



**Inaugural Lecture Series 114**

**“THAT ALL POLITICS IS  
LOCAL**

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*Professor of Local Government*



**OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY PRESS LIMITED**

# **“THAT ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL”**

**By**

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Obafemi Awolowo University.

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## THAT ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

### Some Observations:

Under normal condition, it is natural to make some observations at the beginning of an inaugural lecture if only to let the audience be aware of one or two things about the theme of the lecture. It is in this respect that I claim, no matter how small, that this is the first inaugural lecture in *Local Government in Nigeria* and indeed the *Sixth* in the series of inaugural lectures in our Faculty of Administration since its inception as an Institute in 1962 and Faculty in 1976. Previous inaugural lectures delivered from this Faculty are by: Professors Adebayo Adedeji; Ladipo Adamolekun; Late Jide Aluko; Muyiwa. Sanda and Ralph Onwuka.

The reason for this inaugural lecture to be the first is perhaps very simple. In 1979 the Federal Government of Nigeria in its wisdom earmarked three institutions, namely Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife to mount academic and professional programmes in local government. On April 1, 1984, our programmes of local government at Ife became a full -fledged Department and I was appointed the Pioneer Head of the Department of Local Government Studies. I held this position up to July 31, 1988 before I went on leave of absence to Indiana University, Bloomington, United States of America. Before this new appointment, I was the Acting Head of the Department of Public Administration from August 1, 1979 to March 31, 1984, which nurtured the Local Government Training Programme from its inception in 1979 to April 1, 1984 when it became a department. In November 1991, I and Professor C.A.B. Olowu were appointed Professors of Local Government in the Department of Local Government Studies of this University. The appointment was the first in the Department of Local Government Studies and infact in any of the other two Universities having Departments of Local Government in Nigeria.

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Just before I proceed to the topic of my inaugural lecture, please allow me to make, may be, one additional observation. Certainly, inaugural lectures are endowed with enviable customs. I suppose that these customs have three inalienable characteristics. The first characteristic is to justify the elevation of the lecturer concerned to the highest rank of academic status, "Professor". The second characteristic is for the academic Professor to defend his discipline, and to demonstrate further the viability and productivity of his department or unit. Finally, an inaugural lecture is to open the intellectual avenues for a new order, new beginning and a new realisation. If my assumption is right, then I will say categorically that this is a new beginning. It is not an end.

My topic for this inaugural lecture was selected to reflect a broad concept of local government as an institution and an established discipline.

The title of my inaugural lecture is *"THAT ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL"*. I will certainly make clear my intention for choosing this topic.

### Basis of Interest

When I was first introduced to the study of "Urban Politics" by Professor Charles Adrian of the University of California, Riverside in 1974, the intuition imbued in the theory and practice of Urban Politics impressed me. In 1975, Professor George S. Blair (my supervisor) of the Department of Government, Claremont Graduate School, California, encouraged my in-depth study of Local Government. Although I was born and raised in a local environment, I became highly interested in the pursuit of knowledge in the field of local government first with its concepts as evidenced in the following analysis titled "basis of interest".

In the Eleventh Printing 1974, Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* says, "Nature, the art whereby God that made and governs the world, is

by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within; why may we not say, that all automania have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring, and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer. For by art is created that great *LEVIATHAN* called a COMMONWEALTH, OR STATE"<sup>1</sup>

In the submission of Nicolo Machiavelli (1950), "All states and dominations which hold or have held sway over mankind are either republics or monarchies. Monarchies are either hereditary in which the rulers have been for many years of the same family, or else they are of recent foundation"<sup>2</sup>

In the opinion of Professor Vincent Ostrom (1988), Local Government in the United States is a complex and difficult configuration of elements and relationships. On the one hand, a strong sense of grassroots democracy continues to prevail, government appears to be organised from the bottom up rather than from the top down. From this perspective, local self-government provides the foundation for American democracy. Matters of local concern affect the daily lives of people as they relate to one another within their neighbourhoods or communities.<sup>3</sup>

In the essays on "The environment of the Political System" Professors Gabriel A. Almond, G.Bingham Powell and Robert J. Mundt (1993), advanced a theory that "the domestic and international environments of nations shape the issues of other politics. These environments confront the political system with sets of problems such as unemployment, inflation, economic growth, conflict, and threats from foreign enemies".<sup>4</sup>

According to Professor Alex Gboyege (1987), "Interest in Local Government in Nigeria has grown tremendously since 1976. The renewed interest in local government both as an institutional arrangement for the achievement of political and administrative decentralisation as well as a field of study has been reminiscent of the interest which was

shown in the 1900s particularly in Southern Nigeria. For many reasons **local government has always been a matter close to the minds and hearts of Nigerian elites since British colonial administration forcibly limited their political participation for about half of a century to local level administration.**"<sup>5</sup> I want to conclude this explanatory note by referring to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1968), which says "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of other are indeed greater slaves than they"<sup>6</sup>.

### Evidence "That All Politics Is Local"

All human beings are created with knowledge **no matter** how rudimentary. Human beings have advanced to a high level in shaping their own conditions such as social, economic and perhaps **material**. Human beings have transformed the world into what it is **today** and perhaps may destroy the world because of some selfish reasons. A few things are applicable to man and without which they are in darkness, *language, custom, tradition and culture*. These four fundamental conditions are akin to **political consciousness and development**. They are found in communities of **mankind** and form the basis for political understanding. It is obvious that without effective communication, there would be **misunderstanding** either at the family, local, state or federal levels. It is **presumed** that communities stay together because they could understand one another. It is also true that combination of communities make towns, cities, and countries but their roots are based at the local level. This condition is regardless of whether a country has a population of over one million inhabitants or as small as Tuvalu, a tiny country of nine thousand people in the Central Pacific. I will like to address these four issues independently with specific reference to William R. Bascom and Melville J. Herskovits<sup>7</sup> and P.C. Llyod.<sup>8</sup>

### Language

The main foundation of politics is **communication** which has its beginning from "language". The word *language* in *Oxford English Dictionary's* meaning implies human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, feelings and desires by means of a system of **sound symbols**. The central tenet of my argument here is that prior to **colonisation**, the Nigerian people lived, interacted, maintained law and order and advanced at their own pace **through** the use of their mother tongues. Also, there were evidences of democratic government at the local level through the Community Leader, Village Leader, to the Head of a town. It is to be noted that in most parts of Nigeria especially among the tribes or national units of the South East such as the Ibos, the people had evolved a high degree of decentralised village self government. The Yorubas had a more centralised monarchical system. In the anxiety of the British to extend its Rule into the South-Eastern part of Nigeria, in areas where no chiefdoms existed, the British Officials disregarded the ancient democratic traditions of the people and resorted to the creation of "Warrant Chiefs", these puppet rulers having no personal tradition of responsibility, tended to fall into corruption, and were possibly neither obeyed nor trusted by the people.<sup>9</sup> It is infact, to be emphasised that the same disruption of tribal democracy occurred in **virtually all the states colonised in Africa in particular and elsewhere in the World in general**. The consequence of this disruption is the suppression of the native from possible evolution of a political system based on their own language, custom, tradition and culture. The sad effect of this disruption is that **Nigeria and indeed** some other African nations did not have their own alphabets apart from those translated into local use from the colonials. It has reduced the level of development and introduced non-traditional concepts in a nation which is purely becoming technological. Although it is not the making of the colonial administration for Nigeria to have **three languages (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba)** and at least two hundred and fifty sub-languages, it appears to

be a natural phenomenon which is contributing very eminently to Nigeria's political set back and regional misunderstanding. Vincent Ostrom (1992) argues that the diverse use of language in gaining a livelihood are in turn related to an inter-generational cycle of life. What escapes from consciousness in the ordinary routines of life may again be raised to levels of consciousness as those who achieve maturity are required to cope with the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and skills in the cycle of life. The young are required to learn from those who have learned to take advantage of the accumulation of learning that has become a part of the cultural heritage of any given community sharing a common language.<sup>10</sup>

In Vincent Ostrom's conceptual analysis of the African Heritage with specific emphasis on languages, he threw some light on the need for "language" as a determinant factor for unity, development and progress. "A critical issue is whether people who share common languages and cultural traditions are able to achieve a sufficient level of self-consciousness about their identities and ways of life so as to maintain their continuity on an intergenerational basis. Islam and the Catholic Monarchies of Portugal and Spain posed serious Islamic, Portuguese, and Spanish traditions, to be dependent upon a shared community of understanding among those who adhered to a common faith. Peaceful relationships in human communities presumably depend upon shared communities of understanding. The relationship of imperial cultures to indigenous cultures was and continues to be a most serious source of tension".<sup>11</sup> In essence, the language, the habits of thought, skills, orientations, and aspirations are such that they are not infinitely open to the acquisition of radically different cultural heritages. We cannot expect human societies, despite fantasies which presume otherwise, to achieve a radical revolutionary transformation of ways of life from one day to the next or even from one generation or the next. Potentials for learning are substantial; but the cyclicity of the ordinary routines of daily life is deeply embedded in the intergenerational cycles of life which are critical to that which is cumulative for human cultural

development. If one should revisit the impact of language on development, understanding and unity of a nation, it is perhaps natural to say that Nigeria of today could have been three distinct countries, such as Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. This presumption is rather too late. Also, it is equally late to develop a *lingua franca* because there is no tribe that would be willing to forgo its local language. In other words, we are at the crossroad. Quoting from Mary Kingsley in I.F. Nicolson (1969) *The Administration of Nigeria, 1900- 1960, Men, Methods and Myths*,. "Whatever we do in Africa today, a thousand years hence there will be Africans to thrive or suffer for it".<sup>12</sup> I agree without any reservation with Mary Kingsley's statement. Evidently, when the base is in trouble the rest would follow.

## Tradition

Tradition, in a simple way, implies handing down from generation to generation, opinions, beliefs, and customs. It may and may not be written. Whether written or otherwise, these traditions contribute significantly in influencing politics at large. Thus P.C. Llyod (1967), argues that "Cultural differences between neighbouring peoples are further reflected in the myths of origin, by which many of them could descent from single particular ancestors. The Tiv, of the Benue Valley believe themselves to be descended over fifteen or so traced generations, from a man named Tiv who founded the human race. The Yoruba described themselves as the descendants of Oduduwa, the first man, who the supreme god let down from heaven to create the earth. One may reasonably describe the Ibo as tribally organised; collectively they recognise no common ancestor, and each small village group has its own origin myths, but they do recognise cultural similarities which distinguish them from neighbouring people. Hausa is a linguistic term, properly applied to all Hausa speakers nearly all of whom are citizens of one of the emirates.<sup>13</sup> In essence, there are three distinct areas with

marked concentrations of population, the Hausa-Fulani emirates, the Yoruba Kingdoms and Ibo domain. These three areas are so unlike one another that it is difficult to correlate population density directly with historical or ecological factors. It is to be noted that the development of national party politics in Nigeria began from the three distinct ethnic groups who used their base as the point of entry into the national party politics, with a strong determination that each leader of the ethnic group must head the government within its region. The serious implication of this is that, at no point since 1954 to the present (1993) do we have any political party with a strong national acceptance. The exception to this statement was the annulled June 12, 1993, results which would have put Nigeria into the minds of many million people in the world as a nation democratically cultured. However, it could be said conveniently that the military administration behaved militarily when it sponsored two political parties, the Social Democratic and the National Republican Convention and accepted by the Nigerians contrary to any democratic norms.<sup>14</sup>

The issue of tradition in politics is not limited to Nigeria alone. It has a tradition in politics. For example, Ghana accepts children born of Ghanaian women married to non-Ghanian to take part in Ghana politics. A good example is Jerry Rawlings. When he was a military Head of State, nobody confronted him at least openly. At the election for the civilian Head of State, some people protested very strongly that his father was not a Ghanaian. They threatened court action. Unfortunately, those concerned did not go to court because they realised that it was too late for them to challenge their own tradition which is a form of matriarchy, a social organisation in which mothers are the heads of families.

It is also good to stress that "tradition" is honoured in Europe and the Americas. As argued by Michael Stewart (1956), the words "ecclesiastical as well as civil", imply that the Queen is Head of the Church of England. She is accordingly forbidden by the Act of Settlement to be, or to marry a Roman Catholic and, at her Coronation, swears to maintain the right of the Established Church. As Head of the

Church, the Queen appoints Bishops, in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister and is specially referred to in the Prayer Book.<sup>15</sup> This position was first taken up during the Tudor period. Although tradition is passed on from generation to generation, however, Prince Charles who is the heir apparent to the British throne may start a new history. As at this time, Prince Charles' marriage is in trouble. This may bring a new dimension into the British politics and tradition. Should a divorcee be the head of the Anglican Church? If it happens, it will be a deviation from the tradition. This is a typical situation where a local problem may generate world political tension.

In other situations, the tradition of who is qualified to be the Premier has been embedded into the national politics that becomes difficult to separate. For instance, United States of America has the outstanding form of democracy the world has witnessed. There is a lot to learn from it. In the argument of Clinton Rossiter, (1960), the President of the United States must be, according to unwritten law, a man, White, a Christian<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, according to the unwritten law, American President cannot be; a Negro, a Jew, an Oriental, a woman, an atheist or a freak. According to Clinton Rossiter, these unwritten laws are not likely to be ignored with impunity for some years to come and infact, the office of the American President must be a personal embodiment of dignity and majesty. Or as Attorney-General Stanberry argued before the Supreme Court in 1867 in the case of *Mississippi vs. Johnson*:

"Undoubtedly, so far as the mere individual man is concerned, there is a great difference between the President and a king, but so far as the office is concerned- so far as the great executive office of this government is concerned - I deny that there is a particle less dignity belonging to the office of President than to the office of king of Great Britain or of any other potentate on the face of the earth. He represents the

majesty of the law and of the people as fully and as essentially and with the same dignity, as does any absolute monarch or the head of any independent government in the world".<sup>17</sup>

In the opinion of Oladimeji Aborisade (1988), the deep concern which the Nigerian people have given to tradition, language and culture in every day life is widening. It is gradually reducing the level of unity and infact creating some political insecurity because the Nigerian people relate better to their tribes in many respects. Infact, Nigeria has the highest number of tribal societies in the world and these societies are used to influence local, state and national politics in all ramifications, with reference to elections and appointments to various positions.<sup>18</sup> Very mildly this is called Federal Character, or geographical contiguity in the name of ethnic politics.

### **The Machinery of Change.**

In line with Clifford Pearce (1980), "No system of government can remain static and survive. It must always be responsible to social, economic and political developments in the community, and the machinery for **adaptation** is itself an essential part of the wider machinery of government."<sup>19</sup> This portion of my inaugural lecture will examine the machinery through which significant changes have been made in local government in general and particularly with reference to Nigeria. In England, the three Acts of 1888, 1894 and 1899 taken together constituted a step in the continuing evolution of local government. They virtually completed the process of extending representative **democratic** government at the local level. The structure included two **different** types of local administration; single-tier all purpose authorities in the country boroughs and two tier arrangements in

the administration counties.<sup>20</sup> Although local governments in England have witnessed some kind of re-organisation, they are still seen and recognised as the bedrock of the British politics. As a matter of fact, any British politician allocated a constituency is expected to identify with the aspiration of that locality by taking residential and official accommodation there immediately.

In the United States there are Counties, Municipalities, Townships, School Districts, and Special Districts. In all, there are 63,166 types of government, 475, 344 number of elected officials and 7,577,000 full time workers.<sup>21</sup> The American local government is characterised by the concept of democratic principles infused into the system by the role of local government in Democracy in America accurately reflect early American conceptions and practices of local government, and his insights will be used to convey a sense of this period<sup>22</sup>

In Europe, the continent is divided into four major groups for the purpose of discussion their local government systems. The first is a Southern group. France, Italy, Spain and Portugal with Common characteristics on Roman Catholic religion. The salient features of local government in each of these countries are the exercise of central control through the governor and the concentration of local power in the mayor. The second is the Northern group which are the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. A Germanic tongue is the official or one of **the** official languages of each of the countries. The board is a **prominent** feature of local government in these countries. The Eastern group comprises of the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. The official ideology and the philosophy before 1991 was communism. The fourth group is the United Kingdom and Ireland. Local Government as it has evolved in the united Kingdom has several distinctive features, among which are the extent to which the work is carried on by committees, the lack of an effective organ and the lack of a system of provincial governors.<sup>23</sup> To stress the case further,



Local Government institutions of South and Central America are influenced by at least three factors namely:

- a) Iberian heritage which is still deeply ingrained in the Latin American way of life;
- b) The underdeveloped nature of a large part of these countries has retarded the growth of responsible units of local representative government; and
- c) The influence of the United State.<sup>24</sup>

In Africa, there are more countries and more newly independent ones than in any other continent. Most of the African countries were colonised within the past century and have received their independence within the past decades. Both of these phenomena have had a pervasive effect on the development of the various local government systems which are a blending of the European and the traditional forms of structure. Today, there are three types of local government institutions in Africa, namely;<sup>25</sup>

- a) The provincial district administrative super structure, which exists throughout the continent;
- b) The municipal council institutions which exist throughout many countries but are limited to the urban areas in other; and
- c) The traditional community institutions which are widespread but are not, in many areas, a part of the officially recognised government structure. However, the observation of Samuel Humes and Eilen Martin, 1969, on four factors in Africa that have affected the development of the local government institutions during the colonial and post-colonial stages deserves serious consideration. These are:
  - i) The difference between British- French influence including indirectly Belgium, Spanish and Portuguese Africa;

- ii) Difference between predominantly Islamic and primarily Christian people;
- iii) Difference between Arab and Negro areas; and
- iv) Difference between desert, savannah and forest areas<sup>26</sup>

Since all these four key factors affected the ecology of local government, it becomes imperative that more time must be taken for a detailed comparative study of local government in Africa, to show clearly the role of individual factor and more importantly, government interventions.

Before I conclude the argument on the machinery of change, it is significant to say emphatically that understanding of local politics with tradition and norms is the avenue for a greater understanding of the national and international politics in all its ramifications. The know-how of local politics depends largely upon its local environment.. Let me cite some examples of local issues which culminated into national problems in Nigeria namely:<sup>27</sup>

The civil disturbances which occurred in certain parts of Western State of Nigeria in 1968 which seriously affected Ede, Egba Division, Ibadan, Ijebu-Igbo, Ishara and Oyo and the role of the Agbekoya (farmers are fed up with oppression) and the Aba riot of 1922 and its recurrence of 1988 on taxation.

### The Structure of Local Government

Local government in Nigeria was for many years a replica of the British model. This became obvious because of the British involvement in Nigeria officially from 1900 to October 1, 1960. The British used, very extensively, the traditional institutions to penetrate into the remotest part of Nigeria. The concept of using the traditional ruler as indirect rule was Fredrick Lugard's idea. By profession, he was a military trained personnel. He had the experience of British rule elsewhere in India and

Africa before he was posted to Nigeria. His initial preoccupation was how to rule Nigeria instead of how to develop Nigeria. His concept of ruling differs sharply from that of his counterpart in the Franco-phone West African Countries who came with the notion of "assimilation". The idea of indirect rule which Lord Fredrick Lugard used bore the fruit of hatred, after the exit of the British in Nigeria on October 1, 1960. The hatred could be analysed into two broad categories namely:

- a) The traditional rulers that were used for the success of indirect rule did not receive such eulogy from the indigenous politicians who believed that they had double loyalty; and
- b) The politicians were suspicious of the new role which the traditional rulers should assume.

It is to be noted that the instability of government at the national level has adverse impact on the local governments in Nigeria. Several experiments were tried, such as the Council Manager System, the Divisional Administration, and the two tier model. These experiments were not allowed to mature in most cases before they were either terminated or modified. In 1976, a comprehensive package of the structure of local government was approved by the Federal Government<sup>28</sup>. All the Statutory and public concentrated in multi-purpose single-tier institutions called Local Governments with complete and self contained budgets, so that the whole system of local government within any area can be identified, costed and co-ordinated. In order to achieve sufficiently large scales of operations to be able to perform all the types of functions reasonably economically, whilst remaining sufficiently local, local governments should as far as possible serve a prescribed population. In 1975, it was 150,000 population for all categories of local government except the Metropolitan which was 800,000. However, these limit may be varied in exceptional geographical circumstances, and provided further that there should be no upper limit to the size of local governments covering major towns so as to ensure that each town is

within a single unit.

In 1976, 301 Local Governments were created with a view to making rapid development reach the grassroots. Unfortunately, the ideals which the Federal Government set for the local governments were not met because of one problem or the other. Therefore, in May 1984, the Federal Government set up a twenty man panel in which I. was a member while Alhaji Dasuki was the Chairman to re-examine the existing structures, functions and financial resources available to local governments for the performance of those functions.<sup>29</sup> In the panel's report, "the committee noted that there was general consensus that the existing units of Local Government as contained in the First Schedule, Part I, of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979, should be maintained in view of the current economic situation in the country and the need to make them settle down properly. The Committee also stated that it was generally acknowledged that the system of Local Government in the country after the 1976 Local Government Reforms had more of operational, rather than structural problems arising directly from the behaviour and attitude of the persons who operated the system. The Committee therefore recommended that the multipurpose single tier structure of the present 301 Local Government was quite adequate for our purpose for now and should be given a chance to continue to function unfettered.<sup>30</sup> The government accepted this recommendation. Six years later, that is 1991, the same Government that accepted a recommendation that the 301 Local Government were adequate increased the number to 589 and four area councils for the Abuja Federal Capital Territory.<sup>31</sup> One noticed with dismay the astronomical increase in the number of local governments when in fact the panel cautioned against it.<sup>32</sup> In reality one factor that was responsible for the high demand for creation of additional local governments was the Federal Government's intentions to equate representation at the Federal House of representative to one representative per local government. The consequence is that the Federal House of Representative as we have it now is very unwieldy. However, attempts must be made to trim the

number to a sizeable proportion bearing in mind that no state should suffer. For instance, the panel recommended six key factors in the creation of local government namely:<sup>33</sup>

- a) a minimum population of between 100,000 to 150,000
- b) a minimum tax paying population of 20,000
- c) geographical contiguity
- d) traditional association and wishes of the community in the area
- e) financial viability of the area in question
- f) administrative convenience.

It is interesting to note that the government accepted the panel's recommendation. Some other facts of the report are the functions of local government, management audit, local government finance, staff and manpower development, and intergovernmental relations.

I will like to point out a few recommendations in the Dasuki report which the federal government rejected outright and a few years later the adopted and embarked on the same projects:

- i) The Committee identified the need for the establishment of National Municipal Bank. Government did not consider the establishment of National Municipal Bank in view of the fact that there were other existing financial institutions. Today, the number of the financial institutions have tripled. The same government approved the establishment of the people's Bank and the Community Bank and the Municipal Bank.<sup>34</sup>
- ii) The committee recommended the establishment of a National Government Commission on Inter-governmental Relations which should be responsible to the Supreme Headquarters, Government did not consider the setting up of a Commission necessary. In 1992, the same federal military government set up the National Council on Inter-governmental Relations with the

former military Head of State, Yakubu Gowon as the Chairman of the Governing Board. It is to be noted that Dr Yakubu Gowon wanted to come back as a Civilian President but failed to win under the option A4. Nomination .

What I have been trying to do here is to show that no matter what good recommendations are before a government, government may behave according to its desire. This is common amongst the military regimes. When one considers that Sir Fredrick Lugard who started the epoch of Nigerian administration was a military personnel and some of his predecessors were ex-servicemen, it is sad to say that Nigerian administration tilts more to the military than the civilian though not by design. One of the results perhaps is administrative retrogression. Certainly, the military in the governance of Nigeria have demonstrated a high level of administrative inconsistencies and to a large extent have destroyed the dignity of administrative commitment which is required in building a nation. According to Oladimeji Aborisade's argument (1989), the electoral process, constitutional arrangements and the public service in Nigeria appear to be in a state of confusion because of the fear of loosing power at the centre. This fear if proper care is not exercised may plunge Nigeria into another chaos.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Department of Local Government Studies**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is hoped that I have discussed meaningfully the issue "THAT ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL," using conceptual and contemporary approaches and suggesting what steps should be taken to foster good understanding locally, nationally and internationally and to make local governments more adaptable to the environmental circumstances.

In his book Alex Gboyega, 1987, titled *Political Values and Local Government in Nigeria*, pointed out that Local Government is:<sup>36</sup>

"The study of the development of local governments as a tier of government in Nigeria will not be complete, or indeed meaningful, if it is not preceded by an examination of the philosophical consideration underlying the local government system. The structure, composition and functions of local government are influenced by the political beliefs of those who have the authority and responsibility for determining the main features of the local government system".

Our Department of Local Government Studies agrees with specifics, generalisation and ideals of Local Government. The department has been making frantic effort to achieve ideals in its programme of activities. Our Department of Local Government Studies is the only unit that I believe exists in this University that offers sub-degree and postgraduate programmes in Local Government. It is in fact the only Department that offers consultancy services to Edo, Delta, Kwara, Kogi, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun and Lagos States to develop and run their Certificate programmes in Local Government. The only Department also that caters for the in service training programmes for those who have attained Grade Level 10 and above but did not possess formal education. We run short-time courses of one week or more for skill improvement and re-orientation of modern methods of management.

We also hold periodical meetings with the Directors-General in Charge of Local Government at the State level for progress report on the local government staff and for possible approaches for improvement. This Department when it was created on April 1, 1984, had three full time lecturers namely Oladimeji Aborisade, Ajagbe Oyewo and Kassai Adam from Ethiopia. Today, our Department of Local Government Studies has the following academic staff effectively on the ground, two Professors Oladimeji Aborisade, whose last appointment with Oyo State Government was the Clerk of the House, three Senior Lecturers- A.M.

Awotokun, A.K. Onabanjo, B.O. Adediji, two lecturers. Grade one, I. A. Adewale and Mike Adeyeye, and four Assistant Lecturers F.O. Fagbojun, D.O. Adeyemo, Fatai Olasupo, and M. Mukuro. In all, there are twelve full-time academic members of staff. The Department is involved in carrying out research in the areas of Political Culture, Legislative Control, Tradition, Local Government Productivity, Ethnicity, Rural Development, Essential Social Services, Local Government Finance, and Indigenous Institutions and their Governance.

### Some Suggestions

1. Since the evolution of local government in Nigeria is primarily an offshoot of alien culture in nature, concerted effort must be made to enrich the teaching of local government by including: the traditions, customs, culture and the appreciation of the three main languages into its curriculum.
2. It is also suggested that dualisation of control device at the State Level over the Local Governments which impedes its progress and encourages unhealthy rivalry should be merged into one Department and called Local Government Service Commission, this Commission should be strengthened to reflect this merger. It should be capable for overseeing the primary school affairs which I believe is the primary function of Local Governments. This will definitely put an end to the perennial indecision of the Federal Government in running the primary School Education programmes.
3. The training funds which is currently 1% of the local grants should be increased to 3% and only Universities and reputable external consultancies should be allowed to carry out training programmes. By this, the present mode of running Workshops and Seminars by any

individuals will be curtailed.

4. Because of the enormous demand for trained personnel at the local level, it is suggested that an undergraduate programme in local government which is multi-disciplinary in nature and scope be mounted.

5. The role, functions and performance of local government in Nigeria should be subject of continuous review as well as the revenue allocation formulae.

Mr. Vice-chancellor, Provosts of Colleges, Deans of Faculties, colleagues, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, what I have tried to do in the course of my inaugural lecture was to discuss the importance of local government and to show "THAT ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL". I have tried to demonstrate how tradition, customs, and language play significant roles in local, national and international politics. More importantly, I have tried to show that local is the base for everyone and therefore, respect must be accorded to local environment and local politics in orientation, planning and execution of government and governmental policies.

I thank you all for listening.



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