

Opposition
Political Parties
AND Democratisation
IN Africa



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Gabriel Lanre Adeola

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND OPPOSITION IN NIGERIA

Jacob Olufemi Fatile

Introduction

The dynamism and complexity of Nigeria's federalism has attracted academic scrutiny. This is because it has generated so many problems capable of threatening the corporate existence and continuity of the Nigerian state. Over the years, the issue of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) has remained dominant and most contentious in Nigeria's polity. This is because of its multi-dimensional perspectives. IGR in Nigeria has crystallised and remained dynamic as a result of its multiplicity in terms of ethnic composition and pluralism *vis-à-vis* socio-cultural dimensions. It is naturally expected, therefore, that interactions in terms of fiscal relations will be characterised by hostile competition, unending struggle and survival of the fittest syndrome. The centralised nature of the military hierarchical structure and the exploitative tendencies of the colonial government placed the federal government at an advantage in post colonial Nigeria (Arowolo, 2011).

Intergovernmental relations describes the gamut of activities or interactions that takes place between or among the different levels of government within a country. It covers the combinations and permutations of relationship among them. The role of intergovernmental relations increases as the constituent units are looking for solutions on a common ground, but with an aim to render the federal level of governance constrained, limited. What may be puzzling is the difference in the scope and success of these intergovernmental relations in shifting power relations attached to the given policy area (Simeon and Cameron, 2002). The goals of intergovernmental relations are said to be to promote peace and harmony among the three tiers of government, which are the Federal, State and Local Government. To accelerate the achievement of self-reliant economy. In so doing, inter-governmental relations will help to minimize inter-jurisdictional conflicts among the various levels of government. Also to boost greater natural economic integration through the activities of the three levels of government. Again to enhance the emergence of co-operative rather than competitive federation there is also need to enhance effective and efficient utilization of available human and material resources among the three levels of government.

Intergovernmental relation is an important principle in realizing synergy among different levels of government and within specific levels for stability of entire government. It applies irrespective of the system of government embraced by a country since there is always the state and its related agency the government. For governments to work efficiently there has to be further decentralization with lower levels of government taking central role in implementation of policies through various programmes. Although decentralisation, in particular its devolution aspect has been challenging to effectively realise, many countries have opted for some form of decentralisation aimed at ensuring efficient provision of services

(Mitullah, 2012). Intergovernmental Relations is basically a mechanism for managing conflict and delivering services. Institutions and processes of intergovernmental relations services to promote cooperation among governmental units; recognize and manage conflicts; deliver services more efficiently and to respond to changing circumstances.

This chapter describe and explain some of the major changes within the intergovernmental sphere and their impact on the overall federal structure, as far as opposition is concerned. The chapter considers intergovernmentalism within a federalist approach, rather than an alternative to it. It look closer at how federal systems react to these challenges through a remodelled management of intergovernmental relations.

The Concept of Intergovernmental Relations

The term intergovernmental relations over the years have been besmeared with semantic confusion. For a proper clarification of the concept, three schools of thought have developed. The first school of thought contends that intergovernmental relations can only exist in a federal system, while the second school posits that intergovernmental relations can both exist within a federal structure and as well as in a unitary system of government. The third school says that intergovernmental relations could as well include international relations. The more vital point to note is that inter-governmental relations are described for the overall efficient performance of the entire system, for the mechanisms of checks and balances and to avoid crisis of confidence in the process of governance. Again, there are numerous variations in the nature, structure and/or patterns of inter-governmental relations from one country to another – a state of affairs which arises principally from the differences in culture, tradition, history, origin of the state, party system and system of state organization of the different societies.

From the above, it can be said that intergovernmental relations exists both in the federal and unitary structures and in fact, the point of view that intergovernmental relations is only associated with the federal system should be jettisoned (Bamgbose, 2008). This multiplicity of efforts at conceptualizing intergovernmental relations has been largely responsible for the philological entanglement IGR has found itself. As an instance of the demonstration of this conceptual problem, some people have tended to understand intergovernmental relations as the interactions between and among governments (sovereign national governments). Whereas this conceptualization may not be completely wrong, especially at the global analysis of government, but it tends to paint a nebulous picture of the scope of our subject-matter and creates the impression that intergovernmental relations has to do with purely international relations matters. This may not be wrong given the fact that at the level of intergovernmental relations, policies pertaining to a country's national interest and foreign relations are formulated and implemented (Abonyi, 2006).

The concept has been defined as the interactions that take place among the different levels of government within a state (Adamolekun, 1983; Olopade, 1984). Though, strong emphasis has often been placed on Federal-state relations in a federal system, a comprehensive analysis of such relations show diverse relations. With respect to a federal state therefore, nine types of relations are discernible. These are: Federal-state, Federal-local, Federal-Civic groups, State-state, state-local, state-civic groups, local-local, Local civic groups and inter-civic groups (Olugbemi, 1980).

Intergovernmental relations encompasses all the complex and interdependent relations among various spheres of government as well as the co-ordination of public policies among different levels. It is 'commonly used to refer to relations between central, regional and local governments, as well as governments between any one level, that facilitate the attainment of common goals through co-operation'. It is 'commonly used to describe the interactions between the different levels of government within the state' (Opeskin, 2001:1; Adamolekun 2002:60). Intergovernmental relations is 'the geographical division of powers among the various spheres of government in the nation-state.' He goes further to state that the division of powers implies that each structure has a unique and independent role to play in the intergovernmental domain (Cameron, 1994:23). To Ogunna (1996:350), intergovernmental relations refers to 'the complex pattern of interactions, cooperation and inter-dependence between two or more levels of government in a state. It is also seen as a system of transactions among structured levels of government in a state. It is also seen as registration in which the parties are negotiating advantageous positions for power, money and problems-solving responsibility (Olugbemi: 1980). Intergovernmental relations implies a contrast of higher and lower levels, there is strong support in the political literature for emphasizing co-operation among the levels of government and de-emphasizing the idea of a hierarchical relationship. The implication of the foregoing, especially in the light of collaborations which is the subset of IGR is that, IGR connote cordial or harmonious relationship among the various levels of government and their agencies, be it at the federal, state or local government level (Abdullahi, 2009).

Okoli, and Onah, (2002:256) defined inter-governmental relations as a system of transactions among structured levels of government in a state. Inter-governmental relations are seen as negotiation in which the parties are negotiating advantageous positions for power, money and problems-solving responsibility. Intergovernmental relations can be defined as the interactions that take place among the different levels of government within a state. Usually, the concept is associated with states having a Federal administration system where the relationships between the Federal, Central or national Government and the major sub-national unit (province, region or state) are formally spelt out in the constitution and any re-arrangement must be through a constitutional amendment involving all the levels of government. Although, the emphasis in the analysis of inter-governmental relations is on Federal-State Relations, the full picture also includes how both levels relate to the Local Government units established within each state. The result, then, is that a full analysis of inter-governmental Relations within a Federal administration system must cover the following: Federal-State, Federal-State-Local, Federal-Local, Inter-State, State-Local and Inter-Local Relations (Ralph, 2004:174).

The more vital point to note is that inter-governmental relations are described for the overall efficient performance of the entire system, for the mechanisms of checks and balances and to avoid crisis of confidence in the process of governance. Again, there are numerous variations in the nature, structure and/or patterns of inter-governmental relations from one country to another – a state of affairs which arises principally from the differences in culture, tradition, history, origin of the state, party system and system of state organization of the different societies. The outcome therefore, is that there does not exist any one best system of inter-governmental relations for all countries and for all time, rather it all depends on the peculiar circumstances of each society. Indeed, even within a particular country, the system of inter-governmental relations is not static but varies from one period to another. Besides, even the transactional processes among units of government are not always smooth and co-operative.

[the] term should be used of situations where an opposition is not merely allowed to function, but is actually entrusted with a function. As such, it becomes an institution . . . the crowning institution of a fully institutionalized

institutionalized form of political conflict". According to them:
 which was presented by Ionescu and de Madariaga (1968:9) as the "most advanced and emphasis to one specific kind of political opposition, namely the parliamentary opposition, political opposition in a more empirical way, classic authors have generally attributed more a rather restrictive and normative way. On the one hand, when classifying and studying inclusive definition, the majority of classic scholars have tended to comprehend opposition in morphologically . . . , the dialectic counterpart of power". However, despite this very broad and simple way. According to him, there is opposition when B is opposed to the conduct of disagreement to another body" (Norton, 2008:236). Indeed, Dahl (1966) defines it in a very Opposition is used as a relative term, referring to a relationship: "standing in some form of A study of classic literature on opposition provides a quite nebulous and extensive definition.

being used.

clearly important, therefore, is for any study of 'opposition' to define in what way that term is of opposition is 'right' or 'wrong', and all are employed in contemporary usage. What is behaviours that are normally found in the established democratic world. None of these uses others argue for extension of the term to incorporate a much wider range of anti-government propose that opposition suggests representation and acceptance of difference; and yet of 'institutionalised opposition' within a context of established liberal democracy; others Some scholars argue that for opposition to be meaningful it should be restricted to the idea oppose, others are more inclined to talk about the role or institution of opposition.

institutionalist, or functional, respectively. While some writers stress the notion of 'right' to on/or perhaps, the theoretical orientation to which he/she subscribes; normative, which a particular scholar approaches the subject, or an aspect that he/she puts emphasis Most of the differences we encounter in definitions of opposition are matter of the angle from the very concept of opposition is contested in the same ways as democracy, for instance, is. defined the concept of opposition. Though their definitions vary, it is hard to conclude that meaning that it is used with reference to too many things. Political scientists have differently If democracy is essentially a contested term, opposition is essentially an 'inflated' one,

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being of the entire country.

independent role to play with the view to achieving common goals to the benefit and well-government has an independent and unique role to play; for example, the local level has an levels of government within a country. It is important to state that in IGR, each level of Also covered by IGR are the combinations and permutations of relationships among these which takes place between and among the different levels of government within a country. From the above, it can be inferred that IGR refers to the gamut activities or interactions

2002:44)

Indeed, an inter-jurisdictional conflict seems to be the rule rather than the exception (Ofoeze,

political society and the hallmark of those political societies which are variously called democratic, liberal, parliamentary, constitutional, pluralistic-constitutional, or even open or free (Ionescu and de Madariaga, 1968:10).

Ionescu and de Madariaga (1968) were fully aware of the deficiency in the definition, and subsequently developed other complementary terms, such as control, dissent, and contestation, when speaking of the challenges to the authority or 'non-institutional and non-constitutional opposition' in non-parliamentary, poorly institutionalized, or one-party regimes.

In order to both overcome the normative biases and the restrictive perspective on opposition, it is first necessary to go back to the essence of the concept. On the basis of Dahl's (1966, 1973) and Ionescu's (1968) definitions, there is opposition when actor A opposes actor B in government. We offer a definition of opposition that departs from its fundamental characteristic i.e. its position towards the government. Taking the positioning (rather than the type of actors, the functions, or the supposed locus) of opposition as a criterion allow us to adopt a renewed and more neutral vision of opposition which would not exclude activities, actors, or sites.

From these premises, we offer the following definition of political opposition. A disagreement with the government or its policies, the political elite, or the political regime as a whole, expressed in public sphere, by an organized actor through different modes of action. We deliberately choose an inclusive definition of the concept of political opposition that remains relational but is not based on its functions, targets or objectives. Following the ladder of abstraction of Sartori (1970), this extensive definition allows a more inclusive and general concept from which conjugative conceptualizations can be found by decreasing its extension and increasing its intension. To reflect on this perspective, the unit of analysis of this contribution will not be referred to as "opposition" in the singular anymore but rather as "oppositions", hence implying a much wider spectrum of possibilities in terms of actors, relations and eventually, sites of action.

Political opposition has two major dimensions: ends and means. The ends of opposition might be represented in the form of a continuum. Parties, politicians, cliques, and clans out of government, which would like to join it without any significant changes in the political regime and/or of major policies, constitute its minimalist pole and could be regarded as a "semi-opposition." At the other extreme, political actors, who seek radical change of a political regime and its policies, are located at the maximalist pole of this continuum. Those actors are the "principal" opposition. Some other forms of opposition, such as "non-structural" opposition, which is oriented toward a change of major policies, as well as "structural" opposition, which is oriented toward a change of political regime could be located within this continuum.

An Overview of Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria

The concept of Inter-governmental relations originated in the 1930s in the United States of America and by 1950s, it gained widespread currency following the creation of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental relations. But essentially whether we are referring to the evolution of inter-governmental relations in the United States of America or Canada, such evolution came to the forefront following the beginning of the significant economic and social

development programmes by the existing federal government in these countries that began to have greater impact on other levels of government. Such spirit of change in the American federal system did not go unnoticed as Banovetz (1980:141) asserted that: "Federalism-Old is dead. Yet federalism-new style- is alive and well and living in the United States its name is intergovernmental relations".

Intergovernmental Relations has become fashionable regardless of levels of development and civilisation of societies. In the United States, the central government has turned back significant portions of federal authority to the states for a wide range of major programmes, including welfare, Medicaid, legal services, housing, and job training. The hope is that state and local governments, being closer to the people, will be more responsive to the particular preferences of their constituencies and will be able to find new and better ways to provide these services (Sharma, 2005:169).

The way intergovernmental systems are organised varies from country to country. These differences partly reflect historical and geographical characteristics of each country, the degree of heterogeneity of the population and the extent of government intervention in the economy. Given this diversity, how questions of inter-governmental structures and functions are resolved in practice will often differ from country to country (Bird, 1990). Although the diversity complicates broad generalisation, reference to the experiences of other countries is often the only guide available. Despite its limitations, such experience may provide useful lessons in assessing the potential strengths and weaknesses of intergovernmental systems in any country (Bird & Vaillancourt, 1998).

Nigeria operates a federal system of government consisting of three tiers; the federal government, the states and local government areas. The dynamics of the Nigerian Federation and the Nigerian Constitution make IGR a political imperative. With over four hundred linguistic and 774 Local Government, IGR in Nigeria an inevitability, over the years the pendulum of Federal associations among groups has swung between centrifugal and centripetal forces, as Nigeria sought to adjust the Federation.

The establishment of the Nigerian federal structure dated back to the 1946 adoption of Richard's constitution which granted internal autonomy to the then existing regions of Nigeria. Also, the adoption of the Littleton constitution of 1954 laid further credence to the federal structure of Nigeria (Nwosu, 1980). Historical experiments in Nigeria have revealed that there exists the over-dominance of the federal government at the expense of the other levels of government regarding IGR; this is improper in an ideal federalism. The existing mechanisms and institutions for intergovernmental policy coordination are very weak and need to be improved and strengthened (Ponle, 2011). Nigeria's 1999 Constitution sits the main public sector responsibilities across various government levels. Each level of government is required to operate within its area of jurisdiction, and any action to the contrary is null and void to the extent of its inconsistency with the law (Okafor 2010: 127).

The provisions of the 1999 Constitution have in all, emphasized vertical interaction among the three levels of government rather than horizontal relationships. This according to Roberts (1999) could impose limitations to the extent of cooperation among the levels of government and instead promote a dependency structure that would promote the inclusive authority model of IGR. Resistance to the evolution of such structure by sub-national levels of

government would result in oppositional politics and negative IGR. Hence, for an improved IGR, some amendments are necessary to Nigeria's 1999 Constitution.

The advent of civilian rule cum democracy in Nigeria in 1999 has occasioned recurrent issues/problems of inter governmental socio-political and economic wrangling and crises amongst the different levels of government. The issues of revenue allocation/sharing formulae, resources control; internal security and terrorism; creation of states; wage fixing; establishment of the sovereign wealth fund; structure, composition and funding of local government councils among others have generated intense debates that have at various times touched negatively on the foundations of the federation (Chiamogu et al, 2012).

From the foregoing, it is quite clear that the evolution of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria is characteristically chequered. The various constitutional mutations and our political experience such as the Nigerian Civil War grossly affected the odyssey of relations between and among governmental levels. The investigation into the murky waters of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria has revealed an avalanche of issues. One of them is the dominance of vertical relations. The second one and of course, the major is the centralization of powers, especially with the advent of military rule in Nigeria.

Opposition and Intergovernmental Conflicts in Nigeria

Nigerian federation seems not to be an exception even the oldest federation of the world, the United States does experience conflict especially when the layers of government: federal, state and local governments are on the verge of determining their jurisdictional power. Little does one wonder when Jinadu (1998) pointed out such conflictual nature in federal state when he remarked that the dynamics of federal-state relations within the federalist constitutional framework is one of a see-saw between interdependence and cooperation on one hand and conflict on the other hand, between the centre and the units and between the units themselves.

The dynamics of the Nigerian Federation and the Nigerian Constitution make IGR a political imperative. With over four hundred lingo-cultural groups, a population of over 120 million, thirty-six state and a Federal Capital Territory and 774 Local Government, IGR in Nigeria is inevitability, over the years the pendulum of federal associations among groups has swung between centrifugal and centripetal forces, as Nigeria sought to adjust the federation. As Nigeria used the framework of federalism to manage her conflicts, she has found that intergovernmental relations is a necessary mechanism to promote cooperation, manage conflicts, respond to changing circumstance and deliver services more efficiently. Intergovernmental relations is basically a mechanism for managing conflict and delivering services.

To appreciate the depth of crisis in the Federal system in Nigeria, one has to follow the recent trend of the raging controversy between the Federal and State Governments over the exercise of power or control of revenue resources on how not to have assumed the undue Prominence given to it as a constitutional question if Nigerian leaders, particularly the federal level had adhered strictly to the norms of federalism and followed the precedents established by the past democratic governments in Nigerian federation. Though, the adoption of a federal polity is a political design to absorb conflicting issues in every polity, the advent of May 29 1999 which

gave birth to Nigeria's Fourth Republic witnessed the most conflicting political opposition ever experienced in Nigeria's polity as the various tiers of government engaged in competitive rather than co-operative relations thereby endangering the cordial relations expected among these governments. Afterwards the importance of intergovernmental relations in a federal polity is to enable unity and cooperation to prevail. This absolutely eluded Nigeria's democracy (Chiamogu et al, 2012).

Conflict among the levels of government in Nigeria ranges from revenue allocation, resource distribution, allocation formula, jurisdictional control to administrative control. It can be seen that local government with few markets cannot raise much revenue thereby depending on the other tiers of governments for development. Resource distribution issues in a federation, give risk to a conflict between capacity and equality among the various units which form the federation. Due to the inter-governmental relations among the three tiers of government, Federal government and state Government made local government stagnant in its operation and made them carryout their activities slowly. Local Governments are too dependent on the other tiers of government making them less autonomous.

In Nigeria, the issue of sharing resources among the three levels of government has remained controversial due to lack of acceptable formula. It generates tension and bad blood among the three tiers of government. This has resulted in setting up of different committees or commissions to prescribe the formula to be used. Also there exists a conflict between the Federal, State and Local government over acceptable formula for sharing revenue. For instance, the conflict is usually whether the principle of derivation, need, natural interest or landmass should be used as a basis for the purpose. Even when these principles may be generally accepted as the main basis for working out revenue allocation formula, conflict might arise following as to which of the principles takes precedence over others as the main criteria for sharing the revenue (Angahar, 2013:113).

The derivation principle has aroused the most heated arguments in Nigerian revenue-sharing debates. The derivation or origin principle of distribution stipulates that a significant proportion of the revenues collected in the jurisdiction of a sub-national government should be returned to that government. The derivation principle is put to use in the sharing of revenue among the various units making up the federation in the proportion of certain taxes assumed to have been paid by the citizens. Revenue allocation on the basis of derivation penalizes the relatively backward or poor states. Besides, the principle is not easy to apply as the burden of taxes collected within a state is not necessarily borne by the residents of that state alone.

The Resource Control controversy was between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the eight littoral States (Oil Producing States) which are: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Rivers which have boundaries with the sea (Sanyaolu, 2002). The remaining 28 states later joined the eight littoral states in the struggle. But what was the struggle about? The eight littoral states were asking from the federal government the application of the derivation principle to revenues generated from natural resources located offshore from their coast (Ojameruaye, 2002). These states in essence were asking for a larger share than non-littoral states. They agreed that the revenue from offshore resources should be paid into the Federation Account but 13 per cent of it should be set aside for them while 87 per cent should go to all the states and Local Governments as well as the Federal Government.

From the Nigerian perspective, several attempts were made in the direction of achieving a harmonious sharing formula of its national economic resources among the component units of the federation. Despite all these efforts, there are still inherent challenging issues that are posing serious problems to the Nigerian federalism. Among these critical issues are over-dependence on oil revenue, conflicts over revenue sharing formula, centralizing tendency of fiscal relations in Nigeria and the agitation for resource control, among others (Arowolo, 2011).

The creation of local government areas in Nigeria is a unique feature of our federal system of government. The crucial issues that have generated controversy in recent times in Nigeria is the creation of new local governments (Danjuma and Ibrahim, 2012). The creation of local government is based on the assumption that the local people have the fullest awareness of their needs than outsiders. Every local jurisdiction has its peculiar social, economic and physical characteristics as well as its unique historical traditions, which are better understood and appreciated by its people (Akinboye, 2007). Furthermore, the creation of local governments has always been influenced by political rather than developmental considerations. Local government creation in Nigeria remains entirely an elite affair. It is an enterprise controlled, prosecuted and employed by the elite for the satisfaction of elite desire for power and relevance and all the appurtenances that go with that.

The creation of new local government under Obasanjo's administration has been problematic. According to Maduagwu (2003), the return to civil rule in 1999 threw up a serious debate as to which level of government has the constitutional power to create local government. Five states namely, Ebonyi, Kastina, Lagos, Nasarawa and Niger had created new local governments and went ahead to conduct election for the councils citing section 7(11) of the 1999 constitution as their enabling power. This generated several conflicts between the federal government and the concerned States as the federal government claimed it would not release funds from the federation account to LGAs that are not listed in the constitution while this non-release of funds forced the concerned State governments to abolish the new LGAs, Lagos State government was adamant, risking non release fund for LGAs for several months (Adujie, 2009). Due to politics and other reasons many states governments embarked on the creation of local governments without recognition by the National assembly which lead to mockery of the state by federal government.

Under the fourth republic, though the states could create local government but such creation becomes real only after it was approved by the National Assembly. Theoretically, therefore, state and local governments could create local government; Area Council and Wards respectively, practically, they must seek clearance from the Federal Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. Lagos State whose monthly federal allocations to the local government has been with-held for more than 6years, salaries of works of such local government were unpaid while developmental projects were also stalled, Lagos State government restored to however, the conversion of the newly created local governments to Area Office with their headquarter located in the said Area Offices as local government (Ogunsola, 2009).

The hottest controversy arising from the refusal of the National assembly to recognize additional local government areas created by the States occurred with respect to Lagos State where the House of Assembly created 37 new local government areas in addition to the then existing 20. In creating these new ones, the House of Assembly abolished the

existing local government areas and converted their council offices to other uses. Therefore, the old local government council ceased to exist as physical structure as well as in law. The National assembly, as usual, declined to amend section 3(6) of the Constitution to reflect the new local governments' areas.

The controversy sparked by this situation not between Lagos state and the National Assembly, as it really ought to have been, but between the government of Lagos State and the Federal government which, following the creation of new ones, suspended the release of funds from the federation account to local government council in Lagos state (Eme, 2010). Iwilde (2012) notes that till date, despite the conflicting opinions on the Supreme Court ruling on the matter, the Supreme Court ruling still stands as follows: "Unless the National Assembly enacts a consequential Amendment Act to list the additional 37 Lagos Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) as Local Government Areas under the 1999 constitution, Lagosians cannot validate the new Local government Areas they have lawfully created".

On the issue of state local government account, there are allegations that states are tempering with the statutory allocations to local governments from the federation account thereby leaving them with little or nothing to settle recurrent. The political elites do mobilize groups on ethno-regional interests to campaign for local government creation and development. These elites often argue that local government creation fosters growth and development, bring government nearer to the people, prevent racour and ensure popular participation as the critical bases for creating local governments. The political class argues for local government creation to foster access to statist institutions and structures and engender political inclusion of marginalized sub-nationalities. These arguments of the political elite are flawed in the light of the historicity of local government creation and its politics in Nigeria. The political classes are the greater beneficiaries; the replications of local government (Danjuma and Kwanga, 2013).

In an attempt to prevent an acrimonious relationship between the federating tiers in a federal system of government, there should be a match between constitutional responsibilities assigned and the resources allocated for the discharge of the assigned functions. Government constitutional assignments should be backed up by a complement of taxing powers and revenue rights.

An Overview of Inter-Governmental Fiscal Relations in Nigeria

Nigeria's fiscal Federalism is anchored on economic, political, constitutional, and local and cultural developments. The country runs a Federal structure but during the period of military rule, the structure of government was more unitary than Federal in practice. Between 1967 and 1970, twelve states were created and by 1976 the number of states stood at nineteen. It increased to twenty-one in 1987 and further increased to thirty in 1991 with a separate Federal Capital Territory Abuja. Presently there are thirty-six States, a Federal Capital Territory and seven hundred and seventy-four Local Governments. Consequently, the structure is a three tier or level of Government; the center (Federal), States and Locals Governments, within a presidential system of government (Isawa 2007:93).

The present inter-governmental financial relationship has impacted negatively on the ability of local governments to deliver service at the grassroots where majority of Nigerian live. There is therefore an urgent need to carry out reforms that will address the situation. If left unaddressed, the issues of fiscal federalism and inter-governmental financial relationship will continue be controversial and this will not be helpful in promoting the welfare of the citizens at the grass root through service delivery.

The fiscal Inter-relationship between the three-tiers of government has been contentions over the years. In recent times, the revenue allocation matter has become heated as a result of disagreements over the derivation principle. Ugwu (1998:45) believes that the argument over the fiscal policy in Nigeria has been hinged on the thorny issues of revenue allocations and the criteria upon which distribution of revenue should be based. There have been conflicts and disagreements over the most acceptable formula or principle which should determine allocation and the relative weight to be attached to each criterion. The disagreement of the subsequent revenue allocation formulae hindered inter-governmental relations in Nigeria. For example, the first commission set for this assignment was the Philipson Commission which recommended derivation and even development in 1946 as the most feasible platform for the distribution of national resources, but the country did not find it comfortable and it was opposed by the different regions (Abonyi, 2005:64).

Until the hardening of state-based opposition to the financial hegemony of the central government in the 1970s, the most explosive issue in Nigeria's fiscal federalism involved the conflict over the appropriate formula for inter-state sharing of centrally collected revenues. Although now partly eclipsed by vertical revenue sharing conflicts, the debate over horizontal revenue sharing has never been far from the epicentre of Nigeria's federalism. Indeed, the major problem of inter-governmental revenue sharing in Nigeria has always been the formula for sharing revenue among the regions and states, that is, the horizontal revenue sharing scheme. While vertical revenue sharing debates have revolved around the determination of the relative proportions of centrally collected revenues to be allocated to the centre and the sub-national governments, horizontal revenue-sharing conflicts have evolved the issue of the appropriate principles to be used in sharing central revenues standing to the credit of the states or their localities.

The Fiscal Inter-relationship between the three-tier of government has been contentions over the years. In recent times, the revenue allocation matter became heated when minority States (of South-South Zone) at the National Political Conference staged a walk-out as a result of disagreements over the derivation principle. The crisis in the Niger Delta area of the country hinges on the revenue-sharing issue. Hence, the next decade will pose challenges for the leadership of the Nigerian State and her policy-makers as they tackle the fiscal relationship among the three level of government.

Another salient factor in the debate over fiscal relations in the Nigerian federation is the manner in which states and local government creation have shaped the content and character of central allocations to the states. After the creation of the twelve states from the four regions in 1967, the problem of how to allocate resources among the states arose. To address this challenge, the Federal Government simply divided the percentage allocated to the old northern region equally among the six states created from it. In any case, creation of new states usually brings about changes not just in the quantum of revenues accruable to

the federating units but also the dynamics that influence the factors used in allocation of federally collected revenues.

Laxmikanth, (2006) argues that the best way of ensuring inter-governmental financial relations in a Federal State is that if government authorities in a Federation are to really coordinate with one another in actual practice as well as in law, it is essential that there should be available to each of them under its own unfettered controlled, financial resources sufficient for the performance of the functions assigned to it under the constitution.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has identified and considered major issues in intergovernmental relations in Nigeria between 1999 till date while tracing the historical background to the composition and initial structures of Nigerian federalism. With the operation of a federal system of government in Nigeria, such relations have been so much complex and problematic. The complexity and the problematic nature of such relations began to increase in Nigeria's polity following the gradual increase of the federating units and the local governments at one level and the varieties of interests that cut across the various units (Chiamogu et al, 2012). Looking back at Nigeria's political system, conflicting issues especially among the different levels of government swept both the First and Second Republics into oblivion. The military stifled the Third Republic. The Fourth Republic should be allowed to be different from the previous republics. This can only be done through the elimination of competitive cum conflictual politics and ensuring consensus politics through harmonious intergovernmental relations.

The complexity and the problematic nature of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria between 1999 till date increases in Nigeria's polity following the gradual increase of the federating units and the local governments at one level and the varieties of interests that cut across the various units. Though, the adoption of a federal polity is a political design to absorb conflicting issues in every polity, the advent of May 29 1999 which gave birth to Nigeria's Fourth Republic witnessed the most conflicting political opposition ever experienced in Nigeria's polity as the various tiers of government engaged in competitive rather than co-operative relations thereby endangering the cordial relations expected among these governments. Afterwards the importance of intergovernmental relations in a federal polity is to enable unity and cooperation to prevail. This absolutely eluded Nigeria's democracy under the period under consideration and even beyond.

In order to put a stop to the causes of conflicts among the levels of government in Nigeria, government should provide a strategy for resource distribution, allocation formula, jurisdictional control and administrative control. Administrative techniques for collaboration such as regular intergovernmental consultations and negotiations through certain institutions such as (state local government Joint Account Committee (JAC) should be properly implemented. The Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission) should be encouraged.

For an improved IGR to occur in Nigeria, the intergovernmental allocation of powers contained in the second schedule of the 1999 Constitution should be redistributed in favour of the state governments. The federal government's powers should be reduced such that they do not exceed those listed in the 1963 Constitution where its functions were those

whose scope of benefits were national like defence, currency, foreign trade etc. By so doing, the states will be allowed a fair and just exercise of power and control over their resources in exchange for their consent to construct and sustain a united Nigeria (Wayas, 1998).

In the promotion of strong intergovernmental relations, attempts must be made to move towards an outcome oriented (purposeful) intergovernmental relations which seek to create opportunities for genuine negotiations and the development as well as sustainability of a shared vision. Without an integration of multi-sectoral, cooperation among the spheres of government and creating the right balance, the tensions that arise in these relationships will continue to create systemic blockages and weaken government's delivery capacity further.

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