



Ontology of Nigerian Local Governments: A Functional Approach towards the Global Pattern



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ABSTRACT

From a functionalist perspective, every human society is made up of different social rankings, groups, units and organisations crafted to serve different purposes. The functional approach to the ontological perspective on local government is not about the call for absolute autonomy of local government. Thus, the main problem of this paper is to investigate the ontology of Nigerian local government from a functionalist approach. Using qualitative data, the paper reviewed the: true ontology of an ideal local government from a global parallax; factors affecting the ontology of Nigerian local governments; and practicable ways of making Nigerian local governments align with the global pattern of local governance. Godfatherism; corruption; bias, favouritism and nepotism; bad governance; inefficient service delivery; and electioneering problems were highlighted as the major factors affecting the ontology of Nigerian local governments. The paper submits that we must arise from slumber and as such, no room for excuses. Other revelations were thrown up as regards the true ontology of local government and the practicable ways of making Nigerian local government conform to global pattern. The paper concluded that, Nigeria local government is a failed public bureaucracy asking for the masses' collective attention in form of revitalization. This attention if given will cause a paradigm shift and reasonably refurbish the local government system/structure to fit into the ontological shape of a modern day local government that is compliant with international best practices. This study has its implication on future research and practice.

Keywords: Functionalism, Local Governments, Ontology

1 Introduction

From a functionalist perspective, every human society is made up of different social rankings, groups, units and organisations crafted to serve different purposes. This goes to depict the ontology of such a purposeful establishment. Collaboratively, "Every country has the fundamental principles by which it exists and goals it aims to achieve towards the betterment of the lives of its citizens (Onah, 2020, p.1)." This is so when viewed from a functional approach. Imperatively; while the fundamental principles that guide the existence of some countries could be gleaned from international perspectives, treaties and patterns, many climes especially in third world countries of Africa and even beyond are not compliant with global best practices and therefore cannot be gleaned from such parameters. And this perhaps is the undesired state of the country called Nigeria especially with emphasis on her local governments. Hence, as it concerns the nature of Nigeria's grassroots, the matter is worse than one could imagine. Then, how can we draw a novel course/plan on the needful to be done as regards the unhealthy ontological stance of the country's present local governments so that they would reflect international guidelines, principles and pattern?

The functional approach to the ontological perspective on local government is not about the call for absolute autonomy of local government. Do we really need absolute autonomy at the grassroots? No we don't! Why is it not necessary? To answer this, we glean from the view below: "For one, the stress on



autonomy must be qualified or relative. This is because absolute autonomy for local government defies the very nature of sovereignty. Therefore, there must be control and/or oversight (Udenta, 2007, p.145).” In the logic of globalized dimension of the postulations herein espoused, we add that anyone who includes such government at the grassroots is doing so based on ignorance of the global view of federalism or as a result of mischief. In short, anyone who includes local government or any term known to portray any government apart from the central and state governments in the conceptual framework of federalism/federal system of government as a federating unit is simply advocating for absolute autonomy of any form of government at the grassroots, which absolute autonomy for grassroots government in the actual sense utterly negates the true sense of federalism and such effort will only end up as a damp squib. This amounts to thinking/imaging the unthinkable/unimaginable. Also, such attempt amounts to advocating the unworkable and saying the unbelievable – a hoax in its entirety. The matter is not the absence of local government autonomy but absence of global pattern seen via the lens of functionalism. In all, this paper aligns with Okoli (2005) who contended that there is nowhere in the world where local government is completely free.

At this juncture; it needs to be added that, Political Science and Public Administration as distinct fields of study focus on local government. This focus is mostly to create adequate phraseologies and practicable measures that would enrich state and local government officers’ prowess on issues that concern grassroots leadership. In this regard, it is hoped that policy makers, public officials, members of the executive arm of government at the federal and state levels as well as students of diverse categories will benefit from this present study. Hence, there is need to ascertain through this paper the globalized context on the nature of local governments in federalist societies of the world. However, before we make an inquiry into the nitty-gritty of local government vis-à-vis the general concerns of the topic under review, we start by inculcating conceptual values on terms that made up this topic.

Writing on local government, Amoke (2020, p.193) resonated that, “It is its responsibility to provide such services as portable water, rural electricity, health centres, roads networks, schools and their maintenance, etc. A local government that does these things is seen as an ideal local government providing service delivery.” However, we need to emphasise within the purview of this present study that the above functions and indicators are not enough to portray the comprehensive ontological outline (overview) of an ideal local government. Thus; from a functional parallax we ask, what is the true ontology of an ideal local government? Is the true ontology of a global pattern of local government merely centred on providing services such as portable water, rural electricity, health centres, roads networks, schools and their maintenances? While retaining a structural functional bias, the main problem of this paper is to search and prescribe the true ontology of a local government for Nigerian system from a global centred purview.

Local government is a bureaucracy. Then what is bureaucracy? Narrowly defined, it is “an organisation where rules are observed or followed rigidly and where there is hierarchical arrangement of authority (Chioke, 2012, p.83).” It is clear that local government as a bureaucratic organisation is governed by rules which are meant to be observed rigidly in order to maintain the hierarchical arrangement of authority therein. Despite the thoughtful optimism with which the hierarchical arrangement of authority is instituted within local councils in Nigeria; there are factors which are believed to be affecting the ontology of Nigerian local governments in the quest for an ideal pattern of local governance seen at the international scene. This propelled this examination through documentary evidence cum personal observation.

Depending on the currency of the problem troubling the system; there are several ways to making local governments in Nigeria to align with the global/ideal pattern of local government the world over. Thus, the problem of the study is to interrogate the practicable ways/measures of changing the current ignoble status/pattern of local government and transforming it to become a system based on global standards of local governance. But why do we need this? It is true that, “Local councils in Nigeria need to be revitalised

because a revitalised local government administration will bring about effective governance, and effective governance produces the governance that is ideal (Amoke, 2020, p.200).” The revitalisation of the disjointed anatomy of Nigerian local government would make Nigeria to attain a noble height in the comity of federating states.

Based on the foregoing, this review sought to: identify the true ontology of an ideal local government from a global parallax; examining the factors making the ontology of Nigerian local governments not to conform to the global pattern; and interrogate and relay the practicable ways of making Nigerian local governments align with the global pattern of local governance.

2 Conceptual Framework

The concept of local government denotes the breaking down of a country into smaller units or localities for the purpose of administration, in which the inhabitants of the different units or localities concerned, jointly with their representative mobilize resources, human and material, for the purpose of advancing the developmental course of the people (Abada, 2012). The 1976 Local Government Reform Hand Book defines local government as: “Government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas.” Another strand of definition is that, “Local government is a government created by an Act or Decree which is empowered to deal with matters concerning that locality. Thus, it is the government at the grass root level created for miscellaneous purposes or reasons (Chioke, 2015).” From this angle, it could be harbored that local government structures are systems created for the purpose of delegating responsibilities by the federal or state government to local councils at the various states of the federation. By this, local governments are inferior to federal government or State that creates them. Suffice it to say that the implication of this is that local governments are not part of the federating units. They are more of administrative units and not federating unit of the federation. It is on this basis that Nigeria operates single tier multipurpose structure of local government.

Operationally, local government is any organized leadership/governance championed through the use of local personnel for the harnessing of material resources and human capital development at the grassroots level. Thus, the major focus of local government is the transformation of material resources of local people and the development of human capital for participation in politics and contribution towards organizational goals as well as the overall sustainable national development. These are the hallmarks of an **ideal local government**. Meanwhile, Davenport (1999) contends that, “human capital consists of the intangible resources that workers provide for their employers.” But why absolutely regard resources of the manpower as intangible? Are human capitals such as education and training not measurable? The term; ‘intangible resources’ connote unquantifiable assets. In the context of this work, the resources of the employees are not unquantifiable in its entirety, because they could be quantified by way of performance appraisal. The notion of intangible as used above therefore rubbishes and makes mockery of the employees of an organization, because the resources of the human capital could be evaluated and as such, the logic of Davenport (supra) in the above regard is fraught with question marks, not entirely sound and ought to be chewed with caution, because resources of the human capital are not always intangible no matter how insignificant and minute it may appear. Sequel to the fact that the resources of the human capital are not difficult to describe, understand and/or measure we cannot therefore accept hook line and sinker the view that the resources of the human capital are intangible. However; because the resources of the human resources do not exist as physical things yet valuable to the organization, we *partly* accept Davenport’s view above. As regards the subject matter of this review, it is essential to state that the resources of the human capital are measurable and therefore could be perceived (tangible) when approach the study from a developmental school of thought. Therefore, human capital is both tangible and intangible.

3 Theoretical Underpinning

The paper is anchored on the social theory called, structural functional theory. This theory is alternatively referred to as, functionalism. Hence, the focus of this paper is on functional approach. Interestingly, “Functionalism is a theoretical perspective that focuses on the functions performed in society by social structures such as institutions, hierarchies, and norms (Gómez-Diago, 2020).” It need to be emphasised that, “Functionalism emerged in the early 20th century and is associated with authors such as Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Herbert Spencer, and Robert Merton, who dominated American social theory in the 1950s and 1960s (Gómez-Diago, 2020).”

Structural functional theory views the society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of the individuals in the society. Hebert Spencer, an English biologist and philosopher perceived similarities between society and the human body. Spencer within the ambit of this theory argued that as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, in the same vein, the various parts of society work together to keep the society functional in the right order. Urry (2000, p.23) intones that, “A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as organs that work toward the proper functioning of the body as a whole.” Simply put, the logic of structural functionalism or functionalism is that the society works like the human body.

Accordingly, the parts of the society as seen from the perspective of functional approach/theory are the social institutions, patterns of beliefs and behaviors which are useful in meeting societal needs that could be political, economic and religious in nature. Importantly, local governments are indivisible parts of the social institutions, because it solves social related matters.

3.1 Relevance and Application of the theory

This approach is suitable for the paper’s analysis on its broad and specific purposes, because the emphasis is on both social structure and social functions. Local government is an example of the social structure (institution). The local governments in Nigeria have diverse constituent organs such as the: Executive Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Councilors, Supervisory Councilors, Heads of Departments and other important parts making up the whole. These organs are expected to perform various social functions relative to (in proportion to) the statutory functions saddled upon local councils. So, adopting this theory, the paper x-rays the true ontology of an ideal local government from a functionalist point of view.

Just like the human body under the attack of virus, there are certain issues that limit the functionality of the local government and make it function abysmally. Applying the logic of this framework, the author moves to examine the factors making the ontology of Nigerian local governments not to function well by conforming to the global pattern of local governments in development democracies of the world.

To heal the body under attack by vectors, viruses, bacteria that cause infections, certain antigens that facilitate the production of antibodies and other drugs are prescribed and administered to the body. Based on this, the paper applying the proposition interrogated and relayed practicable ways of making Nigerian local governments perform optimally by aligning with the global best practice of local governance.

4 Discussion

From content analysis cum descriptive methods, the following findings on the specific objectives of this paper suffice:

4.1 The True Ontology of an Ideal Local Government from a Global Approach

The following are the principles of an ideal local government in existing federal systems of the world open for adoption in Nigeria.

4.1.1 Elective Principle

All over the world, the very ontology that depicts an ideal local government in our current mutation is elective principles. The reason is that local officials are installed through the process of periodic election. "Election is anchored on democracy. And democracy itself is a global practice, but the reverse is the case in Nigeria local government system. The matter predominant here and there in Nigeria is the relegation of democratic principle and this has truncated public accountability in the system (Chioke, n.d). However, Ugwu (2017: 100) contends that, "Lack of regular and consistent democratic elections in local governments should not be tolerated by citizens. For years now, some state governments have failed to conduct local government elections. This reduces the autonomy and democratic culture of the system." Now, the truth yet to be told herein is that local administration is undemocratic and abhors/constrains public accountability in a system where it is allowed to thrive.

4.1.2 Community development

Development at the grassroots is development be it called, rural development or community development. It is a matter of semantics and choice of words of the author leading the intellectual debate. Community development is a movement and process with its specific goal centred on fostering better living for the whole community with the active participation of the masses in such community. Therefore, the ideal or true pattern of local government at the global scene is one based on community or rural development needs. In other words, local government is an agent of rural/community development. To make it work, traditions/local organizations/institutions are veritable instruments that are necessary for accelerated development which emphasizes improvement in the productivity of local industries and welfare of the majority of the rural dwellers comprised of the indigenes and non-indigenes. Making Nigeria local government system to work entails a shift from the culture of sidelining traditional system to a culture of participatory democracy for all including the local organizations.

4.1.3 Service centric

The true nature of local government is that it is service centric. It does this by providing and managing local services to the rural and urban dwellers within its territorial confines. Thus, the true ontological perspective of local government is that, "Local government means the government which manages services and amenities in our villages, towns and cities with focus on local problems (brainkart.com)."

4.1.4 Intermediary

The local governments function as the basic link between the people in a village or town with the government (brainkart.com). Local government is the link between the seen and unseen. The seen are the local people, while the unseen is government. Largely, government is like an abstract phenomenon as the people especially in Africa hardly feel the impact of the state actors. Consequently, local government is established to fill such gap created by the inability of the governors and president in countries of the world where government had abandoned their roles in the social contract.

4.2 Factors making Nigerian Local Governments not to Conform to the Global Pattern

There are lingering issues within the country's political space that have made Nigerian local governments to be ineffective in dealing with demands and impotent in producing the goals of ideal local government. The following factors are responsible for making the Nigerian local governments not to conform to the global pattern:

4.2.1 Godfatherism

In a study earlier done, it was observed that, "The politics of godfatherism is apparently at its critical juncture (Chioke, 2020a, p.277)." That is why, "Godfatherism has become an institutionalised phenomenon in contemporary politics in Nigeria and its impact cannot be ignored (Familusi, 2012, p.11)." It is on this note

that, "...we cannot afford to overlook the issues associated with godfatherism, because the fact remains that, godfatherism is a whirlwind that is believed to have destabilized the politics and administration of federating units in third world countries (Chioke, 2020a, p.277)." With respect to local governments in Nigeria, there are manipulations at the grassroots level by political godfathers made up of the ruling and non-ruling elites. This has paved the leeway for the adoption of local administration as a substitute for local government for the past twenty years. Within this period, local governance has been turbulent and economic development at grassroots has been ran a mock with its resultant comatose/chaotic condition being felt on daily basis. Thus, "This godfather phenomenon as a structure in Nigeria's democracy should rather be described as unfortunate (Umahi, 2013, p.9)."

4.2.2 Corruption

Corruption has reached a high crescendo such that an average Nigerian now possibly associates democracy with corruption (Ogundiya, 2010). And the word, 'corruption' is now a household name in underdeveloped entities of the globe with specific reference to Nigeria (Chioke, 2020b). Viewed from a functional approach, corruption is an inhibitor that has successfully impaired growth and development at the grassroots level. In this connection, we observe that the nature of existence of the existing local governments is terribly affected by the influence of corruption. Thus; this is known for making local governments not to conform to international best practices of local governments in known federating systems in the world. And the State Governors are most at times known for advancing corruption because of no implementation of checks and balances by appropriate watchdogs at both the federal and State levels. The repercussion now is that, "corruption slows down the pace of economic development through manipulation of funds for projects (Ikejiani, 1995)." Again, the repercussion is yet severe as, "corruption leads to non – achievement of goals (Ikejiani, 1995)."

4.2.3 Bias, Favouritism and Nepotism

Bias, favouritism and nepotism promote one notorious abnormality in the public administration of Nigeria called 'sectionalism.' Contrary, Section 15 (4) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that, "The State shall foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various people of the Federation, to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties." Despite this proscription, it is awful that nothing has changed. In Nigeria's local government system, there are manifest indicators that depict the existence of biased judgment, favouritism and nepotism in the allocation of values. In this regard, many states in Nigeria through local governance have continued to fan the embers of sectional loyalties with impunity and in sheer contradiction to the dictates of the grundnorm. It is vivid that in the course of determining who gets what, when and how at the local government level, *bias*, *favouritism* and *nepotism* interplay to distort the laid down rules through the manipulations orchestrated by corrupt godfathers at the state and federal levels of government.

At this point we add that, "In a varied dimension; it is believed that, the nascent development here in Nigeria in the aspect of sectionalism and associated aspects are quite enigmatic when narrowly viewed and compared to the democratic principles and the tenets of 21st century governance at the global level. Why? This is because corruption and allied vices have been allowed to linger in the scheme of things as they pertain to the governance of this country (Chioke, 2017, p.3)." Importantly, favouritism forbids pretense and mere sycophantic displays, because it is the manifest act of unfairly treating one person/side better than the other person/side mainly because you prefer or like them more than all others. This is the predominant ordeal in the allocation of values at the grassroots especially in Enugu State, Nigeria since the inception of current Administration. To say that the governor been pro-Nsukka or sectional to the detriment of other local governments and senatorial zones in the state is not an error. We therefore hasten to add that, "Favouritism enables wrong people to be employed in any establishment without proper

qualification (Ndukwe *et al*, 2020, p.106).” This ugly trend has deeply affected the ontology of Nigerian local government system in its bid to becoming an ideal local government in Africa and beyond.

4.2.4 Bad governance

Governance itself is, “the manner in which power is exercised by government in the distribution of a country’s social and economic resources (Kalu, 2019).” The nature and manner of distribution is what makes governance good or bad (Ndukwe *et al*, 2020, p.103). Bad governance is when we have something or so many things bad – totally unacceptable on the basis of good conscience, equality, equity and fairness in the modus operandi of government at the local administrative unit, state level and federal level. It would however be useful to say that bad governance exists where there is weak government, which in turn breeds corruption and allied matters. Commenting on corruption, the researcher had contended that, “Sequel to the parasitic nature of corruption, it is not only a cause or sinequanon for bad governance, it manifests as a corollary of bad governance (Chioke, 2020, p.58).” therefore corruption takes dual forms – as a cause and as an effect.

However, to credence the aforestated positions we glean from the position below:

Corruption is most prominent in the society or organization where there is weak government like Nigeria. In corrupt societies, government is unable to stop corruption because it lacks strong will to do so. Even if there are anti-corruption agencies to tackle the case of corruption, such agencies are easily being swallowed up into corruption because of weak government (Ndukwe, *et al* 2020, p.106).

Nigerians here and in diaspora have adjudged the national government to be a weak one and in this regard, corruption has progressed unabated. Additionally, there is no better way of describing bad governance than a situation where corruption has crippled means of livelihood and development of both the rural and urban dwellers. The aftermath is chaotic, goal displacement, youth restiveness in the form of riots, arson, stealing, banditry and the more extreme form called, terrorism. With the spate of the existence of the trappings of bad governance at the state and grassroots levels, local governments in Nigeria have not been restructured and repositioned to become an ideal pattern of local government system in the world. Following this, “true democracy is a mirage at the grassroot level (Amoke, 2020, p.191).”

4.2.5 Inefficient service delivery

The philosophical rationale behind the local government model as a structure of governance is to address some of the most pressing needs of the rural people which are best taken care of within their local context, hence the appellation local government (Acheoah, 2018). Bearing this philosophy in mind, local government as an organization needs to perform optimally. So far, “...the persisting quagmire is the inability of organizations to attain the vision and mission for which it stands for (Chioke & Mbamalu, 2020, p.388).” It is believed that local governments have not adequately performed their constitutional functions and did not live up to expectations (Amoke, 2020; Chioke, *et al* 2020). Chioke *et al* (2020, p.15160) keyed into this perspective when they opined that, “Precisely, local governments in Nigeria have not performed well as regards to rural development/transformation vis-à-vis the relative autonomy accorded to them on paper and resources prevalent in the local government.”

4.2.6 Electioneering Problems

Local governments in Nigeria have not been allowed by State actors to thrive and actively engage the rural dwellers in result cum people oriented leadership. The implication of this challenge is that the system is not on the road to sustainable development and thus, the system is *profusely engaged in irrelevances*. That is, to say that the leadership is actively engaged in unproductive ventures, which have contributed in making the Nigerian local system appear awkward, backward and an object of mockery and disdain. Therefore, the leaders cannot look askance and pretend to be developing or transcending the lines of underdevelopment

when they are directly making development utterly impossible under their watch and with their own hands. As such, the nation is on its way to systemic collapse occasioned by the use of local administration which is known for repelling rural development and the ontological overview of local government in developed countries, their operations and function.

4.3 Practicable Ways of Making Nigerian Local Governments to Align with the Global Pattern of Local Governance

There are adaptable measures towards making Nigerian local government an ideal pattern. They are:

4.3.1 Substitution of local administration

Local administration is a form of deconcentration where subordinate levels of government (local councils, Counties, Municipals, Boroughs and so on) are agents of the executive arm of the national government. These agents are Field Administrators and as such field administration is another term for local administration. Simply put, field administration means a deconcentrated sort of management at the local level.

Local administration is a system based on who you know. A system controlled through State interference in the affairs of the local people. A system with contorted view of rural needs and one replete with abandoned projects. A system suffering from the superimposition of naïve pilots of the local affairs made manifest through the shenanigans of the political jingoists and godfathers. It is on record that the political jingoists that have infiltrated the political space of the federating states in Nigeria are notorious for sending puppets to stop the advancement of the local people for their own self-aggrandizement thereby adopting the British foreign policy of late 1870s which was invoked during the era of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

At this point, we advance this enquiry by throwing up the features of local administration. Ezeani (2004, p.31) furnished us with the following five (5) features of local administration:

- It lacks substantive autonomy which makes it impossible for local agents to take any authoritative decisions which are binding on the citizens.
- Local administration exists mainly to execute policies and programmes formulated by the central authority to which it is directly responsible and accountable.
- The central or state government directly appoints and controls the staff of the local administration. Thus, the members of the local body are not elected representatives to local people.
- There exists a defined pattern of hierarchical control of power and functions and also of channels of communication from the agents of local administration and vice versa, and which the latter must strictly adhere to.
- Local administration lacks financial autonomy. The central or state government determines and controls its finance.

In keeping with the above views and features of local administration, the Nigerian local governments must not be allowed to continue wallowing in poverty and underdevelopment foisted by the meddlesomeness and imposition of Caretaker Committee – a system used in Nigeria to champion and foster the selfish will of the State Governors. This (local administration) over the years has contributed in making the grassroots grossly underdeveloped. Sequel to this, rural dwellers have resorted to urban migration thereby causing overcrowding of urban cities like Lagos, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Kano and the rest.

4.3.2 Political Participation

Political participation is deeply rooted in taking part in policy decisions at any level of government and in local governance. Historically, we see that, “In ancient Greece as in all developed political systems, local government provides a framework for political participation (Udenta, 2007, p.31).” Lane (1959) asked, “Of what use to a man is his politics?” Similarly, the author asks, why bother ourselves over rural political

participation and governance? To answer the question supra, let us adopt the logic of Laski (1980, p.412 – 413):

We cannot make an average man realize his citizenship in any creative way, if his only relation to government is obtained by voting once every four or five years in a national election. Its relevance to him must be brought more directly home, otherwise, his interests in the political system will wane to varnishing process; and it is elementary that the more inert the citizen body, the more likely is there to be corruption and sinister privilege in the state. A man who realizes that his street is badly paved because a body of persons directly under his view and influence are inefficient begins to have a sense of the network of interest in which he is involved. Local government is educative in perhaps a higher degree, at least contingently, than any other part of government.

It is based on these calculations, premises or framework that local government has gained its reputation/relevance (Udenta, 2007, p.34).” Following the already relayed postulations, calculations, debates, premises and allied angles/perspectives on political participation, the paper adopts Dowse & Hughes (1983, p.290) definition of political participation, “...as those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy.”

Having stated the above fundamentals, we bear in mind that political participation is a distinctive feature of local governments as seen in developed climes of the world where federalism is operational. The grassroots governments are thus consequently seen as a training field for prospective and future state and federal politicians. Thus, to make the Nigerian system an ideal pattern, there must be rational efforts at driving the wheels of local government to a place of international relevance and point of reference.

4.3.3 Democracy

Viewed from international lens, democratic practice is another hallmark of an ideal local government. To start with, “Now, variety is the spice of life. Hence, unity is not necessarily uniformity or better still uniformity does not automatically translate into unity. On the other hand, there is unity in diversity. Hence, we talk about One World. But the whole world is one big mosaic – a world of nations – with these nations more or less as expressions of culture (Udenta, 2007, p.39).” Then for democracy to survive at the grassroots; there must be elements and principles that bind the people together. And democracy is anchored on true love for one another irrespective of obvious differentia in culture, traditions and belief system. Now, the level of democracy at the Nigerian grassroots and other African States is nothing to write home about when juxtaposed with developed sovereign states in America, Europe and so on. Thus; to get the panacea that would reengineer Nigerian local governments to be ideal (conformity with global best practices), we must harvest and adopt the formula expressed by contemporary mutation of our counterparts in Europe and America. Also, the position of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Creech Jones contained in the 1947 dispatch to the Colonial Governors remains largely instructive and germane in our present local ordeal. Mr. Creech Jones in Oladosu (1981, p.35-36) submitted that:

The encouragement of local political interest and the build up of a system of efficient and democratic (later changed to representative) local government is a cardinal feature of British policy in Africa. It is now recognised that the political progress of the territories is dependent on the development of responsibility in local government; that without sound local government, a democratic political system at the centre is not possible and that if social services are to be built up and expanded, there must be efficient organs of local government directly representative of the people to control and operate them.

Democracy is thus the basis for an ideal local government in any society of the globe. It would be needful to aver that, "...democracy is a multifaceted principle as it cuts across all human discipline, culture, ideology and religious creed. Thus, democracy could be viewed as a moral principle, because it connotes the idea of what is ideal and conforms to the dictates of reason (Chioke, n.d)."

4.3.4 Periodic Election

To make the Nigerian local government to wear the ontological aprons of local government in developed countries, elections at the local councils should be periodic and must be based on electoral integrity. But what is electoral integrity? Pippa (2014, p.21) says, "Electoral integrity refers to international standards and global norms governing the appropriate conduct of elections." Following endorsement, these standards apply universally to all countries throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-electoral period, the campaign, on polling day, and in its aftermath (Young, 2009). With this, local governments in Nigeria will possess a global pattern of local governance.

5 Conclusion

For us to duly draw a conclusion on the journey so far in keeping with the allied matters adequately raised before now, we recall and as well throw up the following regurgitations:

We have not passed that subtle line between childhood and adulthood until we move from the passive voice to the active voice – that is, until we have stopped saying "It got lost," and say, "I lost it. - Sydney J. Harris

Gleaning from the above position of Sydney, one can rightly observe the matter with the Nigerian polity. Without mincing words, the issue lies on the nation's inability to pass the subtle line of the nation's childhood enemy – unwillingness to be committed and take responsibility. Hence, we must learn from now the very art and science of taking responsibility for our actions and inaction so as to channel our thoughts and resources into reconstructing the failed walls of our public bureaucracies and decongesting the factors that repel the alignment of Nigerian local governance with international best practices. To take responsibility like sane humans, one must ask: where did I get wrong? Not merely asking, decide on what to do and be seen to swing into actions. For this reason, it is neither the case of I am not to be blamed nor I am right. Now and not later, our journey begins and to get it right, we must begin well. Having seen where our trouble lies, we must rise from slumber. No room for excuses! All hands must be on deck!! Nigeria local government in this tune is a failed public bureaucracy asking for the masses' collective attention in form of revitalization. This attention if given will cause a paradigm shift and reasonably refurbish the local government system/structure to fit into the ontological shape of a modern day local government that is compliant with international best practices.

This review being rooted and comprised of exploratory and interpretive designs raises a number of ample opportunities for future researches in diverse fronts such as: validation of concepts and theory development. Suffice it to say then that more researches from scholars in the twin fields of Political Science and Public Administration will certainly be necessary to corroborate and further relay useful phraseologies on the findings of this work as already relayed. This underscores the implication for future research of this present review.

Significantly, the practical implication is that local government in Nigeria is not adequately channeled to perform optimally. In obvious sense, local government at the global markets are not seen as a federating unit and even the Nigeria's model which had been erroneously seen and tagged the third tier is not even a federating partner in the unitary patterned 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended. Then, students are therefore by this study better positioned to understand the true sense of levels of government. On practice, the implication depicts the need to put aside the contentious 1999 constitution and draw a workable

template for public administration at the local level. Therefore, this study has its implication on both future research and practice.

6 Declarations

6.1 Competing Interests

There is no financial interest or any other interest to declare herein which may have arisen from this research.

6.2 Publisher's Note

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