

A Critical Examination of the Principle of Separation of Powers as a Cardinal Feature of Democratic Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The doctrine and practice of separation of powers is to the legal effect that the three governmental organs (The Legislature, Executive and the Judiciary) are separated into autonomous bodies saddled with responsibilities to perform distinct functions. It is primarily understood to mean not only that the three governmental bodies are separated but also to see that no member of one organ can be member of another concurrently. It is a common knowledge that while the legislative organ is saddled with the primary responsibility to create or enact laws, the Executive is constitutionally empowered to implement these laws so made by the legislatures, and the judicial organ interprets laws in consonance with the dictate letters of the constitution. The separation of powers among the independent organs of government concerns itself with the prevention of any individual or group from accumulating excessive powers and ruling tyrannically. This work seeks to highlight the importance of this constitutional principle of separation of powers and how it has overtime strengthened the practice of democracy in Nigeria.*

Keywords: examination, separation of powers, cardinal feature, democratic governance, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nature and definition of separation of powers

The doctrine of separation of powers is a cornerstone of democratic governance, designed to maintain a balanced distribution of authority among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. In the Nigerian context, this principle is embedded within the 1999 Constitution, which delineates the specific duties and functions of each arm of government."¹

This constitutional arrangement grants the legislature the authority to formulate laws for the nation. In contrast, the executive, led by the President, is tasked with implementing and enforcing these laws. According to Professor Ben Nwabueze, the executive branch bears the responsibility for carrying out the state's laws and policies."²

Supporting the above perspective, the French jurist and philosopher Baron de Montesquieu emphasized the importance of separation of powers by asserting that true political freedom exists only when power is not concentrated in a single authority. He argued that to prevent the misuse of power, each arm of government must serve as a check on the others. According to him, if the legislative, executive, and judicial functions are combined within one individual or institution, liberty would be compromised. He further warned that the absence of separation between the judiciary and the other branches could lead to the collapse of the entire system of governance."³

Conversely, the judiciary holds the crucial duty of interpreting laws and verifying their consistency with the provisions of the Constitution. Justice Chukwudifu Oputa once described the judiciary as the custodian of the Constitution and a defender of citizens' rights. In the Nigerian context, maintaining a clear distinction between the branches of government is vital, as it helps curb excessive concentration of power in any single arm. In this regard, Professor Itse Sagay emphasized that the doctrine of separation of powers serves as both a safeguard against misuse of authority and a vital assurance of individual freedoms."⁴

The principle of separation of powers plays a vital role in sustaining democracy and ensuring effective governance in Nigeria. It has enabled the judiciary to act as a restraint on the overreach of the executive branch, especially in situations where executive actions verge on the misuse of authority. Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu aptly captured this role by describing the judiciary as the "last hope of the common man" and a cornerstone of democratic stability."⁵ This assertion underscores the judiciary's crucial responsibility in safeguarding individual rights and checking any potential overreach by the executive branch. Similarly, the legislative arm has actively carried out its oversight duties, holding the executive accountable and ensuring transparency in governance. Senator David Mark once emphasized this by stating that the National Assembly serves as the voice of the people and a pillar of democratic governance."⁶

In Nigeria's democratic system, the doctrine of separation of powers plays a pivotal role by ensuring that governmental authority is fairly shared among the three distinct arms. This structure is designed to prevent the concentration of power in a single branch and promotes a system of mutual oversight and accountability.

Importance of Separation of Governmental Powers

The division of powers among the various branches of government is a core element of democratic governance, aimed at ensuring that authority is equitably shared among the legislature, executive, and judiciary. This distribution of power serves as a safeguard against the risk of any one branch becoming dominant or misusing its authority. According to Malemi, the doctrine of separation of powers entails the allocation of governmental responsibilities and authority among three distinct and autonomous branches. This arrangement is intended to foster a system of checks and balances, thereby curbing potential abuses of power. Each arm is expected to operate independently, without interfering in the roles or responsibilities of the others.⁷

According to Nwabueze, the doctrine of separation of powers serves as a safeguard against power misuse and acts as a vital protector of individual freedoms."⁸ This underscores the crucial role of dividing governmental authority to safeguard against authoritarianism and uphold citizens' rights. In the Nigerian context, this principle is firmly rooted in the 1999 Constitution, which delineates the specific duties of each branch of government. Section 4 of the Constitution affirms that legislative authority rests with the National Assembly, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives."⁹

This constitutional arrangement guarantees that the legislative branch is empowered to enact laws for the nation, while the executive, led by the President, is charged with implementing those laws. The judiciary, in turn, plays a crucial role in interpreting legislation and ensuring its consistency with constitutional provisions. The doctrine of separation of powers is vital in averting the accumulation of excessive authority within a single arm of government, which could otherwise result in misuse of power and infringement of citizens' rights. As Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu aptly remarked, the judiciary stands as "the last hope of the common man and the bastion of democracy."¹⁰ This underscores the vital role of the judiciary in safeguarding citizens' rights and curbing potential misuse of power by the executive. Similarly, the legislative arm holds significant

responsibility in overseeing the activities of the executive and holding it accountable. Senator David Mark once stated that “The National Assembly is the representative of the people and the bastion of democracy,” emphasizing its duty to reflect the will of the people and ensure accountability in governance. The doctrine of separation of powers is therefore fundamental to the protection of civil liberties and the prevention of power abuse. By dividing authority among the legislature, executive, and judiciary, the system avoids the concentration of power in one arm of government. As Professor Itse Sagay observed, “The

separation of powers is a check on the abuse of power and a guarantee of liberty,” reflecting its essential role in upholding democratic principles.”¹¹ The principle of dividing governmental powers is crucial in preventing the overconcentration of authority and in safeguarding the rights of individuals. In Nigeria, this principle is firmly established by the 1999 Constitution, which outlines the distinct roles of the three branches of government. The legislative branch is entrusted with the responsibility of making laws, whereas the executive, led by the President, is tasked with implementing those laws. The judiciary, meanwhile, ensures the interpretation of laws and verifies their alignment with the Constitution. This structured separation serves as a safeguard against the misuse of executive power and the infringement of personal freedoms. As Justice Chukwudifu Oputa aptly stated, “The judiciary is the guardian of the Constitution and the protector of the rights of citizens.”¹²

This underscores the judiciary’s vital role in upholding the rights of citizens and acting as a check on any potential abuse of power by the executive branch. Equally important is the role of the legislature, which performs oversight duties to monitor and restrain executive actions. In the words of Senator David Mark, the National Assembly serves as the voice of the people and a stronghold of democratic governance.”¹³ This emphasizes the critical function of the legislature in serving as the people’s voice and holding the executive branch accountable. The doctrine of separation of powers is fundamental for safeguarding individual freedoms and preventing the misuse of authority. By allocating governmental responsibilities across the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, it avoids the over-concentration of power in any single arm. Furthermore, it promotes transparency and public accountability, thereby reducing the risk of corruption in governance.

Horizontal or Cooperative Separation of Powers

Horizontal or cooperative separation of powers, commonly known as the checks and balances system, is a core principle of democratic governance that allocates governmental functions across three independent arms—the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. This arrangement is designed to curb the concentration of power and to ensure that each branch can monitor and restrain the others. The idea, originally articulated by Montesquieu in his seminal work *The Spirit of the Laws*, has been embraced by many democratic nations, including Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution (as amended) institutionalizes this principle: Section 4 assigns legislative authority to the National Assembly, Section 5 confers executive powers on the President, and Section 6 grants judicial powers to the courts. Though distinct, these powers operate in a system of interdependence, ensuring a balance through mutual oversight and accountability.¹⁴

The legislative arm exercises checks on the executive by enacting laws, approving national budgets, and conducting oversight functions. A notable example of this oversight power can be seen in the case of Attorney-General of the Federation v. National Assembly. ¹⁵ In that case, the Supreme Court affirmed the National Assembly’s constitutional authority to revise the Appropriation Bill presented by the President, emphasizing the legislature’s crucial role in overseeing government spending. Conversely, the executive branch exercises its own check on the legislature by withholding assent to bills, as demonstrated in the case of Inakoju v. Adeleke¹⁶. In Inakoju v. Adeleke, the court upheld the governor’s

*constitutional authority to exercise veto power over legislative bills, reinforcing the executive's role within the checks and balances system. Similarly, the judiciary functions as a stabilizing force in this structure. In the landmark case of Abacha v. Fawehinmi, the Supreme Court underscored the judiciary's duty to interpret the Constitution and ensure that all actions by the other branches conform to constitutional principles*¹⁷. In *Ukeje v. State*, the Supreme Court reinforced the judiciary's role as the final arbiter of constitutional compliance. The Court struck down customary practices that conflicted with constitutional guarantees—specifically, it declared the Igbo customary law, which denied female children inheritance rights, as discriminatory and inconsistent with Section 42 of the 1999

*Constitution. This case demonstrates how the judiciary not only interprets but actively safeguards fundamental human rights by invalidating laws and customs that violate constitutional provisions. Through such decisions, the judiciary ensures that the principles of equality, justice, and the rule of law remain central to Nigerian governance, further emphasizing the effectiveness of separation of powers in protecting civil liberties and maintaining democratic integrity*¹⁸. In *Governor of Ekiti State v. Oyewole* (2010) 3 NWLR (Pt. 1180) 136, the Supreme Court underscored the importance of due process in the appointment and deployment of judicial officers. The case involved the deployment of Justice Oyewole, a serving judge of the Lagos State judiciary, to the Ekiti State judiciary without compliance with constitutional requirements—particularly Sections 271 and 238 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The Court held that a judge appointed to the judiciary of a particular state could not be transferred or deployed to another state without due adherence to constitutional procedure, including recommendations by the National Judicial Council (NJC) and appointment by the governor of the receiving state with the confirmation of the state House of Assembly.

This case reflects both the principle of checks and balances and the cooperative nature of separation of powers: while each branch has distinct roles, certain functions—like judicial appointments—require collaboration between the executive and legislative arms, under the scrutiny of the judiciary to ensure constitutional compliance¹⁹, the court emphasized the need for harmony and cooperation among the branches for effective governance. This system of checks and balances is designed to prevent the concentration of power in any single branch of government, thereby promoting accountability, safeguarding individual rights, and fostering good governance. Nonetheless, despite these constitutional safeguards, persistent challenges such as executive overreach, legislative corruption, and judicial activism have, at various times, strained the delicate equilibrium envisioned by the framers of the 1999 Constitution. These tensions are evidenced in Nigeria's political

history, where institutional roles have occasionally been undermined or usurped. In conclusion, the Horizontal or Cooperative Separation of Powers in Nigeria represents a dynamic and ongoing interaction among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. While each arm operates within its constitutionally defined limits, their mutual oversight and interdependence remain essential to the preservation of Nigeria's democratic ideals. This doctrine is not merely structural but foundational—a cornerstone of constitutional democracy intended to curb authoritarianism, uphold the rule of law, and sustain a system of governance that is transparent, accountable, and just.

Constitution Check and Balance---Power Convergences

The concept of checks and balances in a constitutional democracy is often misconstrued as a rigid separation of powers. In practice, however, it embodies a sophisticated interplay of authority among the branches of government—a structure better described as “Constitutional Checks and Balances through Power Convergences.” Rather than functioning in isolation, the legislative, executive, and judicial arms share overlapping responsibilities that promote accountability, mutual restraint, and the prevention of authoritarianism.

*This convergence is explicitly reflected in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). For example, while Section 4 vests legislative powers in the National Assembly, the executive arm—particularly the President—also plays a significant role in the legislative process. The President may initiate legislation, particularly through Executive Bills, and possesses the constitutional authority to assent to or veto bills passed by the legislature. Thus, lawmaking is not the exclusive preserve of the legislature, but a collaborative function requiring cooperation between the executive and legislative arms²⁰ and must assent to bills passed by the National Assembly for them to become law. This requirement underscores the collaborative nature of governance, where the enactment of legislation is not solely a legislative function but a joint exercise between the legislative and executive branches. Without presidential assent, a bill—though duly passed by the legislature—cannot attain the force of law, except where the National Assembly overrides the veto with a two-thirds majority as provided under Section 58(5) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This mechanism ensures that no single branch can unilaterally impose its will, thereby reinforcing the principle of checks and balances through mutual interdependence. 21. This was highlighted in *A.G. Bendel State v. A.G. Federation*²², where the Supreme Court affirmed that a bill not assented to by the President does not become law, underscoring the executive's role in legislation.*

Similarly, the legislature shares in executive functions. The Senate must confirm certain executive appointments, such as Ministers, Ambassadors, and heads of critical federal agencies, in accordance with Section 147(2) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This provision empowers the legislature to scrutinize and approve individuals nominated by the President, thereby ensuring that appointments into key public offices meet constitutional and democratic standards. This process not only promotes transparency and accountability in governance but also serves as a vital check on the discretionary powers of the executive²³ and Ambassadors²⁴. In *Ogboru v. Uduaghan*²⁵, The Court of Appeal emphasized that the Senate's power to confirm appointments is a crucial check on the executive, reinforcing the doctrine of separation of powers and accountability in governance. In addition, the legislature exercises fiscal control through its power over public funds. Section 80(3) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) clearly provides that no money shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation except in the manner prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.

This ensures that the executive cannot unilaterally expend public funds without legislative authorization, thereby promoting financial discipline and transparency in public administration²⁶. This financial control was reaffirmed in *A.G. Federation v. National Assembly*²⁷. The judiciary, often seen as the most isolated branch, also participates in this power convergence. While Section 6 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) vests judicial powers in the courts, the President nominates Justices of the Supreme Court, subject to confirmation by the Senate, as provided under Section 231(2). This process exemplifies the interdependence of the executive and legislative arms in judicial appointments. Furthermore, the judiciary checks the other branches through its power of judicial review, ensuring that legislative and executive actions conform to constitutional provisions. This interplay reinforces the principle of checks and balances while safeguarding the supremacy of the Constitution²⁸, and the Senate confirms them²⁹. In *Ogbuagu v. Ogbuagu*³⁰, the Supreme Court underscored the importance of this collaborative process in maintaining judicial independence and competence.

Moreover, the judiciary's power of judicial review, affirmed in cases like *Marwa v. Nyako*, reinforces its critical role in the constitutional framework. In that case, the Supreme Court nullified the illegal tenure elongation of some state governors, declaring it unconstitutional. The Court emphasized that no arm of government has the authority to act outside the bounds of the Constitution, thereby affirming the judiciary's role in curbing excesses by the executive and legislative branches. Through such decisions, the judiciary not only interprets the law but also ensures constitutional supremacy and adherence to democratic norms³¹. This interconnected process underscores the principle that no single arm of government operates in isolation. In the impeachment procedure, the legislature initiates and drives the process through investigation and voting, fulfilling its oversight and accountability functions. However,

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the judiciary, through the Chief Justice of Nigeria, plays a pivotal role in ensuring fairness and legality by constituting a panel of impartial individuals to investigate the allegations.

Furthermore, the executive branch becomes involved at the final stage, as the outcome of the impeachment must be officially recognized and implemented. This tripartite collaboration ensures that impeachment, a grave constitutional action, adheres to due process and is not reduced to a mere political weapon. It reflects the broader constitutional design in Nigeria where checks and balances are not rigid barriers but structured interactions among the branches of government to safeguard democracy, prevent abuse of power, and uphold the rule of law³². Indeed, the attempted impeachment of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2002 serves as a practical illustration of the principle of constitutional checks and balances and the significance of procedural compliance in the Nigerian impeachment process.

In that case, the National Assembly initiated impeachment proceedings against President Obasanjo, citing allegations of gross misconduct, including alleged unauthorized spending and disregard for legislative resolutions. However, the attempt ultimately failed because the lawmakers did not adhere strictly to the procedural requirements outlined in Section 143 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended). Specifically, the impeachment process was marred by procedural irregularities such as: The lack of a formal investigation by a duly constituted panel. Non-compliance with the stipulated timeline and voting thresholds. The absence of an objective inquiry to substantiate the allegations of gross misconduct. These deficiencies provided the legal and political grounds upon which the judiciary and civil society challenged the legitimacy of the process. The failure of the impeachment attempt underscored that:

The Constitution is supreme, and all actions taken under its provisions must strictly comply with its procedural safeguards.

The judiciary has an important supervisory role in reviewing the constitutionality of impeachment proceedings. Impeachment cannot be used arbitrarily as a political tool without due process.³³ "These overlaps in power are intentional elements of Nigeria's constitutional framework, aimed at encouraging collaboration, checks, and mutual accountability between the arms of government. Nonetheless, such convergence can also give rise to institutional conflicts, as seen in *Alamieyeseigha v. Igbinedion*"³⁴, "A conflict emerged concerning the legislature's authority to remove a governor without judicial input, underscoring the friction that can result from intersecting institutional powers. The Nigerian Constitution operates on a system of checks and balances, within which powers are deliberately interwoven. This interconnected structure fosters mutual oversight and helps curb excessive authority in any single arm of government. However, it also requires a careful interplay of collaboration and restraint. Gaining insight into these power intersections is essential for appreciating the evolving dynamics of Nigeria's constitutional system."

Constitution Accommodation---Power Divergences

The principle of checks and balances in a constitutional democracy is often mistakenly equated with a rigid separation of powers. In practice, it entails a more intricate relationship among the branches of government, where overlapping responsibilities foster transparency and limit authoritarian control. This structural interaction—sometimes referred to as "Constitutional Checks and Balances through Power Convergence"—is clearly reflected in Nigeria's constitutional arrangement.

The 1999 Constitution (as amended) illustrates these convergences. For example, although Section 4 grants legislative authority to the National Assembly, the executive branch is actively involved in the legislative process. The President not only proposes legislation but also plays a key role by assenting to bills before they become law. This collaborative mechanism was notably examined in *Attorney-General of Bendel State v. Attorney-General of the Federation*³⁵, where the Supreme Court affirmed that a bill not assented to by the President does not become law, underscoring the executive's role in legislation.

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Similarly, the legislature shares in executive functions. The Senate must confirm certain executive appointments, such as Ministers³⁶ and Ambassadors³⁷. In *Ogboru v. Uduaghan*³⁸, The Court of Appeal underscored the significance of the Senate's authority to approve appointments as an essential mechanism for checking the executive branch. Additionally, the legislature wields financial control, as no funds can be disbursed from the Consolidated Revenue Fund without the National Assembly's authorization³⁹. The authority of the legislature over public finances was reaffirmed in the case of *Attorney-General of the Federation v. National Assembly* ⁴⁰. Although the judiciary is frequently regarded as the most independent branch, it too is involved in these overlapping powers. While Section 6 assigns judicial authority to the courts, the appointment of Supreme Court Justices is made by the President⁴¹, and the Senate confirms them⁴². In *Ogbuagu v. Ogbuagu*⁴³, The Supreme Court highlighted the significance of this cooperative appointment process in upholding the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary. Furthermore, the judiciary's authority to conduct judicial review, as established in cases such as *Marwa v. Nyako*, reinforces its crucial role in the system of checks and balances⁴⁴. This authority enables the judiciary to interpret laws and invalidate actions by other branches that violate the Constitution. Through this interpretive function, the judiciary wields considerable influence over both the legislative and executive branches. However, enforcing judicial rulings often relies on cooperation from the executive, representing yet another form of power overlap.

The impeachment procedure further exemplifies these convergences of power. While the legislature holds the power to impeach the President or Vice President, the process requires the involvement of all three branches. The legislature is responsible for investigation and voting, the Chief Justice of Nigeria—head of the judiciary—administers the oath to the panel assessing the allegations, and the impeachment becomes effective once the President officially declares it⁴⁵. This was illustrated by the 2002 attempt to impeach President Obasanjo, which ultimately failed because the constitutional requirements were not properly followed⁴⁶. These overlapping powers are deliberate aspects of Nigeria's constitutional framework, designed to encourage dialogue, collaboration, and mutual checks among the branches of government. Nevertheless, such interactions can sometimes result in disputes, as seen in *Alamieyeseigha v. Igbinedion*⁴⁷. A conflict emerged regarding whether the legislature could remove a governor without involving the judiciary, highlighting the tensions that overlapping powers can generate. The Nigerian Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances defined by such power convergences. These shared authorities form a network of accountability that guards against the concentration of power in any one branch. At the same time, they require a careful balance of cooperation and restraint. Appreciating these convergences is essential to understanding the evolving character of Nigeria's constitutional democracy.

Reform Projection

Nigeria's constitutional framework, shaped by extensive jurisprudence on power relations, remains dynamic and continuously evolving. This ongoing development is propelled by the need to confront new challenges and meet the aspirations of the populace, giving rise to what is referred to as "Reform Projection" — the anticipation and promotion of constitutional amendments aimed at enhancing governance for Nigerians. These reform efforts draw on historical lessons, current socio-political conditions, and the pursuit of a stronger, more cohesive nation. One key focus for reform is the allocation of powers. Although the constitution provides for both convergence and separation of powers, there are growing demands for a fairer distribution. This issue was notably addressed in *Fawehinmi v. Babangida*⁴⁸. The Supreme Court's restricted jurisdiction to review some military decrees underscored the necessity for more robust judicial oversight over executive authority. Although originating from the military period, this case remains influential in ongoing discussions about constitutional reform, particularly efforts aimed at strengthening judicial independence and enhancing the scope of judicial review.

Another area for reform centers on fiscal federalism. The existing revenue allocation formula, contested in cases such as *Attorney-General of the Federation v. Attorney-General of Abia State & 35 Others*, has sparked debates on how resources should be fairly distributed⁴⁹. Many consider the current formula

insufficient, as resource-rich states contend they deserve a larger portion of the revenue generated from their lands—a concept referred to as "derivation." This issue remains at the forefront in the ongoing case of *Rivers State Government & Others v. Attorney-General of the Federation & Others*⁵⁰, The push for a higher derivation percentage highlights the call for a more decentralized fiscal framework that aligns control over revenue with resource ownership.

Efforts for reform also extend to the electoral system, as seen in *Amaechi v. INEC*⁵¹, The Supreme Court's ruling in favor of Amaechi as governor, despite his not being the party's nominated candidate, revealed weaknesses in the electoral system. This decision has intensified calls for electoral reforms, including efforts to bolster the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), implement direct primary elections, and utilize technology to improve the credibility of elections. Calls for reform also extend to the structure of government itself, as illustrated in *Omo-Agege v. Senate*⁵², The suspension of a senator by fellow legislators was ruled unconstitutional, highlighting the necessity for more precise regulations governing legislative procedures. This case has fueled wider debates on the merits of unicameral versus bicameral legislatures, with some advocating for a transition to a unicameral system to cut costs and simplify the legislative process.

Additionally, judicial reforms are emerging as a significant focus, as demonstrated in *Nganjiwa v. Federal Republic of Nigeria*⁵³, The Court of Appeal's ruling that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) lacks authority to prosecute judges without prior approval from the National Judicial Council (NJC) has sparked discussions on judicial accountability. This decision has informed proposals to reform the NJC's structure and powers, aiming to create a more transparent system for judicial appointments and disciplinary actions.

Reform efforts are also motivated by concerns for human rights and social justice, as reflected in *Ukeje v. Ukeje*⁵⁴, The Supreme Court invalidated an Igbo customary law that prevented female children from inheriting their father's estate. This landmark ruling has intensified demands for constitutional reforms aimed at promoting gender equality, safeguarding minority rights, and enhancing the enforcement of socio-economic rights. Notably, the constitutional amendment process itself is under scrutiny. The current rigorous requirement of securing approval from two-thirds of both the national and state legislatures has prompted calls for reform⁵⁵, Some view this stringent amendment procedure as a barrier to implementing essential reforms. This concern was highlighted in *EEDC Ltd. v. Ozongwu*⁵⁶, The Supreme Court's strict reading of the constitutional amendment procedure has prompted calls for a more adaptable approach, potentially incorporating referendum options for key matters.

These proposed reforms are more than theoretical discussions; they are actively reflected in current constitutional amendment efforts, civil society campaigns, and public debates. Nonetheless, they encounter significant obstacles, particularly political interests, as exemplified by the controversy surrounding the unsuccessful Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Fourth Alteration) Act of 2015⁵⁷, Even widely supported reforms can be stalled by political interests. The concept of "Reform Projection" in Nigeria represents a complex and evolving process. Rooted in a wealth of judicial precedents and social developments, these projections envision a constitution that better reflects Nigeria's diversity, ensures fairer distribution of power and resources, and strengthens the protection of rights and democratic principles. Achieving these goals, however, demands not only legal expertise but also strong political commitment and active public participation. As Nigeria progresses in its democratic evolution, these reform projections provide a strategic guide—not only for constitutional amendments but for the broader mission of nation- building

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