

By contrast, the 1979 Constitution dictated what the states needed. For instance, in 1960, Eastern Nigeria decided that it did not need a House of Chiefs, whereas both Northern and Western Nigeria opted for this second legislative chamber. In the 1979 Constitution, states have no right to choose what they want. In 1960, the Nigeria Police was to be jointly controlled by the Federal and Regional Governments. Such delicacies have disappeared. Above all, in 1960 every constituent Region had its own Constitution. They lost such rights in 1979.

More threatening to the spirit of the Constitution was the assumption in 1979 by Obasanjo's Supreme Military Council that it had the authority to approve and promulgate the Nigerian Constitution into existence. Subsequent military regimes, including Abdulsami Abubakar's, have since claimed the authority of "ratifying" a Constitution which their agents have constructed. In the process, the states have lost their inherent right to ratify the Constitution.

CONSEQUENCES OF CENTRALIZATION AND OF ABUSE OF CONSTITUTION

Nigeria has not recovered from the constitutional chaos that a series of centralization measures of the 1970s has inflicted on our political traditions. In a sense, Shehu Shagari's (1979-83) civilian regime was foredoomed by the false military standards and expectations that a government had to be tough. It was thrown out by soldiers who upheld the philosophy of centralization. Under their regime federalism has been eviscerated, with painful consequences.

Alienation: Most Nigerians are alienated from their governments. With the loss of power by the states and local governments, there are no local autonomies in governance that will empower ordinary individuals and attract them to a government they can relate to. This poverty of governance has been accentuated since the movement of Nigeria's capitals to Abuja widely viewed as a soldiers' fortress.

Lawlessness and Corruption: At the heart of military rule in Nigeria is the enthronement of lawlessness. It began its domain in 1966 by suspending the Nigerian Constitution, retaining only those sections that favored its rule. In 1999, the military seeks to end its formal reign after conducting a series of elections in the total absence of a working Constitution. In-between these years Nigeria has been governed without any constitutional order. Corruption thrives because the moral foundations of law have been destroyed by the military.