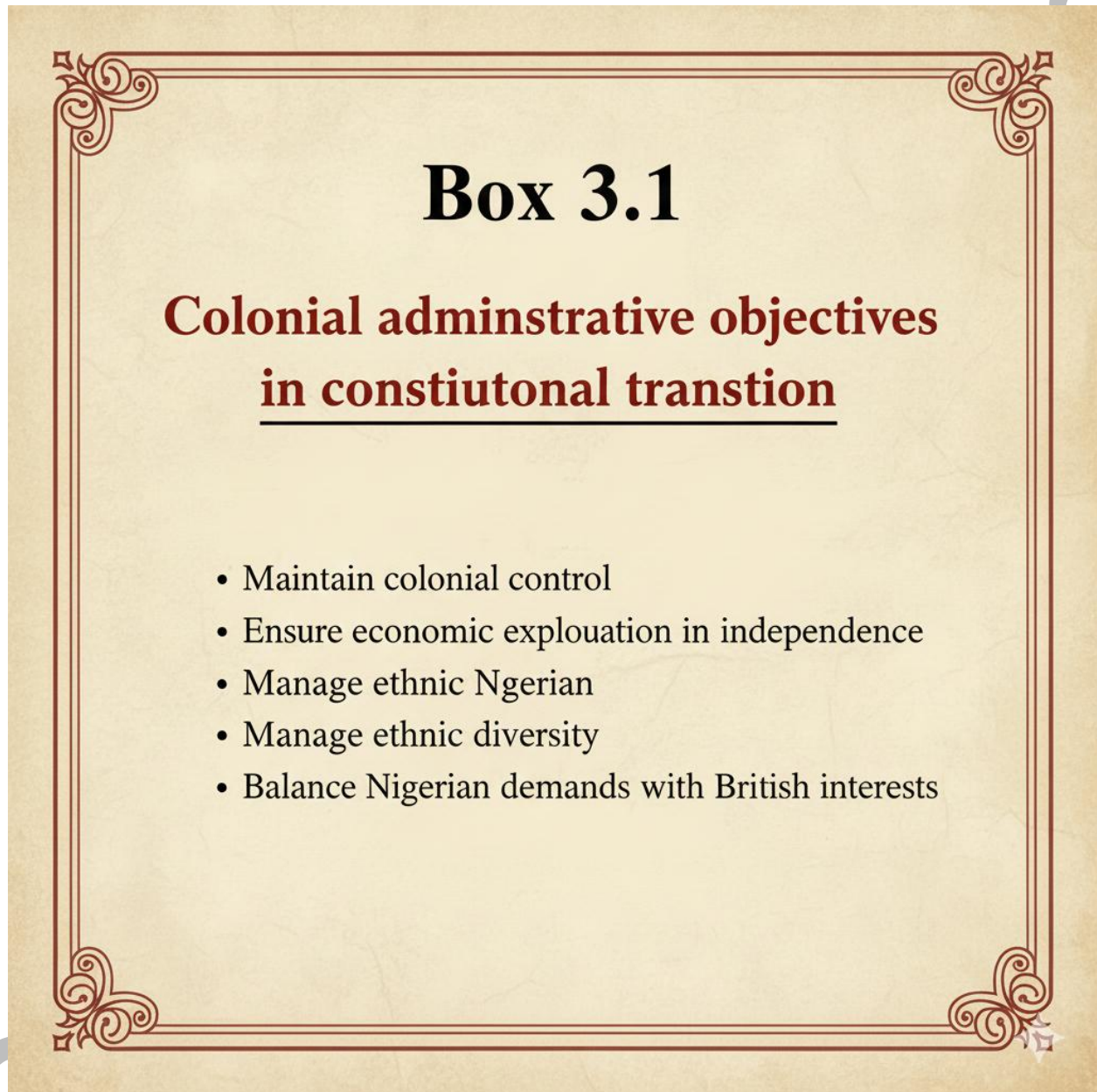
3.1.3 Colonial administrative objectives

While Nigerians pushed for reforms, the British colonial administration had its own **administrative objectives**, meaning goals related to maintaining control, ensuring economic exploitation, and managing Nigeria's diversity. The British sought to create constitutions that balanced Nigerian demands with colonial interests. For example, they introduced regional councils to manage ethnic diversity but retained strong powers for the Governor to safeguard colonial authority.



This duality of objectives—Nigerian aspirations versus colonial priorities—defined the nature of constitutional transition during this period.

Fill in the blank: The British colonial administration introduced reforms to balance Nigerian demands with _____ interests.



Box 3.1

Colonial administrative objectives in constitutional transition

- Maintain colonial control
- Ensure economic exploitation in independence
- Manage ethnic Nigerian
- Manage ethnic diversity
- Balance Nigerian demands with British interests

Box 3.1 Colonial administrative objectives in constitutional transition

Pilot questions 3.1

1. What were the main political pressures driving constitutional reforms in Nigeria?
2. Name one key nationalist leader involved in Nigeria's constitutional transition.
3. What role did newspapers and political parties play in nationalist movements?



4. What were the main objectives of the British colonial administration in constitutional reforms?
5. How did the duality of Nigerian aspirations and colonial priorities shape constitutional transition?

3.2 Comparative Analysis of Clifford and Richards Constitutions

3.2.1 Key similarities and differences

The **Clifford Constitution of 1922** and the **Richards Constitution of 1946** were both colonial frameworks designed to manage Nigeria's governance. A key similarity is that both maintained strong powers for the Governor, ensuring colonial control. However, they differed in scope and inclusiveness. The Clifford Constitution introduced limited electoral politics restricted to Lagos and Calabar, while the Richards Constitution expanded representation by creating regional councils for the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions.

This comparison shows that while both constitutions were limited, the Richards Constitution represented a step forward in recognising Nigeria's diversity.

Fill in the blank: The Clifford Constitution restricted elections to Lagos and _____, while the Richards Constitution introduced regional councils.



Table 3.1

Similarities and differences between Clifford and Richards Constitutions

Feature	Clifford Constitution (1922)	Richards Constitution (1946)
Revernoor's power	Limited elections in Lagos and Calabar	Regional councils introduced
Manage ethnic Nigerian	Retained overriding authority	Regional overriding introduced
Inclusiveness	Restricted to elites	Expanded to regions

Table 3.1 Similarities and differences between Clifford and Richards Constitutions

3.2.2 Contributions to Nigerian political development

Both constitutions contributed to Nigeria's political development in different ways. The Clifford Constitution introduced electoral politics, laying the foundation for political parties and nationalist movements. The Richards Constitution, on the other hand, acknowledged Nigeria's diversity by creating regional councils, which later influenced the federal structure.

Together, they marked important stages in Nigeria's constitutional journey, showing gradual expansion of Nigerian participation in governance.

Fill in the blank: The Clifford Constitution laid the foundation for political _____ in Nigeria.



Box 3.2

Contributions of Clifford and Richards Constitutions

Clifford Constitution:

- Introduced electoral politics
- Encouraged political parties

Richards Constitution:

- Recognized Nigeria's diversity
- Created regional councils

Box 3.2 Contributions of Clifford and Richards Constitutions

3.2.3 Limitations and criticisms

Despite their contributions, both constitutions faced criticisms. The Clifford Constitution was criticised for restricting elections to Lagos and Calabar, excluding most Nigerians. The Richards Constitution was criticised for reinforcing regional divisions and for being imposed without adequate consultation. In both cases, the Governor retained overriding powers, limiting Nigerian influence.

These limitations highlighted the tension between colonial interests and Nigerian aspirations, which continued to shape subsequent reforms.



Fill in the blank: One major criticism of the Richards Constitution was that it was imposed without adequate _____.

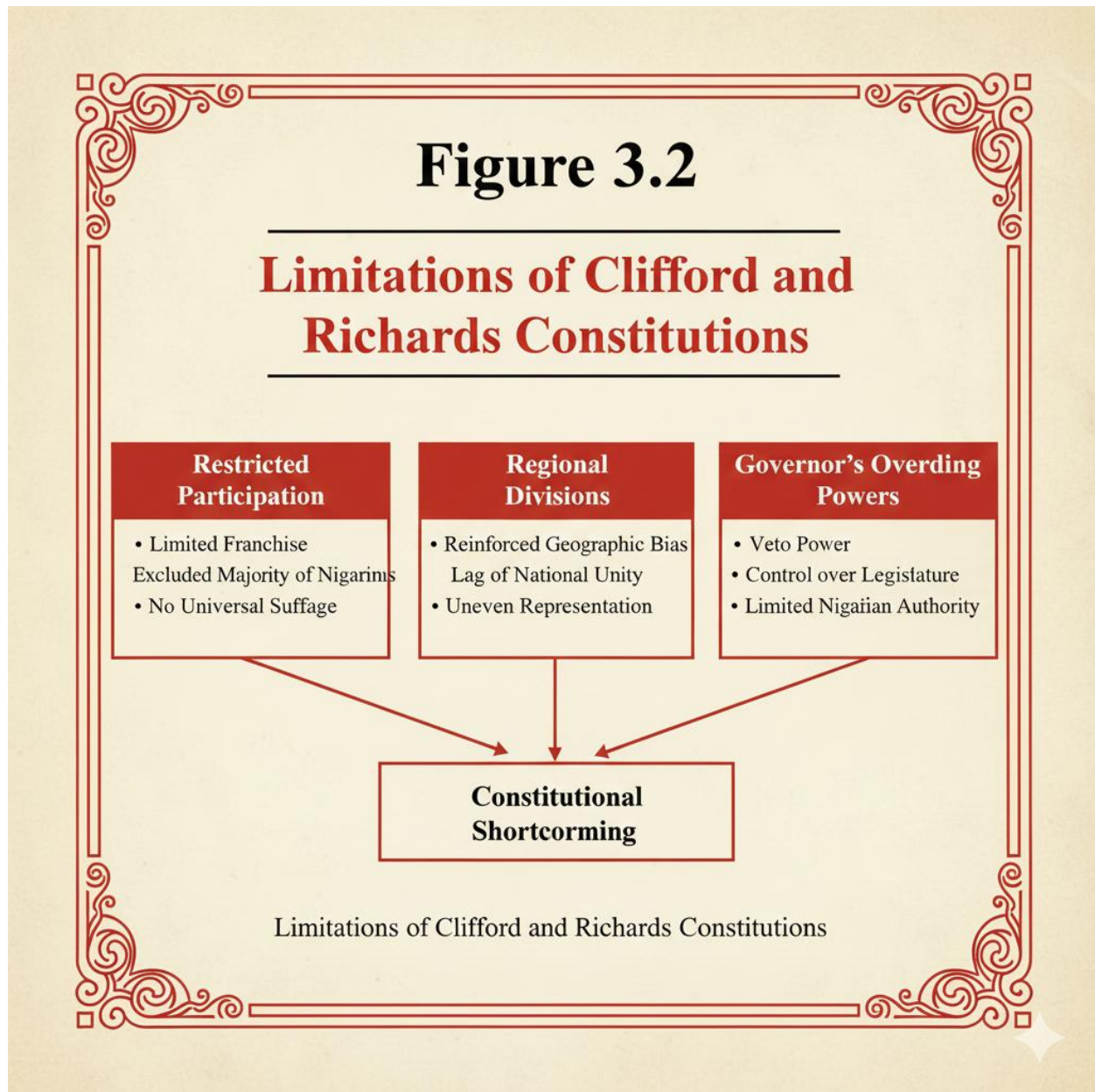


Diagram showing limitations of Clifford and Richards Constitutions (restricted participation, regional divisions, governor's powers) Caption: Figure 3.2 Limitations of Clifford and Richards Constitutions

Pilot questions 3.2

1. What was the main similarity between the Clifford and Richards Constitutions?
2. Which constitution introduced regional councils?
3. How did the Clifford Constitution contribute to Nigerian political development?
4. Why was the Richards Constitution criticised by nationalist leaders?



5. Name one limitation common to both constitutions.

3.3 Comparative Analysis of McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions

3.3.1 Innovations and structural changes

The **McPherson Constitution of 1951** and the **Lyttleton Constitution of 1954** both introduced significant innovations. The McPherson Constitution was notable for its wide consultation process, involving Nigerians through regional and national conferences. It created a **House of Representatives** and regional **Houses of Assembly**, expanding Nigerian participation in governance.

The Lyttleton Constitution built on these foundations by introducing a clear **federal structure**, dividing powers between central and regional governments. Each region had its own premier and council of ministers, while the central government retained authority over defence and foreign affairs.

Fill in the blank: The McPherson Constitution introduced regional Houses of _____, while the Lyttleton Constitution established a federal structure.



Tabre 3.2

Innovations and structural changes in McPherson and Constitutions

Feature	McPherson Constitution (1951)	Lyttleton Constitution (1954)
• Wide Franchise Nigerian involvment National body	• Limited Nigarisien • Federal Council of Ministeress	• Limited consulation, but more structured strictured
• Regional bodies of Assembly • Quasi-federal	• Premiers and Councils and counciis of nf ministers	• Clear federal federal system

Limitations of Clifford and Richards Constitutions

Table 3.2 Innovations and structural changes in McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions

3.3.2 Federal features and regional autonomy

The Lyttleton Constitution was the first to establish Nigeria as a **federation**, meaning powers were shared between central and regional governments. Regions gained autonomy to manage local affairs, while the central government retained control over national matters. This arrangement recognised Nigeria's diversity and attempted to balance unity with autonomy.

In contrast, the McPherson Constitution introduced a quasi-federal system, where regional assemblies existed but were still subject to strong colonial oversight. The transition from quasi-federalism to federalism marked a significant step towards independence.



Fill in the blank: The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 established Nigeria as a _____ for the first time.

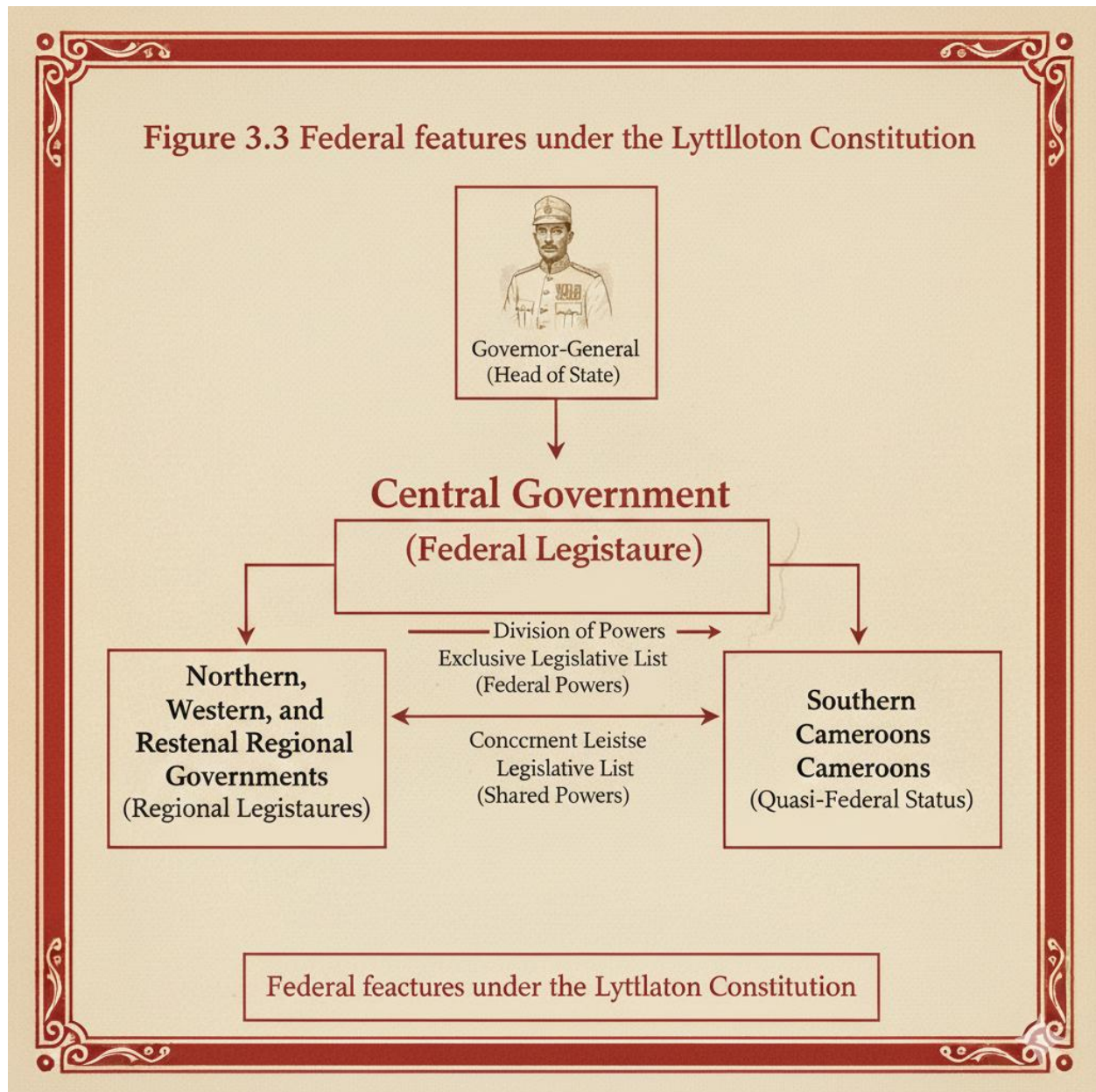


Diagram showing federal features under the Lyttleton Constitution (central government, regional governments, division of powers) Caption: Figure 3.3 Federal features under the Lyttleton Constitution

3.3.3 Achievements and shortcomings

Both constitutions had achievements and shortcomings. The McPherson Constitution achieved wider Nigerian participation and introduced regional assemblies, but it reinforced regionalism and created a weak central government. The Lyttleton Constitution achieved a clear federal structure and increased Nigerian involvement, but it entrenched regional rivalry and failed to fully resolve tensions between unity and autonomy.



Together, they represent critical stages in Nigeria's constitutional transition, showing progress but also highlighting persistent challenges.

Fill in the blank: One major shortcoming of the McPherson Constitution was that it reinforced _____ among ethnic groups.

Box 3.3

Achievements and shortcomings of McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions

McPherson Constitution (1951)

Achievements:

- Wider Nigerian participation
- Quigional assennial structure

Shortcomings:

- Weak central government

Lyttleton Constitution (1954)

- Clear federal structure
- Increased Nigerian participation
- Regional autonomy
- Increased Nigerian participation
- Entrenched regional rivalry
- Unresolved unity-autonomy tensions

Box 3.3 Achievements and shortcomings of McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions **McPherson Constitution (1951)**

Pilot questions 3.3

1. What was the main innovation of the McPherson Constitution?
2. Which constitution first established Nigeria as a federation?
3. What powers did the central government retain under the Lyttleton Constitution?



4. Name one achievement of the McPherson Constitution.
5. Name one shortcoming of the Lyttleton Constitution.

3.4 Overall Transition and Legacy of Colonial Constitutions

3.4.1 Gradual expansion of Nigerian participation

Across the Clifford, Richards, McPherson, and Lyttleton Constitutions, one clear trend was the **gradual expansion of Nigerian participation** in governance. Starting with the limited elections in Lagos and Calabar under the Clifford Constitution, representation widened through regional councils in the Richards Constitution, expanded further with regional assemblies under the McPherson Constitution, and culminated in the federal structure of the Lyttleton Constitution.

This progression demonstrated how Nigerians steadily gained more influence in political processes, even though colonial control remained strong until independence.

Fill in the blank: The Clifford Constitution introduced limited elections in Lagos and _____, marking the beginning of Nigerian participation.



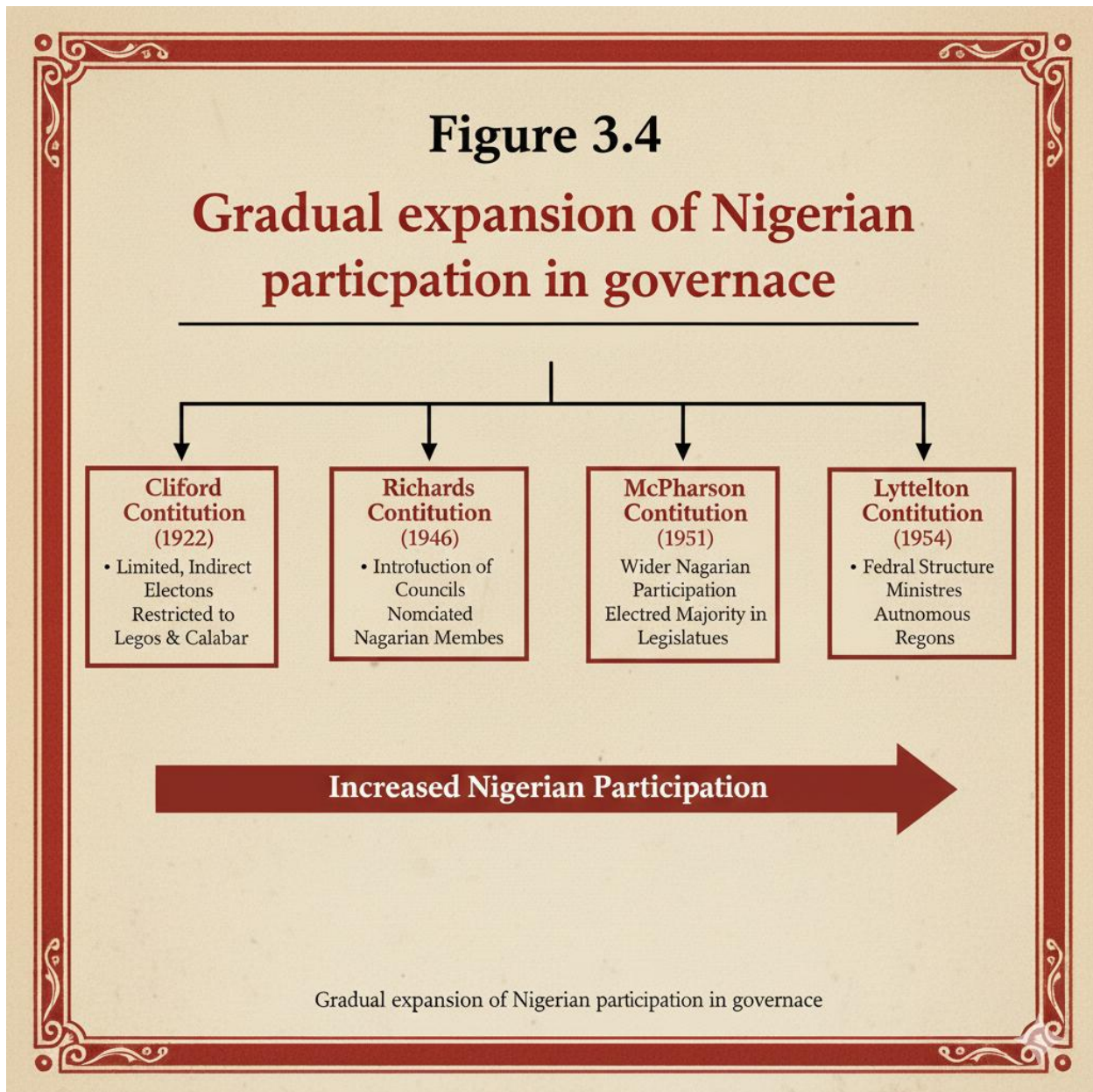


Diagram showing progression of Nigerian participation from Clifford (1922) to Lyttelton (1954)
Caption: Figure 3.4 Gradual expansion of Nigerian participation in governance

3.4.2 Emergence of federalism

The transition also saw the **emergence of federalism**, meaning a system where powers are divided between central and regional governments. While the McPherson Constitution introduced a quasi-federal structure, the Lyttelton Constitution established Nigeria as a federation for the first time. This was a direct response to Nigeria's ethnic and regional diversity, as federalism allowed regions to manage local affairs while maintaining national unity.

Federalism became a defining feature of Nigeria's political system, shaping governance even after independence.



Fill in the blank: The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 established Nigeria as a _____ for the first time.

Box 3.4

Emergence of federalism in Nigeria

- McPreSon Constitution: quasi-federal structure
- Federalism recognised Nigeria's diversity
- Regional Houses of Assembly federal system
- Weak central government government
- Quasi-federal structure established
- Federalism shaped post independence governance
- Drafted with Nigerian input

Emergence structure in Nigeria's constitutional transition

Box 3.4 Emergence of federalism in Nigeria

3.4.3 Preparation for independence

Finally, the collective legacy of these constitutions was the **preparation for independence**. Each reform expanded Nigerian involvement, introduced new structures, and responded to nationalist demands. By 1954, Nigeria had a federal system with regional autonomy, a central government, and Nigerian leaders actively participating in governance.

Although colonial control persisted, these constitutions laid the foundation for Nigeria's independence in 1960, making them critical milestones in the country's constitutional history.



Fill in the blank: The collective legacy of colonial constitutions was the preparation for Nigeria's _____ in 1960.

Table 3.3

3.3 Transition milestones towards independence

Year		Constitution	Key Transition Feature
1922	Clifford Richards	Limited elections in Lagos and Calabar	Regional councils introduced
1951 1954	McPherson Lyttleton	Regional assemblies and wider participation	Regional councils introduced

Table 3.3 Transition milestones towards independence.

Table 3.3 Transition milestones towards independence

Pilot questions 3.4

1. How did Nigerian participation in governance expand across the colonial constitutions?
2. Which constitution first introduced Nigeria as a federation?
3. Why was federalism important in Nigeria's constitutional transition?
4. What was the collective legacy of the colonial constitutions?



5. Which year marked the beginning of limited elections in Nigeria?

Series Summary

This Series has explored the transition through Nigeria's colonial constitutions, showing how reforms from 1922 to 1954 gradually expanded Nigerian participation and introduced federal features. The purpose was to help you understand the progression from limited representation under the Clifford Constitution, through the regional councils of the Richards Constitution, the wider consultation and assemblies of the McPherson Constitution, and finally the federal structure of the Lyttleton Constitution.

By tracing these developments, you have seen how political pressures, nationalist movements, and colonial objectives shaped constitutional reforms. The Series has connected these transitions to the learning outcomes: you should now be able to explain the context of constitutional transition (SLO 3.1), compare Clifford and Richards Constitutions (SLO 3.2), analyse McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions (SLO 3.3), and evaluate the overall legacy of colonial constitutional transition in preparing Nigeria for independence (SLO 3.4).

Glossary of Terms

- **Colonial administrative objectives:** Goals of the British administration, including maintaining control, exploiting resources, and managing diversity.
- **Federalism:** A system of government where powers are divided between central and regional authorities.
- **House of Representatives:** Legislative body created under the McPherson Constitution, including elected Nigerian members.
- **Lyttleton Constitution:** The 1954 constitution that established Nigeria as a federation and prepared for independence.
- **McPherson Constitution:** The 1951 constitution that expanded Nigerian participation and introduced regional Houses of Assembly.
- **Nationalist movements:** Organised efforts by Nigerians to demand self-rule and independence.
- **Regional councils:** Political bodies introduced under the Richards Constitution to give regions a measure of identity.
- **Transition:** The gradual progression from one constitutional framework to another, reflecting political and social change.

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. Which constitution first introduced regional councils in Nigeria? (Linked to SLO 3.2)
2. The McPherson Constitution of 1951 created which national legislative body? (Linked to SLO 3.3)
3. The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 established Nigeria as a _____. (Linked to SLO 3.3)



Short-answer questions

4. State one political pressure that drove constitutional reforms in Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
5. Why was the Richards Constitution criticised by Nigerian leaders? (Linked to SLO 3.2)
6. Identify one achievement of the McPherson Constitution. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
7. Name one legacy of the Lyttleton Constitution. (Linked to SLO 3.4)

Long-answer questions

8. Compare the Clifford and Richards Constitutions, highlighting their similarities, differences, and contributions. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
 - *Basic response*: Discuss similarities such as governor's powers, differences in representation, and contributions to political development.
 - *Value-added response*: Extend by evaluating how these constitutions shaped nationalist movements and laid groundwork for federalism.
9. Evaluate the overall legacy of Nigeria's colonial constitutional transition. (Linked to SLO 3.4)
 - *Basic response*: Explain how reforms expanded Nigerian participation and prepared for independence.
 - *Value-added response*: Go further by linking these legacies to Nigeria's post-independence federal system and ongoing challenges.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

1. Richards Constitution of 1946.
2. House of Representatives.
3. Federation.
4. Demand for greater Nigerian participation in governance.
5. It was imposed without adequate consultation and reinforced regional divisions.
6. Wider Nigerian participation through regional assemblies.
7. Foundation for independence in 1960.
8.
 - *Basic response*: Both retained governor's powers; Clifford restricted elections to Lagos and Calabar, Richards introduced regional councils. Contributions included electoral politics and recognition of diversity.
 - *Value-added response*: These constitutions shaped nationalist movements and influenced later federal structures.
9.
 - *Basic response*: They expanded Nigerian participation, introduced federal features, and prepared Nigeria for independence.
 - *Value-added response*: Their legacy continues in Nigeria's federal system, influencing governance and ethnic relations today.

References and Attributions [Series 3]



- Figure 3.1 Political and social pressures for constitutional reform. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing political and social pressures for constitutional reform in Nigeria.”
- Plate 3.1 Nigerian nationalist leaders during a political rally. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of Nigerian nationalist leaders addressing a political rally in the 1940s.”
- Box 3.1 Colonial administrative objectives in Nigeria’s constitutional transition. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising colonial administrative objectives in Nigeria’s constitutional transition.”
- Table 3.1 Similarities and differences between Clifford and Richards Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table comparing Clifford and Richards Constitutions.”
- Box 3.2 Contributions of Clifford and Richards Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising contributions of Clifford and Richards Constitutions.”
- Figure 3.2 Limitations of Clifford and Richards Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing limitations of Clifford and Richards Constitutions.”
- Table 3.2 Innovations and structural changes in McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table comparing innovations and structural changes in McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions.”
- Figure 3.3 Federal features under the Lyttleton Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing federal features under Lyttleton Constitution.”
- Box 3.3 Achievements and shortcomings of McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising achievements and shortcomings of McPherson and Lyttleton Constitutions.”
- Figure 3.4 Gradual expansion of Nigerian participation in governance. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a timeline diagram showing Nigerian participation progression.”
- Box 3.4 Emergence of federalism in Nigeria’s constitutional transition. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising emergence of federalism in Nigeria’s constitutional transition.”
- Table 3.3 Transition milestones towards independence. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table summarising Nigeria’s constitutional transition milestones.”

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

Part 3.1

1. Demands for greater participation in governance.
2. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, or Ahmadu Bello.
3. They served as platforms for nationalist aspirations.



4. To maintain control, exploit resources, and manage diversity.
5. It created constitutions balancing Nigerian aspirations with colonial priorities.

Part 3.2

1. Both retained strong powers for the Governor.
2. Richards Constitution.
3. It introduced electoral politics.
4. It was imposed without consultation.
5. Governor retained overriding powers.

Part 3.3

1. Wide consultation and creation of regional assemblies.
2. Lyttleton Constitution.
3. Defence and foreign affairs.
4. Wider Nigerian participation.
5. Entrenched regional rivalry.

Part 3.4

1. From limited elections in Clifford to federalism in Lyttleton.
2. Lyttleton Constitution.
3. It balanced unity with autonomy.
4. Preparation for independence.
5. 1922



Series 4: Independence and Republican Constitutional Frameworks

Series Outline

- **Part 4.1: Background to Independence and Constitutional Negotiations**
 - 4.1.1: Political developments leading to independence
 - 4.1.2: Role of nationalist leaders and parties
 - 4.1.3: Constitutional conferences and agreements
- **Part 4.2: The Independence Constitution of 1960**
 - 4.2.1: Key features of the Independence Constitution
 - 4.2.2: Strengths and achievements
 - 4.2.3: Limitations and criticisms
- **Part 4.3: The Republican Constitution of 1963**
 - 4.3.1: Background and rationale for change
 - 4.3.2: Major provisions and innovations
 - 4.3.3: Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy
- **Part 4.4: Comparative Analysis and Legacy of Independence and Republican Constitutions**
 - 4.4.1: Similarities and differences between 1960 and 1963 constitutions
 - 4.4.2: Contributions to Nigeria's political development
 - 4.4.3: Challenges and lessons for future constitutional reforms

Introduction

Nigeria's independence in 1960 marked a turning point in its constitutional history. After decades of colonial reforms, the country finally achieved self-rule under the **Independence Constitution of 1960**, which established Nigeria as a sovereign state within the Commonwealth. Just three years later, the **Republican Constitution of 1963** was introduced, removing the British monarch as Head of State and making Nigeria a republic.

This Series is important because it highlights how Nigeria moved from colonial dependence to sovereign independence, and then to republican status. It examines the political negotiations, the features of both constitutions, and their contributions to Nigeria's political development.

We shall begin with the background to independence and constitutional negotiations, focusing on political developments, nationalist leaders, and constitutional conferences. Next, we will study the Independence Constitution of 1960, analysing its features, strengths, and limitations. Following that, we will examine the Republican Constitution of 1963, considering its provisions, achievements, and weaknesses. Finally, we will compare both constitutions and assess their legacy in shaping Nigeria's political framework.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:



- **SLO 4.1** explain the political developments and constitutional negotiations leading to Nigeria's independence,
- **SLO 4.2** describe the key features, strengths, and limitations of the Independence Constitution of 1960,
- **SLO 4.3** analyse the background, provisions, and legacy of the Republican Constitution of 1963, and
- **SLO 4.4** evaluate the similarities, differences, and overall contributions of the Independence and Republican Constitutions to Nigeria's political development.

4.1 Background to Independence and Constitutional Negotiations

4.1.1 Political developments leading to independence

By the late 1940s and 1950s, Nigeria was experiencing rapid political change. Nationalist movements had grown stronger, and political parties such as the **NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons)**, **AG (Action Group)**, and **NPC (Northern People's Congress)** were actively demanding self-rule. The colonial government recognised that Nigeria was becoming increasingly difficult to govern under existing constitutional arrangements.

The political climate was shaped by rising nationalist consciousness, regional competition, and Britain's broader policy of decolonisation after World War II. These developments created the momentum for constitutional negotiations that would eventually lead to independence.

Fill in the blank: The NCNC, AG, and NPC were major _____ parties that demanded self-rule in Nigeria.





Diagram showing Nigeria's major political parties and their regions of influence (NCNC – East, AG – West, NPC – North) Caption: Figure 4.1 Major political parties in Nigeria before independence

4.1.2 Role of nationalist leaders and parties

Nationalist leaders played a crucial role in negotiating Nigeria's independence. **Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and Ahmadu Bello** were among the most influential figures. They mobilised their regions, built political parties, and participated in constitutional conferences. Their leadership ensured that Nigerian voices were central to discussions about independence.

Political parties also provided platforms for Nigerians to articulate their aspirations. The NCNC championed national unity, the AG emphasised federalism, and the NPC represented northern



interests. Together, they shaped the constitutional framework that would guide Nigeria into independence.

Fill in the blank: Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and Ahmadu Bello were key _____ leaders in Nigeria's independence struggle.



Image showing Nigerian nationalist leaders at a constitutional conference Caption: Plate 4.1
Nigerian nationalist leaders at a constitutional conference before independence

4.1.3 Constitutional conferences and agreements

Nigeria's path to independence was shaped by a series of **constitutional conferences** held in London and Lagos. These conferences brought together Nigerian leaders and British officials to negotiate the terms of self-rule. Key conferences included the **London Constitutional**



Conference of 1957 and the **1958 Lagos Conference**, which finalised arrangements for independence.

Agreements reached at these conferences included the adoption of a federal structure, recognition of regional autonomy, and a timetable for independence in 1960. These negotiations reflected compromises between Nigerian demands and British interests, ultimately paving the way for the Independence Constitution.

Fill in the blank: The Lagos Constitutional Conference of 1958 finalised arrangements for Nigeria's _____ in 1960.

Box 4.1

Key constitutional conferences before independence

- London Conference of 1957: Negotiated federal structure
- Lagos Conference of 1958: Finalised independence arrangements
- Agreements: Federalism, regional autonomy, timetable for independence
- Shared: Federalism, autonomy, regional autonomy

Summary of key constitutional conferences

Box 4.1 Key constitutional conferences before independence



Pilot questions 4.1

1. Name the three major political parties that demanded self-rule in Nigeria before independence.
2. Who were the three key nationalist leaders involved in constitutional negotiations?
3. What role did political parties play in Nigeria's independence struggle?
4. Which constitutional conference finalised arrangements for independence?
5. What were the main agreements reached at the constitutional conferences?

4.2 The Independence Constitution of 1960

4.2.1 Key features of the Independence Constitution

The **Independence Constitution of 1960** formally established Nigeria as a sovereign state within the Commonwealth. It retained a **parliamentary system of government**, with the Prime Minister as Head of Government and the British monarch represented by the Governor-General as Head of State. The constitution also entrenched **fundamental rights**, recognised Nigeria's federal structure, and gave regions significant autonomy.

It provided for a bicameral legislature at the federal level, consisting of the Senate and House of Representatives, and regional legislatures in the North, West, and East. Importantly, Nigerian leaders now had full control over domestic affairs, although foreign policy and defence remained closely tied to Britain.

Fill in the blank: The Independence Constitution of 1960 established Nigeria as a sovereign state within the _____.



Figure 4.2

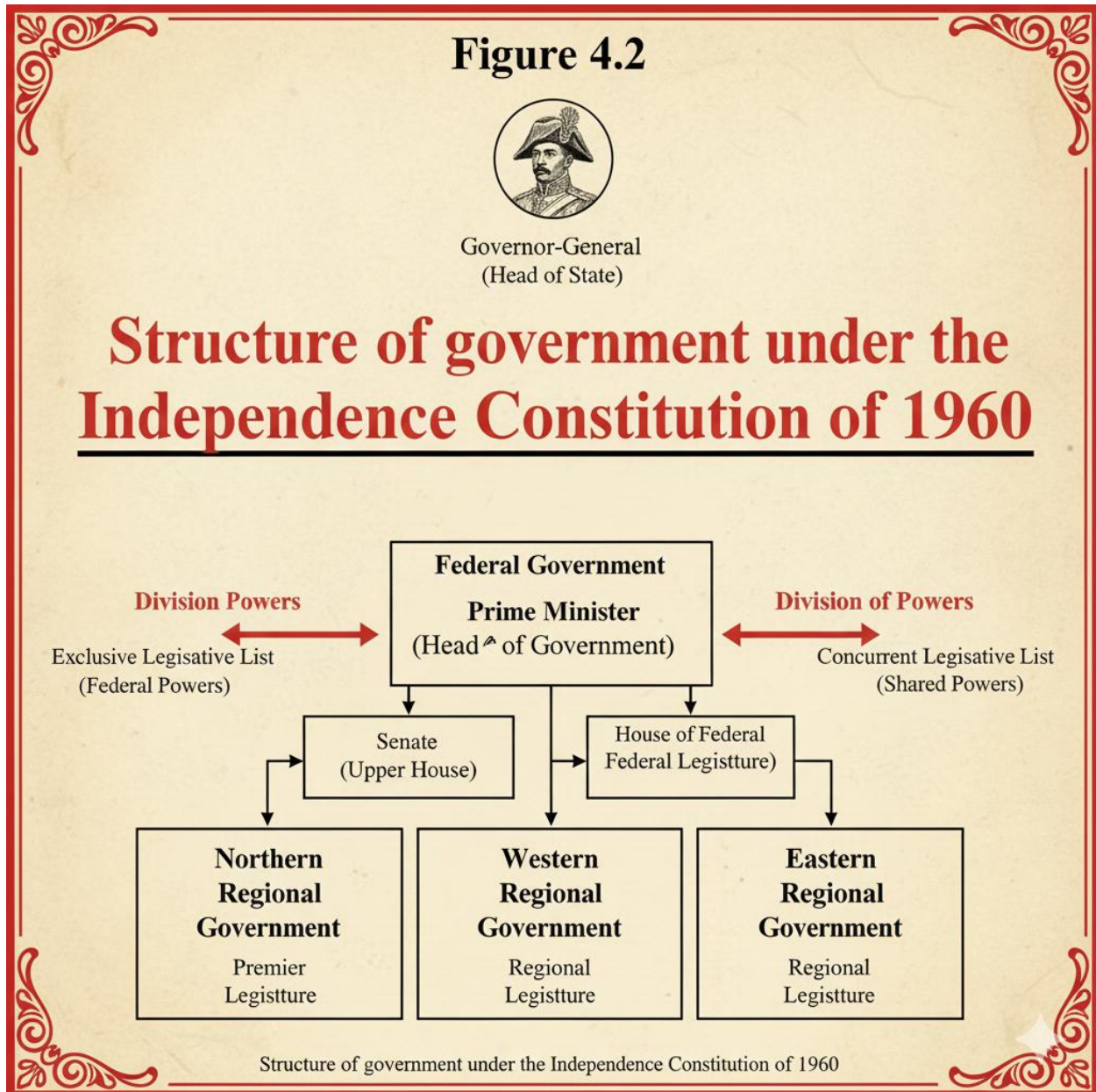


Diagram showing the structure of government under the Independence Constitution (Governor-General, Prime Minister, bicameral legislature, regional governments) Caption: Figure 4.2 Structure of government under the Independence Constitution of 1960

4.2.2 Strengths and achievements

The Independence Constitution had several strengths. It marked Nigeria's transition to sovereignty, gave Nigerians control over domestic governance, and entrenched fundamental rights. It also provided a federal framework that recognised Nigeria's diversity and allowed regions to exercise autonomy.



Another achievement was the establishment of parliamentary democracy, which encouraged political participation and accountability. The constitution symbolised Nigeria's entry into the international community as an independent nation.

Fill in the blank: One major achievement of the Independence Constitution was the entrenchment of fundamental _____.



Box 4.2

Strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution.

- Nigeria became a sovereign state
- Parliamentary democracy established
- Fundamental rights entrenched
- Federal framework recognised diversity
- Regions exercised autonomy

Strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution

Box 4.2 Strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution

4.2.3 Limitations and criticisms

Despite its achievements, the Independence Constitution faced criticisms. Nigeria remained a constitutional monarchy, with the British monarch as Head of State. This arrangement was seen by many as symbolic of continued colonial influence.



The parliamentary system also proved fragile, as regional rivalry and ethnic divisions undermined national unity. Furthermore, while rights were entrenched, political instability and weak institutions limited their effectiveness. These limitations created the need for further constitutional reform, leading to the Republican Constitution of 1963.

Fill in the blank: One major limitation of the Independence Constitution was that Nigeria remained a constitutional _____ under the British monarch.

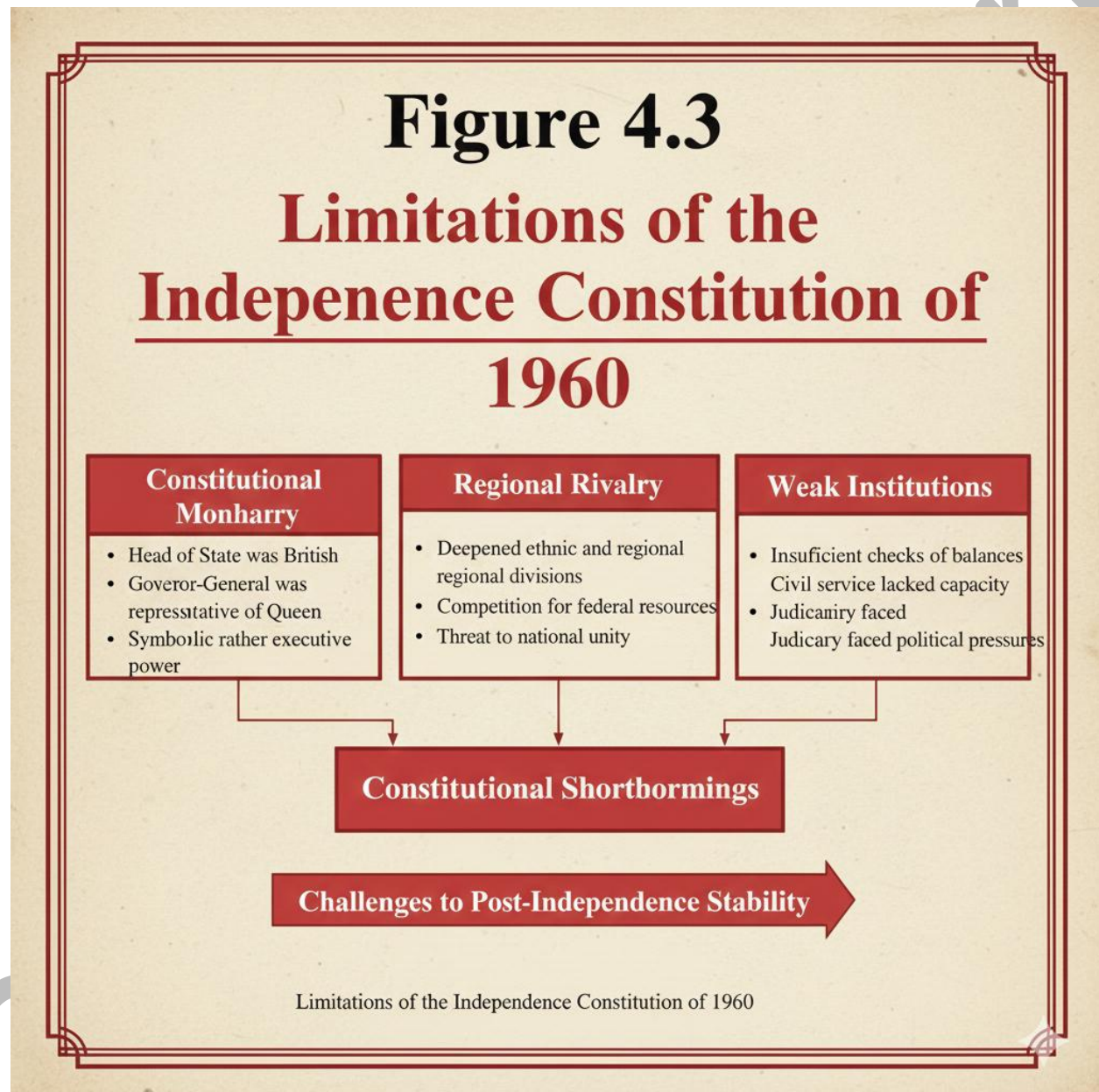


Diagram showing limitations of the Independence Constitution (constitutional monarchy, regional rivalry, weak institutions) Caption: Figure 4.3 Limitations of the Independence Constitution of 1960

Pilot questions 4.2



1. What system of government was established under the Independence Constitution of 1960?
2. Who was recognised as Head of State under this constitution?
3. Name one major achievement of the Independence Constitution.
4. What was one major limitation of the Independence Constitution?
5. Why did Nigeria need further constitutional reform after 1960?

4.3 The Republican Constitution of 1963

4.3.1 Background and rationale for change

The **Republican Constitution of 1963** was introduced to address the limitations of the Independence Constitution of 1960. Although Nigeria had achieved sovereignty, it remained a constitutional monarchy with the British monarch as Head of State. Many Nigerians viewed this as symbolic of continued colonial influence.

The rationale for change was therefore to make Nigeria a **republic**, with a Nigerian Head of State replacing the British monarch. This move reflected nationalist aspirations for complete self-determination and political independence.

Fill in the blank: The Republican Constitution of 1963 replaced the British monarch with a Nigerian _____ of State.



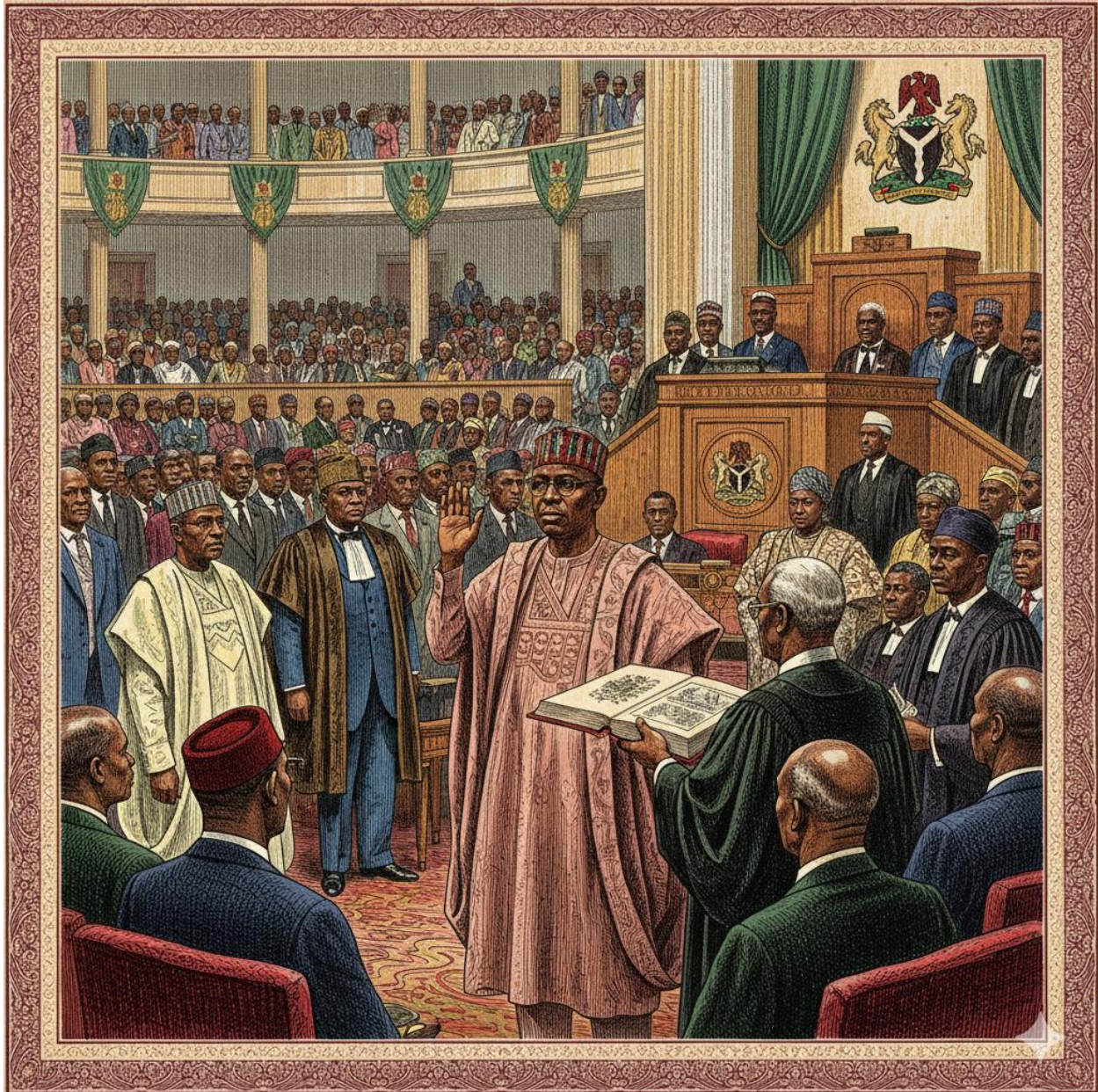


Image showing Nigeria's first President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, sworn in under the Republican Constitution Caption: Plate 4.2 Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe sworn in as Nigeria's first President, 1963

4.3.2 Major provisions and innovations

The Republican Constitution introduced several innovations. Firstly, it abolished the office of Governor-General and replaced it with the **President of Nigeria** as Head of State. Secondly, it maintained the parliamentary system, with the Prime Minister as Head of Government. Thirdly, it entrenched Nigeria's federal structure, with regions retaining autonomy.

It also strengthened Nigeria's sovereignty by removing any residual constitutional ties to Britain. This constitution symbolised Nigeria's full independence and republican status.



Fill in the blank: The Republican Constitution abolished the office of _____-General and created the office of President.

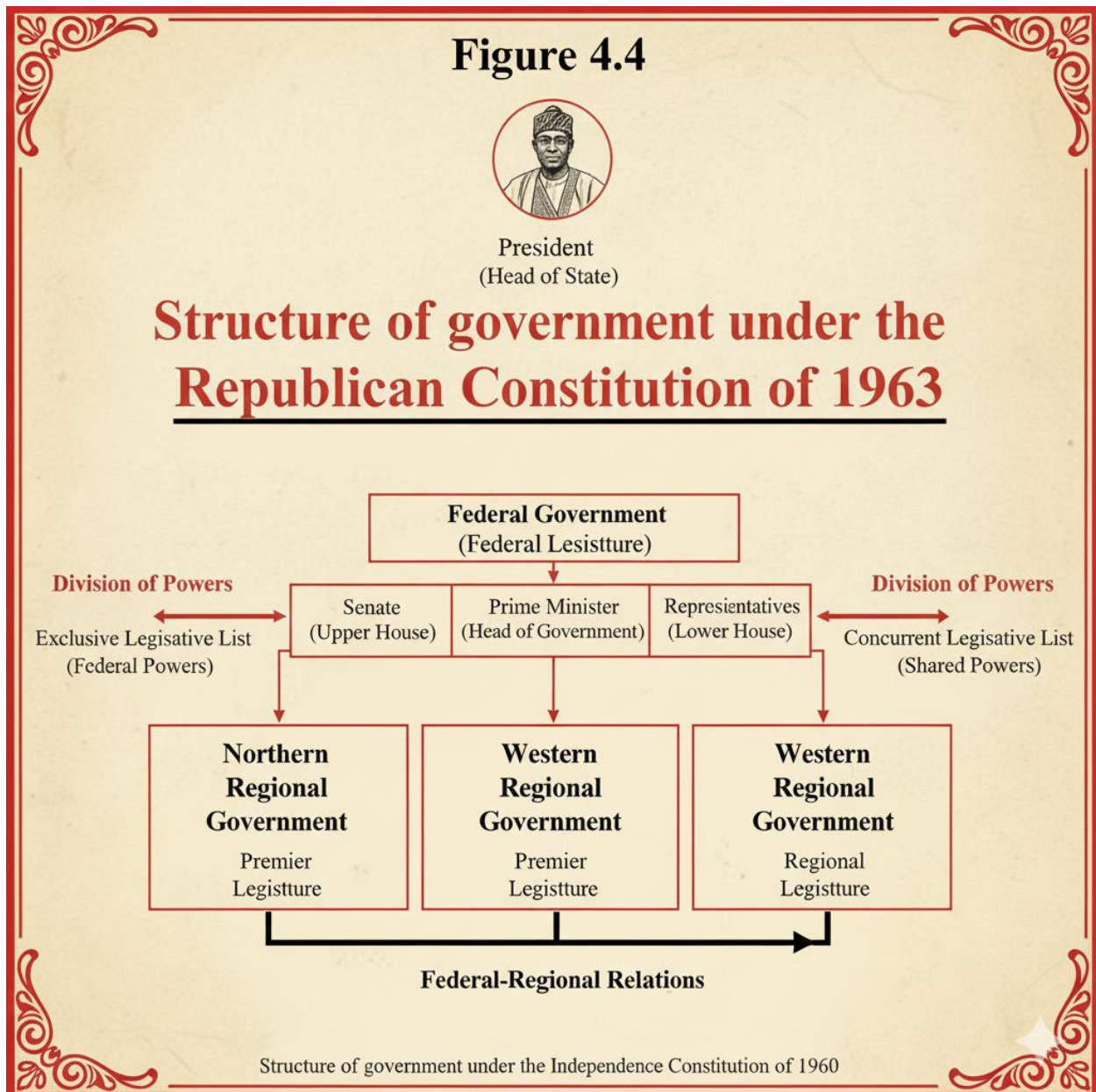


Diagram showing Nigeria's government structure under the Republican Constitution (President, Prime Minister, bicameral legislature, regional governments) Caption: Figure 4.4 Structure of government under the Republican Constitution of 1963

4.3.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy

The strengths of the Republican Constitution included the removal of colonial influence, the establishment of a Nigerian Head of State, and the consolidation of sovereignty. It reinforced Nigeria's federal system and symbolised full independence.



However, weaknesses persisted. Regional rivalry and ethnic divisions continued to undermine national unity. The parliamentary system remained fragile, and political instability soon led to crises that culminated in military intervention in 1966.

The legacy of the Republican Constitution is twofold: it marked Nigeria's attainment of full republican status, but it also highlighted the challenges of managing diversity and sustaining democratic governance.

Fill in the blank: One major weakness of the Republican Constitution was that regional rivalry and ethnic _____ continued to undermine unity.

Box 4.3

Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Republican Constitution.

Strengths

Weaknesses

- Removal of colonial influence
- Nigerian Head of State established
- Consolidation of sovereignty
- Federal system reinforced
- Regional rivalry and ethnic divisions
- Fragile parliamentary system
- Political instability

Legacy

- Challenges of diversity and governance persisted

Strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution

Box 4.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Republican Constitution **Strengths**

Pilot questions 4.3



1. What was the main rationale for introducing the Republican Constitution of 1963?
2. Who became Nigeria's first President under this constitution?
3. What office was abolished by the Republican Constitution?
4. Name one strength of the Republican Constitution.
5. What was one major weakness of the Republican Constitution?

4.4 Comparative Analysis and Legacy of Independence and Republican Constitutions

4.4.1 Similarities and differences between 1960 and 1963 constitutions

Both the **Independence Constitution of 1960** and the **Republican Constitution of 1963** shared similarities: they maintained a **parliamentary system of government**, entrenched fundamental rights, and upheld Nigeria's federal structure with regional autonomy.

However, the key difference was in the **Head of State**. The 1960 Constitution recognised the British monarch, represented by the Governor-General, while the 1963 Constitution replaced this with a Nigerian President, symbolising full sovereignty.

Fill in the blank: The Independence Constitution recognised the British monarch as Head of State, while the Republican Constitution created the office of _____.



Box 4.1

Similarities and differences between Independence and Constitutions

Feature	Independence Constitution (1960)	Independence Constitution (1963)
Head of State	British monarch (Governor-General)	Nigerian President
Head of Government	Prime Minister	Prime Minister
System	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Federalism	Recognised	Reinforced

Strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution

Table 4.1 Similarities and differences between Independence and Republican Constitutions

4.4.2 Contributions to Nigeria's political development

Both constitutions contributed significantly to Nigeria's political development. The Independence Constitution marked Nigeria's entry into the international community as a sovereign state, while the Republican Constitution consolidated sovereignty by removing colonial ties.

Together, they entrenched federalism, expanded Nigerian participation, and symbolised Nigeria's transition from colonial rule to full independence.

Fill in the blank: The Republican Constitution consolidated Nigeria's sovereignty by removing all residual _____ ties.



Box 4.4

Contributions of Independence and Republican Constitutions

- **Independence Constitution:**
Nigeria became sovereign, parliamentary democracy established
- **Republican Constitution:** removed, Nigerian Head of State created
- Both entrenched federalism and expanded participation

Summary of achievements of the Independence Constitution

Box 4.4 Contributions of Independence and Republican Constitutions

4.4.3 Challenges and lessons for future constitutional reforms

Despite their achievements, both constitutions faced challenges. Regional rivalry and ethnic divisions persisted, undermining national unity. The parliamentary system proved fragile, and political instability soon led to crises and military intervention in 1966.

The lesson for future constitutional reforms is the need to balance diversity with unity, strengthen institutions, and create frameworks that promote stability and inclusiveness. These challenges continue to shape Nigeria's constitutional development today.

Fill in the blank: One major challenge of both constitutions was persistent regional rivalry and ethnic _____.



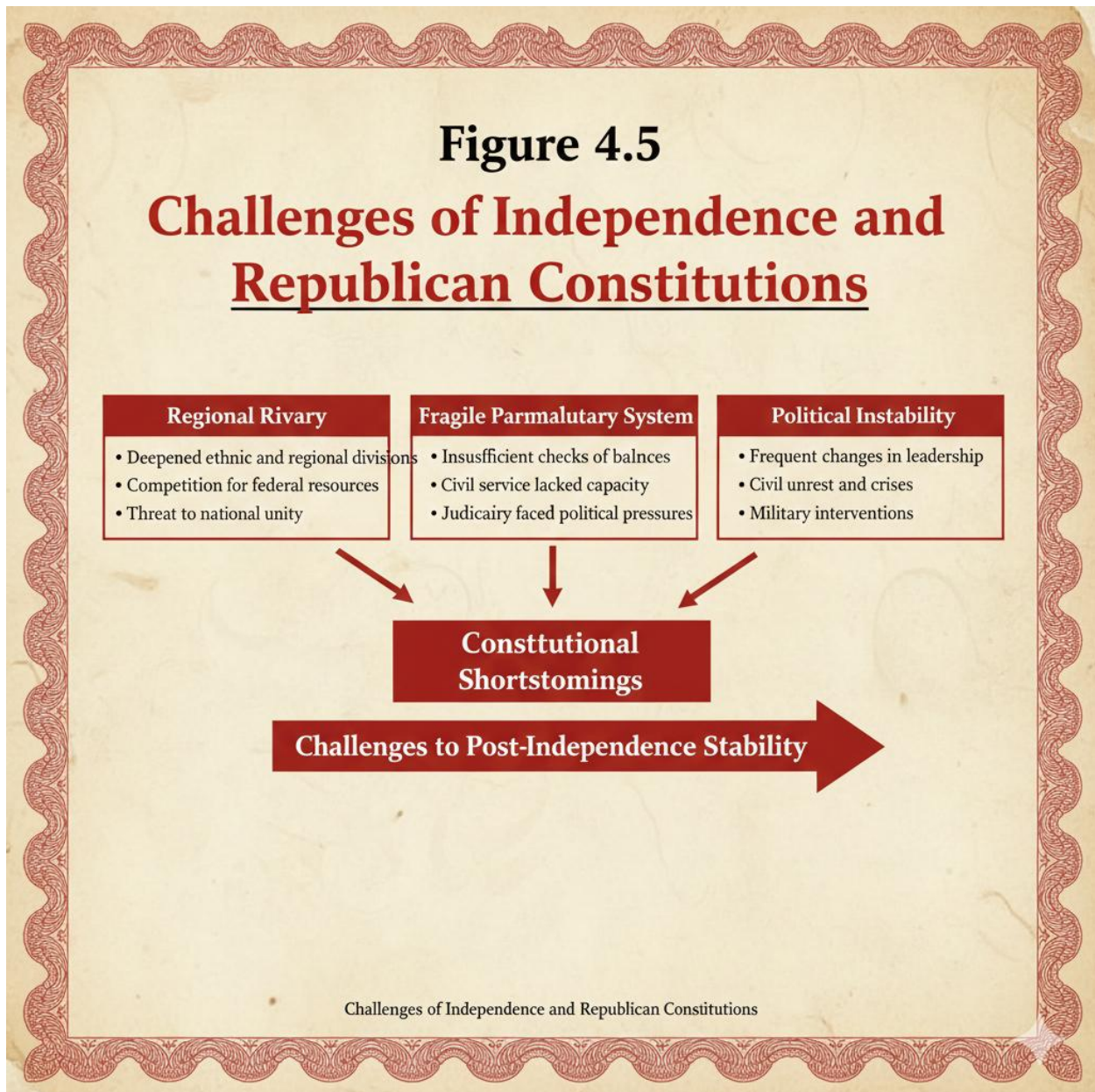


Diagram showing challenges of Independence and Republican Constitutions (regional rivalry, fragile parliamentary system, political instability) Caption: Figure 4.5 Challenges of Independence and Republican Constitutions

Pilot questions 4.4

1. What was the main difference between the Independence and Republican Constitutions?
2. How did the Republican Constitution consolidate Nigeria's sovereignty?
3. Name one contribution of the Independence Constitution to Nigeria's political development.
4. What major challenge persisted under both constitutions?
5. What lesson can be drawn for future constitutional reforms in Nigeria?



Series Summary

This Series examined Nigeria's constitutional frameworks during the independence era. It highlighted how the **Independence Constitution of 1960** established Nigeria as a sovereign state within the Commonwealth, and how the **Republican Constitution of 1963** consolidated sovereignty by removing the British monarch as Head of State.

We began with the background to independence, focusing on political developments, nationalist leaders, and constitutional conferences. We then analysed the Independence Constitution, its features, strengths, and limitations. Next, we studied the Republican Constitution, its rationale, provisions, and legacy. Finally, we compared both constitutions, showing their similarities, differences, contributions, and challenges.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to explain the background to independence (SLO 4.1), describe the Independence Constitution (SLO 4.2), analyse the Republican Constitution (SLO 4.3), and evaluate their comparative legacy (SLO 4.4).

Glossary of Terms

- **Constitutional monarchy:** A system where a monarch serves as Head of State under a constitution.
- **Governor-General:** Representative of the British monarch in Nigeria under the Independence Constitution.
- **Independence Constitution (1960):** Nigeria's first sovereign constitution, retaining parliamentary democracy and federalism.
- **Republican Constitution (1963):** Constitution that abolished the monarchy and created a Nigerian President as Head of State.
- **Parliamentary system:** A system where the Prime Minister is Head of Government, accountable to parliament.
- **Federalism:** Division of powers between central and regional governments.
- **Fundamental rights:** Basic rights entrenched in Nigeria's constitutions to protect citizens.
- **Sovereignty:** Full independence and authority of a state to govern itself.

Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. The Independence Constitution of 1960 established Nigeria as a sovereign state within the _____. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
2. Who was recognised as Head of State under the Independence Constitution? (Linked to SLO 4.2)
3. The Republican Constitution of 1963 replaced the Governor-General with the office of _____. (Linked to SLO 4.3)



Short-answer questions

4. State one major achievement of the Independence Constitution. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
5. Why was the Republican Constitution introduced in 1963? (Linked to SLO 4.3)
6. Identify one similarity between the Independence and Republican Constitutions. (Linked to SLO 4.4)
7. Name one major challenge faced under both constitutions. (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Long-answer questions

8. Analyse the strengths and limitations of the Independence Constitution of 1960. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
 - *Basic response:* Discuss sovereignty, parliamentary democracy, and limitations such as continued monarchy and regional rivalry.
 - *Value-added response:* Extend by evaluating how these limitations created the need for the Republican Constitution.
9. Evaluate the legacy of the Republican Constitution of 1963. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
 - *Basic response:* Explain how it consolidated sovereignty and created a Nigerian Head of State.
 - *Value-added response:* Go further by linking its weaknesses to political instability and eventual military intervention.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

1. Commonwealth.
2. The British monarch, represented by the Governor-General.
3. President.
4. Nigeria became a sovereign state with parliamentary democracy.
5. To remove colonial influence and establish a Nigerian Head of State.
6. Both maintained a parliamentary system and federal structure.
7. Regional rivalry and ethnic divisions.
8.
 - *Basic response:* Sovereignty achieved, parliamentary democracy established, but monarchy retained and regional rivalry persisted.
 - *Value-added response:* These limitations created pressure for reform, leading to the Republican Constitution.
9.
 - *Basic response:* Consolidated sovereignty, created Nigerian President, reinforced federalism.
 - *Value-added response:* Weak institutions and ethnic rivalry led to instability and military takeover in 1966.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

- Figure 4.1 Major political parties in Nigeria before independence. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigeria’s major political parties before independence and their regions of influence.”



- Plate 4.1 Nigerian nationalist leaders at a constitutional conference before independence. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of Nigerian nationalist leaders at a constitutional conference in London, 1950s.”
- Box 4.1 Key constitutional conferences before independence. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising key constitutional conferences before Nigeria’s independence.”
- Figure 4.2 Structure of government under the Independence Constitution of 1960. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigeria’s government structure under the Independence Constitution.”
- Box 4.2 Strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising strengths and achievements of the Independence Constitution.”
- Figure 4.3 Limitations of the Independence Constitution of 1960. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing limitations of the Independence Constitution.”
- Plate 4.2 Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe sworn in as Nigeria’s first President, 1963. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe being sworn in as Nigeria’s first President in 1963.”
- Figure 4.4 Structure of government under the Republican Constitution of 1963. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigeria’s government structure under the Republican Constitution.”
- Box 4.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Republican Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising strengths, weaknesses, and legacy of the Republican Constitution.”
- Table 4.1 Similarities and differences between Independence and Republican Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table comparing Independence and Republican Constitutions.”
- Box 4.4 Contributions of Independence and Republican Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising contributions of Independence and Republican Constitutions.”
- Figure 4.5 Challenges of Independence and Republican Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing challenges of Independence and Republican Constitutions.”

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1

1. NCNC, AG, NPC.
2. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello.
3. They mobilised Nigerians and articulated independence demands.



4. Lagos Conference of 1958.
5. Federalism, regional autonomy, timetable for independence.

Part 4.2

1. Parliamentary system.
2. British monarch (Governor-General).
3. Sovereignty and fundamental rights entrenched.
4. Nigeria remained a constitutional monarchy.
5. To address limitations and consolidate sovereignty.

Part 4.3

1. To remove colonial influence and establish a republic.
2. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.
3. Governor-General.
4. Nigerian Head of State established.
5. Regional rivalry and political instability.

Part 4.4

1. Head of State (monarch vs President).
2. By removing colonial ties.
3. Nigeria became sovereign under parliamentary democracy.
4. Regional rivalry and ethnic divisions.
5. Need to balance diversity with unity and strengthen institutions.



Series 5: The 1979 and 1999 Constitutions: Contemporary Nigerian State

Series Outline

- **Part 5.1: Background to Contemporary Constitutional Development**
 - 5.1.1: Political context of the 1979 Constitution (post-military rule, need for civilian governance)
 - 5.1.2: Transition to the 1999 Constitution (return to democracy after prolonged military rule)
 - 5.1.3: Objectives of contemporary constitutional frameworks
- **Part 5.2: The 1979 Constitution**
 - 5.2.1: Key features (presidential system, separation of powers, federalism)
 - 5.2.2: Strengths and achievements (civilian rule, democratic institutions)
 - 5.2.3: Limitations and criticisms (weak institutions, military interruptions, ethnic tensions)
- **Part 5.3: The 1999 Constitution**
 - 5.3.1: Background and rationale (transition from military to civilian rule)
 - 5.3.2: Major provisions (presidential system, fundamental rights, federal structure)
 - 5.3.3: Strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates (democratic consolidation, calls for amendment)
- **Part 5.4: Comparative Analysis and Legacy of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions**
 - 5.4.1: Similarities and differences (presidential system, federalism, rights provisions)
 - 5.4.2: Contributions to Nigeria's democratic development
 - 5.4.3: Challenges and lessons for constitutional reform in the contemporary state

Introduction

Nigeria's constitutional journey did not end with independence and republican status. The country faced decades of political instability, marked by military coups and authoritarian rule. Against this backdrop, two landmark constitutions—the **1979 Constitution** and the **1999 Constitution**—emerged as frameworks for Nigeria's contemporary democratic state.

The **1979 Constitution** introduced a **presidential system of government**, replacing the parliamentary model inherited from Britain. It emphasised separation of powers, federalism, and democratic institutions, but was short-lived due to military intervention in 1983. The **1999 Constitution**, still in force today, was enacted after Nigeria's return to civilian rule, providing the foundation for the Fourth Republic. It retained the presidential system, entrenched fundamental rights, and sought to consolidate democracy after years of military rule.

This Series is important because it highlights how Nigeria's modern constitutional frameworks were shaped by historical challenges, democratic aspirations, and the need to balance federalism with national unity.



We shall begin with the background to contemporary constitutional development, focusing on the political contexts of 1979 and 1999. Next, we will study the 1979 Constitution, its features, strengths, and weaknesses. Following that, we will examine the 1999 Constitution, its provisions, achievements, and ongoing debates. Finally, we will compare both constitutions and assess their legacy in shaping Nigeria's democratic journey.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** explain the political context and objectives of Nigeria's contemporary constitutional development,
- **SLO 5.2** describe the key features, strengths, and limitations of the 1979 Constitution,
- **SLO 5.3** analyse the provisions, strengths, weaknesses, and debates surrounding the 1999 Constitution, and
- **SLO 5.4** evaluate the similarities, differences, and legacy of the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions in shaping Nigeria's democratic state.

5.1 Background to Contemporary Constitutional Development

5.1.1 Political context of the 1979 Constitution

The **1979 Constitution** was drafted after more than a decade of military rule in Nigeria. Following the civil war (1967–1970) and successive military governments, there was strong pressure to restore civilian governance. The military regime under General Olusegun Obasanjo initiated a transition programme, culminating in the 1979 Constitution, which introduced a **presidential system of government** modeled after the United States.

This constitution sought to address weaknesses of the parliamentary system by creating a stronger executive, separating powers among the three branches, and reinforcing federalism.

Fill in the blank: The 1979 Constitution introduced a _____ system of government modeled after the United States.



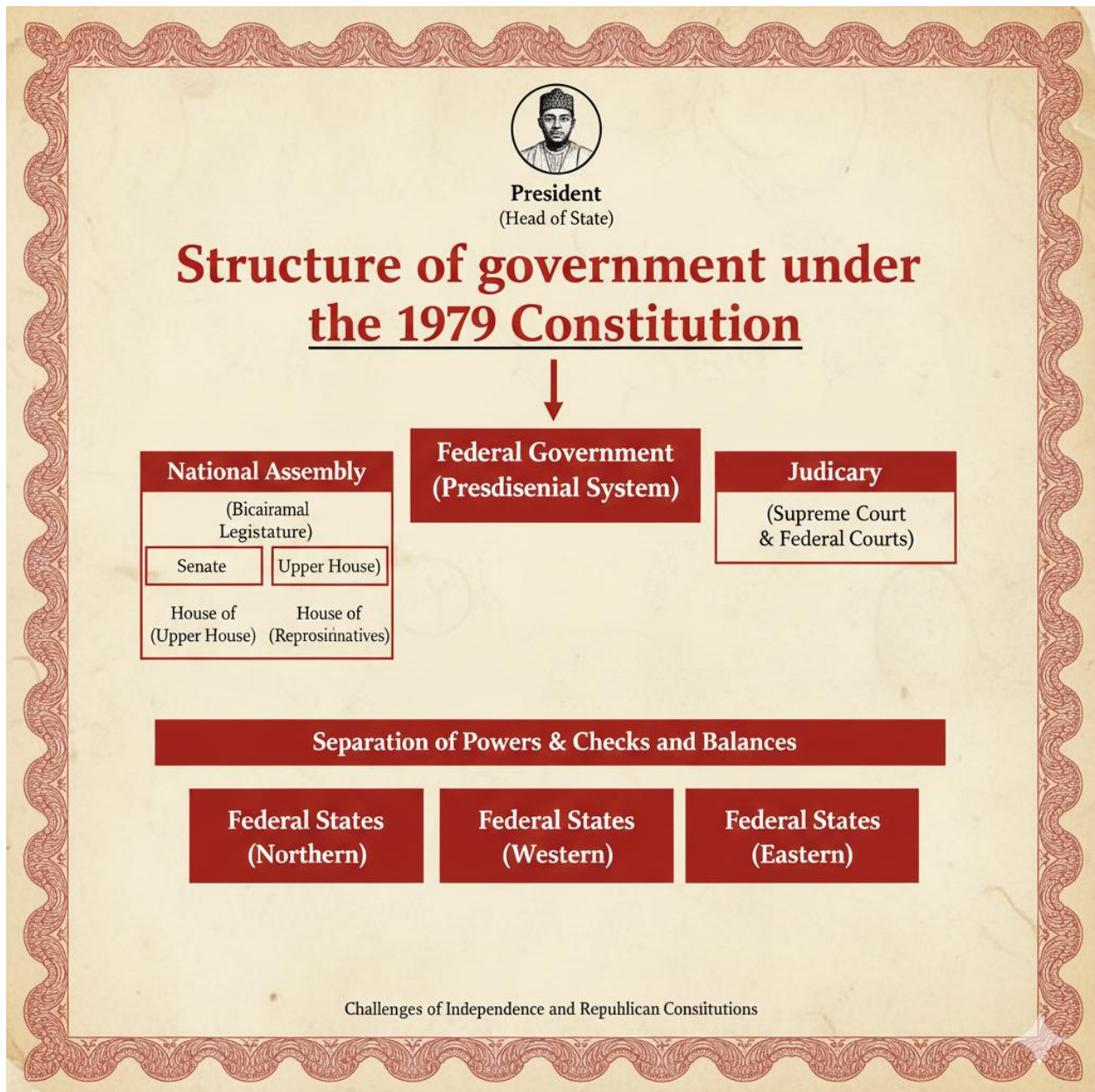


Diagram showing Nigeria's government structure under the 1979 Constitution (President, National Assembly, Judiciary, Federal States) Caption: Figure 5.1 Structure of government under the 1979 Constitution

5.1.2 Transition to the 1999 Constitution

The **1999 Constitution** emerged after Nigeria's prolonged period of military rule (1983–1999). During this time, democratic institutions were suspended, and governance was dominated by military decrees. By the late 1990s, domestic and international pressure for democracy intensified.

General Abdulsalami Abubakar's transitional government oversaw the drafting of the 1999 Constitution, which restored civilian rule and inaugurated the Fourth Republic. It retained the



presidential system introduced in 1979, entrenched fundamental rights, and sought to consolidate democracy.

Fill in the blank: The 1999 Constitution inaugurated Nigeria's _____ Republic.

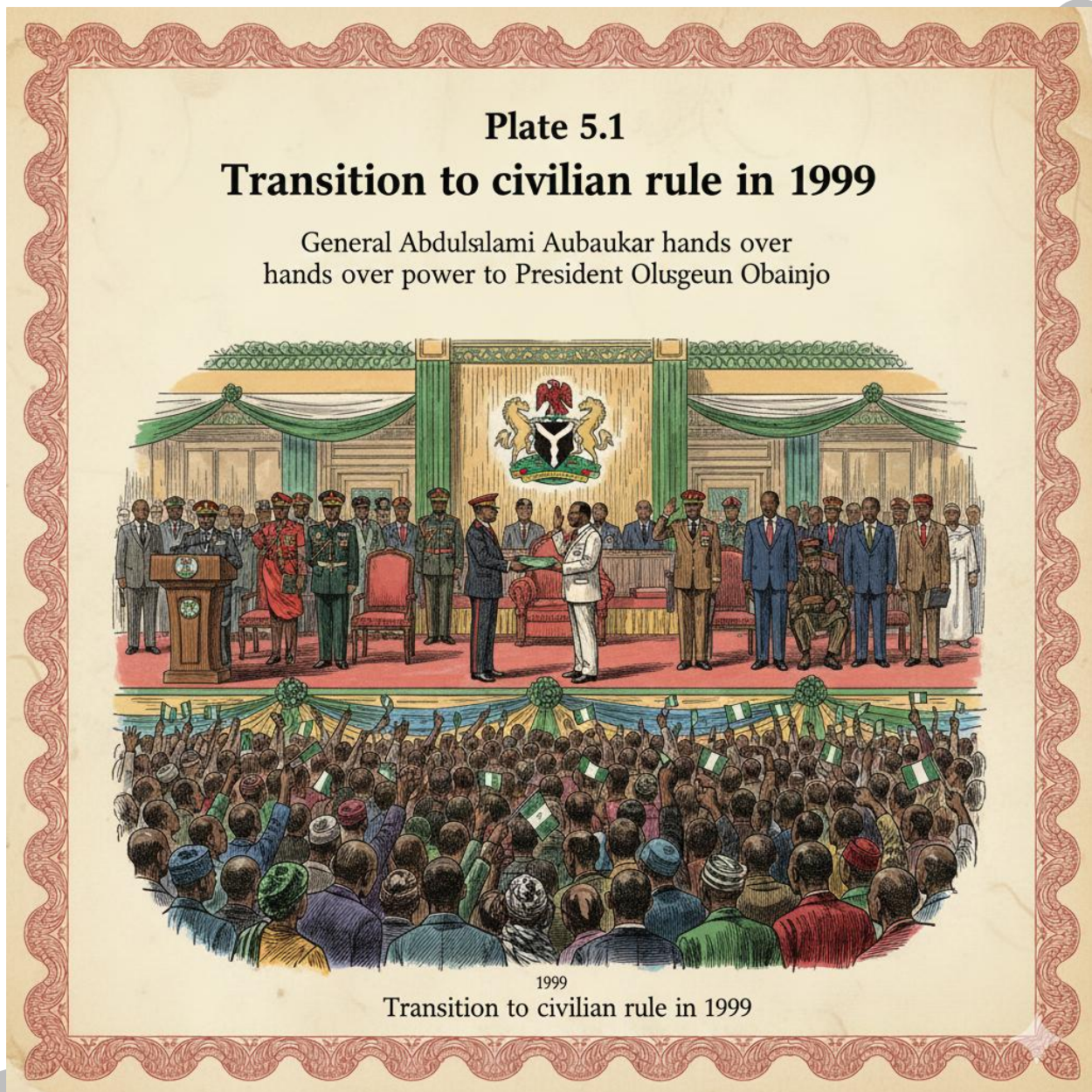


Image showing General Abdulsalami Abubakar handing over power to President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 Caption: Plate 5.1 Transition to civilian rule in 1999

5.1.3 Objectives of contemporary constitutional frameworks

Both the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions were designed to achieve specific objectives:

- Establish a stable democratic framework after military rule



- Strengthen separation of powers and checks and balances
- Entrench federalism to manage Nigeria's diversity
- Protect fundamental rights of citizens
- Promote national unity and democratic consolidation

These objectives reflected Nigeria's desire to overcome past instability and build a resilient democratic state.

Fill in the blank: One key objective of the 1999 Constitution was to entrench fundamental _____ of citizens.

Box 5.1

Objectives of contemporary constitutional frameworks

- Stable democratic framework
- Separation of powers
- Federalism
- Federalism

- Fundamental rights
- National unity

Objectives of Nigeria's contemporary constitutional frameworks

Box 5.1 Objectives of contemporary constitutional frameworks



Pilot questions 5.1

1. What system of government was introduced by the 1979 Constitution?
2. Who oversaw the transition to the 1999 Constitution?
3. What Republic was inaugurated by the 1999 Constitution?
4. Name one objective of Nigeria's contemporary constitutional frameworks.
5. Why was the 1979 Constitution introduced after military rule?

5.2 The 1979 Constitution

5.2.1 Key features of the 1979 Constitution

The **1979 Constitution** marked Nigeria's transition from military rule to civilian governance. Its most notable innovation was the adoption of a **presidential system of government**, modeled after the United States, replacing the parliamentary system inherited from Britain.

Key features included:

- **Executive presidency:** The President served as both Head of State and Head of Government.
- **Separation of powers:** Clear division between the executive, legislature, and judiciary.
- **Federalism:** Nigeria retained its federal structure, with powers shared between central and state governments.
- **Fundamental rights:** Citizens' rights were entrenched in the constitution.
- **Bicameral legislature:** National Assembly composed of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Fill in the blank: The 1979 Constitution introduced a presidential system where the _____ was both Head of State and Head of Government.



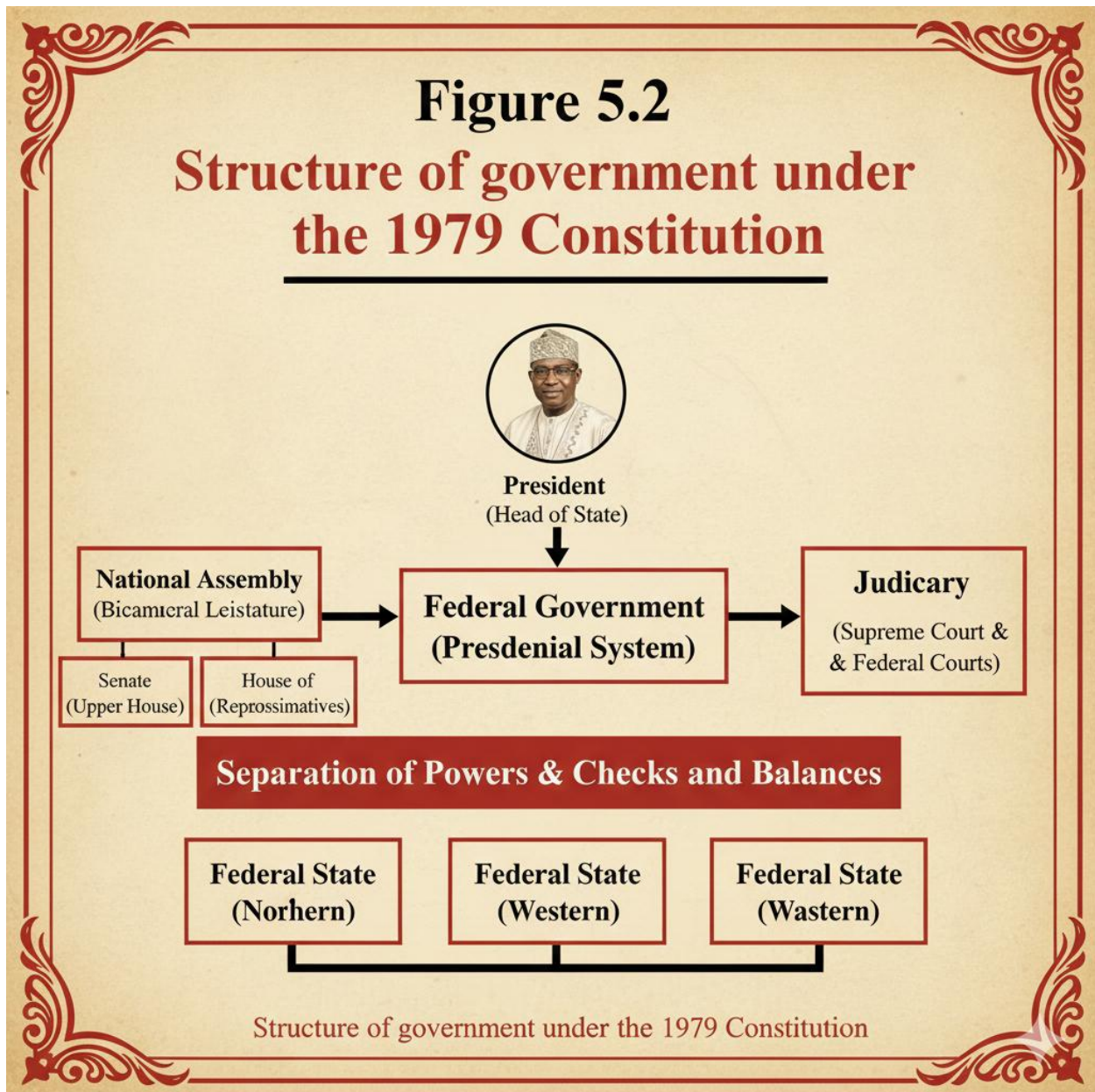


Diagram showing Nigeria's government structure under the 1979 Constitution (President, National Assembly, Judiciary, Federal States) Caption: Figure 5.2 Structure of government under the 1979 Constitution

5.2.2 Strengths and achievements

The 1979 Constitution had several strengths:

- It restored civilian rule after years of military governance.
- It introduced a presidential system that emphasised separation of powers.
- It entrenched fundamental rights, promoting democratic values.



- It reinforced Nigeria's federal structure, recognising diversity.
- It provided a framework for democratic institutions such as the National Assembly and judiciary.

Fill in the blank: One major achievement of the 1979 Constitution was the restoration of _____ rule after years of military governance.

Box 5.2

Strengths and achievements of the 1979 Constitution

- Civilian rule restored
- Presidential system introduced
- Separation of powers emphasised

- Fundamental rights entrenched
- Federalism

Strengths and achievements of the 1979 Constitution

Box 5.2 Strengths and achievements of the 1979 Constitution

5.2.3 Limitations and criticisms

Despite its achievements, the 1979 Constitution faced criticisms:



- The presidential system created a powerful executive, sometimes at the expense of checks and balances.
- Regional and ethnic divisions persisted, undermining national unity.
- Weak institutions made it difficult to enforce constitutional provisions.
- Political instability led to the collapse of the Second Republic in 1983, when the military seized power again.

Fill in the blank: One major limitation of the 1979 Constitution was that political _____ led to the collapse of the Second Republic.

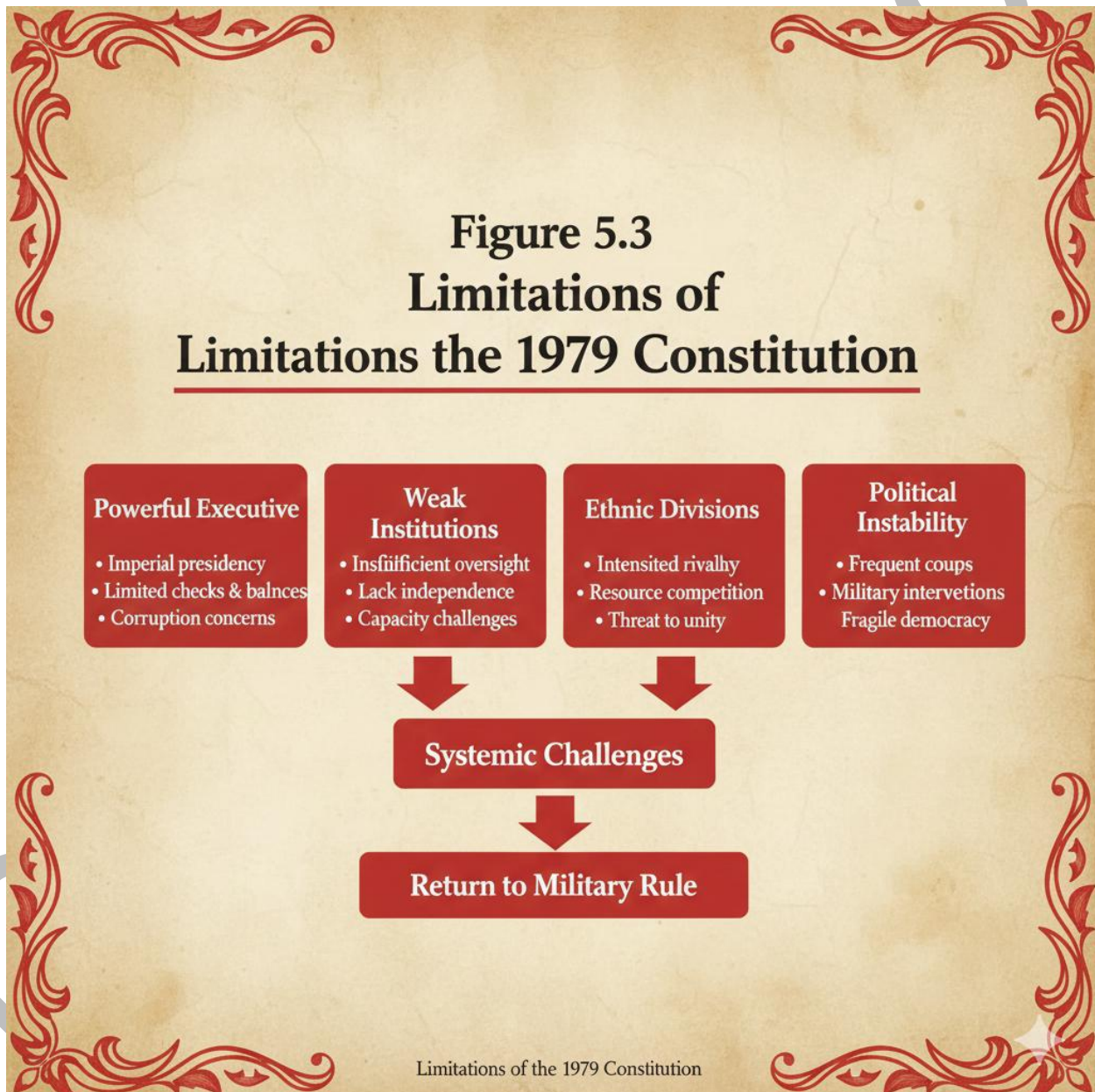


Diagram showing limitations of the 1979 Constitution (powerful executive, weak institutions, ethnic divisions, political instability) Caption: Figure 5.3 Limitations of the 1979 Constitution



Pilot questions 5.2

1. What system of government was introduced by the 1979 Constitution?
2. Who served as both Head of State and Head of Government under this constitution?
3. Name one major achievement of the 1979 Constitution.
4. What was one major limitation of the 1979 Constitution?
5. Why did the Second Republic collapse in 1983?

5.3 The 1999 Constitution

5.3.1 Background and rationale

The **1999 Constitution** was enacted after Nigeria's long period of military rule (1983–1999). During this time, democratic institutions were suspended, and governance was dominated by military decrees. By the late 1990s, domestic protests, international pressure, and the exhaustion of military regimes created momentum for a return to civilian rule.

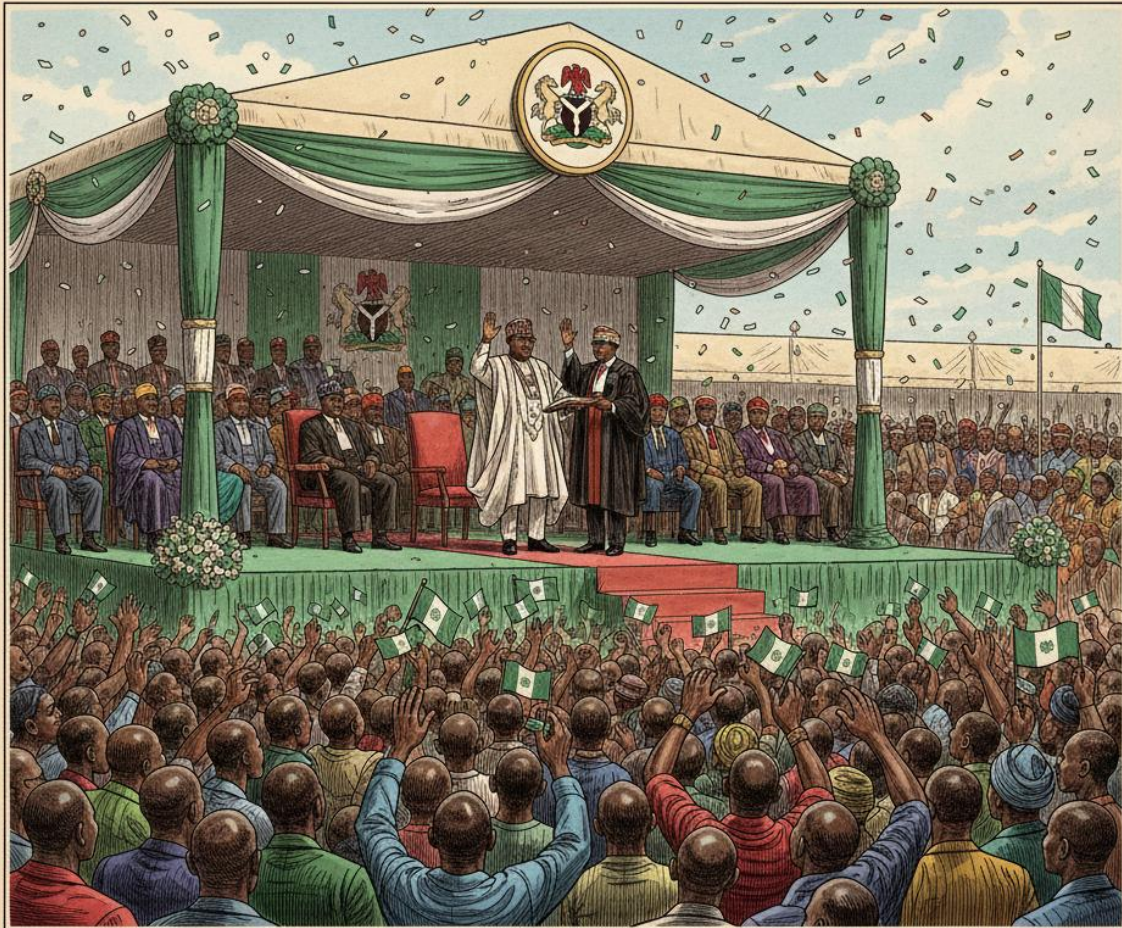
General Abdulsalami Abubakar's transitional government oversaw the drafting of the 1999 Constitution, which inaugurated the **Fourth Republic**. The rationale was to restore democracy, entrench fundamental rights, and provide a framework for stable governance after years of authoritarianism.

Fill in the blank: The 1999 Constitution inaugurated Nigeria's _____ Republic.



Plate 5.2

Nigeria's return to civilian rule under the 1999 Constitution



Nigeria's return to civilian rule under the 1999 Constitution

Image showing the swearing-in of President Olusegun Obasanjo in May 1999
Caption: Plate 5.2
Nigeria's return to civilian rule under the 1999 Constitution

5.3.2 Major provisions

The 1999 Constitution retained the **presidential system** introduced in 1979 but introduced new provisions to strengthen democracy.

Key provisions included:

- **Executive presidency:** President as Head of State and Government.
- **Federalism:** Nigeria structured into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.



- **Fundamental rights:** Chapter IV entrenched rights such as freedom of speech, religion, and association.
- **National Assembly:** Bicameral legislature (Senate and House of Representatives).
- **Judiciary:** Independent judiciary with Supreme Court at the apex.
- **Electoral framework:** Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) established to oversee elections.

Fill in the blank: Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution entrenched fundamental _____ of citizens.

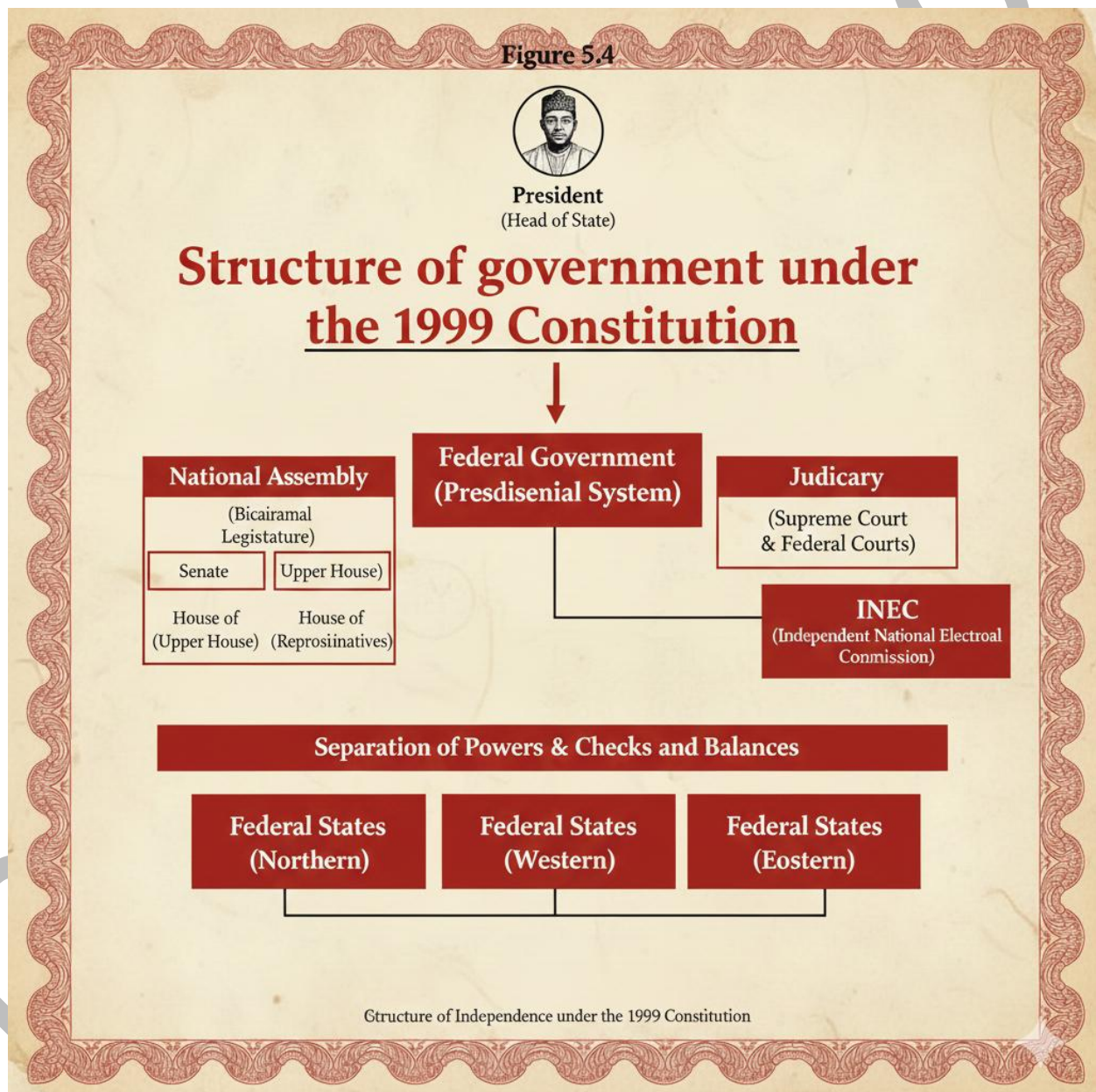


Diagram showing Nigeria's government structure under the 1999 Constitution (President,



National Assembly, Judiciary, INEC, Federal States) Caption: Figure 5.4 Structure of government under the 1999 Constitution

5.3.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates

The 1999 Constitution had strengths:

- Restored democracy after prolonged military rule.
- Entrenched fundamental rights and democratic institutions.
- Reinforced federalism and separation of powers.
- Provided a framework for regular elections.

However, weaknesses and debates persist:

- Critics argue it was drafted hastily by the military without wide consultation.
- Persistent ethnic and regional tensions challenge federal unity.
- Calls for constitutional amendment continue, especially regarding resource control, state creation, and devolution of powers.
- Weak enforcement of rights and institutions undermines effectiveness.

Fill in the blank: One major criticism of the 1999 Constitution is that it was drafted hastily by the _____.



Box 5.3

Strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates of the 1999 Constitution

Strengths

- Democracy restored
- Fundamental rights entrenched
- Federalism reinforced
- Regular elections provided
- Regular elections provided
- Regular elections provided

Weaknesses

- Drafted hastily by military
- Ethnic and regional tensions
- Weak enforcement of rights
- Calls for amendment persist

Strengths and Independence under the 1999 Constitution

Box 5.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates of the 1999 Constitution **Strengths**

Pilot questions 5.3

1. Who oversaw the drafting of the 1999 Constitution?
2. What Republic was inaugurated by the 1999 Constitution?
3. Name one major provision of the 1999 Constitution.
4. What was one major strength of the 1999 Constitution?
5. Why is the 1999 Constitution often criticised?



5.4 Comparative Analysis and Legacy of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

5.4.1 Similarities and differences

Both the **1979** and **1999 Constitutions** introduced and retained the **presidential system of government**, with the President serving as both Head of State and Head of Government. They also entrenched **fundamental rights** and reinforced Nigeria's federal structure.

The main differences lie in their contexts and durability. The 1979 Constitution was short-lived, collapsing with the military coup of 1983, while the 1999 Constitution has endured as the framework of the Fourth Republic. The 1999 Constitution also expanded provisions for electoral institutions (e.g., INEC) and governance structures to strengthen democracy.

Fill in the blank: Both the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions entrenched fundamental _____ and reinforced Nigeria's federal structure.



Table 5.1

Similarities and differences between 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

Feature	1979 Constitution	1999 Constitution
System of government	Presidential	Presidential
Head of State	President	President
Federalism	Reinforced	Reinforced
Electoral framework	Limited	INEC established
Durability	Collapsed in 1983	Still in force

Table 5.1 Similarities and differences between 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

Table 5.1 Similarities and differences between 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

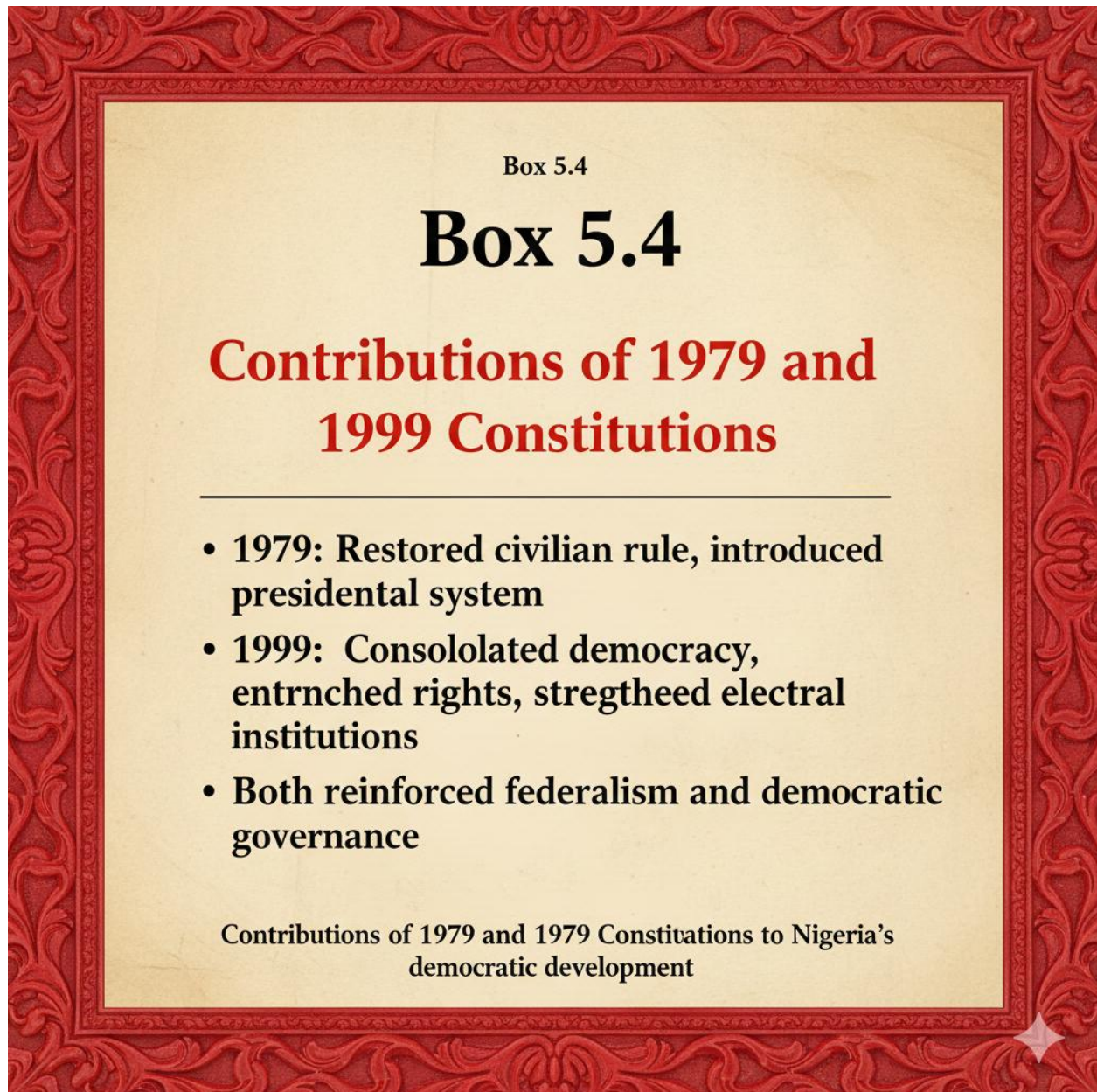
5.4.2 Contributions to Nigeria's democratic development

Both constitutions contributed to Nigeria's democratic journey. The 1979 Constitution introduced the presidential system and restored civilian rule after military governance. The 1999 Constitution consolidated democracy after prolonged authoritarianism, providing a framework for regular elections, rights protection, and federal governance.

Together, they represent milestones in Nigeria's constitutional development, shaping the country's democratic institutions and practices.



Fill in the blank: The 1999 Constitution consolidated Nigeria's democracy by providing a framework for regular _____.



Box 5.4

Box 5.4

Contributions of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

- **1979: Restored civilian rule, introduced presidential system**
- **1999: Consolidated democracy, entrenched rights, strengthened electoral institutions**
- **Both reinforced federalism and democratic governance**

Contributions of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions to Nigeria's democratic development

Box 5.4 Contributions of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

5.4.3 Challenges and lessons for constitutional reform

Despite their contributions, both constitutions faced challenges. The 1979 Constitution collapsed due to political instability and weak institutions. The 1999 Constitution continues to face criticisms of inadequate consultation, weak enforcement of rights, and persistent ethnic and regional tensions.



The lesson for future reforms is the need for inclusive constitutional processes, stronger institutions, and frameworks that balance diversity with unity. Calls for constitutional amendment in Nigeria today reflect these ongoing challenges.

Fill in the blank: One major challenge of the 1999 Constitution is persistent ethnic and _____ tensions.

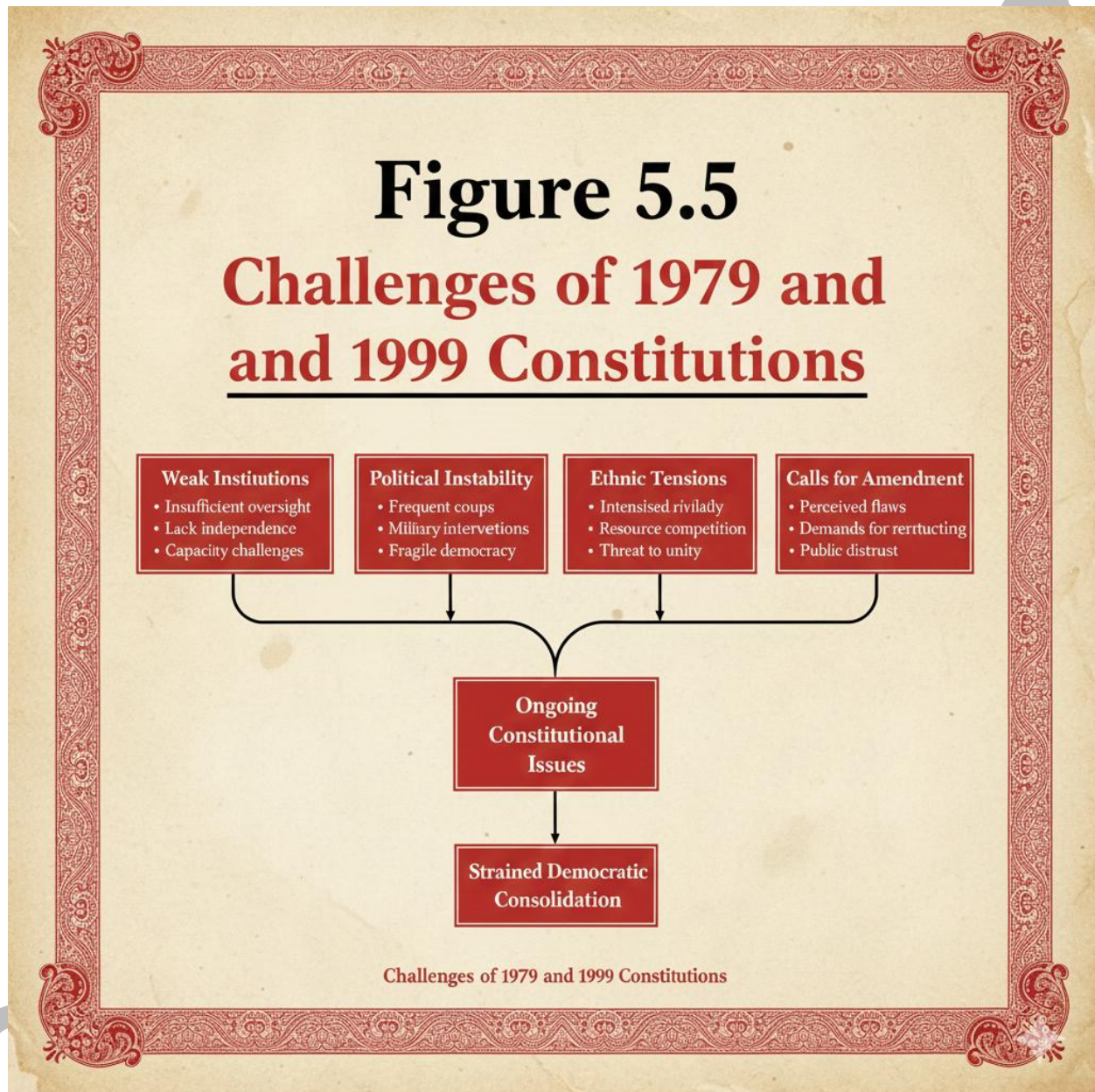


Diagram showing challenges of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions (weak institutions, political instability, ethnic tensions, calls for amendment) Caption: Figure 5.5 Challenges of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions

Pilot questions 5.4

1. What system of government was retained in both the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions?



2. What electoral institution was established under the 1999 Constitution?
3. Name one contribution of the 1979 Constitution to Nigeria's democratic development.
4. What major challenge led to the collapse of the 1979 Constitution?
5. What lesson can be drawn for future constitutional reforms in Nigeria?

Series Summary

This Series explored Nigeria's contemporary constitutional frameworks, focusing on the **1979 Constitution** and the **1999 Constitution**. It highlighted how the 1979 Constitution introduced the presidential system, restored civilian rule, and emphasised separation of powers, but collapsed due to political instability. The 1999 Constitution, enacted after prolonged military rule, inaugurated the Fourth Republic, entrenched fundamental rights, and remains Nigeria's governing framework today.

We began with the background to contemporary constitutional development, examining the political contexts of 1979 and 1999. We then analysed the 1979 Constitution, its features, strengths, and limitations. Next, we studied the 1999 Constitution, its provisions, strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates. Finally, we compared both constitutions, showing their similarities, differences, contributions, and challenges.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to explain the background to contemporary constitutional development (SLO 5.1), describe the 1979 Constitution (SLO 5.2), analyse the 1999 Constitution (SLO 5.3), and evaluate their comparative legacy (SLO 5.4).

Glossary of Terms

- **Presidential system:** A system where the President serves as both Head of State and Head of Government.
- **Separation of powers:** Division of authority among the executive, legislature, and judiciary.
- **Federalism:** Distribution of powers between central and state governments.
- **Fundamental rights:** Basic rights entrenched in the constitution to protect citizens.
- **Second Republic:** Nigeria's civilian government under the 1979 Constitution (1979–1983).
- **Fourth Republic:** Nigeria's current democratic era inaugurated by the 1999 Constitution.
- **INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission):** Electoral body established under the 1999 Constitution to oversee elections.
- **Constitutional reform:** Process of amending or revising the constitution to address challenges.

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions



1. The 1979 Constitution introduced a _____ system of government modeled after the United States. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
2. The 1999 Constitution inaugurated Nigeria's _____ Republic. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
3. Which electoral institution was established under the 1999 Constitution? (Linked to SLO 5.3)

Short-answer questions

4. State one major achievement of the 1979 Constitution. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
5. Why was the 1999 Constitution criticised by some Nigerians? (Linked to SLO 5.3)
6. Identify one similarity between the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
7. Name one major challenge faced under both constitutions. (Linked to SLO 5.4)

Long-answer questions

8. Analyse the strengths and limitations of the 1979 Constitution. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
 - *Basic response:* Discuss presidential system, restoration of civilian rule, and limitations such as weak institutions.
 - *Value-added response:* Extend by evaluating how instability led to collapse of the Second Republic.
9. Evaluate the legacy of the 1999 Constitution. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
 - *Basic response:* Explain how it restored democracy, entrenched rights, and strengthened institutions.
 - *Value-added response:* Go further by linking ongoing debates and calls for reform to Nigeria's democratic consolidation.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

1. Presidential.
2. Fourth.
3. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).
4. Restoration of civilian rule.
5. It was drafted hastily by the military without wide consultation.
6. Both entrenched fundamental rights and reinforced federalism.
7. Ethnic and regional tensions.
8.
 - *Basic response:* Restored civilian rule, introduced presidential system, but weak institutions and instability undermined success.



- *Value-added response:* Collapse of the Second Republic showed fragility of democratic institutions.
- 9.
- *Basic response:* Restored democracy, entrenched rights, reinforced federalism, and provided electoral framework.
 - *Value-added response:* Ongoing debates about amendments show its importance and limitations in Nigeria’s democratic journey.

References and Attributions [Series 5]

- Figure 5.1 Structure of government under the 1979 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigeria’s government structure under the 1979 Constitution.”
- Plate 5.1 Transition to civilian rule in 1999. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar handing over power to President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999.”
- Box 5.1 Objectives of contemporary constitutional frameworks. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising objectives of Nigeria’s contemporary constitutional frameworks.”
- Figure 5.2 Structure of government under the 1979 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigeria’s government structure under the 1979 Constitution.”
- Box 5.2 Strengths and achievements of the 1979 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising strengths and achievements of the 1979 Constitution.”
- Figure 5.3 Limitations of the 1979 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing limitations of the 1979 Constitution.”
- Plate 5.2 Nigeria’s return to civilian rule under the 1999 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a historical illustration of President Olusegun Obasanjo being sworn in during Nigeria’s return to civilian rule in 1999.”
- Figure 5.4 Structure of government under the 1999 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing Nigeria’s government structure under the 1999 Constitution.”
- Box 5.3 Strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates of the 1999 Constitution. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising strengths, weaknesses, and ongoing debates of the 1999 Constitution.”
- Table 5.1 Similarities and differences between 1979 and 1999 Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a table comparing 1979 and 1999 Constitutions.”
- Box 5.4 Contributions of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box summarising contributions of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions.”



- Figure 5.5 Challenges of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions. Suggested AI prompt: “Create a labelled diagram showing challenges of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions.”

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 5]

Part 5.1

1. Presidential system.
2. General Abdulsalami Abubakar.
3. Fourth Republic.
4. Entrenchment of fundamental rights.
5. To restore civilian governance after military rule.

Part 5.2

1. Presidential system.
2. President.
3. Civilian rule restored.
4. Political instability and weak institutions.
5. Military coup of 1983.

Part 5.3

1. General Abdulsalami Abubakar.
2. Fourth Republic.
3. Fundamental rights entrenched in Chapter IV.
4. Democracy restored after military rule.
5. Drafted hastily by the military.

Part 5.4

1. Presidential system.
2. INEC.
3. Restored civilian rule.
4. Political instability.
5. Need for inclusive reforms and stronger institutions.



lanetonline.com

