The Third Tier of Government in Nigeria: A Historical Overview

Ozy B. Orluwene, JP

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/ozyb_orluwene/22/
CHAPTER I

THE THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA
A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Ozioma B. Orluwene

Introduction

The governance of men and the processes of governance constitute a timeless tradition in the history of mankind. In other words, the governance of men and its requisite techniques as well as its paraphernalia is as old as the history of mankind. This is applicable to the totality of the universe or global political community (which includes Nigeria) regardless of the type or form of government in practice.

This being the case, this paper examines a historical overview of the third tier of government in Nigeria. The third tier of government in Nigeria is popularly or generally known as Local Government Administration. It is a colonial creation which served the colonial masters and their indigenous successors in the political administration of Nigeria.

For ease of analysis and presentation, this paper will be divided into the following levels:
(1) The meaning of the concept – Third tier of government
(2) Native Administration system
(3) Reforms of (1930s - 1966)
(5) Local Government Reforms, 1976
(6) Buhari/Idiagbon Reforms
(7) Babangida's Reforms
(8) Alhaji Umaru Ndayako’s Committee
(9) Conclusion and Recommendation.
The Meaning of the Concept (Third Tier of Government Local Government)

The Third tier of government or Local Government Administration as a concept has created excitement among academics and administrators. As a concept, and as one of the vertical or institutional arms of the federal political structure, the local government administration has attracted the attention of many scholars within the academia. These scholars have, in varying degrees of specificity, analyzed the meaning and traced the genesis of local government. They have, in the process highlighted the need for the existence of this arm of government within the anatomy of all federal political systems the world over. However, it appears that there is no consensus as to the way local government should be defined. But it can be broadly specified, following Okoro (2003), as an institutional expression of the governance system set up to cater for those needs and interests of the community closest to it. Also Professor Eme Awa provides another simple definition of local government. He defines local government “as a political authority for the purpose of dispersing or decentralizing political power.” Again, Ola (1984), in his thought-stimulating book entitled, Local Government in Nigeria, adopted the United Nations Office For Public Administration definition of local government “as a political sub-division of a nation (federal system) which is constituted by law and has substantial power to control local affairs, including powers to impose taxes, exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is either elected or otherwise locally selected (appointed)”.

Orewa (1991: 24), in an effort to characterize local government and distinguish it from other fields of Public Administration at the grass roots level, detailed its features, forms, status within the political and administrative framework of a country as follows:

8
a local government is the level of government below the central government in the case of unitary state, or below the regional, provincial or state government in the case of a federation, which is obliged to provide a range of services set out by law, to its communities and has legal authority to do this. It also has legal powers to enforce its executive and regulatory decisions on its citizens without resorting to social pressures to achieve this. Its area of authority and the basis for representation on its political leadership platform are defined by its instrument.

It has its own staff and revenue.

The definition provided by the Federal Government of Nigeria under the Guidelines for Local Government Reform 1976 deserves to be included here for its comprehensiveness. According to that definition, local government is:

Government at the local level exercised through Representative Councils established by law to exercise specific functions within defined areas.

From the foregoing, it could be observed that bringing government nearer to the people involves actually locating governmental presence at the grass roots. One word that expresses this phenomenon is "decentralization". Local Government Administration is an attempt to decentralize government to the local level. It can be explained within the context of the broad field of decentralization as a third tier of government in Nigeria.

Native Administration System
An attempt at a historical overview of Local Government Administration as a tier of government in Nigeria will not be complete, or indeed meaningful, if it does start with an examination of Native Administration system.

Native Administration, according to Gboyega (1987: 14) was the name given to local government during the colonial rule. It was as a result of the exigencies of the era and in a bid not to "rock the boat" and create a situation where the colonialists would engage in the constant physical battles with the locals who had a well-established system of government, particularly in the northern part of the country.

However, Okonjo (1974), comprehensively analyzed the major practical difficulties that necessitated the adoption of Indirect Rule in Nigeria. According to him the vast scale of the area and population to be administered made direct rule by British officers unrealistic from the very beginning. Moreso, at the time, Northern Nigeria was far from being completely pacified. Consequently, the troops that Lugard commanded had to be deployed every now and then to put down resistance to British colonial rule. The hopelessness of the communication system made the adoption of indirect rule all the more inevitable. The consequences of underdeveloped transportation for administrative organization and methods are obvious. Therefore, the Native Authority (N.A.) was the machinery for the operation of the Indirect Rule system - a style of administration which favoured the British colonial authority. That system was the ruling of the people through their recognized traditional rulers who were already in place. The system was cost-effective and a very useful approach for the colonized people (Williams, 2003).

To make the system work, the authorities made ordinances to guide the activities of the native authorities. For instance, there were the Native Authority Ordinance, Native Revenue Ordinance and the Native Courts Ordinance. The
native authority was made the instrument of the ruler who was assisted by a native council of traditional rulers who served in an advisory manner (Afagbo, 1972). Williams (2003) further states that Nigeria’s pre-colonial states did not all have traditional institutions upon which Native Authorities could succeed on the same scale; the Native Authority Ordinance made the traditional ruler the sole guardian of his domain. So, where there were no natural rulers, quasimonarchs were appointed to facilitate the indirect rule system or as a means to achieve Lord Frederick Lugard's rhetoric that "there was no desire to impose on the (Nigerian) people any theoretically suitable form of Government, but rather to evolve from their old institutions based on their own habits of thought, prestige and custom, the form of rule best suited for them and adopted to meet the new conditions" (Igwe, 1991: 21). The ruler could appoint or remove junior chiefs in the running of his native authority. He was given the assignment to recruit a native police to help him subject his people to both his authority and that of the British. (Crowder & Ikime, 1970).

Okonjo (1974) further opines that there was the Judicial Council, which administered justice on a wide range of cases such as land disputes, offences against the State and other weighty matters. However, according to him, this was subjected under the Provincial Court that was presided over by the Provincial Resident. The Native Administration system had its virtues. First, it provided organizations suitable for maintaining contact with the people. Second, it maintained law and order successfully. Third, it provided social services such as education and dispensaries. Fourth, it preserved the long-standing traditions of the people from collapse and decay. These virtues were highly visible in the then Northern Region where Indirect Rule succeeded more than in the South (Nnoli, 1980).

However, the system had many weaknesses. According
to Gboyega, (1987: 14) the foremost shortcoming was that it was unrepresentative. As Aliyu(1980: 3) puts it, the procedures adopted by the system were often irreconcilable with democratic norms. Other demerits according to Aliyu are: (i) it was hostile to progressive measures and essential reforms; (ii) the system in many areas did not show total responsibility in the management of public funds; and (iii) with few exceptions, the system failed to attract qualified staff. It was on the basis of these that the Native Authority system was subjected to reforms that took place differently across colonial Nigeria depending on the readiness of the Region in question. It was the nationalist demand for greater participation of Nigerians in governance after the Second World War that caused the colonial authority to introduce reforms/modifications.

Reforms of 1950 - 1966

The overriding aim of the reforms was to introduce a representative system of government at the local level in the early’50s. The reforms started first in the Eastern Region in 1950 and then in the Western Region in 1952. The reason the reforms took off first in the East was basically because the traditional system was too weak. Therefore, as early as the period under review, the local government councils were 100% composed of elected members. Traditional elements were not represented in the local government (Ibodje, 1999: 53).

Before the reforms became effective in the West in 1952, it took long periods of negotiations and consultations between the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo whose party, the Action Group (A.G.) was in power and the traditional rulers. In terms of the composition of councils and what powers should be exercised by traditional rulers, if they were represented in the councils, the A.G. settled for the policy that not less than 75% of members of the council should be elected while the rest could be traditional rulers.
In the Northern Region, the attempt to democratize the local government system did not start until about 1954. And even when the reforms began, it was not easy to dislodge the Emirs from their pre-eminent position. Democratization meant the attempt to modernize the local government system (the NA) by emphasizing popular participation and control, thereby diffusing the excessive power of the Emirs and traditional rulers. What the change tried to do in the North was to change the status of the Emirate Councils (Dauda, 1980: 17).

To make for changes, where traditional authority was not too powerful, there would be a change from Emirs-in-Council to Emirs-and-Council. Emir-in-Council was the status given to a council where an Emir could overrule his councilors even if the majority opposed his position. All he needed to do in order to effect an arbitrary measure was to secure the support of the Governor or Colonial overseer. In the case of Emir-and-Council, the Emir or Chief could listen to the council and as a matter of convention, they were required to take decisions based on what the councils resolved. In other words the emir or chief had no legal power of veto over decisions made by the majority of his councillors. During this period, these were considered significant changes in the anachronistic Native Administrative system although the path towards change was not very smooth. It was not possible to change the orientation and vested positions occupied by the emirs and chiefs (Ejimofor, 1987).

It should be noted, therefore, that the reforms of the 1950s did not promote the kind of political participation and democratization envisaged because of the nature of political competition and the quest of political leaders to use the local units to acquire and consolidate their positions of power.

**Military Experiments, 1966 - 1976**

The military regime sought to introduce some
systematic changes to local governance in the former Regions/States, and these experiments varied from one Region/State to the other. In the North there was really not much change in the Native Authority System, although the military government made strenuous efforts to institute some changes. The military regime realized the need to reduce the power of the Emirs substantially and to increase the scope of local participation in the democratic process. In spite of this desire, only a minute percentage of the membership of the Native Authority Councils was elected. As Orewa and Adewumi (1983) have indicated:

In the large Emirates where the traditional rulers were quite powerful, the elected members still remained a minority a decade after the introduction of the Native Authority Law 1954, except where there were federated Native Authorities, for example, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Sokoto Provinces.

In the Southern part of the country, two major experiments were tried out: the Development Administration System and the Council Manager System.

**Development Administration**

This system was first practised in the then East-Central State and then extended to States such as Mid-West, South-Eastern and Rivers State, although it did not quite take off in the last three States. In the East-Central State, Development Administration was based on the then existing community development system, which evolved during the civil war period. It was intended that the local people would use the community development strategy to raise revenue and manage their affairs efficiently. Development Administration worked
well especially in communities with strong local organizations of the people (Oyediran, 1988)

The success of the system in the East-Central State attracted the attention of the Mid-Western State government, which in 1972 invited the author of the system, Professor G. A. Odenigwe, to design and put in place the system in that State. The emphasis of this system was on community self-help, and in the Mid-West, the government discovered that with this system local communities could build markets and undertake other self-help efforts (Ibodje, 1999: 57).

The structure of development administration was basically a two-tier system. It involves:

The establishment of what is called a development oriented two-tier system of local administration with emphasis on self-help efforts" (Oyediran & Gboyega, 1979:176).

The structure included the Divisional Co-ordination Councils at the divisional level and the Development Committees at the clan level. The Divisional Co-ordinating Councils co-ordinated the work of the Development Committees in the clans and it was their duty to report to the state government on the progress of work and accompanying problems. The co-ordinating councils also received matching grants, which were disbursed to the clan development committees. The matching grant was a sort of incentive to encourage development committees in revenue generation. In this way, the state government augmented the efforts of the committees by giving or adding to each development committee the equivalent of what it was able to raise at stated periods. This measure raised the enthusiasm of the
development committees and enhanced the development efforts of these communities.

The Council Manager System

This system was tried out only in the Western State and was based on the thinking that some of the management techniques, utilized in the private sector, which worked better than administrative techniques adopted in the public sector, could be applied in the local government system. The local councils were to operate like companies under the leadership of the Council Manager who was the chief executive of the council.

Under the Council Manager System, there was a Council that operated like a board of directors of a company; it was not composed of elected councillors but of appointed notable individuals who formed the board. The Council Secretary was the chief executive who saw to the implementation of broad policies of the Council. He was also called the Manager (i.e. the Council Manager). He was actually to operate as a private sector manager with a large degree of autonomy, and could initiate policies, which were presented before the Council (or board) for approval. He was required to have extensive experience of the private sector management and also a fair grasp of public sector management techniques. Oyediran and Gboyega (1979: 183) have summarized the Council Manager System thus:

The Council Manager is like the general manager of a limited liability company and the Chairman and Management Committee are the Chairman and Director of the Company... The Council Manager as the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer of the council shall direct, co-ordinate and supervise the administration of all departments of the council.

It was expected that given greater autonomy and the
application of private sector management administration techniques, local governments would achieve better results under the council manager system than under the orthodox elected local council system.

Local Government Reforms, 1976

From the review so far, it is clear that there was no uniform system of local government in the country right from the period of colonial rule. Even the Native Administration system was adapted in each region to suit local conditions. It was in realization of the failure of the various reforms so far made that the 1976 reforms were initiated and adopted. For instance, the autonomy of local government was considerably circumscribed under the pre-1976 local government system.

The Murtala Mohammed - Obasanjo regime took some bold steps to reform the local government system as part of the political programme of the regime. It initiated some major reforms in 1976 to make the Local Government System an efficient and viable third tier of government in a Federal structure.

The principal objectives of the reform were:

(i) to make appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiative by devolving or delegating such services and activities to local representative bodies,

(ii) to facilitate the practice of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society and to encourage initiative and leadership potential,

(iii) to mobilize human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in grass roots development, and,
(iv) to provide a two-way channel of communication between local communities and government (both state and federal government).

Guidelines for Local Government Reforms, 1976

Under the 1976 reforms, the Secretary to the Council was the Chief Executive of local government administration. He was to supervise the activities of various departments in the council.

The 1976 Local Government Reforms introduced radical measures. They established a comprehensive standardization of a system of local government within a national framework and designated the local government as a third-tier of government empowered through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. Election to the councils could be direct or indirect. Two Committees, namely, Finance and General Purpose, and Education were established. The councils exercised political authority over their departments through supervisory councillors (Aliyu, 1980: 1). A unified Local Government Service Board was set up to employ, deploy and discipline staff. The Federal Government Guidelines (1976) specified also the aims and functions of local government. One major provision of the reforms was that the local governments were given statutory allocation from the Federal Government in order to make them financially viable. The 1979 Constitution further guaranteed the major provisions of the 1976 reforms especially in the area of preserving the democratic character of the government, and in providing the statutory allocation from the Federal Government.

Given these monumental changes, one cannot but agree with Gboyega (1987: 175) that in spite of its shortcomings, a clear vision of a liberal democratic government system had
emerged. However, as he also observed, rather than making some improvements in the system bequeathed to them by the military, the politicians of the Second Republic exploited, compounded and dramatized the shortcomings and loopholes in the system. In short, they blatantly and flagrantly abused and subverted the essence of the 1976 reforms and the constitution. Between 1979 and 1983, the local government council was anything but democratic. Civilian Governors dissolved elected local government councils at will and cavalierly. They created local governments with such reckless increase that the number of local governments rose from 301 in 1976 to 684 in 1982. In the area of finance, the State Governments diverted local government grants which were channelled through them from the Federal Government account. As Bello-Iman (1988: 241) puts it, the state governments consistently and systematically stultified the activities of the local governments. They hardly paid the 5 percent of the revenue they were expected to give to the local governments.

**Buhari/Idiagbon Reforms**

The 1980s witnessed further changes in the sphere of local government administration in the whole country, following the military take-over of 31st December 1983. In early January, 1984, the military leadership of Buhari/Idiagbon dissolved all Management Committees of the Second Republic and appointed senior civil servants as Sole Administrators. It also scrapped all the councils created by the civilian regime and returned the country to the state stipulated by the 1976 reforms. It consequently set up a 21-member committee headed by Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki to review the local government system with a view to finding ways of avoiding the operational difficulties of the 1976 reforms, among others.

One of the highlights of the recommendations of the
Dasuki Committee was the suggestion that local government should operate accounts in any commercial bank within their areas where the Central Bank of Nigeria can remit their revenue allocations to, after receiving it from the Federal Ministry of Finance. Secondly, it stated the need to retain the structure introduced by the 1976 reforms. However, the committee recommended that a Management Committee be appointed to administer the councils. (Report by the Committee on the Review of Local Government Administration in Nigeria, 1984).

However, the Report of the Committee could not be implemented before the life of the regime was terminated by General Ibrahim Babangida’s ‘palace coup’. Again, the report of the Political Bureau of 1987 did not survive the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations. As Oyovbaire (1992) observed, the report of the Political Bureau and the recommendation of the Dasuki Committee formed the basis of Babangida’s Local Government reforms.

**General Babangida’s Reforms**

The Babangida’s reforms aimed primarily to correct the structural and operational ills or defects of the past reforms. Generally, it aimed at (i) enhancing the autonomy of the system; (ii) strengthening its financial position; (iii) making the system operate fully as a third tier of government; (iv) extending and establishing the presidential system of government and (v) allocating to them adequate functions and responsibilities in line with their new image as an autonomous and viable third tier of government.

The 1989 Constitution, and the Local Government (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) Decree No. 15 of 1989, served as the major initial documents of the Babangida's reforms. In subsequent years, the annual budgets of the Federal Government, and additional decrees, became
useful sources by which the reform measures could be funded.

In addressing the issue of poor financial position of the local governments, the Babangida-led Federal Government increased their statutory allocation from 10 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 1992. In order to realize its objective, it decided to be remitting monthly federal allocations directly to the local governments without passing through their state bureaucratic machinery. This was done in order to avoid what Gboyega (1992) reported:

In 1981 the National Assembly decided that Local Government should be given 10% of the Federal Account and 10% States total revenue. These were to be paid into a States Joint Local Government Account maintained for that purpose. Unfortunately, only the Federal and Lagos State Governments paid their contributions regularly during the Second Republic. What was worse, some State Governments diverted allocations from the Federation Account for their own use. This experience has necessitated some changes in the fiscal arrangements for the Third Republic.

In addition, as Oyovbaire (1992) observed, the local governments are 'encouraged to increase their internally generated revenue effort through the instrument of a matching grant from State Government'.

In addressing the critical issue of autonomy, the Federal Government first abolished the Ministry of Local Government Affairs, and later in 1992 scrapped the Local Government Service Commission. Local governments were empowered to recruit, promote and discipline their staff. Furthermore, there were additional evolution functions
assigned to the local governments especially in the areas of primary health care, primary education and rural water supply.

In furtherance of its objective of enhancing local autonomy with local responsibility, the Federal Government in 1991 through Decree No. 23, introduced the Presidential System of Government at the local government level. The major thrust of the presidential system is the principle of separation of powers. The essential features of this application are:

The Executive Arm of the Local Government shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Supervisors who, together, shall be separate and distinct from the Local Government Council. The meetings of the Executive Arm of the Local Government shall be serviced by the Secretary to the Local Government. In accordance with the letters and spirit of the Civil Service Reform as applied to Local Governments, the Secretary to each Local Government shall henceforth be appointed by the Local Government Chairman. The appointment is political and the Secretary shall hold this appointment at the pleasure of the Chairman who appointed him or her. Accordingly the Secretary shall be deemed to have left office at the expiration of the tenure of the office of the Chairman who appointed him or her. He shall serve as the Chief Administrative Adviser to the Executive Arm of the Local Government, coordinate all the activities of the Local Government, keep proper records of the Local Government (Decree No. 23 of 1991).
The Chairman of the local government has exercised these major functions and responsibilities such as:

a. Served as the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer;

b. Directed the affairs of the local government and allocates responsibilities to the Vice Chairman, supervisors and Secretary;

c. Observed and complied fully with the existing guidelines, financial regulations and other laws operating in the local government system which governed receipts and disbursement of public funds and other assets of the local government entrusted in his care;

d. Held meetings with members of the Executive Arm, at least, once every week;

e. Rendered monthly statement of revenue and expenditure to the legislature;

f. Liaised with the legislature and the leader of the Legislature in the interest of the local government;

g. Ensured the observance of the spending limit of all members of the Executive and heads of department;

h. Addressed, at least, once a year the Local Government Council and presented an account of his stewardship; and

i. Ensured that the local government council was provided with all the necessary materials and funds to enable the council to operate effectively.

The Chairman appointed supervisors in consultation with the legislative arm of the local government council. Such supervisors could come from within or outside the council and were assigned specific portfolios or responsibilities.

On the other hand, the local government council was also properly constituted as the Legislative Arm of the Local Government and shall be charged with the following functions:
i. Law-making, debating and passing local government legislation;

ii. Debating, approving and possibly amending local government annual budget, subject to the Chairman's veto, which could be overridden by a two-thirds majority of the council.

iii. Vetting and monitoring the implementation of project and programmes in the local government annual budget

iv. Examining and debating monthly statements of income and expenditure rendered to it by the Executive Arm of the Local Government; Impeaching the Local Government Chairman who has committed an impeachable offence in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

vi. Advising, consulting and liaising with the Local Government Chairman, and,

vii. Performing such other functions as may be assigned to it from time to time, by the House of Assembly of the State in which it is situated.

The Decree also provided for the election of a Leader of Council whose role was synonymous with that of the speaker of the House of Assembly. The Councillors were part-time legislators and met, at least, once a month. Furthermore, the Decree provided for the office of the Council Clerk. The Head of the Personnel Management Department was designated as the Council Clerk in addition to his other normal duties.

The above provisions have become fully operational in all the local governments. It is important, however, to observe that the application of the principle of separation of powers is yet to be extended to the judicial arm of the government at the local government level. The gains which should have accrued to local governments following the abolition of Ministries of
Local Government and the increase in the revenue accruable to councils could not materialize because of the creation of the inspectorate departments which took over the functions of the Ministry of Local Government and the handing over of primary schools to local governments which depleted their resources (Obasi, 1992).

The emergence of late General Sani Abacha on the political scene also brought some changes to the local government system. With the creation of additional six new states by the regime, the number of local governments increased from 589 to 774. Again, with the dissolution of the various councils, the Abacha regime mandated the various Military Administrators to appoint care-taker committees to run the affairs of the local councils (Orluwene, 2003).

Late Alhaji Umaru Ndayako’s Committee

Our experience in the current democratic dispensation concerning the third-tier of government is saddening. Everything looked perfect from May 1999 until the hue and cry began over the tenure of elected council chairmen and councillors. Was it two years? Or three? Or four?

At the end of the day, the various State Governments woke up one after another to unconstitutionally dissolve properly-constituted councils ahead of elections slated for the year 2002. Care-taker committees of various designs were unilaterally put in place, despite the fact that there was no provision for such in the Constitution.

The Federal Government finally came up with the idea of instituting a Technical Committee that would review the structure of local government after a Council of States meeting in June, 2003. The President indefinitely postponed the elections into the local governments, accusing them of corruption and waste etc. The President thereafter inaugurated an eleven-man Presidential Technical Committee to review the
structure of local government councils in Nigeria. Late Alhaji Umaru Ndayako, the Etsu Nupe, headed the committee, which had among its terms of reference, the need "to review --- and consider the desirability or otherwise of retaining the local governments as the third-tier of government" (Olugunde, 2004).

In effect, the 1999 constitution was subverted a number of times in succession. A case of the gargantuan cock being unhappy at the sight of the cockerel? It is not surprising, therefore, when the Committee recommended that elections into the third-tier be done on parliamentary basis as against the presidential system at the first and second tiers. Reason? The presidential system is expensive and wasteful at the local council level but not at the other tiers. The question is: is there a constitutional provision for parliamentary democracy at any level of governance in Nigeria that the proposition could have worked for the March, 2004 elections without an amendment of the constitution?

From the foregoing, I hold the view that the essence of the Ndayako-led committee was not about the betterment of the local government system but unfortunately, about a dramatization of executive rascality and subversion of the constitution.

**Conclusion & Recommendation**

Based on the excursion into the historical context and analysis of the trends in local government administration in Nigeria, a number of facts emerged. One is that the system of local government has been highly experimental and unstable as a result of the actions or inactions of its operators. I therefore, suggest the following steps to move the system forward:

The first line of change in this regard is a comprehensive review of the constitution through a national conference. This will answer several other national questions,
including the character of the Nigerian state and whether, in this particular instance, we want local governments, who has power to create them and who funds them?

Secondly, we appeal to the current leaders, the President, the Governors and the Legislators, all of whom are in custody of the symbol of authority to calm down and allow the local government system to take shape, thrive and survive, in line with the desire of Nigerians that the local governments be autonomous also.

Thirdly, local government councils should receive their revenue allocation directly from the Federation Account. Therefore, the joint state/local governments accounts should be abolished.

Fourthly, the tenure of local government Council Chairmen and Councillors should be synchronized with that of the first and second tiers. The responsibility of conducting council election should be assigned to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as it happened in the previous Republics and to hold alongside with others during general elections.

Fifthly, the council Chairmen should also be Chief Security Officers in their council areas, just as Governors are in their respective states, in order to enhance their constitutionally guaranteed autonomy and paralleled status.

Finally, the swearing-in of Council Chairmen and Councillors should be assigned to Judges and very senior magistrates, as against the current practice where State Governors do it, and use such occasions to issue self-serving directives to democratically-elected representatives who got their mandates from the same electorate that voted the Governors into office.
References


