



ABSTRACT

The paper examines state-local relations as a necessary mechanism designed to promote cooperation, manage conflicts, respond to changing circumstances and deliver services efficiently in a federation. Unfortunately, democratic rule has reinforced the status of state controls as state governors adopt caretaker committees

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS AND CARETAKER COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN OYO STATE

RASHEED, ISAU OLAGOKE

*Department of Political Science, Emmanuel
Alayande College of Education, Oyo*

Introduction

The devolution of power and revenue allocation among various levels of government necessitates intergovernmental relations (IGR) in a polity. With the level of ethnic pluralism, cultural diversity and geographical spread, IGR in Nigeria is inevitable. Nigeria has three governmental structures: a central government, thirty-six states and a FCT, and 774 local government councils. The pattern of IGR among the component units in the country encapsulates relationships that enable the units of governments to participate effectively and carry out mandate so that common goals are conceived. This includes executive mechanisms, cooperative agreements, judicial and legislative mechanisms that all facilitate service delivery by government machinery (Bello, 2014). Obi (2004) observes that IGR has to do with the complex patterns of interactions, cooperation and interdependence between two or more levels of government within a nation-state. The current democratic experience has witnessed reductions in local government powers. Since the inception



of 1999 constitution, local government councils have become the cesspools of corruption whereby the state governors arbitrarily steal from the funds that ought to accrue to these entities from the federation account. While the federal level has huge revenues at its disposal to carry out its constitutionally assigned functions, much less is available at the state-local levels. Thus, state and local government rely heavily on the centrally allocated revenue from Federation Account to meet their expenditure responsibilities (Egwaikhide, 2004). Allied to that is the overbearing role of state officials in the management of local council allocations. Despite Section 162 (8) of the extant constitution which provides for state-local fiscal relations, and stipulates that amounts standing to the credit of local government councils of a state shall be distributed among the local councils on such terms and manner to be prescribed by

through which local government allocations are delayed, diverted, withheld or filtered. To undertake an investigation of the unwholesome development, a sample of 100 respondents was randomly selected from different categories of people. The use of descriptive survey guided this study. Relying on empirical method of analysis, a self-designed questionnaire was administered to collect data just as Chi-square test was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings indicate that state management of the relations is seen to be dictated and self-interested. The respondents acknowledged that the transition committees at local levels are subjected to greater control and manipulation by state officials. As a consequence, social service delivery is adversely affected in the locality. Based on this, the paper recommends that periodic elections be held at local councils; local council autonomy entrenched; and proper monitoring by central government of the spending patterns of state governors.

Keywords: *Federalism, intergovernmental relations, constitution, local governance, democracy.*



the house of assembly, Ibietan (2012) noted that acrimony and squabbles have always greeted these relationships because of the executive autocracy and several inequities.

Hence, the wealth distribution becomes skewed in favour of only those who are exercising political authorities in the state capitals. To be candid, state-local relations are honoured in breach than in observance. Local government councils in Nigeria have been highly politicized by the powers that be, and the true position of the constitution on the status of the councils is in doubt. States refused to conduct local council polls that would facilitate social service delivery at the grassroots. Although the affected states (such as Oyo, Osun, Kwara and Imo) have adduced the inability to do so to litigations, and amendment to enabling laws (*Leadership*, 2021), the public is not willing to buy that idea.

The Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) has been vociferous in the articulation and defence of the autonomy, and the tenure of LGCs, but state governors continue to foist caretaker committees on the local government councils. In Oyo state, the ALGON of the previous Abiola Ajimobi administration challenged their unconstitutional dissolution and subsequent replacement with caretaker committees by Seyi Makinde-led government.

For Nigerian governing elite, Jega (2007) avers, democracy is desirable, if it can facilitate access to power and create a window of opportunity to loot public treasury and keep the people at their mercy. Unless public resources are used to advance the public good, grassroots' development cannot proceed in a vigorous, just, and sustainable way.

At this point, one may be tempted to ask, why is it difficult for elected state governors to organize local council polls? On what grounds should a state governor divert local council allocations? How can there be positive development when meager allocation is released to local authorities? The focus of this paper therefore is to investigate how caretaker committee arrangement by state governors hinders state-local relations in Oyo state.

Statement of the problem

Though the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria recognized local government (LG) as the third tier of government, the practice of IGR in the current



democratic dispensation clearly shows total subordination of local government to the other two levels of government. The subsisting model of state-local government relations in Nigeria is hierarchical and inclusive than cooperative and interdependent. The fiscal practice in Nigeria lacks equity and fairness as epitomized by the incessant manipulation of revenue allocation criteria and tax regimes by the state officials. Besides, the capacity of the local government councils has been circumscribed by their limited taxing power.

Despite the inclusion of local governments in the federal arrangement, efficient autonomy capable of enhancing their self-reliance and participation in cooperative IGR is not usually guaranteed. The deductions at source (by states) left LGs with little funds which resulted in zero allocation to the local government. Contrary to the constitutional provisions guaranteeing 'the system of LG by democratically elected councils', the democratic representative content of the LG system has been poor as the state governments have preferred caretaker and transition committees to elected officials. The committees so appointed are subjected to greater control being usually party men and lackeys appointed for rewards rather than competence. It is common to find that most governors in Nigeria operate their LGs as an appendage of the state structure. States use caretaker committees and default in the conduct of local government elections. The popular view is that elected councils serve as agents of sustainable development at the grassroots.

The question is: How would state governors who emerged through an electoral process and receive direct allocation from Federation Account deprive local authorities from enjoying the same rights? It is on that basis that the paper attempts to explore the abuse of power by state officials in their conduct of state-local government relations.

Conceptual Clarifications

Federalism refers to an administrative political system where there is constitutional division of powers in such a way that the central and constituent governments are each within a sphere coordinate and independent in the exercise of their powers and functions as they relate to one another and to the centre (Wheare, 1964).



Intergovernmental relations is an interacting network of institutions at national, provincial and local levels created and refined to enable the various parts of government to cooperate in a manner which is appropriate to its institutional arrangement (Wright, 1999). It is a mutual relation between government institutions at horizontal and vertical levels for the common good.

Objectives

1. to identify how diversion of local council allocations has influence on grassroots' administration;
2. to examine how persistent imposition of caretaker committee affects governance at local level; and
3. to investigate the extent to which state-local fiscal relations shape social service delivery in the locality.

Research questions

1. To what extent has delayed revenue allocation affected the running of local council affairs?
2. How has the imposition of caretaker committee hindered efficiency at the grassroots' level?
3. Does state-local fiscal relations facilitate effective social service delivery in rural area?

Hypotheses

H₁: Diversion of local government allocations retards rural development.

H₂: Caretaker committees are rendered ineffective by state officials.

H₃: State-local fiscal relations impede social service delivery.

Review of Related Work

Though the 1976 Local Government Reforms in Nigeria strengthened the LGs in terms of structures and funding, state-local, federal-state-local and federal-local relations remained heavily top-down. The council has substantial control over local affairs, staff and institution as well as financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their



areas (FRN, 1976). Since 1976 LG Reform, significant legal provisions have been made to situate the LG system as a third tier government level within the federal structure in an attempt to define its autonomy and improve its stake in IGR.

The period of democratic rule in Nigeria however, has always been an opportunity for the states to attempt to re-subjugate the LG councils under their full control despite constitutional provisions. The place of LGs in IGR were shown to have been most neglected, abused, politicized and marginalized in the scheme of things. The local government councils are limited to generate revenue from less lucrative sources such as poll tax, motor parks and property tax. Section 7 of the 1999 constitution provides that the state has a constitutional duty to make laws for the structure, operation, functions and funding and administration of LGs. It monitors, regulates, oversees, and supervises the LGs to ensure good governance, optimal performance and local development. It is on this premise that 'states create new local governments, appoint caretaker committees, sole administrators or other forms of undemocratic councils contrary to the constitutional provisions in these processes (Ikeanyibe, 2017).

Several studies have been carried out by different researchers to examine the dynamics of intergovernmental relations. Wright (1982), Cameron (2001), Ikelegbe (2004), Aiyede (2004), Ikeanyibe, (2017) Olaiya (2016) and Obi (2004) conceived intergovernmental relations as the complex patterns of interactions and interdependence among levels of government, designed to facilitate the attainment of common goals in a polity.

Anderson sees IGR as an important body of activities or interactions occurring between (or among) governmental units of all types and levels within American federal system. He thus conceives of IGR as practically existing within the federal system alone. But others like Wright (1982) maintain that IGR involves a range of activities that are neither explicit nor implicit in federalism. To Cameron (2001), IGR is an array of structures, processes, institutions and mechanisms for coping with the inevitable overlap and interdependence that is a feature of modern life. The degree of institutionalization may vary from country to country and



from issues to issues even within a country, depending on the circumstances and the choices of political actors. It may involve all or few of the units in a federation, including the following patterns of relationships: federal-state, federal-state-local, federal-local, inter-state, and inter-local depending on the existing government (Aiyede, 2004). Wright (1982) formulated models of IGR to explain pattern of interaction among components units of government across the world. These include coordinate, overlapping and inclusive. In the context of Nigerian federalism, Benjamin (2004) posits that the pattern of IGR has remained the same, namely the coordinate (or separated) authority, inclusive authority and overlapping models. This came about because of the changes in the form of government (military or civilian), number and powers of the constituent units of the federation (regions /states and LGs) and the fiscal fortunes of the nation (the incidence of oil boom). Of all the models, the overlapping model is considered as the best form of IGR because it requires that each level of government within a level has something to bring to the table which promotes negotiation and bargaining (Ibietan, 2011). In an ideal federal state, Wright (1999) describes it (overlapping model) as a complicated form of IGR where there is interconnection among the three levels of governments. The central government influences the state and LG and vice versa. The model is not likely to exist in a polity where the federal structure is skewed in favour of one level of government and the capacity of other levels is highly constrained.

It is established that the model of IGR in Nigeria therefore seems to be determined more by economics, politics, attitude and needs of the political elite of higher order governments rather than mere legal provision. Thus, in the second republic (1979-83) and the present fourth republic (1999 to date), states have exhibited immense legal manoeuvre and rascality in subjecting the LG councils to their whims and caprices, regarding them as part of their political sub-units. In a study conducted by Akinsanya (2005), state governors not only exercised their powers under S. 7 (1) of the 1999 constitution to “dissolve ‘elected’ LG councils and replace them with sole administrators or caretaker committees but also created new LG Areas...”



Recent political development in Oyo state is a reference point. Despite earlier directive issued by the Minister of Justice, Abubakar Mallami (SAN) entitled “Unconstitutionality of dissolution of elected local government councils and appointment of caretaker committee: the urgent need for compliance with extant judicial decisions”, the refusal of Seyi Makinde-led government to obey the Supreme court orders on dissolution of ‘elected’ ALGON members of the previous administration cost him N20 million fines for perpetrating illegality (*Guardian*, May 8, 2021). Besides, the apex court, in its judgement, noted that the tenures of the sacked council chairmen and councillors have expired but all outstanding salaries and allowances must be paid with immediate effect (*Punch*, May 8, 2021).

In fact, some states forced some LG councils to make contributions for the provisions of some services like primary education. Statutory allocations from the “Federation Account to LG councils, paid into State-Local Government Joint Account” were often diverted by some state governors. So worse is the situation that LG councils were emasculated through acts of omission or commission by some state governments (Usman & Erunke, 2018).

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey. The design is considered suitable because it facilitates generation of data through the standardized collection procedures based on highly structured research instrument.

Population

The population in this research cut across people from different strata of society mostly affected by bad governance, high handedness and brazen impunity of state officials on local governance. They comprise civil servants, politicians, students, traders and security personnel.

Sample and Sampling Technique



One hundred (100) respondents formed the sample of the study. In line with the nature of the research, twenty (20) respondents each were randomly selected across different groups with a view to investigating the level at which unbridled executive autocracy derails local governance process in Oyo state.

Research instrument

A self-designed questionnaire known as “State-Local relations and Caretaker Committee System in Oyo State” was adopted. The instrument contained two parts. The first part of the instrument was designed to elicit relevant information on the bio-data of the students while the second part is made up of items relating to the views of the respondents on how state officials manipulate LGs and appoint interim committees to suppress local governance.

Validity and Reliability of the instrument

The questionnaire was given to experts in the Department of Political Science for scrutiny. Their various suggestions were taken into consideration in the final compilation of this study. This ensures the face validity of the instrument. Meanwhile, Chi-square test was applied to determine the reliability of the test instrument.

Table 1: State governors divert local councils' allocations

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D
1	State executives withhold local government funds	46	48	4	2
2	Inadequate financial resources to implement programmes at local level	51	34	6	9
3	State governors determine the amount to be spent on capital projects in the locality	39	30	24	7
4	State make unnecessary deductions from joint state-local government accounts	61	29	8	2
5	Local governments lack capacity to deliver results	45	27	18	10

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 2



S/N	Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{Fe}$
1	94	82	12	144	1.76
2	85	82	3	9	0.11
3	69	82	-13	169	2.06
4	90	82	8	64	0.78
5	72	82	-10	100	1.22
6	6	18	-12	144	8
7	15	18	-3	9	0.5
8	31	18	13	169	9.39
9	10	18	-8	64	3.56
10	28	18	10	100	5.56
Sum	500				32.94

$X^2_{cal} = 32.94$, $X^2_{tab} = 9.49$ at 5% sig level

Degree X^2 of freedom = $(r-1)(c-1)$

$$(5-1)(2-1)$$

$$(4)(1)=4$$

Since the value of X^2_{cal} which is 32.94 is greater than X^2_{tab} i.e. 9.49 at 5% level of significance, the hypothesis which states that state governors divert local councils' allocations is accepted.

Table 3: Caretaker committees are subjected to greater control and manipulation

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D
1	Appointments of sole administrators do not reflect true wishes of people	58	25	9	8
2	Caretaker committee is a conduit to loot local council funds	76	20	3	1
3	Lack of commitment on the part of caretaker committees	42	36	18	4
4	Local governments are mere appendage of the state structure	67	21	7	5
5	Overbearing influence of governors has worsened the position of local authorities	63	28	2	7

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 4



S/N	Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² fe
1	83	87.2	-4.2	17.64	0.20
2	96	87.2	8.8	77.44	0.89
3	78	87.2	-9.2	84.64	0.97
4	88	87.2	0.8	6.4	0.07
5	91	87.2	3.8	14.44	0.17
6	17	12.8	4.2	17.64	1.38
7	4	12.8	-8.8	77.44	6.05
8	22	12.8	9.2	84.64	6.61
9	12	12.8	-0.8	6.4	0.5
10	9	12.8	-3.8	14.44	1.13
Sum	500				17.97

$X^2_{cal} = 17.97$, $X^2_{tab} = 9.49$ at 5% sig level

Degree X^2 of freedom = $(r-1)(c-1)$

$$(5-1)(2-1)$$

$$(4)(1)=4$$

Since the value of X^2_{cal} which is 17.97 is greater than X^2_{tab} i.e. 9.49 at 5% level of significance, the hypothesis which states that caretaker committees are accountable to the state governors is accepted.

Table 5: State-local fiscal relations impede effective social service delivery at the grassroots

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D
1	Local people don't enjoy maximum benefits of local governance	34	47	9	10
2	Essential services are not accorded priority	26	38	22	14
3	Interim chairmen lack local discretion	39	36	13	12
4	Efficient financial autonomy is not guaranteed	41	28	20	11
5	Rural development is adversely affected	53	27	16	4

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 6



S/N	Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$
1	81	73.8	7.2	51.84	0.70
2	64	73.8	-9.8	96.04	1.30
3	75	73.8	1.2	1.44	0.02
4	69	73.8	-4.8	23.04	0.31
5	80	73.8	6.2	38.44	0.52
6	19	26.2	-7.2	51.84	1.98
7	36	26.2	9.8	96.04	3.67
8	25	26.2	-1.2	1.44	0.05
9	31	26.2	4.8	23.04	0.88
10	20	26.2	-6.2	38.44	1.47
Sum	500				10.9

$X^2_{cal} = 10.9$, $X^2_{tab} = 9.49$ at 5% sig level

Degree of freedom $= (r-1)(c-1)$

$$(5-1)(2-1)$$

$$(4)(1)=4$$

Since the value of X^2_{cal} which is 10.9 is greater than X^2_{tab} i.e. 9.49 at 5% level of significance, the hypothesis which states that state-local fiscal relations hinder effective social service delivery at the grassroots is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study indicates that state controls characterize state-local relations in Oyo state. The power is so detailed and rigorous that it undermines the local discretion in decision making, planning and programming. This is in line with a survey conducted by Adagbabiri (2003) that poor achievement in the locality is a consequence of numerous deductions and little remittances states make to LGs. In a similar vein, Onah & Ibietan (2010) submit that the fiscal practice in Nigeria lacks equity and fairness as epitomised by incessant manipulation of revenue allocation criteria and tax regimes or policies by the governing elite. In their affirmation of the position of scholars, the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees recently raised alarms



that about nine governors were diverting and pilfering LG funds in violation of the guidelines issued by the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (*Punch* 2021).

Table 4 was used to test hypothesis on predominant influence state officials have on caretaker committees. The finding of this study reveals that the interim committees are only accountable to the governors who appointed them in the first place. This was buttressed by Ikelegbe (2004) and Dlakwa (2004) that their mode of selection is not based on competence which robbed the people the opportunities of local initiatives and rural development.

Besides, Table 6 tests the hypothesis on ineffective social service delivery at the grassroots. This corresponds to the Bello's (2014) view that LG is being treated as parastatals. Whatever resources and functions are given to local government, not much can be achieved by this tier of government if it lacks autonomy to initiate and execute its policies and programmes routinely. In the absence of a procedure that is strictly adhered to in this connection, this level of government will constitute 'local administration' rather than 'local government', which is a mere agent of the central government at the periphery.

Conclusion

The paper discussed intergovernmental relations as a set of dynamic and negotiated arrangements of policy, finance and technical capacity that are cooperatively woven together to address developmental challenges facing component units of a federation. Notwithstanding the array of constitutional, statutory and ad hoc bodies set up to promote interactions among federal sub-units, it seems state-local relations are honoured in breach than in observance by the state officials.

Unbridled state control over local government has resulted in underfunding, inefficiency and bad governance at the grassroots level. This was affirmed by respondents as they described the appointment of caretaker committees as "inequitable" "manipulative" "oppressive" "undemocratic" "predatory" among others. Until central government compel the state governors to comply with the constitutional provisions



concerning state-local relations, nothing much could be achieved in that regard.

Recommendations

In view of the above findings, the researcher would like to recommend as follows:

- Local government councils should be granted autonomy and be treated as such by superior levels of government.
- Central government should make direct allocations to LGs so as to enable them implement capital projects without undue interference from state.
- Headship of the local councils should emerge through periodic and transparent election so as to facilitate sustainable development at the grassroots.
- There is an urgent need to send a team of auditors to check financial transactions of local government councils at intervals.
- People at the grassroots should be encouraged to use local initiative in order to solve peculiar problems affecting them.

References

- Adagbabiri, M. M. 2003. Joint Account and financial control in the local government. AAU: Himmal
- Adamolekun, L. 2002. Decentralization, sub-national governments and intergovernmental relations. In Adamolekun, L. (ed) Public Administration in Africa. Ibadan: Spectrum Books. pp 49-67
- Adeyemo D. 2005. Local government autonomy in Nigeria: A historical perspective: *Journal of Social Science*. 10(2), pp 77-87
- Aiyede, E. R. 2004. Constitutional and institutional basis of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria. In Egwaikhide, F. O. et al (eds) Intergovernmental relations in Nigeria. Ibadan: PEFS
- Akinsanya, A. A. 2005. Local government in Nigeria's Intergovernmental relations under the 1999 constitution. In Ayoade, J. A. A. (eds) Readings in Nigerian Government and Politics. Ijebu-Ode: Gratia Associate International.



- Bello, M, L. 2014. Intergovernmental relations in Nigeria: An assessment of its practice at the local government level. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*. 4 (1), pp 66-76
- Benjamin, S. A. 2004. Federal-state and state-state relations in Nigeria: A case study of Lagos state. Egwaikhide, F. O. et al (eds) *Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria*. Ibadan: PEFS
- Cameron, D. 2001. The structures of intergovernmental relations. *International Social Science Journal*. 16 (7), pp 121-127
- Dlakwa, D. H. 2004. The politics of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria. In Egwaikhide, F. O. et al (eds) *Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria*. Ibadan: PEFS
- Egwaikhide, F. O. 2004. Intergovernmental fiscal relations in Nigeria. In Egwaikhide, F. O. et al (eds) *Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria*. Ibadan: PEFS
- FRN 1976. *Guidelines for Local Government Reform*. Kaduna. Nigeria: Federal Government Press
- FRN 1979. *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Lagos: Federal Government Press
- FRN 1999. *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Lagos: Federal Government Press
- Ibietan, J. 2011. Perspectives on intergovernmental relations in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Administrative Science*. 9 (1 & 2), pp 54-68
- Ikeanyibe, O. M. 2017. Federalism, constitution and local government autonomy in Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*. 7 (3), pp 383-393
- Ikelegbe, A. 2004. Intergovernmental relations, governance and development in Nigeria. In Egwaikhide, F. O. et al (eds) *Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria*. Ibadan: PEFS
- Jega, A. M. (2007). *Democracy, Good governance and Development in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books limited
- Obi, V. O. 2004. *Modern Local Government Practice in Nigeria*. Enugu. Cepta (Nig.) Ltd
- Olaiya, A. T. 2016. Federalism and Intergovernmental relations in Africa; retrospect and prospect from Nigeria. *Public Administration Research*. 5 (2), pp 87-103



Onah, R. C. & Ibietan, O. I. 2010. Fiscal federalism and resource control option for Nigeria. In Oguonu, C. & Onah, R. C. (eds) Readings in Public Administration. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press

Usman A. T & Erunke, C. E. 2018. State-Local government relations in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: An assessment of the 1999-2010 experience. *European Scientific Journal*. 8 (20), pp 162-176

Wright, D. 1982. Understanding Intergovernmental Relations. California: Wadsworth

Newspapers

Guardian, 2021. "Supreme Court declares Makinde's dissolution of Oyo LGs illegal". Lagos. May 8

Leadership, 2021. "Opposition mounts on caretaker committees by governors". Lagos. 23 April 24

Punch, 2021. "Nine governors steal local government funds through cronies". Lagos. 15 April

Punch, 2021. "Oyo ALGON floors Gov Makinde at S'Court". Lagos. 8 May