UNIVERSITY OF BATH

PHD

Comparative public administration: The dynamics of local administrative reform in Britain and Nigeria.

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Award date:
1981

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

Link to publication

COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE
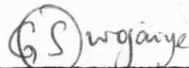DYNAMICS OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM
IN BRITAIN AND NIGERIA.

submitted by

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for the degree of Ph.D.
of the University of Bath
        1981

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ProQuest Number: U319225

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

University of Bath.

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SUMMARY

The objects of this thesis are to examine the conditions which

necessitated local administrative reforms in Nigeria and Britain.   It

also examines the process of administrative reforms in both countries

in a comparative and historical context.   Administrative reform is a

continuous activity, a process, and the local government reforms in

both countries have been treated in sequential trends: Diagnosis,

Formulation of Objectives and Strategies of Administrative Reform,

Implementation, Evaluation, and Recommendations.

The study concentrates on socio-economic and political changes in

both countries, and on changing contemporary views concerning the

processes and purposes of local governmental administration.   Local

government became maladjusted because it did not keep pace with these

societal changes, and hence the need for reform.

We also examine the relationship between the theory and practice of

administrative reform;   and the origins of pressures for reform, the

processes by which reform proposals were advanced, and the ways and

means by which they were implemented (or shelved).

The thesis is structured round a number of variables and

hypothetical questions which were tested in the body of the thesis, such

as: Was local government reform necessary in both countries because

unchanging values could no longer be realised through an outdated

administrative system ?   Or had values changed so that reform was

needed ?   Can a developing country (Nigeria) and a developed one (Britain)

have similar reform objectives and strategies ?   How true is Lee's

hypothesis that time and leadership are two crucial variables in reform

implementation ?   Answers to these and other hypothetical questions are

provided in the thesis.   The conclusion, based on empirical evidence,

is that for any administrative reform to be successful in achieving its

objectives - efficiency, democracy, socio-economic development and national unity - the citizens must be actively involved. And it is this observation that leads us to formulate hypotheses for local government reform, local development and participation through the use of the age-set institution in Nigeria and neighbourhood councils in Britain (though the latter are dealt with very briefly).

INTRODUCTION

This thesis, like any other transnational comparative analysis, involved my having to carry out the necessary fieldwork in two countries: Britain and Nigeria. I made two trips to Nigeria not only to collect materials but also to interview people - councillors, local government officers and citizens who are affected by the 1976 local government reform. In all I covered six states - Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Niger, Oyo and Rivers (see map). There were 238 respondents to my questionnaires, 78 of them being officers and officials of local government. I had to tape record oral evidence from a number of people because of the high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria. These evidences formed the sub-stratum of this thesis, especially chapters 8 and 9, 'Evaluation' and 'Recommendations', with the theory of administrative reform forming the superstratum. I proceeded from the empirical evidence and went on to test my findings in the light of available administrative reform theory. My conclusion, based on these evidences, is that for any administrative reform to be successful in achieving its objectives - efficiency, democracy, socio-economic development and national unity - the citizens must be actively involved.

As Rowat (1980, p.XV) says, the comparative study of local government reform and politics is at such a rudimentary stage that one must start with the basic structural information, which itself is extremely difficult to gather, especially in Nigeria as any researcher will tell you.

Furthermore, although the study of politics rather than insti-tutions is currently popular with political scientists and students of public administration, attempts at studying local government reform on a comparative basis have not been notably successful because we do

1966 REGIONS

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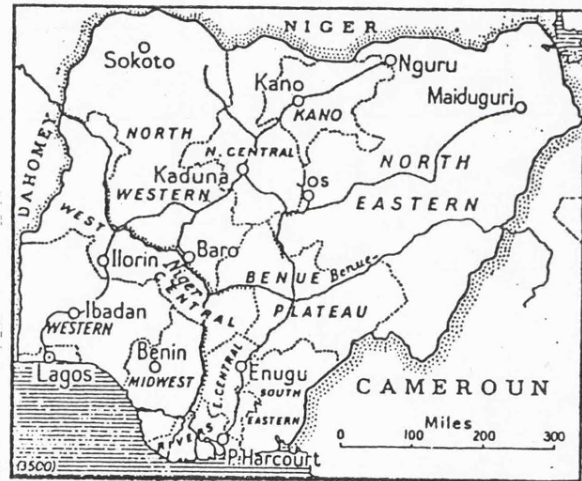
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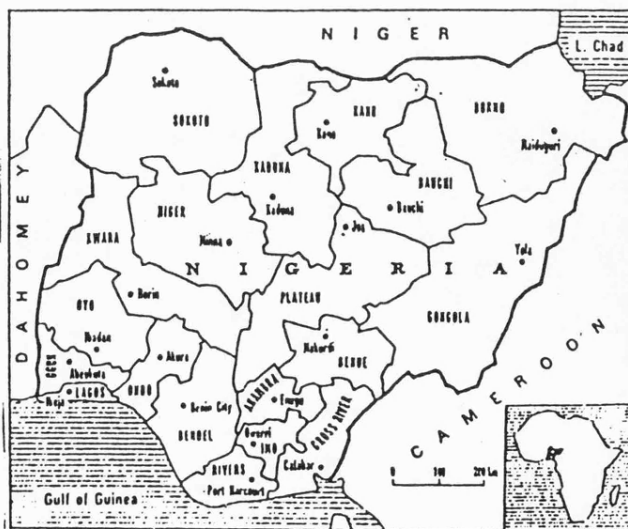
not yet have a deep enough understanding of the varying political
cultures involved. If academic books about reorganisation do not embody
their author's own proposals for 'reform', then they are usually con-
tent to describe the proposals of others and blandly present the debate.
In Nigeria, and to some extent in Britain, there is no study which
discusses the various facets of reorganisation as they relate to each
other and to the environment - social, political, cultural and economic;
which sees reorganisation as about who will control and benefit from
local government; and which seeks to understand it all by looking at
it in the context of the developing political economy. Case studies of
local policy-making and reform tend to be isolated and a-historical. At
its most basic, there is no study which situates local government reform
in the wider societal changes, away from the usual tradition of debate,
and even the assessments of the effects of reorganisation are of
limited value because of lack of empirical research which would enable
academics to make useful and proven recommendations which would benefit
the ordinary citizen (see however, Buxton, 1973; Redcliffe-Maud and
Wood, 1974; Dearlove, 1979; Lagroye and Wright, 1979; Pearce, 1980).
More importantly, I know of no writer who has attempted to make a
systematic comparative analysis of administrative reform in a develop-
ing country and a developed one. These and other problems or aberra-
tions are what I have attempted to solve in this thesis. If the
arguments I have advanced provide a better understanding of reorganisa-
tion than any currently available in the literature, then this
research has been worthwhile.

Students of public administration are struck by the fact that
the 'new ideas' which emerged in disciplines related to public ad-
ministration did not affect the approach to administrative reform.
Even in the United States, where the society is keen on innovations,
the reform attempts of the late fifties adhered more or less to
traditional organisation theory. The reasons for this are the conser-

vative tendencies inherent in government administration and the sequence in which ideas change first, then values, then finally and last, basic emotions and actions.

The comprehensive approach to local government reform analysed in this thesis is influenced by an amalgam of the current ideas which emerged recently in General Systems Theory, Comparative Politics and Public Administration, and modern organisation theory. The framework of my research did not start with the theory. I started from the empirical facts of the local government reforms in Britain (more specifically, England and Wales) in 1974 and Nigeria in 1976, and tried to test my findings and the hypotheses I formulated in the light of current administrative reform theory. This seemingly 'unorthodox' orientation stimulated clear thinking and saved me from becoming a 'prisoner of theory'. Thus my style of writing could have been like Conrad's (Lord Jim) peripeteia or 'reverse time sequence' in which case the theoretical Chapter 1 could have come at the end of the thesis. That it comes at the beginning did not change my research findings and hypotheses, instead it became invaluable for me as I was able to compare and evaluate my hypotheses with administrative reform theories. The aim is to try and disprove theorists who argue that it is impossible to advance a theory of administrative reform which is equally applicable to a developed and a developing country.

The General Systems Theory was developed to meet a need felt by a large number of behavioural scientists. The theory is concerned with the elaboration of a systematic theoretical framework for description of the general relationships of the empirical world. It is based on the assumption that there _ exists models, principles and laws that apply to generalised systems or their subclasses, irrespective of their particular kind, the nature of their component elements, and the relations of 'forces' between them (Van Bertallanffy, 1956).

General systems theory attempts to make assertions applicable to all systems, whether physical or behavioural. The principal points of the idea of a system are: (a) relationships between a system and its environment; (b) interaction between several systems; and (c) interdependence between the various parts of the system (Blalock, 1959). I have used the systems concept as an approach to organisation change, that is, that local government could not remain static, unreformed while its environment - social, political, cultural, technological, economic - was changing.

The Structural-Functional approach emphasises cross-disciplinary research and attempts to study political systems within a wider theoretical framework. Almond and Coleman's (1960, pp.3-64) 'input-output' model is based on the central concept of 'system' involving an integration of both structures and functions. The following are the main features of their 'input-output' model: (a) The political system is a sub-system of a certain culture, being distinguished from other sub-systems by incorporation of the mechanism for control of violence in the whole culture; (b) all political systems have structures and functions. Political structures are multi-functional. Comparison of structures of various cultures is insufficient, because the significance of a structure lies in its functioning; (c) political systems are mixed systems in the cultural sense. Formal-legal aspects, and diffuse and particularistic aspects are combined in the political structure; and (d) input functions in political systems include political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication. This approach is invaluable to my analysis, for if local government is a sub-system of the political system which is a sub-system of the whole culture, it means then that local government must be reformed as the whole system changes.

The Comparative Public Administration approach as elabora-
ted by Riggs (1962) adopts 'ecology' as its basic concept. He elabo-
rates a wide conceptual framework for constructing sub-models in
relation to various aspects of both Western and non-Western societies.
He designates the models of modern, traditional and developing
countries as 'refracted', 'fused', and 'prismatic' respectively. He
goes on to identify three main characteristics of the prismatic society:
heterogeneity, formalism and overlapping. 'Heterogeneity' refers to
coexistence of traditional and modern institutions, which produces
mixed administrative structures and new patterns of bureaucratic behaviour.
'Formalism' refers to the degree of discrepancy between norms and
realities, between 'the laws of the statute book' and 'the actual
behaviour of the official'. 'Overlapping' is reflected by a structural
daulity of formally differentiated structure on the one hand, for
example government offices, parliament, markets, and traditional undif-
ferentiated structures such as family, religious bodies, castes. This
approach proved useful for local administrative reform study in general
and development administration as that of Nigeria in particular. This
approach influenced my Chapter 2 where I had to clarify the histo-
rical, traditional, cultural,etc. differences between Nigeria and
Britain as a starting point in the formulation of my theoretical
design for the cross-cultural comparative study.

A combination of decision theory, communication theory, group
theory and motivational theory forms the central theme of modern organi-
sational theory. The sociological orientation to organisation theory
is associated with the 'social system approach' of Parsons (1956).
From this viewpoint a useful way is to consider them as social systems
of interdependent parts within the broader system of society. According
to Parsons' conception, all social systems must solve four basic
problems: (a) adaptation - the accommodation of the system to the demands

of the environment; (b) goal achievement - the defining of objectives

and the mobilisation of resources to attain them; (c) integration -

establishing and organising a set of relations among the member units

of the system that serve to unify them into a single entity; and

(d) latency - the maintenance of the system's motivational and cultural

patterns. Parsons views a formal organisation as a major mechanism in

modern societies for mobilizing power in the interest of achieving

collective objectives. However, each formal organisation is also a

social system for its own right with sub-systems for the solution of

the four basic problems mentioned above.

Argyris (1959) adopts the system concept for organisation study,

examines the basic and attains an organisational equilibrium properties

of social organisations and suggests that organisation models should

strive toward understanding the patterning of all the relevant parts,

as well as the nature of each part. He defines an organisation as

a plurality of parts, each achieving specific objective(s); maintaining

itself through interrelatedness with the other parts; simultaneously

adapting to the external environment; and maintaining thereby the inter-

related state on the parts.

An amalgam of these approaches provides me with the following

conceptual framework for my analysis of local government reform in

Britain and Nigeria:

a)   Local government administration is a sub-system of the society

in general, and the political system in particular. It and its reform

are constantly affected by its ecology and it in turn reacts;

b)   in Nigeria, the boderline between local government and other sub-

systems is ill-defined, not being clearly established by formal legal

norms or by shared conventions;

c)   local administrative system consists of interdependent parts

with interacting patterns. These parts include political leadership,

organisation members, formal organisation, informal work-groups and

finally, the environmental systems which have a direct impact upon local government. The most influential among environmental systems are the political system which consists of the decision-making body, political parties and interest groups, the public at large and to some extent the judiciary, the social system, the economic system and the culture at large;

d)   local government is integrated into the whole system through various processes, such as the public policy making process, the communication process, and built-in equilibrium mechanisms which exist in every organisation. Local government strives to attain a balance among the various forces, political, organisational and personal, operating within and upon it;

e)   local government has in-puts and out-puts across its boundary, as well as a feedback pattern. It takes in political and public demands and supports, and produces authoritative policies, administrative actions, and public services (Easton, 1961). The feedback pattern is a self moderating mechanism acting by transmission of information between local government and the environment. The information obtained by the feedback loop enables local government to respond to political and public demands, and alters its behaviour accordingly;

f)   changes in other parts of the system must go hand in hand with changes in local government system lest it becomes maladjusted. Discrepancy between the whole and the part leads to defects which must be rectified by administrative reform;

g)   local government reform affects the formal organisation, work-patterns and standard procedure, status positions, interpersonal and group relationships, behaviour patterns, as well as the administrative process, public policy making, co-ordination, control, communications, etc.;

h)   the process of reorganisation must be integrated with mobilisation

of political and public support and with gaining acceptance of the

local government officials and officers. The planning process involyes

political and psychological aspects, as well as administrative aspects;

and   •

i)   reform is a continuous process as internal and/or external cir-

cumstances change. Local government therefore has to be reviewed

constantly, modified and readjusted to new developments.

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. In Chapter 1, I give

some of the advantages which will be derived from a comparative study

of this nature. I then go on to a literature review of administrative

reform theories. Administrative reform is a continuous activity, a

process, and I have treated the local government reforms in Nigeria

and Britain in sequential trends. The first stage in the sequence is

'Diagnosis' or 'Aware of the need for Reform'. The second is 'Formulation

of Objectives andStrategies of Administrative Reform'. The third and

fourth stages are 'Implementation' and 'Evaluation' respectively. I

concluded the chapter by formulating a number of hypothetical questions

which were tested in the body of the thesis, such as :Was local

government reform necessary in Nigeria and Britain because unchanging   .

social values could no longer be realised through an outdated admini-

strative system? Or had values changed so that reform was needed?

That is, was administrative reform necessary because the administra-

tion could not keep abreast of development? Can a developing country

(Nigeria) and a developed one (Britain) have similar reform objectives

and strategies? How valid is the assertion that there can be no reform

strategy with universal applicability? How true is Lee's hypothesis

that time and leadership are two crucial variables in reform imple-

mentation? Is it true that the greater the comprehensiveness, complexity,

and magnitude of changes, the lesser the probability of implementa-

tion? How objective can an evaluation of a reform be? Must we base our

evaluation on the reformer's goal or the people's feelings and attitudes? That is, whose definition of 'success' should we accept? Do the end products of the reforms contribute to the stated goals such as democracy, efficiency, national stability and economic development? Did the reformers stick to the reform objectives?

Before going into the aforementioned sequential treatment of local administrative reform, however, I give a brief historical background of local government in both countries in Chapter 2. I am comparing two administrative systems which are separated from each other by history, tradition, culture, peoples, socio-economic and political environment, among other things. Clarification of these issues is a necessary starting point in a cross-cultural comparative study. Thus in order to understand the changing structure of local government in Nigeria and Britain, and the origins of their ailments and criticism, it was pertinent to give a brief historical description of local government in both countries.

My line of argument is that a number of changes - social, economic, technological and political - had taken place in both countries since the beginning of this century and especially since the Second World War while the structure of local government had remained relatively static. I believe that because there was no corresponding change in the structure, local government in both countries became maladjusted and obsolete. Chapters 3 and 4 detail these changes which include the following: increase in population and urbanisation; growth in size and type of clientele served by local government; changes in problems, needs and demands of the people; new technology, new equipment and advancing knowledge; advances in medicine; expansion of educational facilities and changing and usually rising qualifications of personnel; increased local government functions; the growth of communications; the franchise; increased centralisation; the intrusion of party politics

in local government; and the rise of the professional officer in
local government.

These changes, I argue in the thesis, were responsible for the
criticisms and 'defects' of local government in Nigeria and Britain.
Chapter 5 catalogues the views of critics who believe that the
boundary problem formed the mediety of local government defects while
other problems as those pertaining to democracy, efficiency, central
control and councillor calibre arose mainly because of the defective
structure. For the sake of my analysis, I reduce the defects which were
identified by the Royal Commission on Local Government Reform in
England 1966-69 and the Federal Government of Nigeria to four broad ones.
First, there were too many too small authorities, lacking the areas,
population and resources to provide the specialised staff,
equipment and institutions needed by increasingly technical and complex
services, and catchment areas were too small to provide the necessary
standards of service to the growing numbers of minority groups needing
public help. In northern Nigeria, however, it was felt that the native
authorities were too big and therefore remote, undemocratic and
'ungovernable'. Secondly, the existing areas of local government did
not fit the facts of social life. The obsolete division of town
and country took no account of their interdependency and in particular
the division between county boroughs and counties 'builds into the
system a division of interest where, in fact, there is a common
interest'. Thirdly, it was believed that this fragmentation meant that
the citizens did not feel that local government units reflected
anything meaningful in their daily lives. Local government areas did
not correspond to what they regarded as communities. And so they grew
apathetic. Fourthly, the division of local government into competing
authorities, unable to combine in a common front, and their inadequate
areas (except in northern Nigeria), meant that the central government was

increasing its control, and was likely to remove more functions from un-
reformed local government, leaving it with few important activities

and increasingly unattractive to able people, either officials or

members, to serve. This relates to the calibre of councillors and

the local government staff. The low calibre of course meant that

the authorities were ineffective and inefficient. These problems were

said to be compounded by party politics and corruption, especially in

Nigeria. It should be noted that the views of critics are just pre-

sented in this Chapter and I do not superimpose my views on theirs (my

views are analysed in Chapter 8) except in a few cases where the paucity

of critical materials on Nigeria leads me to supplement what was available

with my own experiences and empirical findings.

In Chapter 6, I crystallise the 1974 reform objectives in Britain

and those of the 1976 reform in Nigeria into three main goals:

Functions and Size, Democracy, and Efficiency. In Nigeria, however,

the objectives included national stability and socio-economic develop-

ment. I also discuss the main differences in the strategies of both

countries to local government reform.

The implementation of these reform objectives are outlined in

Chapter 7. In Chapter 8 I evaluate the whole process of local govern-

ment reform in Nigeria and Britain. I also try to answer the hypo-

thetical questions I set myself in Chapter 1 and at the same time

present my views on some of the assertions generally made by critics

and theorists.

In Chapter 9 I not only present a number of general reco-

mmendations which should help in the attainment of reform objectives

in any future reform efforts, but I also try to expound my own hy-

pothesis which I believe would enhance participation in local affairs

and help to reduce local government burden. Furthermore, my own

propositions should give the ordinary people practical experience

of self-reliance and their ability to create their own solutions to the problems they face. All these advantages and many more which I identified in Chapter 9 can be achieved through the concept of community development either by creating community councils or neighbourhood councils in Britain, or by integrating the age-set institution into the system of local government in Nigeria. And I suggest that the creation of growth pole centres would enhance the efficiency of such an integration of our traditional institution of age-set and the modern quintessence of local government. My propositions may seem bold, broad and may be even vulnerable, but they are nonetheless valuable. Public administration is a science which must always be open to suggestions which may be productive of knowledge. Scientists speculate and guess, they are intuitive, all of which is part of the 'context of discovery'. After all, wisdom does not come to him who gapes at nature with an empty head.

Finally, in the 'Conclusion', I summarise some of the themes which I have developed in the preceding chapters, elucidate further some of the answers to the hypothetical questions in Chapter 1, and suggest ideas which I feel need to be developed if we are to progress in our understanding of local government reform.

CHAPTER ONE

COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE
THEORY OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

INTRODUCTION

>What then are the methods of the social sciences?
>All the various methods employed may be grouped under one
>term: COMPARISON.   The single fact means nothing to us;
>we accumulate facts that seem akin; we classify and
>reclassify them; discarding superficial and accidental
>similarities as we discover deeper substantial identities.
>We accumulate and compare facts from our own and from
>foreign countries; we accumulate facts from the immediate
>and more remote past, and compare them with each other and with
>present facts.   Statistics, comparative legislation, history -
>these are means and models of accumulating facts for comparison...
>Of all these anxiliary sciences, the most important is history.
>All other methods of comparative study may be said to operate
>on a single plane - the plane of the present.   History gives
>to the Social Sciences the third dimension and thus indefinitely
>increases the range of comparison.   But it does far more than
>this.   To the application of the historical method we owe the
>discovery that social institutions persist and at the same time
>change from generation to generation and from century to
>century (Smith, 1886, pp.4-5).

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: without raising the

general questions involved in comparative public administration, such

as its evolution, we shall first outline some of the advantages of

cross-national comparative analysis.   It is only through cross-

national comparison that we can penetrate the many ambiguities and

confusions in the theoretical writing about local government reform.

A comparison illuminates aspects of each system.   After all, it

is interesting to know not only what a system is, but also what it

is not, and why it is not.   Secondly, we will give a detailed

analysis of the theory of administrative reform.   This is important

not only because it will enable us to measure the success or failure of

local government reforms in Britain and Nigeria, but also we will

be able to determine how far both countries have conformed (or

deviated) from the theory of administrative reform process in their

local government reorganizations.   Furthermore, we will be in a

position to test the universal applicability or otherwise of the

theory of reform.   That is, does the theory of administrative

reform apply equally to a developed country like Britain and a

developing country like Nigeria?   This will help us to explore some

of the limitations of our 'taken-for-granted knowledge' about

local government reform.

SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPARATIVE STUDIES

Without going into the general advantages of comparative

studies, we can say, for our purposes here, that a comparative

analysis can make a major contribution towards an improved

understanding of the way in which different countries' institution

of public administration actually works.   Such studies can also

lead to a better understanding of the workings of public administration

in one's own country.   That is, in order that reasons peculiar to

one country are not simply presented as the course of particular

administrative activities, some elements of comparison are necessary

to explain the situation.   'To know thyself, compare thyself to

others'.   The comparative approach is an eye-opener to a people's

self-recognition and to its taking a stand.   It is not accidental

that great civilizations, like the Renaissance, were developed at the

crossroads of mankind and articulated by the meeting of contrasting

systems.   This encounter alone made an awakening Western Europe

fully aware of her own character and qualities.   It is therefore

significant

that the study of public administration must become a much
more broadly based discipline, resting not on a narrowly
defined knowledge of techniques and processes, but rather
extending to the varying historical, sociological, economic
and other conditioning factors that give public administration
its peculiar stamp in each country (Dahl, 1947,p.11.).

Furthermore, comparative public administration studies can be

seen as having a political application for the improvement and extension

of the machinery of government in a particular country.   That is,

public servants are interested in the way in which foreign countries

deal with the structure and content of administration and with

administrative reform.   Foreign experience can contribute some

ideas to solve the administrative problems of one's country.   Politics

has changed from an almost static preservation of carefully balanced

positions to the interplay of dynamic drives of unpredictable forces.

Hence our concern has turned away from a merely descriptive analysis

of formal, legalistic, and constitutional forms to a prime

consideration of the processes of decision-making and political dynamics

especially administrative reform.   Thus we stand to make an

invaluable gain in a comparative study of local government reform

in Nigeria and Britain.

Local government in Nigeria and Britain, for instance, are

providers of services.   They are also democratic agencies for the

ordering of local priorities and the implementation of local demands.

Both are essential mechanisms for relieving overloaded central

government of some of the many services it is expected to provide.

They help to legitimise decisions made at central level.   Furthermore,

they are massive spenders: in Britain, for example, between 1962

and 1974, local government expenditure rose from 9.2 per cent to

12.4 per cent of the gross domestic product. In Nigeria, local government authorities spend 7 per cent of the nationally derived public revenue. Lastly, they are recruiting agencies for the local political elites.

Local government systems in both countries also share a number of problems. They are faced with erosion of autonomy: increasing State intervention, and the growth of national planning objectives and agencies. Another major problem of both systems concerns efficiency. Finally, they share the problem of democracy at the local level, that is,representativity of the local elites, and participation.

Both systems have their differences which are rooted in the social environment, in the historical traditions and conventions which underpin each system, in the political and economic setting, and in the institutional arrangements of each country. Despite these differences and similarities, both countries have been obsessed with the need to reform local government.

THE THEORY OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Introduction

Administrative reform is a universal thing, and in contrast to 'change', it is man-made and deliberate. Goodenough rightly observed that "as long as humanity lasts, men will be reformers... endeavouring to change others in order to maintain or create desired situations for themselves, or to change themselves in order to accommodate to unyielding circumstances or to realise a new dream" (1963,p.15). Politicians, civil servants and scholars of public

administration have always expressed their concern about the
inadequate adaptation of the machinery of government to societal
and political needs. Administrative reform, which is the panacea
to this 'inadequate adaptation', may take the form of a piecemeal
reorganization within an arm of the administrative machinery,
designed to adjust the relationships between a bureaucracy and
other elements in a society or within the bureaucracy itself, or
a large-scale overhaul of the system in-toto. As administrative
systems change slowly and in a conservatively incremental manner,
natural response and adaptation are inadequate in meeting the
challenge of development. Something faster and more radical is
needed, namely, organized programmes of administrative reform.

But the term, 'administrative reform', has been much used
and abused. Writers on administrative reform have failed to
reach a consensus on its definition and on a theoretical framework
under which it can be studied and analysed. It is still at a
pre-paradigmatic stage "marked by a plethora of competing schools,
a polyglot of languages, and accordingly, a confusion of logics.
There is neither a common research tradition nor the necessary
consensus for a common field of inquiry. Each of the competing
schools questions the others, adventurism is rampant, and commonly
accepted standards of control do not exist" (Landau, 1966,p.39).
And recently, questions have been asked as to the adequacy and
appropriateness of the term 'administrative reform' itself and
suggestions have been offered to substitute it by using a more
comprehensive term like 'reorganization of the machinery of
government' which is "a consciously induced and directed change in

the machinery of government" (Leemans, 1976,p.8).

The study of administrative reform, like other social science
subjects, is handicapped by what Leemans calls 'a jungle of
concepts and terminology':

> Not only do students in the same field have difficulty in
> communicating with each other, but laymen cannot understand
> the reservations academics have about each other's work
> and they are puzzled by the different uses of the same
> term in referring to vaguely related phenomena.   The lack
> of a universally shared and standardized vocabulary is
> common to all social sciences, with the same consequence -
> namely that semantic confusion leads to errors of a
> theoretical and explanatory nature (Caiden, 1970, pp.43-4).

The dissatisfaction and frustrations that have developed over
the years about the use of the term 'administrative reform' can
be attributed to several factors.   One of the rhetorics that is
often heard in any reform effort is the 'rationality concept':
that administrative reform is intended to improve upon the existing
situation by aiming to create a good administration which clearly
has a normative element.   Contrary to these pious wishes,
what actually happens in many real situations is entirely a
different thing.   Many reformers have no other purpose than to
strengthen the position of certain power holders, and reform actors
are strongly inspired by influence and power motives (Leemans,
1976, p.8).   The traditional use of the term has left an
impression that a clear-cut distinction can be made between
changes in the bureaucracy and those in the organization of the
political executive organs.   As one writer aptly says, "it may well
be that administrative reform has lost its grip on the imagination
of the political scientists because it has ignored the conceptual

problems involved in adapting static models of administrative

perfection to dynamic political reality" (Montgomery, 1969,p.427).

A good number of the so-called administrative reforms have implied

considerable changes in the structure and processes of political

executive organs and in their relationship with the administrative

machinery (Leemans, 1976, p.7).   It has been observed that changes

in power structures within and among political executive organs induce

changes in the administrative machinery, many of which are inspired

by purely political considerations (Groves, 1976, pp.99-113).

Recent discussions show considerable awareness of the need to

view administrative reform as a sub-system of a wider societal

system which includes a political sub-system.   Administrative reform

is part of societal reform, and the interactions between and among

the administrative and political sub-systems are crucial and to

a large extent determine the setting up of objectives, strategies,

and probabilities of the success of the implementation of the

administrative reform proposals.   Part II of Leeman's

The Management of Change in Government is a catalogue of case studies

about administrative reform, and the experiences of some developing

countries point to a dilemma which has not been adequately treated

(see Moharir, 1976, pp.238-51; Hadisumarto and Siegel, 1976, pp.252-71;

Castro, 1976, pp.185-212; Brewar-Carias, 1976,pp.213-237).   On

the one hand, there is a growing need to undertake comprehensive

reform programmes to keep in pace with complex social, economic and

political situations which most developing countries must cope with

in order to survive let alone prosper.   On the other hand,

comprehensive reforms have been found to be extremely difficult to

implement.

Another factor which has obstructed the formulation of a theoretical framework with universal usage is the place of contextuality in the success or failure of any reform. Developing countries differ vastly among themselves regarding their administrative systems (that is, nature, composition, and capability), political systems (that is, absolute monarchy, military rule, dictatorship, one-party rule, multi-party democratic system), economic conditions (that is, stages of economic development), and cultural heritage. These wide-ranging differences, and, consequently, the futile attempts to develop an all-embracing and universal strategy to study administrative systems and reforms have been widely recognised. Lawrence and Lorsch (1969,p.88) conclude that an optimal change model for a particular case should be "conditional on the task to be done, the environmental conditions to be handled, and the characteristics of the individual contributors involved"(emphasis mine).

In fact Basil and Cook opine that a "categorization of environmental states is a prerequisite to developing strategies for change" (1974, p.205). Dror hypothesizes that "the preferable mix of administrative reform strategies is in the main a function of the concrete circumstances of each particular reform" (1976,p.127). Cohen emphasizes the uniqueness of each situation, which results in the demand by each to use its own approach suited to the particular situation at hand and builds strategic models on the basis of three variables; task, organizational form, and personal characteristics (1976, pp.165-181). Esman (1972), in his authoritative analysis of administrative reform in Malaysia, agrees with the view that each situation requires its own strategy.

The simple fact, however, that there seems to be no strategies of universal applicability does not exclude the design of strategic model for the management of induced change in government which have some degree of validity for similar reform situations and objects. Cohen (1976, pp.165-181), Lee (1976, pp.114-125), and Lawrence and Lorsch (1969, p.89) provide typologies which suggest that a broad model of reform strategy can be designed to study divergent types of reform situations.

What is Administrative Reform?

We stated at the beginning that there has been no corpus of systematic theory either about the kind of administrative changes which should be engineered or about the methods by which they should be implemented. Thus administrative reform, as a term, has been defined differently by different writers depending on their focus of attention. Thinking on administrative reform can be traced during the post-war years when systematic efforts were made to export technical help and know-how to the developing countries from the developed ones especially the United States in order to strengthen the administrative capabilities of the former, but intellectual discussion did not become very important until the sixties. In spite of the growing attention in recent years, administrative reform still remains conceptually deficient and elusive. This can be attributed partially to the inability of the people writing on it to differentiate the term from other related terms. The theorists, in order to look creative, spend a lot of time trying to disprove other theorists, while devoting little time to producing fine academic theories. Moreover the mass of 'bad' theories threatens

the recognition of 'good' theories.   Landau (1965,pp.7-8) warns

that metaphorical schemes

> can neither be justified nor invalidated and they remain outside
> the scientific domain quite impregnable to the tests of
> experience.   Such transfers not only cluster our vocabularies
> but they are pregnant sources of myth.....

He further warns against "the mixing of models which not only

obscures imagery and confuses meaning but....frequently leads to

contradictory results" and may lead to nonsense results as well as

erroneous conclusions.

Furthermore, Caiden says that the over-abundance of theories is

due to pride and independence.   "Independence creates a random

approach to common problems, with a resulting reluctance to follow

somebody else's definitions and usages.   The semantic confusion

produces a mass of terminologies that pass as new theories" (Caiden,

1970, p.3.).

It is evident that the term 'administrative reform' has acquired

widespread usage and recognition in the literature pertaining to

government and public administration.   The rationality concept

or moral purpose of administrative reform has been emphasized.   Thus

the term has been applied to all improvements in administration:

(a) to general administrative overhauls in difficult situations,

(b) to specific remedies for 'maladministration', (c) to any

suggestion for better government, and (d) even to the intentions

of self-styled administrative reformers (see, for example, Finan and

Dean,1957, pp.437-452; Siegel, 1966, pp.45-55; Singh, 1955,

pp.224-239; Martin, 1965).   For instance, Montgomery defines

administrative reform as "a political process designed to adjust the

relationship between a bureaucracy and other elements in a society, or within the bureaucracy itself....both the purposes of reforms and the evils addressed vary with their political circumstances" (Montgomery, 1967, p.1.). Caiden defines it as "the artificial inducement of administrative transformation against resistance" (Caiden, 1970, p.8.). According to him, administrative reform contains three interrelated properties: (a) moral purpose, which emphasizes the importance and necessity of improving the status quo by removing alleged faults; (b) artificial transformation which points to a radical departure from existing arrangements and policies. 'It is a form of creative destruction in that an old order is broken down to pave the way for a new order'; and (c) administrative resistance, that is, when opposition is assumed (Caiden, 1970, pp.66-7).

Caiden (1970, pp.57-8, 65-7) also distinguishes administrative reform from administrative change by saying that the latter is a self-adjusting organizational response to fluctuating conditions while the need for the former arises from the latter because of the malfunctioning of the natural processes of administrative change.

Dror says that administrative reform is "directed change of the main features of an administrative system" (1976,p.127). This definition gives the term an objective reference and an ordinal scale of measurement. His two principal attributes of reform are goal orientation (directed, conscious) and the comprehensiveness of change, so that reform can be considered in terms of its scope (number of administrative components affected) and the rate of change (time required to bring about the desired changes). To Hahn-Been Lee,

administrative reform is a complex process in which many factors
interact and affect one another and whose results can be found over
a considerable period of time (Lee, 1970, pp.77-89).   Lee broadens
his ideas about administrative reform and proceeds to show its link
with innovation by declaring that administrative reform involves
new values and modes of behaviour to accommodate new ideas within
an organizational context.   This is what Leemans (1976,p.8)
calls its latent apostolic nature.   Administrative reform is therefore
considered normative as it calls for improvement upon the existing
order.   "And there is little question that national development is the
primary goal of many developing countries"(emphasis mine) (Lee,1976,p.114).

Administrative reform is generally used to describe activities
which actually go far beyond its salient meaning.   It is conceived
as directed action.   Administrative reform is defined here as
those efforts which call for or lead to major changes in the
bureaucratic system of a country intended to transform the existing
and established practices, structures and behaviours within it.

To a number of scholars, the terms administrative development
and administrative reorganization are synonymous with administrative
reform.   This is not surprising as reorganization literally means
organizing some things differently from what was the case in the past.
Reform has literal origins in the giving of new and different form to
something, and translating those terms in organization vocabulary
signifies new organizational structure.   As Mosher notes,

> Reform has a strong normative connotation. Reorganization
> though somewhat restricted and precise in its definition, has
> come to acquire nearly the same meaning in the American culture,
> both in its descriptive and in its normative senses(Mosher,1965,p.129).

Reorganization, therefore, is conscious, planned, intended, deliberate attempt to change the existing state of the system (Mosher,1967,p.497).

Khan defines administrative development as the growing capability of the administrative system to cope continuously with difficulties created by social change toward the goal of achieving socio-economic and political progress (Khan, 1975, p.149). To Riggs (1971, pp.25-6), administrative development reflects the capacity of administrative systems to make choices and to exercise discretion to bring about environmental changes by deliberate programmes and self-conscious decisions.

The objective of any reform effort and administrative development programme is to bring a change in the present state of the administrative system which will enhance its capacity to undertake and perform complex functions as they emerge. In a nutshell, it is agreed that it is through administrative reform that we can achieve greater administrative development:

> First, reform proposals challenge bureaucratic inertia and reactionary administrators and although defence mechanisms may temporarily suppress change, things can never quite be the same and peace tokens have to be made if the situation is to be kept in hand. Second, reform programmes attract enterprising administrative talent and provide valuable experience for a new generation of administrative aspirants. Third, reformers promote badly needed administrative modernization which is likely to set off a chain reaction in functional reforms as changes in techniques, skills, and attributes in specialized field seem more attainable than possibly the harder changes to carry through in administration. Fourth, constructive progressive forces find openings for their respective creative talent in empirical problem-solving, particularly the kind presented in administrative reform. Fifth, any effort to transform administrative systems is to be commended in the face of official indifference, technical ignorance, political intransigence and public apathy (Caiden, 1973,p.343).

For our purposes in this thesis, we define administrative reform as those efforts which call for or lead to major changes in the

bureaucratic system of a country intended to transform the existing and established practices, structures and behaviours within it. This definition helps us to distinguish the post-war 'tinkering changes' from the major reforms of 1974 and 1976 in Britain and Nigeria respectively.

Administrative Reform as a Process

Administrative reform is a continuous activity, a process, and we shall therefore study it in its sequential trend. Any study of administrative reform must begin with the understanding of the awareness of the need for reform and conclude with a discussion of the problems relating to the implementation of such efforts, that is, an evaluation of the implementation of reform objectives, as in Figure 1.1:
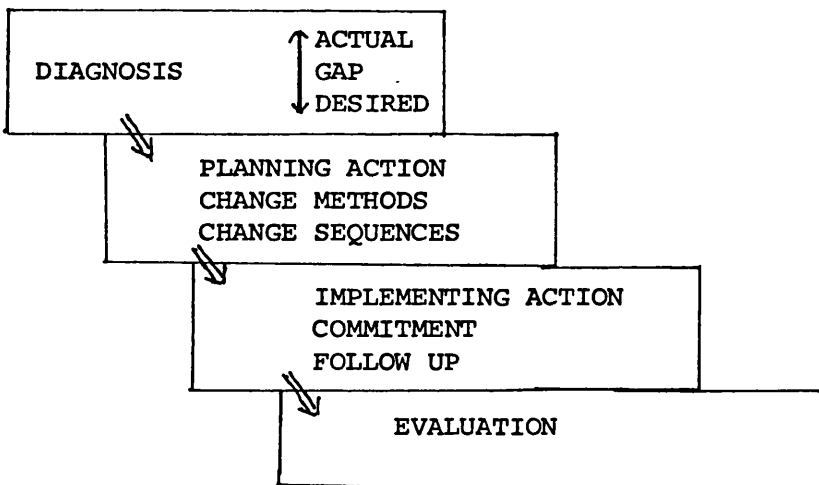
Figure 1.1: Source: Lawrence and Lorsch, 1969, p.89

Several advantages can be noted if administrative reform is considered a process. Reform is a process which carries with it

wider implications than the content of the reform.   In other

words, behavioural aspects are emphasized along with the structural

ones to make a study of any administrative reform more exhaustive.

Cohen emphasizes the role of the reformer in the process approach.

In reform, the medium is the message:

(a) the way the reformer goes about making changes is at least as

important as the specific changes recommended;

(b) if a reformer wants to create more responsible, responsive

and initiating civil servants, the reformer himself must begin

immediately to behave that way.   A splendid example of the

physician healing himself - risk-taking and innovation beginning

with the reformer right from the start of the reform movement;

(c) since reform is a process, the relationship between reformer

·and target becomes a central issue, not only for the initial

structuring of the relationship, but also for the way in which the

reformer goes about studying the problem, gathering information,

coming to conclusions and making recommendations.   The reformer

must not only arrive at good answers, but must work in a way that

is consistent with the desired changes (Cohen, 1976, pp.172-3).   A

process-oriented approach takes into account and gives high priority

to the human variable in the reform.   At the same time, it demands

that reformers must be more knowledgeable, concerned and involved

to bring about the relevant changes.

Caiden disagrees with the notion that process approach is most

suitable to study administrative reform.   Instead, he opts for a

systems approach because he believes that "reform of any administrative

system should begin with an analysis of the system rather than an analysis of the reform process" (Caiden, 1973a, p.27). Caiden thinks that the process approach is too narrow in its scope and in the end is unable to consider sources and dynamics of administrative behaviour within the context of an administrative system. Contrary to Caiden's thinking, it can be argued that the process approach is comprehensive in its scope and does include and focus on the interaction between and among individuals and organizations and thereby throws light on the dynamics of administrative behaviour.

Goodenough identifies six major stages in the process of administrative reform:

(a) INSPIRATION, the initial reformulation of the new social order, which usually comes to some individual in a flash of insight into social and moral problems;

(b) COMMUNICATION, whereby the visionary reveals his ideas to others and seeks their co-operation;

(c) ORGANIZATION of converts, through which the prophet reaches a wider audience;

(d) ADAPTATION TO RESISTANCE, wherein "even mild disapproval or lack of enthusiasm is likely to be interpreted as evidence of hostility toward the movement and its aims";

(e) ENACTING a programme, in which concrete steps are taken systematically to alter the conditions of life, and to forge a new order; and

(f) ROUTINIZATION, when the programme and its results are successful and the new pattern of living becomes routine (Goodenough,1963,p.286).

Mosher (1965,pp.142-6), following Goodenough, identifies

six sequential steps also:

(a) INCREASE OF TENSION, when within the administration, dissatisfaction

and frustration intensify;

(b) SPARK, when some particular event ignite the already charged

atmosphere;

(c) REORGANIZATION STUDIES carried out by investigatory groups about

what should be done;

(d) THE REACHING OF DECISION, 'the consultation, negotiating, and

decision phase', which may coincide with the previous stage

or await feasibility studies;

(e) FEASIBILITY STUDIES, which consists of translating recommendations

into practical administrative techniques and planning implementation;

and

(f) IMPLEMENTATION.

For our purpose here, the six major sequential steps in

administrative reform identified by Goodenough and Mosher will be

combined and reduced to four broad phases:

(a) Awareness of need or diagnosis;

(b) Formulation of goals and objectives, Strategy and Tactics or

Planning Action;

(c) Implementation of reforms or Implementing Action; and

(d) Evaluation.

Each of these steps is characterized by the need for top-level decisions

and adequate resources for its fulfilment.   The initial decision to

make a global diagnosis is not enough.   For this diagnosis to serve as

the basis for a programme of action, it must be followed by a further

decision fixing priorities on the basis of the needs considered most

urgent by the reformers.   In some cases, this decision will permit

the instrumentation of the infrastructure for reform mechanisms,

but new and specific decisions are required in order to implement the

recommendations formulated by such mechanisms.   Each step changes

the preceding situation, and constitutes definite progress that

calls in turn for new decisions.   What is called for is actually

a chain of decisions as in Figures 1.2 and 1.3

Figure 1.2

AWARENESS OF NEED

EVALUATION   FORMULATION OF GOALS
                                     AND STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION
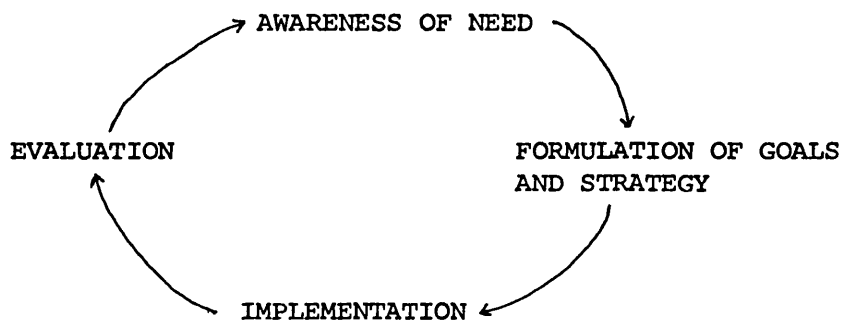
AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

According to Lawrence and Lorsch, a diagnosis should indicate

the symptoms which have to be translated into a "coherent picture

on the basis of which action can be planned and carried out with a

reasonable assurance that objectives will be achieved" (Lawrence

and Lorsch, 1969, p.85).   Thus administrative reform is needed where

change is insufficient to keep an administration abreast of development,

and performance gaps appear - that is, "a significant discrepancy

exists between what it is doing and what it 'ought' to be doing"

(Downs,1967, p.191).   The conditions which necessitate administrative

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THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM PROCESS
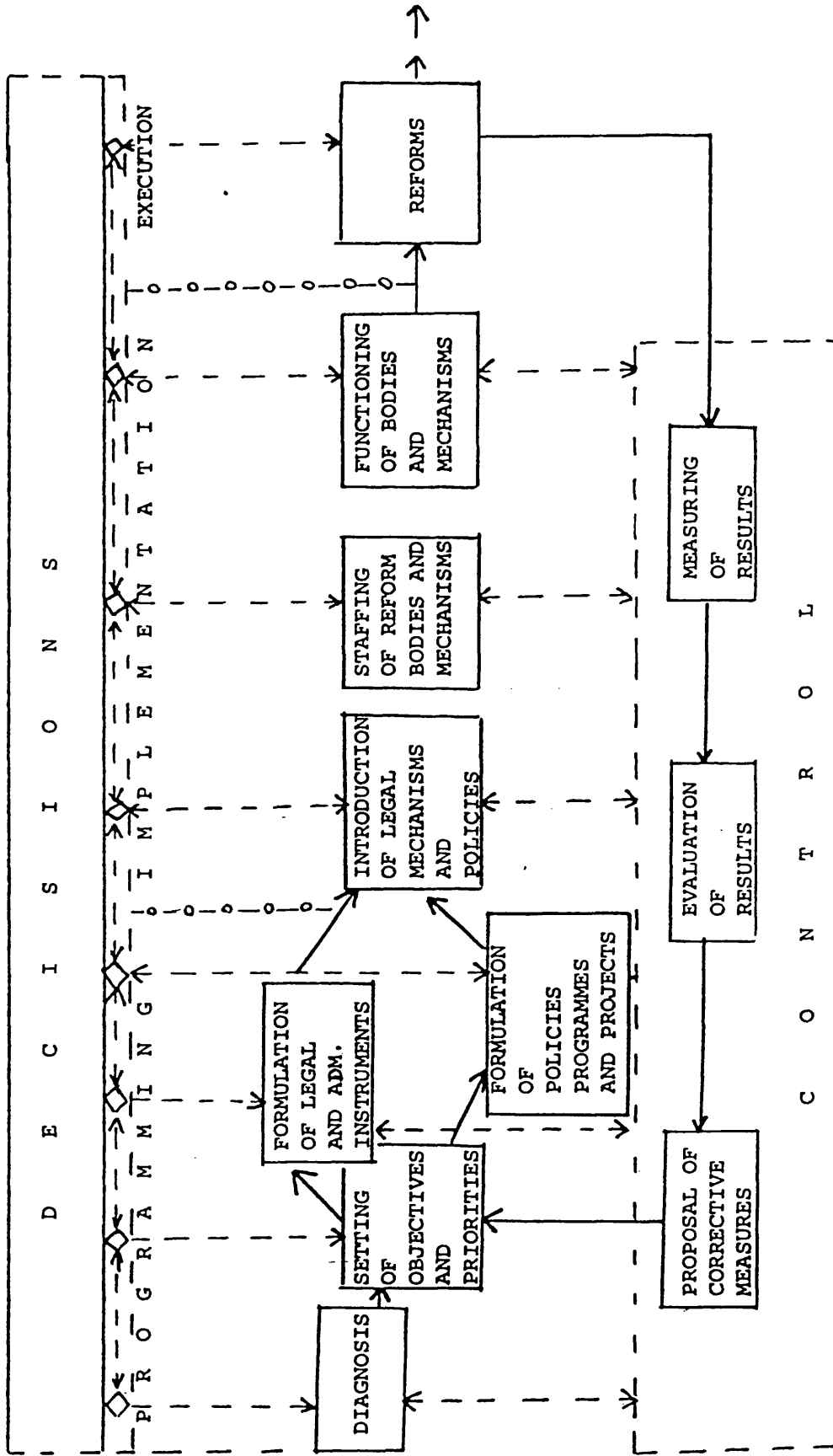
Source: Castro, 1976, p.192   FIGURE 1.3:

reform are the following:

(a) The take-over of power through revolution or otherwise, by

political groups who differ strongly from those previously in office;

(b) (Semi-) revolutionary developments inspired by violent

dissatisfaction with the operations of the machinery of government

including the bureaucracy;

(c) Grave developments in the environment such as war (or threat

of war), economic depression, sharp demands which have strong political

support (for example, for the autonomy of parts of the country);

(d) The need for drastic cuts in government expenditure;

(e) 'Maladministration' which does not clearly affect the relationship

with the environment but is perceived as excessive annoyance by groups

within the government (Leemans, 1976, pp.16-17).   Thus, the

awareness of administrative reform arises when the components of an

administrative system become maladjusted.

Combination of a number of different and identifiable factors

over a period of time will push for major structural and behavioural

changes to rectify the defects in the existing administrative system.

These are:

Growth in the size of the clientele served;   changes in problems and

needs and, therefore, in organizational programmes and responsibilities;

changing philosophy as to the proper responsibilities of governments;

(result of) new equipment and advancing knowledge; changing and

usually rising qualifications of personnel (that is, increasing need

for specialists);   basic policy changes at top level forces change

(Mosher, 1967, pp.494-96).

This phase (Diagnosis) not only calls for an analysis and diagnosis

of the administrative situation but also the selection and

indication by authorities of administrative reform of priorities

within this framework; and the determination of means (normative

instruments and bodies responsible for orientation, co-ordination,

execution and evaluation of reforms) and measures (policies, programme

and projects) with which to achieve the chosen objectives.

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Although administrative reform is universal, it is conditioned

by a number of variables: specific local needs, availability

of different resources, historic traditions and indigenous political

culture. Before we can say that a reform is a success or

otherwise, it is therefore necessary not only to consider these

variables, but also we must clarify the aggregate goals of the

administrative reform. When the awareness for reform is clearly

felt and understood, the logical step that follows is to decide what

needs to be done and how that can be accomplished. No reform

process can be complete without a clear perception of the role of

goals and strategies within it. There is a clear consensus among

practitioners and academicians that desired goals for any administrative

reform must be set as clearly and as early as possible. It is

essential in order to determine the appropriate strategies. Also,

without specification of goals, it will not be possible to determine

the extent of success or failure of the reform.

Dror (1976, pp.129-130) mentions six paramount goal clusters that

inform reforms:

, (a) Traditional 'administrative efficiency' in the sense of saving money through form simplification, procedure change, duplication reduction and through similar organization and methods approaches;

(b) changing a particular main component of the administrative system so as to meet some ideal image. This again includes a large variety of main goals such as: introduction of a merit civil service; introduction of a planning-programming-budgetting system; moving towards automated data processing and integrated data and information banks;

(c) reduction of perceived weaknesses, such as corruption, favouritism, political spoils etc;

(d) adjusting the administrative system to advancing over-riding societal objectives, such as accelerated modernization;

(e) changing the division of labour (functions) between the administrative system and the political system. For instance, either in the direction of reducing the power of the senior civil service and making it a more obedient servant of the political process or increasing the professional autonomy of the administrative system and strengthening its influence on policy;

(f) changing the relations between the administrative system and the population or selected population segments. For instance, through relocation of decision centres ('centralization versus decentralization'), 'democratization' in the sense of participation, and 'democratization' in the sense of making the personnel composition more reflective of various population segments. Of course administrative reform can be for purely political motives, such as making administration serve as a scapegoat, gaining support through distributing spoils.

Dror rightly says that administrative reform is a multi-goal-oriented endeavour which necessitates categorization of objectives.

Objectives can be divided into external and internal categories.
This typology has the advantage of indicating the nature of the reform
suggested. Dror, following the same line of thinking, distinguishes
between the two principal categories: (a) "intra-administration
directed goals which are primarily concerned with improving the
administration, and (b) objectives dealing with the societal roles
of the administrative system and its interrelation with other components
of the policymaking system and even of society as a whole" (Dror,1976,
p.130). Goal clusters, a,b,and c above are examples of goals which
are intra-administration directed, while d,e and f are examples of
administrative reform goals dealing with the societal roles of the
administrative system, and with changing policies and programmes.

In many circumstances, internal and external goals remain closely
interrelated and pose problems to efforts which intend to differentiate
between them (see, for example, Mosher,1967,p.497). The former are
usually set as means towards the greater attainment of external goals,
that is, to realise certain societal situations or relationships, or
to increase and improve outputs. External goals have been specified
in general terms in administrative reform programmes in many countries.
These mostly concern the overhauling of the administrative system to
accelerate wide-ranging social and economic development. At the same
time, political realities must be taken into consideration in setting
objectives. Internal objectives have been associated with the
attainment of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness within an
organizational context. Reduction of unnecessary governmental
expenditure on trivial administrative activities has been another
objective of administrative reform. All these are intended to bring
about significant improvements in administrative systems.

Experience has shown that there is a lot of difference between
formal or official goals and informal and individual goals of particular

reformers which sometimes may be not only dissimilar but contradictory.

Commenting on the Philippine experiences in administrative reform,

Dr.Josef Abueva charges that undeclared goals of reformers were personal

advancement, empire-building, and elimination of rivals (Abueva,1970,

pp.45-47).   Caiden therefore draws some conclusions from the range of

objectives and goals: (a) Reform objectives are not necessarily objective

and reform proposals are not necessarily subjective;

(b) complex radical reforms need more time and instruction to implement

than simpler incremental reforms;

(c) initial steps in reform implementation are judged more critically

than later stages, once expectations and promises seem to be in the

process of realisation;

(d) reforms are more likely to be accepted (1) if they are tailored to

local circumstances, implemented through existing institutions, and

invite local participation (emphasis mine); (2) if existing institutions

and practices are not condemned out of hand, that is, if attention is

given to extolling the virtues of reform rather than the defects of the

unreformed;   and (3) if they are based on critical rather than uncritical

nonoperationalism;

(e) it is easier to draft proposals and plans than to execute them.

The wider the range of reform sources the more likely that the proposals

will not coincide (Caiden, 1970,pp.142-3).

Strategy

According to the United Nations Report, "the frequency with which

administrative reform efforts had failed in the past demonstrated the

difficulty of making them effective without good reform strategies and

the importance of devising appropriate strategies to carry them out"

(United Nations, 1973, Vol.1,p.13).   Strategy is one of those

elements in the process of administrative reform whose significance

is well recognized, but at the same time little effort has been made

until recently to circumscribe it (see Chin and Benne, 1969,pp.32-59).

This problem is complicated by the 'elusiveness' of the concept, because

different reformers use different strategies. No two persons have

similar thoughts, experience, knowledge and values about what strategy

to employ for administrative reform. Though they examine identical

social phenomenon, they view it differently:

> People will define the meaning of a situation differently, they
> will come up with different evaluations, they will derive or
> impute different norms and certainly they will feel about the
> situation in many, many different ways and intensities
> (Meadows, 1963, p.87).

The rejection of the validity of a universal strategy for the

management of administrative reform is also emphasized by Leemans.

"The place and role of the machineries and their sub-systems in the

politico-administrative system and in society at large, their internal

structures and relationships, their political and administrative cultures

and patterns of behaviour, vary too much to allow a strategy with

universal applicability" (Leemans,1976, p.46). Similarly, Lawrence

and Lorsch suggest that the desired reform model for a certain case

should be conditional on the task to be done, the environmental conditions

to be handled, and the characteristics of the individual contributors

involved (1969,p.88). Dror hypothesises that "the preferable mix of

administrative reform strategies is in the main a function of the concrete

circumstances of each particular reform" (Dror,1976,p.127).

The rejection of universal strategies should not stop us from

designing strategic models for the management of administrative reform

which have some degree of validity for similar reform situations and

objects. Thus, Dror is one of the first scholars to undertake a

thorough study of strategy in the context of administrative reform and

to provide a conceptual framework for further elaboration and
clarification.   He defines it as 'mega-policies' which lays down "the
framework of guidelines and the boundaries of policy space within which
operational and detailed policies are to be established and decisions
are to be made" (Dror, 1976,p.126).   Strategy implies defining the
goal boundaries of a desired or intended activity, as opposed to
'tactics' which refer to details of policy programmes (Leemans,1976,
p.42;   see also, Mosher,1967,p.502).

In conformity with our definition, strategies in the context of
local government reform must therefore deal with issues such as:

> overall goals of administrative reforms;   the boundaries of
> administrative reforms;   preference in respect of time, risk,
> acceptability;   choice between more incremental or more
> innovative reform;   preference for more balanced versus more
> shock directed reforms;   relevant assumptions on the future;
> theoretic (trait or explicit) assumptions on which the reform
> is based;   resources available for the administrative reform;
> and the range of feasible reform instruments (Dror,1976,p.126).

Strategies have also been viewed from a sequential, logical angle
which presupposes careful consideration of several factors which sometimes
must be carried out simultaneously.   These are as follows:

(a) Research and analysis of the current situation;

(b) analysis and discussion leading to general consensus on needs and goals;

(c) forecasting of the future setting of public administration,
including the political, economic and social environment, and the
probable availability of resources to administration, as well as to
its reform;

(d) development of alternative plans of administrative reform;   and
analysis of their costs and benefits, including social costs and benefits;

(e) decision to proceed on best feasible plan;

(f) implementation;

(g) continuing feedback on consequences and modification of plan as
indicated (Grosnick and Mosher,1973,pp.11-13.).

In conclusion, we can say that the 'best' strategy for administrative reform is determined contextually, dependent on and dictated by the reform objectives, the 'human dimensions', and the special environment obtaining in a particular country; and the three most essential elements of strategy are: (a) determining the desired (provisional) situations and possible alternatives or variants; (b) determining the means by which this situation should be achieved; and (c) fixing the time dimension, that is, the period within which the desired situation should be realised (Leemans,1976,p.46).

IMPLEMENTATION

Caiden (1976,p.142) calls the implementation stage the achilles heel of administrative reform because most reforms fail at this stage. Experiences of India and Pakistan are good examples (Moharir,1976, pp.238-51; Gorvine,1966). As all reforms entail not only structural changes but also changes in mental and moral attitudes, people normally try to resist their implementation because they "prefer the familiar to the unknown,...the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss" (Oakeshott,1962,p.172). Moreover, any given organization which is internally integrated resists being changed and discourages changes in its context. "Survival is... the motif of any organization and stability is the sine qua non of organizational survival" (LePiere, 1954, p.329).

The age-old advice generally given to the reformer is to keep in mind the interests of politicians and various affected interests within the administrative system so as to obtain the support of these people to facilitate the implementation and success of the reforms. The blessing of political authorities and cooperation of civil servants

(those who perceive real or imaginary threats that they will be
adversely affected by the reform) are invaluable to overcome the
greatest hurdles to the success of any reform effort.   The difficult
position of the reformer in the context of reform implementation is
obvious:

> The reformers remain outsiders to the situation they are trying
> to improve.   They have no power, position, status to influence
> those who can change things or they have no access to people who
> do have influence, or they have no impact on people who have to
> be convinced.   Even highly prestigious bodies invested with the
> task of reform discover that nobody else really has any intention
> of doing anything about their proposals and they are being used to
> bury a burning issue, not for remedial action.   When reformers
> do something worthwhile to propose and action is intended, they find
> that administrative systems are extremely conservative, no matter
> what the recognised value of their suggestion (Caiden,1976,p.142).

The high attrition rate in the implementation of major administrative
reforms has been considered as one of the most complex and frustrating
problems faced by the scholars in the area.   In response to the
situation, two things have happened.   On the one hand, deliberate
attempts have been made to identify and analyse those factors and
situations which prevent the implementation of reforms.   On the other
hand, strategies have been developed to facilitate the process of
implementation.   As we said earlier on, the choice of strategies
depends on a host of factors, such as the formulated goals, the extent
of reform to be initiated, the nature of existing transformations within
society, and the intentions of the reformers - to carry out reform with
or without general consensus, with or without the use of force, and
through existing channels or otherwise.

Using case studies drawn from many countries in the continents
of Africa, Asia and Latin America, Caiden gives a list of factors and
situations which must not only be understood but avoided as these result
in the failure of major administrative reforms: A bad beginning;
imitation, not innovation; incorrect diagnosis; hidden intentions;
indecisive approach; faulty planning; unduly restrictive techniques and

instrumentalities; inability to command resources; absence of
feedback; no monitoring; evaluation ignored; and goal displacement
(Caiden,1976,pp.145-164).

Lee is one of those few who have tried time and again to
come up with a strategy which will increase the probability of success
of any reform effort. He considers the degree of implementation as a
function of the social environment,the political structure, the reform
agents, the reform agency, and the reform strategy (Lee,1970,pp.77-89).
He also posits two reform implementation strategies: (a) the comprehensive,
and (b) the selective. A comprehensive strategy can be implemented if
the leadership of reform agents and the internal structure of the reform
agency are strong and if the social environment and political structure
are favourable. A selective strategy can be implemented if either:
(1) the leadership is strong but the situation is unfavourable, or
(2) the situation is favourable but the leadership is weak. It follows,
then, if the leadership is weak and, at the same time, the situation is
unfavourable, no strategy can be expected to be effective. In Lee's
matrix, time and leadership are two crucial variables which deserve wider
attention.

Lee (1976,pp.114-125) attempts to relate the types of reforms and
the kinds of existing bureaucracies. He argues on the basis of the
experience of many countries that programmatic reforms have better
probabilities of success as these admirably suit the needs of closed
bureaucracies which can be found in most of the developing countries.
In other words, to enhance the possibilities of implementation,
reformers must have a clear understanding of the nature, type, and
objective of reform as well as the stage of bureaucratic development,
as in Table 1.1 below.

TABLE 1.1:

REFORM TYPES	REFORM OBJECTIVES	KINDS OF BUREAUCRACIES
Programmatic	Improved Performance	Closed
Technical Programmatic	Improved Methods Improved Performance	Mixed
Procedural	Improved Order	Open

Source: Lee, 1976,p.118.

Bhutani goes farther than Lee and asserts that the creation of a conducive environment for the facilitation of the process of reform implementation presupposes the creation, sustenance and spread of appropriate attitudes in men who matter most - men who occupy positions in the administrative hierarchy from where the consequences of good or bad leadership emerge and permeate the entire structure (Bhutani,1966, pp.612-17). Bhutani suggests some ways by which reforms can be implemented with speed and effectiveness. These are: (a) implementors must get involved in the process as early as practicable; (b) an adequate agency for follow-up action must be established; (c) the urge to improve must come from within (whether from an individual or from the organization where reform is introduced) to have lasting improvements; and (d) extreme care must be taken in the choice and training of personnel meant to undertake the implementation of reforms.

Backoff (1974,pp.85-94), through the use of an innovative framework, employs the characteristics of administrative reform to predict the prospect of success in implementing major administrative reforms. The characteristics are: scope, magnitude of change, sequence of change, goals or objectives, reform instrument or means, and evaluation criteria. It is hypothesized that the greater the comprehensiveness, complexity, and magnitude of changes, the lesser the probability of implementation

as there will be more resistance-organized or institutionalised.

Caiden (1970,pp.144-156) suggests four methods of implementation:

(a) Reforms imposed through political revolution: Political changes
are likely to induce sweeping administrative reforms especially among
the upper reaches of the administration (politicians and administrators)
during a radical transformation of the power elite, as, for instance,
a violent revolution or a military take-over, particularly if the new
elite is ideologically motivated and inclined to totalitarianism;

(b) reforms introduced to remedy organizational rigidity: The
principal instrument of contemporary administration is the bureaucracy,
whose institutionalised behaviour pattern embodied in legal codes may
have a life of its own independent of the people who staff it. This
rigidity leads to stresses and strains which in turn lead to internal
demands for administrative reforms. Flexibility can be introduced
internally. First, administrators are constantly reshuffled. No one
is permitted to remain in the same job long enough to stamp his
personality on the organization. New men are tried all the time. Second,
more emphasis is placed on research and projection. Third, steps are
taken to prevent excessive rigidity (and of course excessive flexibility)
in structure and regulations. Fourth, initiative, creativity,
suggestions, and innovations are encouraged by example, and by incentives
and promotional schemes. Fifth, boredom is combatted through job
turnover, rotation, and joint ownership schemes. Sixth, greater
responsiveness is promoted by public relations, consumer research, and
complaint units;

(c) reforms through the legal system: One of the most obvious ways of
getting somebody else to do what one wants them to do is to have a law
passed. The law, in fact, is becoming an increasingly important method
for implementing administrative reforms;

(d) reforms through changes in attitude: Lasting reforms cannot depend on the superiority of power or the coercion of non-believers. Ultimately those who resist reforms have to be won over in spirit as well as body. Their attitudes must change or be changed. To change people's behaviour, "it is necessary to change also their thinking and their attitudes, to anticipate and to seek out anxieties, to talk difficulties out in a kind of mental therapy" (Dimock,1959,p.239). Participation unfreezes attitudes, encourages positive responses, permits more balanced interactions, and reduces resistance.

The writings of Cohen, Caiden, Backoff, Lee and others, have greatly helped to clarify and operationalise the complexities that are found in the process of implementation, yet sizeable gaps differentiate pious assumptions from the happenings in real world in the study of administrative reform. Sometimes the gap is too great to distinguish between the ideal and the real, which eventually seriously dampens the prospect of implementation of reforms.

Caiden crystallises the assumptions generally made, consciously or unconsciously:

> First, that the government has recognised the need to improve
> its performance and is determined to do something effective;
> second that the government has appointed acknowledged experts
> to identify the weakest points and to concentrate on those
> remedies likely to have the widest application; third, that the
> experts with government backing are able to conduct full inquiries
> and publicise their efforts, whether in temporary ad hoc
> commissions or more lasting institutional arrangements; and fourth,
> that the experts are capable of doing a competent job (Caiden,
> 1976,p.144).

In practice, things do not exactly follow the idealistic routine. Many governments only pay lip-service to reforms and have no real desire to see major reforms take place but would like to talk about it because of political gains involved. The reform bodies are mostly manned by incompetent people. Serious efforts are seldom made to maintain a balance between politicians, bureaucrats, academicians, and other

outside experts when members are chosen. This uneven composition results in recommendations which are impractical and difficult to implement. Bureaucratic attitudes have not changed, which prompts the perpetuation of negative and hostile attitudes towards any mention of change. Changes are always feared and frowned upon. Reformers have to be extremely fortuitous to expect co-operation from bureaucrats under these circumstances. And cooperation of bureaucrats is necessary to study the situation and eventually to make recommendations for change. Sometimes reformers are not qualified to perform the job that they undertake.

But it may be assumed that the above mentioned gap between the ideal and the real can be narrowed considerably and the task of implementation will be smoother if the government gives serious attention to three types of actions: First, a well-defined and bold policy, a firm decision on the part of political leadership in power to carry out the reforms accepted by it. Second, there is the need for adequate institutional arrangements and safeguards for implementation of reforms. Third, there is an operational plan to push ahead with the implementation of the accepted reforms.

EVALUATION

Unless administrative reforms are evaluated, the process is incomplete. Administrative reforms cannot be understood nor evaluated apart from the objectives that they endeavour to achieve. Yet to take the reformers at their word is unscientific, certainly distorting. They should be judged by their deeds alone. Their contribution may be quite marginal. "Their egotistical stance may detract from the 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' who work unobtrusively in the background, yet have a greater impact on the course of events than fleeting reforms" (Caiden, 1970, pp.159-160). Moreover, the reformers might

probably have seen only a part of the whole or they might have
misunderstood the situation completely.   Furthermore, reformers
often declare romantic objectives like democracy and efficiency to
veil their undeclared intentions such as more power to the central
government; reform may be an overt strategy designed to place the
control of government in particular hands - a strategy that is seen as
necessary and possible by certain groups at particular points in time when
they feel that they are not winning, and cannot win, within the
established rules of the governmental game.

Attempts to evaluate administrative reform involve serious
methodological problems.   Caiden (1970,pp.157-158) catalogues a
number of these problems.   First, reform is not an end in itself.
Should its success be measured by its contribution to the ultimate
objectives of administrative performance?   Even if reforms improve end
performance, what if the end products do not contribute to social
efficiency or the public interest?   Second, what constitutes success
in reform?   Is it the full realization or achievement of the reformers'
original objectives?   Is it any improvement on the status quo,
irrespective of costs?   Third, how much of the success can be attributed
to the reformers, directly and indirectly?   How much is due to factors
beyond their control?   Is the success merely on paper or have the
reformers established built-in desires to ensure continuation?   Fourth,
is it possible to allow for differences between declared and real aims,
between positive and negative aims?   Fifth, what time limit should
be allowed if results are not immediately forthcoming?   What about
delayed reactions and cumulative effects?   How long do the seeds of
reform take to grow and ripen?   Sixth, how can charisma be measured
when the reformer has personally won over his opponents through patience,
cheerfulness, tact, and laconism?   Finally, could the reform effort
have been used more profitably in other directions?   What were the

better alternatives and were they considered?   Could more have been achieved at very little extra cost if the reformers had not stopped where they did?

Rarely does the nature of the evidence allow researchers to attempt answers to these methodological problems.   Such factors as motivation, morale, and subconscious feelings are beyond recall soon after the event.   Rarely do reformers keep a full diary of events. In search of greater accuracy, researchers must be prepared to enter areas in which revelations are harmful and persistent inquiry is discouraged.   But to stop short at this point is to court bias and contradiction.   To evaluate only part of the evidence is hardly satisfactory or satisfying.

Furthermore, appraisal is not the exclusive right of reformers and reformed.   Reformers may not be representative of the society or the situation.   They are likely to be 'outsiders', elite aspirants, highly educated, politically sensitive, probably holding influential positions or closely connected with power holders.   Their expectations are likely to be higher than most.   Even if their aspirations are not met, the results may be pleasing nonetheless to different groups - elite, administrative conservatives, reformed, clientele - for different reasons. The final judgement, therefore, should be with the ordinary men and women whom the entire administrative apparatus is designed to serve. Unfortunately evaluation of this kind is the most neglected aspect in reform implementation.   Given articulate public opinion, administrative secrecy, autocratic institutions and sporadic, isolated and uncoordinated efforts to improve performance, there is hardly any strong movement in favour of administrative reform in any country, and people who would like to see better administration do not know what practical steps to take to make their demands felt.

But there is a brighter side.   The achievements of reformers are

observable, and it is possible to compare the end results with

the original aims.   Productivity and the general level of services

can be measured, as most organizations endeavour to ascertain their

performance according to known criteria (though these may not be the

most accurate or reliable of guides).   Costs and expenditures are

usually readily available.   On the basis of these and other known

facts, researchers are endeavouring to measure organizational efficiency,

social costs, the efficacy of decision-making, the quality of policy-

planning, morale, job satisfaction, organizational loyalty, centralization,

specialization, and so forth.   It is also not difficult to discover

whether vice, corruption, and waste have been eliminated and whether

behavioural patterns have changed.   The records and working papers

of reformers and of organizations responsible for surveys of

administration are mostly available.   The accumulation of this

material should in time provide solutions to methodological problems.

Nevertheless, evaluation depends largely on its purposes – the questions

in which the evaluator is most interested, such as contribution to

development, increase in local skills, improvement in social welfare,

higher levels of satisfaction, greater dynamism (or self-sustained

growth), and rate of circulation of new ideas.   The results will differ

correspondingly.

CONCLUSION

We have said that we will study administrative reform as a process

because the sequential trend will enable us to look into both behavioural

and structural aspects of administrative reform.   The structural

aspect will be invaluable in our analysis of the administrative system,

while the behavioural will elucidate the human variable in the reform

process.   The relationship between reformer and target becomes a

central issue, not only for the initial structuring of the relationship,

but also for the way in which the reformer goes about studying the problem, gathering information, coming to conclusions and making recommendations. He must not only arrive at good answers but must work in a way that is consistent with the desired changes. In other words, to study administrative reform as a process also includes studying it as a 'system' because we can see the interaction between and among individuals and organizations and thereby of the dynamics of administrative behaviour.

We will therefore study local government reforms in Nigeria and Britain in the light of the aforementioned sequential steps: Diagnosis, Objectives and Strategy,Implementation,and Evaluation. To do this, we will test the various hypotheses of reform in the light of local government reform efforts in both countries, and of course try to formulate our own hypotheses and make recommendations.

In his analysis of the diagnostic stage, Downs concludes that administrative reform becomes necessary when change is insufficient to keep an administration abreast of development, and performance gaps appear, that is, "a significant discrepancy exists between what it is doing and what it 'ought' to be doing" (Downs, 1967,p.191). Of course the maladjustment of the components of an administrative system becomes acute and recognisable when a political group who differs strongly from those previously in office take over power. Thus a diagnosis of the administrative system becomes necessary when it is thought to be inefficient and ineffective; when it cannot meet current demands or when the impact of growth takes it by surprise. Other factors that necessitate administrative reform are said to include growth in the type and size of the clientele served; changes in problems and needs, and, therefore, in organizational programmes as to the proper responsibilities of governments; (result of) new equipment and

advancing knowledge; and changing and usually rising qualifications

of personnel (that is, increasing need for specialists). Thus, was

local government reform necessary in Nigeria and Britain because

unchanging social values could no longer be realised through an outdated

administrative system? Or had values changed so that reform was

needed? That is, was administrative reform necessary because the

administration could not keep abreast of development?

The determination of necessary answers to these hypothetical

questions about the need for reform will lead us to the next stage of

administrative reform: formulation of goals and strategies. We had

referred to Dror's categorization of goal clusters: intra-

administration directed goals such as the attainment of economy,

efficiency and effectiveness within an organizational context, reduction

of corruption and favouritism, introduction of a merit civil service

and introduction of a planning-programming-budgetting system. His

second category deals with external objectives which mostly concern the

overhauling of the administrative system to accelerate wide-ranging

social and economic development. Again, the questions we will address

ourselves to are: What are the objectives of the 1976 (Britain,1974)

local government reforms? Are the reform objectives given by Mosher,

Caiden, Dror and others equally applicable to a developing country

(Nigeria) as well as a developed country (Britain)?

Scholars of administrative reform agree that for a reform process

to be successful, appropriate strategies are invaluable. Unfortunately

there is no universal strategy for administrative reform because every

reform must relate to the socio-economic, political and cultural

environment of the country. How valid is the assertion that there

can be no reform strategy with universal applicability? Since

the formulation of an appropriate strategy depends also on the goals

of the reform, and since the reform goals of Britain and Nigeria

differ only in a few cases such as the need for national stability in

Nigeria, can we therefore have similar strategy?   To what extent has

Nigeria tried to forge its own strategy?

The implementation stage is normally referred to as the achilles

heel of administrative reform because most reform efforts collapse

at this stage.   Did the pre-1976 (pre-1974,Britain) local government

reforms in Nigeria fail because the power or will to carry out the

reforms were absent on the part of the political leaders?   How true

is Lee's hypothesis that time and leadership are two crucial variables

in reform implementation?   And is it true that the greater the

comprehensiveness,complexity, and magnitude of changes, the lesser the

probability of implementation?

The last stage, evaluation, is very important in administrative

reform.   Unless administrative reforms are evaluated, the process

is not complete.   But how objective can an evaluation of a reform be?

Must we base our evaluation on the reformer's goal or the people's

feelings and attitudes?   That is, whose definition of 'success' should

we accept?   Do the end products of the reforms contribute to the

stated goals such as democracy, efficiency, national stability and

economic development?   Did the reformers stick to the reform objectives?

The hypotheses we have posed for ourselves will be tested in the

main body of the thesis.   Our analysis will concentrate on the post-war

local government reforms but especially the 1974 and 1976 reforms in

Britain and Nigeria respectively.   And our observation will lead us

to formulate our own hypothesis for local government reform and local

development in Nigeria.

In order to understand the changing structure of local government

in Nigeria and Britain, and the origins of their ailments and criticisms,

it is pertinent to give a brief historical description of local

government in both countries.   Then we will examine the major social,

economic and political changes that have affected the structures

before the recent reforms, and finally the process of local government

reorganization since the Second World War will be considered.

CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: NIGERIA AND BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

> The mastery of any field of political science
> involves some knowledge of institutional
> history (Munro, 1913,p.1).

In order to understand how local government in Nigeria and

Britain came to be as it was at the time of the 1976 and 1974 reforms

respectively, and especially the origins of their defects and criticisms,

it is essential to go into a brief historical perspective of both countries.

NIGERIA

We shall endeavour to examine the local government system, including

Indirect Rule, in Nigeria prior to independence in 1960.   However, we

will need a brief survey of the administrative machinery in Nigeria before

the advent of the British.   This will throw some light on the working,

and our understanding of Indirect Rule and the pre-independence structure

of local government.

Nigeria was not a single country before the advent of the British,

but she was made up of numerous independent states of differing area and

population, some of them under powerful Emirs and Obas (as in the northern

and western parts of the country respectively), and some very small

states with representative governments such as those of the eastern Nigeria,

the Delta area and the so-called 'Middle Belt'.

The large states in the north and west were centred around the Obas

and the Emirs who were powerful rulers with vassals in the distant rural

areas of their kingdom.   These vassals or representatives had to pay

tribute and regular taxes to the ruler.   In the north, the Emir ruled

with a few advisers and usually his district representatives were his

friends, relations or sons. They were answerable to him and held

office at the pleasure of the autocratic Emir.

Whereas the southern part of Nigeria has had contact with various

European peoples, northern Nigeria had been more or less a 'terra

incognita' to the various European peoples until the turn of the present

century. Hitherto, the emirates of northern Nigeria had had most,

if not all, of their connections with North Africa and the old Sudanese

Kingdoms.

The administrative structure in the north was hierarchical in character

with the Emir or Chief at the top, counselled, and assisted by his

traditional councillors such as the Waziri (vizier), Madaki, the commander-

in-chief of the armed forces, and various such others who resided in the

emirate headquarters with the Emir. The emirate was divided into

territorial fiefs and to each fief a District Head was appointed who was

responsible to the Emir for the administration of the area. As the chief

representative of the Emir, he was primarily responsible for the maintenance

of law and order, collection of taxes and served as 'eyes and ears' of the

Emir in the area. The districts were further divided into smaller

units called villages and still into smaller units called hamlets. The

Village and the Hamlet Heads were responsible to the District Head and

they were delegated with responsibility of tax collection in their areas

of jurisdiction and also the maintenance of law and order.

In addition to the Emir's court which represented the highest court

of appeal in the emirate, there was in each district a local Muslim judge

well trained in Muslim law. Recruitment into the ruling group was purely

on personal basis, nobility, nepotism and favouritism, except for the

Muslim judges who were more often than not appointed on merit.

In western Nigeria, the Oba was a constitutional monarch who ruled

with the advice of his chiefs and these chiefs represented different

quarters of his domain. An Oba owed his obaship to his chiefs who

could remove him if they lost confidence in him.   It was "an oligarchy

which responded to public opinion which had a great respect for constitutional

authority but could revolt if driven too far by any oppressive acts of the

authority" (Orewa, 1966,p.1).

In eastern Nigeria, the village rather than the clan was the common

unit of government, and the existence of powerful rulers such as the Obi

of Onitsha, was due to the influence from Benin.   What at first appears

to be rigid conventions in Ibo culture invariably turn out to be the

ritual framework within which debate and questioning was carried on.

The revenue collected by the central government was not used to

provide services for the local areas.   The provision of roads, building

of town halls, even the policing of the area against night marauders, were

all provided by the local people at the village level.   The concept of

age grade (see chapter 9) was fully utilized, the young ones provided

communal labour such as in building roads while the elders settled petty

disputes, leaving serious ones to the Oba's or Emir's court.

PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATION OF INDIRECT RULE

The British government did not make any systematic attempt to

administer Nigeria until 1903 when Lugard subjugated northern Nigeria,

and introduced initially to that part of the country and later to the

rest of Nigeria a philosophy of public administration popularly known as

indirect rule.   This philosophy is "the system by which the tutelary

power recognizes existing African societies and assists them to adopt

themselves to the functions of local government" (Hailey,1957,p.155).

The existing African societies referred to were the 'native authorities'

and they were to be guided in the formidable task of adaptation to the

functions of local government (certainly not the traditional functions

by implication) by British administrators.

Harold Laski argued that the British administrative service did not welcome innovation, and was positively hostile to the idea of civil liberty. African criticism of British rule was regarded as sedition (Laski, 1938,p.546). The criticism was sometimes linked with the important question of the irresponsible nature of colonial rule, due to the fact that neither the British parliament nor the British electorate showed any continuous interest in African affairs. In spite of the theory of trusteeship, "in (Nigeria), Europeans are masters and Africans servants. The vast majority of Europeans in Africa believe that relationship to be an integral part of the natural order of human society" (Leys,1931,p.102). Leys argued that this lack of administrative responsibility, which would have been a reality in a democratic self-governing community, had led to a denial of ordinary rights and liberties to Africans.

It was argued by supporters of Leninist theories of imperialism that indirect rule was simply a device for keeping Africans in a position from which they could be readily exploited. Other critics of the imperial policy believed that the system had its origins in racist beliefs which held Africans incapable of governing through any institutions other than their own 'inferior' ones. A close analysis of various theories advocating indirect rule suggests that its supporters did in fact believe in the unique quality of British political life, the institutions of which could not be transferred successfully to other people. According to the myth which had grown up about the exploits of the British imperial administration, the people of the colonies were governed much better than they could hope to govern themselves, by men who belonged to the elite of a society which had long accepted the responsibility for governing less fortunate or inferior people (Zimmern,1934,pp.102-3). All

indirect rule arguments envisaged only very gradual change, the

prevention of political disruption which might lead to social chaos,

and a future which would take care of itself.   By their emphasis on

the danger of rapid social change, they bolstered indirect rule theories.

The Northern Region and Indirect Rule

The Fulani Empire collapsed under the modern weaponry of Lugard in

1903.   Lugard then installed British residents at the main towns in

the north.   Lugard was impressed with the efficiency of the Emirs as

rulers.   He therefore reappointed them as administrators of their

peoples, only restricting them from slave dealing and other inhuman practices,

from the establishment of armed forces, and from feudal rights over land.

As Campbell puts it, "the Muslim theocratic states possessed an admirable

administrative pattern upon which to build an effective local government

structure.   They had an organized form of taxation; they possessed a

separate judiciary of professional judges and the kingdom was divided

into administrative sub-areas, each under the control of an

appointed executive"(1965,p.115; see also,Kirk-Greene, 1965).

It is important that Lugard did agree to retain the Fulani system even on

an experimental basis.   In his anxiety to utilize the wonderful

intelligence of the 'born rulers' and to solicit their cooperation,

Lugard allowed, however, even when he allegedly insisted on good government

and justice, the Fulani system to remain as a permanent basis of British

colonial administration in northern Nigeria.   His insistence on good

government and justice, whatever these mean because of the different

cultural orientations of the Fulani islamic government and the British

western ideas of government and justice, brought into the indirect rule

picture what I consider to be the kingpin of the system, namely the

British administrative officer who was to assist and guide the Fulani Emirs

and chiefs along the road to good government and justice.

Lugard and subsequent colonial administrators decided to maintain
the Fulani system for personal and logistic reasons which were more
important than the anxiety to utilize the wonderful intelligence of the
'born rulers'.   As Cowan observed:

> Lugard used Indirect Rule primarily as a matter of political
> necessity and not of theory since his administrative staff at
> the beginning totalled eleven officers for the entire area.
> Indeed, even as late as 1921 there were only one political
> officer for every 80,000 inhabitants in the Northern provinces.
> Neither the finances nor the personnel were available for
> direct administration.....(Cowan,1958,pp.12-13).

One is therefore tempted from the foregoing that the indirect rule
system of administration, already used in India and Fiji, was a child of
expediency, a makeshift policy ennobled from being just an expedient
in times of financial hardship and lack of staff to a complete philosophy
of government for Britain's colonial peoples.   The traditional
organization could only have been assisted and guided to adapt itself to
the modern functions of local government by orienting its essential
ingredients towards modern development.   On the contrary, in their
anxiety (I would add of necessity) to ensure optimum utilization of the
traditional organization for the purposes of indirect rule, Lugard and his
successors frantically attempted to preserve these ingredients - the Emir
and the chief, the Native Treasury, and the Native Courts - in cold storage.
And in fact, in the case of the chief the colonial administration introduced
a new phenomenon hitherto unheard of in the literature of indigenous
African administration, the title of 'sole chief' (abolished in 1952) without
reference obviously to any council with whom a chief was always traditionally
known to have been associated.   The colonial administration did not stop at
the introduction of this new phenomenon alone.   In the words of Lugard,

the essential feature of the system is that the native chiefs
are constituted 'as an integral part of the machinery of the
administration'.   There are not two sets of rulers - British
and native working either separately or in co-operation, but a
single Government in which the native chiefs have well-defined
duties and an acknowledged status equally with British officials
(Lugard,1965,p.203).

The consideration of the Emir as part and parcel of the colonial

government had the following implications: (a) it had the tendency of

isolating the chief from his traditional environment and making him solely

responsible to the colonial government for decisions taken affecting his

people; (b) one would tend to infer that since the chiefs were dependent

largely upon the administration in retaining their posts they acquiesced in

whatever proposal was presented to them by the latter without ascertaining

the wishes and interests of their people; (c) it would be impossible to

supervise them if they were part and parcel of the single Government;

and (d) it represented the strengthening of their position vis-a-vis

the people which meant weakening the traditional brakes upon the chiefs.

Henceforth, the Emir was to have a weak traditional council in a 20th

century setting.   This weak position of the council was further

exacerbated by the declared policy of the colonial administration to bar

the western educated elite which was the product of the social and

economic changes of the war and post-war periods from participating in

the political and administrative life of northern Nigeria.   Since

members of this group were drawn largely from the 'commoner class' they

were usually barred from political office under the traditional authority

system in which royal birth and nepotism were the primary criteria for

selection.   This had dual significance for the failure of local

government: not only was there a loss of potential talent, but there

was also created a group which had a high degree of political awareness

but was alienated from participation in legitimate political activity.

The position and the indispensability of the Resident in carrying

out the government policy can hardly be overemphasized.   He was the

backbone of the system, with the Emir just an arrow in his bow, and his

- duty was to act as a sympathetic adviser and counsellor to the native

chiefs.   It was a major responsibility, and a titanic task on his side

to educate the Emirs and direct them in their respective administrative

duties.   Beneath the Resident was the District Officer who supervised and

assisted the native rulers and district headmen.   He had full responsibility

to arrange for the carrying out of all departmental work of the government.

He heard appeals from native courts especially in cases relating to land

dispute.

Southern Nigeria and Indirect Rule

While Lugard busily engaged himself in the reconstruction of the north

under indirect rule, the west remained, enjoying no definite measure

of administrative control.   The extent of jurisdiction exercised over

the inhabitants by the government was vague.   Various states remained

independent under one treaty or the other with the British Government.

Residents were, however, posted to these states, but they possessed and

exercised powers no less than those of consulates.   Local administration

remained entirely the business of the indigenous authorities guided

and advised by the District Officer or Commissioner.   Judicial system

which then appealed to them as the sole machinery of administration received

particular attention.   There were three grades of courts, the Supreme

Court whose jurisdiction was extended to the Western Provinces in 1900,

Native Council, and Native Court.   The Native Council exercised,

primarily, judicial functions, having the District Commissioner at the

head of other members nominated by the High Commissioner.   The Native

Council had also power to make rules relating to modification of native

law, regulation and promotion of trade, and generally to maintain peace.

The court system never seemed to have proved an effective system of administration. The Native Council for instance could not be properly called 'native' since the court was nominated by the District Commissioner. The local officers of administration relied on the little powers vested on them in respect of the Native Council. On various occasions they were at sea to discern the policy of the government, or the extent of its executive powers. The Egbas, for instance, presented an anomalous position, where the government was carried out in the name of the Alake, who was himself illiterate, by an able and educated native.

The position of the south-eastern part of Nigeria was in fact unique. The measure of authority exercised by the government during this period, and even up to the time of amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Provinces was insignificantly infinitesimal. The coastal strips of this region, especially Bonny and Calabar had early contacts with the Europeans, but purely on commercial grounds. In order, at this time, to overcome the hazards that beset the British traders, the Home Government merely appointed a consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra. The consul dealt with commercial cases, though in cases concerning the natives, they acted in full collaboration with the native chiefs. By 1872, the consul and court of equity received legal recognition. After the provinces had come properly to the grip of British Government, the same court system was retained. Thus in 1906 a Native Council Ordinance provided for the establishment of Native Council or courts, with other minor subordinate courts. The jurisdiction of the native council was exactly as it was in the Western Provinces. The court became an executive arm of the government. The idea of warranting chiefs to attend the court sprang up.

The native court could hardly prove an effective administrative

organization; the native members had no real powers in the court, they were mere puppets. The court far from being the Commissioner's court was dominated by the court clerk who exploited the situation by lording it over illiterate warrant chiefs. Maintenance of justice became the hallmark of administration. Primary needs of the society were played down. The District Commissioner was most of the time preoccupied with other functions, that delegation was inevitably often made to the corrupt court clerks.

It would therefore appear that the success or otherwise of indirect rule very much depended upon the leadership qualities of the administrative officers - setting goals, clarifying objectives, etc. Unfortunately, however, not all 'political officers' were development oriented. The first phase of indirect rule from 1900-1925 saw some of the most influential officers develop a philosophy of indirect rule which was inimical to development. Brian Smith (1967,pp.32-33) noted the example of Charles Temple, one of the most distinguished Residents of the first decade of indirect rule. Temple believed that the duty of the British administrative officer was to preserve the social structure and cultures of indigenous societies from disrupting effects of contact with an alien civilization. The practical implications of this are not far to seek. Development plays a very secondary role to the business of creating local administration which might have existed under ideal conditions prior to British suzerainty. It should be observed at once that the tendency to 'preserve' the emirates in the cold storage was not only an attempt to back-pedal them which was antithetical to development, but also myopic which represented lack of managerial vision. It ought to have been clear, though not to Temple, that the effect of this would be to reinforce the suffocating blanket of tradition; that to the extent that the British had occupied northern Nigeria at all, it would have been

impossible for him and others of his ilk, to steer the tide of contact

with an alien civilization with all its disrupting effects; and that the

attempt to insulate the emirates from 'anything new' would operate towards

their stagnation.

One can therefore conclude, with some justification, that the role

of the administrative officer was in general negative, insisting upon the

preservation of the Native Authorities in very near their original form

which was antidotal to development. Thus the failure of the upper

management to set goals, clarify objectives, develop procedures, plan,

schedule and project itself into the future is very visible. Like an

observer at a burial procession, one could visualize the dramatis personae

moving in a long calvacade like 'processionary caterpillars', one

processionary leading and the other following - each with his eyes half

closed and his head snugly fitted against the rear extremity of his

predecessor. "They mistake activity for accomplishment. They meant

well but got no place" (Randal,1967,p.4.). Needless to add that it

is a situation which smacks of managerial incompetence. Bearing in

mind that development is not a natural process, and requires powerful and

resourceful change agents, this transparent managerial incompetence became

profoundly convulsing.

Amalgamation and the extension of Indirect Rule to the Western and Eastern

Provinces

The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern provinces of Nigeria

in 1914 had far-reaching consequences on the development of the system

of native administration in Western and Eastern Nigeria. It led to an

attempt to apply the well-tried, ill-defined formula of indirect rule,

as developed in the Northern provinces, to the southern half of the country.

The official reason for the decision to apply indirect rule to the south

was that it was necessary to apply a uniform policy of local government
throughout the whole of the newly created country (Lugard,1920,para 16).
But apart from administrative convenience, the amalgamation was
economically viable especially in the face of economic stagnation of the
north.   The north had depended largely on grants-in-aid which the
Imperial Parliament could ill afford.   Thus to boost the north, it had
to be merged with the prosperous south.

The amalgamation, however, did not sufficiently extend administration
to the villages which had all along been ignored.   Rather the court
system was the main organ of administration in these villages.   Courts
were reorganized but it did not take Lugard long to realise that success
in the northern administration was not founded on efficient courts, but
depended on a good taxation system and well established treasuries.
He was convinced that without reasonable financial backing any administration
was doomed to fail.   A major obstacle, however, existed in this area with
respect to tax collection.   Apart from payment of tributes and tithes
to their chiefs or Obas, the Yorubas had known no system of taxation.
The introduction of direct taxation in 1916 was greeted with vehement
resentment and disturbances in Iseyin and Abeokuta.   The announcement
by the government in 1927 of its intention to introduce direct taxation
was greeted with the most sullen acquiescence in certain districts, and the
worst experience was the 'Aba Riot' which was the direct outcome of
unfounded rumours and suspicion that women were going to be taxed.

The Aba Riot was a turning point in the history of native
administration for it was only after it that intensive investigations
and research were conducted on the lines of knowing what the native
institutions in the South-Eastern Provinces were with a view to using
them as units of local government.   It had been found necessary to
accommodate the atomic units in the South-East and Middle Belt Provinces.

Donald Cameron who took over as the Governor came fully determined to make indirect rule look more attractive than before. To him the allegiance of a people to a tribal head freely given and without external cause is the essence of ' true indirect rule. It was paramount in his mind to see that the greatest aims to be pursued at all costs were those of building on the existing organization and ideas of the people; of leaving it to the people themselves assisted by sympathetic advisers to device and develop their own local institutions in accordance with their own standards of modern civilization and of resisting the temptation to play the part of 'King makers' or constitution makers. Thus Cameron insisted that village units in the Middle Belt and the South-Eastern Provinces should retain their identities as judicial and executive bodies. Where, however, a more powerful and vigorous authority existed and was surrounded by smaller units numerically and financially weak and barely able to maintain themselves, and provided these units exhibited a disposition favourable to amalgamation it was highly desirable to encourage them to group themselves with their most powerful neighbour. He took care to identify various types of native authority such as chiefs-in-council, council of elders, and stressed strongly the need to preserve the essentially democratic character of indigenous institutions and thereby abolished the autocratic ideas of indirect rule. He changed emphasis in the method of preserving the indigenous institutions as mere 'museum pieces' to directing their evolution towards representative organs of democratic local government. He found that it was not easy to democratize the northern emirates radically, and he therefore preferred a gradual process. The native authorities were not to be accepted solely because they were traditional, but merely because they were acceptable to their people. He brought a change of emphasis from the rule by the chiefs to the rule by the chiefs and council. Native authority

was just an instrument through which advancement could be made in the
social, economic welfare of the local people, and was not to be regarded
perpetually as upholders of law and order (Cameron,1934).

Decline of Indirect Rule and the Need for Reform

Right from its introduction, indirect rule had not only been subject
to vehement opposition, but had also provoked a lot of adverse criticisms
both from within and from without the country, and even the most articulate
critiques were among those who served in the administration itself.   Just
as Lord Lugard had his followers through the 1920s and 1930s, so also
did a person like Lord Hailey have his precursors amongst many of the
commentators on the theory and practice of indirect rule.   Criticisms
of this method of government began even before Lugard's The Dual Mandate
was published in 1922.   Probably the earliest really trenchant criticism
came from a district officer in Nigeria, Fitzpatrick, who argued that the
system of indirect rule replaced the comparatively more desirable system
of 'autocracy, tempered by assassination' (Fitzpatrick,1924,p.619).
The protection of the autocratic rulers by British bayonets created a
feudal system which was inefficient, expensive and corrupt.   In his view
the administration had been needlessly duplicated and, so far as the
native administration was concerned, the population tended to divide into
those on the pay-roll and those paying taxes.   In order to put an end
to this corruption, with which he believed the British were identified,
he advocated an increased European administrative staff, with African
additions where possible, to undertake all administrative services.
Another criticism in the same vein came from Lord Raglan who categorised
all chiefs as tyrants or weaklings so that "the administration is placed
in the dilemma of having either continually to upset the decisions of
the chiefs or else to connive at injustice"(Raglan,1923,p.579).

Fitzpatrick and Lord Raglan were critical of the operation of indirect rule, especially the strengthened position of the Emir and their (Emirs') enhanced prestige at the expense of older indigenous institutions. We have said that the aim of indirect rule was to preserve indigenous institutions which, the British administration believed, had some value for Africans as a good basis for administrative take off. In Nigeria, it seemed that some indigenous institutions had been ignored, while others had been preserved and made more resistant to change.

Criticisms of indirect rule became more frequent after 1930 due to socio-economic and political changes in Britain and Nigeria (see chapters 3 and 4). These criticisms were centred around the two questions of whether or not the system did preserve African institutions, and whether such institutions could be made the basis for gradual political development. Many critics suggested that old institutions were not really being preserved at all. Old sources of political legitimacy had been destroyed inevitably, the more democratic aspects of Nigerian societies undermined, and Nigerian aristocracies entrenched in positions from which they could now be removed only by the British administration. One critic pointed to the danger of indirect rule bolstering the power of oppressive and incompetent chiefs (Leys,1931,p.70) while Rattray thought that the people themselves were likely to become estranged within the system because it had produced centralized Nigerian autocracies "disregarding the bases of former African constitutions and states which were essentially decentralized and democratic" (Rattray, 1934,p.22). Was it not the case, the critics asked, that African chiefs had become the tools of the British, and were often so regarded by their own people, especially the educated ones?

In so far as the institutions could be said to have survived they were increasingly anachronistic. The critics believed that political systems should reflect economic and social realities, which meant that

there should be a chance for participation in politics for the increasingly large number of Nigerians who lived outside the tribal milieu. This fundamental criticism shaded into a second one which was to the effect that people learn about politics by being active in politics. Under the system of indirect rule, important groups were denied a chance to participate, while the role of the traditional elite was seriously restricted and distorted by the imposition of an alien super-structure.

There were thus three main criticisms of indirect rule. It was an inefficient and corrupt method of governing alien people; it was a vehicle of reaction and not progress; it had the effect of submerging democratic elements in tribal society under an authoritarian framework. These criticisms were commonly connected with whether or not the system was likely to impede 'or enhance the development of institutions through which Nigerians would eventually govern themselves. It is clear that Lord Hailey doubted the wisdom of maintaining indirect rule for this reason. It was also true, said the critics, that educated Nigerians themselves were critical of indirect rule and regarded this method of administration as an imperialist device for preventing development, or as an indication that the British regarded them as inferior people who could not be expected to operate in their superior western institutions. Leonard Barnes, for example, argued that Africans rightly understood that local institutions and traditions were preserved

> less from any sense that these things may be intrinsically
> worthy of preservation and development than in a profound
> conviction of their inferiority to British counterparts
> and therefore to their suitability to backward people
> (Barnes,1935,p.284).

The system of indirect rule could be interpreted therefore as a Machiavellian design to keep the Nigerian in his place, and a means of actually preventing development. The educated Nigerian was being turned against the British by "the not wholly unjust doubts about the

honesty of our intentions" (Macmillan,1934,p.137).

Some of the criticisms of indirect rule imputed to large groups of Europeans, involved in colonial politics, a kind of sinister design to defraud the African. Certainly the intention to exploit Africa for European benefit found expression in the theory of the dual mandate. Cotterell went farther, suggesting that Africans were regarded as the guinea pig savage of brave new world whom "the anthropologist would like nothing better than to see pinned-down in a kind of mental cold storage, preserving for perennial future study the paradox of arrested development" (Cotterell,1934,p.454).

A criss-cross strand of argument runs through Sir Donald Cameron's egotistic evangelical mission: "we are using their own indigenous institutions in order to promote higher standards of civilization amongst them. This is the most vital principle in my conception" (Cameron,1937,p.9). The belief that existing institutions made the best basis for change was a Burkean notion. It was part of the British conservative tradition that change should always be introduced slowly, retaining what was valuable in the existing institutions of society; this conservatism bedevilled local government in Britain.

The 'indirect rulers' knew, and perhaps felt a sense of guilt, about the damage done to African societies in the past. The missionaries, an integral part of the administration, tried to suppress those aspects of African social system (e.g. age grade) most clearly anathema to Christian beliefs as interpreted through western culture. There existed a conflict between a belief in the advantages of progress as manifested in the application of scientific discoveries to the solution of human problems and a recognition of the loss of a sense of security which the individual tends to suffer in a mass society. As we have mentioned earlier, the attempt was to exacerbate the gulf that existed between 'us' and 'them',

demonstrated in the British attempt to define where, when and what he

could participate in.   Admittedly the aim of the British Government was

to grant independence when it felt that Nigerians were 'mature'.   But how

could they mature in cold storage, when the Imperial Government had failed

to undertake a programme of mass education; when it had failed to provide

adequate resources to attack disease and poverty; when it had allowed

British nationals to exploit Nigerian resources without encouraging

genuine economic growth and development?   Above all, it had failed to

provide experience in government which would have made the transfer of

power to Nigerians and the practice of democracy a success.   All these

failures, to use Professor James O'Connell's words, led to the inevitability

of instability in Nigeria and to the demise in which local government found

itself.   "They saw instability ahead for newly created states in which

existed extremes in educational standards and in which ethnic loyalties

had been encouraged, under the system of indirect rule, at the expense of

national loyalties" (Crocker 1936,p.215).

The Labour Monthly epitomized the suffering of Africans:

> In the colonies millions of coloured people are denied the vote;
> they are not consulted about the administration nor about the
> management of their lives...Government is carried on by ordinance;
> there is no freedom of speech nor of the press; trade union and
> political organization is either illegal or functions under the
> daily threat of a persecution for 'sedition'.   The peasantry are
> driven by heavy taxes from their land to work in British owned mines..;
> and, as workers they are paid a few shillings a month and are forced
> to live in foul conditions, so that the British capitalist may earn
> his profits (Labour Monthly, 1939,pp.757-8).

It was a serious defect of indirect rule that it was not democratic.

The initial mistake was that the indigenous institutions of government

which had existed as democratic and decentralized were ignored, especially

in the South-Eastern Provinces and the Middle Belt, where the atomized

units of government seemed to present some difficulty in discerning any

power or authority which could be utilized for local government purposes,

but indeed it was in these societies that one could find the germs,

the very essence of everything upon which indirect rule should have been

built.   The Aba Riot was a great lesson.   The importance of villages

was later realised.   Something approaching democracy was introduced after

autocracy had been entrenched.   Training in democracy should normally

have been expected to precede its introduction to ensure that democracy

is firmly rooted and maintained.   In almost all over Nigeria democracy

implied that the affairs of the state rested not in the hands of a few,

but was the concern of the whole people.   It was unforeseeable to think

of democracy as the same thing as a rule by a 'sole native authority'.

To the educated people this was no democracy, nor was it near to it.

It was undemocratic to allow the Governor or the Resident the right to

recognize or depose a chief.   It was true that the people were later

allowed to recommend a chief of their own choosing, but the ultimate

power to recognize and depose him rested in the Governor, a situation quite

strange to the people.   By their own tradition, the people had their

own way of removing reactionary chiefs (Johnson,1921,pp.70-71). Democracy,

therefore, was lacking in Nigeria, and as Dr.Miller very well put it,

"Nigeria was ruled administratively on the principle that was the

very antithesis to that of democracy"(Miller,1947,p.29.)

     Another damaging attack on indirect rule was the idea of segregating

the educated classes from the illiterate masses, a policy introduced

by Lord Lugard.   This was implicit in his plan for educational systems

in the Northern Provinces.   Worse still was the policy of excluding

the educated natives from the native authorities, and from the

administrative service on the general belief that no native was suited for

such responsibility as that of the administrative officer, rather they

could continue to serve as clerks (Coleman,1958,p.163).   Another

principle of native administration which received a stinging attack

was the educational policy, especially that of the north.   It

was forcefully argued that education was not moving as fast as would be

expected.

Thus, the colonial government was an undemocratic institution

designed to maintain British authority.   Decisions were improsed from

above.   In practice, this meant that the political officers wanted

someone to whom they could give orders and who could be held responsible

for carrying them out.   Indirect rule, which formed the philosophical

basis of British rule incorporated the indigenous political structure

and thereby provided the cheapest means by which this authority could be

preserved.   However, indirect rule only worked where the traditional

political institutions were authoritarian.   These problems - lack of

democracy, nepotism, corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness -

remained basically unsolved at the time of the 1976 reform (see chapter

5) despite the changes of the early fifties (see chapters 3 and 4).

BRITAIN

At the beginning of this chapter we stated the reasons for going

into an historical analysis of both countries.   To these might be

added the fact that this historical background affords us the opportunity

to analyse the extent of change brought about by the 1976 and 1974

reforms in Nigeria and Britain respectively.

Mediaeval and Tudor Period

We have said that no system of local government is devised in a

vacuum.   It cannot be separated from social, economic, and political

conditions that form its environment.   Local government in Britain arose

from men tackling problems as they developed - such problems as the

maintenance of law and order, the relief of the poor, and the building

and repair of highways.   Richards (1978,p.11) has described how

the three traditional units of local government in England and Wales

have been the county, the parish and the borough, each possessing a

considerable degree of independence.   The three traditional units

came into existence during the Middle Ages when the country was still

predominantly agricultural with a widely scattered population.   Each

county was administered by a county court presided over by the Sheriff

appointed by the Crown.   The counties were divided into 700 hundreds

each administered by a hundred court.   At a lower level of the rung

came the township which constituted a rudimentary police authority and

each of which was represented at the hundred court by its Reeve and four

men.   Within the townships were the parishes, or areas of administration

round the churches although the parish later acquired non-ecclesiastical

functions.

The system of local government based upon the sheriff and the county,

hundred and parishes fell into disuse, and in the first instance, most

of the duties were undertaken by Justices of the Peace appointed by the

Crown on their circuits around the country.   The Justices maintained

law and order.   New social and economic problems accompanied the

growth of industry, particularly the woolen industry, in the 16th century.

The enclosure (fencing-in) of common fields resulted in many unemployed

serfs who urgently needed relief, and the dissolution of the monasteries

by Henry VIII ended an important form of charity for the poor.   The

declining social conscience of the larger landlords led to the neglect

of highways and footpaths at a time when increased commerce produced the

need for a better system of road maintenance.

To meet these demands local government was reorganised on the

basis of the parish with Justices of the Peace undertaking a co-ordinating

and controlling role.   A considerable body of new legislation followed.
By the Statute of Highways 1553, each parish had to appoint two surveyors
responsible for the repair of roads in the parish, and the inhabitants
were required to devote four days' labour a year to the maintenance work.
Wealthier persons could pay a highway rate in lieu of work, and this money
was used to pay the poor working on the roads.   The administrative
duties of the parish were greatly increased by the Poor Relief Act 1601.
Each parish had to appoint an overseer who recovered a rate from local
inhabitants for the purchase of materials on which the poor could work.
It seldom proved practicable to provide the work and it was largely
replaced by the distribution of relief financed by a parish rate.   Hence
each parish carried out its duties through four categories of unpaid
officer—overseer of the poor, surveyor, constable and churchwarden
(Richards, 1978,p.13).

The Eighteenth Century

The control of the Justices of the Peace by the central administration
came to an end after the Revolution of 1688.   Quarter sessions operated
as the principal link between central and local administration.   The
members of this body met at least four times a year for judicial business.
It was natural that they should discuss county affairs.   The duties of
the Justices were few in comparison to modern standards, but the growth
of the new industrial towns created new social problems.   In short, the
rise of industrialism made the old system of government chaotic and
out of date.

Among the influences which contributed to the need to reform local
government were:

(a) The movement to fence-in common land in order to secure agricultural
improvements led to many farm workers being driven from the land.   They

flocked into the towns to seek employment and placed a strain on such local government services as existed;

(b)   many parish vestries safeguarded the interests of privileged groups and paid no attention to the interests of the community.   And most town councils neglected their public duties and failed to promote municipal interests.   The public officers themselves were corrupt and inefficient;

(c)   there was a tremendous increase in the rate of industrial development from about 1750.   The increase was mainly brought about by the harnessing of steam to provide power for machines.   This power was worth supplying only to many large machines, and this meant that they had to be brought together in factories.   The old system of domestic production declined, and more and more people went to work in factories.   Towns grew up around the factories, and the resultant problems led to demands for the extension of local government services and for a more efficient local government structure;

(d)   the transformation of the country from an agricultural society to an industrial one created problems with which local government could not cope, such as sanitation, water supply, public health all of which called for expert knowledge and large resources;

(e)   the Parish Overseers of the Poor were unable to handle the problems of the parishes where manufacturing interests had created new centres of population;

(f)   the problem of poverty, easy to manage when applicants for relief were few, became more difficult as enclosure and industrial change swept the country;

(g)   the Industrial Revolution raised the standard of living and lowered the death rate.   The rapid increase in population which followed gave

rise to serious administrative problems (Stones,1968,pp.5-6).

To remedy these problems, various ad hoc authorities were established
to provide specific services.   Local Acts created improvement
commissioners to undertake such duties as paving, lighting, street-cleaning
and general improvements, financed through rates.   Other local Acts empowered
the establishment of corporations to take over poor relief functions from
the unpaid 'parochial' overseers.   In like manner turnpike trustees were
charged with the maintenance of existing main roads and the provision
of new ones, and were authorised to levy tolls on road users (Hart
and Garner,1973,p.24).

The Nineteenth Century

The system of local government had to be reformed again during the
early part of the 19th century because of sweeping demographic, social
and economic changes that had taken place.   These reforms led to
a system of parishes, counties, boroughs and ad hoc bodies.

In 1832 there were over 15,000 parishes, each being a distinctive unit
of local administration but varying considerably in area, population, and
the number and method of appointment of officials (Smellie,1946,p.12).
The parishes in towns and cities exercised important functions in common
with rural parishes.   It was the right of all inhabitants to have a say
in parish business and to perform, in turn, parish duties.   "In practice
arrangements for the administration of the parish reflected its economic
and social order, and open parish vestries were often a small oligarchy
of intimate neighbours presided over by the clergyman or senior churchwarden
and dominated by neighbouring Justices of the Peace (Seeley,1978,p.3).

In general, the system worked well, particularly in settled rural
communities.   In the new industrial towns people did not know one
another and community spirit was weak.   The close or select vestries

which became established lent themselves to corrupt practices by

consisting of a restricted number of people (10 to 24) serving for life

and filling vacancies by co-option.   Parish duties were heavy and

dirty, and many people were willing to pay to get out of doing them.

This led to the rise of local 'bosses' who controlled all the civic offices.

The first changes in the legal constitution of the parishes were made

by the Sturge Bourne Acts of 1818 and 1819.   These Acts introduced a

property qualification and plural votes (up to a maximum of six votes

for highly rated properties).   A minority of about 3,000 parishes

adopted these arrangements and they tended to become combinations of

tradesmen bound together by local interests (Smellie,1946,pp.15-16).

The Hobhouse Act 1831 introduced another sweeping change whereby

every ratepayer, male or female, secured a single 'parochial' vote.

It also provided for annual elections and vote by ballot, but restricted

the choice of electors to people with such a high rating qualification

that most were excluded.

The duties of the Justices of the Peace increased considerably

although there were only 5,000 in 1832 compared with 3,000 in 1689,

and the Justices struggled under the load of numerous statutes.   The

office became specialised and required such expert knowledge that few

people were qualified to accept it, and of those who were qualified to

do the job, few cared to take it on.   The new industrial towns were

not pleasant enough to attract the landed gentry, from whom Justices were

usually recruited.   The position was therefore occupied by someone who

was inefficient and corrupt.

About 200 municipal corporations were outside the jurisdiction of the

Justices of the Peace.   They tended to safeguard the interests of

traders and craftsmen and usually failed to provide sound administration.

They were inefficient because:

(a) Councils often felt that they had no responsibility for social problems. The members of the council confined their activities to the administration of corporate property;

(b) members of the corporations (when they were not manufacturers themselves) considered that the industrialists should meet the needs of the workers whom they had brought into the towns for their own profit;

(c) even where the council was willing to act, it was not always easy for it to acquire the power to do so;

(d) often a town had extended beyond its ancient boundaries; its powers to provide services ended at its legal boundaries.

An ad hoc authority is one which is created for a special purpose and which exercises only one function. The inadequacies of the traditional local government system had resulted in the setting up of various ad hoc bodies. About 200 local Acts had been passed to establish incorporated guardians of the poor, while over 1,100 turnpike trusts had been formed of which the more important ones appointed permanent paid officers and experimented with different road profiles and surfaces. Improvement Commissioners were extending their activities from roads, street-lighting and police to water and gas supplies and provision of fire engines. Although the enthusiasm of some of the new authorities diminished and they were not all incorruptible, nevertheless they provided services which the traditional activities could not supply, and were in fact the beginnings of modern local government at a time when the county and borough systems were becoming increasingly ineffective (Richards,1978,p.16).

Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, the traditional structure of local government which had served the country for centuries, was crumbling in the face of rapid socio-economic changes. The system which had been adequate in an agricultural society with few social problems was inadequate when confronted by the pressing social needs of a society

which was becoming increasingly industrial.   The early 19th century

reform was in response to social and economic changes which made the

system of local government obsolete and created problems.

Nineteenth Century Socio-Economic Change

Mention has already been made of the fact that local government cannot

be separated from the social, economic, and political conditions in which

it exists and operates.   The 19th century saw dramatic changes in

the structure of local government in England in response to environmental

changes.   During the early 19th century the following factors were among

those which affected the growth of local government and the need for its

reform:

(a) The growth of industry: The development of steam-driven machinery killed

home industry, since the new source of power was worth supplying only

to many machines in factories.   The factories needed many workers, who

were housed in towns.   The concentrated new urban developments of

the Industrial Revolution created an urgent need for improved local

government services of all kinds.

(b) The growth of trade-union activities: The change in industry

from domestic (taking place in the home) to factory production brought

together large numbers of workers, who became organized and began to feel

that they had power.   As they grew and became stronger they added their

weight to the demand for local government to improve living conditions

and provide amenities.

(c) The French Revolution: The ruling classes were shocked by what had

happened in France, and felt that the same thing could occur here unless

the working classes were kept down.   Strong measures, such as the

Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800, tried to prevent the rise of working-class

organizations which could press for reform.   These Acts forbade any

united action by masters or workmen to raise or lower wages or to
increase or diminish the hours or quality of work.   During the
Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) there was no great demand for reform because
there was prosperity.   "The slump in the years following the end of the
Wars and the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824 increased the demand
for reforms" (Stones,1968,p.11).

(d) The rise of political parties: Until the 19th century political
parties tended to be loose associations of people with the same attitude
to the questions of the day.   The arrangement was very flexible.   By
the 19th century the country was more definitely in two political camps,
both representative of the middle class.   The Conservative Party reflected
the views of the landed gentry, who favoured the established system of rural
local government.   The Liberal Party was that of the industrialists, who
wanted to see reform in the towns.   The tussle between the two elements
helped to determine the form which local government was to take.

(e) 'Laissez-faire' and Utilitarianism: One of the most important principles
to which men subscribed during the 19th century was that of 'laissez-faire' -
a belief in a free competitive economy and a strong conviction that it was
wrong for a government to interfere with the actions of individuals.
This idea was taken a stage further by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who said
that the value of any governmental or individual action could be tested
by seeing whether it resulted in the greatest good for the greatest number
of people.   He applied his idea to a study of the local government
system and concluded that local government could be improved by electing
the local authorities in accordance with a standard procedure, by giving
them greatly increased powers and functions, and by auditing their accounts.
These two concepts and a more enlightened social conscience led to more
demands for local government reforms.

(f) The Reform Act,1932: Before 1832 Parliament was composed of two

members from each county and each borough regardless of size and population. In the counties those persons were allowed to vote who held the freehold of land worth more than forty shillings a year (Stones,1968,p.12).

The Reform Act 1832 extended the vote to the middle classes and this resulted in a Liberal Government dedicated to further reform. The first statute affecting local government was the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834[4] which established very strong central control through the Poor Law Commissioners. Some 700 unions (groupings of parishes) replaced the 15,000 parishes for the administration of poor relief, based on convenient administrative areas, under elected Boards of Guardians of the Poor, who appointed salaried officials.

In 1833 the Government set up a Royal Commission to inquire into the state of the municipal corporations in England and Wales. The corporations were in need of reform because they were corrupt, inefficient and strongly biased in religion and politics, and, therefore, in their administration of charitable trusts. The Commission's report led to the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835, which laid the foundations for the present-day system of local self-government, with elected councils which were unconnected with the administration of justice. There were however serious limitations as a large proportion of the inhabitants could not vote and the powers of the new councils were confined to the management of corporate property, control of police and making of bye-laws, although these powers were extended by subsequent statutes. The Act was applied to 178 of the 246 boroughs, but London and 67 very small boroughs were not included.

Richards (1978,p.17) describes the remarkable difference of approach between the last two Acts. Poor Law reform was based on strong central control, uniform arrangements, rationalisation of areas and the ad hoc

principle. The Municipal Corporations Act 1835 gave authority to
local representatives subject to a minimum of central control, maintained
existing areas and created organizations which could each administer a
wide range of services.

Public health was the next service which demanded attention.
Using statistics collected by the new local registry offices, Edwin
Chadwick, Secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners, produced a report
showing that there was a connection between the amount of sickness and
the amount of poor relief which was paid. By the middle of the 19th
century, about half the population lived in towns and by 1880 the proportion
had increased to over two-thirds (Smellie,1946,p.77). Of fifty large
towns in England and Wales in 1845, scarcely one had a good drainage
system and only six a really pure water supply. Living conditions were
filthy and squalid, with a consequent danger of cholera and the plague
(Stones,1968,p.16).

Chadwick argued that the amount spent on poor relief could be reduced
if sickness were prevented. The Public Health Act 1848 authorised the
establishment of a General Board of Health overseeing local boards of
health, charged with the duty of providing water supply and drainage either
where the inhabitants requested it or where the death rate exceeded 23
per 1,000. Municipal corporations assumed these responsibilities for their
areas. The General Board of Health was abolished in 1858 but the 670
established local boards of health remained.

By the middle of the century the turnpike trusts were encountering
problems with road maintenance. It had become evident that a parish was
too small an area for road maintenance and in 1862 the county justices
were given powers to create unions of parishes as highway districts.
These proved unpopular and many villages opted out of highway districts
by adopting the Public Health Act 1848 and the Local Government Act 1858,

and forming their own local board of health, which entitled them to

separate highway powers.   The Local Government Act 1863 blocked this

loophole by stipulating that only parishes with a population of at least

3,000 could apply for local board of health status.   However, many

villages obtained this status by 1863 and some remained as urban districts

until 1974.   Some of the highway districts were never established

and others ceased to function, resulting in responsibility for roads

reverting to the parishes (Richards ,1978,p.19).

The Second Reform Act 1867 gave the vote to urban workers but it was

not until 1884 that this was extended to rural workers.   A more enlightened

Parliament recognised the confusion, variation and overlap of local

government bodies and functions.   This was glaring in the administration

of public health, where powers were vested in the vestry, guardians of the

poor, local boards of health, borough councils and improvement commissioners.

The Royal Sanitary Commission which reported in 1871 found "a chaotic

system which made efficient local government impossible" (Stones,1968,

pp.17-18).   In 1871 the Local Government Board was established with

poor law, public health and registration of births and deaths functions.

The first compulsory Public Health Act in 1875 revised and rationalised

public health law and introduced a simplified pattern of urban and rural

sanitary authorities, although the general structure of local government

administration was still confusing and cumbersome (Seeley,1978,p.6).

For example, the urban sanitary authorities were highway authorities but

not poor law authorities, while in rural areas the poor law authorities

had sanitary functions and often highway responsibilities.

In 1870 Gladstone's Liberal Government gave the parish the

responsibility to provide a school where it had not already been provided

by the church or other voluntary agency.   School attendance became

compulsory in 1876 and free in 1891 (Richards,1978,p.19).

Meanwhile London had been excluded from the operation of Municipal

Corporation's Act 1835 and was probably the worst governed area in the

country.   The capital had expanded substantially outside the one square

mile occupied by the City of London, and the corporation showed little

interest in the adjoining areas.   Many important services were

administered by the Metropolitan Board of Works established in 1855,

based on a system of indirect election through district boards.   The

Metropolitan Board acquired further wide-ranging powers over time, some

of which it is claimed were administered corruptly.

Structural Reforms: 1880-1944

By 1880, the local government system was in chaos, ripe for reform.

Seeley described the position in 1885 as "a chaos of areas, a chaos of

franchises, a chaos of authorities, and a chaos of rates" (1978,p.6).

The range of sizes of borough was enormous - from half a million population

in Liverpool to a few hundred in Shaftsbury (Smellie,1946,p.47).   There

were over a dozen different kinds of rates and even elections were held

at different times, in different ways and on different franchises.   It

became evident that the creation of numerous ad hoc bodies was not

conducive to maximum efficiency and that a simple system of general local

authorities offered distinct advantages.

The system needed reform also because important changes in suffrage

had taken place.   The 1867 Reform Act had extended the vote to the new

industrial working class, whilst the 1884 Act gave the vote to the

agricultural working class.   These changes in the political environment,

themselves reflections of further social, economic and physical

environmental changes, were to lead to further reforms in the structure

of English local government.   This second period of reform was

essentially one of 'consolidation' and established a structure of local

government which, outside London, was to remain largely unchanged until

1974.

The essential pieces of legislation in this period were the Acts of

1888, 1894 and 1929.   As a result of the first two, the structure of local

government was unitary or single tier in the larger towns, and two or

even three tier in the rest of the country.

The Local Government Act 1888 established the county councils, with

a similar framework to the boroughs, consisting of councillors elected by

the ratepayers and aldermen elected by the councillors.   In the counties

the administrative powers of the Justices of the Peace were transferred

to elected county councils.   The original proposals had been that all

the country should be governed by county councils, who would act as a

link between government departments and the smaller local authorities within

the counties.   However, many of the larger boroughs were unwilling to be

swallowed up by counties, whose councils would be motivated by rural

interests.   These large boroughs were able to bring pressure to bear on

the Government, and the Act, when passed, excluded from control by the

counties all the municipal boroughs which had a population of more than

50,000 and four others (Chester, Worcester,Burton-on-Trent, and

Canterbury) which had a population of less than 50,000.   The authorities

which were excluded from control by the counties were known as county

boroughs - single-tier authorities with the powers and duties of both

counties and boroughs for their areas.

The 1888 Act was a major step towards the concept of sub-legislatures

and provision was incorporated for decentralisation from Parliament to

county but this was never implemented.   The Act also attempted to establish

basic principles for providing monetary aid to local authorities, by

isolating central aid to local government from other forms of national

expenditure and thereby restricting central supervision of local administration. The majority of specific grants were replaced by a single combined grant to be paid from a separate local taxation account, funded from forty per cent of the product bf certain national taxes (assigned revenues). The system was later discontinued as the assigned revenues did not increase at the same rate as local authority expenditure and successive governments were not prepared to increase the range or proportion of revenues paid to the local taxation account. This was the beginning of a continuing controversy on the relative desirability of general grants as opposed to grants for specific purposes (Richards,1978,pp.21-22).

The next stage was the rationalisation of the second-tier authorities. At the time of the passing of the Local Government Act 1888, there had been some support for proposals to make more orderly the system of local government in county districts. The Local Government Act 1894 went a step further in reorganizing and simplifying the system of local government. The Act provided that urban sanitary authorities (usually these were the areas of local boards of health constituted under the Public Health Acts 1848-74) should be called urban district councils and their districts, urban districts. It also established new rural district councils, to which were transferred the duties and powers of the rural sanitary authority in the district. Both types of council were to be elected.

The Local Government Act 1899 overhauled local government administration in London by replacing numerous district boards and vestries by 28 metropolitan borough councils. It was believed that the boroughs would act as a counterweight to the London County Council as they were given responsibility for public health, housing, rating, libraries and recreational services. As Richards (1978,p.22) says, it was not foreseen at the time that most new duties would be assigned to the county council , thus accentuating the imbalance.

The pattern of local government structure thus established was to remain for over half a century - until 1963 in London and 1974 in the remainder of England and Wales, and this is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

FIGURE 2.1:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE: ENGLAND AND WALES 1899-1974
(LONDON: 1899 - 1963)

London County   County   Administrative
Council   Boroughs   Counties

Metropolitan
boroughs

                                Non-county   Urban   Rural
                                   or   Districts   Districts
                                municipal
                                borough   Parish
                                                           Councils
                                                              or
                                                           Parish
                                                           Meetings
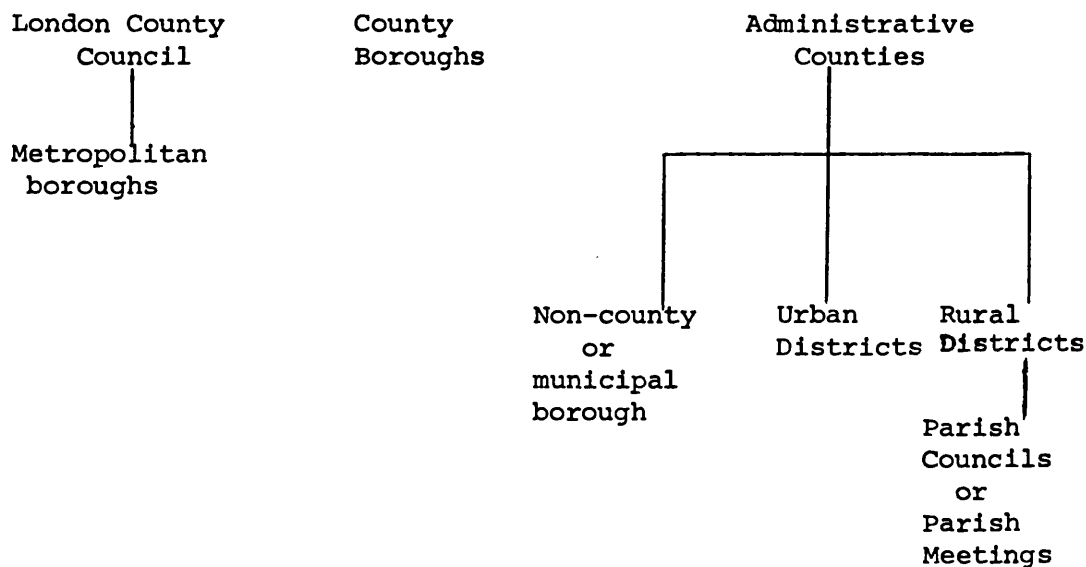
Source: Richards,1978,p.23

Yet the system did reflect the political, social and economic realities of the late 19th century. At that time, it was still meaningful to distinguish between town and country, and it was created before it was possible to foresee the many stresses and strains that 20th century strains would bring; the 1888 local government system was created before the invention of the motor car; the introduction of universal suffrage in Britain (1928-), and the creation of the welfare state and the rise of a social democratic party essentially concerned with representing (at least organised) working-class interests.

Some of the rapid changes which overtook the new local government system shortly after its introduction and before its main revisions in 1929

can be seen from the following data. The population of England
and Wales was increasing at a considerable rate, rising from 26 million
in 1881 to 38 million in 1921 - an increase of 46 per cent in 40 years.
This increase was not distributed evenly throughout the country and was
concentrated primarily in the towns which extended into the surrounding
countryside. These developments undermined local authority boundaries
and caused conflict between urban and rural authorities, as the majority
of rural district councils and county councils were opposed to town
boundary extensions and the conferment of county borough status. Between
1889 and 1925 there were 109 extensions of county borough areas and an
increase in the number of county boroughs from 61 to 82, involving a
combined loss to the counties of 350,000 acres, 3 million population and
£14½ million in rateable value (Seeley,1978,p.11).

Furthermore, the movement of population from the rural to urban areas
continued, as the urban percentage of the population rose from 57 per cent
in 1891 to 67 per cent in 1921. Unknown at the time of the 1888 Act,
there were over a million road vehicles licensed by 1930. Also unknown
in 1888 was the Labour Party: by 1929 it was in its second period of
office, and its concern with social welfare was beginning to make itself
felt, perhaps more strongly in the housing and planning fields.

The 1929 Act contained a number of important provisions, of which one
was the abolition of the only remaining ad hoc authority - the Guardians of
the Poor. Their functions (poor law, registration and hospital
service) were transferred to the county councils and county borough
councils. Another aim was to improve the condition of roads in county
areas to keep pace with the increasing number of vehicles by transferring
the highway powers of rural districts to the county councils. Towns with
a population exceeding 20,000 could claim highway powers over county
roads within their boundaries and all urban authorities retained

responsibility for minor or unclassified roads. Rural districts and

towns with less than 20,000 population could be given delegated powers

over county roads in their areas but this did not operate very

satisfactorily and diminished over time. Richards (1978,p.30) thinks

that there is a strong case for confining highway activities to the larger

authorities with the necessary technical expertise and resources.

The Act also recognised the need for regional planning over wide areas

than those of individual local authority units. It empowered county councils

to act jointly with other authorities in the preparation or adoption of

town planning schemes.

However, the reforms of 1929 were initiated not so much by the need

to cope with the aforementioned changes as by a crisis in another area,

namely,the finance of local government. The 1888 Act had attempted a

separation between local and national finance, but the ever-increasing

scope of local government activity in the 20th century ensured that

such a separation could not be achieved (Jones,1969a, pp.165-82). Central

government found it necessary to give ever-increasing grants to finance

the new services, whilst on the other hand, local authorities found that

taxes (rates) provided an ever-diminishing part of the revenue they

required. Financial reforms were required for three reasons: to

meet part of the cost of the new and expanding services provided by local

government; to enable the centre to supervise services expected to reach

a certain minimum standard everywhere; and to correct inequalities in

the burden of local taxes between different individuals and areas. To a

certain extent, it was felt at the time that all these goals could be

achieved by replacing the many individual grants in aid by a block grant,

and by the exclusion of agricultural and industrial land from local taxes,

steps taken to ameliorate the problems of the Depression of the late 20s

and 30s. As a result of the 1929 Act, however, the new grants generally

increased the already apparent tendency for the central departments to

exercise a general control over the work of local government.

Between 1929 and 1974, there were numerous Acts which, together with

government committees, boundary commissioners and even Royal Commissions,

attempted to ensure that the structure of local government could continue

both to cope with the problems with which it was faced, as well as providing

the various services required and demanded of it.   Examples of

important legislation which increased the scope of local government activity

include the 1944 Education Act, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947,

as well as many Housing Acts.   Local government has also lost some

functions to central government.   Some - such as the Poor Law (1934-47),

most civil airports (1945), electricity (1947), gas (1948) and more recently

water (1974) - have been transferred to public corporations.   Others -such

as trunk roads (1936 and 1946), hospitals (1947), and most remaining local

health services (1974) - have been transferred to central government.

The administration of these last has not been transferred to centrally

located Whitehall departments or to their inspectorates.   New local

agencies with some discretion have been appointed - in these cases the

divisional road engineers, the road construction units and the regional

hospital boards.

Moreover, numerous bodies have been appointed which it has recently

become common to call QUANGOS, quasi-autonomous, non-governmental

organisations.   Many of them are also local - from some of the oldest,

such as employment exchanges, through to consumers' committees and

advisory committees of all kinds - and some such as the area health

authorities have several members nominated by local authorities.

All these legislations and changes took place without a fundamental

review and change in the organizational and areal basis of local government

until 1974.   As Goldsmith correctly says,

what has happened to English local government since 1888
is that it has become <u>delocalised.</u> In other words, a
number of changes have posed problems for the structure of
local self-government laid down by the 1888 Act, causing
adaptations which have fundamentally shifted the emphasis
away from democratic criteria and the locality, towards
efficiency ones and the centre. These changes have been
both national and local, as well as reflecting political,
social and economic changes in the country (Goldsmith,1979,p.15).

It is an examination of these changes that we now turn, for an

understanding of them is essential to an understanding of the need to

reform local government.

CHAPTER THREE

DIAGNOSIS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE NEED FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

INTRODUCTION

> The careful student of history must seek the explanation of
> the forms and changes of political institutions in the social
> and economic forces that determine them (Turner,1920,p.243).

We have said that the awareness of administrative reform arises

with the realization that the present organizational set-up is unable

to meet its obligations adequately; when a particular administrative

system cannot keep in pace with development and fails to make necessary

adjustments to socio-economic and political changes over a period

of time. As a result, its components become maladjusted. We also

identified a number of factors which will push for major structural

reforms to rectify the defects in the existing administrative system.

These factors include the following: growth in size and type of the

clientele served such as substantial increase in population and

urbanization; changes in problems, needs and demands of the people,

(result of) new technology, new equipment and advancing knowledge;

changing and usually rising qualifications of personnel and basic

policy changes at top level. We shall be dealing with all these

factors under two broad headings - SOCIO-ECONOMIC, and POLITICAL changes.

These changes which were taking place while the structure of local

government remained relatively stable, led to increased load (functions

and responsibilities) on local government without a corresponding increase

in capacity (performance), and therefore the defects and criticisms

which were levied on local government in Nigeria and Britain (see

Chapter 5).

First of all, we will formulate here a conceptual framework which

will enable us to interpret the changing structure of society, generating

demands for new structures of local government in both countries. This

framework will go a long way to help in answering our question:

Was reform necessary because the administration could not keep abreast

of development?   Our perspective is shaped by the systems analytic

perspective associated With David Easton (1965), which provides a useful

theoretical framework with which to interpret the background to local

government reform.   We will now be in a position to define local

government as a system which resides in and responds to socio-economic

and political changes.   Thus, the changing structure of local government

can be seen as a series of 'system responses' to environmental changes,

responses which are partly regime changes (e.g. the spread of partisan

local government);   partly authority changes (e.g. the advent of the

military in Nigerian politics or the rise of public persons as local

political leaders);   and partly system changes (e.g. reform in

orgniaation and function).

But, as we shall see, local government reform cannot be simply

interpreted as responses to the forces of socio-economic and political

changes, for to do so is to ignore the role of the reformer, Dahl's

homo politicus (Dahl,1961,pp.223-8).   The actions of the reformers

will be determined by their perception of their environment and

environmental changes.

Thus, the problems of 'administrative systems' and 'administrative

reform' will be approached within the framework of General Systems

Theory, at a macro-analytical level which recognises that:

(a) policy formation is as much a key factor in determining the output

of public policy - represented by bureaucratic performance - as is

policy execution;   and

(b) (local government) bureaucracy is a sub-system of the larger society,

and the ability of the bureaucratic system to pursue its goals - that

is, its capacity - is determined by two factors: its external links with

the environment and its internal orientation. What we want to
demonstrate is that national goals, viewed either in terms of their
stationary condition at a fixed point of time or in terms of their
dynamic elements, represent the load on the bureaucratic system, and
that the capacity of the bureaucratic system to support its load is
determined by the links it maintains with the external environment as
well as by its internal basic environment or orientation. The need
to reform the local government systems in Nigeria and Britain arose
because the load (input) has multiplied due to socio-economic and
political changes while the capacity (output) has not kept abreast of
these changes.

Societies the world over are caught in a situation that demands
wholesale changes in their organizational structures and social dynamics
in order to deal with the new complex technological, economic, and political
relationships. The reform of local government (Nigeria: 1976;
England and Wales: 1974) became necessary because previous reform
attempts since 1945 were not successful. That is not to say that it
was only after 1945 that reformers and critics of local government in both
countries started feeling the discrepancy between the ideal and reality,
that is, that local administration was not keeping abreast of developments.
Criticisms of local government and the need for reform go much farther
back. But the demand for reform, which culminated in the 1976 and 1974
reforms in Nigeria and Britain respectively, became more articulate and
enunciative after the Second World War and especially in the sixties.
We shall therefore concentrate on post-war reform efforts.

In order to adequately analyse the 'defects' of local government in
Nigeria and Britain, we need to catch the dynamics of social, political
and economic changes that have occurred in both countries. There are
differences between the two countries and they (the differences)

are rooted in the social environment, in the historical traditions
and conventions which underpin each system, in the peoples, in the
political and economic setting, and in the institutional arrangements
of each country.   It is on the variety, complexity and intensity of
these differences and changes that our analysis of the formulation of
reform objectives and other subsequent observations and assertions
will depend.   But first we will give a brief catalogue of the ailments
and pressures confronting local government in both countries; we will
deal with them in much greater detail in chapter 5.

Despite the huge gap in development between Nigeria and Britain,
and the aforementioned differences (see chapter 1), it is interesting
that both of them should have so many problems in common; and both
of them were obsessed with the need to reform local government.   Both
countries felt that the local government system was not working well;
that it was undemocratic, which is argued to be related to the low level
of voting in local elections.   It is also said that they were
undemocratic because of the lack of control by the locally elected
representatives over the bureaucracy.   Elected officials themselves
are said to be drawn disproportionately from better educated middle-class
men or, in Nigeria's case, from illiterates.   It was also asserted that
they were undemocratic because of the degree of internal democracy within
the local authorities, their insensitivity to local demands and their
institutional responses to the challenge of participation.

Both systems of local government have been put under severe
pressure because of sweeping demographical changes, population mobility -
rapid movement from rural to urban areas in Nigeria and Britain
(urbanization), and in Britain's case, suburbanization, that is,
the city spread and decaying city centres.   Added to these is the
growing awareness that large industrial and commercial centres can no

longer be planned or serviced in isolation from the surrounding rural
or semi-rural areas and vice-versa.

Another major problem which local government in both countries
faced was the erosion of their autonomy.   Increasing State intervention,
the need for national planning agencies, and the secular egalitarian
trend involving the demand for minimum standards in performance, were some
of the pressures pushing in a centralist direction.   Certainly central
control is real, and is manifested in the plethora of circulars and
advice that flood the offices of local authorities.   Central control
can be in many guises - political, administrative, legislative, technical
and financial.   It is the financial which is often resented, since local
government dependence is more than evident: two-thirds of British local
government fund expenditure come from central government in the form of
grants.   This is even higher in Nigeria, with the Federal and State
Governments providing about four-fifths of local government expenditure.

Finally, both local government systems faced growing problems about
their efficiency - and at two levels: both in their relations with the
centre and within local government structures, real problems of
duplication and co-ordination have emerged.   Added to these is the
point of corruption and nepotism in the Nigerian system.   Moreover,
small local authorities are said to be too weak in financial resources
and trained personnel to provide proper services and adequate
administration.   Only in a few cases can they establish or maintain
such costly institutions as hospitals and secondary schools unaided.
As we said earlier, we shall deal with these problems in greater details
later.

However, although local authorities in both countries have certain
problems in common, their causes of, and conditions for reform differ
in many respects.   Modernizing, secularizing and (sub) urbanizing
trends have long been noticeable in Britain.   Increased social

mobility, coinciding with technical progress, mechanization and rapidly improving communications, has considerably enlarged the scale of almost every aspect of human life. During the last few decades, in particular, social and economic development has accelerated in pace.

Metropolitan areas with their highly fragmented structures have understandably long been a matter of concern, but the <u>raison d'etre</u> of the small districts in rural areas was moreover being increasingly contested. More recently, growing recognition of the need for physical, economic and even comprehensive planning has given new dimensions to the local government issue in Britain. Planning stresses the necessity for progressive and integrated policy making and large-scale territorial frameworks for government and administration suitable for carrying out this task. The reduction in the number of local authorities (from about, 1500 to about 400) is indicative of current thought in this respect.

On the other hand, Nigeria, at the threshold of a new era, has undergone an even more tumultuous process. Not only did she demonstrate a natural inclination by breaking with the colonial system of administration, but she has also introduced new structures, as a result of changed socio-economic and especially political conditions. Moreover, the new orientation towards social and economic development has placed many new tasks on the shoulders of local government; this has been further aggravated by the frequent lack of any well-organized indigenous private sector in the economic and social field, and therefore the panacea, reform.

In Nigeria, scale-enlargement has not been the primary cause to stimulate local government reform, although it has been a secondary factor, notably in western Nigeria. Efforts in this direction have placed major emphasis on the political reliability of the system for

enhanced national unity and stability, and on the contribution it

can make to social and economic development, and on increased popular

participation in public decision-making and action.

In concluding this introduction we can say that a local government

system, particularly when it has developed gradually and is more or less

the outcome of natural growth, does not function autonomously within

the national system of government and the national community. A system

is sometimes rooted in the distant past, like the British, but even if

it is created by the government as a bold act of innovation, like the

Nigerian system, it is subsequently moulded and re-shaped by the society

in which it operates, influenced by numerous forces which condition its

nature, operation and form. In the terminology of the modern social

sciences, local government is a system that functions together with other

systems within a larger system, and all these systems interact on each

other.

Local government machineries in Britain and Nigeria lagged behind

socio-economic and political changes; systems of local government and

administration, in particular, became obsolete and thus unsuited to

modern conditions and present and future needs. The point we are making

is that the 'defects' of the British and the Nigerian local government

systems, and therefore the needs for their reform, were a product of the

social, economic and political changes which both countries witnessed.

These changes stretched the local government structure beyond what it

could take, thus the discrepancy between LOAD (functions and responsibilities

or input) and CAPACITY (performance or output), and this created problems

for local government administration.

In order, therefore, to fully comprehend the criticisms levied

on local government in both countries, it is necessary first of all to

discuss the changes which have occurred in the society. Thus, we shall

try to conceptualize the interplay of forces between load and capacity
vis-a-vis the criticisms that were levied on local government. As
we have said above, local government does not exist in a vacuum but
that it is a sub-system of a larger society and to which it must respond.
Therefore, any changes in the society will rebound on local government.
We will classify the societal changes which a local government must
respond to as: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGES.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE

Little is still known of the pre-twentieth century social and
economic life of Nigeria.   We do know, however, that the Hausa /Fulani
peoples engaged in extensive trading activities across the Sahara Desert
for hundreds of years; and that Kano was one of the few major
trans-Saharan trade centres.   On the other hand, the peoples of the
south, particularly the Ibos and Yorubas, traded with Europe for more
than two centuries, participating at first in the slave trade, and after
its abolition, in the trade in palm produce.   There is also evidence
that despite the difficulties imposed by dense vegetation and difficult
terrain, especially in the south, there existed internal trade.
Exchange, division of labour and even the use of a monetary standard were
well established in many parts of the country.   Food and other
subsistence items were produced simply: the hoe was the most significant
instrument of cultivation and beasts of burden and head porterage were
the means of transportation.

The appearance of European trading firms in the 19th century, and
missionaries sowing new ideas and bringing education, and later an
externally imposed government began to produce important structural
change in the economy of Nigeria.   Most important of all was the
offering by traders of rewards for the sale of particular crops which

were in demand abroad - principally palm oil and palm kernels, and later cocoa, rubber, and groundnuts.   Though there were no European plantations, production being done by peasant farmers on tiny parcels of land, the new incentives offered by the Europeans led to increased agricultural production for export.   In the 20th century new cash crops such as cotton, rubber, cocoa and groundnuts brought more and more peasants into contact with the world market and with outside ideas. This contact helped in awakening a nationalist spirit, including the demand for democratic local government as we shall see later. Thus, the system of local government through native authorities remained relatively static for almost half a century until the early fifties, while the following changes were taking place in the society:

(a) the monetization of the economy and the linking of the economy with the world market;

(b) the introduction of new agricultural commodities such as cocoa, and the valorization of existing ones such as palm produce.   The money made from these crops afforded farmers some leisure and some of the farmers could now devote more of their attention to local government affairs;

(c) the introduction of medicine and new drugs which lowered the death rate and consequently led to a population explosion and urbanization;

(d) the introduction of Western education and the training of medium-level personnel especially of white-collar clerical workers;

(e) the introduction of new technology such as the construction of a rudimentary albeit important railway network between 1895 and 1927, and the introduction of motor cars which inevitably meant that roads must be built and maintained; and

(f) the establishment of a few new towns to facilitate closer spatial integration of the economy.

All these changes, which we discuss in some detail below, and especially

improved transportation, led to quicker dissemination of ideas, and
the changes had a serious impact on the structure of local administration
in later life.

The pre-1974 British local government structure on the other hand,
was still based essentially on the Acts of 1888 and 1894 whose major
premise was that town and country were separate and required a separate
structure to deal with the differing problems they faced.   Since then,
the process of continuing urbanization and industrialization has made
that separation meaningless as the process of increasing social and
economic inter-dependence overwhelmed the existing local boundaries.
New technology, such as the introduction of motor vehicles, added to the
functions of local government since, for example, they had to provide
and maintain roads.   Improved educational facilities led to increased
better qualified personnel some of whom chose to work with local
authorities.   Despite governmental attempts at containing urban England,
nothing could stop the process of suburbanization and the flight of
industry out of the city.   We can gain an insight into the scale of
these changes using the following indicators:

Increase in Population

In 1871 the population of England and Wales was about twenty-three
million.   It had risen to thirty-two million in 1901, forty million
in 1931, forty-six million in 1961 and reaching sixty million in the early
1970s.   Nigeria also experienced a tremendous increase in her
population which was nineteen million in 1931 but rose to thirty million
in 1953 and by 1975 there were over seventy million Nigerians.   The
expansion of population in Nigeria and Britain was not distributed
evenly throughout the countries.   In fact, the vital factor in the
population explosion has been the increase in the urban proportions of
the population, particularly in towns between 50,000 and 200,000 people.
In 1901 there were 61 of these towns, housing 22 per cent of the

population of England and Wales. By 1961 there were 162 of such

towns and they housed 38 per cent of the population. 77 per cent of

the population now live in such urban towns, as against 57 per cent in

1891 and 67 per cent in 1921. 40 per cent of the population live in

the six major metropolitan areas, though this proportion is declining

as people continue to leave the major cities.

Urbanization in Nigeria, on the other hand, was given a strong

stimulus by the British conquest of the country. The wage employment

offered by the government and by commercial firms tended to be

concentrated in particular spots. Centres of administration requiring

Nigerian employees were needed for the effective political control of

the country and about them were clustered what few modern amenities

there were. At the same time with the growth of the export and import

trade, centres for collection of produce and distribution of imported

merchandise were set up at key ports and at strategic points on the

main transportation routes. With the railway came the further need

for concentration of services and fueling facilities. Thus to the

already existing urban centres, the importance of some of which increased

immensely, there were added new ones - Kaduna, Jos, Port Harcourt, Enugu,

Gusau, Onitsha and Aba, to mention a few. In these towns were

concentrated the schools, the sanitary systems, the hospitals, and

sometimes electric power. To the attractions offered to rural dwellers

in the forms of wage employment prospects or small-scale business

opportunities there was added that of enjoyment of these other amenities

and services. Nigerians were attracted by the 'gleam' and they flowed

freely into the urban centres without recruitment, compulsion, or

assistance (see Table 3.1); the cities thus grew in the same way as

export production - through local responses to economic (and other)

incentives. What evidence there is points to tremendous increased

urbanization.   There were about 0.8 million people living in urban

towns of 50,000 or more in 1921.   The figure rose to 1.4 millions

in 1931.   Despite this 5.8 per cent rate of growth, 'urban' population,

thus defined, was by this time still only 7 per cent of the estimated

total.   According to the 1952-54 census, this figure had risen to

11 per cent and has more than doubled by 1975.

TABLE 3.1

POPULATION OF PRINCIPAL URBAN CENTRES IN NIGERIA.

TOWNS	1911	1921	1931	1953	1975*
Ibadan	175,000	238,094	387,133	459,196	847,000
Lagos	73,766	99,690	126,108	267,407	1,060,848
Ogbomosho	80,000	84,860	86,744	139,535	432,000
Oyo	45,432	46,356	48,733	72,133	152,000
Benin City	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	53,753	136,000
Iwo	60,000	53,588	57,191	100,006	214,000
Ilorin	36,342	38,668	47,412	48,999	282,000
Kano	n.a.	49,938	97,031	130,173	399,000
Zaria	n.a.	25,000	28,000	53,974	224,000
Kaduna	n.a.	5,428	10,628	38,794	202,000
Jos	n.a.	2,000	2,476	38,527	90,402
Enugu	n.a.	3,170	12,959	62,764	187,000
Aba	n.a.	2,327	12,958	57,787	177,000
Port Harcourt	n.a.	7,185	15,201	71,632	242,000
Calabar	n.a.	15,438	16,958	46,705	176,000
Maiduguri	n.a.	16,274	24,359	54,646	189,000
Onitsha	n.a.	10,319	18,084	76,921	220,000
Ede	26,577	48,360	52,392	44,808	182,000

Note: n.a. = Exact number hot known.

Sources: Coleman,1958, p.74;   and *1975 figures,
           Africa South of the Sahara, 1979,p.748.

Population increase and mobility have led to certain problems for local government. The urban areas, and particularly the larger towns, needed room in which to accommodate their increasing numbers; the rural areas, alarmed at the departure of local taxpayers opposed any extension of the urban boundaries and the consequent declining revenues. In Britain, they were opposed to the creation of new county boroughs which had the same effects, since it removed the areas of authorities promoted to that status from the jurisdiction of the county authority. In short, the conflict between town and country - between county borough council and county council - arose because areas of local government did not adequately change to meet the conditions created by drifts of industry and population. Furthermore, owner occupation in England and Wales reached over 50 per cent in the early 1970s, whilst the supply of privately rented accommodation had dwindled to some 15 per cent: as a consequence, the rental market is supplied by municipal housing, with over a third of the total housing stock falling into this category.

Urbanization and industrialization in Nigeria also involved continuous differentiation in the institutional structure of the society, as well as changes in the social, economic and psychological commitments of people. In order words, considerable social mobility led to calls for changes in local government structure to meet the demands of the increasing clientele. Social mobility also diminished the cleavage between the town and its surrounding rural areas. This further made nonsense of the structure of local government. And in the realm of politics, increasing urbanization effected a new political role for the urban worker and the expanding middle class. Thus, as modernization progresses, popular political involvement tends to be

enhanced and traditional political loyalties eroded.   Concomitant

with this, different interest groups arise, or are aroused, and the

growing mass of enfranchised citizens will increasingly leave their

imprint on the political process.   The implications of social

mobilization for political development are understandably far-reaching,

because a change in the quality of politics occurs by virtue of changes

in the range of the human needs which impinge upon the political process.

The transformation of social needs on a large scale - particularly in

areas such as housing, employment, social security, municipal services,

medical care, and so forth - creates impossible demands on local

governments whose administrative and resource capacities have not

adapted or kept pace with growing and divergent needs of a modernizing

population.   Thus, rural-urban drift brought with it changes (social,

political and economic) and problems.   Greater mobility of the

population and the weakening of the extended family linkages brought

new demands upon the local authorities to assist the individual who fell

into need.   The tempo and character of the changes created situations

and attitudes that have predisposed many Nigerians to nationalist

activity and increased demands from the government after independence.

The cities and towns became not only melting pots, but the breeding

and training grounds, as well as the arenas, of Nigerian nationalism; and

later for the demand for a democratic and efficient local government to

cater for their needs.

Advances in Medicine

The increase in population of both countries was due, in great

part, to a check upon the death rate by the advances made in medicine.

From the beginning of the 18th century (Nigeria: 20th century), the

medical profession had moved, at an accelerating pace, out of the

darkness of superstition into the light of science. A connection
had been established between dirt and disease, and some attention was
given to providing clean water, sewers, drainage, and to removing
offensive trades and nuisances.

Later, in the 19th century Britain, it was thought likely that
every individual was a possible menace to public health, since he could
harbour germs on his body, in his clothing, and in his home. Every
person came to be regarded as a possible spreader of diseases who, if
not supervised and treated, could affect the whole nation. Local
authorities came to pay more attention to personal health services in
accordance with minimum scientific standards under greater central
supervision.

Since the Second World War there have been significant improvements
in environmental sanitation, the inspection of the food supply, maternity
and child welfare, the supervision of midwives, the treatment of
infectious diseases, and modern medical aids have been increasingly
introduced in Nigeria too. These, such as the introduction of
quinine to cure malaria, have had effects on the death rate and hence
on the population growth rate (see Table 3.2). The population explosion
means in effect that the local government authorities have had to
provide and maintain dispensaries, maternity centres, housing,social
security and amenities for the masses. As a consequence they became
important sources of employment. The local authorities did not respond
adequately to these changes and responsibilities and because they
lacked the necessary funds and trained personnel, they became
inefficient and ineffective.

TABLE 3.2:   BIRTH AND DEATH RATE IN NIGERIA

	PER THOUSAND	
YEAR	BIRTH RATE	DEATH RATE"
1900	n.a.	430*
1929	n.a.	134*
1965-70	49.6	24
1970-75	49.3	22

Note: *These figures represent the rate of infant mortality
      in Lagos, but they are representative.

Sources: Africa South of the Sahara, UN, 1979; Census of Nigeria,
         1931,Vol. 1.appendix 1,pp.125-30; Dr.J.G.S.Turner, "Notes
         on the Medical History of Lagos", Vols.11 & V1, Lagos,1933.

Expansion of Educational Facilities

Before 1870, the provision of education in Britain had been in the

hands of various voluntary bodies, assisted by State grants.   The

Education Act 1870 authorised local school boards (ad hoc bodies) to

provide schools where voluntary provision was not adequate.

The Education Act 1902 abolished the school boards and transferred

their powers to county councils and county borough councils.   The

larger non-county borough councils and urban district councils were

to be the authorities for elementary education only.   This new and

costly service was operated only by the largest local government units.

The provision of higher education was restricted to county councils and

county borough councils, since smaller authorities could neither provide

such a service nor make adequate use of it.

In Nigeria, perhaps the most significant inheritance from the colonial

masters was the introduction of Western education, usually by

missionaries.   Schools were built in many areas which had hitherto

seen nothing like that, although their influence remained concentrated,

of course, upon the main centres of administration.   The shift

of emphasis to education in the government expenditure after 1951

had a very significant socio-economic and political impact on the

society.   Not only did the provision of educational facilities add

to the burden of local government and therefore its ineffectiveness,

but education per se changed the type and quality of local government

clientele and inevitably the demands of the clientele.

In the Western Region, primary education became free in 1955

and the number of admissions expanded rapidly in most of the others.

Openings for secondary schools also increased rapidly whilst the number

of university entrants was substantially higher.   From less than a

million students in institutions of various kinds in 1950, the figure

rose to over three million within fifteen years.   This tremendous

expansion of education facilities in Nigeria has continued, with

education receiving the highest priority in the Federal Government budget

estimates since 1978.   We shall see in the next sub-section how

education siphoned the already inadequate resources of local government

in Nigeria.   Table 3.3 tells all the story of the rapid change in education

since 1938.

TABLE 3.3:   EXPANSION OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN NIGERIA

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED			
YEAR	SECONDARY EDUCATION	TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL	UNIVERSITY
1938	5,400	−	60
1950	21,400	1,300	300
1955	39,500	2,600	900
1960	135,400	4,700	2,700
1971	343,313	15,590	14,371
1973	448,904	22,588	23,173
1975-80	1,555,180	117,686	53,000

Sources: UNESCO, Statistical Yearbook, 1967;
         Legum, 1977,p.674.

In Britain all education other than university education has
been a local authority responsibility since 1902, and the division
as between secondary and primary was at one time between the county
and county borough councils on the one hand and certain district
councils on the other.   This ceased with the Education Act 1944,
in the belief that it is wrong educationally and administratively for
responsibility for a child's education to be split half way through his
school career.   In contrast, in Nigeria where education is the overriding
interest of all classes of the community, the native authorities of
colonial days and the local authorities that succeeded them have shown
their eagerness to build primary schools and their willingness to make
sacrifices to do so.   Thus there has emerged the administrative
pattern of divided responsibility that had been discredited in the
British Act of 1944 - the local authority primary school and the
government secondary.

The expansion of education (and enfranchisement) in Nigeria and
Britain led, as we shall expand later, to increased political awareness
and participation, to increased qualified specialist personnel working
with the local authorities (though less so in Nigeria) and also to
increased demands for institutional reforms both at the national and
local levels.   As Wraith puts it, "it is part of a natural process
that as education and prosperity become more widespread people demand,
and are capable of exercising, an increasing share of responsibility
in administering local affairs..."   (1972,p.21).

Increased Local Government Functions

It is not possible to lay down any precise responsibility between
central and local government, because there is no infallible test
of principle by which to determine what particular duties should be
assigned to either of them.   There is no class of duties which, from

the purely constitutional point of view, it will be improper to
entrust to local authorities.   But in the course of history,
responsibilities have been distributed between central and local
administrations in an almost infinite variety of ways.   Regards
have always, however, been had to the fact that the society is not
static, but in a state of flux.   Changes are bound to occur and
emphases are bound also to be different at different stages of
development.   It suffices, therefore, without reference to theory,
to accept the fact that there are certain functions which, it is either
essential or desirable for the government to perform, and that there
are certain functions which are essentially suited for performance
by the local authorities.

We must remember that Britain pioneered the agricultural and the
industrial revolutions and they created for her unprecedented social
problems, especially of destitution and disease.   The central government
itself had no machinery for tackling these problems.   'Local government',
as it then existed, was equally incapable of solving them.   Outside
the boroughs (which were in any case concerned with local trade and
prosperity and were extremely corrupt) local government meant the
'justices of the peace', whose main job was judicial and whose
administrative functions were rudimentary.   Of course, someone had
to solve the social problems and the policy of the 19th century
governments was to give responsibility to locally elected bodies to
deal with poverty, provide basic necessities in the streets, deal with
problems of sanitation and public health and later with public
education (Pearce, 1980, pp.14-15).

In contrast, when comparable modern problems began to arise in the
20th century in Nigeria, Government was paternal and all-powerful and
its local agents, the district officers, were supposed to solve every

problem that came along. State control, which would have been regarded in Britain at the time as unacceptable, was accepted in colonial government as normal. To get a true British-Nigerian comparison it is therefore necessary to stand history on its head. The result, in Nigeria, of superimposing the British kind of local government on what already existed was simply too much government; there was not enough for everyone to do, especially with the limited resources available, so that having created local government it was necessary to invent a purpose for it. In fact, the real purpose, in the minds of the British, had been political education, as a preparation for self-government, and in the minds of the Nigerian politicians the diminution of the power of the chiefs.

The point we are making is that such functions as the building and maintenance of roads, public works, schools, dispensaries, housing, transport, traffic and amenities, which usually should be reserved for local government were performed by the field agencies of the central government. This means that the central government was very powerful and influential since it imposed the apparatus of modernization from above upon people who took very little active part in it. These field agencies which were "essential when things had to be done for people, came to be something of an obstacle when the time came for things to be done by people. In other words it is now difficult for local communities, coming into the picture after fifty years of departmental government, to find their feet, since the knowledge, the skill, the equipment and the money are so largely concentrated in central government hands" (Wraith,1972,p.44). The result has been that administrative, professional and technical competence have been unduly concentrated in the central government service, at the expense of local government, and this made local government, even with their

limited functions, ineffective and inefficient.

Before the reform of 1974 in Britain, one could define the functions of local government as follows: the environmental, the protective and the social. This analysis has now become obsolete. Contemporary problems of the 'environment' such as communication have become primarily national. The protective services included the police whose staffing and administration now largely ignore local government administrative boundaries; and one of the most important of the social services, hospitals, was taken away from local government about 30 years ago. We shall return to this point - the loss of functions - shortly.

In Nigeria much of this was meaningless because, as we said earlier on, most of these functions were performed by the central government. Apart from law and order, only public sanitation could be said to be the responsibility of local communities. The unromantic subjects of refuse, sewage, drains, public cleansing, pure water, and pest and disease control have been the foundation of local government everywhere. Almost everything else is a matter of argument, so far as its administrative setting is concerned. We should now, however, go into some details about the growth of local government functions.

One matter in which local authorities in Nigeria have differed from the British, and more closely resembled the French, is in their general responsibility for law and order. They have, of course, specific powers to deal with natural nuisances such as fires and man-made nuisances such as brothels, gambling, begging, hawking and noise. But there has always been in addition a general duty laid upon all local authorities, which cannot be listed as a specific function or defined with any precision; that is the duty generally to assist in maintaining law and good government. This duty has grown increasingly important today. The law lays it down that local authorities shall not only

perform the duties imposed on them by the law, but must generally

maintain order in their areas.   In this respect it is the duty of the

local authorities to interpose for the purpose of preventing, and to the

best of their ability prevent, the commission of any offence by anybody

within the area of the council.

In view of the great stress laid on the importance of this duty, the

law contained provisions permitting the councils to maintain their

own local police force and prisons.   The importance laid on the

maintenance of law and order can probably be attributed to local

government's inheritance of some of the roles played by traditional

authorities in the past, when no other government agency possessed the

necessary information and organization at the local level.   The provision

for local authorities to maintain law and order was described as the

Native Authority's main raison d'etre_ and obligation to the Regional

Government and to the community it serves (Campbell, 1963).   The

added burden of maintaining a police force and prisons was necessary

in view of the fact that the 'native authority' was almost synonymous

with the 'native court'.

One other, if not the most important duty performed by the local

authorities, is the provision of medical and health facilities.   Here,

the responsibility was shared between the councils and the central

government.   Local authorities played and still play a prominent part

in the sanitation of their areas.   This 'welfare' category of functions

became vast as new services were added, and the tasks of health inspectors

increased.   They include the inspection of houses, and abatement of

nuisance;   inspection of animals or meat for the purposes of determining

whether they are fit for human consumption;   inspection of buildings with

a view to detecting whether they are dilapidated or ill-ventilated in

such a way as to constitute danger to the lives of the inhabitants.

They vaccinate people against smallpox or cholera and carry out routine

inspection of bakeries, waterworks, eating houses etc. to see that

they are constantly maintained in a perfect sanitary condition.

Education later became an important function of local government,

as we mentioned before.   Local authorities were empowered to build,

equip and maintain schools.   Most of the primary schools in the

Eastern Region prior to independence were owned and managed by voluntary

agencies and missions, but they relied on the councils for a proportion

of their recurrent costs.   In the north, native authorities contributed

immensely to building and maintaining schools.   The Northern Regional

Government on its part appreciated this great task and encouraged the

native authorities to improve the existing educational facilities by

giving them capital grants towards meeting the costs, and by making

a recurrent grant for the payment of teachers' salaries in grant-aided

schools.   The native authorities also ran a number of secondary schools.

Another function which became devolved on local government was the

provision of a public works.   This department, usually with an engineer

as the head, was responsible for the building and repair of roads and

bridges which were under the council's jurisdiction.   A number of the

wealthy local authorities provided public utilities, such as street

lights.   The provision and improvement of markets, abbatoirs, motor

parks, were all among the important functions of local government.

It must be mentioned also that the councils were empowered to take

part in trade or commerce.   Wealthy councils like Lagos City Council

and Enugu Urban County Council operated public passengers' transport,

but these in themselves were poorly organized and ineffective.   In the

Northern Region, the Government established the Native Authorities

Housing Corporation in 1963 to stimulate business interest of the native

authorities.

Although the responsibilities of local government remained in the established realms of sanitation, minor works, law and order and primary education, increasingly the view came to be held that rural local government is meaningless unless it is assisting in economic development - creating wealth which in the more distant future may yield the tax revenue from which social services can ultimately be financed. In Nigeria there is some confusion as to what constitutes 'development'. Often the word is construed to mean anything that was not there before, irrespective of whether it is revenue-earning or a liability on existing revenues. Unfortunately the most popular forms of development - schools and health centres - are a heavy recurrent liability especially in view of the pitifully inadequate human and financial resources, and produce no immediate return; their return lies in the improved health and education of the next generation. Markets and abpatoirs are other popular projects which pay their way as public utilities but cannot be said to <u>add</u> to wealth. The kind of developments which are most likely to produce returns in a near future are unforunately the least popular - investment in improved agriculture, fisheries, drainage and irrigation, and village industry (Wraith,1972,pp.38-9).

This contrasts with Britain where the idea of economic development as an aim of local government is alien. Agricultural or industrial, it is largely in the sphere of competitive private enterprise. The State may play a regulatory role or may be responsible for a number of nationalised industries, which are either natural monopolies or public utilities. But local authorities play no direct role at all. The most that could be said about local authorities in Britain is that they may sometimes provide the basic opportunities, such as land for factories or river frontage for docks and wharves, and the public services to support them; but actual development is not their affair. Their

business is to collect rates and with the help of central government to provide public works, transport, markets and a wide range of amenities and social services.

We have mentioned the losses and gains made by local government in Britain between 1888 and 1974 (see Chapter 2). During this period there was a radical extension in the range and quality of the services provided by local authorities. Following the Education Act of 1902, a spate of social legislation, such as the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, has required local authorities to provide a wide array of personal and environmental services, far beyond the limited protective and public health functions of the late 19th century, and has greatly widened the functional role of local government units. An unprecedented scientific, technical and communications revolution, the evolution of the concept of a Welfare State, and the need for the provision of national standards, have formed the background to these changes, providing the tools and a philosophy for local government's assumption of increased responsibility for the welfare of the population.

Changing social conditions, such as those outlined above, rendered the local government areas which were suitable for performing given functions unsuitable for their task when functions grew in scope and when new duties were made necessary by advances in living standards. There was no significant attempt to adapt areas to the requirements of the services which had been allocated to them, resulting in varying standards of service from authorities whose resources were too slender to fulfil their responsibilities. Local government structure therefore became 'ossified and anachronistic'.

There were economic changes as well. In chapter 2 we mentioned the change from an agricultural economy to an industrial one, and the problems and consequences of the change. Thus agriculture which was

the main source of employment at the time of the 1888 Act, declined

seriously in later years and accelerated the movement of population

from the country to the towns.   This mobility, as we have noted, brought

problems to local government.

Another example of the economic and functional change is the way

motor industry and especially the heavy industries, have moved away from

the centre of the city - Ford is at Dagenham and Halewood, and British

Leyland at Longbridge and Leyland.   The development of the car and

the subsequent spread of car ownership has meant that long-distance

commuting (up to 30 miles each way) is relatively common around most

cities outside London, whilst the development of suburban rail and

underground services around the latter has meant commuting journeys of

up to 50 miles and more.   This has given rise to what Pahl (1968,p.263)

has called 'a dispersed city' around London :   in twenty years, between

1951 and 1971 the outer metropolitan area of London has grown from

3,500,000 to 5,300,000.

One of the most important consequences of the growth of the dispersed

city has been the impact on the old core cities, which generally have

lost population and jobs.   For example, Liverpool lost almost a

quarter of its population between 1951 and 1971, many of them the younger

and more skilled members.   The much higher proportions of the semi-

skilled and unskilled, of the elderly and of those who, for whatever

reasons, are unable to leave the inner city, mean that the old core

cities face a much higher demand for services, but also have a lower

tax base on which to finance such services.

There has, however, been a missing factor in our argument, namely

the size and population of the local authorities to whom it is proposed

to delegate, for it is meaningless to discuss the functions of local

authorities without also discussing the areas within which those

functions are to be discharged. The two are quite inseparable, and they present us with the central dilemma of local government in Nigeria and Britain, namely that there is always a conflict between efficiency, which generally tends to point to large units, and local democracy, which always tends to point to small ones. Let us now briefly unravel this complexity.

The size, and more particularly the population of a local authority determines its revenue; this in turn will determine its capability; moreover some of the functions of local authorities (e.g. sewerage and sewage disposal) can be efficiently and economically administered over a small area, whereas others, such as electricity, require a large one; as a further complication, some of those which need only a small area may come to need a larger one, as technical efficiency grows; consequently the administering authority may have to combine with others, in order to become bigger, or alternatively lose the administration of such functions altogether and allow them to be performed by a larger authority, such as the central government or a quasi-autonomous organization. A related problem is that some functions which can be discharged satisfactorily over a small area (e.g. a town) nevertheless need highly qualified staff, which a small authority cannot afford.

Thus, not only has local government in Britain and Nigeria been criticized for failing to respond adequately to socio-economic changes around them, but they have been found inefficient because of their size. Functions were devolved haphazardly, paying little attention to the sizes of local authorities, and therefore to their financial and personnel capability. We shall return to these points when we come to deal with the 'defects' of local government in Nigeria and Britain (see chapter 5).

We have said that the tremendous increase in the functions of local government led to criticisms and calls for reform since they could not

adjust adequately to meet these changes. But the other side of the

coin is the loss of functions which relates to one of the criticisms

of local government, namely that it was undemocratic. A local government

is a semi-independent political body whose powers may in general be given

or taken away at any time by legislators. Furthermore the functions of

local government in both countries are generally defined in the law,

that is, a local authority may do nothing unless it has been specifically

authorized by the legislature. With all these changes which we have

said occurred in the society, Governments came to doubt the capacity

and capability of local authorities to provide vital services, and this

has led to central intervention in many matters which would be

considered of purely local interest in Nigeria and Britain. Other

arguments for taking away local government functions include: the

need for uniform and acceptable standards of services, the need for

large, specialized and technical operation, and the need for high level

management. Thus local government in Britain have lost the following

functions: Poor Law (1934-7), most civil airports (1945), electricity

(1947), gas (1948), water (1974), trunk roads (1936 and 1946) and

hospitals (1947). Local governments are said to have lost their

autonomy not only because of the loss of these functions, but also

because of the amount of central supervision, and their huge dependence

on central government finance. Again, we shall treat these things in

detail when we come to discuss the 'defects' of local government.

Population.explosion, population mobility and the weakening of the

extended family linkages, the impact of urbanization and the universal

cash economy, industrialization and the technological revolution, the

evolution of the concept of a Welfare State, and the need for acceptable

standards of services increased the responsibility of local government.

An array of functions have, in short, been devolved on local government

far beyond the limited protective and public health functions of post-war

years without a corresponding increase in their technical, financial,

professional and administrative competence.

The Growth of Communications

In Britain the size of local government units was influenced by the

ease with which man could travel on foot or horse.   In Nigeria the

same is true of the area of jurisdiction of an Emir/Oba or his

plenipotentiary.   With the development of the internal combustion engine

the conception of locality has changed.   Technological advances such as

the development of the aeroplane and telephone have 'shrunk' Nigeria and

Britain and made things much easier.   There were no vehicles in Britain

by the time of the 1888 Act. By 1930 Britain had over a million motor

vehicles and this figure rose to 12 million by 1970.

The colonial government contributed in no small way to the development

of communications facilities in Nigeria.   It started the railway line

by 1898 and by 1932 had reached a total mileage of 2,100.   It

constructed harbours in Lagos and Port Harcourt and built roads.   In

1914 Nigeria had 2,000 miles of roads over which motors could pass; by

1926 this total approximated 6,000 miles.   By 1951 the mileage was 28,000

and by 1962 it jumped to 45,000.   The number of licensed commerical

vehicles rose from 7,300 in 1950 to 18,000 at the beginning of 1958,

and the increase in the number of private cars during the same period

was from 7,000 to 24,000.   This figure jumped to over 85,000 in 1972.

The number of telephone instruments installed in the country also increased

rapidly from 10,500 in 1951 to 49,000 in 1962 whilst the total wire-miles

rose from 38,000 to 182,000 over the same period.   Tables 3.4 to 3.7

graphically portray the tremendous growth in communications in Nigeria.

TABLE 3.4: MERCHANT SHIPPING FLEET

DISPLACEMENT (gross tons)	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
"	110,000	121,000	142,000	182,000	336,000

Source: Africa South of the Sahara,1979,p.758.

TABLE 3.5: MOTOR VEHICLES IN USE

	1969	1970	1971	1972
Private cars, taxis etc.	42,778	42,425	60,000	85,000
Commercial vehicles (	25,626	27,086	39,000	48,000
Motor cycles	29,559	29,730	40,000	58,000
Tractors	478	459	800	1,200
Trailers	1,644	1,499	2,000	3,000'
Special purpose vehicles	182	396	420	500
TOTAL	100,267	101,694	142,220	195,700

Note: 1969 figures exclude the 3 Eastern States;
1970 figures exclude the Northern and East-Central States;
1971 and 1972 figures are estimates for the whole country.

Source: Africa South of the Sahara, 1979, p.748

TABLE 3.6: INTERNATIONAL SEA-BORNE SHIPPING

		1972	1975
VESSELS ENTERED	'OOO NET REG.TONS	8,824	n.a.
GOODS LOADED	'OOO METRIC TONS	87,588	100,100
CRUDE PETROLEUM	" " "	n.a.	98,719
GOODS UNLOADED*	" " "	4,727	4,800

* Including transhipment
Source: Africa South of the Sahara, 1979,p.758

TABLE 3.7: CIVIL AVIATION (SCHEDULED SERVICES 'OOO)

NIGERIAN REGISTERED AIRLINES	1973	1974	1975	1976
KILOMETRES FLOWN	9,100	9,400	9,500	10,200
PASSENGERS CARRIED	300	325	450	485
PASSENGER - KILOMETRE	334,000	355,000	430,000	470,000
FREIGHT TON-KILOMETRE	7,400	7,400	6,800	7,300
TOTAL TON- KILOMETRE	38,000	41,000	49,000	51,000'

Source: Africa South of the Sahara, 1979, p.758

The effect of the growth of communications in Nigeria is that it led

to an increased trading radius of each producer and each village and

thereby a quicker dissemination of ideas such as the demand for democratic

local government, and these communications changes had serious impact on

the structure of local administration in Nigeria.   Increased demands

from the ever-increasing clientele led to problems, such as the provision

and maintenance of roads, dispensaries, housing, drainage and so forth ,

for local government.   In a more direct way, the growth of communications

had another effect on the structure of local government: it is possible

for the local government official of today to know the extremities of his

local government far more intimately than, for example, the rural district

official of 1920 knew his district.   The influence of communications

on the system and structure of local government is so significant that

Wraith asserts that "it is communications that are really the important

geographical factor in local administraction; they determine whether

centralization is possible, irrespective of whether governments want

it." (1972, p.32.)

Furthermore, improved transport has meant that smaller authorities have

lost more and more functions to the larger ones and that large local

authorities had to transfer major services to central government

authorities or quasi-governmental organizations.   Thus local government

structure and boundaries created by the colonial masters and only

slightly changed by their Nigerian successors, and the Victorian

local government boundaries in Britain became obsolete and irrelevant

because of large changes in population distribution, including the rapid

growth of the conurbations, improved transport facilities and the

development and widespread use of motor vehicles, technological

developments generally and the demand for more and improved services.

We must add as an aside, however, that although all-weather roads and

above all the aeroplane have diminished distance, Nigerian communications

by road, rail and telephone are still indifferent by international

standards, and this fact must continue to affect local government for many

years to come.   In the main it should tend to enhance its importance,

since as a general principle the worse the communications in any given

area the greater the need for decentralization through devolution.

Furthermoere, we are aware that there were local government changes in

the early fifties in Nigeria but these were nothing but changes of name

since there were complicated political motives behind them - destroying

indirect rule through the chiefs (the hall-mark of colonialism), creating

local machinery for national political parties, placating local interests

and handing out patronage.   We will deal with these things when we

come to consider the political changes that occurred (see chapter 4)

but suffice it to say that the changes in the fifties were not systems

responses to environmental changes neither were they for efficiency reasons.

The fact is that the local governments became less efficient and corrupt,

and there was nothing to show that even the most rudimentary services

were rendered.

The somewhat detailed analysis of socio-economic changes in Nigeria

and Britain is necessary if we must see how the changes have affected

the political situations.   But that is just half the truth as we shall

later see.   Political changes too have led to socio-economic changes.

Changes in one aspect, therefore, have organic relationship with changes

in other aspects.   For instance, urbanization and education led to

increased political awareness and consequently political changes;

also, independence heralded Nigerianization and indigenization of the

economy and these led to enormous socio-economic changes, changes which

forced the central government to devolve more functions on local

government as the former had to face other more serious functions such as

foreign affairs.

We did say earlier that local government is an organism which must be

affected by changes around it.   In Nigeria we have deliberately painted

a rosy picture of socio-economic changes.   Yet, in whatever form

development takes, it engenders its own problems.   In the case of

Nigeria, socio-economic changes led to regional inequalities, local

government inefficiency and consequently accusations of tribalism,

nepotism, corruption and bribery.   In their classic study of

Corruption in Developing Countries, Wraith and Simpkins concluded that

"local government in the Southern Regions of Nigeria has reached the

point of being a conspiracy against the public, so riddled is it with

bribery, nepotism, politics and corruption" (1963,p.19).   The majority

of school leavers were drifting into the towns and fast becoming a solid

unemployable community there, to provide the fodder for the political

thuggery and lawlessness which appeared an increasingly commonplace

feature of Nigerian political life.

In short, the seemingly rosy socio-economic development is nothing but

hallucinating gleam.   The common man did not benefit much.   In

fact, we will note that there was little in terms of socio-economic

changes in the period 1960-1970 because of political wranglings.   The

politicians who fired the aspirations of the masses betrayed them.   They

gerrymandered the structure of local government and even with-held

the grants of some local authorities. The goods were not delivered, the masses became alienated and disenchanted and these plunged the country into chaos which consequently led to political changes - the creation of states and the eventual reform of local government.

Yet the dynamic aspect of these changes had not affected the basic structure of local government before the reforms of 1974 in England and Wales and 1976 in Nigeria. Local government structural and organizational changes were not commensurate with the rate of socio-economic changes. Thus what happened was that increased socio-economic activities multiplied the load (functions and responsibilities) on local government without a corresponding increase in its capacity. The net result was inefficiency and ineffectiveness. In short, there was a great deal of underspending and weak administration, resulting in considerable under-fulfilment and structural distortion. All these have led critics and reformers to describe local government as being anachronistic, undemocratic and inefficient (see chapter 5).

Some Implications of Socio-Economic Changes for Local Government

In whatever country it occurs, socio-economic changes bring with them an expansion of the politically relevant strata of the population. These politically relevant strata are a broader group than the elite: they include all those persons who must be taken into account in politics. Dockworkers, farmers and trade union members in Nigeria and Britain are not necessarily members of the elites of these countries, but they are quite likely to count for something in their political life. In Nigeria, as in other developing countries, the political process usually does not include the mass of isolated, subsistence-farming, tradition-bound and politically apathetic villagers, but it does include increasingly the growing members of town and city dwellers, cash-crop farmers,

wage earners, those who use the mass media, literates in town and country. The growth in the numbers (and types) of these clientele produces mounting pressures for the reform of political practices and institutions such as local government.

Socio-economic changes also bring about a change in the quality of local politics, by changing the range of human needs that impinge upon local (government) political process. As people are uprooted from their physical and intellectual isolation in their immediate localities, from their old habits and traditions, and often from their old patterns of occupation and places of residence, they experience drastic changes in their needs. They may now come to need provisions for housing and employment, for social security against illness and old age, for medical care against health hazards of their crowded urban dwellings and places of work and the risk of accidents with unfamiliar machinery. They may need succour against the risk of cyclical or seasonal unemployment, against oppressive charges of rent or interest, and against sharp fluctuations in the prices of the main commodities which they must sell or buy. They need instruction for themselves and education for their children. They need, in short, a wide range and large amount of new local government services. But local government will not be able to perform these functions effectively and efficiently unless it is reformed.

These needs ordinarily cannot be met by traditional types of local government inherited from a precommercial and pre-industrial age. Neither could these needs be met by a local government system designed in the 19th century such as in Britain. The answer to satisfy these needs can be found in local government reform.

· So also, the growing need for new and old local government services usually implies persistent political pressures for an increased scope of government and a greater relative size of the government sector in the national economy. In other words, a greater scope of governmental

services and functions requires ordinarily an increase in the
capabilities of local government.   Usually it requires an increase
in the numbers and training of local ogovernment personnel, an increase
in local government offices and departments, and a significant improvement
in administrative organization and efficiency.   A rapid process of
socio-economic change thus tends to generate major pressures for
political and administrative reform.

Similar to its impact on local government, socio-economic changes tend
to generate also pressures for a more general transformation of the
political elite.   It tends to generate pressures for a broadening and
partial transformation of elite functions, of elite recruitment, and of
elite communications.   On all these counts, the old elites of traditional
chiefs and emirs, village headmen and local notables are likely to prove
ever more inadequate;   and political leadership may tend to shift to the
new political elite of party or quasi-party organizations, formal or informal,
legal or illegal, but always led by the new 'marginal men' who have been
exposed more or less thoroughly to the impact of modern education and
urban life.

The increasing numbers of the mobilised population, and the greater
scope and urgency of their needs for political decisions (at least at the
local level) and governmental services, tend to translate themselves,
albeit with a time lag, into increased political participation.   This
may express itself informally through greater numbers of people taking
part in crowds and riots, in meetings and demonstrations, in strikes and
uprisings, or, less dramatically, as members of a growing audience for
political communications, written or by radio and television, or
finally as members of a growing host of organizations.   While many of
these organizations are ostensibly non-political, such as improvement
societies, study circles, agricultural and commercial associations and
the like, they nevertheless tend to acquire a political tinge, particularly

in a country like Nigeria which lacks more open outlets for political
activities such as those available in Britain.   But even where there
are established political parties and elections, as in Britain, a
network of seemingly nonpolitical or marginally political organization
serves an important political function by providing a dependable social
setting for the individuals who have been partly or wholly uprooted
or alientated from their traditional communities.   Such organizations
may serve at the same time as marshalling grounds for the entry of
these persons into political life.

Where people have the right to vote, the effects of socio-economic change
are likely to be reflected in the electoral statistics.   This process
finds its expression both through a tendency towards a higher voting
participation of those already enfranchised and through an extension of
the franchise itself to additional groups of the population.   Often
the increase in participation amongst those who already have the right
to vote precedes the enfranchisement of new classes of voters.

Another effect of socio-economic changes is the shift of emphasis
away from the parochialism of the traditional culture to a preoccupation
with the supralocal but far less than world-wide unit of territorial,
and eventually national state.   Experiences in some of the developing
countries including Nigeria suggest a more rapid rise of attention
devoted to local affairs and national topics than of that given to
international affairs.

The expansion of cash crops in Nigeria following the advent of
the British, and especially before independence, points to another
side effect of socio-economic changes in the society: social mobilisation
and economic development tend to substantially increase the share of
the international trade sector in the national economy.   Thus, in the
course of British development, the proportion of total foreign trade rose

from an average of 20 per cent in 1830-40 to about 60 per cent in
1870-79.

The problem of the ratio of the sector of internationally oriented
economic activities relative to total national income - and thus
indirectly the problem of the political power potential of internationally
exposed or involved interest groups vis-a-vis the rest of the community -
leads us to the problem of the size of states and of the scale of effective
political communities, which in turn relates to local government. As
we have seen the process of socio-economic changes generates strong
pressures towards increasing the capabilities of government, by increasing
the volume and range of demands made upon the government and
administration, and by widening the scope of politics and membership of
the politically relevant strata.   The same process increases the frequency
and the critical importance of direct communications between government
and governed.   It thus necessarily increases the importance of the
language, the media, and the channels through which these communications
are carried on.   The panacea, again, lies with reforming local
government institutions.

Other things assumed equal, the stage of rapid socio-economic changes
may be expected, therefore, to promote the consolidation of states
whose peoples already share the same language, culture and major social
institutions such as Britain; while the same process may tend to strain
or destroy the unity of states whose population is already divided into
several groups with different languages or cultures, such as Nigeria.

In the last analysis, however, the problem of the scale of states
(and also of local governments), goes beyond the effects of language,
culture, or institutions, important as all these are.   In the period
of rapid socio-economic changes, the acceptable scale of a political
unit will tend to depend eventually upon its performance.   If a government

fails to meet the increasing burdens put on it by the process of

socio-economic transformation, that is if capacity falls short of

the load, a growing proportion of the population is likely to become

alienated and disaffected from the local government.   It is this failure

that led local government in Nigeria and Britain to being labelled as

inefficient and ineffective, and that the solution to the problems

lies in reforming them.   At the national level, the problems of Ireland

to Britain and of Biafra to Nigeria may serve as examples.   If a

government proves persistently incapable and unresponsive it may be

forced out of power by, say, the military. As we shall see in the case

of Nigeria, the intervention of the military was to affect local government

in no small way.

All these implications, and their relationships with the politics of

Nigeria and Britain will be discussed in the next chapter.   We shall also

examine the political changes which took place in both countries and the

effect of socio-economic changes on political changes and vice-versa since

the latter are usually preceded or accompanied by a rise in several

of the usual indicators of the former.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIAGNOSIS: POLITICAL CHANGES AND THE CHANGING SYSTEM
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

> Administrative reform is a political process designed to
> adjust the relationships between a bureaucracy and other
> elements in a society, or within the bureaucracy itself
> (Montgomery,1967,p.1).

A country's decentralization system can be considered a sub-system

of its political system.   Political factors are consequently of major

importance in determining the local government system and/or its

reorganization.   After all local government draws its legal and

constitutional authority from the Government.   Moreover, the fact that

national unity is frequently one of the principal objectives of the

decentralization policy indicates the highly political nature of the

decision on the system to be introduced.   The less stable the political

situation, the greater will be the significance given to political

considerations.   Nigeria, as we shall see later, therefore attached

decisive weight to political factors in reorganizing local government.

These political factors may be of twofold origin: political ideology

and political expediency.   The ideology underlying a country's

political system has great influence on the structure and functioning

of its system of local government and administration.   The government

will develop a system in accordance with the basic ideological principles

which it has adopted, and which are therefore likely to be reflected in

local institutions and their relationship with the central government.

Britain has thus developed a more or less advanced system of local

representative institutions in accordance with her interpretation of

democracy which is frequently marked by a considerable, although declining,

degree of local autonomy.   Nigeria, in comparison, has opted for a

Western model of democracy with considerable degree of central control

over local authorities (see below and chapter 8).

Although the system thus tends to acquire its overall orientation

from the political ideology, political expediency is equally or sometimes

even more important; the probability of attaining the desired structure

depends primarily on the degree to which it is permitted by political

conditions.   In fact, therefore, the structure of power within a

country, the existence, nature and strength of groups supporting or

opposing the government, all exercise strong influence, if not on the

design and reform of the local government system, then at least on its mode

of operation.   If such opposing centres of power are likely to affect the

government's authority and even its existence, as the regional governments

did before 1966 in Nigeria, it will be reluctant to design a framework of

local government which may reinforce or encourage the oppositional forces,

or which, on the other hand, may antagonize them to the point of revolt or

seccession.   Such problems evidently determine the local government

policy in a country like Nigeria with diverse, territorially cohesive

ethnic groups.

Thus, following Wildavsky (1966,p.306), we can slightly expatiate

the aforementioned political factors to become (a) 'Policy politics' which

deals with the question of which policy will be adopted;   (b) 'Partisan

politics' which concerns the matter of which party will win a given contest,

such as a debate or an election;   (c) 'System politics' which deals with

the issue of what structures and procedures are instituted in order to

produce decisions;   and (d) 'Patronage politics' which relates to the

distribution of individual (or group) assignments to posts within the

decision making system.   We will look into all these and especially their

effect on local government.

POLITICAL CHANGE

In Nigeria and Britain, political changes and decisions have often led to changes in the structure and functions of local government. In most cases, political changes heralded in social and economic change. That is not to say that socio-economic developments have not had a great impact on political changes. But in the field of local government, political reforms and decisions have affected the functions and structure of local government more than social and economic changes. In chapter 2 we mentioned a number of political changes in Britain which led to local government structural and functional reforms in the 19th century. These include the French Revolution, the growth of trade union activities, the rise of political parties, the widening of the franchise, "laissez-faire" and various Acts of Parliament. There have always been close links between democracy in Parliament and in local government because if democracy is to work effectively, it must operate at all levels. Parliamentary reform in 1832 was logically followed by municipal reform in 1835. The extension of the franchise in 1884 was followed by the establishment of representative government in the counties through the Local Government Act of 1888 (Pearce, 1980,p.9).

Three important changes have occurred in the nature of local politics in the 20th century. First, there has been the extension of formal party politics into local government. Second, as in Nigeria, the rise of party in local government has produced an associated change, namely, in the nature of political leadership. The third and in some way most significant change in twentieth-century British local government has been the emergence of the professional officer as an important factor in local politics. Nigeria, too, in the 20th century has seen a number of political movements and changes which have considerably affected local government. Amongst these are: the rise of nationalism, the democratization of the

political system and the granting of political power (including

independence) to Nigerians, the extension of formal politics into local

government, and the coming of the military into politics.   We shall

expand on these in a momeht and consider them in terms of those which are

essentially local in nature and those which operate in a national context.

   We have dealt with the introduction and abolition of indirect rule

in Nigeria.   Whatever its shortcomings, the system reflected the

political, social and economic realities of the early 20th century Nigeria.

Things started changing rapidly in the years between the War and independence

in 1960.   The Nigerian constitution was amended four times: in 1946,

1951, 1953 and 1957.   These national political changes were transmitted

to the local level.   Thus, traditional native authority was replaced

by the local government system.   The change was quicker in the east and

west than in the north where the system of administration through native

authorities was less firmly rooted.   But even then attempts were being

made in the north to make the native authorities more democratic and responsive

to public opinion.   Thus in 1952 the Northern House of Assembly passed

amendments to the Native Authority Ordinance which had the effect of

abolishing the status of sole authority hitherto enjoyed by a considerable

number of Emirs.   They were obliged to accept advisory councils, though

they were not bound to accept advice given by the councils.   The 1954

Native Authority Law incorporated this amendment, authorized the Governor

to prescribe the inclusion of a certain proportion of elected members of

Native Authority Councils, and in the case of lesser chiefs obliged the

chief to abide by the majority decision of his council.   Later, further

legislation gradually introduced the elective principle into the

traditional authorities.

   One of the first steps taken by Chief Awolowo's Action Group

Government when it took office in the then Western Region in 1952

was to reform the machinery of local government.   The Local Government

Law of 1953 provided for one -, two - or three-tier local government at

the divisional, district, or local council level based on the principles

of English local government.   It stipulated that not more than one

quarter of the members of the councils could be traditional members

and that the powers of intervention previously exercised by the Resident

of a province were to be transferred to newly created inspectors of local

government (usually the former Residents).   Usually traditional chiefs

acted as presidents of local councils in western Nigeria.

In the Eastern Region the demand for elected local councils was

inspired by a genuine distrust of the native authorities, widely thought

to have been created by the British, and by the demand for self-government.

Because the east lacked a system of traditional native authority comparable

with the north or west, the power of the British administrative officer was

inevitably greater, and as the independence movement gained strength, the

system became increasingly unpopular.   It was reviewed in 1947 and the

Local Government Ordinance of 1950 provided for the creation of elected

county councils, urban and rural district councils and local councils.   The

councils were made directly responsible to the regional government and

administrative officers were no longer responsible for taking executive

action in the provision of local government services.   In the east, as in

the west, Residents' posts were abolished in 1956/7.

Two other political developments had significant effects on the structure

of local government in the former Eastern Region.   First, in order to

clear the way for a regional system of personal income-tax introduced

under the 1956 Finance Law, the Government decided to abrogate direct

tax and rates levied on a personal basis which hitherto had been the

main source of revenue to the local authorities.   Although the Eastern

Regional Government agreed to distribute to the authorities £1.9 million

of the £2.5 million it expected to collect through the new income tax

in the first year, the measure was criticized on grounds of the local

authorities' loss of local fiscal autonomy.   Second, the Jones

Commission, appointed in 1956 to inquire into the position, status, and

influence of chiefs and natural rulers in the region and to make recommendations

reported in that year that throughout the region there was a feeling that

local councils had moved too far in the direction of popular representation

through election and that there was an almost universal desire to see

traditional heads presiding in every council.

THE FRANCHISE

Another political change which affected the nature of local government

(e.g. election results, the extent of local taxation, calibre of councillors

and efficiency, party politics in local government and therefore local

democracy, etc.) in Britain, as it did in Nigeria, was the broadening of

the franchise.   According to Keith-Lucas and Richards (1978,pp.18-20), by

1900 the franchise for all forms of local authority was basically the same -

the occupier of rateable property.   Unmarried women with the necessary

qualifications were admitted in 1869 and married women in 1882.   It was

not until 1918 that a male voter's wife was admitted as such to the

register.   And it was not until the Sex Disqualification Removal Act of

1919 that women were allowed election as council members.   Paupers too

had been excluded from the franchise.   They had traditionally been

disfranchised from all parliamentary and local elections as,in effect, a

separate and inferior estate of the realm.   The People Act 1918 allowed

paupers to vote in local government elections; but the Local Government

Act 1933 prevented them from service on any local authority.   It was not

until the National Assistance Act 1949 when the concept of pauperism was

eradicated that the poor could exercise their full rights of citizenship.

The franchise, however, was still based on the conception that it was
the ratepayer who should control the local authority - a doctrine that
led inevitably to a great emphasis on economy by councillors who saw
themselves as essentially trustees of the rate fund.   Long after the
property qualifications had been abolished for voting for Parliament, the
local government vote was denied to all except the occupier of rateable
property and his wife (or her husband) and this restriction was not
removed until the Representation of the People Act 1945.   The Act, in
making provision for the resumption of local government elections after the
War, provided that all parliamentary electors should also have the local
government vote.   The abolition of this restriction added some eight million
voters to the register and at last the right to vote in local elections
came to be based on the person rather than on the occupation of property.
It was a significant change, which implied also a change in the attitude
to local councils - no longer primarily trustees of the rate fund.

Thus, the widening of the franchise has some implication for the
reorganization of local government which in turn "is so central to the
political world of organized power for particular advantage, that it must
have implications for the continuing societal struggle to control government"
(Dearlove,1979,p.13).   Rae (1971) details the political significance of
the qualifications for the franchise and the political importance of
qualifications for elected office.   For example, the Audit (Local
Authorities) Act, 1927, disqualified any person surcharged for more than
£500 for five years from membership of any local authority.   "The Labour
Party saw that the main purpose was to exclude the Socialist members
from the local authorities in East London" (Keith-Lucas,1952,p.179).
In my view, a political perspective on universal suffrage has to
recognize its implication for the access of different interests to local
government, and therefore for the likely direction of public policy.

Another political implication of the extension of the franchise for
the nature of local government and its reform is the coming into local
politics of professionals and small businessmen. "The franchise was
extended lower and lower down the social scale, until it practically
embraced the whole community, and gave the working classes a potential
control over municipal as well as Parliamentary elections" (Redlich,
1903,Vol.1,p.278). The 'crowding out of the gentlemen' and their
replacement by professionals and businessmen led to the call for a
reorganization of local government because of the allegedly dwindling
calibre of councillors (see chapter 8 for our view on this point). In
other words, local government was said to be inefficient and ineffective
because the social leaders and landowners assumed less of a role on local
councils than was once the case in the golden era of local government.

> It is as the working class have moved into local government,
> aided and abetted by the rise of the Labour Party, that so
> many councillors have been judged as of 'illiterate speech and
> low social standing' and as of inadequate and declining
> calibre (Dearlove, 1979,p.15).

We must add, however, that the idea that the working class have taken
over as councillors is erroneous. This was a bourgeois fear that did
not materialise in reality. Councillors are still predominantly middle
class, though professionals, managers and small businessmen, rather than
landowners and manufacturers.

In Nigeria, too, as socio-economic changes took place (see chapter 3),
it became mandatory for public men to work on local councils, replacing
the traditional rulers and their plenipotentiaries, usually friends and
relatives. Table 4.1 depicts the gradual but effective abandonment
of traditional members for elected members, usually professionals and
small businessmen, on the councils (see Table 4.3).

TABLE 4.1:   MEMBERSHIP OF SELECTED NATIVE AUTHORITIES IN THE FORMER WESTERN PROVINCES OF NIGERIA: 1944-49

NATIVE AUTHORITY	Membership in 1944		Membership in 1949		Increase of elected members 1944-9
	Traditional	Elected or Nominated	Traditional	Elected or Nominated	
Ibadan District (exluding Advisory Board)	11	4	11	12	8
Idanre	32	2	32	12	10
Ife Division	25	2	29	15	13
Illa District	26	1	19	8	7
Itsekiri	51	-	7	26	26
Ika (federal)	11	-	11	11	11
Irrua Group (Ishan)	17	-	17	8	8

Source: Hailey, 1951, p.168.

Apart from these implications of political reforms for the
calibre of councillors, Cornford (1963,p.37) points out another: the
widening of the suffrage class became the most significant single factor
in deciding political allegiance (see also, Rubinstein,1977,p.124).
The arrival of professionals through the British Labour Party did a lot to
"push businessmen off the council" (Morris and Newton, 1970,p.122).
In Wolverhampton, "the growth of labour representation on the council is
due largely to the extension of the franchise" (Jones,1969a,p.58).
In London in the 1880s and 1890s the Labour Party became 'a new political
force, supported by an extended trade unionism, and capable of winning
elections for either liberals or socialists'.   In the 1919 local
elections Labour secured control of half the Metropolitan Borough
Councils, and by 1934 had captured the London County Council (Thompson,
1967, pp.110,286).   A wide suffrage, combined with single member
constituencies, also helped to give the party structure the shape we know
today;   indeed, to the modern debate about representation and electoral
systems party is central.

By implication, the extension of the franchise led to the detection
of another 'defect' in the system of local government, namely, participation
and the erosion of local democracy.   We have argued how universal suffrage
brought party politics, allegedly led by the Labour Party, into local
government.   It is argued, therefore, that the intrusion of party politics
into local government discourages the right sort of people from putting
their names forward, and encourages the selection of candidates solely on
the basis of their record of party loyalty and service.   On the council
itself, it is claimed, the existence of party groups stifles free
discussion and renders council debates meaningless since all decisions are
effectively taken at private group meetings.   Finally, it is alleged

that doctrinaire party policies are liable to be adopted regardless of individual local circumstances and flying in the face of technical advice from officers (see, Committee on the Management of Local Government, 1967,Vol.1,pp.109-111; Warren,1952,p.187; Grant,1971,1972). The survey findings of the Royal Institute of Public Administration graphically portrays the intensity of party politics in local government. Of 31 county councils which responded to the questionnaire as many as 27 formally recognized party group leaders, and 29 had groups which met before full council. The aggregated figures indicate that 75 per cent of English and Welsh local authorities had formally recognized leaders and 86 per cent of party groups caucus met privately before council meetings.

Taking all these developments into consideration, we can say that the 20th century Nigeria, like the 19th and 20th centuries Britain, saw growing acceptance of the contention that as the common man prospered, so he would acquire the leisure time and the desire to turn his attention to responsible consideration of the affairs of state. As socio-economic changes were taking place, it became necessary to make some political changes and thus the various barriers to participation by the common man were removed. Hereditary and proprietary political institutions were gradually stripped of their powers while the powers of institutions of the elected representatives of the people were gradually enhanced.

NATIONALISM AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

One of the political movements in Nigeria without a direct equivalent in Britain was nationalism. The movement which led to the gradual abandonment of indirect rule in favour of local government as the precursor of self-government and independence is traceable to social, economic and political factors. The failure of indirect rule in

eastern Nigeria left a continuing shock in its trail, despite the efforts

of Sir Donald Cameron to ameliorate conditions. Whatever faith in the

system might have still lingered was dealt an even greater blow by the

Second World War. War served as an activating agent of political

consciousness sweeping through the colonial world. It brought home to

the Nigerian leaders a realization of the unworkability and inadequacy

of indirect administration, a realization that its centrifugal pull worked

against central representative government. The country soon found itself

in the throes of problems connected with taxation, Africanization of the

Government service, and education.

Nigerian socio-economic growth and nationalism have followed closely

parallel courses and derived reciprocal impetus one from the other, both

being a part of an awakening and a search for a new place in the world

for the Nigerian. Nigerian nationalism was the end product of three

major developments or conditions. The first was the 'social mobilization',

to use Karl Deutsch's phrase, of substantial numbers of Nigerians as a

result of a policy of determined Europeanization by Christian missionaries,

a literacy curriculum, and the growth of a population of urban workers

worried by psychological and economic insecurity. Of special importance

was the introduction of schools, the development of cash crops and local

economy, the growth of communications, and the introduction of information

media such as newspapers.

The second was the accumulation of "conscious economic grievances

among the mobilizaed groups, derived from the presence and the practices of

large-scale European enterprise and what was believed to be government

indifference regarding economic development" (Coleman,1958,p.410). The

people's hopes were raised by steady economic growth, only to be dashed due

to the Second World War. The war led to vast expansions in governmental

powers in Nigeria and Britain in order to deal with the miseries wrought

by the massive economic crisis. The expansions assumed various forms, some radically socialist in nature, some only mildly reformist of the capitalist system; but all had one feature in common - a large complex bureaucracy at the expense of local government. Of course large complex governmental bureaucracy dampened the understanding of the people about what actions were being taken by officers of government in the name of the people. We shall return to this point in a moment.

The third and most important reason was the emergence of a Western-educated minority who worked in the government or firms and who felt the frustration of colonial rule most. This educated minority wanted "the form of freedom that is not merely self-determination and self-realization, but rather the determination and realization of goals which enhance, protect and unite life" (Marcuse,1973,p.51). By 1945, changes were beginning to be felt because the number of educated Nigerians had been on the increase. Different associations were formed, and most of which were launched solely to attack and demand the abolition of indirect rule. The antipathy of these men towards the indirect rule system and native administration had become more pronounced. In fact, the Nigerian Youth Movement, the precursor of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) demanded a "complete abolition of the Indirect Rule system. Native administration should be a form of local government, and it is for that reason that we will encourage and support it" (see, Awolowo,1947,p.57.).

As we shall expatiate later, the introduction of party politics in Nigeria was to have a great effect on local government because the parties (N.C.N.C., Action Group and Northern Peoples Congress) not only won power at the regional level in the east, west and north respectively, but they reformed local administration namely, from the unrepresentative native authority system to democratic local government. The politicization of local government in Nigeria, as in Britain, produced an associated change,

namely in the nature of political leadership.   Traditional rulers were

swept aside for educated public persons.

The Second World War had a great impact on local government in Britain

too.   The war destroyed very large numbers of houses in London and a number

of other cities and towns.   In all, 280,000 houses were destroyed,

250,000 made inhabitable, and 250,000 seriously damaged.   Local government

was given the task to rehabilitate returning soldiers and others.   Churchill

demanded 'work, food and homes' and the councils had to take immediate action

to ameliorate the physical and social problems attendant on the war.   Local

government functions, as well as its estimation increased in the eyes of the

people and the political parties.   180,000 prefabricated metal houses were

erected and councils helped to get house-building started again.

The huge social and physical problems which bedeviled the country led

to a plethora of reports from commissions and committees.   The most

important of these was the Beveridge Report on Social Insurance and Allied

Services, which laid the foundation for the pattern of the 'welfare state'.

Out of this report and the subsequent discussions emerged a series of

statutes some of which changed the pattern of local government functions.

First came the National Insurance Act, 1946, the National Insurance (Industrial

Injuries) Act,1946 and the National Health Service Act,1946.   It was

this last measure which made most difference to the role of the local

authorities and started the ball rolling for the erosion of local government

functions.   On the one hand it took away from them all the hospitals,

maternity homes, sanatoria and mental hospitals.   On the other hand,

though, it expanded the lesser functions of local authorities in such fields

as ambulances, prevention of sickness and after-care, and midwifery.

CENTRALIZATION

Another major post-war political change in Nigeria and Britain is

centralization.   The following were the pressures pushing in a

centralist direction and therefore eroding the autonomy of local government

in both countries:

(a) Socio-economic changes, the importance of the work of local authorities

in the public sector of the national economy and the resultant need to

ensure that local authority expenditure is consistent with the Government's

general economic policy;

(b) the high proportion of local authority income by way of Government grant

and Parliament's wish to exercise some supervision over the spending of this

money: two-thirds of British local government fund expenditure come

from central government in the form of grants.   This is even higher in

Nigeria, with the Federal and State Governments providing about four-fifth

of local government expenditure;

(c) the national importance of much of the work of local authorities, the

need for national planning agencies, and the secular egalitarian trend

involving the demand for minimum standards in performance.   This demand for

minimum standards of provision cannot be over-emphasized in Nigeria.   In

fact, the centralization of some local government functions was due to the

doubt cast on the capability (financial and personnel) of local authorities

to provide some essential amenities, such as secondary school education,

courts, prisons and the police;

(d) the need to protect taxpayers against possible financial mismanagement by

local authorities, by means of Government loan sanction and audit;

(e) the desirability of protecting local authority staff against arbitrary

dismissal;

(f) the need to provide suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes

between the local authority and individuals, particularly with regard to

alleged maladministration through local commissioners; and

(g) the most important political change in Nigeria which led to large-scale

centralization was the coming of the military into politics with their

emphasis on discipline, national integration and unity. Their justification

for their own entry into politics is to end politics, after a turbulent

political period, and they began by outlawing the most vigorous and

conspicuous of the pre-military political institutions, including local

government. Such institutions were branded as divisive and opposed to

national unity. Functional, political and administrative powers therefore

became centralised under the military.

Centralisation is related to at least three of the 'defects' of local

government perceived by reformers: that most local authorities are

inefficient because they are too small and the panacea is therefore

centralisation; and that local government is undemocratic because of the

various forms of control - administrative, legislative, financial, political

and technical - exercised by the central government (see chapter 5).

We will deal here with the most important and most conspicuous form of

centralisation - the transfer of functions from local to central government

and quasi-autonomous organizations.

The Second World War inevitably had its impact on local government in

Nigeria and Britain. Although the rate of central control increased

considerably after 1945 due to political tensions and economic difficulties,

centralisation of local government functions in Britain date much further

back (see Robson,1966,p.13). Local government functional losses are

regarded by critics as reducing the power of the authorities and their

estimation in the eyes of the electorate. As Professor Robson put it,

"there can be no doubt whatever that the transfer of services from locally

elected councils to centrally appointed boards signifies a loss of

democratic control over those services" (1952,p.350; see also, Royal

Commission on Local Government in Greater London,1960,paras.227,707;

Money,1973,p.319).

The origin of central-local tension can be summarized thus: some

services are national, but administrative efficiency requires that they

be performed locally (Foster et al,1980,p.48).   Despite these tensions,

local government continued to enjoy a lot of prestige and respect until the

beginning of this century.   Its functions included the provision and

maintenance of streets, roads, police, prisons and local courts.   Local

government was in-charge of the provision of poor relief, education, gas, water

sewerage, and later electricity and buses (Robson,1966,pp13-32).

However, social and economic changes (see chapter 3) had made the

provisions of the 1888 Act obsolete.   Beliefs and values had changed.

Centralisation was not only a response to these changed and changing socio-

economic situations, but it was also a matter of political expedience.

Foster et al (1980,pp.45-63;   see also Robson,1966,pp.13-32) catalogue

local government functional losses.   Some, - such as the Poor Law

(1934-47), most civil airports (1945), electricity (1947), gas (1948)

and more recently water (1974) - have been transferred to public corporations.

Others - such as trunk roads (1936 and 1946), hospitals (1947), and most

remaining local health services (1974) - have been transferred to central

government.

Local government in Nigeria also witnessed a great deal of

centralisation to the point where people regarded them as 'mere agents'

first, of the Regional Governments and then of the State Governments

(Wraith,1972,p.67).   Prior to 1976 there had been a steady encroachment on

the preserves of local government which the reforms were designed to reverse.

In the west the loss of traditional functions was in top gear in 1968 when

aspects of primary and secondary education were assigned to the State.   A

state water corporation was established to take over water supply from local

government.   Police and prisons were transferred to the federal level

in 1969.   In 1970 forest reserves, "from which many councils derived

considerable income" (Oyediran,1974,p.552), were taken over by the

State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.   This centralisation

happened to coincide with an improvement in the qualifications of

councillors and led one observer to predict that "frustrations will increase

as the local leadership realises that it is called upon to do little more

than administer motor parks and cemeteries...an enfeebled local government

can hardly be expected to develop community interest and support for

facilities and services which are wholly state responsibilities"

(Oyediran,1974,p.552).

In the east the Local Government Law, 1960 (Part X) gave the minister

for local government extensive powers with the result that he virtually

controlled local government services.   The functions of councils at

the divisional level, under the reorganisation of the late sixties and

early seventies known as 'development administration', were mainly advisory.

In the north, the position of the native authorities was weakened by

the Provincial Administration Law of 1962 which provided for the

appointment of a provincial commissioner, of ministerial rank, to represent

the Government in each province.   These politicians took over the functions

formerly exercised by the Residents and therefore control from the centre

became more tight and this left the native authorities with little freedom.

And it was in the north that the most marked centralisation took place

after the military coup of 1966.   Previously the provision of services

directly to the public was left largely in the hands of the native

authorities (N.A.s).   The regional government provided services whose

scale required resources beyond the capacity of the N.A.s.   There was a

presumption in favour of local government, albeit of a traditional kind.

The system was also flexible with services such as water supply being

allocated between regional and local government according to the resources

of particular N.A.s.   Only a minority of authorities were in a position to

run hospitals or welfare services, and there were wide disparities in

the level of provision in other services between the wealthier and poorer

emirates.   Nevertheless, "the general tendency was for services rendered

directly to the public to be regarded as native authority responsibilities

until these became so complicated or expensive that Government had to take

over" (Adedeji and Rowland,1972,p.304).

The native courts, police forces and prisons were centralised largely

for political reasons, though with significant financial consequences for

local government in the form of between 7.8 and 11.1 per cent of total

recurrent expenditure in 1967-8.   Great confusion was caused by leaving

in operation a statute which vested the power to maintain law and order

in local government (Summerhayes,1969,p.219; Nemetz,1971).   Then in

1970 most functions relating to agriculture, animal health, co-operatives

and roads were taken over by the states, partly because they were already

under the technical direction of ministry staff and partly because the

states wanted even more control.   The fiscal position of the federal and

state governments was also superior to that of local government

(Nemetz,1971,pp.5-6).   The regional and state governments had preferred

to take over services rather than strengthen local finances.   Indeed the

weak fiscal position of local government was brought about by taxation

changes imposed by the centre and then used as the rationale for

centralisation.   Local government emerged from these changes with what one

observer regarded as 'trivial' functions, and the presumption about the

location of responsibility for local services swung significantly in favour

of the state government (Yahaya,1975,p.27).   Thus in almost all the states

in the federation, the pre-1976 local government reforms saw a shift of

powers, manpower and financial resources from the local authorities to the

state ministries and public corporations.

The reasons given for centralizing local government functions were similar to those used in Britain (see Foster et al,1980,pp.49-63). Apart from those given above, the first argument which we are going to advance for the transfer of functions from local government is what we call political expediency. The political temperature is higher in Nigeria than in Britain, largely because Nigeria has not yet achieved the state of nationhood. That is to say that she is often in danger of internal dissension and has yet to achieve natural unity, which accounts for the coups and counter-coups, and even a civil war. In a situation like Nigeria, therefore, the central government felt that national unity must be their overriding aim and therefore they guarded against anything divisive; and there is no doubt that local government has often been misunderstood, or misrepresented, as local self-government, or the creation of small tribal states which could threaten national unity. In Britain, politics in local government is usually contained within reasonable limits, and while political clashes can be sharp on particular issues, it is accepted that much municipal work is a-political. In Nigeria, on the other hand, politics in local government can be explosive, and the central government naturally take this into account as a hazard to security. Moreover, the leaders, given the fragile basis of their legitimacy, are afraid of decentralizing power to local levels because of the fear that pockets of resistance would build up around local autonomous centres.

Another reason adduced for centralising local government functions is that local administration must be geared to development, and if this is taking place within the framework of a national development plan it is not easy for the planners to allow very wide margins of local discretion. By contrast, local government in Britain has very little to do with economic development, which is the province of private enterprise or

public corporation.   Local authorities are concerned with services,
and their role in development is at most the ancillary one of providing
the environment which will attract others to develop.

Other reasons advanced for transferring local government functions to
central government include: staff shortage at the local level;   widespread
corruption and nepotism;   lack of confidence in the capability of local
government;   too many local authorities were regarded as being too small
to attract the necessary staff, to generate adequate revenue, and to be
effective and efficient.   Another ostensible reason for these changes was
the desire to improve services many of which were considered to be
ineffective, inefficient and corrupt.   But just as important a motivation
appears to have been the self-serving desire for bureaucratic growth of the
various state ministries.

We can say, therefore, that the regional governments failed to maintain
in the sixties the interest they had in local government in the fifties.
Political, financial and other pressures had a profound impact on the
structures, staff, services, and finances of local government.   The
regional governments, especially the west and east, devoted more effort in
developing ministry bureaucracy - each with its own field administration -
than in promoting local government.   While the regional budgets increased
dramatically, the local ones did not;   the total amount expended in the
mid-sixties was actually less than in the final years of the fifties.   And
in the west especially, the elected councils gave way to nominated ones
in 1963 - concomitant with the political crises.

The latter half of the sixties was marked by several events which had
a profound impact on local government, as we shall see later.   First,
the coup of 1966 suspended representative (including local representative)
government.   Secondly, the outbreak of the civil war in 1967 suspended
local government in the east and diverted attention from the improvement

of local government in other areas of the country. Thirdly, the

transformation of the four regions into twelve states (then 19 in 1976),

which were formally created in 1967 but commenced operationally in 1968,

has led to major changes in local government. The series of tax riots

in 1968 and 1969 in the western state underscored the importance throughout

the federation of being responsive to the needs of the local areas. The

loss of police and prisons functions to federal agencies and of other

functions to state agencies principally in 1968 was an indication of the lack

of confidence in the integrity and efficiency of the local institutions.

By 1969, local government throughout Nigeria was in a state of crisis.

Or as one journal puts it editorially,

> the institutions of Nigerian local government have failed to enhance
> their capacity,to involve the public, to respond to local needs,
> or to administer effectively and responsibly the various local public
> services. In fact, they have declined. The hopes which
> accompanied the reforms of the early fifties have been dashed
> on the disappointments of the sixties (Quarterly Journal of
> Administration, April 1969,pp.169-170).

Thus, the effect of the military take-over on local government

proves our hypothesis that local government is an organism which must

respond to environmental and political changes. Furthermore, the

large-scale overhaul which local government faced under the military

corrobrates what we have said earlier: that major administrative reforms

are usually direct outcomes of very serious crisis conditions faced by a

government, such as the take-over of power, through revolution or otherwise,

by political groups who differ strongly from those previously in office.

Thus, it is clear that all democratic states have experienced a

rapid growth of governmental functions in recent years, and that much of

this growth has occurred centrally. But while local operations have

everywhere declined in relative importance, they have grown substantially

in absolute terms (see chapter 8). The public demands resulting from

industrialization and urban living have forced local authorities to extend

or adjust traditional services and to provide a wide range of new
services. Yet everywhere the growth of 'big democracy' has been
accompanied by a sharp concentration of administrative space. As a
consequence, the spatial requirements of public administration have tended
to change much more rapidly than politically determined boundaries and
there has resulted an institutional chaos of intergovernmental, ad hoc,
and special-purpose agencies which tended to destroy the foundations of
local self-government in Britain and Nigeria. In these complex and
rapidly changing relations, local authorities in both countries have
experienced a gradual erosion of their former independence, and have been
subject increasingly to severe financial dislocation.

Looking at the importance attached to local government before say 1946
in Britain and 1960 in Nigeria, and the great decline they faced thereafter
and up to the time of the reforms in the seventies, one cannot but agree
with Professor Langrod that "local government has within itself, inevitably,
the seed of its own death once the process of democratization is accomplished;
democracy in action will claim, then, sooner or later, but inevitably a
breakaway from the fundamental idea of local government and will demand
administrative centralization" (1953,p.29). Local government was given
so many vital functions, local government had become so important that the
political parties had come to regard it as a possible repository of
their power. It is this vital role that local government came to play in
Nigeria and Britain that led the political parties to intervene in local
government, because a great deal of political influence was derived from
control of local councils. In other words, political parties became
involved in local councils because they derived much of their local
influence from the membership of them. The pioneers of local party
organization always realised the importance of municipal elections as
barometres indicating the state of national opinion and as reliable training

grounds for party workers.   It is to the politicization of local
government that we now turn.

PARTY POLITICS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

We do not attempt to survey the whole field of party politics in
local government, but its impact on local government in Britain and Nigeria,
party politics being one of the things that have 'happened' to local
government and therefore made the provisions of the 1888 Act irrelevant.

There has been little formal study of the workings of party in local
government and much of the discussion that does take place is still
largely concerned with whether or not party in local government is desirable.
Buxton noted that "the role of the party groups in the actual running of
the council (has)...been almost as little studied as their relations with
the outside parties" (1973,p.85).   The Royal Commission on Local Government
in Greater London left out the intrusion of partisan politics in local
government because they did "not conceive it as any part of our duty to have
regard to considerations of party politics" (1960,p.65).   Yet it is
necessary to study the impact of partisan politics on local government
because it relates to local policy formation and execution, the
day-to-day work of local authority, the result of local elections, the calibre
of councillors and the discussion of local democracy.   In Nigeria
especially, they dominated local government, and in large measure contributed
to its failure, and the consequent need for reform.

In Britain, the existence of organized political groups on local
councils is no recent phenomenon.   As Bulpitt puts it, "the search for
a golden age (in the 19th and early 20th centuries) when politics and parties
played no part whatsoever in local government is quite futile;   conflict has
always existed, and parties were always present" (1967,p.5;   see also,

Brand,1974,pp.133-4). Hadfield and MacColl (1948,p.90) point out that the influence of political parties had increased and was increasing in local government. Indeed, parties had come to be seen as the "indispensable element in the conversion of local councils into responsible governments" (Dunsire,1956,p.87).

A coherent urban political programme attached to a permanent political organization, however, did not emerge until the last decades of the 19th century. The foundation of the Birmingham Liberal Association in 1865 and its adherence to a programme of municipal reform laid the foundation for Joseph Chamberlain's successful capture of the City Council and the School Board in 1873, and things were never going to be the same again in local government (Briggs, 1968,p.193). The emergency of municipal Socialist ideas in the 1890s in the Labour movement gave added impetus to the growth of a programmatic local government politics (Gyford,1976,p.60). Labour therefore, extended partisan politics in local government especially after the Second World War, but it did not introduce party politics into local government (Young,1975,p.29).

Representative local government in Nigeria, on the other hand, was a child born out of party politics, and therefore, inevitably, born into partisan politics. The first local government laws in 1950-54 were passed in a state of political urgency and euphoria. "Complicated political motives were behind them - destroying indirect rule through the chiefs (the hall-mark of colonialism), creating local machinery for national political parties, placating local interests and handing out patronage" (Wraith, 1972,p.53). It is significant that national leaders, later to become Presidents, Prime Ministers and Opposition Leaders, all took the ministerial portfolio of local government in the early days of power. In this atmosphere practical realities were thrown overboard, and functions

and powers were given to local authorities which they had no hope of using. Thus, local authorities in Nigeria were created for political and prestige reasons, and as Professor Dudley (1968) said in his study of party politics in northern Nigeria, the Northern Peoples Congress relied primarily not on its own efforts in organization but on the numerous staff of the native administrations, which provided the party with continuous and direct access to the area and people under their jurisdiction. It was therefore the desire to ensure conformity, the determination to break, particularly, Tiv opposition, a group known for their individualism, that led to the riot of 1960 and again 1964.

Some of the arguments advanced in defence of parties at the local level can also be used to show their impact on local government. The battle of parties on the local authority is not a mere charade; their conflict represents a genuine disagreement as to what councils should do, how they should do it, and whose interests and values should be advanced. Moreover, with formal powers dispersed amongst the various committees and sometimes delegated to chairmen, and with individual councillors able to sink their own responsibility in the wider corporate responsibility of the council as a whole, "party organization in council has the great merit of identifying responsibility for policy and action" (Committee on the Management of Local Government, 1967,Vol.5, p.398). Party can thus impact a sense of direction and purpose to the disparate activities of the various committees and departments, and can provide the officers with some form of guidance as to what proposals are likely to meet with acceptance. In short party provides a common frame of political reference for the officers, and a common source of information, inspiration and allegiance for the councillors, thereby unifying an otherwise fragmented pattern of government. In addition to all these and in contrast to what is available in Britain, political parties in Nigeria were not divided from each other by social and economic

policies and beliefs, but by personalities and ethnic rivalries which

contributed greatly to the failure of local government.

Conversely, a party with a majority in the council which is reminded

of its responsibility by an effective opposition, the local press, and its

own internal discipline provides a local government with strong and effective

organization.

Outside the council itself parties are also important as a means of

organizing local elections and mobilizing the vote, and in particular as

a mechanism of recruitment into the ranks of councillors.   In the absence

of parties in local elections the consequences may be those experienced in

the United States:

> In most situations in which parties have been abolished in municipal
> elections, the conservative forces of the community have won most
> elections.   In the absence of a party based on the lower strata ,
> which could define issues that appeal to their interests and bring
> them to the polls....the voting portion of the electorate in
> such elections is disproportionately composed of the more privileged...
> (Lipset,1964,Vol.1,p.lxi;   see also,Adrian, 1952).

The role of the parties in ensuring the widest use of the electoral

process is crucial.   In Britain, more than half of the seats in Parliament

were uncontested before the emergence of national parties (Lloyd,1965).

The same problem has already been mentioned in the local context, where the

evidence suggests that "competition for seats is strongest in urban areas

and appears to bear a relationship to the presence of party organizations"

(Committee on the Management of Local Government,1967,Vol.5,p.48).   With

larger authorities and larger electoral areas the importance of party as

a means of enabling individuals to wage a local campaign seems likely to

increase rather than to decrease.   This is particularly true for working-class

candidates, for whom parties are in any case the chief avenue of recruitment

to the council chamber.

Beyond their periodic function of recruiting candidates and organizing

election campaigns, parties also serve to some degree to aggregate the

various interests within the community. The close links, personal and

organizational, between the parties and differing local social and economic

groups, enable the parties to receive and absorb the demands of such groups

and to carry them into the policy making process. This may help to account

for the comparatively modest degree of independent pressure group activity

at the local level in Britain compared with the United States.

Political parties then represent genuine divergencies of view, they

give coherence to the work of local authorities, they function as a means

of political recruitment and election organization, and they represent the

demands and interests of differing social groups both organized and unorganized.

The rise of the Labour Party brought with it three vital changes: it

was associated with speedy transaction of business in short council meetings,

with little attempt by the full council to alter committee recommendations,

with few items being referred back for further consideration and with few

questions put to committee chairmen. In addition, Labour councils were

much more prone to limit the autonomy of officers and to involve the

councillors in questions of detail (Boaden, 1971a, p.422). Secondly, the

Labour Party widened the spectrum of local debate, because it emphasized

the provision of services than the other parties - such as housing and social

services (Boaden, 1971b,p.112). In other words, Labour widened the

scope of local government, as a result of which it was to acquire many new

functions, such as town and country planning, which would previously not

have been seen as legitimately within the purview of local authorities

(Goldsmith,1979,p.17). Thirdly, the Labour Party emphasized the importance

of campaign programmes, introduced pre-council caucus meetings, and a sense

of party discipline. As Bulpitt (1967) has shown there is little uniformity

in party politics in English local government, which run from rigid one-party

systems to loose multi-party ones. Nevertheless, one of the consequences

of these Labour-associated changes was to force similar changes on the
Liberal and Conservative parties both of which now have their own caucus
meetings, fight local elections on a programmatic party basis with candidates
who have some party connection and who are likely to support the party line.

The impact of party politics on local government in Nigeria prior to the
military coup of 1966 was almost completely negative.   Party differences
impeded council work and brought the whole system of local government to a
standstill.   There was indiscipline, corruption, indolence, nepotism,
gross excesses in party patronage, and generally, party politics lowered the
morale of the staff of local government.   A staff of local government risked
dismissal if he belonged or was seen to belong to the opposition party.
Party militants were used as administrative personnel, and party and
administrative structures brought together.   In Nigeria the council often
became the constituency party organization.

Centralization, which became the order of the day, was largely
motivated by intense partisan politics designed to satisfy only the
ruling party in a given region.   In 1963, a well-known political commentator,
Theo Ola said that "the greatest single enemy of local government system
in Nigeria has been party politics" (Daily Times, January 26,1963). Similarly,
the acting secretary of Ibadan City Council, S.T.Fahm, argued that

> the existing local government was conceived without allowing for
> complications of party politics and the use that can be made of
> local government councils by national political parties.   It was
> introduced at the time when the politicians were keen on exercising
> newly acquired powers;   but today it appears the wheel has turned
> full circle (1963,pp.7-8).

Another important convention or political expediency which was ignored
in Nigeria but which is widely, though not universally, observed in Britain
is the distribution of offices.   In a borough, for instance, it is
customary either for the mayor to come from the majority party and the
deputy mayor from the minority one, or for the two parties to hold the office

in turn; this symbolizes the fact that the mayor is the chief representative

citizen and is to that extent above politics.   Similarly, it is customary

either to share the chairmanships of committees between the parties

(see Table 4.2), or to arrange that the chairman comes from one party and

the vice-chairman from another; it is also customary to spread the

membership of the committees proportionately between the parties.

The contrast in Nigeria is sharp.   Not only does the winning party

take all the chairmanships, but unless restrained they will appoint only party

members to committees.   This situation was carried to an absurd stage

that the then Western Regional Government became compelled to include a

section in its local government law enabling the Minister to use powers

of direction if it appeared to him 'that the minority parties are not

adequately represented on a committee of the council'; otherwise they might

well have been excluded altogether (Wraith,1972,p.89).   The power of the

majority party used to pervade every aspect of a council's life and work,

even to the extent of compelling the council's employees to join the party

under threat of dismissal.

TABLE 4.2:

PATRONAGE DISTRIBUTION IN TWO COUNCILS IN BRITAIN: 1955-60

	MANCHESTER	ROCHDALE
Committee Chairmanships	NP & M	NP
Committee Places	P	P
Alderman	P	P
Mayoralty	P	P
Outside Board and Committee Places	P	NP

NP = Non-party-political (seniority usually basis of distribution)
P = proportional to party representation
M = majority party takes all.
Source: Bulpitt,1967,p.122

The above problems took on an added force given the Nigerian

socio-political conditions of ethnicity and conflict between the

traditional and modern seats of authority.   However, a special problem

arose in areas or regions where the party controlling the regional

government was different from the ruling party at the local level.

Several forms of pressure were used by such a party at the regional level

to break such an opposition.   This was the situation in the then Northern

and Western Regions of Nigeria where you had pockets of opposition, such

as the Tiv example given earlier, to the ruling parties at the regional

levels.

In both the Northern and Western Regions especially, all kinds of

political victimization and oppression were used to elicit conformity

with the ruling party.   Of course, you had the Native and Customary

Courts, the prisons and the Native Authority Police who were charged with

such a responsibility.   Generally, local councils that refused to conform

had their grants withheld or in the final resort faced dissolution.   Things

had gone so bad that Akindolire asserted that "the present mess in local

government emanates from over-politicizing of our local authorities"

(1963,p.3), and McGrath (1969,p.189) concluded that the council was

anything but the democratic local institution it was formerly meant to be.

Like in Nigeria, the politicization of local government in Britain

has led to a change in the nature of political leadership (Lee,1963;

Jones,1969a).   'The fit and proper social leaders' who dominated town and

country government in the 19th century have been cast off and their place

has been taken by public or party persons, people whose position in the

political or social hierarchy of the community depends ultimately on their

political skills and particularly on their party status and label rather

than hereditary or proprietary reasons.   Table 4.3 graphically portrays

the scale of the change from local councils composed of traditional rulers

and their plenipotentiaries to local government dominated by public

persons.

TABLE 4.3:'   PERCENTAGE OF COUNCILLORS BY MAJOR OCCUPATION:
                THREE WESTERN NIGERIA COUNCILS,1959-1963.

	IFE	IWO	OGBOMOSO	TOTAL
Farmer	27.3	20	15	24.1
Produce Buyer	23.9	12	-	18.1
Trader	12.5	20	20	15.0
Teacher	6.8	16	10	9.0
Carpenter	4.7	4	15	6.0
Tailor	4.7	4	25	7.5
Public Letter Writer	3.4	4	-	3.0
Lawyer	3.4	-	-	2.2
Store Keeper	3.4	-	-	2.2
Timber Contractor	2.3	4	-	2.2
Butcher	1.1	4	-	1.5
Black Smith	1.1	-	-	.7
Goldsmith	1.1	8	5	3.0
Bricklayer	1.1	-	-	.7'
Painter	1.1	-	-	.7
Herbalist	1.1	-	-	.7
Truck Driver	1.1	-	-	.7
Nurse	-	-	5	.7
Washerman	-	-	5	.7
Insurance Broker	-	4	-	.7
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Oyediran,1973,p.459.

The rise of the party man has led to a change in the way formal

political leaders perceive the changes, issues and policies with which

they deal.   As Dearlove (1973,pp.206-26) has shown,the ideology of the

local councillor is an important determinant of the kinds of policies he

will favour or the way in which he perceives problems.   The emergence of

party candidates has meant that party ideology has tended to become much

more important as a determinant of policies: Labour councils, for instance,

will not sell council houses, and Conservative councils are not enthusiastic

about building new ones.

In Nigeria, however, the failure of local government during the first

republic could be traced directly to the absence of ideology and the

calibre of the politicized councillors.   Their calibre was low

if measured in terms of their educational qualifications (see Table 4.4),

professional and political experience and their level of probity. Most

of them were corrupt, inefficient and inexperienced in the affairs of

government.   They dabbled in routine matters of administration such as the

award of contracts and staffing matters.

TABLE 4.4:   PERCENTAGE OF COUNCILLORS BY EDUCATION: THREE WESTERN
NIGERIA COUNCILS, 1952-63

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	IFE	IWO	OGBOMOSO	TOTAL
	N.86	N.25	N.20	N.136
None	19.8	24.0	35.0	22.9
Adult Education	16.3	4.0	10.0	13.0
Primary	47.7	56.0	40.0	48.0
High School	5.8	8.0	5.0	6.1
Teacher Training	2.2	8.0	10.0	4.6
University	8.1	–	–	5.4
TOTAL	99.9	100	100	100

Source: Oyediran, 1973,p.457.

All of these set of changes, which we categorized earlier as being

of essentially a local nature, are local only in their impact.   The

changes themselves have contributed considerably to what might be

called the 'delocalisation' of local government: it is in this sense

that they are inter-dependent with the national changes.   As Goldsmith

points out, the strong partisan nature of local politics clearly has a

national dimension, which is clearly seen by electors:

> Now more than ever, local electors use local elections as a
> means of passing judgement on the performance of parties at
> Westminster and in Whitehall, and national politicians use
> local election results as indicators of likely general/national
> election outcomes (1979,p.17).

In the same vein, the fact that local political leaders are likely

to be party men means that they will use their position to implement the

local dimensions of their party's national policies: the amount

of money spent on education and the sale or non-sale of council houses

are good examples.   Many local leaders may be prominent within the ranks

of the national party, even if they have no ambitions to rise further up

the political ladder.   In this way, national and local politics become

entwined, and local politics become delocalised.

PROFESSIONALISM _

Another significant political change which is less prominent in Nigeria

but which has affected English local government in the 20th century is

the rise of the professional officer.   The social and economic changes

which we enumerated (see chapter 3) meant that local government has expanded

its scope and therefore needed expert advice to tackle these complex

problems.   The late 1960s brought both an emphasis on efficiency and

management in public administration, and the emergence of new demands for

local democracy, participation , community power and professional

autonomy (Hill,1970).   Given the doubtful strength of local electoral

accountability, the extent to which local government develops more democratic

and responsive processes depends considerably on the role played by local

administrators (Sharpe,1967; see also Gregory,1969,pp.31-47).   Perhaps the

most important development affecting the professionals' role is the growth

of procedures for corporate decision making.   In a.period of greater

restraint on public expenditure, the crucial decisions may be those on overall

social priorities.   Examples of expert hands are seen in such occupations

as planner, social worker and housing manager.   In education, the 1944

Education Act provided the impetus for major post-war development, and

also made it a statutory obligation on every local education authority to

appoint a permanent education officer.   In his article, Brian Neve points

out the professional, co-ordinating and brokerage role of the Chief

Education Officer:

> several case studies of local decision making in the post-war
> period have isolated the CEO as the main source of innovation
> over a period of time or pointed to the likely connection between
> the arrival of a new CEO and, for example, the creation of new
> advisory posts, an acceleration of local need, or a new move on
> comprehensive reorganization. A study of Reading shows the
> CEO as the source of all innovation, while another describes a
> new CEO in Birkenhead successfully revitalizing a dormant
> education service (Neve,1977,p.293).

In short, the CEO is seen as a catalyst, an expert among experts.

The result, as people like Lee (1974,) Dennis (1972) and

Davies (1972) have shown, is that these professionals have risen to

positions of enormous influence, if not dominance, in the local decision-

making arena. Their position is one which many councillors find it

difficult to challenge. They can be more or less aware of national

developments and reports, and use these to extract initial commitments

to policies which may have a significant long-term impact, and in the past

many of them have done much to foster a bi-partisan consensus on decision

making. Neve (1977,p.293) again cites the example of a study of the

prolonged comprehensive reorganization process in Manchester (1953-67)

with the CEO playing a mediating role between two implacable bodies:

a Labour Education Committee strongly committed to reform and grammar school

teachers determined to resist it. In such circumstances the education

officer has 'professional' loyalties both to the teachers and to his own

judgement of the educational welfare of the children (present and

future), while also having a 'democratic' loyalty to his committee. Thus

even when the policy initiative comes from the party group or from prominent

councillors, the chief officer may play a key role in co-ordinating the

process in reconciling opposing interests and in determining the form

of the policy outcome.

Furthermore, the rise of the professional official with his ties

with a national professional institution has delocalised local government.

Thus the Society of Chief Executives protested when Rother District
Council dismissed its Chief Executive.   The professional institutes are
often very important influences on the form and content of legislation
and its implementation: ·planning provides a good example with the 1968
Town and Country Planning Act.   These national associations, such as
the Association of County Councils and the Association of Municipal
Corporations, have tremendous influence on all legislation affecting the
work of local authorities.   In their own way, these 'national'
representatives of local authority interests have all contributed to the
delocalisation of local government in Britain.

CONCLUSION

Having analysed the changes which occurred in the society while the
structure of local government was relatively stable, the answers to the
questions which we set ourselves at the beginning are starting to emerge:
Was reform needed because unchanging social values could no longer be
realised through an outdated administrative system? Or had values changed,
so that reform was needed?   Well, if we take the socio-economic and
political changes that occurred into consideration, it is not surprising
that so much criticism was levied on local government in England and Wales.
Instead for local government to be reformed as these changes were occurring,
what happened was an extensive preservation of existing status and
privilege at each successive stage in the growth of the structure.
Furthermore, new tasks have had to be devolved upon local authorities
in a makeshift haphazard manner.   Moreover, there was no sufficiently
responsive machinery for the adaptation of the structure to changing
conditions.   By the 1960s, however, the socio-economic and political
changes outlined above had created sufficient pressure and criticism to bring
about systematic reform.   It is to these criticisms that we now turn in the
next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DIAGNOSIS: THE DEFECTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

> The increase in population and the requirements of the time
> has outgrown the capacity of local machinery created for more
> limited objects (Wright and Hobhouse, 1884,p.iv).

In chapter 1 we said that a diagnosis should indicate the symptoms

which have to be translated into a coherent picture on the basis of which

action can be planned and carried out with a reasonable assurance that

objectives will be achieved.   Critics believed that the existing local

government administrations in Nigeria and Britain had failed to meet the

demands put on them.   The impact of growth took them by surprise and

they could not keep up with the times.   The pattern of settlement was

always well ahead of the pattern of organization.   Clearly the human

geography, pattern of life, functions of local authorities, and nature

of local administration had changed so drastically that the need for new

institutions became inevitable.

The British system of local government created by the Act of 1888

was working so well that the President of the Local Government Board

declared to the House of Commons in 1893 that "no man can point to a

single instance in which our municipal system has broken down" (cited in

Dearlove,1979,p.21).   This tribute was attested to at the beginning

of this century by Dr.Josef Redlich who pointed to "the marvellous increase

in the efficiency of local government and the equally marvelous growth

in its functions" (1903, Vol.2,p.408).   He also praised the flourishing

system of democratic local government noting how "the gradual substitution

of a democratic for a privileged franchise has not done away with the

governing classes...democracy was not found to have deprived the upper

classes of political leadership" (1903,Vol.1,pp.215-16, 278).

The socio-economic and political changes detailed in chapters 3 and 4 made redundant this happy late Victorian golden age of democracy, efficiency, autonomy from central control and high calibre councillors. The local government system in the 20th century and especially after the Second World War came under heavy criticism.   Critics have described the system as inefficient, subject to massive and increasing central control and therefore it was undemocratic, and dominated by councillors and officers of declining calibre.   Buxton concluded that "local government was not capable of providing an efficient service" (1973,p.54; see also, Richards, 1978, p.33).

So terribly bad did critics believe things had gone that Richard Crossman, Minister of Housing and Local Government, denounced the system as archaic and regressive (1975, p.440).   Municipal administration was regarded as inefficient, ineffective and unbusinesslike, and Brodrick (1875,p.27) was driven to the conclusion that the 19th century reorganization on which the pre-1974 structure was modelled, was based on 'unscientific legislation'.   A lot of people, including politicians, local government officers, academics and critics became disturbed at the manifest inability of local authorities to cope with the major problems facing them (Robson, 1966,p.122).

Small wonder that the representatives of the London County Council in giving evidence before the Ullswater Commission on London Government, complained bitterly of the unsatisfactory nature of the local government area; a structure which they declared was entirely unsuitable to the modern requirements of local government, particularly in regard to such services as education, electricity, housing, transport and the regulation of wholesale markets (Robson, 1931,p.41).

All these views were aggregated in the official words of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England, and the Labour Government's

White Paper on the Reform of Local Government in England:

> unless local government is organized to meet the needs of the
> future, and in particular is organized in units large enough to
> match the technical and administrative requirements of the
> services which it administers, its powers must diminish, and with
> it the power of local democracy.....Radical change is overdue.
> And only if such change occurs, and local government is organized
> in strong units with power to take major decisions, will present
> trends toward centralization be reversed, and local democracy secure
> its place as a major part of our democratic system (1970,paras.
> 10, 97; see also, Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater
> London,1960,paras.227,707,; Money, 1973,p.319).

In Nigeria too, commentators praised the inherent qualities of the

pre-independence system of local government and its capacity for the

conduct of affairs (Hailey,1957,p.460).   Azikwe's N.C.N.C. saw local

government as a way of extending "democratic principles and advancing the

interests of the people of Nigeria and the Cameroons....(and as a)

suitable means for the purpose of imparting political education to the

people of Nigeria" (see, Arikpo,1967,p.61).   This was orchestrated in the

fifties by Awolowo, the leader of the Action Group, who glowingly

enlogized the local government system:

> Local government is the foundation on which the massive and the
> magnificent super-structure of state, regional or central government
> is erected.   Indeed, it is the most efficient agency by means of
> which the regional or state government minister can respond to the
> basic needs, welfare, and general well-being of the citizens
> (Western Nigeria House of Assembly Debates,1952,pp.96-7).

Thus according to Brian Smith, local government in Nigeria came to be seen

as "playing an important role in achieving the developing world's prime

objectives: securing the maximum returns from material and human resources,

and raising the standards of living" (1967,p.28).   In another article, he was

so convinced of the efficiency of local government in the provision of

essential services in the Northern Region that he asserted that even if

the regional government collapsed, the local governments were capable of

running vital services in the region (Smith,1967,p.40; see also, Wraith,

1972,p.200).

The post-war dreams of an efficient and democratic local government
evaporated in the sixties.   Local authorities in Nigeria, like their
British counterparts, were said to be inefficient because their sizes
were too small to generate adequate revenue and attract the right quality
of staff and councillors.   They were also believed to be over-politicized,
corrupt, undemocratic and stagnant (West Africa, 1971,p.214).   Things had
degenerated so much that critics came to the conclusion that

> the institutions of Nigerian local government have failed to enhance
> their capacity, to involve the public, to respond to local needs,
> or to administer effectively and responsibly the various local
> public services.   In fact, they have declined.   Nigerian local
> governments today are deprived of their representative institutions,
> are being shorn of their functions, and are declining in manpower
> and fiscal resources.   The hopes which accompanied the reforms
> of the early fifties have been dashed on the disappointments of the
> sixties (Quarterly Journal of Administration, April 1969,pp.169-170).

A tremendous similarty exists, therefore, between Nigeria and Britain
with respect to the whole language of discourse about local government,
its problems, its reorganization and prospects.   This is not surprising
since most of the advocates of reorganization in Nigeria not only studied in
Britain, but are also very attentive to developments in the latter country
and have often tried to transplant facets of British local government to
Nigeria.   Moreover, political scientists in Britain, like their counterparts
all over the world, have come to appreciate the essence of comparative studies,
and this has led some of them into research about local government in Nigeria.
In both countries, therefore, there has been a lot of writing about the
need for efficiency and the virtues of local self-government, and advocates
of reorganization have long been concerned with the calibre of their
elected representatives and with the implications of this for services
and expenditure.   Furthermore, in both countries there has been anxiety
about the inefficiency caused by the presence of too many too small
authorities, and fragmentation in the overall system and within individual
local authorities has been pointed to as harmful and as a problem needing

solution.

CRITIQUE

Several attempts were made before the seventies to reform local

government in both countries. The belief that the functioning of

local government was highly unsatisfactory led to a plethora of committees

and commissions set up to inquire into different aspects of local government.

such as the Maud and Mallaby Committees on people in local government, the

Allen Committee on the impact of rates, the Local Government Commissions on

areas and authorities in England and Wales, the Herbert Commission on Local

Government in Greater London, and then the Royal Commission on Local

Government in England. In Nigeria, too, abortive attempts were made in

the early sixties and between 1968 and 1971 through committees of inquiry

such as the Benue/Plateau State Reform Panel, Kano State Committee for

Local Government Reform, and Kwara State Advisory Committee for Local

Government Reform, to reorganize the system of local government. These

attempts, however, led to further centralization and the consequent weakening

of local administration.

We have said that the defects analysed by the Royal Commission

(1966-69) and the Federal Government in its Guidelines for Local Government

Reform (1976) were nothing new but were mere compilations of criticisms

which had become bitter since the Second World War in Britain and especially

in the sixties in both countries. The Commission was unanimous in the

view that 'local government in England needed a new structure and a new

map'. It was 'in a sense a random growth' which had 'not been planned

systematically in the light of what it has to do and the social and

geographical conditions of each place'. The Commission diagnosed the

following basic defects in the structure at that time:

(a) The division of town and country, what the Commission called "the

most fatal defect in the present system" (para.85). The 'present' structure

failed to recognize the inter-dependence of town and country which increased

with the growth in personal mobility. "People from the countryside

came into the towns for shopping, entertainment, higher education and

many professional services; people who work in towns increasingly live

out in the country and commute; people who live in the towns increasingly

go out to the country for recreation" (para.86).

(b) the division of responsibility between counties and county

boroughs had built up a legacy of boundary ambitions and fears, and

created a division of interest between the two types of authority.

According to the Commission, "the fragmentation of England into 79 county

boroughs and 45 counties, each with its own independent authority concerned

with its own interests, has made the proper planning of development and

transportation impossible" (para.87);

(c) there was a division of responsibility within the counties themselves;

county councils were frustrated in the exercise of their power by county

districts' responsibility for related functions. And within any county

the pattern of responsibility was uneven, the larger county districts had

more powers than the smaller in certain aspects. This defect is more

clearly set out in the findings of the Seebohm Committee on Local Government

and Allied Personal Social Services (1968,paras.676 and 681);

(d) the inadequate size of many local authorities measured in terms of

population, area , or financial resources, led to lack of highly qualified

manpower and technical equipment;

(e) the relationship between local authorities and the public was

unsatisfactory. Here the Commission drew mainly upon studies previously

carried out for the Committee on the Management of Local Government (1967);

(f) the relationship between central and local government was simply

'wrong' (para.100). In the Commission's view central government should

settle priorities for services of national importance, establish minimum

standards, broadly determine the allocation of resources, establish

priorities, operate checks on costs and quality and resolve inter-authority

and citizen-authority disputes (Royal Commission on Local Government in

England, 1969, Vol.1,pp.25-32).

Although there was no official thesis on the defects of local government

in Nigeria comparable to the Royal Commission's report, critics nevertheless

diagnosed similar malaise to those above.   These defects were:

(a) Confusion arising as to the proper status, functions and the best

organizational framework of the local government, that is, whether the

local government system was a rival government to the regional/state

government claiming the loyalty and duties of the people or whether it

should be based on the principles of decentralization or deconcentration

of powers;

(b) inefficiency, ineffectiveness and waste arising from the poor supporting

facilities such as staff, funds and equipment at the disposal of the local

government;

(c) corruption and malpractices arising from the lack of identification and

moral involvement with the local government system as an instrument of

development at the local level;

(d) partisanship arising from the election and/or appointment of local

government representatives on political party/tribal lines.   This led to

the tendency of successful candidates trying to 'recover' their expenditure

on election through corrupt practices; and the ruling party withholding

the grants of local government belonging to the opposition.   Furthermore,

partisanship was alleged to have led to further centralization and therefore

the charge that councillors were unresponsive to their electorate;

(e) too many too small authorities which made it impossible to generate

necessary fund with which to employ qualified staff and execute projects.

Thus, the councillors and local government workers were said to be men

of poor quality who were inefficient.   And because they were inefficient

and ineffective, many of their functions and powers were transferred

to the Government or corporations.

These defects were summarized by the Chief of Staff Supreme

Headquarters, Brigadier Yar'Adua:

> Local governments have, over the years, suffered from the continuous
> whittling down of their powers. The State Governments have
> continued to encroach upon what would normally have been the
> exclusive preserves of Local Government.   Lack of adequate funds
> and appropriate institutions had continued to make Local Government
> ineffective and ineffectual.   Moreover the staffing arrangements
> to ensure a virile local government system had been inadequate.
> Excessive politicking had made even modest progress impossible.
> Consequently, there has been a divorce between the people and
> government institutions at their most basic levels (Guidelines,
> 1976,foreword).

For the sake of our analysis here, we will reduce the defects

identified by the Redcliffe-Maud Commission and the Federal Government to

four broad ones.   First, there were too many too small authorities,

lacking the areas, population and resources to provide the specialized

staff, equipment and institutions needed by increasingly technical and

complex services, and catchment areas were too small to provide the necessary

standards of service to the growing numbers of minority groups needing

public help.   In northern Nigeria, however, it was felt that the native

authorities were too big and therefore remote, undemocratic and

'ungovernable'.

Secondly, the existing areas of local government did not fit the facts

of social life.   The obsolete division of town and country took no

account of their interdependency and in particular the division between

county boroughs and counties 'builds into the system a division of interest

where, in fact, there is a common interest'.   In Nigeria, this problem

was exacerbated not only by the indifference of the colonial masters to

urban development which was carried over to the post-independence era, but also the establishment of Government Residential Areas for the colonial administrators and their Nigerian successors, effectively segregates the 'country' areas from the chaotic township♥   Indeed, this fragmentation was said to be the fatal defect of local government.   Suburbs were not governed by the towns from which they had emerged; conurbations, each now a single economic and social unit, were splintered into a variety of authorities, and urban districts were divorced from the rural districts whose core they composed.   This administrative fragmentation was said to have damaged the provision of services to areas whose problems needed to be tacked   comprehensively (Royal Commission on Local Government in England,1969, Vol.1,paras.85-88).

Thirdly, it was believed that this fragmentation meant that the citizens did not feel that local government units reflected anything meaningful in their daily lives.   Local government areas did not correspond to what they regarded as communities.   And so they grew apathetic (Jones, 1973,p.155).   And thus critics believed the division of local authorities into tiers (outside county boroughs) confused the electorate and led to their lack of interest in the activities of the authorities. This ignorance was not thought to be a sound basis for democracy.

Fourthly, the division of local government into competing authorities, unable to combine in a common front, and their inadequate areas (except in northern Nigeria), meant that the central government was increasing its control, and was likely to remove more functions from unreformed local government, leaving it with few important activities and increasingly unattractive to able people, either officials or members, to serve.   This relates to the calibre of councillors and the local government staff. The low calibre of course meant that the authorities were ineffective and inefficient.   These problems were said to be compounded by party politics

(see chapter 4) and corruption, especially in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the system was manipulated for party advantage. Its financial and professional viability was undermined as local government units were created to suit the electoral needs of political parties and as offices were filled as political rewards. By 1965 every council set up in 1952 had been suspended. Important local government functions were transferred to ad hoc bodies.

We shall now expand the critique of the existing system to see how the institutions of local government "have failed to enhance their capacity, to involve the public, to respond to local needs, or to administer effectively and responsibly the various local public services" (Quarterly Journal of Administration, April 1969,p.170).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The boundary problem formed the mediety of local government defects while other problems as those pertaining to democracy, efficiency, central control and councillor calibre were spokes in the hub. For instance, the Redcliffe-Maud Commission considered the division of responsibility in the counties between the county and district authorities a great weakness in view of the need for a common rational approach to problems of planning and the integration of personal social services. Both the Nigerian Government's Guidelines and the reports of the Redcliffe-Maud Commission found the size of most local authorites inadequate for their responsibilities. They considered the relationship between local authorities and the public unsatisfactory, largely because the public found the system too complex and difficult to understand. A more comprehensible system would, they believed, result in more accessibility, interest, awareness, and involvement. Or as the Guidelines put it, reorganization will lead to a system which will not only "stimulate democratic self-government

and encourage initiative and leadership potential" but it will also bring about success through 'community responsiveness' and participation' (1976,foreword). Furthermore, they found the relationship between central and local government unsatisfactory because of the great heterogeneity of local authorities. Better mutual understanding and a clearer division of function and responsibility would be possible only if local authorities were fewer and stronger in resources and in their capacity to deal with community problems.

This intimate relationship is not only between the 'hub' and the 'spokes' but also among the 'spokes' themselves and which we are only separating for academic purposes. The inter-relationship among the defects can be demonstrated by the fact that central control is said to have increased because of local government inefficiency and ineffectiveness which in turn is a consequence of the poor calibre of the staff and councillors.

It was commonly believed that the structure of English local government, established at the end of the last century, was antiquated (Robson, 1966; Griffith,1966; Mackintosh,1968; Richards,1978; Pearce,1980). These critics believed that the symptoms of decay were the result of obsolete municipal structure which was quite unsuited for the tasks it was designed to perform. Thus the major problem of local government was identified as that of the boundary because they were felt to be inconsistent with modern needs and social necessities (Robson,1931,p.30).

To critics, local government in Nigeria before the 1976 reform were a medley of authorities lacking correspondence between their sizes and the financial and personnel resources required to provide and maintain services (Wraith,1972; Post,1968; Orewa,1968; Nemetz,1971; Adedeji and Rowland, 1972). They agreed that structural problems were at the centre of local government defects. Post (1968,p.102) argued that the local authorities

were corrupt, and inefficient because their sizes were too small to

attract qualified personnel.   Adejuyigbe concurs, saying that "the small

sizes of the councils had important effects on their finances" and of

course on their achievement (1972,p.403).   Wraith takes his argument

further and asserts that not only were they too small to be effective,

but the 'tier' system was too complicated for a society that was largely

illiterate:

> ...the system had no relevance to traditional forms, and that in
> particular the requirement that one local authority should collect
> the tax only to part with most of it to another, upon whom they
> might only look with favour, aroused deep suspicion and resentment
> (Wraith,1972,p.63).

Intense partisan politics in local government added to the boundary problem

as politicians gerrymandered the councils for their political ends.   In

1969, a journal's editorial comment said that local government in Nigeria

would remain inefficient unless they "have sufficient size.   It must be

sufficiently large - in area, in population, and hence in potential fiscal

and leadership resources - to develop programmes, employ competent

administrative and professional staff, and to manage the variety of local

services expected of a modern local government" (Quarterly Journal of

Administration, April 1969,p.170).

The Pre-Reform Structure

The pattern of local government in England and Wales was established

by the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894.   In the county boroughs

a single authority was responsible for local services within the area.

In the counties there was a two-tier system.   Responsibility for some

services was given to the county council, and other services were entrusted

to county districts - non-county boroughs, urban districts, and rural

districts.   In rural districts certain functions were performed by

parish councils or parish meetings.   The Local Government Board (and later

the Minister of Health) was empowered, subject to Parliamentary confirmation, to confer county borough status on non-county boroughs and to extend the boundaries of county boroughs. The subsequent creation of new county boroughs and the enlargement of the original ones involved a considerable transfer of population, territory, and financial resources from administrative counties to county boroughs.

As of 1972 the local authorities in England and Wales comprised:

58 County Councils

82 County Borough Councils

276 Non-county Borough Councils   )
)
548 Urban District Councils   )   A total of 1,298
)   District Councils
474 Rural District Councils   )

About 7,500 Parish Councils

About 3,400 Parish Meetings

This did not include Greater London, which had the Greater London Council, 32 London Borough Councils and the City Corporation.

The disparity in population of each type of local authority is very glaring if we classify them according to population as in Table 5.1

The differences in population among the areas of the same constitutional class were almost grotesque. The counties ranged from Lancashire with more than two and a quarter million, to Rutland with less than thirty thousand. The West Riding of Yorkshire had 1,696,220 inhabitants, as against Westmorland with 66,950. The Welsh counties varied from Glamorganshire with more than 750,000 to Randnorshire with less than 20,000. Even if we omit the extreme, there were large differences of population in the middle ranges.

This disparity was not limited to counties alone. For example, the county boroughs of Birmingham had a population of well over a million,

TABLE 5.1:   POPULATION, NUMBER AND TYPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
                  IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1964.

POPULATION	NUMBER
1,000,000+	4 County Councils 1 County Borough Council
500,000 to 1,000,000	14 County Councils 3 County Borough Councils
250,000 to 500,000	15 London Borough Councils 17 County Councils 10 County Borough Councils
100,000 to 250,000	17 London Borough Councils 14 County Councils 33 County Borough Councils 1 Non-County Borough Council 2 Urban District Councils 2 Rural District Councils
50,000 to 100,000	5 County Councils 34 County Borough Councils 45 Non-County Borough Councils 17 Urban District Councils 27 Rural District Councils
20,000 to 50,000	3 County Councils 1 County Borough Council 94 Non-County Borough Councils 130 Urban District Councils 164 Rural District Councils
10,000 to 20,000	1 County Council 53 Non-County Borough Councils 162 Urban District Councils 160 Rural District Councils
5,000 to 10,000	38 Non-County Borough Councils 129 Urban District Councils 82 Rural District Councils
1,000 to 5,000	44 Non-County Borough Councils 104 Urban District Councils 39 Rural District Councils
Below 1,000	1 Non-County Borough Council 4 Urban District Councils

Source: Registrar-General's Population Estimates for mid-1964.

Liverpool nearly 750,000, while Canterbury had slightly over 30,000,

Dudley below 65,000 and Gloucester 70,000. The non-county boroughs ranged

from towns like Swindon, Cambridge and Poole, all approaching the hundred

thousand mark, or Rhondda which just exceeded it, to tiny pockets like

Bishops Castle in Shropshire or Eye in Suffolk with less than 2,000 inhabitants.

The urban districts ranged from Basildon with a population of 103,000 to

to Saxmundham with only 1,500.

Similar anomalies also occurred in their territorial size, with a large

county covering about 1,649,401 acres as against the Holland Division of

Lincolnshire with 267,847 acres.   Among the non-county boroughs,

Keighley had an acreage of 23,640 as against 157 acres for Woodstock.   These

same territorial anomalies permeated into the rural and urban districts, as

we can see in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2:   SIZE,NUMBER AND TYPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN
                  ENGLAND AND WALES, 1965*

TERRITORIAL SIZE	NUMBER AND TYPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
Below 1,000 Acres	11 Non-County Borough Councils 40 Urban District Councils
1,000 to 1,999 Acres	43 Non-County Borough Councils 87 Urban District Councils
2,000 to 2,999 acres	1 County Borough Council 43 Non-County Borough Councils 80 Urban District Councils 2 Rural District Councils
3,000 to 4,999 Acres	11 County Borough Councils 73 Non-County Borough Councils 143 Urban District Councils 2 Rural District Councils
5,000 to 9,999 Acres	41 County Borough Councils 83 Non-County Borough Councils 128 Urban District Councils 5 Rural District Councils
10,000 to 14,999 Acres	13 County Borough Councils 10 Non-County Borough Councils 23 Urban District Councils 5 Rural District Councils
15,000 to 19,000 Acres	7 County Borough Councils 5 Non-County Borough Councils 21 Urban District Councils 9 Rural District Councils

Table 5.2: continued.

TERRITORIAL SIZE	NUMBER AND TYPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
2o,000 to 29,999 Acres	6 County Borough Councils 5 Non-County Borough Councils 4 Urban District Councils 38 Rural District Councils
Over 30,000 Acres	3 County Borough Councils 2 Urban District Councils 405 Rural District Councils

* Excluding county councils and GLC area.

Source: Municipal Yearbook, 1965.

Although one is not advocating for uniformity of size and population

among the local authorities in each category, but the disproportionate

sizes were too pronounced.   Critics like Maddick (1963,p.115), Richards

(1973,p.34) and Robson (1972,Vol.1p.74) believe that each category must have

a minimum and maximum size if they must perform their duties efficiently and

effectively.   The implications of these disproportionate sizes and

populations were that inefficiency and duplication became the order of the

day.   Also, it would have been impossible, for instance, for Birmingham

with over a million people and Gloucester (70,000) to have proportionate

and comparable financial resources such as rateable facilities.   These

ranges in sizes and population led critics to believe that a number of local

authorities were too small to perform with tolerable efficiency and economy

the functions devolved on them.   The Labour Party asserted that "there

are too many local authorities, the majority of which are too small.....

too many authorities lack the population and rate revenue necessary to

provide essential services" (1942,pp.5-6;   see also, Sharpe, 1965,p.11;

Redcliffe-Maud and Wood,1974,pp.24-31).   Robson agrees and argues that

"just as the technique of industrial and commercial administration now

requires far larger units of authority than formerly, so does the

technique of efficient municipal administration now demand more extensive

units of local government" (1931,p.125). The Local Government Boundary

Commission argued that "a single large unit should be able to achieve

economies in terms of manpower and money more easily than several smaller

ones" (1947,para.24). The Royal Commission on Local Government in

England (1966-69) did not doubt the wisdom of one of its predecessors since

they also considered it "clear that larger authorities offer advantages of

specialization in staff and institutions" (1969,Vol.1,p.59).

The alleged inefficiency however has greater root in the changes

which occurred in the society, than in the structure itself. This assertion

is made up of three ingredients. First, the socio-economic and political

changes that have taken place in the 20th century Britain have been

enormous (see chapters 3 and 4). Second, "as the services run by local

authorities have increased in number and importance, (so) the problem of

securing a high level of modern efficiency has also increased" (Jackson,

1963,p.207). Third, in the face of these two changes the overall

structure of local government has remained unchanged in its essentials.

In other words things have not so much gone wrong with local government;

it is more the case that local government has just failed to adapt to 'new

problems' and 'new duties' (Local Government in England and Wales During

the Period of Reconstruction,1945,p.3). In effect, a stable governmental

structure has been described as inefficient in the face of social and

economic change. Governmental authority has remained 'fragmented' while

the growing conurbations enjoy an economic and social integration.

'Lilliputian organizations' were seen as no longer up to the task of

managing the technical means of satisfying the everyday needs of those

who lived in the great cities (Green,1959,p.17). The answer to our

hypothetical question is unfolding now: Was reform necessary because

changing social values could no longer be realised through an outdated

administrative system? The much talked about values can be reduced to

'democracy' and 'efficiency'. And as we have demonstrated, the changes

are enormous. New methods of transport which arose from the introduction

of the petrol engine set up an overflow of population from the towns,

resulting in an an enormous expansion of their suburbs. A large number

of people now work in one area and live in another. These people have to

be provided with many services by the city in which they work, but most of

them pay rates only to the council of the area in which they live.

This artificial division between country and town not only became

blurred and unrealistic but was also a constant source of rivalry between

the authorities. One of such local conflicts was between the counties

and county boroughs over proposals by the former to bring within their

boundaries the 'overspill' areas into which their populations had moved

out, a course resisted by the county councils because it meant a loss of

prestige, catchment area and rateable value to them. Because of these

and other problems, the areas and populations of local authorities remained

small and they were therefore deemed inefficient (see,Simon,1926,p.216).

Convinced, therefore, that small areas can never have the necessary

resources to perform satisfactorily, commentators started praising the

efficiency of larger areas. Griffith (1966) believes that the arguments

in favour of larger local authorities are many, various and strong and the

Royal Commission on Local Government in England (1966-69) received a number

of evidences calling for larger areas because, as one of them points out,

"small-scale operations in refuse disposal are uneconomic and inconvenient

in various ways" and, more generally, they argued on, "a small authority is

less likely to possess modern plant, equipment or specialist appliances....

(has) less room for new developments in services....(and) little margin for

unexpected contingencies" (Written Evidence of the Ministry of Housing and

<u>Local Government,</u> Research Study 10,1969,pp.38,51).   Robson also

believed that "one of the most cogent reasons for requiring larger....

units of local administration is that the present muddle produces a

strong tendency to centralization" (1931,p.60).

In a word, the Redcliffe-Maud Commission subscribed to the 'doctrine of

the minimum size for an efficient authority'.   It is interesting to know

that the Minister who appointed the Commission "had no doubt that an

impartial body would support his contention that larger units were needed"

(Morton,1970,p.17), and the Commission itself in considering " proposals

for a new structure started from the basis that most existing units are too

small for the provision of the main services" (1969, Vol.1,p.42).

Local government structure was even more chaotic in Nigeria

(Fadahunsi,1977).   The coming of regional self-government in the early

fifties provided an impetus to the interest in local government structure

and administration in each of the three regions.   In the south, the native

authorities were replaced (in the east, as a result of the Local Government

Ordinance of 1950; in the west, following the Local Government Law of

1952) by English-style county or divisional, district and local councils.

The governing bodies were wholly elected in the Eastern Region and three-

quarters elected, and one quarter titled members in the Western Region.

The district and local councils were not subordinate, but co-ordinate with

the larger (divisional and county) jurisdictions within whose boundaries

many, but not all, were located.   In the north, the Native Authority Law

of 1954 replaced the sole chief with the chief-in-council, but the

traditional districts and village groups/villages remained as subordinate

administrative organs of the native authority.

Thus, prior to the 1976 reform, there was no uniformity of structure

among the local governments in Nigeria.   Every region (later state)

established and operated its system of local government.   Not only did

critics believe that the structure was ill-defined and chaotic, but

they also believed that the local authorities except in the north, were

too small in area and population to be efficient.   To them, it was impossible

to survey the facts of local government without becoming convinced that

there was a great multitude of minor authorities covering areas so inadequate,

possessing such small populations and with so limited financial resources

that with the best will in the world, they had neither the capacity nor

the means to exercise in a satisfactory manner the powers conferred on

them.   Wraith (1972) believes that the main characteristics of local

government in Nigeria was the utter lack of symmetry or system under which

it was carried on.   Fadahunsi, Orewa, Wraith and a host of other critics

concluded that local government in Nigeria consisted of numerous Lilliputian

authorities "sans population, sans money, sans knowledge, often sans

staff" (Robson,1931,p.45) and almost sans existence.

Local government structure problem in Nigeria was compounded by

illiteracy and politics.   "The ordinary man tends to see local government

in terms of local feuds, traditional rivalries, and distrust of

neighbouring towns or communities with whom he is unwilling to share his

own resources, and whom he suspects of getting more than their fair share

of benefits; not only does he not want his council to combine with others -

he would like it to become still smaller; and the politicans often back him

up" (Wraith, 1972,p.63).

Thus the argument about the size of local authorities in Nigeria, as

in Britain, can be reduced to three spheres.   First, small authorities

are seen as unable to secure the services of councillors and officers of

high calibre.   Orewa provides evidence to support his claim that none of

the small authorities in Bendel State was "able to employ a qualified

technical officer to supervise the construction and maintenance of its roads

and bridges" (1968,p.231).   Second, small authorities are seen as
unable to secure the benefits that are alleged to derive from economies of
scale.   Orewa concludes that "the per capita expenditure on administration
and law and order were on the average lower in larger councils than in the
smaller councils" (1968,p.224).   Third, and related to the second one,
small authorities cannot secure the benefits of specialization and
division of labour whereby competent specialists are employed for particular
tasks, as it is difficult to justify the employment of the range of
necessary specialists unless the case load is large (Wraith,1972,p.84).

The scale of the local authorities activities varied greatly from place to
place and it was in the north that their influence was greatest.   Before
the reorganization into states, local authorities varied in size of
population between 2,000 and three million, and their ordinary revenues
from £10,000 to over £2 million.   The large authorities such as Kano,
Sokoto and Katsina made their own provision for public services -
electricity, water etc - and had full responsibility for the policing of
their area and maintaining their prisons.   Kano Native Authority, for
instance, spent over £2 million a year and employed over 5,000 salaried
personnel, and supported a modern hospital with over 300 beds.   The
native authorities acted as the agents of the regional government in
implementing regional welfare and works programmes in their localities.
To execute these programmes, some of the richer authorities employed their
own expatriate staff.   In fact it used to be said with some truth that
before the reorganization into states that if the central government
collapsed in the north, the native authorities would carry on the
administration of the region, whereas if the native authorities collapsed
there would be complete disaster (Hicks,1961,pp.180-181; Smith,1967,p.40).

Things were different in the other two regions where the system of
native authorities had been taken over by the introduction of local

government institutions on the English model. These local government
authorities, however, were neither as large nor regarded as efficient as
the great emirates of the north. In 1953-4, for example, the total
ordinary expenditure of all the local treasuries in the Western Region
was under £2 million, the largest being Ibadan with £278,484, and the amount
in the east was even less. Many of the local authorities in the south
used to spend about £2,000 and hardly employed anybody outside their small
office staff.

In a nutshell, the population and resources of the local authorities
were regarded as too small to allow them to be effective except within a
very narrow range, consisting mainly of minor roads and small dispensaries.
Thus by 1958, there were 132 'tiny' local authorities in the Western Region.
These were made up of 14 Divisional Councils, 9 All-purpose District
Councils, 58 Districts and 51 Local Councils (Western State of Nigeria,
1971,p.10). Critics therefore believed that the pre-1976 reform attempts
were not done on the grounds of logic or equity. They were not inspired
by any general principles except for political gains. Yet as we said in
chapter 1 (see also chapter 8), administrative reform should be both a
political and a management process; and for administrative reform to be
meaningful, therefore, it must allow for both its political and managerial
elements. In Nigeria, only the political aspect was emphasized. The
councils were created to give "a measure of local independence to groups
of villages" (Western State of Nigeria,1971,p.4) and to allow the
politicians to win elections. The same process of fragmentation took place
in the east and by 1960 there were 107 local authorities.

Adejuyigbe (1972) believes that the small size of the councils had
important effects on their finance, efficiency, democracy and councillor/
officer calibre. He asserts that many of them could not raise enough
revenue to pay their staff. They were unable to engage people to

perform many of the functions expected of them.   To back up his

assertion he gives the example of Ifetedo Local Council in Ife Division

which was unable to engage labourers for road works during the 1970/71

financial year.   "Some of the provisional authorities in Akoko were unable

to provide funds for drugs in their dispensaries in certain years - in

1967/70 Akoko East Provisional Authority could only provide £8 for drugs

for use in its dispensaries" (Adejuyigbe,1972,p.403).   This was a classical

example, highly representative of local government in Nigeria, especially

in the west and east.   Even in the north where local authorities were

usually larger, richer and believed to be more efficient, my native

authority, Yagba, had only £110 in its treasury in 1965.

Furthermore, local government units did not reflect anything meaningful

in the daily lives of the citizens because they did not fit the facts of

social life.   What the citizens regarded as communities did not correspond

to the areas of local authorities.   This is believed to be responsible for

their apathy (Wraith,1972).   Moreover, the majority of the electorate,

who at any rate are illiterates, were confused by the 'tier' system of

local government.   The Western Region, for instance, had the Local Council

which was generally not a rating authority; it was usually associated with

a larger council which collected the rates.   The rating authority then

paid an annual grant to the local council to meet its expenses.   But local

council taxpayers were not willing to pay taxes to outsiders.

All the problems of local government remained unsolved despite the

declared intention of the Military Government in 1966 to reform the system.

A year after the creation of twelve states in 1967, the promised reform was

launched and by 1970 the Federal Military Government's proposals were

implemented.   The result was the familiar pattern of non-uniformity in

local government.   In 1972 the Western State (now Ogun,Ondo and Oyo states)

reformed its own local government system by adopting a modified version of

the American city-manager plan, introducing a one-tier system, removing

the traditional rulers from local government affairs, and directing that

40 per cent of local revenue raised annually should be used for local

development efforts.   In Bendel State (formerly Midwest), local governments

were abolished in 1974 when the state government promulgated the Development

Administration Edict.   This edict introduced a two-tier structure of

Development Councils and Development Committees in what it called the

'development administration system' (Government of the Midwest State of

Nigeria, 1974).   The new system resulted in the deconcentration of state

ministries to the field and the appointment of a civil servant (Resident)

as the head of the entire government operation in each administration

division.   Members of the development councils and development committees

were selected by the state government.

In 1972 the East Central State (now Imo and Anambra states) introduced

a two-tier prefectoral system tailored on the French model.   Under what it

called 'divisional administration', direct control of the system by the state

cabinet and the military governor was exercised through state-appointed

divisional officers.   In the South Eastern State (now Cross River state),

the new system of field administration was directly controlled by the Ministry

of Development Administration, while only advisory and tax collecting roles

were assigned to the traditional authorities.   In Rivers state, the

government also centralised the functions of local administration under the

state ministry.

In the northern states, the local government reform of 1972 replaced

the extant native authorities by local government authorities, and

reorganized the native authority system by establishing in their place

'Administrative' or 'Development Areas' which were mutually independent but

directly related to the local government authority and the State Governments.

The roles of the state bureaucracies were increased while the position and

powers of the emir in local government was watered down. These reform

attempts failed because they were done primarily for political reasons.

They led to increased centralization of local government powers and

functions (see chapter 4).

Thus by 1976 there was still a huge disparity in population, area,

and revenue of local authorities as presented in Table 5.3. The disparity

in population was pronounced. In Kano State, for example, they ranged

from Kano with a population of 4,747,065 to Gumel with a little more than

a quarter of a million. In the North-Eastern State, Bornu Local Government

had 1,971,870 inhabitants, as against Jama'are with 6,000. In the

North-Western State they varied from Sokoto Local Government with more than

3 million people to Lapai with just 100,000. In the Western State the

differences were equally grotesque. They varied from Ogbomosho Local

Government with 343,279 to Ilara with 1,113 inhabitants (Western State of

Nigeria,1972,p.87).

Similar anomalies also occurred in their territorial size. In

Kwara State for example, Ilorin Local Government covered an area of 2,110

square miles as against Oyun with 258 square miles. In the North-Western

State, Sokoto had a square mileage of 25,608 as against Lapai with just

2,587 square miles. In the North-Eastern State, they ranged from over

32,000 square miles (Bornu) to just about 150 square miles (Jama'are).

And in the Western State they ranged from Oyo Local Government with 7,927

square miles to Epe Local Government with only 466 square miles.

The implications of these disproportionate sizes and populations were

that inefficiency and duplication became rampant. Also, it would have

been impossible, for instance, for Katsina with over two and a quarter

million people and Birnin Gwari (29,798) to have proportionate and comparable

financial resources. Thus while Katsina Local Authority had almost half a

TABLE 5.3: POPULATION, AREA, NUMBER OF TAXPAYERS AND TOTAL RECURRENT REVENUE OF SOME LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: 1973/4

STATE	L.AUTHORITY	AREA IN SQUARE MILES	POPULATION (1963 Census)	NUMBER OF TAXPAYERS	TOTAL RECURRENT REVENUE (NAIRA)
B/PLATEAU	Wukari Langtang	6,223 1,927	285,646 80,092	37,596 9,487	352,180 88,760
KANO	Kano Gumel	12,933 1,205	4,747,065 263,733	838,731 36,608	3,091,560 228,660
KWARA	Ilorin Oyun	2,110 258	504,124 114,090	77,265 7,464	535,720 120,740
N/CENTRAL	Katsina Birnin Gwari	8,500 n.a.	2,286,032 29,798	418,475 97	2,699,700 46,066
N/EASTERN	Bornu Jama'are	32,005 149	1,971,870 6,000	321,371 5,819	3,246,120 51,514
N/WESTERN	Sokoto Lapai	25,608 2,587	3,213,017 101,937	503,426 7,615	4,452,620 64,330

Source: LOCAL GOVERNMENT YEAR BOOK 1973/74:
THE NORTHERN STATES OF NIGERIA, 1974, pp.22-24; 65-70.

million taxpayers, Birnin Gwari had only 97, and the total recurrent revenue

of the former was 77 times more than that of the latter.   Kano Local

Authority had a total recurrent revenue of N3,091,560 while Gumel could

only muster N228,660.   In the North-Eastern State the local authorities'

revenues ranged from Bornu with N3,246,120 to Jama'are with N51,514.   Prior

to the 1976 reform, therefore, variation in the expenditure and development

potential of local authorities remained as wide as when Dr.B.C.Smith first

noted that:

> While Bornu and Kano Native Authorities plan to develop medical
> services by capital expenditure amounting to £139,000 and £141,695
> respectively for the period 1962-1968, Jama'are and Kamabu plan
> expenditures of £1,000 and £100.   Other extremes include
> £54,708 (Kano) and £200 (Lafiagi) on agriculture, and £358,052
> (Kano) and £500 (Jama'are) on communications (1967,p.39).

Thus many local authorities were regarded as too restricted geographically

and administratively to be fully effective.   "The majority of the councils

have no plans, staff or funds to reseal the Provincial and District roads

which were tarred for them by the Government in the first instance" (Orewa,

1963,pp.12-13).   Adejuyigbe concludes that "the economic inviability of

the councils makes them unable to attract qualified staff or ensure them the

security of tenure necessary for progressive administration" (1972,p.405).

The Government's official Guidelines concur with these critics and

declare that "lack of adequate funds and appropriate institutions had

continued to make local government ineffective and ineffectual" (1976,foreword).

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CRISIS

Another diagnosis of critics and the Redcliffe-Maud Commission is

that there was a 'fatal' division between town and country, established

by the 1888 and 1894 Acts.   This division is said to be artificial,

certainly against the new age symbolised by the motor car, which leads to

"the huge tidal wave of population which sweeps in and out of many large

cities every morning and evening" (Robson,1931,p.97). This division

of town and country is believed by Robson and a host of other critics to

be too fertile a ground for conflict for the health of local government.

And the Royal Commission (1966-69) agrees that "local government areas

no longer correspond to the pattern of life and work in England. Population

has long since over-run many of the old boundaries" (1969,Vol.1,para.85).

This discintion, it is argued, should be abolished and town and country

linked in entities like the proposed city regions. "The opposition of

county councils to the efforts of non-county boroughs to obtain county

borough status, and the attempts of existing county boroughs to enlarge

their boundaries, constitutes the forms in which this conflict between town

and country has usually been manifested during recent decades" (Robson,

1931,p.76; for an illustration, see maps 12-15 in the folder accompanying

Volume 111 of the Royal Commission's Report,1969). The effect of this

division was that no single authority was responsible for thinking about

the totality of related services and their adequacy, about the community

as a whole. Thus counties and county districts were not regarded as

proper units of self-government, but as providers of services.

Half-hearted piecemeal attempts were made to solve the town-country

problem and the chaotic relationship between counties and county boroughs

on the one hand, and the county councils and the county districts on the other.

The Local Government (County Boroughs and Adjustments) Act 1926 raised

the qualifying population level from 50,000 as provided for in the 1888 Act

to 75,000 and provided that the status could only be granted by Local

Private Act. The Local Government Act 1958 further raised the qualifying

level to 100,000 and placed a ban on the promotion of Local Private Acts for

15 years. Under this Act, however, a comprehensive review of the

status and areas of all local authorities was set in train through the

agency of a Local Government Commission.

Hart (1966) believes, like Robson (1966) and Warren (1963) that

reform was urgently needed to resolve the problem between town and

country; between the conurbations and the regions.   The conflict between

town and country further reduced efficiency, they claim, because petty

jealousy hindered vital policy making.   The problem of who to decide

what and who to do what always became an excuse to do nothing.

The Conurbations and the Regions

Because of the alleged untidy planning and structure, Sir William Hart

believed that the conurbations are "the aggregations of urban development

which have spread without the benefit of planning to guide their growth"

(1966,p.128).   He believed that a number of areas, such as Greater London,

have growth mainly from one centre, "spreading in concentric rings with

untidy fingers of development stretching further along the main lines of

communication" (1966,p.128).   The result, he said, was a jumble of local

authority areas with accidentally interlocking boundaries dividing authorities

of differing status, powers and resources which led to public uncertainty and

confusion (Hart,1966,p.129).

Attempts to solve these problems through joint committees produced

little result.   Joint boards were established to administer some services,

especially those like sewage and sewerage disposal, where the physical

necessities of geography take little heed of local authority boundaries.

Joint police authorities were also constituted in some cases;   often

arrangements were made for one authority to provide a service, such as

the supply of water, in the area of its neighbours.   Yet when all this

had been done, the conurbations remained from a critical point of view,

'untidy', 'inconvenient' and 'inefficient' when compared with what might

be the case.

A clear example is the first post-war step towards reorganization of local government when the Government set up a Local Government Boundary Commission. After two years' experience, particularly as related to the conurbations, the Commission concluded that their powers were inadequate. They could only consider the alteration of areas and of the existence and status of individual local authorities; they could not make recommendations affecting the distribution of functions among local authorities. They could not propose the creation of a new unit of local authority or the modification of the group of functions which any recognised unit exercised. Thus because the government was not ready to grant the Commission extra powers, it was wound up in 1949.

After this Commission came a flurry of other commissions. The 1958 Local Government Act set up two commissions, one for England and the other for Wales. Greater London had been excluded from the scope of the Local Government Boundary Commission, but in 1957 the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-60 (the Herbert Commission) was appointed "to examine the present system and working of local government in the Greater London area; to recommend whether, any, and if so what, changes in the local government structure and the distribution of local authority functions in the area, or in any part of it, would better secure effective and convenient local government" (1960,p.1). The Report of the Commission was largely accepted and implemented in the 1963 Local Government Act.

The problem of town-country dichotomy was very serious in Nigeria also. Improved medical faciltiies and better standards of living consequent upon socio-economic and political changes lowered the rate of mortality, and led to a population explosion. The shift from agriculture to industry and commerce, and the availability of amenities and opportunities (hospitals, schools, colleges, pipe borne water, jobs, electricity etc.) led to the

movement of Nigerians from the rural areas to the towns and thus

accelerated urbanization.   Not only was the urban area the abode of

modernist Nigerians and the centre for their modernizing activities, it

had come to assume a determinate and decisive role on Nigerian social,

economic and political life, dictating the pace of social progress and

infusing the cultural mien with an ever more complex and intricate pattern.

The cities, especially the administrative and commercial centres such as

Kano, Kaduna, Ibadan, Enugu and Lagos, 'burst' their traditional boundaries

and created spatial, physical and administrative problems.   The confusing

and illogical separation of town and country spread to other towns, especially

state capitals, with the creation of 12 states in 1967 (19 states,1976).

Kano city, for example, had a population of 131,000 in 1953.   This

rose to 415,000 in 1967 and by 1975 Kano was a city of 600,000, giving it an

estimated annual growth of 8.9 per cent.   Kano is a sprawling, spacious

place, comprising the ancient city, modern 'township' ('Sabon Gari')

and commercial centre, international airport, seat of Kano State Government

and subsidiary townships.   Like other Nigerian towns, population explosion

and urbanization led to serious problems such as traffic congestion, breakdown

of public services and shortage of housing in Kano.   So far as local

administration was concerned, it was a tangle of authorities with the city

separated administratively from its suburbs despite their social and

economic interdependence.   The local authorities consisted of the old and

powerful Kano Native Authority which was renamed the Local Government Authority

in 1968, its subordinate authority for the Old City, the Waje Town Council,

an administrative officer in charge of the modern commercial part of the

city and many ad hoc authorities.   An attempt was made in 1962 to

reorganize the tangle of local authorities into a more rational kind of

organization.   This attempt led to the establishment of a Kano Greater

Planning Authority, which was replaced in 1969 by the Metropolitan

Planning and Development Board which assumed planning powers for the

whole of Greater Kano.

Kaduna, the old Capital Territory of the Northern Region and since

1967 a state capital, is the fastest growing city in Nigeria, with an

estimated annual growth of 11.2 per cent.   As Kaduna Capital Territory

and a modern town, it had the advantage of more spacious and far-sighted

planning: that is, the Territory covered a 5-mile radius from the city

centre.   In 1975 Kaduna was a city of 202,000 people.   Despite the

far-sighted planning, Kaduna had become, in the seventies, an 'ungovernable'

city because of the high rate of urban growth (Wraith,1972,p.144).   It had

'burst out' of its 5-mile radius yet the suburb was administratively

distinct from the city in spite of their social and economic interdependence.

Uncontrolled growth, slums, pollution, congestion, and the breakdown of

public services through over-strain had become as acute in Kaduna as

anywhere else in the country (Wraith,1972,p.144).   A sign of hope for

Kaduna, however, was the 50-year development plan which was approved in

principle in 1970 and which effectively took off after 1976.

Ibadan is second to Lagos as the worst example in Nigeria of

'megalopolis' - the city running riot with no one able to control it.

Its problems are comparable to those of any other town in Nigeria: rural

exodus, migrant unemployment, industrialization, lack of modern sewerage,

lack of housing and planning, urban crime and poverty in the face of weak

financial resources, limited administrative capability and inadequate

infrastructure.   These problems, like in other Nigerian cities, are

aggravated by maladministration, malfeasance and corruption.   Ibadan

used to be the capital of the Western Region, and since 1967 a state

capital.   It was always firmly linked sociologically and economically

with the farming areas round about it, but this interdependence was ignored

in the local administrative set up.   The population of Ibadan increased

considerably and this led to enormous expansion which created problems since

the town and the countryside were separated administratively.

Lagos, as we have said, is the worst example of a megalopolis in Nigeria.

It is one of the fastest growing cities of the world.   The 1963 census gave

Lagos a population of 665,000 within the formal city boundaries, but

these had little relation to the real built-up area and it was calculated

that another 425,000 ought to have been added to give the population of the

continuous conurbation (Wraith,1972,p.140).   By 1975, Lagos was estimated

to have a population of about a million and a half, and population within the

city limit was growing at about 8 per cent per annum while the urbanizing

areas beyond it was 20 per cent.   A critic has this to say of Lagos:

> Growth had been unplanned and largely unforeseen and has gathered
> such momentum that it is impossible to halt or reverse it, and
> there seems no reason why by the end of the century the built-up
> area should not stretch ten miles inland.....The penalty that the
> public has to pay is constant failure of water and electricity,
> chaotic traffic, inadequate public transport, and tiring and
> expensive journeys to work (Wraith,1972,p.141).

The problems of local administration in Lagos, as was the case in England

and Wales before the reforms of 1974 (London: 1963), derived from structures

designed to meet the needs of simpler days, and which became largely

obsolete.   Furthermore, most Nigerian cities and towns were built or

developed by the colonial masters for their own interests, and these bear

no reality to present day Nigeria (Allen,1972,p.17).   The Lagos Town

(now City) Council is a body of long standing, but until the 1960s it was

in essence a sanitary, public health and markets authority only;   it then

acquired other responsibilities, notably a bus service purchased from

private enterprise and the administration of primary education.   More

recently still its social welfare and works programmes have greatly increased,

and its budget in 1975 was about £5½ million, four times what it was in

1965. Nevertheless it could not possibly undertake responsibility for

providing the major public services or solving the major planning problems

of the city. For many years the Ministry of Lagos Affairs of the Federal

Government was responsible for the major roads and streets and the vital

water supply, and has now been succeeded by the Lagos State Government; the

Ports Authority is responsible for the city's most important undertaking;

electricity is supplied by the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA);

and the statutory corporation known as the Lagos Executive Development

Board (LEDB), has been responsible for the huge undertaking of clearing the

worst of the slums, replanning the city centre and creating new housing

estates on the outskirts.

There were, therefore, five different 'agencies', all within the same

geographical area, performing functions best suited to the different kinds

of work and to the resources which each could muster. Unfortunately the

division of labour between them, and their various areas of jurisdiction,

have not kept pace with changing circumstances. Here is the familiar

pattern of a growing city (from 300,000 in 1955 to 1,500,000 in 1975)

pushing its tentacles into the area of neighbouring authorities, so that the

time came when the statutory boundary had no relation to the real boundary

and claims were made to extend it at the expense of its neighbours. Until

the time of the civil war, progress towards a more rational organization

was made difficult by the fact that the whole of Lagos outside the city

boundary was within the former Western Region, which raised political,

administrative and financial problems of great complexity (Jones and

Keith-Lucas,1963). As long ago as 1964 a United Nations team had proposed

that the artificial separation of the city (Federal Government) from the

built-up area outside (Western Regional Government) should be terminated, and

that a Greater Lagos Metropolitan Authority should operate over the
whole conurbation in the manner of the LEDB, and that the then Lagos Town
Council should act as a second-tier authority, also over the whole area
(Koenigsberger et al,1964).   The creation of Lagos State reduced some of
the problems but not the multiplicity of authorities over the whole area.
The Federal Ministry of Lagos Affairs is now superseded by two state ministries
Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs for general purposes and Works
and Planning for planning purposes, located at Ikeja, and the jurisdiction
of the City Council and the LEDB remain unchanged.   Outside the city
boundary - in the territory taken over from the Western Region - urban
planning is the responsibility of the Ikeja Planning Authority and there
were before the 1976 reform, four 'divisional' local authorities for general
purposes - Ikeja, Badagry, Epe and Ikorodu, all of which are so near the
metropolis that they have become urbanized.

In Nigeria and Britain we have the universal problem of the growing
city and its hinterland.   The city boundary is always slow to catch up
with the real area of the city, which has led in some parts of the world
to the growth of what is usually called the 'City Region' - a ring thrown
round the city sufficiently widely to anticipate future problems of urban
growth and to solve them by a single authority, or at least a co-ordinated
set of agencies.   Before the 1974 and 1976 reforms in Britain and Nigeria
respectively, local government areas no longer corresponded to the pattern
of life and work.   Population had long since over-run many of the old
boundaries.   The local government structure did not correspond to the
realities of life because it failed to recognise the social and economic
interdependence of town and country.

The Race for County Borough Status

The structure of local government in Britain included two different types of local administration: single-tier all-purpose authorities in the county boroughs and two-tier arrangements in the administrative counties, with a special variety of two-tier government in London. This is in contrast to what obtained in Nigeria where there were no all-purpose local authorities in the midst of a two-tier system. At the turn of the century, when local government services in Britain were far less fully developed and when attention chiefly concentrated on the environmental problems of the urban areas, the two systems of local administration existed side by side without difficulty. But services expanded and county functions became more important; at the same time there was a steady stream of applications to establish new county boroughs or to extend existing ones and, inevitably, there was friction and rivalry between the counties and the county boroughs. Furthermore, the separate development of local government in the towns, largely because of public health and other problems there, had resulted in a divergence between the powers possessed by urban authorities as against those in rural areas - a divergence which was in due course to demand modification in times of greater mobility and more unified standards.

A number of critics, including George Jones (1963,pp.173-87; 1964,pp.277-90) advanced a number of reasons most important of which is the shift of population, to justify their call for enlarged county boroughs which would remove the 'unrealistic' division of town and country and lessen the rivalry between the counties and the county boroughs. In the report on the West Midlands Special Review Area, the Local Government Commission's Report says,

The county boroughs, representing the main urban centres,
are losing population to the peripheral areas, where more land
is available for building and people can get a house with a garden.
Among the population which is lost in this way are the younger
families, because these need accommodation with more space for
children, and, more generally, the higher income groups.   As
a result, the county boroughs....are beginning to lose variety
in the social and economic make-up of their populations (1961,p.19).

This view was orchestrated by the SSRC Bristol Conference Working Group on

the Royal Commission (1969).   Their research shows that the distribution

of population, the pattern of industrial and other employment, have

changed greatly.

Another reason advanced for the extension of county boroughs was the

natural increase, that is, the excess of births over deaths, which is said

to be much greater than was forecast 30 years ago.   Moreover, there is an

increase in the number of families wishing to have their own separate

homes.   From these causes, and from the universal desire for more

spacious living, comes an increasing movement out from the older and

more congested areas of towns to their fringes and to places well beyond.

The net result, it is believed, is that the resident population of many

county boroughs and large municipal boroughs is either falling, or is

rising by far less than their natural increase, while the resident population

of fringe areas is rising by much more than their natural increase.   Jones

(1963), Simon (1938,pp.399-405), and Hennock (1973,p.323) believed that

these movements would lead to chaos because some people are living in a

local government area while paying rates to another.   They also believed

that the movement from the centre of the towns would lead to 'decay',

and create class consciousness because only the rich can afford to live

in the quieter and more beautiful suburb.

These critics adduced reasons for the outward movement: growing

affluence in the society; the bus, motor car and telephone; in many

big towns a point of time has been reached when a great deal of densely

developed housing built in the mid-19th century, is now so worn out that

it is having to be replace, and municipal rehousing, commonly at lower

densities and with consequent overspill, has become a big and immediate

pressing task; and that council housing has produced an exodus because

the number of displaced people cannot be all resettled due to roads, spacing

for play, schools etc.   Thus they came to the conclusion that a county

borough in circumstances such as we have described was going to find itself

in a more and more serious position if its boundaries remained unchanged,

and that this must often outweigh the 'genuine factors' on the other

side, such as the wishes of the inhabitants in the fringe area and the vigour

of local government activity there.

Thus, it is said that the relationship between a town and its rural

surroundings transcends purely social and economic inter-relationship.

Towns provide a great many services, as the Royal Commission (1969,Vol.1,p.26)

notes, for people in the suburb, such as shopping, hospitals, dental treatment,

insurance, accountancy, further and higher education, recreation,

entertainment and a host of other things.   But it is not a one-way traffic:

the countryside provides the city-dwellers with opportunities for recreation

and certain types of employment.

As we have said before, there were attempts before the Royal Commission

(1966-69) to reform the structure of local government in Britain and resolve

the town and country crisis, and especially the county - county borough

conflict.   The 1958 Local Government Act, a product of a concordat between

the Government and local authority associations, is a good example.   The

scope of the Commission was very restrictive.   The 1956 White Paper said

that there was "no convincing case for radically reshaping the existing form

of local government in England and Wales.   What is needed is to overhaul

it and make such improvements as are necessary to bring it up to date"

(Local Government: Areas and Status of Local Authorities in England
and Wales,1956). Thus the Local Government Act 1958 delineated five
conurbations - Tyneside, West Yorkshire, South-East Lancashire, Merseyside
and the West Midlands - outside Greater London and labelled them 'special
review areas' and the remainder of England and the whole of Wales as 'general
review areas'. The Commission could propose changes in the boundaries
of the counties and county boroughs and/or abolish or create new ones, but
it did not have the power to review functions. In the special review areas
it could propose changes in the county districts, including abolishing or
creating them or promote them. The Commission was also empowered to
propose a 'continous county', that is a county with no county boroughs
within its boundaries. Likewise, it could propose the allocation of
functions between the continuous county and the county districts within its
boundaries.

The scope of the Commission was further restricted by the way it was
asked to carry out its enquiry procedures. As Sharpe noted, "the Act
clearly limits the scope of the Commission and the regulations however
admirably democratic in intent, have made matters worse by enforcing it, as
their reports amply testify, to devote much time and energy to the negative
job of answering the objections of existing local authorities rather than
the rigorous examination of the positive merits of reform" (1965,pp.21-22).
And as Richards concludes,"the morass of procedure for dealing with objectors
strangled any impetus in (the Commission's) work" (1978,p.37). The final
stroke that broke the Commission's backbone was inflicted by the Minister
of Housing and Local Government, Richard Crossman, a radical reformer
who felt that

> the whole structure of local government is out of date, that our
> county borough and county councils as at present organized are
> archaic institutions whose size and structure make them increasingly
> ill-adapted to fulfilling the immensely important functions with
> which they are charged. The greatest obstacle, in fact, which prevents
> efficient councils from retaining public confidence is the obsolete

constitutional framework within which they had to operate
(1965,p.658).

In a nutshell, like the ill-fated Local Government Boundary Commission, the Local Government Commission (1958-65) could not achieve much because of the aforementioned cumbersome procedures.   By 1966, the Commission was dissolved and replaced by the Royal Commission (1966-69).   Before the 1974 reform, therefore, there were incremental changes but no significant structural reform.   The boundaries remained largely as they were at the beginning of this century.   Considerable transfer of functions took place from smaller to larger geographical units in the existing local government structure, and from local government to the central Government and ad hoc bodies.   Central control over local government expanded and tightened, and was accompanied by immeasurably enlarged assistance from central funds.   Moreover the allocation of functions to local authority had been piecemeal.   Nobody seemed to examine the total effect on the system of population explosion, population mobility, urbanization and functional distribution, with the consequence that a number of local authorities had duties which they were ill-equipped to perform; and they lacked the scope and resources necessary to attract adequately trained staff and provide services at present day standards.

LOCAL COUNCILS, COUNCILLOR CALIBRE AND THE ELECTORATE

The concern to increase efficiency in local government in Nigeria and Britain is related to the concern to raise councillor calibre.   As we said at the beginning of this chapter, critics believe that the poor calibre of councillors was closely related to the 'defective' structure of local government and therefore to inefficiency which led to the electorates' apathy towards the business of local authorities.   As Dearlove (1979,p.15) says, part of the case for reorganizing local government boundaries and

creating larger local authorities has been grounded in an appreciation

that this could have the effect of increasing the likelihood that urban local

authorities would have councils composed of businessmen and professionals.

This view is shared by the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater

London which felt that

> there does seem to be some relationship between the size and scope
> of the authority and the capacity of the councillors and
> officials attracted....a certain minimum size and scope of
> authority seems to be needed to attract councillors and officers
> of the right calibre (1960,p.63).

The Working Group on Local Authority Management Structures agreed "that

streamlining the structure and management processes will result in more

of these potential candidates (professionals and businessmen).being

willing to play an active part in local government" (1972,p.30).

In Britain, anxiety about councillor calibre is nothing new. It is

a product of the socio-economic and political changes that took place

in the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as population explosion, mobility,

the Labour Party, the industrial revolution, franchisement, etc. (see

chapters 3 and 4). These changes led to a change in class composition of

local councils by 'crowding out' manufacturers and landowners and bringing

in professionals and small businessmen. Hennock notes that as early as

the middle of the 19th century "the personnel of town councils repeatedly

attracted critical comment. It seemed to many observers that there had

been a change for the worst since 1835" (1973,p.312). Hennock goes on

to point out that by the 1850s there was a "decline in the number of

substantial men" - "a decline in the representation of the social and

economic elite" - and a rise in the representation of retailers: " really

small businessmen.....In terms of business ability and of local standing the

council had reached a nadir by the second half of the 1880s" (1973,pp.179-96,

225-6). Lee details the experience of Cheshire where

county government by country gentlemen....was transformed between
1840 and 1880....by the introduction of businessmen and industrialists
into the county magistracy.....The landed gentry were displaced from.
their monopoly of local politics by new social leaders.....who
made their wealth out of the expansion of urban industry (1963,pp.4-5,79).

By the end of the Second World War, however, "the county society of social

leaders was replaced by a community of public persons.....and the county

council.....gradually became a body of elected representatives.....each of

whom was dependent for his position not on his social standing but on his

experience in public service" (Lee,1963,pp.212-13).

At the beginning of this century, Ostrogorski noted a "decline in the

intellectual, and to some extent, moral standards of the personnel of the

town councils" (1902,Vol.1,p.49), and Lowell had "no doubt that the average

standing of the councillors had gone down" (1908,Vol.2,p.199).   In Bath,

businessmen formed almost half of the council in 1938 but by 1962 they made

up barely one-fifth of the total council (Green,1968).   And critics believe

that the "traditional leadership....from the higher occupational status

groups" is being challenged by the leaders of the non-traditional workers through

the trade-union and Labour movements" (Stacey,1960,pp.36-7).   In 1960, Dame

Evelyn Sharp, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local

Government told the Annual Conference of the Association of Municipal

Corporations:

> I do not think that enough really able people are interested today
> in taking part in local government.   I do not think that enough
> people from business, from industry, from agriculture and the
> professions are going into it....Most people engaged or interested
> in local government agree....that the calibre of local government
> is not equal all round to its responsibilities.

This belief was translated into official action when The Committee on the

Management of Local Government was appointed to "consider in the light of

modern conditions how local government might best continue to attract and

retain people (both elected representatives and political officers) of the

calibre necessary to ensure its maximum effectiveness", and much of the

evidence to the Royal Commissions on Local Government in England and

Scotland considered "it is a view widely held that the standards of

elected representatives is not as high as it might or should be", and that

something should be done to improve matters (Royal Commission on Local

Government in Scotland,1969;<u>Written Evidence 9</u>,p.6).

The problem of poor calibre among the councillors and officers of local

government was so real in Nigeria that one cannot over-emphasize it.

Critics believe that representative local government started off with

councillors and officers of low calibre.   We should note, however, that

before representative local government was introduced, ' local government'

was in the hands of 'noble traditional councillors' who were plenipotentiaries

of the Obas or Emirs (see chapter 2).   Thus, like in Britain, socio-

economic and political changes in Nigeria forced out the powerful aristocrats

after the Second World War and brought in petit-bourgeoisie (see Table 4.1).

These elected councillors were regarded as intellectually and morally

delinquent.   The majority of them did not have secondary education (see

Tables 4.3 and 4.4).   In his study of three councils in Western Nigeria,

Oyediran (1973,pp.457-8) discovered that almost one quarter of the

councillors had no formal education whatsoever, and nearly one half

(48 per cent) attended primary school only.   10.7 per cent had more than

primary education and only 5.3 per cent had university education.   As

Humes put it, "the calibre of the (councillors) has been generally low;

too few qualified and motivated men were available for office and thus too

many of the incumbents were illiterate, unemployed and corrupt"

(1970,p.99).   Wraith believes that most councillors were driven into

local politics "solely for what they could extort through bribery and

corruption, and of the rest, few really understood their role, but

interfered with their officials and dabbled in administration" (1972,p.76).

Critics found the quality and performance of councillors and officers

deeply disappointing:

> Generally speaking, men who stand for local councils are not
> successful or established men; many of them have no definable
> occupation, and regard their council membership as a way of
> supplementing, if not actually earning, a living. A high
> proportion are neither intelligent nor honest, and it is these
> who deter more reputable citizens from standing for local councils.
> Above all, local councils have virtually become appendages of the
> political parties and the first qualification for a councillor
> was to be a political 'activist'. The dishonesty of councils
> has come to be taken for granted, a fact which can be stated openly
> since it is the subject of so many official reports. No one
> seriously questions the fact that the chief purpose of many - indeed
> most - councillors was to enrich themselves by percentages on
> contracts, bribes for favours and corrupt practice in general; or
> that nepotism, the giving of jobs, market stalls or contracts to
> relatives was common practice (Wraith, 1972,pp.81-2).

The inefficiency and ineffectiveness of councillors and officers

reinforced each other. There were no incentives for the officers.

Until recently all local governments administered their own personnel

services; the unified services in the West and Mid-West (Bendel State)

covered less than 2 per cent of the top posts. The salaries were low,

the security inadequate, the promotion prospects limited, and the respect

and responsibility insufficient to attract and retain sufficiently qualified

personnel. The regional/state governments did not do enough to improve

the status of local government officers; and politicians undermined what

little responsibility they tried to exercise. Patronage, nepotism and

jobbery were therefore rampant (Smith and Owojaiye,1981,p. 222.).

Furthermore, their inefficiency was exacerbated by the blurred

distinction between the legislative function of the councillor and the

executive function of the staff. The principal officers of a British

local authority are men of high professional standing; as a broad

generalization they are probably better educated, better qualified and better

paid than many of the councillors whose servants they technically are.

Councillors for their part are men and women busy with their own affairs,

to whom local government is voluntary public service, and who think
too highly of the ability of their officials to dominate them.   This
contrasts with Nigeria where the principal officers of local authorities
are few in number, their professional qualifications are very low, and they
are not highly paid.   And as we have seen, the councillors were not people
of high attainments.   The relationship between the councillors and the
officers was one of master-servant relationship.   The use of committees
abetted the intensity of councillor interest in administrative matters such
as staffing and contracts;   as a result administrative matters were mistreated,
professional staff were misused and abused, and the council was diverted
from its more important policy and planning considerations.   This is
authenticated by the Public Service Review Commission (Udoji Commission):
"Both the portfolio councillor and the multi-committee systems often lead to
interference by council members in the purely day-to-day administrative issues
of local government.   This leads to continual frustration of officials,
inefficiency and corruption" (1974,p.122).

A number of reasons can be advanced for the 'poor quality' of staff
and councillors in Nigeria.   First, local government was relatively young
and did not command much loyalty;   men who were completely honest in their
dealings with family, clan and tribe were often corrupt as councillors.
Second, only a limited number of educated people were available;   the
majority of the educated ones went into national politics or to professions
and businesses.   Third, and as a consequence of the second, the majority
of people who engaged in rural local government were necessarily illiterates,
and it was not easy for men of higher calibre to work alongside them.
Fourth, the council areas were small in population and revenue, and the
volume and importance of the business each was able to handle was such that men
of standing were not interested in it.   Fifth, as we have said, the councils
were so deeply embroiled in politics that busy people with businesses or

professions of their own could not be bothered with them.

To summarize, one of the most severe shortcomings of local government was the lack of administrative and development planning caused by the paucity of top leadership posts. The most obvious deficiency was the lack of a post which would provide overall administrative leadership and plan for future development. There was no administrative post with clear-cut authority to direct and co-ordinate the department heads and with the salary and security to attract men with the education, experience and the expertise necessary to do the job competently and to secure the confidence of the politicians, the public and the state bureaucracy, and to stand firm against political interference in administrative matters. Nor were there enough professionally qualified men to head the local government departments on a full-time basis. A jurisdiction which could not afford such qualified personnel could not justify its independent existence. All these views were aggregated in the Guidelines: "the staffing arrangements to ensure a virile local government system had been inadequate. Excessive politicking had made even modest progress impossible. Consequently, there has been a divorce between the people and government institutions at their most basic levels" (1976, foreword).

Local Authorities and the Public

As quoted above, the Federal Government believed that there was 'a divorce between the people and government institutions', and the Royal Commission (1969,Vol.1,pp.28-9) concluded that the relationship between local authorities and the public was not satisfactory. The Committee on the Management of Local Government found that there was both ignorance of and indifference to local government on the part of the public.

A number of reasons were adduced for this apathy. First and most important, was the issue of councillor calibre. The electorate felt that

they were inefficient and ineffective, and in Nigeria's case, corrupt.

"Local government is, at present, apt to be irrelevant to people's

problems, and often cannot solve them even though it has the responsibility

for doing so" (Royal Commission on Local Government in England,1969,

Vol.1,p.28).   Second, the apathy to local government was largely due to the

defects in the existing structure which we have outlined.   Third, the apathy

of the electors was also said to be due to a trivial knowledge of local

government or lack of interest in it.   Surveys conducted for the Royal

Commission (1966-69), like those of the Maud Committee (1964-67), revealed

that only one out of four electors could spontaneously mention a single function

provided by their council.   "Between a quarter and a third thought that

county boroughs provided hospitals and electricity, and almost one in five

that the clerk of the council was elected" (Redcliffe-Maud and Wood,

1974,p.62).   Many more had never met their councillor nor could name

him (Hampton,1970,pp.135-7).   Fourth, the publicity needed to generate

interest was also said to be inadequate since most of the councillors

could not devote full-time to council work.   Among the alleged deterrents

to potential councillors used to be the amount of time which council work

involved, more so that they were unpaid.

Before the 1972 Act, it was believed that people were dissatisfied

with the traditional method of public participation in local government.

It was suggested that too many decisions were initiated by the local

authority or its agent before they were passed to the public.   "There will

have been consultations and discussions between departments of the local

authority before the subject is put to a committee, but seldom will an

attempt have been made to consult directly the people chiefly affected -

parents and schoolchildren, for example, by a proposed reorganization

of schools, or residents in an area proposed for redevelopment" (Redcliffe-

Maud and Wood,1974,pp.70-71).   Furthermore, it was said that the councils

had inadequate devices for getting the necessary feedback of local views
on the running of services.   These views led the Royal Commission to conclude
that "the system itself is hard enough for most people to understand"
(1969,Vol.1,para.99), and the National and Local Government Officers
Association confessed that the institution was "complex, obscure, pettifogging
and dull" (Committee on the Management of Local Government,1967,Vol.1,p.68).

Again, attempts were made prior to the 1974 and 1976 local government
reforms in Britain and Nigeria respectively, to solve the problem of public
apathy in local government affairs.   Although the Maud and the Mallaby
Committees were not directly concerned with the problem of public apathy,
both reports, published in 1967, believed that public apathy was a by-product
of the defects of local government such as the structural/functional
deficiencies, an excess of central control, an exeessive number of committees
and sub-committees, too much fragmentation of work between separate
departments, lack of calibre of some elected members and officers and other
internal organizational matters.   The Maud Committee's Report even concluded
that the country was not getting full value in terms of human happiness for
the time spent and for the increasing capital expenditure standing in
1967 at £3,000 million per annum (9 per cent of the gross national product).

The various reforms carried out in Nigeria between 1968 and 1971, and
which attempted, in part, to solve the problem of public apathy in local
government, were mere window-dressing.   The reforms once again brought to the
fore the chiefs and other traditional elements.   Furthermore, local officers
were replaced by Government civil servants which further increased
centralization.   Thus, patronization, powerlessness, poverty, corruption,
parochialism, poorly conceived politics, pussillanimous policy-making
institutions, patronage-ridden personnel services and a paucity of administrative
and development planning due to a lack of professional administrative posts -

these and a host of other problems plagued local government institutions

in Nigeria and increased public apathy prior to the 1976 reform.   And

the malaise that underlined these problems was the unwillingness of the

regional/state governments to make investment required to develop responsive

and responsible local government.

CENTRAL-LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Central control or lack of democracy, is the last but by no means the

least important defect diagnosed by critics and the reformers.   The power

exercised by central government departments over the affairs of local

authorities is extensive.   It is deemed necessary to ensure a high

national standard of service which otherwise might vary greatly from one

authority to another.   Any restraint must to some extent limit local

autonomy, but the degree of control and its many forms perturbed those who

felt that local democratic participation in decisions which determine the

conduct of local services was superseded by the remote dictates of a

Government juggernaut.   Whether the choice is as simple as that between

local but democratic inefficiency and centralized competence, as is sometimes

suggested, is highly debateable, but we have already seen how local authorities

have lost functions to a number of governmental and ad hoc bodies

(see chapter 4).

We will not go into detailed discussion of the various forms of control –

legislative, judicial, financial, administrative, etc. – because they are

not only outside the ambit of this sub-section but they are also well-known

to any student of public administration (see, for example, Green 1959,p.156;

Jackson,1970,pp.220-34;   Robson,1966,p.67;   Seeley,1978,pp.152-69;

Smith and Stanyer,1976,pp.113-29;   Jones,1980;   Richards,1978,pp.160-67).

We will be concentrating on the prevalence of the idea that central control

had increased and that this was bad for local government (see below).

Traditional administration is seen as revolving around particular services, and local authorities are often seen as geared to "the local administration of a policy laid down in broad lines by the central government" (MacColl,1951,p.10; see also, Green,1959,p.156; Robson,1966, p.67). Both these factors are said to encourage a situation in which local authorities conceive of their role in very narrow terms as limited to the provision of separate services which are seen in isolation each from the other and from the problems and needs in the local community. A situation is described in which the "central government is the determination of policy and principle. Local government is the application of those principles to the peculiarities of local fact" (Clarke,1969,p.1). Broadbent (1977,p.138) went further, considering that "the total picture does seem to support the idea of the local state as an agent of central government". Indeed, there is the view that local authorities are just engaged in "managing a bundle of separate independent services" because they have "traditionally been considered as local agencies responsible for a collection of essentially separate services defined by statute and drawn together within the same organization for administrative and political convenience. Their role in short, was prescribed and restricted" (Redcliffe-Maud,1967,p.350; see also, Greenwood,Smith and Stewart,1971,p.5). This lop-sided central-local relationship has been attributed to the central government's reliance, not only on its formal powers of intervention, but also on its ability to impose its will upon local authroities by means of informal persuasion, for the existence of extensive legal powers of control has had a 'cumulative' and 'psychological effect' where local authorities submit questions to the minister "over which he has no legal control" (Jennings,1947,p.258; see also, Dearlove,1973,pp.11-12).

Critics advanced two reasons to account for the increase and extent

of central control particularly since the Second World War.   First,

there is the belief that local authorities depend too much on central

finance and that he who pays the piper dictates the tune (Marshall,

1960,p.15; Robson,1966,p.149).   Hepworth, rather more pointedly asserted

that "the more finance is supplied by the central government from nationally

raised taxes the less tends to be the discretion allowed to local government.

Conversely, the greater the ability of local government to raise

finance from its own sources then the less able the central government

is to control local government" (1970,pp.14-15).   Chester suggested

that "it could be argued with strong support from the history of

central-local relations that the giving of a grant enabled the central

Government to 'purchase' many of the administrative powers it now possesses"

(1951,p.48).   These critics believed that the only panacea to this

defect is reform which would enable local authorities to gain more financial

independence and with this a supposed increase in decisional autonomy

(Chester,1951,p.333; Committee on the Management of Local Government, 1967,

Vol.1,p.Xl; Royal Commission on Local Government in England,1969,Vol.1,p.31).

Second, central control is believed to have increased because of "the

prevailing desire for uniformity of public services" (Marshall,1960,p.15),

and the Royal Commission (1969,Vol.1,p.30) declared that the public demand

for equality was also responsible for detailed control.   All these

critiques were substantiated by the Royal Commission which agreed that "local

authorities are not given enough freedom to go their own way.   In

addition they are subject to a number of minor controls and requirements

which detract from their ability to manage their own affairs and make their

own decisions" (1969, Vol.1,p.30).

In Nigeria, critics expressed similar dismay about central-local

relations.   Before the first military coup of 1966 local governments (or

native authorities) were closely controlled by the regions.   All proposed

by-laws had to be submitted for ministerial approval and the regional

governments could compel an authority to make rules on any subject provided

for in the local government laws.   Rules or orders made by local

authorities could be centrally revoked.   Administrative controls were

exercised through policy circulars, directives, regulations, instructions,

routine consultations, and reporting.   District officers attended council

and committee meetings.   Representatives of other central departments in

the localities were involved in close supervision and inspection of local

government activities, ensuring conformity to regional government policy.

Some council departments consisted largely of field officers of central

ministries, making the local authority an extension of the ministry's

field service.   For example, the forestry division of the Ministry of

Agriculture and Natural Resources in the old Western Region acted as the

forestry department of a number of local authorities (Mittlebeeler,1971).

Control of staffing arrangements was centralised and all financial decisions,

including tax rates, level of surpluses and administrative expenditure,

required central approval.   Capital expenditure, embodied in development

plans, required central approval, even down to the selection of projects

for execution.   If an authority was considered sufficiently viable

financially to service a loan for large projects the centre controlled its

source, type and conditions.   Loans had to be managed and accounted for

in accordance with ministerial directives.   All local authority investments

were subject to central clearance and the regional governments laid down

procedures, conditions and regulations regarding the circumstances under

which local authorities could lend money, including advances to staff.

As would be expected, central control was not relaxed under the

military regime, least of all during the civil war.   From his survey

Mittlebeeler concluded that "In few countries with local government is

there greater centralization. Much of this phenomenon of course can be
traced to the critical period through which the country is passing, but even
in the days when collegiate legislative bodies were functioning, central
control was very much in evidence" (1971,p.206). Adedeji and Rowland
concluded that the existence of budgetary controls "eloquently articulate
the weak and dependent status of local authorities" (1972,p.227).

Extensive central controls over the internal administrative
organization of local authorities were in existence. Before 1976, the
appointment of senior officials, such as clerk to the council, treasurer
and supervisor of works, required central approval. Conditions of service
for local government service were regulated and salaries were determined
by technical departments at the centre. The management of local authority
staff was carried out in accordance with a common set of staff regulations
for local authorities in each region. Financial procedures were closely
controlled by the memoranda issued by the central ministry (Campbell, 1963).
By 1972 it was estimated that "financial controls over local authorities in
many states are now very detailed and, to an extent, go beyond controls
exercised by central governments in most countries" (Adedeji and Rowland,
1972,p.221).

Staffing arrangements were also controlled by the Government. In the
west a Local Government Service Board, appointed by the regional executive,
was set up in 1957 to make appointments and promotions in the unified
local government service for senior positions. This meant, according to one
observer, "the total elimination of local community control over the staff
that serve them" (Oyediran,1974a,p.550; see also, Odenigwe,1973,P.109).
Thus, though the local community paid the salaries, they had no power
over recruitment or scale of remuneration. The L.G.S.B. was answerable to
the central ministry not to local councils. Other officers also felt a

a sense of commitment to the state government rather than their local

council (Kolawole,1979,p.10; Adewumi,1973,p.52).

Apart from the two aforementioned reasons for increased central control

which were (and still are) applicable to both countries, there are other

reasons which were peculiar to Nigeria.   The motives for central control

varied from one part of the country to another.   They were influenced by the

experiences which different regions had of local government in the past.

In the north the institutions of local government, based as they were on the

powerful traditional governments of the Hausa/Fulani emirates, were often seen

as rivals to the centre.   They were capable of acting in defiance of the

old regional government (Yahaya,1975,p.24).   They sometimes commanded

greater loyalty from the masses.   When the region was subdivided into states

in 1967, leaving some emirates in an even more powerful position within the

smaller territories covered by the new states, it was inevitable that local

government had to be changed to underline its subordinate position.   Elsewhere

in Nigeria, the centre's preoccupation had been with corruption at the local

level and partisan advantage in regional politics (Smith and Owojaiye,1981,

p.221-2.).   Intervention by the centre had been extensive on both counts.

The modifications to the structure of the system introduced in the late

sixties did not lessen local government's financial problems. Misappropriation

of funds continued to provide the centre with opportunities to intervene in

local management.   The loss of qualified staff to other occupations

persisted, further increasing local government's dependence on the centre in

the planning and execution of local projects and services.

As we said earlier on, critics in both countries believed the

excessive central control was bad because it undermined local democracy.

It was also widely believed that central control reduced the efficiency of

local government since men of calibre were unwilling to serve in an

institution which they regarded as no more than the Government's agents.

This belief, it is alleged, also increased public apathy in local government affairs.

Whether these critics were correct in their diagnosis of local government defects or whether the alleged defects have been memoved by the 1974 and 1976 reforms in Britain and Nigeria respectively will be analysed in chapter 8. First of all, let us examine the objectives and strategies of the reforms which were initiated as a result of these criticisms.

CHAPTER SIX

REFORM OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

> No suggestion for 'reform is more common than 'what we need
> is more coordination' (Pressman and Wildavsky,1973,p.133).

To ensure proper understanding of this chapter, we need to remind

ourselves that reform is characterized by a value orientation that is

different than merely recognizing the possibility that a new process

or concept can be applied to a particular situation (innovation)·

In the administrative context the advocacy role is more important than

the originating role.   What we need stress here is the "effort to

apply new ideas and combinations of ideas to an administrative system

with a conscious view to improving the system for positive goals of

national development " (Lee,1970,p.78).   Hence, once local government

defects have been diagnosed, analysed and understood, the logical step

that follows is to decide what needs to be done (objectives) and how

that can be accomplished (strategies).   This stage is what Dror

(1976,p.126) refers to as 'mega-policies' which lay down the framework

of guidelines and the boundaries of policy space within which operational

and detailed policies are to be established and decisions are to be made.

Though it is easy to complain, it is difficult to diagnose and to suggest

remedies, steps that present intellectual challenge and require relevant

knowledge and creative thought.   Symptoms may be misinterpreted;

facts may be taken in the wrong sequence;   only part of the whole may

be seen (Caiden,1970,p.136).

Administrative reforms cannot be understood nor evaluated apart

from the objectives that they endeavour to achieve.   It is therefore

of prime importance for any administrative reform that its objectives

be properly set.   Firstly, it is essential in order that the strategies

and instruments may be determined.   Secondly, it discourages

'actors and sub-systems'from pursuing their own objectives under

the pretext that these accord with those of the leaders or reformers.

Thirdly, lack of concise objectives is dysfunctional to the operations

of the organization in that it creates insecurity.   Lastly, the

degree to which the objectives are realised is a significant yardstick

of the success or failure of the reform.   Similarly, reorganizations

are intended to accomplish purposes of one kind or another in addition

to and beyond the modification of organizational structure, as exemplified

in the local government reform in Britain and Nigeria where democracy

and efficiency loomed large among the goals.   This is another way of

saying that reorganization is an intermediate objective toward something

else.   It is normally a means, not an end unto itself.   (Though

change 'for its own sake' sometimes contributes to the motivation for

reorganization.   Scale enlargement in southern Nigeria and Britain,

and scale reduction in northern Nigeria were means towards the

achievement of greater efficiency and effectiveness.   Furthermore, it

should be noted that the means-ends relationship is by no means a

one-way avenue or indeed an avenue at all.   Ends modify means, and

means modify ends.   As we will see later, ends were changed in certain

cases during the implementing of reorganization).

In chapter 1 we said that goals can be divided into external and

internal categories: (a) intra-administration directed objectives which

are primarily concerned with improving the administration, such as

efficiency, and (b) goals dealing with the societal roles of the

administrative system, and with changing policies and programmes, such

as development.   This distinction is only for academic purposes

because the two are closely inter-related.   Internal objectives are

usually set as means towards the greater attainment of external

objectives, for instance, to realise certain societal situations or
relationships, or to increase and improve outputs.   External objectives
have been spelled out in many reform programmes, particularly in
developing countries (Mosher,1967 pp.497-8).   In Nigeria, for
example, social and economic development featured frequently as one of
the prime objectives of local government reform.   Another objective
in Nigeria and Britain was the strengthening of democracy in local
government and administration.   Yet another reform goal which featured
prominently in the reform of local government in Nigeria was the need
for national integration and unity.

Internal goals may also be manifold.   Traditionally, administrative
reform has been equated with organizational efficiency, and often
inspired by the necessity to reduce government expenditure.   Some
reforms, inspired by this objective, have nevertheless focused more
generally on improvement of the administration.   The 1974 reform in
Britain emphasized efficiency, which was also an important consideration
in the 1976 local government reform in Nigeria.   However, efficiency
often covers a wider area as exemplified by Mosher (1967,p.498) who
emphasized effectiveness as a goal of reorganization.

Another major concept behind the reform of local government in
Nigeria and Britain, but especially in the latter, is rationality, which
in many respects is related to efficiency and effectiveness.   For
example, the introduction of new budget and planning methods (e.g.
PPBS or PAR) is intended to increase rationality in budgetary allocations
and in policy making.   We will later relate each of these objectives to
the local government reform in Britain and Nigeria.

Leemans mentions changes in influence and power relations as an
important motivation for administrative reform.   "Such changes may
concern the relationship between the bureaucracy and the political organs.

The area of influence relations (sic) also includes trends to

broaden participation in internal decision-making processes" (Leemans,

1976,p.29). Dror (1976,pp.129-130) goes a step further and

catalogues reform objectives a number of which are applicable to the

local government reforms in Britain and Nigeria (see chapter 1).

The Royal Commission under Lord Redcliffe-Maud was established

in 1966 " to consider the structure of local government in England,

outside Greater London, in relation to its existing functions; and to

make recommendations for authorities and boundaries, and for functions and

their divisions, having regard to the size and character of the areas in

which these can be most effectively exercised and the need to sustain

a viable system of democracy" (Royal Commission on Local Government in

England,1969,Vol.1,p.iii). The Federal Military Government was a

bit more explicit in setting out the objectives of the 1976 local

government reform in the Guidelines and which were subsequently enacted

in state edicts. These were:

(a) To make appropriate services and development activities responsive

to local wishes and initiatives by devolving or delegating them to local

representative bodies;

(b) to facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the

local levels of our society and to encourage initiative and leadership

potential;

(c) to mobilise human and material resources through the involvement

of members of the public in their local development; and

(d) to provide a two-way channel of communication between local

communities and government (both State and Federal)(Guidelines for Local

Government Reform,1976, p.1).

Thus both countries realise that administrative reform as a

permanent and systematic effort should elicit an organic-adaptive response

from the public sector in every area and at every level of its work.

Therefore its purposes, more specifically, include:

(a) increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative units

through improvement of their structures and working systems so as to

ensure that available resources for fulfilling government functions are

used to the greatest possible advantages;

(b) assigning responsibilities, as precisely as possible, to the

institutions and officials in charge of the co-ordination and execution

of goal action;

(c) simplifying, accelerating and decentralising the operative mechanisms

of such entities, while expediting and simplifying procedures;

(d) making every effort to ensure that governmental personnel have

the necessary ability and training to adequately perform their tasks

by means of training and motivation programmes designed to stimulate

conscientious, innovative, dynamic and responsible attitudes towards

their work; and

(e) stressing the importance of co-ordination, collaboration, and teamwork

as a government policy for ending insularity and lack of co-ordination.

Since administrative reform is not mechanical, but based on human

values, it therefore calls for genuine decisions, support, readiness

for participation and innovation, goodwill of the public and proper

allocation of resources.   And to be successful, the reform must make

clear the direct benefits for the participants of the reform and the

masses in general.

Administrative reform objectives, therefore, are oriented towards

fulfilling specific demands of the public rather than towards mere

"efficiency' or an abstract 'rationalization' of the government

machinery.   In the case of the 1976 reform in Nigeria it was hoped

to make local government a third tier of government activity in the nation,

which will govern effectively and democratically at the local level.

It was hoped that a reformed local government system would allow:

(a)   the Head of State to achieve the most effective possible

realization of his goals and programmes, especially those concerned

with socio-economic and political development: "The reform of our

system of Local Government is not only important and desirable in itself,

but it is a crucial element in the Political Programme of the Federal

Military Government.   Indeed, having disposed of the question of the

creation of new States, the Local Government Reforms are the next

important exercise in the process of building a sound foundation for the

return of this country's administration to civil rule " (Guidelines,

1976, foreword);

(b)   the Head of State to utilise his national programmes through an

efficient, effective and democratic local government.   He believed that

for national economic development and political stability to be achieved,

he must wake the people out of their lethargy and inertia, beginning from

the grassroot - the local government.   Thus he sought to promote local

government human, material and financial resources through the added

impulse which his programmes would give to co-ordination, participation

and teamwork (Guidelines, 1976, foreword); and

(c)   the citizens and society in general to enjoy constant improvement

in the economic, social, political and cultural aspects of their daily

lives, efficient attention in their dealings with the government and

capability in the services they have the right to demand of government

entities.   "These reforms would mean nothing if they did not include the

certainty that as from now, every stratum of Nigerian society would

benefit from the continued prosperity of this country, through the

availability of amenities, indeed necessities, such as electricity,

adequate water supply, improved transportation, health facilities and

so on" (Guidelines,1976, foreword).

To emphasize the commitment of the Murtala/Obasanjo regime to a virile democratic local government, the responsibilities to be performed by the new local governments, both concurrent and exclusively, were carefully spelt out (see Appendix 1).

In a nutshell, the goals of the 1974 local government reform in Britain and those of the 1976 reform in Nigeria will be crystallized into three main objectives: FUNCTIONS AND SIZE, DEMOCRACY, AND RATIONALITY OR EFFICIENCY.   In Nigeria, however, the objectives included national stability and socio-economic development.

FUNCTIONS AND SIZE

It would have been absurd to reform the structure of local government without relating it to functions and vice-versa.   Thus the term of reference required the Royal Commission to consider the structure of local government in England, outside Greater London, in relation to its existing functions; and the Nigerian Government sought to achieve active participation of the people in local government by devolving vital functions to the councils (Guidelines,1976,p.1).   The concept of rationality is also closely linked with functions for there would be no need to talk of efficiency or effectiveness if there are no functions to be performed.   And the simple fact that local authorities have functions means that they have to perform them well.   These functions are varied and are of immense scope, including responsibility for the police, for the fire services, for almost all education other than university, for the health and welfare of mothers and infants, the old and the sick, for children in need of care, for public health, for the physical environment and the use of land, for housing, for sports and recreation, for museums, art galleries and libraries, for highways, traffic

and transport.   The Commission sums up the functions of local

government as "responsibility for the safety, health and well-being,

both material and cultural, of people in different localities..." (Royal

Commission on Local Government in England,1969,Vol.1,p.10).

The Federal Government felt that a reformed local government would

generate "local initiative and response to local needs" (Guidelines,

1976,p.1).   To achieve this aim, the Government devolved functions

(a)   which require detailed local knowledge for efficient performance;

(b)   in which success depends on community responsiveness and

participation; and

(c)   which are of a personal nature requiring provision close to where

the individuals affected live, and in which significant use of discretion

or understanding of individuals is needed (Guidelines,1976,p.1.).

The above definitions of the role of local government stress its primary

responsibility for all aspects of community welfare within the

geographical area of its jurisdiction.

In chapters 4 and 5 we catalogued critics' displeasure with the loss of

functions by local government either to the central government or to

ad hoc bodies of the central government.   These criticisms which also

border on the central - local relations, especially the need for local

democracy, became a gospel word for writers, the Redcliffe-Maud Commission

and the Federal Government of Nigeria.   The Royal Commission (1966-69)

and the Federal Government therefore aimed at righting wrongs by stemming

the erosion of local government functions hoping thereby to strengthen their

democratic base.   The Nigerian Government said that devolving adequate

functions to local government would ensure active and democratic

participation of the people (Guidelines,1976,p.1), and the Conservative

government argued in 1971 that

a vigorous local democracy means that authorities must be given real functions - with powers of decision and the ability to take action without being subjected to excessive regulation by central government through financial or other controls...above all else a genuine local democracy implies that decisions should be taken - and should be seen to be taken - as locally as possible (Local Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganization,1971,p.1).

We must note in passing, however, that most of the critics of local government functional losses have not taken time to take stock of local government gains especially in Britain (see chapter 8).

Both the Royal Commission and the Federal Government believed that structural reorganization was a prelude to functional effectiveness. They noted that some services were being provided jointly by two or more authorities. There were duplications, overlapping, wastage and confusion. Redcliffe-Maud and Wood observed that residents of Stalybridge had area offices in Dunkinfield for education, in Stalybridge for health, in Wilmslow for children, and in Stockport for planning, while for welfare there was no administration at area level (1974,p.30). As we saw in chapters 4 and 5, the situation in Nigeria was not better than the one described above.

To offset these structural defects and the consequent functional inefficiency, the Nigerian Government proposed that a population of 150,000 (The Royal Commission proposed 250,000) was the minimum necessary for effective discharge of local functions; because only an authority of this size would "have at its disposal the range and calibre of staff, and the technical and financial resources necessary for effective provision of education, housing and the personal services" (Royal Commission on Local Government in England,1969,Vol.1, para.257). Furthermore, the Federal Government's Guidelines say that "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 total populations of between

150,000 and 800,000" (1976,p.3.).

Another solution, and which is closely linked to the idea of population, is that authorities should be large enough to be responsible for, say, land-use planning and transportation, and at the same time act as housing authorities. Just as there are different views about structure, so there are about the right size of authority. The fact is, again, that there is no one size which is uniquely right, while all others are wrong. The Royal Commission, like the Federal Government, therefore proposed a population size which would solve the country-town dichotomy, thus creating a local government in its simplest, most understandable and potentially most efficient form: an area embracing town and country and a population of at least some 250,000 (Nigeria: 150,000-800,000) (Guidelines,1976,p.4.). It was claimed that any authority smaller than these figures "cannot offer attractive career prospects for well-qualified staff and they have financial disadvantages" (Guidelines,1976,p.4.).

Thus, the Federal Government and the Royal Commission believed that the areas of the new authorities must be large enough for planning. Secondly, the proposed population range in each country would allow local government to attract the necessary skilled manpower and resources needed to provide services of the highest standard. Thirdly, wherever possible, each authority should be responsible for all the services in its area but at the same time it must not be so large as to be unresponsive to the wishes of the electors.

DEMOCRACY

There is a universal demand for further democratization and for opportunities for large-scale participation in political, or more generally, in public action. In a country like Nigeria, popular participation in economic and social development programmes is conceived essential for their

effectiveness.   In countries like Britain and America, with long-established and well entrenched democratic systems, increasing awareness of the limitations of representative government as an instrument for large-scale participation in political action has caused a search for new forms by which to involve citizens, citizen groups and organizations in the making and implementation of policies (see chapter 9).

Of central importance in the debate about the structure of local government are the objectives 'democracy' and 'efficiency'.   The overriding objective of the Royal Commission and the Federal Government was to make reforms which would enhance both the effectiveness of local government and 'sustain a viable system of local democracy'.   The need for local democracy is also emphasized by Brain Smith because it is the base structure for "political education through participation.   Local democracy, in theory, ensures the responsiveness of administration to the peculiar interests of local communities and protects the general health of democracy" (1976,p.31).

But as we indicated above, democracy goes beyond mere electioneering and the right to vote; it includes important concepts as accountability and control, responsiveness and the redress of grievance.   According to Wood (1976,pp.22-5) democracy has at least four different meanings. There is the representational meaning, emphasizing election and voting rights.   It is this meaning that led the Royal Commission to propose single-member wards with a maximum of 10,000 constituents, and as a consequence, the Commission suggested a population of 1,000,000 as the maximum for a local authority.   For the same reason the Federal Government proposed an upper limit of 800,000 people for any local authority. Thus in Britain and Nigeria (especially northern Nigeria), the pre-reform structure was said to be 'undemocratic' because the authorities were too large and remote from the electorate, with the result that about half

the seats at local elections were regularly filled without a contest.

The geographical meaning of 'democracy' emphasizes the importance
of 'smallness', both in terms of physical accessibility and population
which lead to a genuine representation of local interests.   The Commission
demonstrated the importance it attaches to the geographical meaning of
democracy by "running a 'Community Attitudes Survey' which sought information
about the size of areas to which people felt most attached, and by mapping
areas in terms of such factors as the journey to work, the circulation area
of local newspapers, and bus routes" (Wood,1976,p.24.).   Similarly, the
Federal Government warned against 'large and sluggish bureaucracy' which
is distant from the people.   "If too large, even with small population,
remoteness from some of the people arises" (Guidelines,1976,p.4.).   Both
the Federal Government and the Royal Commission believed that democratic
control of services and accessibility call necessarily for a small
functional unit.   It is a basic requirement of effective local democracy
that authorities should be in charge of areas within which they can
provide efficient services.   Furthermore, the reformers felt that the
bigger the unit, the more doubtful it becomes whether the individual
citizen can have a real sense of belonging to it (Royal Commission on
Local Government in England,1969,Vol.1,p.72).

The third definition of democracy emphasizes the concept of 'responsible'
government.   Birch (1962) sub-classifies this into two parts:
'Responsive' government is one which responds to public demands, and
'accountable' government is government seeking judgement on its performance.
Both definitions imply the cargo-cult concept (that goods will be
delivered), that it is responsible for the provision of reasonably
important public services.   Here there is a clear link between the ideas
of 'democracy' and those of 'efficiency' or 'effectiveness'.   A
responsible local authority is one with clear choices to make about the

nature of its outputs: it is not one which is too small to be

entrusted with a reasonable range of functions by the Government.

Little wonder that the Royal Commission wanted local authorities which

would "enable citizens and their elected representatives to have a sense

of common purpose" (1969,Vol.1,p.3.), and the Federal Government wanted

local government to be "responsive to local wishes and initiative...and...

provide a two-way channel of communication between local communities and

government" (Guidelines,1976,p.1.). Wood concludes that "though the

discussion about responsiveness and accountability frequently revolved

around calls for 'participation', for local ombudsmen, for press and public

access to meetings of council committees, beneath all this lies the clear

implication that democracy and functional effectiveness are linked"

(1976,pp.24-5).

Fourthly, the concept of 'democracy' could refer to functional

division between different tiers of government. For instance, the

Conservative White Paper of 1971 stated that "a genuine local democracy

implies that decisions should be taken as locally as possible" (Local

Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganization,1971,para.8).

Like the definition above, this also links democracy to efficiency.

The above definitions do not underrate the importance of elections;

in fact they buttress its significance since elections are effective

ways of emphasizing accountability and control. Councillors have to

face re-election, and this is bound to influence their decisions on major

policies. Thus election is effective in persuading councillors to

anticipate the likely local reaction to alternative decisions. This

anticipated reaction from the electorate suggests that councillors are

responsive to local pressure. "Whenever a controversial matter requires

decision a council will test the local climate of opinion before taking

action and will have in mind the consequences of taking an unpopular line"

(Redcliffe-Maud and Wood,1974,p.21.).

Before the 1974 reform, local complaints were handled by the councillors.With the exception of Bristol in the mid-1960s, there was no formal 'office of complaints'.   The Royal Commission realised the difficult situation a councillor might face, say, when pressed by a local resident to pursue a complaint which is against a decision he has made.   This and other reasons led the Commission to recommend the creation of local ombudsmen, which it was hoped, would buttress the four ideas of democracy as defined above.

EFFICIENCY

We have already said that 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' are closely related to 'rationality', and we shall discuss them as one of the objectives of local government reform in Britain and Nigeria.   In both countries the expectations affecting the scale of public services are outstripping the capacity of the economy to provide resources with which to satisfy them, at any rate without restrictions on private consumption and investment which currently would be regarded as intolerable.   It is in this context that one must place the movement to raise the efficiency of local administrative institutions and methods.   Thus, since the public services have extended, and yet the constraints on increasing the resources devoted to them have become more compelling, the major reaction has been to call for administrative reform with the hope of improving the performance of local administrative agencies - improving input-output ratios.

The search for efficiency in Nigeria and Britain is as old as the 'identification' of the defects of local government.   It was not surprising, therefore, that the Federal Government and the Royal Commission

placed great emphasis on the need for effectiveness and efficiency.

The barage of administrative reforms that took place in Britain in

the 1960s was largely influenced by the Plowden Report. Three other

reports - Mallaby, Maud and Bains - greatly stimulated this quest

for efficiency. It is interesting to note, by way of contrast, that

Nigeria did not have any committee or commission of inquiry on local

government management prior to the 1976 reform. We shall, however, be

drawing on recommendations of the Federal Government in its search for

efficiency in local government. The different approaches in the quest

for efficiency which we shall be considering are: Manpower Management,

Co-ordination of Policy and Administration, and Management Techniques.

Manpower Management

The Royal Commission in its quest for efficiency leant heavily on the

Mallaby and Maud Reports on personnel management. The best use of

scarce manpower is a central part of efficient administration. Two main

factors stand out. One is the argument, elucidated in the Mallaby

Report, that skilled staff are in short supply and local authorities suffer

harmful shortages. The other dominant factor is the view that new skills

are rapidly being demanded as governmental services expand. To solve

these problems, the Bains Report, like the Maud and Mallaby Reports,

recommended that internal management needed change dependent on reform

of the system through effective recruitment policy, beautiful career

prospects, extensive training facilities, staff streamlining, use of

specialist services and reduction in the number of local government

committees and departments. Committees should relate to programme areas

rather than the activities of different departments. More significantly,

major instruments for corporate planning were necessary in every

authority: a central policy and resources committee, a chief executive

without departmental responsibilities, a management team of chief

officers which he would lead, and a system of interdepartmental working

groups implementing tasks in a general system of corporate planning and

implementation (see Diagram 6.1). The setting up of a personnel

function was also recommended. In short, it was recommended that "the

traditional departmental attitude within much of local government must

give way to a wider-ranging corporate outlook" (Working Group on Local

Authority Management Structures,1972,p.6.).

In Nigeria, the Federal Government realised that one of the obstacles

to past reform efforts was inadequate staffing. Or as the Guidelines

put it, "the staffing arrangements to ensure a virile local government system

had been inadequate" (1976,foreword). And in other to remedy this

defect the Government recommended that the Ministry of Local Government

should ensure "that the quality and quantity of staff available to local

DIAGRAM 6.1: THE PROPOSED ORGANIZATION
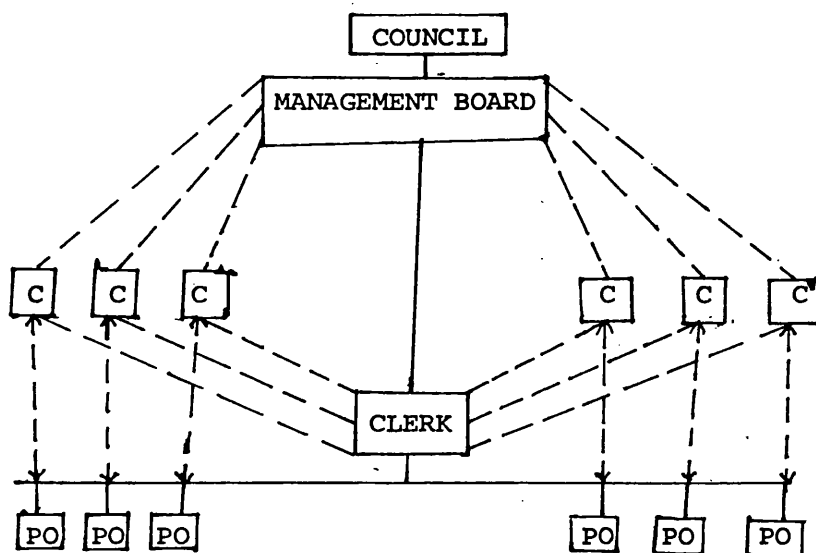
C = COMMITTEE   PO = PRINCIPAL OFFICER
——Indicates line of command running from the council through the Management
   Board and the Clerk to the Principal Officers.
---- lines of contact and advise only.
* NOTE* This diagram does not imply that one committee has only one

DIAGRAM 6.2 :   LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION IN NIGERIA

| LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL |

| CHAIRMAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL |

| CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Secretary to Local Government Council) |

STANDING COMMITTEES

(i)   General Purposes Committee
(ii) Education Committee
(iii) Finance Committee
(iv) Works Committee

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
—
COUNCIL SECRETARY
(LEGAL UNIT)
(VALUATION UNIT)
MARKET
MANAGEMENT ETC

FINANCE DEPARTMENT
—
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE
—
(TREASURER)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
—
PRIMARY AND ADULT
—
(EDUCATION OFFICER)

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
—
(MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH)
or
(HEALTH SUPERINTENDENT)

WORKS
—
WORKS MANAGER
—
(Roads, bridges, water supply, town planning, open spaces, Fire Services)

NATURAL RESOURCES
—
FORESTRY
—
AGRICULTURE
—
VETERINARY

OTHER UNITS:

INFORMATION AND PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT

SOCIAL WELFARE

SOURCE : ANAMBRA STATE (1976)

principal officer associated with it or that each

. principal officer has necessarily a

single committee to refer to.

Source: Jackson, 1970,p.143.

governments is such that they are able to discharge the functions and

provide the services for which they have been given responsibilities"

(Guidelines, 1976,p.11.). Improved personnel is necessary in view of

the huge number of functions and the large fund which local governments

are expected to shoulder. The Ministry of Local Government is also to

lay down the terms and conditions of service for local government staff

so as to bring them to par with the State Civil Service, and promote local

government training schemes at various levels for administrative, financial,

professional and technical staff in co-operation with training institutions

and other ministries (Guidelines,1976,pp.11-12.).

Each local government must have an Executive Secretary who will be

responsible for the administrative management of the local government as

a whole and should be the secretary to the local government council and

to the council's Finance and General Purposes Committee (see Diagram

6.2 and Appendix 11). To make the post attractive to candidates, the

secretary is placed on the same salary as a deputy permanent secretary.

The Guidelines recommend that each state, through its Local

Government Service Board, should set up a combined local government service

for the more highly trained cadres. And the Board

> should be responsible for all employment, postings, discipline
> etc. of all members of the combined local government service, but
> should delegate internal postings within local governments and
> minor disciplinary matters to Establishment Committees of local
> governments subject to the right of appeal to the Local Government
> Service Board, which should also serve in an appellate capacity
> in respect of disciplinary matters concerning staff employed by
> local governments directly (Guidelines,1976,p.11).

Thus, it was felt in both countries that these internal changes required

a restructuring of the system of local government. After all, "if

large areas are to be contemplated in order to provide for more

efficient administration of some services than is at present possible

within the local government field" (Hart,1965,p.7), then "the traditional

departmental attitude within much of local government must give way to a

wide-ranging corporate outlook" (Working Group on Local Authority Management

Structures, 1972,p.6; see also, Royal Commission on Local Government in

England,1969,Vol.1,pp.123-4; Stanyer,1970,pp.15-16).

Co-ordination of Policy and Administration

Another approach in the quest for efficiency centres on the twin

problems of co-ordination and policy planning. Co-ordination has,

traditionally, been carried out by the council itself, by horizontal

senior committees such as finance, by the estimates and budgetary process,

by party control, and by informal working groups of officers. But in

recent years local authorities have felt the need to go further in their

search for comprehensive administration, and have considered the advantages

of a specific co-ordinating committee.

The Maud Report (1967) and the Federal Government's Guidelines

criticized local government arrangements whereby members concerned

themselves with details of day-to-day administration, much of which could

be entrusted to officers. The Maud Report, drawing from the experiences

of foreign countries and of local experiments at Newcastle and elsewhere,

stressed firmly that the Clerk should be the undisputed head of the

council's staff. The Guidelines similarly emphasized that the secretary

should be the head of all appointed personnel. The Maud Committee and

the Federal Government produced detailed plans to ensure co-ordination

of both administration and policy in local authorities, which involved a

drastic reappraisal of the nature of committee work and the structure

of local administration. The structure and functions of the Local

Government Service Board recommended by the Federal Government were

similar to Maud's Management Board which was rejected by local authorities.

The onus to recruit, promote, transfer and train local government staff

rest with the Board.

The significance of the Management Board for the existing committee

organization would be:

(a)   Committees should not be directing or controlling bodies nor should

they be concerned with routine administration;

(b)   no committee should have more than fifteen members (including co-opted

members);

(c)   committees should be deliberative and representative bodies;

(d)   committees should take executive decisions only in exceptional

circumstances when the management board requires them to do this - these

fields of decision-taking should be strictly defined by the management

board and it should be made clear that the committees issue instructions

to the officers only on these matters; and

(e)   the number of committees should be drastically reduced and similar

or related services should be grouped and allocated to one committee

(Committee on the Management of Local Government (Maud Report),1967,

Vol.1).   Paragraph 168 states: " we believe that in an all-purpose

authority it should be possible to reduce their number to about six",

and suggests - Planning and development, Housing, Works - including

highways and traffic, Education and culture, Health and welfare, and Public

protection.   Diagram 6.3 illustrates Bains alternative model for the

committee structure of a non-metropolitan county.

In order to enhance local government efficiency, the Guidelines

(1976,p.9)   recommended that local authorities should avoid numerous

or large committees.   The Government   recommended that there should, in

all cases, be two main Standing Committees: Finance and General Purposes,

DIAGRAM 6.3:   COMMITTEE STRUCTURE - NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTY
(BAINS COMMITTEE PROPOSALS)

```
                          ┌─────────────┐
                          │ · COUNCIL   │
                          └─────────────┘
                          ┌─────────────┐
              ┌───────┬───┤POLICY AND   ├───────┬────────────┐
              │       │   │RESOURCES    │       │            │
 Education    │  Planning│ COMMITTEE   │Amenities and    Police
 Committee    │  and     └─────────────┘Countryside      Committee
              │  Transport-           Committee
              │  ation
          Social Committee                           Public
          Services                                   Protection
          Committee                                  Committee
                    ┌──┬──────────┬──────────┐
                    │  Personnel  Land        │
                    │  Sub-       Sub-        │
                    │  Committee  Committee   │
              Finance Sub-              Performance Review
              Committee                 Sub-Committee
```
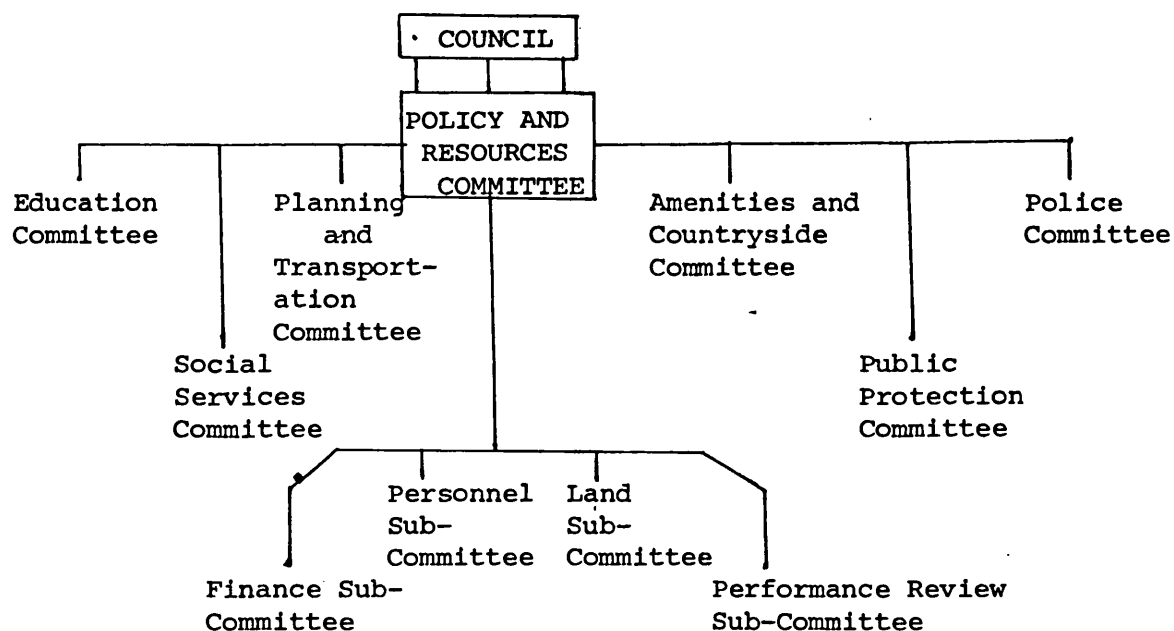
and Education.   Other standing committees should be kept to a

minimum and should be restricted to manageable size (usually four).

The Guidelines   require that members of all committees (except ex-officio

members) including their chairmen should be elected by the council.   So

also every local authority is expected to have a chairman and not more than

four supervisory councillors who will devote most of their time and

energies to the affairs of local government.   The Guidelines also

recommended that councils should exercise 'political control' over the

departments of their local government through supervisory councillors or

through small committees (1976,p.9).   Like the Maud Report, the Guidelines

recommended that the roles of the committees would be to make recommendations

to the management board (Service Board) on 'major objectives' and 'major

strategies' for achieving those goals.   They would review progress in

the sphere of the particular service that concerned them, consider

reactions of the public and deal with any matters referred to them by the

board.   Executive decisions would only be made in exceptional cases

and when the board asked for this to be done;   the implication being that

delegated authority would normally rest with officers rather than

committees.   As the Guidelines put it, "members of departmental

committees will not give directives to executive heads of departments

directly, but if it concerns policy matters, such directives should come

from the committee chairman as political heads of departments.   The

functions of committee chairmen thus envisaged are a departure from those

of the familiar portfolio councillor with executive functions" (1976,p.9).

We should note, however, that all the recommendations contained in the

Guidelines were more or less mandatory.   There is little room for

flexibility and criticism under a military regime.   In Britain, on the

other hand, a number of people attacked the Maud report, especially the idea

of a management board (Greenwood, Norton, and Stewart,1969,pp.151-68;

Smith and Stanyer,1968,pp.239-279).

Thus, generally it would appear that local authorities accept the

Maud Report's diagnosis of the organizational problems which result from their

committee structure, and also accept that greater internal co-ordination is

required and could be achieved by allocating wide functions to a policy

committee;   but it is not accepted that reorganization should entail a

radical change in the powers or functions of existing committees.   The

barage of criticisms levied on the management board proposal paved the

way for the Bains Report.   The Report of the Royal Commission left out

the idea of a management board but its members were "firmly of the

opinion that the new main authorities must have a central committee, board

or body of some kind, by whatever name it may be called" (1969,Vol.1,

para.486).   Additionally, "the case is surely cast-iron for a central

body to advise the council on its strategy and priorities, co-ordinate

the policies and work of the service committees, and ensure that the best

managerial methods are adopted in each department and in the work of the

council as a whole" (1969,Vol.1,para.489).   Each of the new authorities

would therefore work out the form of central committee most suited to

its requirements, and also the division of duties between the central

committee and the service committees"which would continue to be at the

heart of affairs...It is, however, a radical change from traditional

practice that we seek.   The central committee must be at the core of

the administration; and the proliferation of committees must be ended"

(1969,Vol.1,paras.493-5).

Management Techniques

We must point out at the beginning that all that we are going to

discuss in this sub-section did not feature in the 1976 reform in Nigeria.

"An approach to local government which centred on such grand concerns as

democracy, efficiency and central control, hardly had time to notice

matters so mundane as the actual working of particular local authorities.

Local government was either pure administration, or a self-regulating

democracy, and from these perspectives the management of local government

could easily be assumed away as an irrelevant, taken-for-granted blur"

(Dearlove,1979,p.113).

In Britain, corporate management-Management Services, employment of

private consultants, LAMSAC, PPBS, Work Study, O & M, Operational research,

Network Analysis, use of computers, and Cost-benefit Analysis - has been

an important ingredient of recent local government reports, such as the

Maud and the Bains reports, and has aroused great interest among members

and officers alike.   It aims to provide a framework whereby the needs

of a community are viewed comprehensively and the activities of the local

authority are planned and executed in a unified way to satisfy those needs

to the fullest extent possible within available resources. To achieve

these aims necessitated considerable restructuring of the internal

organization of local authorities in 1974.

NATIONAL STABILITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Two 'external objectives' featured largely in the 1976 reform in

Nigeria: national unity and stability and socio-economic development,

both of which cannot really be emphasized in the case of the 1974 reform

in Britain.

National Unity and Stability

In the first place, this was expressed in the government's concern

with the political unity of Nigeria. The Federal Government wanted

a system of local government which would stimulate the consolidation and

reinforcement of national unity and the reduction of any centrifugal

forces that might be present.

> The reform of our system of local government is not only important
> and desirable in itself, but it is a crucial element in the
> political programme of the Federal Military Government (emphasis
> mine). Having disposed of the question of the creation of new
> states, the Local Government Reforms are the next important
> exercise in the process of building a sound foundation for the
> return of this country's administration to civil rule (Guidelines,
> 1976, foreword).

The Government was not only reluctant and unwilling to establish a

local government system that might create power centres capable of

competing with or effectively opposing the central government; it was

determined to demarcate the boundaries of local units in such a way that

existing power centres will be weakened or destroyed. Just as the

establishment of regional bodies in Czechoslovakia during the 1950s was

undoubtedly partly inspired by the Government's wish to combat federalist

inclinations and to reinforce its grip on the whole country, so the

creation of states in 1967 and the reorganization of local government

in 1976 were structural efforts made to combat the disintegrating

influence exercised by the former regions and provinces of Nigeria.

As the Guidelines put it, the implications of the reform "in fact mean

that a fundamental change in the political structure of this country will

be brought about" (1976, foreward).

Thus the government destroyed the existing regional governmental and

administrative structures.   This was necessary because Nigeria is a

country of many peoples, each with their governmental structures developing

into power centres which affected the authority of the central government

and consequently endangered national unity.

Finally, the Federal Government introduced representative local

government as a nation-building instrument.   Meeting the people's

desires to participate in governmental affairs, at least at the local level,

was considered a useful device by which to reduce their resistance.   It is

interesting and ironical that it was the military, an undemocratic

institution, that reorganized representative local government in Nigeria.

National unity was also interpreted as the nation-wide acceptance and

implementation of central government policies, the integration of local

policies in the national policy and adherence by local governments to the

standards of services laid down in the centre.   This problem is closely

related to the more fundamental question of whether the function of local

authorities is solely or primarily to foster local interests or to serve

national interests at the local level.   The objective of national unity,

understood in this fashion, not only requires a certain structure of

local government and a certain relationship between local and state

government, but also necessitates the shaping of local government units

whose size and managerial capacities can guarantee the level of achievement

and service demanded by the centre. The Federal Government

therefore recommended that local councils should have substantial

control over local affairs, initiate and direct the provision of

services, and "determine and implement projects so as to complement

the activities of the State and Federal Governments..." (Guidelines,

1976,p.1). Furthermore, the Government was aware of the values,

strength and common interests inherent in the existing system by

demanding that local government should, with such adjustments as may

be appropriate, be coterminous with the existing Divisions, (Guidelines,

1976,p.5.).

Socio-Economic Development

This objective coincides in certain respects with that of efficiency

which, in the fulfilment of public tasks, is considered to contribute

to the economic and social development of an area. In Nigeria, the

efficient performance of public tasks at the local level is a prerequisite

for successful realization of the national plan. In spite of the fact

that development and efficiency are interdependent there are sufficient

reasons why separate attention should be paid to the objective of social

and economic development. Firstly, it needs more than just efficiency;

it also requires the promotion of active popular participation as well as

the integration of governmental activities for the various geographical

areas and governmental tasks. Secondly, social and economic development

is the primary objective of overall Nigerian government policy to such a

degree that, if only for this reason, it deserves special mention. This

concerted government policy for economic and social development is not

confined to Nigeria alone, but to an increasing extent, in Britain,although

as we pointed out in chapter 3, the role of local government in development

is to provide the basic opportunities such as land for factories, rather

than plunge into actual development.

Furthermore, the stress on local government as an instrument for development is closely associated with the reflection, wrongly or rightly, that small units will stimulate popular participation in developmental activities. This reflection is deeply rooted in the 1976 reform objectives which were _inter alia_, to develop local leadership, to develop pride and unity in their areas and country, to bridge the gap between people and the administration, to bring the people's thought to bear on their problems, to initiate them in the art of self-help and collective action, and above all, to release their latent creative energies and to utilize the vast manpower potential in the country for its development. Some of these motives were also mentioned by the Royal Commission (1966-69); in Britain, the cry for metropolitan government, encompassing a number of existing local units, springs from concern regarding the inability of the existing structure to provide the leadership, stimulus and integration necessary for economic expansion; moreover, central cities were often hampered in their economic growth by lack of territory, thus the call for the eradication of town - country dichotomy, which would enable municipalities to meet industrial and commercial expansion needs. Lastly, the tendency to construct large local authorities was also inspired by the wish to provide a governmental instrument and basis for economic development. In its evidence to the Royal Commission, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government advocated the city region concept not only because it "considered that the city region as the...development unit (would be)able to formulate and execute its own policies", but also because it would be a prerequisite of effective future investment and economic development (Royal Commission on Local Government in England,1969,Vol.1, paras.112,115 and 120). The

Commission itself was convinced that large units of local authority,

such as provincial councils, "are required which can settle the broad

economic, land use and investment framework for the planning and

development policies of operational authorities" (1969,Vol.1,para 283).

Little wonder that the Government pointed out in 1977 that "local authorities

now need...to stimulate investment by the private sector, by firms and

by individuals, in industry, in commerce and in housing" (Policy for the

Inner Cities,1977,p.9).

An important issue, therefore, for the Nigerian government especially,

was the type of local government structure and administration which would

provide the most effective instrument for popular participation in

developmental activities.   As we said before, the recommended population

range indicates the strong emphasis which was placed on participation in

socio-economic development as an objective of the reform policy.

The type of participation envisaged is primarily concerned with the

execution of decisions taken by local political and administrative

authorities.   It refers, therefore, to mass participation in

developmental works such as improvement of agriculture, building of roads

and houses, provision of health facilities etc. rather than to the

participation of a few people in policy and decision making.   It is

obvious, however, that the two types of participation cannot be fully

separated; engaging people in developmental activities implies, in many

cases, that they are also allocated a role in the taking of minor decisions.

As we shall try to prove in chapter 9, large-scale participation is

closely related to community development, which stresses that people should

actively and willingly partake in the execution of projects which have been

decided upon by the people themselves, or the local council, or in

exceptional cases, by the State Government field agencies.   The relationship

between local government and community development is frequently pointed

out; it is often claimed that the former should contribute considerably towards the latter, but in order to do so, the Federal Government believed that local government must have proper structure, powers and methods of operation (see sub-sections 'Functions and Size', and 'Efficiency'). Awareness of the significance of local government in stimulating citizen participation in social and economic development was therefore central to the 1976 reform. This is understandable in that the private sector is not only relatively weak in comparison to the private sector in Britain, but it also depends to a large extent on State capital. Unfortunately, the Guidelines and the State edicts were extremely vague on what role they expected local government to play in the development process, which should normally be the provision and maintenance of necessary infrastructure such as markets, council offices, roads, water supplies etc. (not industrial enterprises) to stimulate and support the private sector.

As we shall see in chapter 9, we will be resting our thesis on the belief that, if not done by dictatorial methods, rural manpower can only be mobilised for projects conceived and organised by the people as an expression of their own felt needs; the rural population is indifferent to innovations brought to them by central government agents whose ways of thought are unfamiliar. This is only one side of the coin, of course; undeniably, central government agents have frequently been prime movers in innovation and local development. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that active participation in social and economic development can best be achieved within the framework of a small community. People are more willing to engage in development work for the benefit of a limited government unit whose decision making authorities they feel closely associated and trust, than they are to work for more remote authorities. Popular participation in development activities, it is believed, therefore calls for small-size units of local government - "if

too large, even with small population, remoteness from some of the

people arises" (<u>Guidelines,</u>1976,p.4.). But is there an optimum size;

and is local government necessarily the primary unit for community

development?   In many cases, as we shall see in chapter 9, these

activities could ideally be performed at the sub-communal level, the

village or group of villages.   In fact, the usefulness of the sub-communal

unit as a catalyst for stimulating popular participation is a strong

argument in favour of its establishment.

The empirical evidence we have discussed so far in this chapter does

not support those who hypothesize that developing and developed countries

cannot have identical local government reform objectives.   We do accept

that the emphasis placed on objectives varies from countries to countries

but by and large the reform goals themselves can be very similar.   These

objectives, however, will falter and die if correct strategies are not

designed to implement them.

STRATEGIES

In chapter 1 we said that local government reform strategies differ

from country to country: "the preferable mix of administrative reform

strategies is in the main a function of the concrete circumstances of

each particular reform" (Dror,1976,p.127).   The 1976 reform in Nigeria

was initiated and executed by the military government, and like all military

strategies, this was clothed in secrecy and it was quickly implemented

with military precision.   Thus, unlike in Britain, there was no room for

<u>serious</u> research, debates, consultations, and legislative actions.

The assertion in the paragraph above, however, is not completely true.

After all, what we have discussed in this thesis so far shows a lot of

correspondence in their analyses of defects and the setting of objectives,

steps that are very crucial in administrative reform strategies.   In fact

this goes to support our claim that environmental differences between

countries should not stop us from constructing strategies with universal

applicability, with each country just needing to adapt them to her

environment. Thus, in Nigeria and Britain, there were debates,

researches and consultations, although acceptedly more comprehensive in

the latter country. The Guidelines (1976,foreword) speak of 'tentative

discussions', 'small co-ordinative committees', and of 'exhaustive

consultations' between the States and the Federal Government on the one hand,

and between the Federal Government and the traditional rulers on the other.

This it not to deny, however, that there were marked differences in the

strategies of Nigeria and Britain.

Firstly, unlike in Nigeria, Britain set up a Royal Commission with many

local government experts on it. Britain decided to use a Royal Commission

because they are regarded not only as agents of change but also as "the

chief advisory bodies in the legislative and administrative process"

and "their report is looked to as an exposition of the situation or problem"

(Wheare,1955,pp.68-9). The debate they generate is regarded to be at

least of equal importance to their investigative work and actual

recommendations. Donnison concludes that commissions are a force to

reckon with because "their work generated and focused a reforming impetus

which would have been difficult to mobilise in other ways" (1968,p.558).

And local government reform is one of the delicate subjects where the

Government feels that impetus from a royal commission would be better

because with the councils, their associations and professional groups

thinking first and foremost in terms of their interests and future role;

with politicians weighing the political balance sheet; and with civil

servants thinking very much in terms of administrative and legal

feasibility, the Royal Commission provided the best chance for all and

sundry to air their views. The Royal Commission therefore served a

valuable purpose in maintaining a reform momentum and in creating a new agenda for public debate.

The Royal Commission's need for prolonged public debate and the necessary administrative and legislative procedures lead us to the second point - reform pace or timing.   It took Nigeria less than two years to initiate and implement the 1976 local government reform as against almost a decade (1966-74) taken in Britain despite the two year period given by Crossman who evidently hated the procedure and demise of the earlier Local Government Commissions for England and Wales (1958-65). The drastically short period of time taken to reform the local government system in Nigeria was due to a number of reasons:

(a)   The Murtala regime which came to power in 1975 had shown itself to be a 'ruthless', highly disciplined one that was above petty politicking;

(b)   that regime presented the local government reform as an urgent objective because it was a crucial element in their political programme of returning the country to civil rule in 1979.   This was very attractive to the people and helped to weaken pockets of resistance;

(c)   the need for national unity, after the civil war, made it attractive and necessary to destroy the existing societal structure which endangered the Government's existence;

(d)   the governmental and administrative machinery needed thorough re-structuring to turn it into an efficient and effective instrument for achieving the development objectives;

(e)   the role of 'homo politicus' (see chapters 1 and 7) - Murtala's high standard of probity and his personal charisma lent him a lot of speed and weight in the reform efforts;

(f)   since it was a military regime, there was no room for serious, long-drawn debates and legislative procedures;

(g)   Nigeria could drastically and quickly reform its local government

since the system was fairly simple, very young (less than 25 years

old as against the century-old system in Britain) and therefore easier

to change. Damages caused by any failure will be consequently smaller,

particularly in view of the possible gains to be derived from the reform;

(h) no local representative institutions could claim any long history

and tradition of public service and consequently they felt less

impelled to oppose reforms which might reduce their importance; and

(i) few vested interests are aggregated in institutions such as associations

of local authorities and groups of local politicians who, jealous of their

position and that of their members, will resist major changes likely to have

any unfavourable effect.

Britain, on ther other hand, had to settle for a gradual approach

because:

(a) As a democratic country she had to give the electorate the opportunity

to discuss and debate the object and subject of the reform. In other

words, the government could not dictatorially impose the reform with one

stroke of the pen;

(b) like all royal commissions, the Redcliffe-Maud Commission, by nature,

had to proceed gradually in order to broaden the debate and this means

having to deal with a wealth of materials, evidences etc. In all, some

2,156 witnesses submitted written evidence to the Commission;

(c) gradual process enables adaptation of the local government structure

to new needs and conditions, while allowing the people to adapt to

the new structure, without disrupting the continuity of the operations

of local institutions;

(d) it minimizes resistance to reform since everybody would have had the

opportunity to air his view;

(e) the existing system of local government which was almost a century

old had become a stable, highly complex and differentiated administrative

system which could not be hastily changed overnight without causing disruptions;

(f) the decision making process is highly pluralistic. Innumerable individuals and organizations, whether connected to central government or not, were involved in the decision making process on the reform schemes; and

(g) local representative institutions, whose considerable influence was further strengthened by associations of local authorities and political parties, were an important source of resistance.

An important similarity in the 'time factor' is worth mentioning: the reforms in Nigeria and Britain were initiated and implemented by Governments which had newly come to office and which were therefore still popular with the public during this honeymoon period. Murtala came to power in 1975 after eight years of Gowon's rule which had become directionless, corrupt and irresponsible. In Britain, the Labour Party initiated the reform in 1966 and the Conservative Party implemented it at a time when they had newly come to office with a comfortable majority.

These differences in strategy, therefore, were inevitable because, as we have said, any government is conditioned in its choice regarding local government reform by the impact of environmental conditions on the structure and functions of local units. A government may prefer a particular strategy, but it must realise the difficulties that prevailing conditions will imply for effective implementation. If these conditions are not taken into account when changing the local government structure, the reform is unlikely to be successful. Many countries have experienced setbacks in introducing a new system of local government because it was unsuitable to local conditions; others have had to deviate considerably from their original intentions. The danger has proven particularly acute when a system is transplanted from one country to another, such as the doomed British-inspired system enacted in Nigeria in the 1950s.

Apart from the influence exercised by ecological conditions on the feasibility of reforming the system of local government, any local government reform will face active resistance as it alters the power structure of the community and thereby arouses groups or individuals who feel that their interests or power positions will be affected. People in authority are particularly affected by such threats to prominence. In Britain, this refers to members of local government bodies: the councillors, the mayors, the officers and the various local authority organizations, such as the AMC or the RDCA or more generally, NALGO. Generally, opposition to reform came from such quarters than from members of the general public. In Nigeria, strong resistance to local government reform came from local landlords, chiefs and especially emirs in northern Nigeria where the boundaries of the emirates co-incided with local government boundaries.

Local government reform has therefore become a complex and intricate process. The dissatisfaction regarding the existing systems in Nigeria and Britain, and the important role which local government plays in the process of political, social and economic development of Nigeria especially, prompted scholars, governments and associations of local authorities to use a more systematic approach to the problem. Before the 1974 and 1976 reforms, both countries 'modernized' and adopted their local government systems haphazardly and piecemeal, usually by removing functions from local government. The last reforms, however, show laudable trend towards a more systematic and wholesale approach, implying greater efforts to set clear objectives to the decentralization policy as a basis on which to re-design the system.

In a nutshell, the tendency towards greater rationality in local government reform is striking. This is not only shown by more systematic efforts, but also by the declining influence of less rational considerations,

such as identification with the social community, antagonism between
urban and rural areas, between city and residential fringe municipalities.
This new trend was aptly expressed in the Liberal Party's evidence to
the Redcliffe-Maud Commission: 'It is clear that a thorough rationalization
of local authorities is required'. The rational approach is also
manifested by the search for quantifiable criteria such as functions,
efficiency and planning, on which to determine size and boundaries of new
units of local government and administration. Nevertheless, a government's
ability to give decisive weight to rational consideration depends largely
on their acceptance by the people and influential interest groups. Value-
judgements and group interests still play a considerable role in the
feasibility of reform achievement. The need for a rational approach led
the Royal Commission and to some extent the Nigerian Government to ask
for evidence, to carry out some research and to deduce principles upon
which their recommendations were based.

Evidence and Consultations

The Redcliffe-Maud Commission commenced its work by sending a letter
to every local authority requesting evidence within three months and an
open invitation to the public was also made. In all, some 2,156 witnesses
submitted written evidence. Of these 1,269 were individual local authorities
(including 594 parishes) and 536 were individual members of the public,
such as academics and local government officers and councillors. The
remaining 350 or so included national and local political, amenity,
business, professional and ratepayer associations. Oral evidence was
taken from only a dozen bodies - ministries, local authority associations
and NALGO.

In Nigeria, evidence of witnesses were taken and consultations were
carried out although not at a scale comparable to the Redcliffe-Maud

Commission because of time factor. Indeed, the Federal Government

asked each state to set up a Committee for Local Government Reform but

this was after the Guidelines had been published and enacted as edicts by

the states. The Federal Government had therefore previously diagnosed the

defects of local government, set out the reform objectives, strategies and

principles as contained in the Guidelines and had made up its mind as to

the type of structure of local government it wanted. All that was left

to the Committees to do was take evidence (mainly oral) from witnesses and

make recommendations about possible new boundaries (see chapter 7).

Unfortunately both the evidence of witnesses from the states and those

allegedly collected by the Federal Government were never published.

Everything was shrouded in secrecy. Thus all that we know about the

evidence and consultations was the little fed to us in the Guidelines.

According to the Guidelines (1976, foreword), tentative discussions

on local government reforms started in 1975 through the establishment of

a small co-ordinative committee. Each state was asked to make consultations

and the reports of these were submitted to Lagos for information and

co-ordination. Then the whole country was divided into zones and each

zone was asked to prepare papers on local government reform and particularly

on the definition and functions of local government, its financing, the

role of traditional authorities within any proposed local government

structure, the Local Government Service structure etc. The zonal reports

were discussed at various conferences in Enugu, Kaduna and Ibadan. The

final conference was held in Ibadan to co-ordinate the recommendations of

all the committees plus all the observations made by local government

practitioners, traditional rulers, local council administrators and other

interested parties. The amalgam of this process, after collation, was

again submitted to a joint meeting of National Council of States and the

Supreme Military Council. The document which emerged from this joint

meeting was submitted to a national conference of traditional rulers

which was held in Lagos in July 1976.

The next step was that of a mass education campaign embarked upon

by the traditional rulers.   This writer was on the entourage of the

Emir of Ilorin as he campaigned to solicit support for the reform effort

throughout the former Ilorin Emirate.   The campaign was not partisan;

it was not to speak for or against candidates seeking election, but to

get the people to support local government reform which would bring

government nearer to them, and to get them to vote in the local elections.

For instance, the Emir of Ilorin, like all the other traditional rulers,

emphasized that the local government reform was to bring development to

the local areas; and that the elections were not attempts to get the

local people to pay more tax, but that they should vote so as to elect

the person they thought most suitable as their councillor.

Research

The desire for a more rational approach is further evidenced by the

emphasis on research.   The Redcliffe-Maud Commission was not ready to

base its recommendations only on the evidence of witnesses.   Indeed, what

they heard convinced them of the need for further research involving an

appraisal of existing information and research and the setting-up of

specific research projects.   As we said earlier, local government reform

is now based on scientific studies, particularly to the determination of

optimal areas and boundaries of local government units.   Britain

undertook research on these matters and ascertained its necessity: "The

determination of the number and area of provisional authorities required

for the proper organization of local government will necessitate careful

and detailed studies".   (Evidence of the Association of Municipal

Corporations to the Royal Commission,1969,para.269). Even so, there is a

widespread lack of research activities.   A main weakness of Nigerian

local government reform is the lack of systematic research and educational

effort in relation to the structure and operations of local government.

There is little or no academic study of local government institutions and

their role in the somewhat complicated federal structure.

Thus, serious research did not come into play in the Nigerian reform.

The Government did not carry out any research, neither did they contract

anybody to carry it out for them.   Even in Britain, the limitations of

general studies of local government as a whole or of aspects thereof are

evident.   Even though the Redcliffe-Maud Commission recognised the

essence of research and in fact backed up their proposals by considerable

research, they stated with regard to the relationship between the efficient

operation of a certain function and the maximum and minimum size of local

units: "...we simply do not know whether the time spent on research will

produce enough hard facts about this problem...size cannot be statistically

proved to have a very important effect on performance" (1969,Vol.1, para.219).

This is all the more interesting because it has frequently been posited

that research on size and boundaries of local units is easier to undertake

and is more likely to produce useful results than on most other aspects of

decentralization;   many important variables, including intensity of social

and economic relationships within an area, cost-benefit relationships of

major public functions, popular interest in communal affairs, are at least

quantifiable by approximation.   Other issues, such as whether or not a

new tier of government should be introduced, or of an optimal population

of a local government, have hardly any objective measuring-rods, so that

subjective or value-judgements or political expedience are likely to be

decisive factors in policy-making.   Research into the overall system of

local government is even more problematic, although studies on environmental

factors, for instance, may help reform efforts.

Another limitation is the absence of sufficient and reliable data, the compilation of which is expensive and requires highly trained manpower. The ensuing doubt regarding the usefulness of research reduces governmental willingness to vote necessary funds. Trained researchers are very rare in Nigeria. It is interesting to note, however, that the Royal Commission was therefore more influenced by departmental studies than by research, apparently because of the aforementioned problems. The Commission attached great importance to the Departmental studies, to "the subjective impressions of those who have direct, disinterested knowledge of the quality of local authority performance in two major services. They both showed that size was related to performance" (1969,Vol.1,para. 221).

Time, which we have discussed, is yet another difficult factor. The Murtala/Obasanjo regime had only four years to execute eight objectives, local government reform being only one of them. Moreover, being a military regime, there was little or no room for research. The reform effort was shrouded in almost total secrecy. Yet if a high level of perfection is craved, considerable time is necessary, but policy decisions frequently cannot await research results, and doubt regarding their reliability will make governments even less willing to be patient. This attitude will be further aggravated if the researchers disregard the political and administrative possibilities of implementing the proposals made.

Despite these limitations of research, it would be wrong to conclude that it is worthless. "A strength of many recent reports has been that their 'evidence' has not been confined to the 'opinions' of interested parties acting as witnesses. The provision of 'intelligence' is a valuable function of a support team..." (Wood,1976,p.45). An important usefulness of the research on the effects of size on output was in fact to point the way for further, more sophisticated studies in the

future.   A secondary value was that pitfalls emerged which the

commissioners knew they must avoid in their report.   On the other hand,

lack of research led the Nigerian government to make questionable

value-judgements and sweeping declarations, such as, that any local

government with less than 150,000 people is inefficient (Guidelines,1976p.4).

It would be interesting to speculate on how the military regime hit upon

their population range of 150,000 to 800,000 in the absence of research.

But we can do no more than speculate.

Royal Commission's Recommendations

Using the evidence before them in considering their terms of reference

and how best to achieve the reform objectives, the Royal Commission,

like the Nigerian Government, posed one fundamental question: "What size

of authority, or range of size, in terms of population and of area, is

needed for the democratic and efficient provision of particular services

and for local self-government as a whole?" (1969,Vol.1,para.8).   The

Commission answered this question by applying a number of principles

(see Appendix III)to the country as a whole.   They arrived at the

conclusion that the greater part of England should be divided into 58

unitary authorities, embracing both town and country, responsible for

almost all executive action in relation to local government services.

The major towns which are the focal points for the commerce and cultural

life of the surrounding area would also be the centre for local government.

The Commission recommended that the minimum size for all the main services

should be a population of some 250,000, and a maximum of 1 million population.

The Commission also expressed concern in terms of size and remoteness

if an all-purpose unitary authority had a population greatly exceeding a

million.   To forestall this, it proposed a two-tier system for the

three largest conurbations which was similar to the London pattern in

operation since 1963.   In these three metropolitan areas around

Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, responsibility for services would

be divided between the top-tier or metropolitan authority, whose key

functions would be planning, transportation, water supply, sewerage, refuse

disposal, police, fire and ambulance services, and major development,

and twenty lower-tier or metropolitan district authorities, whose key

duties would be education, personal social services, health and housing.

The Commission also recommended that throughout the 61 areas, local

councils initially representing the displaced boroughs, urban districts

and parishes should be established to represent and communicate the wishes

of cities, towns and villages in all matters of special concern to the

inhabitants.   Their major task would be to represent local opinion, but

they would have the right to be consulted on matters of special interest

to local inhabitants and could play a part with services appropriate to

their resources and subject to the agreement of the main authority.

The Commission further recommended that these 61 unitary and

metropolitan authorities should be grouped, together with Greater London,

in eight provinces, each with its own provincial council.   Provincial

councils would be elected by the authorities for the unitary and

metropolitan areas and Greater London, but would also include co-opted

members of between 20 per cent and 25 per cent.   The major task of these

councils would be to settle the provincial strategy and planning framework

within which the main authorities would operate, thus replacing the

regional economic planning councils, and to collaborate with central

government in the economic and social development of each province.

In line with the recommendations of the Maud Committee on Management,

the Commission proposed the abolition of aldermen and limited council

membership to 75.   The number of committees should be small with a

central committee to work out priorities.   Every authority should appoint

a chief executive, chosen regardless of professional background. Delegation to officers should be freely exercised. Local offices should be established where the public can seek advice.

The main issue which the Commission faced was the choice between essentially one-tier and two-tier local government with Mr.Senior disagreeing with the Commission's proposals. He believed that the right approach was to create city regions consisting of five provincial councils, 35 city regions, 148 district councils and numerous local councils (see Diagram 6.4). His City Region concept was similar to the unitary authorities since both wanted the merging of town and country. But the 35 Senior City Regions were larger: 20 of the 35 would have populations in excess of 1 million each. All members of the Commission were agreed that units of this size were too large to be all-purpose authorities, hence his proposal of 148 district councils. Senior's City Regions would be directly elected and responsible for the planning,transport and development functions, capital investment programming, police,fire and education, while the directly elected district councils would have health, housing and personal services functions. The difference between the Commission's proposals and those of Mr.Senior can be illustrated by a diagram (Diagram 6.4).

DIAGRAM 6.4: REDCLIFFE-MAUD COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS   SENIOR'S PROPOSALS
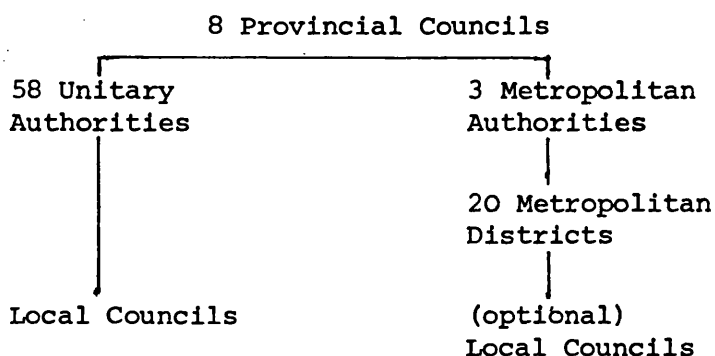
8 Provincial Councils		5 Provincial Councils
58 Unitary Authorities	3 Metropolitan Authorities	35 City Regions
	20 Metropolitan Districts	148 District Councils
Local Councils	(optional) Local Councils	Local Councils
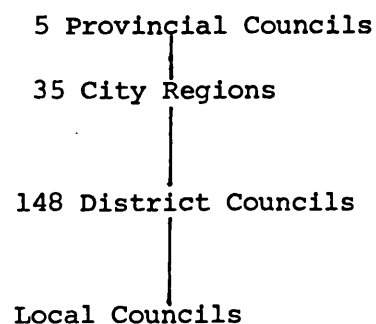
As we said earlier, the main point of dispute was over the
principle of unitary authorities.   35 City Regions perfectly fitted
with the evidence of government departments but the Commission rejected
this plan because they were convinced of the value of all-purpose county
borough type authorities: "where responsibility for local government is
undivided, then co-operation between services is much easier" (Richards,
1978,p.44).   Since the units proposed by Senior were too big to be all-
purpose authorities, smaller units had to be created.   The Report noted that
the evidence of the Department of Education and Science inspectors did
not support the Department's claim that an education authority should have
a population of half a million; the Commission therefore accepted unitary
authorities of 250,000 people, or even less in a few cases.   Senior's
proposals were a radical departure from the existing structure, in contrast
to the Commission's which tried to respect existing local boundaries
wherever possible.   As Richards says, "the argument against unitary
authorities is that it is impossible to define areas which are suitable for
the operation of all local government services.   One is forced to choose
either areas suitable for planning purposes which are too large and remote
for personal services, or a frame work suitable for personal services, that
is too small for planning" (1978,p.44) (see Appendix 111 for details).
In short, the unitary concept of the Royal Commission was clearly influenced
by a systems view of local government which emphasized the interdependency
of the diverse activities of local authorities and the need to plan ·
comprehensively for goals that could not be achieved by any one service in
isolation.

Reaction to Commission's Report

Public reaction to the unitary authority concept was in general
unfavourable.   Of the four principal local authority associations

only one, the Association of Municipal Corporations, supported the proposals, but the others, like the Conservative Party, favoured a two-tier system to prevent the risk of rural interests being disregarded by dominant urban authorities. The Senior alternative proposals appeared to carry greater support "but this ignored the fact that the Senior scheme would have produced fewer and larger education authorities and that his proposed boundaries would do more to disturb present administrative and social pattern" (Richards,1978,p.45). There was an evident desire for increased representation, more 'democracy' and a minimum of reform.

A Government White Paper (Reform of Local Government in England) in 1970 proposed a new local government structure based on 51 unitary areas and five metropolitan areas - Merseyside (Liverpool), Selnec (Manchester), West Midlands, West Yorkshire and South Hampshire. The Commission's proposals for eight provincial councils were deferred but the establishment of local councils was accepted. Other recommendations included the abolition of the office of alderman, improvements in councillors' allowances, fewer committees, delegation of more detail to officers, review of non-financial controls and less statutory control.

The Labour Government intended to promote a Bill in the 1971-2 session of Parliament to introduce the new structure. However, in the June 1970 General Election the Labour lost power, and with it, their concept of unitary authorities. The Conservative Government which came to power favoured a two-tier structure, and in 1971 published their own White Paper (Local Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganization, HMSO,1971) containing alternative proposals which formed the basis of the Local Government Act 1972 which was implemented in 1974 (see Appendix 1V).

In 1970 the Labour Government had also proposed a new local government structure for Wales based on three unitary authorities: one for Newport and Monmouthshire, one for Cardiff and East Glamorgan, and a third for Swansea and West Glamorgan. The remainder of the country was divided

into counties and local councils. The proposals were largely opposed

by the Welsh population and did not materialise because of the subsequent

change of Government (see Appendix lV for details of the various proposals).

Local Government Reform Principles in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the Government applied the following general principles

to the country also (Guidelines,1976,pp.3-6):

(a) All the statutory and public service functions of local government should

be concentrated in multipurpose single-tier institutions with complete and

self-contained budgets, so that the whole system of local government within

an area can be identified, costed and co-ordinated;

(b) 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, looal governments should, as far as possible

serve local populations of between 150,000 and 800,000, provided that

these limits 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;

(c) regardless of population, no town or city should be split between two

primary local governments. The whole planning area surrounding a town

should be in the same primary local government as the town itself. This

should apply not only to places which have been formally constituted as

Planning Areas now, but those which are likely to be so constituted within

the next ten years. Where two or more towns, whether they are actually

contiguous or not, are nevertheless close to each other as to make up a

conurbation, the whole should, with the planning peripheries, be in the

same local government area. Urban local governments should be

exceptional. No urban area with a population of less than 150,000 should be established by separating it from its surrounding former Division(s) and even at that level, the remaining area should not have less than 150,000 inhabitants. The special requirements of towns within local government areas can best be catered for by subordinate Town Councils;

(d) at the other end of the scale, local governments with less than 150,000 total population are in some cases inevitable especially where population densities are very low, but local governments covering less than 150,000 should be kept as few as possible. In no State should the average population of local governments be below 150,000. Only in this way can more sophisticated services be provided. Very small local governments, apart from their facing financial disadvantages, cannot offer attractive career prospects for well-qualified staff. Otherwise one of the fundamental objectives of the reforms, which is to raise the quality of local public services, will not be met. Poor quality staff are unlikely to provide good quality services;

(e) local governments should, in most cases, be coterminous with Divisions, with such adjustments as may be appropriate. Some existing very large local authorities already have sub-divisions within them, called Administrative Areas, Development Areas etc. Again, with appropriate adjustments, these could serve as the basis for the new local governments. Where large existing local authorities are to be sub-divided, they should be within the overall limits above, and be as few as possible. An average population of 400,000 or more within a large local government should be preferred;

(f) it is not the intention of Government to destroy the organic unity of the traditional chiefdoms, emirates or similar institutions. Where a

large traditional emirate or chiefdom is to be subdivided into several

local governments, the latter will not become 'emirates' or acquire new

traditional heads.   The local governments will be modern functional

institutions.   The traditional emirates and chiefdoms will remain,

although their functions will be changedto accord with the present day

circumstances;

(g) where a local government is coterminous with an existing local government

authority with a single Emir or Paramount Chief, and it is desired that

this Emir or Paramount Chief shall be the active President of the new

Local Government Council, there will be a single council only for the local

government, with the Emir or Paramount Chief as President.   This may also

apply if the local government consists of more than one former emirate

or other traditional authority, but one of the latter cover the greater

majority of the whole population, and if the Emir or Parmount Chief is

fully acceptable to the populations of the minority elements as council

president.   The minor chiefs would in this case be members of the local

government councils;

(h) where a local government is coterminous with a single former local

goverment authority, it may be more consonant with local tradition or

opinion that the Emir or Paramount Chief should be ceremonial president

only.   In this case, for normal business, the council should be presided

over by a chairman.   In such cases there may be a Traditional Council in

addition to the Local Government Council.

The application of these principles or recommendations will be

discussed in the next chapter, 'Implementation', because they were

mandatorily implemented to the letter by the State Governments.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

> Accepting the concepts and implementing them are
> two very different things (Taylor, 1972, p.251).

We pointed out in Chapter 1 that the implementation stage is the achilles

heel of administrative reform because most reforms fail at this stage.

This is due to the fact that most reformers are not genuine in their inten-

tions or because they are outsiders to the situation they are trying to

reform. In other cases, highly prestigious bodies like the Redcliffe-

Maud Commission (1966-69) invested with the task of reform discovered that

their recommendations were politically unacceptable and they therefore

fell by the wayside. This was not too surprising since the Commission

was appointed by a Labour Government that was no longer in office at the

implementation stage. The Conservative Government did accept the

Commission's diagnosis of local government defects, their reform objec-

tives and strategies, and the recommendation that a population of 250,000

was necessary if an authority was to be an effective provider of major

services such as education.

Despite the fact that most of the recommendations of the Commission

were modified or rejected (see Appendix IV), the reform was still imple-

mented because the vast majority of proximate decision-makers had

broadly accepted the need for reform which revolved around the generally

accepted weaknesses of the former structure of local government.

Second, the Government, the Opposition and the electorate were committed

to local administrative reform. This became apparent in 1967-8 when

several major recommendations of the Mallaby, Maud and especially the Fulton

Reports were accepted. Third, Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister,
made it clear that the Government intended to act quickly when he pre-
sented the Redcliffe-Maud Report to the Commons. Fourth, the Conserva-
tive Party led by Mr. Heath had campaigned in 1970 on a platform of
modernizing government, and little wonder that Mr. Walker a close associate
of Mr. Heath and an ambitious politican who was keenly interested in local
government reform as shadow minister, became the minister in-charge.

Thus, all the crucial implementation variables (see Chapter 1) were
favourable at the passing of the Local Government Bill in 1971 and the con-
sequent Local Government Act 1972. Britain undertook a comprehensive
reform (as against selective reform or incrementalism) because the leader-
ship was strong, committed, willing and united. The time (see Chapter 6)
was propitious: the Conservative Party had just won the general election
in 1970 and was still popular in 1971-2. Many civil servants, tradition-
ally renown for opposing reform, supported this one in principle. A good
example is Dame Evelyn Sharp, a powerful and experienced permanent sec-
retary. The reform agents (the Commission) were also strong and committed.
They were respected experts and they maintained the reform momentum by
generating a lot of public debate and an atmosphere of reform. The socio-
political environment was equally favourable. The electorate was keenly
interested in seeing some changes: there was "widespread agreement among
witnesses on the need to change the present local government system"
(Royal Commission on Local Government in England, 1969, Vol.1, para.109).
Both the Government and the Opposition were also agreed on the need for
structural reforms and whatever arguments ensued were restricted to the
type of reform; "at no stage was a serious anti-reform lobby in evidence"
(Wood, 1976, p.183).

A comprehensive local government reform was also carried through
in Nigeria because the Murtala/Obasanjo Government which initiated and
implemented it was keenly interested in the reform. It was such 'a

crucial element in (their) political programme' that they could

not afford to entrust it completely unto a commission (see Chapter 6).

We should note, however, that the recommendations of the Federal Government

were highly influenced by the 1974 Public Service Review Commission (Udoji

Commission). The following are some of the recommendations of the Com-

mission which were adopted by the Murtala/Obasanjo regime: (a) States

operating a multi-tier local government system should re-examine the

structure with a view to adopting a single-tier system; (b) Ministries of

Local Government should establish research and development planning units

to assist local government in improving the effectiveness of their admini-

stration; (c) The Council, which should continue as the policy making body

for the Local Authority, should forbear from interfering with administrative

matters, which should be fully delegated to the Executive Secretary; (d)

The revenue-sharing arrangement between state and local government should

be reviewed with the object of ensuring that local authorities are provided

with adequate funds for performance of their functions; (e) In order to

be able to recruit and retain competent staff the salaries and conditions

of service of local government staff should not be less favourable

than those of civil servants; (f) Each state should establish a Local

Government Service Board to develop and implement common policies dealing

with personnel matters and to apply the same in all local government

authorities in the state; and (g) Statutory recognition should be given to

the administrative function of traditional rulers, and they should be

more closely integrated as a parallel but complementary system for

projecting government image at the local level (Public Service Review

Commission, 1974, pp.118-133).

Like in Britain, all the implementation variables were propitious at

the time of implementation of the Nigerian reform: the socio-political en-

vironment was favourable; a new regime had just come to power in 1975 after

almost a decade of Gowon's corrupt government (see Chapter 5). The people

were definitely yearning for a change and they welcomed the coup d'etat that

brought Murtala to power, and his promise to reform local government. This was shown by the nation-wide demonstration in support of the new regime and its policies; the press called the advent of Murtala's regime 'a golden opportunity' for the 'rebirth of a nation' (Nigerian Herald, 6 August 1975); and the university students who since 1972 had had an average of three violent riots every year against Gowon's regime not only welcomed Murtala's government but the National Union of Nigerian Students placed a two-year self-imposed ban on rioting as a gesture of its support for Murtala. The political structure of the nation was also favourable to reform. The military had no room for legislative processes, arguments and opposition. This not only killed any resistance to reform but it also speeded up the implementation. The reform agents, the military, were very sincere in their attempt to reform the local government structure. This genuineness and sincerity of purpose led the Military Government to undertake the reform themselves rather than entrust it to a commission which would have wasted time and given rise to dissension of opinion as to whether or not reform was necessary, and if necessary, what structure it should take. The reform strategy (see chapter 6) matched the occasion perfectly. One of the strategies which we have not mentioned, however, was the compulsory retirement, immediately after the regime came to power, of known 'dead-wood' civil servants who would have opposed or delayed the reform. These civil servants had been known to block past reform attempts because their interests were at stake. Their retirement aided the serene and auspicious socio-political environment and strengthened the image and power of the Government.

Another strategy which the Military Government used and which we briefly mentioned in the last chapter, was to employ the blessing and co-operation of traditional rulers. They had perceived real or imaginary threats that they would be adversely affected by the reform but the Government turned the scale in their favour by promising to restore their status and powers which had been whittled down by previous governments :

> Nothing in these reforms could be construed to mean an attempt
> at reducing or abolishing the traditional functions of our Emirs,
> Obas, and Chiefs. On the contrary, the reforms recognize the
> crucial nature of the position of the traditional authorities and
> care has been taken to preserve the organic unity of our traditional
> institutions and societies (Guidelines, 1976, foreword).

The support of the traditional rulers gave the reformers an added

influence and power. By eliciting their support, the Government overcame

the greatest hurdle and thus they had ample room to implement the reform

smoothly and quickly.

In Lee's matrix, time and leadership are two crucial variables (1970,

pp.77-89). His hypothesis about reform implementation is confirmed in

both Nigeria and Britain: that a comprehensive strategy can be implemented

if the leadership of reform agents and the internal structure of the reform

agency are strong and united and if the social environment and the political

structure are favourable. The first variable, 'time', we have discussed

in chapter 6 because it is a strategy that is equally important to the

implementation stage as to the other stages of administrative reform.

Leadership or the role of 'homo politicus' which we briefly mentioned in

that chapter too and which we have briefly touched on here will be discussed

fully later in this chapter. Backoff's hypothesis that the greater the

comprehensiveness, complexity, and magnitude of changes, the lesser

the probability of implementation can only be assumed to be true a priori.

It is certainly difficult to prove in the case of the 1974 and 1976

reforms in Britain and Nigeria respectively because his hypothesis failed

to take into consideration other important variables such as leadership,

time and socio-political environment of the country concerned. The changes

in both countries were complex and comprehensive, yet they were implemented

because the reformers had the will and the power to do so, and the time

and socio-political atmosphere were propitious.

We will divide this chapter into two: the legislative process of

implementation, and the actual changes (structures, elections, committees,

etc.) that were made. In the first part we will concentrate our attention

on Britain because the legislative process was lacking in the case of

Nigeria. We mentioned in the last chapter, though, that some con-

sultations did take place in Nigeria. In the second part we will concentrate

on the changed system in Nigeria particularly because the changes that took

place in Britain are fairly familiar and relatively easy to obtain. We

will, however, reduce some of the structural changes in Britain to an

appendix (see Appendix IV).

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS 1971-2

The White Paper

In February 1971 the new Conservative Government's proposals emerged

in a twelve-page White Paper (Local Government in England: Government

Proposals for Reorganization) and a consultative document was published

for Wales (Welsh Office, 1971). The White Paper convering local govern-

ment in England recognized the validity of the arguments for large autho-

rities for the effective and efficient operation of some services and for

smaller authorities for grass-roots democracy but argued that regional or

provincial areas would be too large for the operation of local government

services. Hence the Conservative Government 'solution' of a two-tier

structure was proposed, consisting essentially of counties and districts

(Sharpe, 1978, p.83). Metropolitan counties were proposed in the densely

populated conurbations, each divided into metropolitan districts having

more powers than other districts. The detailed geographical applica-

tion of these principles propounded by the White Paper were set out in a

separate circular, Department of the Environment Circular 8/71.

Thus there are two styles of local government system, the metropolitan

and the non-metropolitan. What distinguishes them is the allocation of

responsibility for education, including libraries, and the personal social

services (see Appendix I). The White Paper argued that a population range

of between 250,000 and a million was needed for effective performance

of these functions. In the conurbations it is possible to form second-tier districts compact in size which fall within this population range. Here the districts can undertake education and the social services. The Conservative scheme of six metropolitan counties (Merseyside, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Tyneside) which differed slightly from the Labour's in that South Yorkshire and Tyneside were included but South Hampshire was left out, were to have 34 metropolitan districts.

In order to enhance representative democracy and make for intimacy of the electorate and their representatives, it was proposed that the second-tier authorities in the rural areas should have a population far below 250,000. The pattern here is similar to the previous one in that powers should be distributed between county and district with major functions remaining with the former. 38 non-metropolitan counties were recommended by the White Paper and the accompanying Circular from the Department of the Environment outlined boundaries for the counties. Isle of Wight, the smallest non-metropolitan county with a population of 111,000 is the only one that does not pass the 250,000 limit. At the other extreme were some non-metropolitan counties with populations of over a million. The largest non-metropolitan counties, Essex, Hampshire and Kent seem too big to be satisfactory representative authorities responsible for education and social services. The boundaries for metropolitan districts were also outlined in the Department of the Environment Circular. Here the population range lay between 182,000 for South Tyneside and 1,168,000 for Birmingham.

A radical reorganisation of boroughs and urban and rural districts was proposed to provide larger districts which would have greater resources and thus be better fitted to undertake the responsibilities allocated to them. This turned out not to be too radical since many of the districts had a population and rateable resources far below those of the defunct county boroughs. Clearly the status of a local authority was to depend not only on size but also on the nature of the area

and its surroundings. A Local Government Boundary Commission was to

make proposals for the arrangement of districts outside the metropolitan

counties and its report in 1972 proposed 278 districts with an average

population of about 100,000. In the most remote rural areas district

population fall as low as 40,000. As far as possible the new district map

was formed by amalgamations of existing authorities.

The place of the rural parish was also recognised by the White Paper

but it was to have powers rather than duties. It was subsequently agreed

that former boroughs and urban districts with a maximum population of

20,000 could form third-tier councils.

The effect of these reforms varied from place to place. Only dis-

trict boundary changes affected the five shires of Salop, Wiltshire,

the Isle of Wight, Cornwall and Hertfordshire. In other places, adjustments

to county boundaries and/or the merging of former counties either in part

or as a whole took place. Many of the new shires were amalgamated with

one or more former county boroughs, which,inevitably, resented their

reduced status. The practical effect was less felt where the county

borough was already the geographical headquarters of the administrative

county. Plymouth, Portsmouth and Southampton,for instance, felt it more

than Norwich and Nottingham. The practical effect was most felt in the

metropolitan areas where not only were there new boundaries, but also

new types of authority.

The Welsh consultative document proposed that Wales should be re-

organzied into seven new counties and 36 districts. Glamorgan was to be

split into two and five other counties Clwyd, Dyfed, Gwent, Gwynedd and

Powys were to be established along the lines of their English counterparts.

The Local Government Act later divided Glamorgan into three sections with

South Glamorgan containing only two districts, Barry and Cardiff. Com-

munity councils could also be created at the parish level (see Figure 7.1).

The Bill

The Bill of 351 pages which was presented to Parliament on November 4th, 1971 contained no major changes from those discussed above except that all six metropolitan counties had been reduced in size, with territory being conceded to the neighbouring counties. Glossop, Skipton and Harrogate, and Ellesmere Port, which were originally planned to be in Greater Manchester (Tameside district), West Yorkshire (Leeds district), and Meryseyside (Wirral district) respectively were returned to their traditional counties. In addition, Durham, Northumberland, Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, North Yorkshire and Warwickshire were to benefit from smaller changes. There were also exchanges of territory between shire counties, designed, again, to restore 'natural loyalty of people towards their counties'. The new counties of Avon and Teeside (later to be renamed Cleveland) were reduced in size, the former losing the Frome area to Somerset, the latter Easington to Durham and a large part of Stokesley Rural District to North Yorkshire. Brackley was returned to Northamptonshire, Lowestoft to Suffolk, Long Eaton to Derbyshire, Aldershot to Hampshire, and the Ingleton area of the Yorkshire dales to North Yorkshire. Furthermore, Sedbergh Rural District Council was transferred from Yorkshire to Cumbria. It was proposed that Colchester and the adjacent north-east Essex area were to be added to Suffolk, leaving a smaller Essex county based more clearly on Chelmsford and Southend, on the grounds that the Colchester-Ipswich area should be treated as one and that most councils in the area had asked for the transfer. The new Humberside county was extended to take in a substantial part of north Lincolnshire (Grimsby and Scunthorpe). New counties, most of which were continuations of existing counties, were also renamed in the Bill. The name Tyneside was changed during the parliamentary proceedings to Tyne and Wear. Malvern became known as Hereford and Worcester. Teeside was renamed Cleveland but Avon, Cumbria and Humberside retained their names.

In the allocation of functions the Government had made con-
cessions to the AMC and the district council associations which gave
the districts responsibility for clean air zone, the maintenance of minor
urban roads, municipal public transport undertakings (except in metro-
politan counties), and some local plan-making.

Taking into consideration the politico-administrative importance
of local government reform, one can say that the Bill had an easy passage
through the Committee Stage and in Parliament, except for matters of
details. The Labour Party's opposition to the Bill was weakened by
their acceptance of the unpopular Royal Commission's scheme of unitary
authority. The Labour Party's opposition to responsibility for education
being given to districts instead of metropolitan counties was also un-
popular since it would diminish representation and participation. The
Labour Party also critized the Government for drawing boundaries too
tightly around the metropolitan areas with the consequence that these autho-
rities would find it difficult or impossible to obtain the land needed for
housing development in the foreseeable future. Again, this proved un-
popular because the 'fringe' areas of the metropolitan counties were content
to remain rural or semi-rural rather than being included in the conurbations.
Furthermore, the Labour Party accused the Conservative Government of
gerrymandering because it had merged Labour controlled county boroughs
in Conservative-controlled counties. More specifically, the division of
Glamorgan into three parts is so flagrantly party-political that it evoked
an unprecedented accusation of indefensible political gerrymandering from
Lady Sharp, the former Permanent Secretary of the old Ministry of Housing
and Local Government (Sharpe, 1978, p.84). New Society dubbed the Bill
"a pure political carve up, devoid of all justification in terms of social
geography or of good planning" (18 February 1971, p.259). We return to
this point below (see section on 'The Role of "Homo Politicus"').

Thus, as Richards puts it, "during the second reading debate in the
House of Commons on the Bill the most lively issue concerned a question of

procedure rather than substance: it was whether the proposals for Wales should have been presented in a separate Bill" (1978, p.50). Although the standing committee met on at least 51 occasions and the report stage was lengthy, no major changes in principles took place and only alterations of detail were made. Only minor structural and technical amendments, mostly introduced by the Government, took place in the House of Lords, except for the return of refuse disposal to counties from non-metropolitan districts, which the Government had proposed but which was defeated in Parliament.

The Bill had a relatively easy passage in Parliament despite the importance of local government reform because 'a general weariness had surrounded the whole question'. As we said before, there was a general agreement that some reorganisation was necessary if further central government's erosion of local powers was to be stemmed, and if the capability of local government was to be enhanced. Secondly, there was general acceptance of the 1972 plan among the public, the Government and the association of local authorities (except, of course, the Assocition of Municipal Corporations). "The Royal Commission had ignored the extent to which the county was a social unit as well as an administrative entity and that as a social unit it commanded considerable loyalty. In contrast the Conservative plan respected existing boundaries to a far greater extent, especially in relation to the counties" (Richards, 1978, p.51). Thirdly, although there were protests, lobbies and campaigns, these were unsuccessful because they were uncoordinated and were sometimes confusing. Lastly, although there were a few individual MPs who tried to secure changes favourable to their constituencies, it was clear that there were more urgent social and economic issues facing Parliament. "In 1972 local government was far from being top of the politcal agenda" (Richards, 1978, p.51). Thus, the Bill became an Act on 26 October 1972.

Local Government Act 1972

The Local Government Act 1972 gave effect to the proposals con-
tained in the Bill creating a new local government structure in
England and Wales, with a relocation of functions. It also contained new
provisions covering the administration of local authorities including such
matters as registration of electors and conduct of elections, general pro-
cedural arrangements, staffing,discharge of functions and finance. This
Act largely replaced the Local Government Act 1933 and incorporated,with
some modifications, the provisions of the London Government Act 1963 re-
lating to local government in London. However, the structure of London
local government was barely changed and remained as contained in the 1963
Act.

The new structure contained in the 1972 Act became fully operational
on 1 April 1974. The Act divided England and Wales into counties and
districts, with Monmouthshire and Newport transferred to Wales. There
are 45 counties in England and eight in Wales, of which only five are
entirely coincident with the boundaries of the former administrative
counties. Six of the English counties are termed metropolitan counties,
embracing the major urban conurbations of Greater Manchester, Merseyside,
South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire and West Midlands. The
remaining 39 English counties are often referred to as non-metropolitan
counties (see Figure 7.1).

In the six metropolitan counties there are 36 metropolitan districts
with similar constitutions to those of other districts but extended func-
tions (see Appendix I). There are 296 non-metropolitan districts in England
and 37 in Wales, some of which are wholly urban, some wholly rural and
many others both urban and rural in composition. This has resulted in a
large reduction in the number of second-tier authorities, which previously
amounted to 1,333,made up of county and non-county boroughs and urban and
rural districts (see Figure 7.1). District councils were empowered to
submit a petition to the Privy Council for borough status and many sub-

FIGURE 7.1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

ENGLAND

6 Metropolitan county councils

36 Metropolitan district councils

39 Non-Metropolitan county councils

296 Non-metro-politan dis-trict councils

Parish Councils

Parish Meetings

1 Greater London Council

32 London Borough Councils

1 City of London Borough

WALES

8 Non-metropolitan county councils

37 Non-metropolitan district councils

Community Council

Community Meetings
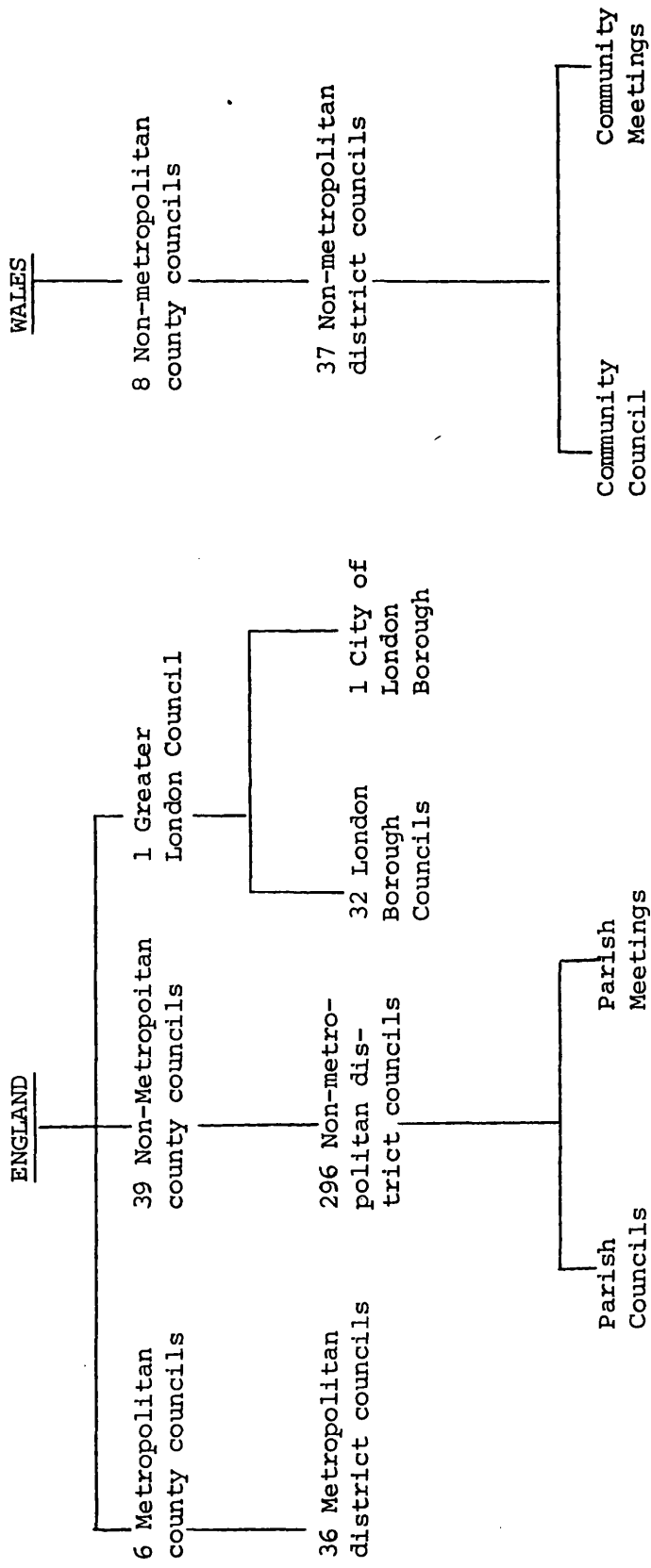
missions were made and approved. Procurement of borough status entitles the council to elect a mayor and deputy mayor but has little other practical importance.

At third-tier level, English rural parishes remain and new parishes may be created and existing ones abolished. Hence the pattern of parishes can change, and as the earlier distinction between rural and urban districts has been removed, there is no restriction on the districts in which parishes can be created. Former rural parish councils continue and new ones were to be established in former boroughs and urban districts where the Secretary of State so directed. The population limit for new parish councils is either 150 or 200 electors, the lower limit applying where a parish meeting has requested one. In Wales, community councils supersede the former boroughs, urban districts and rural parishes.

Permanent Local Government Boundary Commissions were established for England and Wales to review local government boundaries and local electoral arrangements. The reorganisation reduced the total number of principal councils (above third-tier level) in England and Wales, including London, from 1,425 to 456. There was, however, still a great diversity of population, areas and rateable values within the same category of authority, although much less than before the reform (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2 and compare with Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

The hiatus between the Act in 1972 and its actual implementation in 1974 was necessary in order to make adequate preparations for the changeover from the old authorities to the new. In particular it was necessary to assemble resources of staff and accommodation, to establish administrative arrangements and for the new councils to become familiar with their functions and activities. Time was needed for elections to be held (between March and June 1973) so that the new councils could take up their executive responsibilities and the 1972 Act provided a period of overlap during which the old and the new authorities co-existed, although the

TABLE 7.1 : <u>POPULATION RANGES FOR EACH TYPE OF AUTHORITY</u>

Type of Authority	Lowest Population	Highest Population
English Metropolitan Counties	Tyne and Wear ·(1,193,000)	West Midlands (2,777,000)
English non-Metropolitan counties	Isle of Wight (111,000)	Hampshire (1,450,000)
Welsh Counties	Powys (101,000)	Mid Glamorgan (540,000)
London boroughs	Kingston-on-Thames (136,000)	Croydon (329,000)
English Metropolitan Districts	Souty Tyneside (182,000)	Birmingham (1,168,000)
English non-Metropolitan districts	Teeside (24,000)	Avon (422,000)
Welsh districts	Radnor (18,670)	Cardiff (286,000)

SOURCE : Compiled from Richards, 1978.

TABLE 7.2 : <u>RATEABLE VALUE (IN £MN) RANGES FOR EACH TYPE OF AUTHORITY</u>

Type of Authority	Lowest Rateable Value	Highest Rateable Value
English metropolitan counties	Tyne and Wear (116	West Midlands (386)
English non-metropolitan counties	Isle of Wight (12)	Essex (205)
Welsh counties	Powys (8)	South Glamorgan (45)
London boroughs	Sutton (26)	City of Westminster (311)

SOURCE : Compiled from Richards, 1978.

new ones had no operational fucntions at that time.

Before the new councils were elected, joint committees were set up

for the new administrative areas composed of elected representatives of

the appropriate existing authorities. The essence of these committees

was to prepare a mass of advice for the in-coming regime, make arrange-

ments for the smooth take-over by the new authorities and to help co-

ordinate policies and strategies. They were also to take basic manage-

ment decisions, including those on committee and departmental structures,

ideally adopting a corporate management approach as advocated in the

Bains Report (see chapter 6).

One particular difficult problem in the change-over period was the

appointment of staff by the new local authorities. The main objectives

were to redeploy existing staff in the most effective way, to protect

the interests of staff and to assist the public by the smooth and efficient

transfer of functions. In consequence the customary procedure of public

advertisement was used only for a limited number of very senior posts,

mainly chief executives to county councils and metropolitan districts.

Most other senior professional, technical and administrative posts were

filled from among local government officers within limited recruitment

areas. Where this procedure did not produce a suitable applicant, the

Local Government Staff Commission normally gave approval for the national

advertisement of the post but restricted it to serving local government

officers in England (excluding London) or Wales. This restriction was

intended to safeguard the interests of staff during the reorganisation

period when many posts were at risk and some might face redundancy.

The majority of staff undertaking specific functions were transferred

to the appropriate new authority without formal selection.

Implementation in Nigeria

As we pointed out earlier, local government reform in Nigeria lacked

the legislative process because the country had no legislature at the

time. All that we will do here, therefore, is give a broad analysis

of the arrangements that were made to bring the implementation to

success. Details will be discussed in the next section. There were

consultations, however, (see chapter 6) but these were more or less part

of the Military Government's strategy to facilitate the implementation of

local government reform. We must note, however, that everything that we

have said concerning the Guidelines was mandatory on the states. All the

recommendations contained in the Guidelines were to be adhered to. Indeed

in order to enhance its legality, it was renamed The Draft Local Government

Edict and the contents of all subsequent edicts by the states were iden-

tical to the Draft. The Guidelines and the Draft therefore formed the

common denominator for all the states but their provisions (detailed

substance, not principles) were adapted, to a limited extent, by individual

states in order to accommodate local circumstances. Here then is another

contrast to the reform process in Britain: the local authorities are

created by the Parliament in Britain, which is typical of a unitary

system of government but in Nigeria local authorities are created by and

derive their powers from the states which is typical of a federal system

of government.

In 1976 the Federal Military Government directed that all local

authorities in the country be dissolved. For example, the existing

Divisional Development Councils and Development Committees in Bendel

State were dissolved on 26th May 1976 and Anambra State abolished the

Divisional, Urban and Community Councils of the former Divisional Admini-

stration system on August 1st. Kwara dissolved its Local Government

Authorities and Cross River State its Development Administration system

on August 1st 1976.

All the states promulgated local government edicts (e.g., Kwara

State Local Government Edict No.8 of 1976, Rivers State Local Government

Edict No.8 of 1976, Kaduna State Local Government Edict No.1 of 1977,

etc) which provided the necessary legal status on which the new authorities

were to operate. They made provisions for elections into the new
councils and for the establishment of Traditional Councils and Local
Government Service Boards. Perhaps their most important provision, like
the Guidelines, was that for the first time the whole country was to
have a uniform unitary system of local government: "All the statutory and
public service functions of local government in Nigeria should be con-
centrated in multi-purpose single-tier institutions called Local Governments"
(Guidelines, 1976, p.3). Subordinate councils could be created but these
were to have no powers, functions and financial allocations except those
derived from their 'parent' local government. This again is an interesting
contrast to the multi-tier local government system in Britain.

Apart from these statutory measures, necessary administrative actions
were also taken to ensure the successful implementation of these reforms.
Caretaker Committees were set up during the transition and administrative
officers (usually state civil servants) termed Sole Administrators were
appointed. These were to see to the   smooth changeover from the old
authorities to the new. Their duty included (a) The transfer of functions
from the states ministries to the local authorities; (b) the transfer,
recruitment or secondment of staff from the states civil services; (c) the
preparation of estimates for the new local authorities; and (d) the assess-
ment and take-over of physical assets.

Steering Committees which were designated Implementation Committees
in some states were set up (a) to make all necessary arrangements for the
registration of voters, compilation of voters' list, erection of polling
booths, printing of ballot papers, etc; (b) to delineate or divide each
local government into single member constituencies for the purpose of the
elections; (c) to make general arrangements for the planning, supervision
and conduct of elections; (d) to study in depth the relevant policy papers
containing the Federal Government decisions on local government reform
and what their implications are for each state; (e) to demarcate, with the
help of Government surveyors, etc.if necessary, the state into a number

of local government authorities; (f) to merge or divide areas into

local authorities in order to achieve the minimum population of 150,000

as directed by the Federal Government; and (g) to take traditional loyalties

into consideration when making such demarcations; or as the Guidelines

put it, "the new local authorities must be coterminous with existing

Divisions, with such adjustments as may be appropriate" (1976,p.5)

Elections into local councils, which could be direct or indirect,

were held in various parts of the country between November 1976 and

January 1977. All these arrangements were completed at different dates

in different states between January and Februry 1977. In accordance

with the provision of the Guidelines and the edicts the 75 per cent

elected and 25 per cent nominated councillors elected their chairmen

(in reality each council had to submit a list of three candidates to

the Governor who alone could make one of them the chairman - see

chapter 8 for our comment) and supervisory councillors and the new local

government councils were inaugurated on 6th January 1977 in Bendel, 24th

February in Benue, and 10th February 1977 in Imo State. By 1st April

1977 Nigeria's 299 local authorities became fully operational.

THE REFORMED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

Structure

Whereas Britain opted for a two-tier system which apparently strikes

a compromise between the need for large areas on grounds of functional

efficiency and the desirability of smaller units in the interest of

community representation and involvement, the Guidelines stipulate that

Nigeria should have "multi-purpose single-tier institutions called

local government with complete and self-contained budgets, so that the

whole system of local government within any area can be identified, costed

and co-ordinated" (1976,p.3). Where appropriate, however, the local

authorities could have subordinate units to which they could delegate

some of their powers and functions. It was hoped that such subordinate

units would further enhance representation and pariticpation. In order
to 'efficiently' perform its duties and still remain 'local', the
Government directed that each local government area should have popu-
lations of between 150,000 and 300,000, with possible extension to
400,000 for large councils and even higher figures (800,000) where a
single urban area is concerned. Permission had to be taken from the
Federal Government before any state could create an authority of less than
150,000 population.

TABLE 7.3:POPULATION VARIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN SOME STATES

(IN THOUSANDS), 1976.

State	Over 400	350-400	300-350	250-300	200 250	150-200	Below 150	Total	Highest	Lowest
Anambra	--	1	4	4	6	7	1	23	Onitsha (352,807)	Oji River (86,768)
Benue	-	1	4	3	1	3	1	13	Ankpa (370,717)	Oguma (89,560)
Gongola	-	1	-	5	2	7	2	17	Michika (375,596)	Zing (126,091)
Ogun	-	-	2	1	2	5	-	10	Abeokuta (324,814)	Ijebu North (162,367)
Rivers	-	1	1	2	3	1	1	9	Degema (369,082)	Sagbama (144,451)
Kano	10	3	3	4	-	-	-	20	Kano Met-ropolitan (711,354)	Jahun (261,654)
Sokoto	7	2	1	5	2	2	-	19	Gusau (563,000)	Yauri (163,000)
Ondo	-	1	2	3	4	6	1	17	Ekiti Central (361,634	Ilase/Ese Odo (126,455)
Kwara	1	-	-	1	2	7	1	12	Ilorin (474,385)	Kogi (124,000)

SOURCES : Compiled from Statistical   Digests of some states,
          and from 'Progress Reports' sent in by some states
          to the National Conference on Local Government Reform,
          University of Ife, 1977.

A brief look at Table 7.3 shows the extent to which local authorities
in 9 states (chosen randomly) were created in accordance with the Federal
Government's guidelines. Of the 140 authorities in the nine states, 133
have populations within the range stipulated by the Government. In other
words, only 7 of the 140 local authorities (5%) are outside the guide-

lines, and for which special permission had to be sought for their creation before they started to function. By April 1977, a total of 299 local authorities were fully operational in Nigeria.

It is interesting to compare Tables 7.1 and 7.3. As in Britain, there are considerable variations in sizes of local authorities in Nigeria although these are far less bizarre than before the 1976 reform (compare Tables 5.3 and 7.3). Unlike in Britain where each metropolitan county exceeds the one million population mark, in Nigeria there is no local authority with more than the upper limit of 800,000 people. Just as one can point to the disparity in population of two English metropolitan districts, Birmingham (1,168,000) and South Tyneside (182,000) so also one can point to the disparity between Kano Metropolitan Authority (711,354) and Oguma Local Government (89,560). There are diversities as well in areas and revenues (Table 7.4) but again much less than before the reform in 1976 (see chapter 5).

TABLE 7.4: REVENUE RANGES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN SOME STATES, 1977-8 (IN NAIRA)

State	Highest		Lowest	
Sokoto	Sokoto L.G.	(4,412,372)	Anka L.G.	(1,782,778)
Ogun	Abeokuta L.G.	(2,857,720)	Ijebu North L.G.	(1,690,773)
Kano	Kano Metropolitan	(12,522,940)	Kazaure L.G.	(1,794,320)
Imo	Aba L.G.	(7,782,670)	Bende L.G.	(3,027,139)
Bauchi	Akko L.G.	(2,937,404)	Dass L.G.	(796,928)

SOURCES : Compiled from Statistical Digests of some states, and 'Progress Reports' delivered at the National Conference on Local Government Reform, University of Ife, 1977.

The degree of change involved varied from state to state. Its practical effect was most felt in the northern states where large emirates had to be broken up into a number of local authorities. In Kano State, for example, the former Kano Emirate was divided into 16 new local authorities. Subordinate authorities were also established so as to bring

the electorate nearer the government (see Table 7.5). Nineteen

local authorities replaced the former five in Sokoto State, and in

Bornu State, the former Bornu Local Authority was broken up into eleven

new local governments., There were formidable changes in the structure

of local government in other parts of the federation but attempts were

made not to disturb loyalties of the people to their local authorities.

There were adjustments to existing boundaries, for example, in Bendel State

where the fourteen Divisional Development Councils became nineteen local

governments. Kwara State now has twelve local authorities instead

of the former eight, with changes only in Igbirra Division which is now

divided into Okehi and Okene Local Governments; Ilorin Division which was

divided into three new local authorities (Asa, Ilorin and Moro); and

Igbomina/Ekiti Division which becomes two local governments, Ifelodun

and Irepodun. Eight new local authorities now replace the former seven

in Niger State. Lagos State created eight new local governments out of

the former seven local councils. The existing Lagos City Council was

divided into two - Lagos Island Local Government and Lagos Mainland

Local Government. Slight boundary changes were made at Ikorodu, Ikeja

and Epe local authorities; Mushin Town Council was divided into Mushin

West and Mushin East Local Governments; and Awori Ajeromi and Egun Awori

District Councils were amalgamated to form Badagry Local Government. Thus

every local government has an identifiable governmental character. As a

third-tier of government, it has elected officers who are expected to

be responsible to the electing citizens.

In Britain corruption and maladministration is to be checked by

the ombudsman. The Local Government Act 1974 established two commissions

for local administration, one for England and the other for Wales, each

embodying parliamentary and local commissioners. The commissions make

the necessary administrative arrangements including appointing staff,

providing accommodation and publishing information about the procedure

TABLE 7.5: KANO STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Local Government	Subordinate Units or Districts	Headquarters	Population
A KANO EMIRATE			
1. Kano Metropolitan	City, Waje, some part of Ungogo and Kumbotso	Kano City and Township	711,354
2. Dambatta	Dambatta and Babura	Dambatta	384,167
3. Ringim	Ringim and Garki	Ringim	428,635
4. Minjibir	Minjibir and Ungogo	Minjibir	286,384
5. Gezawa	Gezawa and Gabasawa	Gezawa	321,234
6. Bichi	Bichi	Bichi	452,770
7. Dawakin Tofa	Dawakin Tofa	Dawakin Tofa	471,874
8. Gwarzo	Gwarzo and Karaye	Gwarzo	614,508
9. Tudun Wada	Tudun Wada and Kiru	Tudun Wada	343,408
10. Rano	Rano and Kura	Rano	564,438
11. Wudil	Wudil and Sumaila	Wudil	537,754
12. Dawakin Kudu	Dawakin Kudu and Kumbotso	Dawakin Kudu	408,176
13. Dutse	Dutse	Dutse	319,521
14. Jahun	Jahun	Jahun	261,654
15. Birnin Kudu	Birnin Kudu and Gwaram	Birnin Kudu	430,708
16. Gaya	Gaya	Gaya	382,541
B. HADEIJA EMIRATE			
17. Hadeija	Hadeija, Birnin Guri, Hirikasama, and Madori	Hadeija	486,328
18. Kaffin Hausa	Kaugama, Auyo, Kaffin Hausa, and Bulangu	Kaffin Hausa	281,942
C. GUMEL EMIRATE			
19. Gumel	Gumel, Damzomo,Gwarawa, Sule Tankarkar and Maigatari	Gumel	366,588
D. KAZAURE EMIRATE			
20. Kazaure	Kazaure, Roni, Yan Kwashi and Amaryawa	Kazaure	293,754

SOURCE : Kano State Statistical Digest, Ministry of Economic Development, Kano, Nigeria, 1976-77.

for making complaints. The commissioners investigate the complaints.
The office of the ombudsman is absent in Nigerian local government but the
Guidelines made provisions for public scrutiny of the accounts and records
of proceedings of the council.

Urban Areas

Communities may be considered large either by population, and/or
by territory. Where both the population and territory are large the main
problem will be that of dividing the community into units. There are
two options : (a) constitution of large urban centres into separate local
government units and the rest into one or more local government areas; and
(b) merging some areas with the main town and constitution of the rest into
one or more local government units.

The Guidelines provide that urban centres with populations of
more than 150,000 could be constituted into separate local government
areas. In fact it stipulates that no town or city should be split between
two primary local governments; and that "the special requirements of towns
within local government areas can best be catered for by subordinate Town
or Ward Councils" (1976, p.4).

Thus the 1976 reform tried to solve the existing structural prob-
lems of local government by supplying a full description of local govern-
ment with the following attributes: the first criterion is that of
autonomy. The new local government unit is established by law "to exercise
specific powers within defined areas" and they have their "own identity,
powers, and sources of revenue ... and functions for which they are
responsible to the State" (Guidelines, 1976, p.3). Some of these powers
and functions are exclusive to local governments while others are held
concurrently with State Governments (see Appendix I). In other words,
as creatures of the state, the new local governments are subject to
state control in the concurrent list. This control notwithstanding, local
authorities have a substantial degree of autonomy - in functions,

administrative and fiscal affairs (see, however, Chapter 8). The second attribute is that a local authority now exists as a corporate entity - with a given area and population.

FUNCTIONS OF NEW LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities are statutory corporations created by State Edicts or by Act of Parliament in Britain and limited in their activities to the powers and duties prescribed in the legislation. If they act unlawfully, the actions will be <u>ultra vires</u> and the courts can prevent this. Local authority functions in both countries are of two main categories : those which they have a duty to perform (mandatory functions); and those which they can perform at their discretion (permissive functions). The majority of functions are compulsory - as, for instance, refuse disposal and the provision of public conveniences. On the other hand the provision of local entertainments or libraries is a service which many local authorities are empowered to provide if they believe it necessary, but there is no compulsion and it ranks as a permissive function. A number of functions such as the provision of public health and education are mandatory in Britain whereas they are permissive in Nigeria (See Appendix I). The reasons for allowing such functions to be permissive in Nigeria are due to the weak financial position of local authorities and lack of adequately qualified personnel.

Local authorities may also acquire additional powers, giving some measure of flexibility and enabling enterprising authorities to do pioneering work. Furthermore, authorities' functions vary over time, either by the allocation of new activities, such as consumer protection services, or by the transfer of functions to other bodies, such as water supply to the new water authorities or corporations.

Since the system of local government in Nigeria is unitary, there is no division of functions between levels of authorities. In England and

Wales, all local authority services in any area can be provided by one
or both of the principal councils, namely a metropolitan county and/or
metropolitan district, a non-metropolitan county and/or non-metropolitan
district, or the Greater London Council and/or a London borough. In some
cases concurrent powers are exercised whereby some aspects of a service
are provided at one level and other aspects at another, planning being
one example. District councils can also in some instances undertake duties
on behalf of county councils on an agency basis. The underlying philosophy
behind the division of local authority functions is to allocate to the
counties those functions which need substantial resources and/or can be
most effectively administered over large areas, such as strategic planning,
major highways and police. At district council level, functions are allocated
which are best provided in smaller units and where local knowledge and
control are important, as with housing and local amenities.

It is easier to understand the range and scope of local authority
services if they are grouped in a meaningful way. Richards (1978,
pp.63-8) has classified them into four groups :

(a)   PROTECTIVE - protecting the individual from various dangers,
through fire brigades, police forces, main drainage, refuse removal, food
inspectors, weight and measures inspectors and the licensing of public
premises;

(b)   COMMUNUAL - for the benefit of all, such as the provision of roads
and paths, street-lighting, planning and leisure services;

(c)   PERSONAL - giving direct assistance to individuals, such as educa-
tion and welfare services; this is now the most costly part of local
authority services in both countries;

(d)   TRADING - these have diminished with the nationalisation of gas and
electricity undertakings and the transfer of water supply to the regional
water authorities in 1974 in Britain. In Nigeria, water supply has been
taken over by the water corporation of each state; Kwara State allocated

8.2 million naira in 1976 for the development of thirteen modern markets, a service that falls within the jurisdiction of local government. Many of the functions which one would term as trading are already in the hands of special purpose bodies (see chapter 8). Nevertheless, there are some trading services remaining, such as civic restaurants, public transport facilities and airports (see Appendix I for details of allocation of functions).

FINANCE

Without an adequate and expanding financial base, local governments, no matter how enthusiastic and hardworking they may be, will not be in a position to deliver local services to the people at an acceptable level and at the right time. The bane of pre-1976 reform efforts of local government was finance. One major disadvantage from which most of the grants in Nigeria suffered was that they were paid in arrears and hence much depended on the ability of the local authorities concerned to finance their projects from their own limited resources before collecting grants from the Regional/State Governments.

The strength of the 1976 reform was its financial provision. As a first step, the Federal Government wrote off all the debts of the local authorities so as to give them a clean start. The Guidelines state that "if meaningful local government is to be expected in Nigeria, much larger financial resources are needed. In respect of local resources the only one which can be made to yield really large sums is Property Rating the use of which should be extended to all local governments ..." (1976, p.13). Following the recommendations of the committee appointed by the Federal Government (Report of the Committee on the Federal and State Governments' Financial Contributions to Local Governments, 1977, mimeo) it was decided that the Federal Government should allocate 5 per cent of its retained revenue to all the local governments in the country while each state government would allocate 10 per cent of its total

recurrent revenue to the Government's contribution, distributed to each
state according to population and 25 per cent on the basis of equity among
the states. The allocations from both Federal and State Government
sources to the local authorities in each state are paid into the State
Local Government Fund from which they are distributed to each local govern-
ment - the formula being 75 per cent according to population and 25 per
cent on the basis of equity. Thus the Federal Government allocated ₦100
million to State Governments for onward transmission to local authorities
in 1976/77. This was increased to ₦250 million in 1977/78 but reduced to
₦150 million in 1978/79. Again this was doubled to ₦300 million in 1979/80.

The 1976 reform has therefore introduced a new formula of revenue-
sharing which is comparable to the Brazilian, Dutch and United States
systems. The effect of the reformed system of finance on local government
in Nigeria can be seen in Table 7.6. Before 1976, state government grants
ranged between 3 per cent and 10 per cent of the total local government
revenue (except in Kwara State with 22 per cent in 1972/73), but the
percentage has now gone up sharply to between 75 per cent and 85 per cent
in 1977/78 on the average. At the same time in Britain, local authorities
in England and Wales received 65 per cent of their expenditure from
central government grants. This over-reliance on state grants is a grave
development in Nigeria because it makes local authorities dependent on
another level of government which has hardly proved reliable in the past.

On a comparative basis it seems as if local authorities in Nigeria
are financially better than before the reform although they are still
spending only about 10 per cent of all public expenditure as against the
30 per cent spent by their English and Welsh counterparts. The local
government share of total public expenditure varies from state to state.
In 1976, for example, local authorities in Kwara State spent as low as 3.6
per cent of total public spending while the figure was as high as 18.5 per
cent in Lagos State and even higher (22 per cent) in Anambra State in
1979. As a proportion of total local government revenue, the grant

TABLE 7.6: <u>REVENUE ALLOCATION/GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES</u> (1970-77)

1	2	3 Revenue derived from Column (2) as Percentage of Total Government Revenue	4	5
Country	National and State/Regional Assistance to Local Government and/or Local Governments share of National/State Collected Revenue 1975/77	1975/77	1970(where available)	Remarks
Brazil	10% of National Revenue Shared (1975) 20% of State Sale Taxes	80%-90% small L.G. 50% large L.G.	N.A.	9.1% of National Revenue in 1970 went to L.G.
Columbia	13% of National Revenue	N.A.	N.A.	-
Costa Rica	10% of National Revenue (1975)	N.A.	-	1.9% of National Revenue in 1970 went to L.G.
Honduras	6.3% of National Revenue(1973)	N.A.	N.A.	-
United States	State/Local Government sharing of taxes on motor spirits and tobacco, etc. Also Fed. grants in aid of L.G.	Federal 7.15%; State 31.15%(1973/ 4) Fed.Grants (38.3%)	Federal 4.0% State 30.6% (1972/2) Grants 34.6%	Grants as % of total L.G. Revenue 1967 (31.3%)
United Kingdom	Exchequer grant, Housing subsidies and grants to trading services	45% (1974)	40%	-
Netherlands	13.25% of the yield of the eleven major national taxes	90%	N.A.	-
Nigeria	5% of Federal Government retained revenue and 10% of each State Government recurrent revenue	75%-85%	3%-10%	-
Denmark	Grants and re-imbursements	54% (1973/74)	53% (1965)	-

SOURCE : Orewa, 1977, mimeo.

figures of 3 per cent to 10 per cent for Nigeria in 1972/73 was far

less than the United States percentage of 31.3 per cent (1967) and 40 per cent

in the United Kingdom (1970). With the new system, however, the 5 per cent

Federal and 10 per cent State Government allocations have raised the Nigerian

grant as a proportion of total revenue to a ratio of about 80 per cent and

placed it roughly on the same level with Brazil and second only to the Dutch

ratio of almost 90 per cent. It has now outstripped the United State with

38.3 per cent in 1974 and England and Wales with 65 per cent in 1976.

The sound financial state of the local governments is evident in

Kaduna State where the fourteen local authorities estimated to spend a total

of N42,982,155 in 1977/78 on recurrent account while their estimated revenue

amounted to N55,399,101, leaving an estimated surplus of N12,416,946. The

Federal Government provided N17,091,345 of the estimated revenue, while the

Kaduna State Government provided N11,491,875. This sound financial base is

true of all local governments in Nigeria, with Bauchi State local authorities

having a total aggregate surplus of N361,701 and Kano with a surplus of

over N5 million (see Table 7.7).

Apart from these grants, local governments in Nigeria, like their

British counterparts, are expected to fully develop local revenues such

as rates, community and property tax. For example, the Kano State Local

Government Edict No.5 of 1977 states that the revenue of local government

shall consist of :

(a)   moneys derived from community tax and any rate imposed by the

local government;

(b)   moneys payable to the local governments under the provisions of

any other enactment;

(c)   moneys derived from licences, permits, dues, charges, or fees specified

by any bye-laws or rules made by the local government;

(d)   revenue derived from any public utility corporation, or any service

or undertaking belonging to or maintained by the local government;

TABLE 7.7: ESTIMATED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS IN 1977/78, KANO STATE

Name of Local Government	Estimated 1977/78 Total Revenue	Estimated 1977/78 Recurrent Expenditure	Estimated 1977/78 Capital Expenditure	Estimated 1977/78 Total Expenditure	Estimated Balance 31/3/78
1. Municipal	12,522,940	6,805,470	4,392,500	11,197,970	1,324,970
2. Dutse	2,655,970	692,200	1,048,780	1,740,980	1,114,990
3. Rano	2,618,310	832,820	1,685,000	2,517,820	100,490
4. Wudil	2,596,920	1,266,330	1,288,000	2,554,330	42,590
5. B/Kudu	2,589,810	913,940	1,185,000	2,098,940	490,870
6. D/Tofa	2,596,360	787,780	1,340,000	2,352,780	243,580
7. Bichi	2,402,780	944,260	1,048,780	2,112,760	290,020
8. Dambatta	2,382,640	1,197,150	779,150	1,976,300	406,340
9. Ringim	2,357,290	715,430	1,210,000	2,183,770	173,520
10. Jahun	2,357,290	715,430	1,210,000	2,183,770	175,520
11. Gwarzo	2,307,340	931,730	1,177,000	2,108,730	198,610
12. D/Kudu	2,292,960	995,670	1,196,780	2,192,450	100,510
13. Gaya	2,213,890	954,470	1,202,300	2,156,770	57,120
14. Hadelja	2,198,000	943,040	828,000	1,771,040	426,960
15. Gumel	2,164,070	1,025,140	912,000	1,937,140	226,930
16. T/Wada	2,154,150	968,350	1,081,000	2,049,350	162,800
17. Gezawa	2,099,610	822,550	1,231,000	2,055,550	46,060
18. Minjibir	2,075,650	890,560	985,920	985,920	191,170
19. K/Hausa	2,032,560	812,510	1,090,000	1,902,710	129,850
20. Kazaure	1,794,320	610,220	1,116,700	1,726,920	67,200
TOTAL	54,076,086	16,265,465	25,008,910	50,702,560	5,908,100

SOURCE :'Kano State Progress Report', National Conference on Local Government Reform, University of Ife, 1977.

(e)   rents derived from the letting or leasing of any building or land

belonging to the local government;

(f)   statutory allocations;

(g)   any sums of money which may lawfully be assigned to the local govern-

ment by any public corporation;

(h)   interest on the investments of the local government;

(i)   such sums of money as may be granted to the local government;

(j)   such sums of money as may be paid to the local government by

a joint board; and

(k)   such other moneys as may lawfully be derived by the local government

from any other source not hereinbefore specifically mentioned.

Like local authorities in England and Wales, those in Nigeria can take

loans for capital development projects, and State Governments were directed

to give 'revolving loan funds' to the local governments. One can conclusively

say that the decision of the Federal Government on revenue sharing has

provided a framework within which great strides forward can be made in the

provision of a sound financial base for local authorities.

THE REFORM AND TRADITIONAL RULERS

We have pointed out the immense influence the traditional rulers,

especially the Emirs in the north, wielded on local government in Nigeria

(see chapters 2, 4 and 5). The Emirs had always resisted any attempts to

have their power and influence curtailed. They wanted to have a say in

the appointment of staff and the administration of local government.

Furthermore, they were not prepared to accept any form of reform that

would divide their usually large emirates into numerous local authorities.

In fact, one can say that the failure of pre-1976 local government reform

efforts was due mainly to the power struggle between elected councillors

and the traditional rulers (see, Adamolekun, 1977, pp.30-42).

The 1976 reform has made a great attempt to reduce the inter-

ference of traditional rulers in the administration of local governments,

without destroying their status in the society. The Head of State was

aware of the importance of traditional rulers as agents of Government in

public enlightenment (this was demonstrated in 1976 when the traditional

rulers campaigned vigorously to get the citizens to register for the local

government elections; the improved percentage of voters is shown in

Table 7.8), as tax collectors, and as agents of law and order. Moreover,

General Murtala realised that traditional rulers are effective agents of

mass mobilisation, especially for socio-economic and political developments.

In order to placate the traditional rulers, especially in the north where

big emirates have had to be split into many local authorities, the Govern-

ment states that :

> Nothing in these reforms could be construed to mean an attempt at
> reducing or abolishing the traditional functions of our Emirs,
> Obas and Chiefs. On the contrary the reforms recognise the crucial
> nature of the position of the traditional authorities and care
> has been taken to preserve the organic unity of our traditional
> institutions and societies (Guidelines, 1976, foreword).

The traditional rulers on their part accepted the reform for a number of

reasons. First, they had little or no choice in the face of a determined

military government. Orders were orders and they were meant to be obeyed.

Any form of opposition from the traditional rulers would have been summarily

thwarted.

TABLE 7.8: REGISTERED ELECTORS FOR 1959 AND 1976 ELECTIONS

STATES	1959 Election Registration		1976 Local Government Election Registration	
	No.	As % of 1952 Population	No.	As % of 1976 Population
Bendel	650,130	43.9	1,595,839	47.04
Benue	327,266	23.38	1,245,778	37.23
Kwara	178,239	33.28	1,263,106	51.14
Ogun	421,453	43.94	974,239	45.56
Oyo	921,841	37,77	3,277,632	44.76
Ondo	497,247	52.06	2,968,195	78.88
Plateau	276,197	22.52	863,337	30.90
Rivers	282,036	45.78	1,198,010	50.52

The way the military regime dismissed some influential permanent
secretaries and top military personnel proved the extent to which they
were ready to go to achieve their policies. Therefore, the military
government confronted the traditional rulers with a combination of threat
and promise. They either accepted the apparent gains the reform promised
them, or they would lose everything. Second, like everybody else in the
country, the traditional rulers welcomed the new regime, as demonstrated
by the historical visit made by top traditional rulers, such as the
Sultan of Sokoto and the Oni of Ife, to Lagos to see General Murtala. Under
the former regime, and especially after 1973, the powers and status of the
traditional rulers were at their lowest ebb with some of them reportedly
flogged on the order of some of Gowon's governors. The traditional rulers
felt that the new regime would restore their powers and status. Third,
for the first time since independence, the traditional rulers were taken
into confidence in the reform effort. They were not just passive spectators
or outsiders in the reform; they were really involved (see chapter 6).
Fourth, the promise of the creation of 'traditional councils' allayed
whatever fears they might have had that their powers and status would be
eroded by the reform. Thus, although their emirates or areas of juris-
diction were divided into many local authorities, they still maintain
their suzerainty over such former areas in religious and traditional
matters (see their functions below).

The Guidelines state that Traditional or Emirate Councils should be
presided over by an Emir or Paramount Chief. And the composition of the
council should include all traditional title holders, one or two represen-
tatives of each local government council "if this is deemed appropriate
and any other persons who may be desired to make the council broadly
representative of the major facets of life in the area" (Guidelines,
1976, p.6).

The functions which the Government expects an Emirate or a Tradi-
tional Council to perform are :

(a)   To formulate general proposals as advice to local government;

(b)   to harmonize the activities of local government councils through discussion of problems affecting them generally, and giving advice and guidance to them;   .

(c)   co-ordination of development plans of local governments by joint discussion and advice;

(d)   community tax assessment within the area as a whole in consultation with local government councils, and announcement of tax. Also to aid, as is the usual practice, in the collection of tax;

(e)   determination of religious matters where appropriate;

(f)   support for Arts and Culture;

(g)   chieftaincy matters and control of traditional titles and offices, except where these are traditionally the exclusive prerogative of the Emir or Chief in which case the council's function shall be advisory to the Emir or Chief;

(h)   determination of customary law and practice on all matters including that relating to land;

(i)   making representations or expressing opinions to Government or any other organization on the collective behalf of the local governments in the area;

(j)   deliberating on or making representations or expressing opinions to Government or any other organization on any matters which it deems to be of importance to the Emirate or Chiefdom as a whole, or which may be referred to it by Government or other organisations; and

(k)   Emirs and Chiefs should be responsible, as hitherto, in assisting Government in the maintenance of peace(Guidelines, 1976,pp.7-8).

From the foregoing it has become clear that the influence of traditional rulers in local government will be mainly through their membership of the created emirate or traditional councils. It was recommended that each local government or group of local government councils should have

a traditional council consisting of traditional rulers and the chairman/
chairmen of the local government council(s) in the area. In order to
function effectively and efficiently, the traditional councils were given
permission to have their own staff as well as grants from the state and
local governments. For instance, Bornu State created five Emirate Councils -
Bornu, Dikwa, Fika, Biu and Bade - and a Traditional Council, Gwoza. For
the 1977/78 financial year, a total provision of N1,051,000 was made to
these councils, distributed as follows :

Bornu :	N335,000	Biu ;	N154,000
Dikwa :	N181,000	Bade :	N112,000
Fika :	N178,000	Gwoza :	N 91,000

The State Government contributed 50 per cent of each amount shown above
and the local authorities concerned contributed the remaining 50 per cent.

MEMBERSHIP OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS

In chapter 6 we discussed personnel management and we will deal
here with the elected members of local authorities. The primary
functions of all councillors ought desirably to be the direction and control
of council affairs, making key decisions, monitoring progress and the broad
supervision of officers and their work to ensure that agreed policy is
implemented, that ratepayers secure value for money and that there is
an absence of waste or graft. It is the duty of councillors to investigate
complaints lodged by members of the public and to elicit the facts.

In order to guarantee that their objectives of the reform are adhered
to, especially those of efficiency and democracy, the Nigerian Government
recommended that membership of local government councils should be pre-
dominantly elected either by direct or indirect elections from local
communities. But up to 25 per cent of the membership of each council
could be reserved for members nominated by the state governor which, it
was argued, would ensure the representation of a wide range of groups

(Guidelines 1976, p.8). This arrangement, however, is quite a departure from representative democracy because it makes the council less sensitive to a change in local opinion than a wholly elected body might be (see chapter 8). The life of a council is expected to be about three years unless previously dissolved by the state governor after due enquiry, for incompetence or incapability. The elections were not to be fought under party affiliations because the ban on partisan politics was still in force during the first elections in 1976/77.

The Guidelines and the Edicts made provisions for the position of a chairman. Thus, each local council is to have a chairman who is elected for three years like the councillors. The council elects three candidates from its own membership listed in order of preference and the state governor "appoints one of the three persons proposed as chairmen to be chairman of the council or, where two or three persons are proposed, nominates any one of them to be chairman of the council" (Kaduna State, 1977, pp.11-12; Kwara State, 1976A, p.54; Rivers State, 1976, p.54).

For election purposes, each local government area was divided into single-member constituencies and each constituency elected one member by select ballot. Ogun State was divided into 134 constituencies, Kwara State 214, Gongola State 293 and Rivers State 189 constituencies. Table 7.9 gives in details the allocation of seats for every local government in Kwara State.

TABLE 7.9: ALLOCATION OF CONSTITUENCIES PER LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE 1976 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN KWARA STATE

Local Government Area	Population	Registered Voters	No. of Constituencies
Asa	164,157	80,622	17
Borgu	147,487	59,020	15
Edu	152,758	78,803	16
Ifelodun	178,214	110,013	18
Ilorin	474,385	203,029	27
Irepodun	212,215	129,657	18
Kogi	124,000	63,892	12
Moro	162,647	79,571	17
Okehi	250,899	134,484	20
Okene	197,511	112,451	18
Oyi	248,181	138,271	20
Oyun	157,272	73,293	16
TOTAL	2,469,727	1,263,106	214

SOURCE: Kwara State, 1977, pp.3, 5 and 79.

The edicts enacted by the states, like the local Government Act 1972 in Britain, prescribed procedural arrangements for meetings, notice required, number of members to constitute a quorum, method of voting and like matters. Decisions on ordinary business must be made by a majority (2/3 majority in Nigeria) of the members present. Minutes of meetings must be available for inspection by local government electors. In Britain, the press and other members of the public can attend council and committee meetings.

COMMITTEES

The committee system which Nigeria adopted from her former colonial master is a characteristic feature of English local government, whereby the work of the local authority is sub-divided between groups of councillors, sometimes supported by co-opted persons, and smaller in size than the whole council. Prior to the reforms in 1974 and 1976 in Britain and Nigeria respectively, most local authorities were structured on the basis of departments operating under the direction and control of committees, which prepared budgets and thus became competitors for their share of the total available resources. The larger authorities provide a wide range of services which are interrelated and hence no one service should be treated in isolation

The Bains Report placed great emphasis on the corporate approach to management in local government, believing that the traditional departmental procedure was no longer appropriate to secure the most effective use of resources. Hence the study group recommended that management activities be concentrated in a policy and resources committee supported by a chief executive and a management team of officers. In this way an authority can formulate more realistically its long-term objectives covering all services, and make forward planning projections, decisions as to priorities and assessment of financial implications. The basic philosophy is that at policy stage councillors decide and officers advise, while at the ensuring execution stage councillors monitor and officers perform. This represents an

over-simplification, as policy and administration cannot always be clearly distinguished and the boundaries can become blurred. The administration of policy frequently concerns the councillor more significantly than the policy itself since the worries of electors stem from policy implementation.

As we said in chapter 5, a tremendous similarity exists between Nigeria and Britain with respect to the whole language of discourse about local government reform. Little wonder then that the Guidelines, like the Local Government Act 1972, gave local authorities a discretionary power to set up committees, joint committees and sub-committees to enable them to discharge their functions. The Act and the Guidelines gave local authorities greater freedom in the organization of their internal structures, and they have streamlined their committee systems and reduced the number of committees.

Committees can be classified as follows :

(a) STATUTORY AND PERMISSIVE : Statutory committees are those which local authorities are by statute compelled to set up, namely the education committee of a local education and the police committee of a local government authority. In England and Wales they must also have a social services committee of a social services authority while local authorities in Nigeria must have a finance and general purposes committee. The Finance and General Purposes Committee is to be responsible for (i) the regulation and control of the finances of the local government; (ii) the consideration and award of contracts; (iii) the implementation of the decisions of the local government with which no other committee or body is charged and for the general running of the affairs of the local government; and (iv) such other functions as the local government may, from time to time, delegate thereto (except the power of levying a rate or tax or of borrowing money) (Kwara State, 1976A, p.59; Kano State, 1977, p.51).

Permissive committees are those which a local authority is not compelled to establish but can do so if it wishes. The edicts state that

"a local government may appoint such other standing or <u>ad hoc</u> committees

in addition to those specified above for any general or special purpose

that in the opinion of the local government would be better regulated

and managed by means of a committee and may delegate to a committee so

appointed, with or without restrictions or conditions, any function exer-

cisable by the local government" (Kwara State, 1976A, pp.59-60: Rivers

State, 1976, p.65);

(b)   STANDING AND SPECIAL : Standing committees are set up on a relatively

permanent basis and are normally renewed annually. Special committees are

set up to deal with specific short-term matters, such as extensions to

council offices or a review of house-improvement policy, and are disbanded

when the objective has been realised;

(c)   SERVICE AND MACHINERY : Service committees administer services or

functions of a local authority, such as leisure services or highways.

Machinery or co-ordinative committees are concerned with administrative

machinery such as personnel;

(d)   JOINT COMMITTEES can be appointed by two or more local authorities

to deal with matters of common interest. This arrangement offers considerable

flexibility and is ideally suited to the management of such facilities as

sports centres, or control of water and atmospheric pollution; and

(e)   JOINT BOARDS consist of the nominees of two or more authorities and

they administer a service in which the appointing authorities have a mutual

interest. They differ from joint committees in that they are separate from

and independent of their constituent authorities,and are almost invariably

bodies corporate with a perpetual existence and their own financial powers

(see, Kano State, 1977, pp.54-55). Typical example would be joint planning

boards set up by the appropriate ministers, or in the case of Nigeria,

state commissioners.

Thus every local government in Nigeria was to have a chairman and

not more than four supervisory councillors who will devote most of their

time and energies to the affairs of local government. These super-
visory councillors will also exercise 'political control' over the
Departments of their local government. They will each chair a committee
"concerned with the political direction of a group of departments or of
a single department such as in the case of education ... and (they) will
automatically be members of the Finance and General Purposes Committees
which will in effect be the 'cabinet' of the local government" (Guidelines,
1976, p.9).

The committee system, despite its alleged disadvantages (see Jackson,
1970, pp.138-142), therefore enables local authorities to deal with their work
effectively and efficiently. The wide range of functions and variety of
detailed matters requiring decisions by the principal authorities could
not be handled at full council level without massive delegation to paid
officers, which would destroy the democratic principle and result in
councils being no more than rubber-stamps. Committees comprise a council's
workshops, where officers' technical knowledge and councillors' assessment
of public needs are integrated and a balanced solution formulated.

THE ROLE OF 'HOMO POLITICUS'

As we said in chapter 3, an adequate analysis of reorganization can-
not be fully explained as only necessary response to the socio-economic and
political changes in Nigeria and Britain. Equally important are the
actions which reformers have to take to effect structural changes, and
these actions are determined by their perception of environmental changes
as well as their environment. Since the reforms in both countries were
carried out by the decision-makers, their personality and interests must
then come to bear on initiating and implementing reform. Their perception
or interest may be fashioned by their party political ideology or by
expediency or as was the case in Nigeria, by the need to redeem the image
of the military in the eyes of the people.

The initiation and execution of local government reform under the
Murtala/Obasanjo regime (Obasanjo took over as Head of State when Murtala
was assassinated in 1976) was successful because their regime was so
strongly committed to it. As we said earlier on, Nigeria was at its lowest
ebb by 1975. It was therefore necessary from the beginning for the
Murtala/Obasanjo regime to present a radical alternative to its corrupt,
inefficient and 'direction-less' predecessors. Moreover, there was a threat
of public disorder as exemplified by violent riots, high rate of armed
robbery and disparaging articles in the press about the role of the army
in politics. Gowon's policies became unpopular, especially when be back-
pedalled on his initial decision to return the country to democratic rule
by 1976. Furthermore, some elements in the army were known to be getting res-
tive. Finally, the nation wanted a change. The new government therefore
started by dismissing all known corrupt and inefficient civil servants and
top military officers. The former state governors were dismissed and a
series of inquiries instigated into their corrupt practices. The structure
of the Military Government was modified so that the new state governors
were no longer members of the Supreme Military Council but were responsible
directly to the Supreme Headquarters. Thus it was impossible for these
new state governors to operate state governments as their personal fiefdoms.
The regime followed these reorganisations up by creating seven new states
to bring the number to nineteen, and as a first sign of their willingness to
restore democracy to the country in 1979, reformed the local government system.
The creation of seven more states and the reorganization of local government
brought the government nearer to the people than ever before. Murtala was
a dedicated, dynamic and charismatic leader who loved democracy and he
received mass reverence because the people knew he was acting in their
interest. The support his regime gave to the reform effort led to its
successful implementation.

In Britain, the role of 'homo politicus' in the reform can be
illustrated by the actions of Richard Crossman (the initiator) and Peter

Walker (the executor). When Crossman was Minister of Housing and Local

Government he had to decide the fate of the proposals for local govern-

ment boundaries being made to him by the Local Government Commission.

He reported in his diary :

> I soon discovered that as a Labour politican these are for me not
> merely decisions about the boundaries of local authorities but
> decisions which will influence the boundaries of constituencies ...
> every time ... I alter a county borough boundary I may affect the
> fate of the M.P. sitting for this borough ... Politically all I
> have to do is prevent 30 or 40 Labour seats going to the Tories
> (Crossman, 1975, pp.64-5,132).

The general problem which Crossman faced was simple : "how I can best

adjudicate to avoid bringing Conservative suburbs into Labour cities like

Leicester and Nottingham and so undermining safe Labour Parliamentary

seats" and giving a built in majority to the Conservatives on the new

local councils. Naturally enough, Crossman did not broadcast the fact

that when taking boundary decisions he took "the greatest care to see that

politically they were acceptable to the Labour group(s) on the town

council(s) and to the Labour member(s)" (Crossman, 1975, pp.75-6,

160, 240, 312).

Another example and in a similar vein, is that of Henry Brooke who

was leader of the Conservative opposition on the LCC and as Minister of

Housing and Local Government "he was anxious to see the Herbert Commission's

proposals adopted primarily for the political advantage that he saw in them

of putting an end to Labour's control of London" (Rhodes, 1970, p.108).

The action of 'homo politicus' was also conspicuous at the imple-

mentation stage of the 1974 reform. For instance, Mr. Walker, a devout

Tory, was vigorously opposed to a unitary system which he saw as a

radical departure from the status quo. He attached great importance to the

evolution of a new structure through building on the existing multi-tier

system rather than through radically changing areas and authorities.

Furthermore, he surely had the political gain to be made by the Conserva-

tive Party in mind when he merged county boroughs, normally Labour, into

counties normally Conservative. Southport, a town council under Conser-

vative control, got some concessions during the implementation of the reform. Southport is interesting because its inclusion in, and Ellesmere Port's exclusion from, Merseyside made Conservative control of that new metropolitan county a very real possibility in an election year favourable to the party. Even in more general terms, party bias is discernible for Mr. Walker was resurrecting, albeit in an attenuated form, a very long-standing Conservative desire to neutralise the radical propensities of the cities by placing them under the umbrella of the Conservative-voting shires (Sharpe, 1978, p.84). Certainly these are just some of the examples where one can say that the political interests of the reformers have over-riden the declared objectives (democracy and efficiency) of the reform.

CONCLUSION

The Murtala/Obasanjo regime realised that to achieve national development and national stability, a firm foundation for a rational government at the local level is imperative. They implemented all their reform programmes and even went further to ensure that local government is enshrined in the constitution as an autonomous third level of Government. They realised that not only on the institutional level, but, more important, on that of the general climate, the development, stabilization and extension of local government contribute towards the democratization of customs, to the education of the citizens and to preparing them in this way for an active participation in public life.

The reform in Britain was gerrymandered to suit the Conservative Party rather than the public. This is hardly surprising because, as Sharpe says, "new boundaries mean a new basis for determining majorities and therefore which party will win. No party in power dares miss the opportunity to ensure that whatever the ostensible reasons for boundary change may be, its interests are not only protected but if possible enhanced" (1978, p.84). However, the mere fact that the reforms were

carried through by the Conservative Party is a great achievement. But as we shall see in chapter 8, an adequate evaluation of the reform can not be undertaken on the basis of the role of party politics, though insofar as the pursuit of party advantage undermined the necessary relationship between diagnosis and remedy, it was likely to be one major contribution to the ultimate failure of the reform.

The process of local government reform is such a complex thing that it can never be devoid of problems. It is therefore necessary to evaluate the reform. Did the reformers stick to the reform objectives? Do the end products of the reforms contribute to the stated goals such as democracy, efficiency, national stability and economic development? These questions will be answered in the next chapter and we shall give our own recommendations (see chapter 9) as to how the problems that arise out of the reforms can be solved.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

> Now that the survey is completed I realise that I have shifted
> from seeking dramatic and speedy remedies for administrative
> failings to recognizing the many obstacles in the path of
> reformers (Caiden, 1970, p. xi)

This chapter will attempt a systematic evaluation of the reform

process in both countries, paying particular attention to their

implementation. The critiques we offer will enable us to put forward

our own fresh approach in the next chapter.

THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

We shall not devote all our energy to what critics have termed the

'popular mythology' (Dearlove, 1979, pp. 1-19) or 'traditional orthodoxy'

(Stanyer, 1976, p. 17) of local administrative reform, that is, an

optimistic reliance on prescriptive liberal theories of representative

government to explain the practice of local government which inhibits

the development of empirically based theories more carefully attuned to

the reality, and not the ideology, of the local situation today. The

almost universal 'popular mythology' of 'large is efficient whereas small

is democratic' is pure assertion made without adequate research or

evidence. Fairly obviously, it is also part of this orthodoxy to assert

that small is inefficient whereas large is undemocratic, and there is the

view that it is not really possible to attain both democracy and

efficiency within the one local government system. Given the assessment

of the system of local government in both countries as inefficient and the

concern to ward off even more central control, there has been the consistent

and untiring advocacy of the need for larger local authorities. But, at

the same time, there has been a certain sneaking anxiety about the

implications of all this for the democracy of local government. It was widely believed in both countries that the calibre of councillors had declined. Another rule of reform relates to the issue of central control and local autonomy and derives from the orthodox explanation for the extent of central control. If you wish to decrease central control, and so increase the extent of local autonomy, then you should provide new sources of local revenue, so reducing local dependence upon the central government. This sequence is fairly familiar: "Commitment first, theory second; and facts last, or not at all." (Dearlove, 1979, p 38).

To question these 'traditional orthodoxies' would be to question the rationale of the objectives of the reforms and this would require a separate thesis. A critical consideration of the orthodoxies on local government and its reorganization is not the same as a critical consideration of the reality of reform itself, and demolishing the literature does not tell us much about the political implications of reform. Thus to toe the line of questioning the 'traditional orthodoxies' would be to concentrate on the theory of local government reform at the expense of good empirical studies of the implemented reforms, which is contrary to our intention. Instead we will be concentrating on evaluating the implemented reforms in Nigeria and Britain in terms of their reform objectives, or more specifically, in terms of the ordinary men and women whom the entire administrative apparatus is designed to serve. Undoubtedly this will also involve some evaluation of their reform objectives since we need "to adopt a less narrow perspective where we engage in questioning, research, and wider reading, and try to transcend the artificial specialization imposed by disciplinary boundaries" (Dearlove, 1979, p. 10).

In fact, the job is only half done if we do not give some evaluation

of the objectives and the strategies of reorganization. After all the reformers might probably have seen only a part of the whole or they might have misunderstood the situation completely. Moreover, reformers often declare romantic objectives like democracy and efficiency to veil their undeclared intentions such as more power to the central government; reform may be an overt strategy designed to place the control of government in particular hands - a strategy that is seen as necessary and possible by certain groups at particular points in time when they feel that they are not winning, and cannot win, within the established rules of the governmental game. Short-term political victories can get converted into longer-term strategic gains if they can become institutionalized in new constitutions, structures and processes of government (see Chapter 7). The governmental power of various groups is partly a result of the rules that have been made to govern, as "some publics have been able to shape political institutions and practices ... This is ... a matter ... of the institutional framework of politics, and the very rules of the political game itself, being systematically biased in favour of certain interests rather than others" (Newton, 1976, p. 236).

Reform attempts in both countries since the Second World War conformed to an almost predictable pattern both as to the nature of the recommendations submitted and the results achieved. The insignificant progress being made as a result of these studies suggests that perhaps the proposals are not related sufficiently to programmes, are not imaginative enough to cope with modern complexities, and represent merely a futile exercise in trying to achieve a neat but sterile administrative structure.

Thus, in any evaluation of the results of a reform, it is not enough

to make our judgements merely on the basis of our 'expertise' in
local administration and disregard the voice of the people. The
people must consent to reform to make reform meaningful. The reformers
must be reminded that the means are important only insofar as they help
in the attainment of the ends. The mere fact that a reform is
undertaken and completed is a major achievement but in most cases not
as many changes are made as might be expected. The success of reform
rests not merely on immediate accomplishments, but on the machinery it
sets in motion for continuing attention to organizational improvements.

Although the reform in Britain is radical, it is definitely less
radical than had been envisaged in 1966 when the Royal Commission was
established, and it is much less radical than the reform in Nigeria.
The Local Government Act 1972 is littered with decisions which would
seem to conflict with the original theoretical objectives, for
example, the unresolved structural-functional tangle relating to the
complicated division of responsibility between counties and districts
for services such as highways and town and country planning. Though
such decisions could be defended, the case relied on an extremely narrow
interpretation of the concepts of democracy and efficiency and it was
apparent that political expediency was a more important factor. Indeed,
it is sometimes difficult to see exactly where the Government did stand
firm during the consultative and legislative processes. Exceptions
to the 250,000 population size were allowed, the 'whole built-up area'
concept of the metropolitan counties was breached, the 'clear-cut
division of powers' disappeared, and there was little in the way of a
move towards the promised 'stronger' local authorities. The combination
of powerful local government vested interests and a Conservative
Government pursuing a policy which attempted to build on the existing

organization of local authorities ensured that tradition was frequently

considered the more important whenever and wherever it conflicted with

change.

In Nigeria, there still is a discrepancy between bureaucratic

values of formal organizations like local government and social norms of

behaviour. There is a wide gap between the laws of the statute book

and the actual behaviour of the officials. Yet we know that reform of

structure, if not followed by changes in patterns of behaviour, is

insignificant. Functions which should be the exclusive preserve of

local authorities are still being eroded by state governments and the

impunity with which many local authorities have been dissolved without

due inquiry by a high court judge as stipulated by law shows that the

reform is more theoretical than practical. In short, reorganization

was taken on its own terms at the level of its public face and ideology

as being solely about increasing democracy, efficiency, and effectiveness

in the general effort to create better government in the public interest,

without a corresponding change in social and political norms of

behaviour of state government and local government officials.

Reform in both countries was therefore based on a mixture of

theoretical, institutional and political objectives. The need for

governmental leadership and action ensured that any concern for theory

was frequently subordinated to tactical considerations. We showed in

Chapter 5 that the objectives as enunciated by the Royal Commission

and the Federal Government were not only open to different interpretations

but they were also vague and elusive. The vagueness results from the

elusive nature of the theoretical diagnosis of local government defects

which were made. What did both governments mean, for instance, by

their assertion that local government was undemocratic ? It is in terms

of responsiveness or representation or participation or their

dependence on central government grants ?   Or is it, as it has been

suggested, because of the intrusion of party politics into local

government ?   The calibre of councillors was said to have declined

yet everybody knows that there is no objective way of measuring

councillor calibre.   Have the reforms rectified these defects ?

In the foregoing chapters, attention has been given to the overall

objectives of decentralization policies and to some of the major

environmental (historical, ecological, social, economic and political)

conditions which influenced the structural and operational reform of

local government.   Since the problem of local government reform was

considered in the light of these objectives and environmental factors,

the consequences of some objectives often proved incompatible with those

deducible from certain ecological conditions.   This pertains to the

overall structure of local government and administration as well as to

size and boundaries of local authorities.   In both countries, there

was 'tension' between the desire of the governments to promote

democratic decentralization, and political conditions which made such

a policy undesirable or socio-economic conditions which are dysfunctional

to the development of local representative institutions with discretionary

powers.   The desire for efficiency caused both governments to favour

relatively large local units, but the geographic isolation of many

communities made this difficult to realise.   A merger of cities with

neighbouring villages seemed desirable, again for reasons of efficiency,

but this was avoided because of the risks involved in grouping

sociologically and culturally heterogeneous populations.   Furthermore,

scale enlargement was a strong argument for providing services for large

areas, but this was deemed detrimental to large-scale popular

participation in decision making which is preconditional to local democracy.

As we noted in Chapter 6, there were differences in the strategies applied by the two countries. This was not unexpected because of the historical, social, economic and political differences between them. Britain went about the reform through a Royal Commission while the Nigerian Government decided to carry out the reforms itself. These strategies, however, have their own advantages and disadvantages. The Commission served a valuable purpose in maintaining a reform momentum and in creating a new agenda for public debate. Commissions are agents of change and the success of the Redcliffe-Maud Commission lay in the attraction of its report to the Government (and in the hostile reactions which produced an alternative approach attractive to the Opposition). The Government was able to adopt a set of proposals as its own which, it could claim, had emerged form an impartial, expert inquiry. It could continuously quote this 'expert advice' as a defence to its proposals (Rhodes, 1975, pp. 191-3). Also, the use of a Royal Commission enabled a lot of research to be carried out and it afforded the public the chance to air their views, thereby minimizing resistance to reform. Furthermore, the use of the Commission enabled adaptation of the local government structure to new needs and conditions, without disrupting the continuity of the operations of local institutions.

The Nigerian Government decided to go it alone because they did not want a commission over which they would have only limited influence. The time factor was very important to the Federal Government because they had to implement eight programmes within four years, and local government reform was just one of them. The political set-up and the political situation of the country did not warrant the use of a commission. Nigeria was under a military regime and like all military regimes, it

wanted quick and precise action; a complete restructuring of the
local government system was necessary so that the Government could
carry out its new political ideals of democracy and self-reliance.
The governmental and administrative machinery needed thorough and
drastic overhaul to turn it into an effective instrument for achieving
development objectives.

Both approaches have their disadvantages. Difficulties can
arise through delay while a commission sits - such delay can, on
occasion, aggravate the issue or cause it to be interpreted rather
differently (as happened in the case of local government in Britain
in the post-1958 period when attitudes hardened and structural
weaknesses became increasingly apparent). Stagnation can result from
advice which may prove to be politically unacceptable. Governments
can find themselves in the embarrassing position of seeking to avoid
implementation without wishing to launch a frontal attack on the
findings of a body of experts appointed by government. Finally, by
appointing a commission the Government loses control of the timetable.
Though deadlines are often set - two years in the case of the Redcliffe-
Maud Commission - they are rarely met. A Government which sets up a
commission during its first year or two of office can be fairly sure
that the report will arrive shortly before a General Election is due,
at a difficult time for implementation to be feasible should the issue
be controversial. This, of course, was just what happened to the
Redcliffe-Maud Report. On the other hand, the appointment of a
commission at a later stage in the life of a Government frequently
results in the publication of a report after the next election, when
that Government may well be no longer in office. Thus the appointment
of commissions can be regarded in most cases as "a recipe for delay"

(The Guardian, 31 October 1968).

The strategy adopted by the Nigerian Government did not give room for necessary research and consultations. Critics could therefore point to the fact that the Government's recommendations were pure guess-work not based on any empirical evidence. They could also accuse the Government of high-handedness since the implemented reforms were not based on a broad concensus of the people. A sensible reform cannot be dictatorially imposed with one stroke of the pen. It needs cooperation of all concerned. A hurried radical reform like Nigeria's is disruptive and could be harmful. Moreover, an entirely new system may not adapt well to its environment and consequently become little more than a blueprint. Finally, drastic reforms may cause strong resistance and even violent opposition.

It is difficult to give a general judgement about these two approaches. There may be cases in which drastic reform of the existing system offers the best solution for a new government (as in Nigeria's case), whether because of the environmental conditions or political expediency or for other urgent reasons. Even then, however, the government must realise the risks involved in introducing a new system overnight, and the likelihood that much of the old system will continue to function, since community power structures tend to be highly resistant to change. The 'Government by Commission' approach is likely to meet with greater success. Not only can more allowance be made for ecological conditions, but the government is able to test the opinions and reactions of the people and to change its policy in line with the general concensus of the people. The success of either approach depends to a great extent on the government's ability to rally support for its proposals or to force them down the throats of national and

local communities in spite of opposition.

Although our evaluation of the objectives are interrelated because the reform objectives themselves are greatly linked to one another, such as efficiency to democracy or efficiency to functions and size of local authorities, nevertheless we shall be evaluating them under the following headings: Function and Size, Democracy, and Efficiency.

FUNCTION AND SIZE

In Chapter 6, we mentioned that the need for a systematic approach to local government reform led both countries to search for a correlation between the functions of local government units and the size and area in which these can be most effectively exercised. In pursuance of this objective, the Royal Commission recommended a unitary system of local government which was rejected on the ground that a single local authority is bound to be the wrong size for the discharge of at least some of the functions of local government (Local Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganization, 1971, para. 9). It is doubtful, however, whether the new two-tier system meets this criticism. There was no justification made for the allocation of services adopted by the 1972 Act in terms of functional efficiency. Rather, the selection of housing and planning as the chief activities of the district authorities was motivated mainly by the need to operate these services close to the people, a principle that was admitted to rest more upon the demands of democracy than upon any need to achieve 'efficiency' (Local Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganization, 1971, para. 13). One is justified, in view of this insistence on democracy, therefore, to say that the new authorities are unsuitable to discharge their democratic

functions effectively.

Another problem about the Royal Commission's proposals is that the unitary authorities were too small for the effective performance of some of their functions such as education, development and transport planning. The new counties are bigger than those proposed by the commission, but with their average population of around 500,000, the criticisms of the Redcliffe-Maud authorities advanced by the White Paper still apply. We can assert, along with the Royal Commission, that it is almost impossible to determine the relationship between the efficient operation of a certain function and the maximum and minimum size of local units; we should note that, despite the claims of the White Paper, the size and organization of the new counties was arrived at more as a matter of administrative convenience, political needs and respect for tradition, than by any analysis of the type of authority necessary to administer any particular service.

In giving its reform proposals, the Royal Commission mounted a lot of research to look at the realities of modern life and likely developments in the future, in order to give some sort of social and economic coherence to the new areas. In particular, attention was paid to the growth and scale of commuting and even to the distance which individuals travel between their home and their shopping centre, it being suggested that a single local authority should ideally cover all these various aspects of an individual's daily life. It is ridiculous that such an analysis could be rejected   in favour of building on the existing organization which the government itself had pronounced ineffective and antiquated. Furthermore, with the possible exception of the new county of Humberside, traditional boundaries have been followed, which further hampers the expansion and development of the conurbations be ond their traditional boundaries which they have over-flown. The 'whole built-up area' concept

of the metropolitan counties was abandoned.   It is depressing to find

that the lack of congruity between the local government boundaries and

the actual pattern of life which characterized the existing system was

not just reproduced but also exacerbated.   To the Conservatives, winning

elections is an inevitable counter-weight to the rational solution of the

size and shape of local government units.   They were anxious to preserve

the historic counties and protect the wealthy suburbs and countryside

from urban demands for housing space.   Care was taken in delineating

the boundary between Hampshire and Dorset in 1972 not to divide a safe

Conservative seat, while the Conservative town of Newmarket might logically

have been in Cambridgeshire but was retained in Suffolk to balance Labour

strength.   The population range for each type of county authority is

still astounding (see Chapter 7).   In short, many of the local authorities

(especially the districts) are neither small enough nor do they relate

well to the facts of social geography.   Our line of argument is that if

the Government wanted to achieve efficiency and democracy within the same

structure of local government, it should have made the upper tiers of

local government bigger than at present constituted so that they could

perform the major services efficiently; while making the lower tier (the

districts) much smaller than at present so that they could perform

the minor personal social services and help to increase the participation

of the citizens in local affairs (see Chapter 9).

One of the primary aims of the 1972 Act was to create a system that

is sufficiently flexible to match function to area and to ensure that

decisions are taken as locally as possible.   It is difficult to claim

that the new system is better in relation to this goal than the old.   "The

vast bulk of the country was covered by a two-tier system under the old

order so that the function-to-area 'fit' argument was already as close to

being met as the new" (Sharpe, 1978, p. 88).   Where it was not - in the

county boroughs - the successor districts are either larger than the
county boroughs they superseded, or they are the same size.   Either way,
there has been no increase in local decision making.   Moreover, it must
be remembered that under the new system some major functions that were
entirely the responsibility of the county boroughs have been transferred
to the much larger counties.   In short, it is difficult to see how the
objective of matching function to area and of ensuring that decisions
are taken as locally as possible has been achieved.

Another aim of the Act requires that local government boundaries
follow population settlement patterns.   This objective is based on the
assumption that the basic settlement form is now the service centre and
its hinterland.   The service centre may be defined as the continuously
built-up area of a town and its hinterland as the surrounding ring of
satellite communities.   These communities are embedded in a semi-rural
and rural environment but, it is argued, they owe their existence to
their proximity to the service centre and its accessibility to them in
terms of employment, shopping and a myriad of private and public services.
Thus the hinterland is said to be just as much a part of the town as are
the suburbs that form the rim of the town's continuously built-up core.

The basic settlement pattern, so this argument continues, is, then,
no longer one of urban entities that are sharply differentiated in socio-
economic terms from their rural surroundings, but a series of service
centres and their hinterlands - spread cities - whose boundaries meet and
overlap to cover most of the country and especially the central population
core of England (where over two-thirds of the population live) that runs
from Greater Manchester and Merseyside in the north-west to London and
the south-east region.   In these areas, which Sharpe termed 'the coffin',
we may no longer talk of urban and rural but rather of different degrees
or urban-ness.

Translated into local government boundaries, this aim of the 1972 Act implied the abolition of the old county boroughs, which, broadly speaking, did not usually embrace even the whole of the built-up areas of cities, and the creation of new authorities that embraced some approximation of the spread city.

The need to match the local government structure to this alleged reality rested on three grounds. First, the objective linkages of the town plus hinterland will have already generated a subjective community of interest among all the inhabitants of the spread city through the links of employment, shopping and social activities. Secondly, and more decisively, planning and the related functions of traffic management, highways and public transport can only be effectively and efficiently undertaken if their jurisdiction covers the whole of the spread city since in planning terms service centre and hinterland are interdependent. The extent of settlement in the hinterland, for example, can directly affect the prosperity of the service centre economy, and, equally, the level and pattern of public and private services in the service centre – employment opportunities, car parks, shopping facilities, traffic control, public transport, cultural and educational services – affects those in the hinterland. Thirdly, retaining the old county borough boundaries was inefficient and irrational. Put in the more formal terminology of public goods theory (see Foster et al, 1980), we may say that the public goods services it provided had effects – they confer benefits or exact costs – over a much wider area than the built-up core. The extent of each service's externalities varied, but they were all well beyond the boundaries of the county borough. Extending the boundary was therefore an improvement on the status quo in the sense that it would come closer to internalising these service externalities and thus making possible a sharing of the costs and the benefits of the public goods more

equitably among those affected.

How far does the new system fulfil these three interrelated aims ?
In one sense it never could, simply because the three aims conflict to
some extent with the first <u>main</u> objective which seeks to keep decisions
as local as possible.   It clearly fails in some of the metropolitan
counties which do not even embrace the continuously built-up area.
Elsewhere, too, the boundaries of the shire counties are only a very
crude approximation to the actual influence areas of the cities they
encapsulate.   To some extent this is because the spread city model
cannot be applied in many areas outside the 'coffin', simply because a
distinctive rural society still persists there.   Also, many influence
areas overlap.

Furthermore, the claim that there were economies of scale to be
reaped by reorganization could only be based on the assumption that local
services generate certain fixed costs irrespective of the population size
of the authority.   If the average population served by local authorities
was increased it followed that unit costs of the service would fall.
The difficulty with this assumption is, first, that these fixed costs
have never been identified.   They have only been assumed to exist and
we may presume that the faith in their existence is derived not so much
from evidence of their existence as the pervasive influence of the
economic theory of the firm.   Secondly, the assumption seems to be that
the long-run cost curve declines at the same point and for the same level
of output for all services - education, social welfare, highways and so
forth.   Equally, too, they are assumed to operate over a very wide
population range so that any enlargement of any existing authority would
apparently reduce service costs.   Finally, the belief in "the apparently
limitless fixity of fixed costs was matched by an equally firm belief in
the absence of diseconomies of scale" (Sharpe, 1978, p. 92).   All of

these assumptions would be more plausible if there had been any evidence

under the old system that they might be correct. But there was little

or no evidence that scale did bring lower costs (Newton, 1974, p. 54).

To sum up the discussion of the functionalist goals, we may say that

if the new system seems to fulfil them to a much greater extent than the

other objectives which it was created to achieve, the functionalist

objectives are based on a number of shaky assumptions. Not only are

these objectives based on shaky assumptions, but they have been the prime

determinants of what is perhaps the fundamental defect of the new system

in Britain, and that is the enormous scale of the new authorities.

Despite the claim of the 1972 White Paper that the new units would be

created,'above all else', on the basis that 'a genuine local democracy

implies that decisions should be taken as locally as possible', the local

units, the districts, are on average in excess of 120,000 population. In

some of the remoter rural areas this means 'genuine local democracy'

operates in areas of 40 miles across, and districts where the seat of

government is 20 miles from quite large population centres within the

district are quite common. At the county level, which provides most of

the major functions, the situation is even more extraordinary. The

average population of the English and Welsh counties is in excess of one

million and in some instances the seat of government is a half-a-day's

travel time from the largest centres of population within the county. In

Devon, for example, the largest city - Plymouth - is 40 miles from the

county seat at Exeter.

The reformers were very concerned with improving service performance,

and it was the assumption that this improvement could be achieved by

increased scale. This dominant emphasis on scale effects meant that the

other major requirement of local government - that it should be democratic -

is overwhelmed. The result is that the primary local authorities in the

new system (the counties and the metorpolitan districts) are too large

to correspond to anything that anyone can recognise as a community in the

sense that they can command the loyalties of the citizens, evoke a sense

of identity among them, or correspond to their patterns of movement.

Not only is the democratic criterion overwhelmed, it is also undermined

by the incorporation of functionalist criteria within it in the sense

that making local government units functionally effective is also seen

as making them more democratic. The reasoning behind this connection

runs something like this: democracy implies the capacity of government to

act. It therefore follows that enhancing the capacity of a local

authority to act, making it more functionally effective that is, also

enhances democracy (Wood, 1976, p. 24).

One of the defects found in the existing sturcture of local government

was the rural-urban dichotomy.   It was argued that a town which is a

natural commercial, social and cultural centre for the surrounding

hinterland should also be its administrative centre.   In some cases

the distinction between town and country has remained, at the second-tier

level especially.   Bath is a separate authority, an island wholly within

another district; the same is true of Cambridge.   Among third-tier

authorities the difference in status between town and parish tends to

emphasize the urban-rural dichotomy even more clearly than before the

reform.

Furthermore, the separation of planning functions between county and

district councils causes delays, duplication of resources and inter-

authority disputes.   Their satisfactory operation demands a high level

of cooperation between the two different types of authority, which is

not always achieved.   The division of functions, such as the maintenance

of minor roads and local planning powers (see Appendix 1), may be

confusing to the average elector and the existence of two or even three

local authorities administering the same area does not give the impression of optimum effectiveness. One can also argue that the two-tier structure leads to fragmentation and loss of a corporate approach. Cooperation between counties and districts can be hindered by local loyalties, party political differences, and a natural tendency of district councils to strive for maximum independence. In theory, concurrent powers should provide excellent opportunities for cooperation but this is not always the case in practice, with one authority waiting for the other to provide the particular service and the result that nothing is provided. Alternatively, both authorities may provide similar services in the same area causing unnecessary and expensive duplication.

The structural-functional defects of the present system are beautifully summed up by Norton:

> It has certainly failed to achieve administrative areas in many cases in which urban centres and interdependent rural hinterlands can be treated as a unit ... the dispersal of local government functions among not only new counties and districts with strange and unfamiliar names and areas but also among new health and water authorities appear to have created a more difficult set of problems for the public. Accessibility is less and involvement is less. The interests of different groups of authorities remain antagonistic and have to be reconciled at the centre (1980, p. 273).

Most of these criticisms can also be levied on the Nigerian reform. There was no research to back up the recommended population range of 150,000-800,000. In the event, many local authorities in the south are too small to be able to perform their functions effectively and efficiently, while those in the north are too large for the democratic participation envisaged by the reformers. Indeed, it would appear that the Federal Government paid more attention to administrative convenience in restructuring local government than to efficiency. Furthermore, given the large expanse of the area of the country (Nigeria is four times bigger than Britain), it would seem that the democratic objective cannot be realised by less than three hundred authorites. This necessitated some states, such as Anambra,

Kano and Rivers to create 'subordinate' authorities. Unfortunately

these so-called 'subordinate' authorities have no powers, no finances,

no personnel and no functions except those delegated to them by their

'parent' authorities. Surely if the Federal Government was sincere in

its declaration that local authorities should exercise democratic self-

government close to the local levels of the society and should perform

functions in which success depends on community responsiveness and

participation, it should have given real recognition to these second-tier

authorities. Likewise, the Federal Government declared that a population

of not less than 150,000 was the minimum necessary for local authorities

to be functionally effective and efficient. Whatever criteria might

have been used to arrive at this magic figure, there are problems.

Firstly, the minimum size concept based on a cost-benefit relationship

not only depends on the number of inhabitants, but also on population

density, number of children per family, communications and such like. It

is definitely difficult to determine an absolute local government area

on a total population basis. Any attempt to ascertain a minimum level is

therefore of limited use. Secondly, it remains to be seen how a local

authority of 150,000 people can generate enough resources to maintain its

'functional integrity' and carry out its tasks at the level demanded by

present-day society. Thirdly, the resulting low level of achievement is

likely to induce and has induced state governments to exercise close

control or even to transfer some functions from local government.

Fourthly, the financial weakness of small local authorities causes

frustration and the effect this has on representative local government can

only be harmful. Finally, it would be difficult to recruit staff of

sufficiently high calibre, particularly when set against the counter-

attraction of state civil services. Thus, without an adequate revenue

that would enable them to recruit qualified staff, it is difficult to see

how they can perform their duties, such as economic planning, housing and
education, effectively.

Furthermore, and like in Britain, there is still a bewildering
difference in the populations of local authorities (see Table 7.3). It
is surprising that a local authority like Kazaure with a population of
293,754 and a revenue of N1,794,320 is expected to have the same powers
and functions and perform them to the same standard as Kano with a
population of 711,354 and a revenue of N12,522,940. Perhaps an even
more serious criticism of the new system, with the possible exception of
northern Nigeria, is the great emphasis that was placed on traditional
loyalties in drawing the boundaries of local authorities. In Anambra
State, the new, all-purpose authorities replaced, and are coterminous
with, the former administrative divisions. This is true of most of the
southern states. Even in the north, there were minimal changes in Niger
State, and in Kwara State where Borgu, Edu, Kogi, Oyi and Oyun local
authorities retain their old boundaries.

There were some clear improvements, however, on the old systems in
both countries. Very many weak and lilliputian authorities were removed.
In Britain, county boroughs were abolished, the number of local authorities
was reduced by a quarter, and the chaotic system of delegation in the
county areas was abolished. In Nigeria, the 'giant' authorities in the
north were broken up and for the first time in the history of the country,
there is a uniform system of local government whose existence is guaranteed
by the constitution. The American city-manager system in Oyo, Ogun and
Ondo States, the Development Administration system in Bendel and Cross
River States, the Native Authorities in the northern states and the two-tier
French prefectoral system in Imo and Anambra States all disappeared with
the 1976 reform. Until 1976, local authorities used to be created and
financed by regional/state governments, but with the new system the

Federal Government is a major financier of local authorities and it is therefore not easy for state governments to withhold or withdraw their grants for political reasons. In the past there was a lot of gerrymandering with regiònal/state governments establishing and dissolving councils as they wished. This will be legally and constitutionally difficult under the present system. Furthermore, not only did the constitution guarantee local government as a third-tier of government in the country, but it also guaranteed their functions. Thus a local authority could take a legal action if it feels that its functions are being eroded by the state government. Lastly, in both countries, the bewildering ranges in population, size and revenue among the same type of local authority have been reduced.

DEMOCRACY

Representation

The Nigerian and the British Government emphasized the need for local government to be truly democratic: "Above all else, a genuine local democracy implies that decisions should be taken - and should be seen to be taken - as locally as possible" (Local Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganization, 1971, para. 8). The Nigerian Government wanted power returned to those people who should exercise decisions locally. Yet we noted in Chapter 6, following Dilys Hill (1974), that democracy is a concept that is open to many interpretations, and in so far as this concept of local democracy has been further developed, it has appeared to rest more upon the need for government to be local than upon any precise analysis of what is required for a system of local government to count as truly democratic. Furthermore, one doubts the claims made for local government as an instrument of representative democracy mainly because of the influence of party politics

on local government and the low turn out at local elections. If elected

representatives are to be accountable, they must have control over the

matters for which they are brought to account. In the new county authorities

the members are faced by increasingly complex and difficult policy decisions,

taken by the local party caucus and/or by a large organization whose head

office, and therefore whose chief policy advisers, may be located some

fifty miles from where the members and their electors reside. This is

equally true of the majority of local authorities in Nigeria. In Kwara

State, for example, a councillor and his electors who live in Egbe are about

72 miles away from Oyi Local Government headquarters where decisions are

taken. A councillor living in Baruba has to travel over 135 miles to get

to Kogi Local Government headquarters in New Bussa. In these circumstances,

and given Nigeria's poor communications system, it is difficult to believe

that the elected members will be any better placed, in terms of either of

the skill or of the time and energy that they are able to devote to the job,

to make any serious contribution to policy-formulation, or to exercise any

real control over the way in which the authority does its business.

The Royal Commission suggested the reformed system would make a wider

cross-section of the public readier to offer itself for election thereby

restoring the primacy of the councillors (Royal Commission on Local Government

in England, 1969, Vol. 1, p. 146). This is pure assertion based primarily

on hope. We accept that the new authorities are larger than the existing

ones, but their very size means that heavy burdens are laid upon the part-

time councillors, responsible not only for running the authority but also

for attending to the wishes of their electors. It is certainly difficult

and time-consuming to pursue the individual case through the complex local

government machinery; yet the councillor must do this on behalf of a large

number of his constituents in addition to attending to policy. Particularly

if the councillors are going to follow the ethos of the Bains Report by

closely involving themselves in the authority's business, then it would

become an almost unbearable burden for the vigorous people, holding down

responsible jobs elsewhere in the community, whom the reformers seem to have

in mind as the new generation of councillors.   The problem of long distances

to council offices and meetings and the work-load of the councils are much

reduced in the non-metropolitan district councils.   But it is doubtful if

'people of calibre' would readily serve on the councils because of their

size and resources.   Moreover, the mere fact that those who serve on district

councils cannot have a say in the major services such as education, social

services, transport and road planning must surely deter competent people

from wanting to serve on the councils.

The simple fact that voting figures, now running at about 35-38 per cent

of the total electorate (and seems to be falling year by year), have not

improved, shows that apathy in local council affairs is still widespread.

In some areas seats are uncontested.   A survey undertaken for The Times

(6 August, 1977) revealed a 'widespread lack of public confidence' and the

leading article warned that unless the central government took action 'they

will be condemning local government to an era of public distrust'. Confirmation

of these findings was contained in the Prime Minister's Committee on Local

Government Rules of Conduct (1974, pp. 3, 35) which recognized that "there is

at present a great deal of disquiet about conduct in local government", and

therefore, the need to 'secure public confidence' from what a wider ranging

government investigation into the same problems termed a 'grudging electorate'

(Royal Commission on Standards in Public Life, 1976, p. 117).   Further

evidence of public distrust and governmental concern was provided by the

Committee on Financial Aid to Political Parties (1976), and in a survey

undertaken for the Royal Commission on the Constitution which pointed to a

"'we' and 'they' situation" and a "sense of grievance" in which "people

tended to feel powerless in the face of government and cut off from it" -

especially if they came from "working class households" (1973, pp. 18-21).

These problems are aggravated not only because local elections are so poorly

supported that councillors are not really very representative of their

constituents, but also because the councillors are amateurs, part-timers

with varying interests and ability. Inevitably the officers have to become

involved in policy matters. Given their limitations, the councillors (even

committee chairmen) can do little more than try to set very general

objectives and operate with a 'consumers council' role with regard to

controlling the administration. Thus, the calibre of councillors is not

likely to improve as long as people feel that local government is not

democratic enough. Anxiety about declining councillor calibre is a crude

but direct way of highlighting the relative autonomy of local government.

In Nigeria, the customary way of measuring the calibre of councillors

is by their educational achievements. The reformed system, it was hoped,

would encourage capable and fairly well educated people to offer themselves

for service. Nothing since 1976 has shown any improvement. In Oyi Local

Government, for example, two of the supervisory councillors were primary

school teachers, the chairman was a dispenser and all the other councillors

have elementary education only. Moreover, men of calibre are likely to be

attracted to serve in the State Assemblies, or the House of Representatives

or the House of Senate than on local councils. Our survey (see Table 8.1)

shows that 42 per cent of those interviewed said that they would rather

contact their Ministries of Local Government to have their problems solved

as against the 26 per cent who said that they would contact their councillors.

This is an indirect way of passing judgement on the calibre of the new

councillors. The citizens still feel they are hopelessly incapable of

solving their problems.

TABLE 8.1: IF THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU FELT VERY STRONGLY THAT THE LOCAL

AUTHORITY OUGHT OR OUGHT NOT TO BE DOING, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? (%)

A.	CONTACT LOCAL COUNCILLOR	26%
B.	CONTACT MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT	42%
C.	SIGN A PETITION	4%
D.	JOIN A LOCAL PRESSURE GROUP	10%
E.	DON'T KNOW	18%

Turn-out is still very low with only 24.9 per cent of registered voters

actually voting in the 1976 elections (Oyediran, 1977, p. 26).   The total

number of uncontested seats is bewildering.   Table 8.2 shows that a total

of 525 seats in states for which data is available   were   uncontested,

TABLE 8.2: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION, 1976: DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS AND
NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

STATE	Total No of Seats	Returned Unopposed	No of Seats Contested	% of Contested Seats	No of Contesting Candidates
Bendel	186	24	162	87.1	515
Benue	194	28	166	85.5	512
Kwara	214	66	138[a]	64.4	323
Ogun	134	64	70	52.2	175
Ondo	251	122	120[b]	47.8	303
Oyo	436	115	317[c]	72.7	937
Plateau	248	39	209	84.2	659
Rivers	189	67	122	64.5	332
TOTAL	1,852	525 (28.3%)	1,104	71.66	3,756

Note: a = No candidate was nominated in 10 wards.
       b = Elections were not held in 9 wards due to irregularities in
           nomination process.
       c = Four (4) seats were not contested at Ilesa Local Government area.
Source: Oyediran, 1977, p. 26.

TABLE 8.3: <u>ACTUAL VOTERS AS PERCENTAGE OF REGISTERED ELECTORS IN THE</u>
<u>1976 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS</u>

STATE	REGISTERED ELECTORS	ACTUAL VOTERS	PERCENTAGE
Bendel	1,595,839	780,009	48.88
Benue	1,245,778	493,556	39.62
Kwara	1,263,106	297,940	23,59
Ogun	974,239	183,689	18.85
Ondo	2,968,165	249,103	8.39
Oyo	3,277,632	663,273	20,23
Plateau	863,337	403,257	46.70
Rivers	1,198,010	270,392	22.57

Source: Oyediran, 1977, p. 28

representing 28.3 per cent of the number of seats; while Table 8.3 portrays

the low turn-out of the electorates. This low turn-out could be due to the

fact that Nigerians had not had an oportunity to vote for over a decade until

the local elections in 1976 and because of their apathy in local council

affairs. Another reason could be due to the exclusion of party politics

from the elections.

In both countries, therefore, the new systems have failed to bring forth

a new type of councillor better able than his predecessors to hold his own

with the officials. This problem is made more difficult by the fact that

there is no objective barometer for measuring councillor calibre. It is

certainly not enough to measure a councillor's capability by his educational

achievement alone. Furthermore, the new structures have not improved

democratic representation and responsibility because scale enlargement

leads to a less favourable ratio of democratic representation, that is, there

will be more voters per elected representative. In the light of these

evidences, one can say that the crisis of local representative democracy is yet to be solved.

Political Parties and Democracy

The military government excluded party politics from the 1976 local government elections in Nigeria. It is true that party politics played a major role in the demise of the existing system and escalated the rate of corruption in local government administration especially before 1966 (see Chapter 4). But we regard the exclusion of partisan politics from the new system as a serious aberration. It is one of those unfortunate complications arising from a law made by the military for civilian use. Party politics at the local level provides a training ground for political aspirants at the state and national levels. National and local issues can no longer be entirely divorced and the party system enables consistent policies to be pursued over reasonable periods of time, and ensures that councillors are made more responsive to the wishes of the electorate. Moreover, strong and vigorous political parties can revitalise the elected member whose impact is being eroded by the increased technical expertise of officers. Furthermore, parties in local government are bound to arouse electoral interest. Fundamentally, however, party involvement "renders responsibility for the general level of council achievement visible to the public, facilitates judgement at the polls, and through the ups and downs of party fortunes at successive elections, brings shifts in public feeling forcibly to the council's notice" (Warren, 1952, p. 191). Although local partisan politics is barred in some states in the United States of America and in Canada, and although there is a lot to be said against party politics in Nigeria (see, for example, Wraith, 1972), it is surely myopic, given Nigeria's historical development, to expect politics to be kept out of local councils in present day Nigeria.

In fact, our survey shows that 84 per cent of those interviewed said that local elections should be fought on a party political basis. All one can say is that party politics in local government should be sensibly operated. The democratic objective of the reform was also undermined by two elements: the provision which empowers Governors to appoint up to 25 per cent of council members, and the provision for indirect elections to some councils especially in the north. These provisions create an 'elite' which is insufficiently responsive to the needs and wishes of the local population, and make the council less sensitive to a change in local opinion than a wholly elected body might be.

In Britain, if emphasis is to be placed, as the Bains report recommends, on the involvement of as many members as possible in the directing of the council's work, even to the extent of having members of the minority as well as of the majority party on the central coordinating committee (Working Group on Local Authority Management Structures, 1972, para. 4.27), then responsibility for council decisions, even for decisions taken along political lines, will be blurred, and the opportunity of the electorate for passing a political judgement on those decisions commensurately reduced. Second, and more seriously, the two-tier system is bound to reduce the degree to which electors feel able or willing to influence events, not only by creating confusion about which council is responsible for what decisions, but also by requiring him to vote for not one but two local authorities. All the evidence suggests that people can only cope with a very small amount of exercise of the franchise, the only elections that come near to attracting serious interest or giving a fairly accurate picture of opinion being those for Parliament. But even if voters do take an increased interest in local government, the predominance of party politics will mean that they will be effectively prevented from voting on the council's actual record. The 1981 local

government elections lend weight to the view that the overwhelming majority of electors treat local elections merely as an extension of the political contest at national level, and vote for their councillors not on the record of the individual candidates, or even of the council administration, but rather according to their current view of the performance of the national government on purely national issues such as unemployment or monetarism.

The reorganization has increased the impact of party politics in local government because by amalgamating party and non-party authorities the party system has almost invariably spread to the whole. Before the reform, 46 per cent of the 1,166 local authorities for which satisfactory information is available had full party political systems. Out of 330 of the 422 new authorities, 63.7 per cent have party political systems (Norton, 1980, p. 273). It is doubtful if this increased political party affiliation will enhance the democratic quality of local government. If Mallaby's (1974) declaration is true that people of experience and ability, attracted to local government by feelings of care and compassion for neighbouring communities, are turning away from service on district and county councils organized on a party political basis as they fail to see what party politics has to do with domestic issues, then to expect an era when 'men of calibre' will fill town councils is illusory since party politics is on the increase.

Participation

Another aspect of local democracy which the reformers in both countries had in mind is participation. Democracy requires that local inhabitants participate in the process of political decision making regarding local affairs through their local representative institutions. Territorial democracy, according to Bulpitt (1972, pp. 285-7), rests on

the 'Traditional Orthodoxy' of community, participation, local government, decentralization and democracy. But this 'popular mythology' is ambiguous about how power is actually to be shared between people. The traditional ideal of local people attached to their community and involved in its affairs is quite compatible, in theory and practice, with government by a local elite. Nor is it clear to what extent the citizen is expected to take part beyond the act of voting. If, however, we expand the concept beyond mere voting to encompass things like participation in decision making or physical participation in community activities and affairs, then the reforms have failed to enhance democracy except in parish meetings, and at district or town level in Nigeria.

We have expressed our doubts about the ability of elected members adequately to understand, or control, the activities of their council. This is relevant to popular as well as to representative democracy, since information about particular decisions, and the ability to bring pressure to bear, are most naturally provided to the citizen by his elected representatives. "Direct influence of this sort may still be possible in the district councils, and indeed the weak administrative structure that those authorities may suffer from, combined with the emphasis that they lay on the localization of decision-making, could lead to excessive attention being paid to particular hard cases, to the detriment of proper long-term planning" (Buxton, 1973, p. 266). The councillor's dual role as a policy-maker and people's representative is a difficult one to balance. If, in the district councils, this balance is disturbed, it can at least be said that citizens are exercising some influence over decision-making, even if the long-term interests of the general electorate may not be thus best served. In the counties, however, rather more tangible factors may have to be invoked in the search for elements of popular democracy.

We have also pointed out that the size of the new counties and the remoteness of their headquarters, may prove a serious handicap to their citizens. These factors are bound to increase the citizen's difficulty in finding out from officials what the council is up to. Citizens will also find it hard to believe that such officials would be open to persuasion from those who are affected by their plans and decisions. Just as the new counties are too small to be efficient, so also they are too large for popular democracy which the Government seemed to regard as the most important objective of the reform. The report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England indicates that "more than three-quarters of those interviewed were conscious of living in a local community, which was defined as the 'home area'" (1969, Vol. 1, p. 62). However, this 'home area' was not necessarily identified with one of the major local authority areas (e.g. borough or rural district). In rural areas, the home area was mostly the 'civil parish or something smaller'. The Government failed to capitalize on this survey to create second-tier authorities which would be small enough to cater for the democratic objective. In short, the new authorities cannot ideally serve as local authorities because the allegiance of their citizens tend to be restricted to a much smaller area than that covered by these new authorities. In fact the citizens of the new metropolitan districts are far more removed from the seat of government than before the reform, and they will suffer the added confusion of the presence of an additional 'upper' tier of local authrority. Some of these developments, particularly with regard to the reorganization of county boroughs, were necessary on grounds of efficiency; but the increased size of local government areas must reduce the popular democracy of the new system.

The problem of size and the remoteness of the local government headquarters is no less serious in Nigeria. Except in the north where

the large native authorities have been broken into smaller local

authorities, some of which are still very large by any standards, it is

difficult to see how the citizens' participation has been enhanced by

the reforms.   In most parts of the country the old boundaries have been

followed in drawing the new ones, and in the south especially, the

reform merged many existing small authorities.   In these places,

therefore, the problem of participation has been left unresolved despite

the government's avowed declarations.   Amalgamation of former councils

has a harmful effect on the citizen's influence on local government.

First it leads to a less favourable ratio of democratic representation

since there will be more voters per elected representative.   Second, it

increases the need for appointed and specialized staff which may dwarf

the role of local representatives in local government and administration.

Finally, it increases the distance between the citizen and his local

government;   consequently, his influence on local government and

administration will diminish proportionately.   There is no doubt that it

is this distance from the centre of government which has influenced the

attitude of those whom we interviewed: 52 per cent of them feel that the

present local government set up is neither the best nor the most effective.

As we said above, the increased influence of the non-elected officers

is a blur on democratic participation in the new systems in both countries.

The attempt to introduce corporate planning into the English local

government especially has probably served to strengthen the hands of those

officers who are less intimately involved in the direct provision of

services to the public and so are more able to take those decisions which

are defined as being in the interest of the 'community' as a whole and

in the long run without taking into consideration the effects of their

decisions on individual citizens or group of citizens.   In addition, a

key thrust of contemporary reorganization has been the quite overt concern

to 'close up' local authority decision-making to public intervention.
The Committee on the Management of Local Government pointed out that "a
systematic approach is required to ensure that the component parts of
the organization are not distracted by the pressure of current problems"
(1967, Vol. 1, p. 48), and the report of the Working Group on Local
Authority Management Structures recognized that "some policy changes will
inevitably be in the nature of a reaction to outside events" (1972, p. 12).
These developments will hinder, rather than enhance participation.

Central-Local Government Relations

The independence of local government from central control, and the
degree to which local government is entrusted with further powers are
important elements both in increasing the responsibility of local
government and in increasing the disposition of the citizens to take
local government seriously.   Considerable criticism was directed at the
Royal Commission's proposals because they did not involve any extension
of the powers of local government (Walker, 1970, col. 447); but even
after the reform, there is considerable evidence that the democratic
process is being eroded along with local authorities' sense of responsibility,
by the extent and nature of central government controls, the move towards
uniformity and the unsympathetic statements made by government leaders.
The transfer of local government services away from local government is
particularly disturbing.   The National Health Service Reorganization
Act 1973 took away the remaining personal health services of local
authorities, while the Water Act 1973 left them with the minimal
responsibilities of testing water purity and administering local sewerage
needs.   The Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 required local -
authorities to unify local social services under a single committee, with
a director of social services whose appointment must be approved by the

Minister, providing a consolidating and centralizing impact (Ashford, 1976).

Added to these are the limitations on local autonomy in the services which

local government does control that have been imposed by statutes such as

the Housing Finance Act 1972. All these do not augur well for local

democracy.

It is generally said that local authorities are agents of the central

government and that they lack any real autonomy because of their

constitutional position, a public desire for uniform services, and an

increased dependence upon central government grants. These assertions

may be simplistic but they are true, especially in relation to financial

dependence. The Written Evidence of H.M Treasury to the Royal Commission

was well aware of the fact that expenditure by local authorities formed

a major part of total public expenditure. It regarded it as "therefore

inescapable that the central government, and in particular the Treasury,

should be increasingly concerned with the need for forward planning and

effective control of the movement of local authority expenditure as a

whole". It correctly concluded that the "need to exercise closer

control over the expenditure of local authorities as a whole is not

easily reconciled with the need to give them greater individual freedom to

determine both their total expenditure and its distribution between

services" (1969, pp. 4-5). This view was substantiated in 1977 when the

Labour Government said: "The dilemma which faces central government is to

secure and promote an effective local democracy with genuine political

choice and at the same time fulfil their responsibilities for the management

of the economy and for the standard of public services" (Local Government

Finance, 1977, p. 3). These statements should cause us concern in view

of the fact that local government is increasingly dependent on central

grant.

It is a pity, however, that the reform did not take the implications

of the setting of the contemporary economic situation into serious

consideration.   At the most general level, the problem of local government

can be seen as an aspect of the overall problem of the public sector in a

capitalist economy.   This is a problem that centres on the sources of

state revenue and the scale of public expenditure, and on the scope and

direction of state intervention.   It is a problem that becomes acute at

certain moments, such as now when the Government rate support grant is

reduced, resulting in a reduction in working balances, increased rates, and

cuts in local expenditure in real terms.   The problem of local government,

therefore, would appear to be its long-standing fiscal crisis - the

tendency for local government expenditure to outpace locally generated

income, especially in metropolitan areas.   At the core of local government

struggle for democracy is the problem of the scale of its expenditure and

the nature of its interventions, a problem left unsolved by the reform, and

despite the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Local

Government Finance (1976), is still unsolved by the Government.   This

problem is indeed the reason for Mr. Heseltine's recent threat to cut

government grants to local authorities that 'overspend'.   The Guardian,

in its leading article, warned that "it is now an urgent priority to

defend local democracy from Mr Heseltine's centralist urge" (3 June, 1981,

p. 12).   One wonders if Mr Heseltine needs reminding that "local

government is the only representative political institution in the country

outside Parliament; and being, by its nature, in closer touch than

Parliament or Ministers can be with local conditions, local needs, local

options, it is an essential part of the fabric of democratic government"

(Royal Commission on Local Government in England, 1969, Vol. 1, para. 28).

Central-local relations in Nigeria have not improved with the reform.

Unlike the reform in Britain, Nigeria's did restore a number of functions

to local government.   But like in Britain, local government has become

more dependent on State and Federal Government grants, and the nature

and scope of intervention is causing concern. The relationship between

the new local authorities and the state governments do not indicate a

relaxation of central control. Firstly, the edicts stipulate that a

Governor may refuse approval of duly elected candidates for chairmanship,

and at least three candidates have to be presented to him out of which he

chooses one to become the council's chairman. This is a blur on the

principles of representative democracy and gives a Governor the chance

to dispense patronages to his cohorts or pliant rear-guard chiefs in

the home area. Secondly, the edicts provide that "every chairman of a

council shall render his services to that council on such basis as the

Governor may determine" (see, for example, Section 27 of Kwara State

Edict No. 8 of 1976). This is undemocratic and reflects the state

government's desire to control the local authorities as much as they can

while claiming to exhort the principles of 'participatory democracy'.

Thirdly, complaints have been heard that even the new Nigerian constitution,

which endows local government with the status of a 'third tier of

government' gives insufficient consideration to the problem of central

control (Azinge, 1978). The most evident problem, like in Britain, is

in relation to the duplication and sharing of funtions. Unlike in

Britain, however, the friction is not between two levels of local

government but between the local authorities and the states which created

them. This friction is not brought about by the structure of local

government, however deficient the structure may be, but by the discrepancy

between the laws of the statute book and the actual behaviour of state

government officials. The reformed system has not been followed up by

a change in the pattern of behaviour of state government officials on the

one hand, and as we shall see later, of local government councillors and

officers on the other hand. It is depressing to find that the old practice

whereby regional and state governments took over local government services

rather than strengthen their resources is still in vogue.   We will return

to these points later including the power of dissolution which has been

used to excess since October 1979.   First, let us analyse the more

obvious forms of control.

(a) Policy Control

Close supervision of all major policy decisions is still pervasive.

Local authorities are required to reach a technical standard of

administrative performance acceptable to the state governments.   Before

any project can be embarked upon the relevant department in the local

government organization is required to seek the advice of the appropriate

specialists in the state ministries.   Under the old system each chief

officer of a local authority department was required to consult their

counterparts in the central ministry for approval of items to be included

in the department's submission to its own finance committee when the

authority's budget was being prepared (Yahaya, 1975).   This is still

part of the general budgetary procedure.   Complex projects are

supervised throughout implementation by an official of the appropriate

state government ministry.   For example, local education authorities are

guided by the ministry of education in all professional decisions

concerning the development and maintenance of primary education.   Inspectors

check school records, especially records of cash transactions and fees.

Even when projects have been included in the approved development plan

for the year, specific sanction must be obtained from the ministry of

finance on each one.   Some state governments have even gone so far as to

pay grants in respect of educational buildings direct to the contractors

after awarding the contracts themselves, necessitating the processing of

claims in the state capital with all the attendant bureaucratic delays.

Grants are used by the centre as a flexible instrument reflecting changes

in central policy.   The grant mechanism is used to try and ensure that

proper records are kept, to check on expenditure trends and to prevent

fraud.

Policy control is not restricted to initiatives taken by local

councils.   States direct authorities to pursue policy objectives.   This

is clearest in the field of primary education which consumes by far the

largest proportion of local expenditure on services (see Tables 8.4 and

8.5).   But it also extends to minor areas, such as requiring local

authorities to participate in road safety campaigns.   Local authorities

are also given guidance on how to use their powers.   In Kaduna State,

for example, local councils were urged by the state government to encourage

self-help, to teach people how to use the resources available under

Operation Feed the Nation, and mobilise the masses.   Local authorities in

parts of Kwara have been told to extend property rating.   In Kaduna

State, councils have been told to give primary education priority in

their development plans and were warned that funds for 'low priority

projects' would be diverted to primary education by the state.   In Lagos

State the central authorities have urged councils to pay particular

attention to the construction and maintenance of roads, public conveniences

and markets.   In Cross River, local authorities have been advised to

complete existing projects before embarking on new ones, to intensify

their revenue collecting efforts, and to keep their traditional rulers

out of party politics.   In 1980 local governments in Ogun State were

instructed to select twelve roads for priority development, this being a

major area of concentration by the state government in its rural

development policy.   Lists of selected projects were to be submitted to

the state House of Assembly since Members saw this as their right as

elected representatives of the people (New Nigerian, 6 February, 1980).

TABLE 8.4: DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING BETWEEN SERVICES,

1962 - 1980

(Eastern Region and Anambra State)

| | EASTERN REGION 1962-3 | | ANAMBRA STATE 1979-80[a] | |
	£ 'OOO	%	₦'OOO	%
Administration	497.5	11.2	9.0	11.7
Judicial	403.9	9.1	--	--
Education	1,486.0	33.4	57.9	75.6
Health	627.9	14.1	3.7	4.8
Works	1,177.4	26.3	4.0	5.2
Agriculture	26.6	0.6	2.1	2.7
Trade and Industry	3.0	0.1	--	--
Other	232.6	5.2	--	--
TOTAL	4,434.9	100	76.7	100

a = estimates
Sources: Anambra State, Local Government Approved Estimates, 1979-80;
Eastern Region, Native Treasury Estimates

TABLE 8.5: LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE IN THE NORTHERN REGION AND

KADUNA STATE

| | NORTHERN REGION 1963-4 | | KADUNA STATE 1975-6 | |
	£ 'OOO	%	₦'OOO	%
Administration	2,039.8[a]	17.7	2,814[d]	14.17
Judicial	1,209.5	10.5	--	--
Education	1,907.7	16.6	13,681	71.3
Health	941.3	8.2	1,325	6.9
Public Works	2,812.0	24.4	569[e]	2.9
Social Services	1,809.9	15.7	802	4.2
Agriculture	484.4[b]	4.2	--	--
Trade and Industry	307.1[c]	2.7	--	--

a Includes district council funds
b Includes animal and forest resources
c Includes commercial undertakings
d Includes Public Complaints Bureau, public debts charges, payments to the capital development fund, revenue & grants to statutory bodies & contributions to other authorities.
e Includes housing and 'lands and survey' departments.
Sources: Ministry of Economic Planning, Northern Nigeria (1966); Ministry of Economic Planning & Rural Development, North Central State (now Kaduna State) 1976

The states now have their representatives even more closely involved

in the daily management of local affairs through the secretaries to the

new local authorities than before the reform (see Appendix II).   These

chief executives are generally civil servants from the state's ministry

of local government, responsible to the permanent secretary.   The local

government edicts confer on the secretaries the functions previously

conferred on residents, district officers, divisional officers, sole

administrators and similar officials of the state governments.   In addition

they now become the chief executives with all the local authority

departmental heads answerable to them.   In Anambra, for example, the

administrative organization of each local authority 'revolves around' the

chief executive who is responsible for the implementation of all council

decisions.   The secretary, significantly, is "responsible for ensuring

that the decisions of the council <u>accord with Government policies</u> (emphasis

mine).   When any decision of the council appears at variance with

Government policy, it is the duty of the Chief Executive to advise the

council and clear the position with the appropriate Ministry before

carrying out the decision" (Anambra State, 1976, p. 13).   The integration

of the local administration is further emphasized by the duty placed on

secretaries to "perform such other functions as assigned to them by the

State Government, for which they are held directly responsible to the

Cabinet Office" (Anambra State, 1976, p. 14).   Secretaries also control

the deployment of staff within the authority, subject to overall control

by the state's Local Government Service Board.   In our survey, 98 per

cent of the secretaries who were interviewed said that their allegiance

is first towards their boss in the ministry rather than the chairman of

the local authority.   This is not surprising since their salaries and

promotions come from the states' civil services.   It is for these

reasons that they are regarded as district officers in a different guise,

and "the duality of their role tends therefore to militate against the autonomy of the new Local Governments" (Aliyu, 1978, p. 284). In addition, local government inspectors have been appointed and authorised to attend council and committee meetings, inspect accounts and other records and advise the local authorities on the use of their powers. This system seems to perpetuate the over-centralization of the old, leading one expert to conclude that "Local Governments are not going to be as autonomous as would appear from the Guidelines" (Aliyu, 1978, p 284). However, it must be remembered that a lot depends on the calibre of state ministry staff, and this has not always been high enough to guarantee effective control in pursuit of better administration.

Policy control extends beyond decision-making to envelop the choice of crucial decision-makers within local political institutions. The Federal Government's policy statement gave state governors the power to select from their council nominees the chairmen of a council and its committees or make the decision for the council if it cannot agree within a prescribed period on a choice of candidates. The choice of members of General Purposes Committees (the local authority's cabinet), political heads of departments and the chairmen of any other standing committee are also subject to the approval of the state governor. Most states adopted these controls by including them in the edicts which put the federal policy into effect. Conflicts have occurred between local authorities and state governors over the approval of council nominees. Some governors have been suspected of using this power as a political weapon. There have been moves in some states to amend the edicts to free councils from central control over the selection of key office-holders. Elsewhere, however, the central power seems to have been extended by state executives issuing instruction as to which functions would come under the jurisdiction of each supervisory councillor and how various committees

would be composed.

An unusual feature of the new system is the provision for nominated members to be appointed to local councils. This stems from the naive misconception contained in the Federal Government's policy document that such a group of councillors could 'concentrate on the development of their Local Government area' in a non-partisan way (Guidelines, 1976, para. 25). How it could be thought that such an activity can be non-partisan is not made clear. Nevertheless, the edicts provide for the nomination by the state governor of up to 25 per cent of council members. This power, then, is not the more usual one of co-option, whereby local councillors bring into their committees people whose advice, experience or expertise they value. It is rather one of central control to be exercised by the state executive. It should therefore be of some concern when a nominated member is selected by the state executive to be chairman of a local council or to occupy some other important post such as supervisory councillor. In Bauchi State, for example, nominated members occupy 35 per cent of key posts and 70 per cent of the chairmanships. Elsewhere in the northern states, however, the proportion of chairmanships occupied by nominated members falls to 25 per cent. The requirement that at least 75 per cent of local councillors should be elected is, nevertheless, a considerable improvement on the system in operation prior to the military takeover, when in the north, for example, only 33.7 per cent of councillors in local government were on average elected (Campbell, 1963, pp. 66-8).

Accompanying this control of the membership of council is a continuing state control over the appointment of traditional rulers. The new system allows for a greatly reduced role for emirs, chiefs and other traditional heads of communities. However, they have been assigned responsibilities which could turn out to have considerable local significance, such as determining religious matters, advising local

authorities on policy, 'coordinating' development plans, assisting in

the assessment and collection of community tax, determining and declaring

customary law (including that affecting land tenure) and assisting in the

maintenance of law and order. These responsibilities, combined with the

natural authority still assigned to traditional leaders by communities

in many parts of Nigeria, suggest that they will remain a potent force in

local politics for some time to come.

The significance of the fact that the state executive has to 'recognise'

traditional leaders before they can occupy these positions varies from one

part of the country to another. The succession to a title in some of

the larger dynasties may be self-evident so that state endorsement is a

formality. In some parts of the country, such as Anambra, traditional

titles relate to relatively small communities within the new local

government areas, and the state executive has decided not to 'meddle' in

the 'primary processes' of community selection involved. The identification,

selection and installation of traditional leaders devolves on their

committees (Anambra State, 1976, p. 11). However, the ultimate endorsement

of traditional leaders in most areas rests with the state executives.

(b) Budgetary Control

Overall control of the local budget has not diminished in intensity.

Each budget has to be drawn up according to a prescribed format. Any

departure from this requires central approval. The budgetary process

commences with a circular from the ministry which sets out the principles

which should guide the authority in drawing up its estimates of revenue

and expenditure. 'Preliminary' estimates are prepared on the basis of

these principles. Some items of revenue and expenditure even require

prior approval by the ministry before they can be included in the preliminary

estimates. These 'advance proposals' include changes in the level of

local taxes, new administrative posts and an intention to continue a

commercial undertakings which has run at a loss for three consecutive

years. Ministry officials assist in the definition of policy objectives,

advise on the reasonableness and feasibility of budgets and issue

warnings: "the existence of these constraints eloquently articulate the

weak and dependent status of local authorities" (Adedeji and Rowland, 1972,

p. 227). The professional staff of other ministries are authorised by

the ministry of local government to check estimates relating to their

policy area. The state ministry of education, for example, checks the

estimates of local education authorities to decide upon the services and

projects to be undertaken and to evaluate their financial soundness. It

is also concerned to test whether the right calibre of staff are being

employed and to prevent money for salaries being diverted to other

purposes. On the revenue side the ministry of education fixes the per

capita rates which local authorities can levy for such specific items as

school furniture, buildings, books and stationery. Officials from the

ministry work closely with the local authorities in the preparation of

estimates and their advice must be complied with.

After a budget has been processed by a local authority and its

committees it is passed to the ministry for local government for approval.

No authority has the power to raise any revenue or incur any expenditure

unless it is embodied in a centrally approved budget. The state

government can specify the proportion of expenditure to be allocated to

recurrent and capital programmes and, within these, the proportional

allocation between departments and the percentage for salaries and wages.

An authority with a poor revenue record may have its budget cut.

Comparable controls are exercised over capital expenditure, including

procedures and principles to be followed in the preparation of capital or

development plans. The ministry can alter a plan after consultation

with the local authority concerned. Any disagreement between a local

department and a central technical ministry is settled by the ministry

for local government. Before development plans are approved the competence

of local authority staff is checked, and the ministry satisfies itself

as to the adequacy of local administration and whether costs are realistic,

reasonable and correct (Aliyu and Koehn, 1980). Councils are advised on

which kinds of capital projects they should concentrate.

Budgetary control is the main instrument by means of which the centre

ensures that local policy making and expenditure are consistent with

state policies and priorities. In addition inspectors from the central

ministries are entitled to attend all council meetings, and are beginning

to emerge as more powerful than either the secretary or treasurer to the

council (Aliyu and Koehn, 1980, p. 45).

(c) Control over Internal Organization

Extensive central controls over the internal administrative organization

of local government have always been enforced, and these have not been

reduced by reform. Under the old system the appointment of senior

officials, such as clerk to the council, treasurer and supervisor of

works, required central approval. Conditions of service for local

government service were regulated and salaries were determined by technical

departments at the centre. The management of local authority staff was

carried out in accordance with a common set of staff regulations for local

authorities in each region. The central government required certain

committees to be appointed, such as an establishment committee for

personnel functions. Financial procedures were closely controlled by the

memoranda issued by the central ministry (Campbell, 1963). And the

centre decided what criteria and standards had to be met before an

authority could be classified as needing less direction from above.

The Financial Memoranda in use since the reform and endorsed by the

local government edicts do not relax the centre's control of internal

council procedures. They contain instructions which 'shall be observed

and complied with by all Local Governments, for the better control and

management of the financial business of Local Governments in the State'.

They provide detailed guidance and instruction of the financial and

accounting procedures to be followed by all local authorities. These

go far beyond procedures for the preparation and approval of annual and

supplementary estimates. They define the precise duties and responsibilities

of councils, committees and senior officials in regard to funds, stores and

financial management, including ensuring that there is compliance with the

Financial Memoranda. They prescribe certain organizational arrangements

for collecting and accounting for revenues and controlling expenditure,

including how to organize bank accounts, strong rooms, cash flows, tax

censuses, payment vouchers and the regular reconciliation of departmental

spending. They specify the accounting objectives, principles and

practices to be followed and the records and statements to be maintained

and prepared monthly and at the end of the financial year. Procedures for

the preparation of local development plans are prescribed. Councils are

reminded that 'these Financial Memoranda are mandatory and shall apply to

all local governments and all institutions in which a local government has

a substantial financial interest, unless the authority approving such an

arrangement specifically directs that certain provisions of the Financial

Memoranda shall not apply either partially or wholly to any institution'.

Local authority accounts are subject to audit by the state

government's auditor, and controls over staffing arrangements have

increased. The Guidelines (1976) stipulate that each state should set up

a combined local government service for the more highly trained cadres.

This service was to be strengthened 'far beyond the limits of existing

staff' by transfers and secondments from the state administrations. Local

Government Service Boards (LGSB) would be given responsibility for the

deployment of all members of the combined staff and would delegate

internal postings and minor disciplinary matters to a local authority's

establishment committee. Gradings, pensions, gratuities and other

retirement benefits were to be brought into line with equivalent posts in

the state civil service. The only choice open to the states when

reorganizing this part of their local government systems was between giving

the board entire control over postings or allowing local authorities

to select from candidates submitted to them by the board after it has

processed applications and chosen suitably qualified persons.

State governments not only determine the grading structure for local

authority employees. They also determine where particular officers in a

specified authority should be placed in that structure. For example,

the secretaries of Kaduna, Zaria, Katsina and Birnin-Gwari have been

designated GL.15. The relative grading positions of different officers

is also specified - heads of departments relative to their secretaries,

section heads relative to their heads of department and so on. Central

regulations also determine the number of senior staff to be employed.

In education, for example, the size of school population determines the

number of education officers to which an authority is entitled, and their

salary scales.

It is not surprising that conflicts of loyalty arise, leading to

conflicts within a local authority. Council chairmen perceive their

secretaries as their senior civil servants. The secretaries, however,

see themselves as representatives of the state executive. They have taken

important initiatives in the development of local policies. Some have had

to be warned against acting as the 'overlords' of their councils after

they had begun to adopt a supervisory stance, advising councillors on

the right attitudes to adopt, addressing inaugural meetings and generally

taking a centralist perspective on local government (New Nigerian, 12

January and 25 February 1977).

Some states, such as Lagos, have begun to repeal those parts of the local government law relating to the position of the paid officers, arguing that a gubernatorial system was as appropriate at local level as at state, and that the council chairman should be the chief executive of the local authority, perhaps even with direct elections to that office.

The state ministry of local government is at the hub of the control system. The Guidelines (1976, pp. 11-12) propose the establishment of such a ministry in each state to channel the required financial and technical support to local authorities.

(d) Centralization of Functions

Appendix I shows the functions which are exclusive and those in which local authorities in Nigeria are to 'participate'. This provision was later enshrined in the fourth schedule of the constitution. In terms of legal and constitutional provisions, then, local government is extraordinarily well placed to perform a major role in local development, both economic and social. However, the problems of shortage of professional staff, lack of finance and the calibre of councillors will prevent the devolution of most concurrent functions in the near future (Aliyu, 1978, p. 284). In some states even functions in the exclusive list, such as markets, motor parks and property rating, have not been devolved. In Lagos, for example, the state decided in 1977 to set up a new authority to administer the recently completed Tejuosho market though Mainland local council claimed jurisdiction under the 1976 edict. Kwara State allocated 8.2 million naira in the same year for the development of 13 modern markets to be located in the administrative centres of the state's local authorities. In Oyo the state Property Development Corporation has been sued for a housing programme of 25,000 new housing units by 1983 (West Africa, 28 April, 1980). Many of the

functions on the concurrent list, such as housing, land-use planning, refuse management and water supply, are already in the hands of special purpose bodies (Olowu, 1979, p. 5).

The state governments had tended to regard the local authorities as their agents. They have not felt constrained by the various formal allocations of powers between states and localities which exist in edicts, policy statements and the constitution. Thus the picture that is emerging is one of a very pragmatic distribution of responsibilities with the states engaging in whatever activities they regard as necessary. Hardly any function is seen as the sole preserve of local government. In 1977, for example, Lagos State decided to set up a special purpose agency for refuse clearance and disposal in and around the city because the local authorities could not cope. At the same time, it was announced that the state had spent 1.2 million naira on refuse equipment for local authorities in the Lagos metropolitan area (New Nigerian, 8 January 1977). Kwara State government has been directly involved in housing, health, water and agricultural services. Cooperation between all three levels of government - federal, state and local - has been sought in Niger State in the provision of rural clinics. Local authorities and the state forestry department in Bornu have combined in an effort to prevent further desert encroachment. Kaduna State's agricultural programme has involved grants to local councils for the distribution of bulls to mixed farms. There have been joint ventures in Imo State between local government and the state water corporation in the provision of boreholes, generating plant, pumps and tanks. In primary education, which officially became a joint responsibility of federal, state and local governments in 1976, both state and local authorities are agents for the implementation of a national scheme. In Ogun the state government recently spent 6 million naira on textbooks for primary and

secondary schools. Bauchi State has found it necessary to appoint a special committee of civil servants to deal with the duplication of functions between state and local government and advise on functions which need to be transferred to the local councils, given financial considerations and the local government edict.

In some states the weak financial position of the local authorities has forced them to look to the state for the provision of services and amenities which they would otherwise have provided themselves. In Anambra, for example, local councils have pressured the state for better roads, especially in food producing areas, and pipe-borne water. In Ondo local authorities have asked the state to take over primary education since their obligations would incur deficits of between 700,000 and 1.1 million naira in 1979-80 when they are not allowed to present deficit budgets. Sardauna local government in Gongola State has sought greater state involvement in the provision of roads which demanded such a large proportion of its budget. What all these prove is not just the transfer of functions to the states, but, more seriously, the duplication, fragmentation and wastage which they entail. The problem is compounded by the fact that the state governments themselves are hardly more efficient than the local authorities.

(e) Suspension and Dissolution

Local government, unfortunately, finds itself at the centre of political and legal controversy in Nigeria, which compounds political machinations with constitutional interpretations. The state executives were given the power to suspend or dissolve a council if an executive is satisfied that a council was not discharging its functions in a manner conducive to the welfare of the inhabitants of its area, or had failed to hold the meetings which the law requires. A council can be suspended or dissolved for three months after which time elections must be held or the old council

reinstated. During the period of dissolution the executive council is required to appoint a committee of management with the power to discharge all the council's functions. The widespread use of this power soon after the return to civilian government is a disappointing feature of the new system in operation. The fact that it has proved so easy for the new state governments to dissolve local councils and replace them with decision makers who, if they are representative of or responsive to anyone at all it is the state leadership, should cause some dismay among those who have put their faith in local democracy as the guarantor of national democracy and stability.

In fact since 1979 virtually all local councils have been dissolved and replaced by caretaker management committees appointed by the state governor. The justification for this has either been mismanagement on the part of local councillors or the state's inability to organize fresh elections at the end of the councillor's first term of office. However, the dissolutions have been kept in force well beyond the statutory time limit of three months. In some cases there have been court actions when the legality of dissolutions has been challenged, as happened in Rivers State in November 1979. Elsewhere, allegations of manipulation in pursuit of partisan advantage have been made, as in Oyo State in January 1980 when the state branch of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) accused the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), which was in control at the state level, of packing the management committees, with which the executive had replaced the state's local governments, with its own activists in compensation for them not having been chosen as UPN candidates in the 1979 state and national elections. There have been many other accusations of this kind, especially when dissolutions were enforced before the natural expiry of electoral terms. In Kwara the NPN itself was accused by the

Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) of using the caretaker committees which it

had appointed to 'subjugate' members of other political parties prior to

the holding of new local elections, and of appointing its 'agents' to

these committees. The partisan motivation behind many of the

dissolutions is evident in the justifications offered for them. In Benue,

for example, the House of Assembly passed a resolution requesting the

executive to dissolve all the local councils in the state, claiming that

the councillors were 'handpicked by the last military administration'

and that the council chairmen had been victimising their political

opponents (West Africa, 26 November 1979). Unfortunately partisan

motives therefore seem to predominate in the use of the dissolution power,

though allegations of mismanagement are always made. Dissolution has

been used to punish areas that did not give electoral support to the party

in power.

It is undoubtedly the case that the wholesale mass dissolution of

councils is the cause of serious confusion. This confusion is between

the power of a governor to dissolve a council because investigation has

revealed maladministration, and the decision to suspend all councils

more or less indefinitely. The former is an administrative action. The

latter concerns the whole basis of the system and is therefore a

legislative matter. In sweeping away all councils the state executives

seem to be confusing an administrative power of central control with a

legislative function, that of responsibility for the local government

system as a whole. It is also hard to believe, when there are mass

dissolutions, that all local authorities in a state are simultaneously

guilty of mismanagement, especially when there have been few investigations,

required by the law, to prove this, though this was claimed to be the case

in Lagos when the governor suspended every council on the grounds that

they were "no longer discharging their functions in a manner conducive

to the welfare of the inhabitants" (New Nigerian, 26 March, 1980).

Hence it appears as if mass dissolution and the replacement of elected councils by appointed committees defies the constitution which guarantees representative local government. Dent's criticism identifies the political motive behind the fusion of administrative and legislative powers:

> A further aspect of excess state government power is their apparent assumption that since local government is within their sphere of legislative competence, they can use this power to appoint their own political supporters to management committees to run local government councils. Section 7 of the constitution GUARANTEES elected local government by elected local government councils (1980, p. 1887)·

Similarly, the issue of local government reorganization has become a matter of electoral manipulation for partisan advantage. Many of the proposals to create more units of local government are designed to give the ruling party an advantage in the next round of local elections, or to redress grievances arising from the politically motivated sub-division of some states for local government purposes in 1976. The fact that the constitution stipulates that a candidate for the governorship must win one quarter of the votes in at least two-thirds of the local government areas in the state means that a governor who can create more local authorities in areas where his party has strong electoral support can significantly improve his chance for a second term of office. While there can be no objection to a party promising in its election manifesto to reform the local government system in pursuit of improved administration, this should be kept distinct in the public mind from attempts to gerrymander gubernatorial and other elections. It is a pity, therefore, that many of the recently advocated 'reforms' appear to be thinly veiled attempts to gerrymander the structure in the interest of the dominant party at the state level.

Conclusion

The new system of local government in Nigeria continues very firmly in a tradition of central control stretching back to colonial times. The new status endowed by the constitution is outweighed by a subjection to central controls which extend well beyond the power to veto local initiatives and enable central authorities to promote their own policies using local governments as their agents. Both sanction and influence are used equally extensively. The motives for central control are highly political and paternalistic.

Anyone commenting adversely on this is likely to be reminded of the grave administrative problems faced by local authorities because of the poor calibre of their staff and councillors. These factors in the local situation cannot be denied. But it is equally important to remember that poor standards of administration are not the exclusive perogative of local government. The centre's record has not been an unblemished one. Many additional problems are created for local government by delays in decision making at the centre, ranging from the approval of annual estimates to the countersigning of payment vouchers. Councils have often found themselves well into the financial year before final approvals are received. Both morale and efficiency can be undermined by the late or non-payment of central grants. Badly designed forms impose extra burdens on those required to furnish the ministry with detailed records and statistics. Problems snowball when complex submissions required from local authorities produce queries from the ministry which have to be followed up. Confusion can arise from the dispersal of central controls among different central authorities, especially when they all apply to the same subject, such as having the governor approve councillors' salaries, the commissioner approve heads of departments salaries and the local government secretary approve the

salaries of other officials. Nor does the centre always rigorously

observe the requirement to consult a local authority before deleting or

amending an item on its estimates. Useful advice on development

planning has been rare. A lack of familiarity with local problems on

the part of headquarters' staff has led to the issuing of unworkable

instructions, especially in circulars of general application to widely

varied circumstances (Adewumi, 1973, p. 47). Central auditors are not

always familiar with local government accounting methods, and there have

been cases of cancelled accounts which later turned out to be correct.

Delays in completing audit, sometimes up to five years, have often meant

that they impose no threat to the potential fraud or embezzler. It has

sometimes been felt that the central authorities have actually discouraged

the recruitment of qualified staff on the basis of merit in local

government in order to divert good people into the civil service and to

make it easier to control local authorities. Good staff have even been

demoted for refusing to move out of local government into the State's

administrative service.

Excessive central control can also be dysfunctional in the response

which it may elicit from repressed local authorities. If circulars are

expressed in too technical a language for the local officials they "may

assume that no serious action is anticipated" (Adewumi, 1973, p. 46). If

local authority personnel requirements are rejected attempts may be made

to run services without the necessary qualified staff. If the state

forces its own appointees on unwilling local authorities they have "a

clever way of frustrating such people ... either by entrusting

responsibilities in the hands of people more junior to them or creating

a difficult working climate" (Adewumi, 1973, p. 51). The feeling that

staff have been imposed by the centre may reduce the interest and

confidence of the public in local government and consequently the

willingness to pay tax at a time when tax evasion is already a serious

problem for local authorities (Oyediran, 1974[A], p. 551). Local

authorities may try to circumvent central controls over contracts for

capital projects by breaking down contracts into amounts smaller than

those which require Tenders Board approval or by purchasing materials in

bulk for contractors to use, again reducing the cost to avoid central

scrutiny and expert advice which may run counter to the authority's own

views and intentions (Adewumi, 1973, p. 55).

It is extremely difficult to strike the right balance between

central control and local autonomy, especially in conditions of under-

development. How that balance works out in practice will depend on a

number of factors, and not just on formal relationships. Some of these

are associated with the political and organizational circumstances

which condition the interaction between different levels of government.

The attitudes of central ministries to local authorities may vary. Local

authorities in their turn may be able to bargain and negotiate successfully

with higher levels of government. They themselves will vary in the

resources which they have at their disposal for resisting central control.

Central agencies may not be able to present a consistent policy. Local

governments may receive conflicting guidance from different departments

on expenditure and levels of service provision. Such incompatibility

and obscurity may be virtues as far as local autonomy is concerned

(Harris, 1978).

However, they may be vices if they lead to negative responses from

local authorities, or undermine their fragile administrative viability,

or produce a reaction at the local level which is self destructive as

well as defensive. It seems likely that the present atmosphere and

machinery of central control over local government in Nigeria will lead

to expectations of local autonomy being frustrated, with the inevitable

consequences for locally administered services. Obviously this part of

the machinery of government cannot be artificially dissociated from the

political struggles taking place at state level. However, if local

groups begin to feel that their local institutions can never amount to

anything more than mere pawns in the games of higher level politicians

and that the gap between expectations and reality is increasing, government

at both levels will be brought into disrepute.

Thus, although democracy is one of the guiding objectives behind the

reinstatement of representative local government in the 1976 reform, it

is inaccurate to identify it with local government. The doctrinary

inclination with regard to democracy has led many people "to link, then

merge and confuse decentralization and democracy" (Fesler, 1964, p. 3).

Events since 1976 demonstrate that local government is not of necessity

identical with democracy, and that special measures must be taken to

ensure that local government is democratic (Smith and Owojaiye, 1981).

The reforms, however, did bring a few gains from the point of view

of their democratic objective. In Nigeria, the electorate had their

first chance in over a decade to exercise their democratic rights at the

polls. The 1976 elections were necessary appetizers for the 1979 state

and national elections. The voting age was lowered to 18 years from

21 years and universal suffrage was introduced throughout the country for

the first time. Lastly, democracy was further strengthened by greatly

reducing the role of traditional leaders in local government affairs. In

Britain, a large number of trivial controls have been abolished, local

authorities now suffer less interference on planning matters, some local

powers have been clarified or expanded, the small amount an authority

can spend for the benefit of its area beyond the services for which it

has statutory provision has been substantially increased, and the

government auditor's powers in connection with local authority expenditure

have been narrowed. We should not exaggerate the loss of municipal

functions. Local authorities are still critically involved in important

and fast-growing sectors of social provision. They have made significant

functional gains such as the 1947 Civic Restaurant Act which empowered

local authorities to provide and administer restaurants and to supply

meals to the public; the Clean Air Act, 1956, which allowed local

authorities to establish smoke control areas; the 1962 National

Assistance Act which enabled county and county borough councils to

provide meals and recreation for old people instead of using voluntary

bodies for this purpose; and perhaps the most important 'gain' was the

Town and Country Planning Act, 1947 which introduced a comprehensive

system for the control of development. Two other innovations which the

reform brought about are worth mentioning because they are vital for

democracy. Firstly, under the 1972 Act press and public have a right

to attend committee meetings. Secondly, the establishment of the office

of the ombudsman enables claims and grievances of citizens to be dealt

with equitably. The increasing powers of both central and local

government to make decisions affecting various rights of the citizen make

it necessary to provide effective remedies, through the ombudsman, which

protect him against unjust administrative action.

EFFICIENCY

It is really inconceivable that one can talk of efficiency and

effectiveness of local authorities in both countries amidst the many

problems which we have enumerated so far in this chapter. If the

functional/structural divisions are not based on any rational criteria,

with a lot of overlapping, fragmentation and duplication of functions

between different tiers of local government leading to wastage and

conflicts; if the councils do not have enough resources, both finance

and manpower, to perform their duties efficiently; if they are not even

free to exercise basic democratic rights; if representation and

participation have been killed by excessive central control; if serious

limitations are placed on local autonomy by national control of its

expenditure; and if the calibre of councillors and officers has not

improved with the reforms; then one can certainly conclude that there

has been little or no improvement in efficiency.   In other words, there

is an intricate connection between the functional/structural and

democratic objectives on the one hand, and efficiency on the other hand.

And since our evaluation shows that the first set of objectives have not

been adequately achieved by the reform, then the last objective,

efficiency, has certainly suffered too.   What we have analysed so far

therefore portrays the inefficient and ineffective operation of local

government, especially in Nigeria.   What remains for us to evaluate,

therefore, is the internal administration of the councils.

As with the case of democracy, so with functional efficiency have

the realities of local government outrun the assumptions on which the

system is based.   At the beginning of the century, the task of local

government in Britain was mainly one of simple administration, providing

the basic services and otherwise interfering very little with the

citizens' free conduct of their affairs.   But now, when local government

is a huge machine handling a variety of complex functions and trespassing

directly upon private interests, the independence of the elected member

in pursuing the grievances of his constituents is compromised by his

formal responsibility for the acts of the council, however little he may

in fact be in control of policy-making or of official administration.

Although the councillors' policy-making role may give them access to the

machine of a kind that popular representatives would not otherwise enjoy,

it does so by making those representatives part of the machine, implicated

both in the decisions and in the efficiency of its administration. This dilemma is, in our view, the fatal flaw in the position of the elected councillor. It is very doubtful whether 'part-time' councillors could effectively act either as policy-makers or as the instrument of popular democracy. What does seem clear is that, by attempting to sustain both roles at once, they are prevented from the proper discharge of either.

The Maud Report, the Redcliffe-Maud Report and the Bains Report all made serious attempts to improve the internal management of local government. Little has changed, however, since the reform. A survey by Greenwood et al (1974, 1975, 1976) which tried to identify the salient features of the management structures of the new authorities in order to see how they compare with the structures prevalent before reform shows that very few local authorities have streamlined the numbers of committees. In fact many local authorities have even been forced to reinflate numbers of members per committee in order to give members 'something to do' (Greenwood et al, 1975, p. 7). The Bains Report went beyond simply proposing a reduction in the number and size of committees, since it also had regard as to the criteria to be used in dividing up committee responsibilities. Local authorities were advised to adopt the 'programme committee' concept, and although this has not been rejected explicitly by local authorities, the specific committees set out in the Bains Working Group's Report (1972) are not always accepted and several traditional committees have survived reorganization (Greenwood et al, 1975, p. 8).

The survey also discussed the emergence of area committees and the use of informal working groups of councillors, but it recognized that these were "still comparatively rare innovations" (Greenwood et al, 1975, p. 9). They declared that the policy committee was an 'established feature' of English local government, and reorganization has brought to

a head the pre-reorganization movement towards the policy committee as the hub of the committee system. But although the Bains Report stressed the quite crucial importance of monitoring and reviewing established policies and commitments and wanted to see a performance review sub-committee, 'fewer than half' the new authorities have followed this crucial piece of advice.

Furthermore, traditional departments have, by and large, retained their status and few authorities would appear to have broken from the professional base. There are a number of authorities, particularly counties and to a lesser extent shire districts which still adopt the 'traditional professional-department approach' (Greenwood et al, 1976). These authorities all have the 'primary corporate mechanisms' of chief executives, management teams, and policy committees, but they simply 'do not operate in the corporate way that was envisaged by Bains'. The truth of the matter is that 'there are some local authorities where the corporate structure exists on paper but it has little or nothing to do with the actual operation of policy-making'. Even at a more general level, the corporate additions of the chief executive, management team, corporate groups, and policy committee have to a large extent been overlain onto the ongoing operating structure of line departments and service committees (Greenwood et al, 1976).

At a general level, the departmental structures, established at the time of reorganization, have changed little since then, and the "tension ... between central departments and service departments has been exacerbated since reorganization" (Greenwood et al, 1976, p. 17). New departments that have been created out of a number of other departments have 'often suffered more from cutbacks' and have been the subject of major 'conflicts' and 'antagonisms'. The continuing strength of the established departments and professional groups is revealed in 'the lack of commitment to inter-

disciplinary working groups in many authorities'; in the 'considerable

doubt in many authorities about the value of central corporate planning

units'; in the fact that 'very few authorities have central research

and intelligence units'; and in the fact that personnel management 'does

not tend to play an important part as was envisaged before reorganization'

and chief officers have had to spend their time 'plugging the gaps'

(Greenwood et al, 1976). The management team has been a problematic

innovation. Few authorities have taken the Bains advice and created a

small team because of the social problems of resentment, suspicion, and

communication where certain officers are excluded. Where a team has

tried to develop a sense of 'collective responsibility' this has frequently

evoked considerable hostility on the part of members. Simply expressed,

> it is not clear that the management team has been one of the
> successes since reorganization: unity at a personal level has
> not necessarily permeated the authority and subsequently led to
> integrated departmental work relations between the disparate
> departments; agendas have been clustered with too much detail;
> and concensus management has too often obliterated a necessary
> diversity of opinion (Greenwood et al, 1976, p. 22)

On the councillor side, although there are some authorities where

the policy committee assumes a 'coordinating role', and there are others

where it assumes a corporate and 'interventionist' role, the 'largest

group of local authorities' has a policy committee which assumes a

'commenting' role where the locus of policy-making is still within the

service committee. These views have been authenticated by Stewart (1975)

who identifies a danger in that management teams see their role not as

the setting of a framework, but the consideration of all the authorities'

activities. He describes vividly how the processes of corporate

management are drowning in seas of paper, policy and resources committees

battle with endless agendas, management teams become another committee

through which new proposals have to struggle and inter-disciplinary

groups proliferate, and there is a danger that all activities are dealt

with by corporate management.

Another problem which is still hindering efficiency in both countries, although to a lesser extent in Britain, is corruption. The Royal Commission on Standards in Public Life (1976) found that of the 179 people, excluding police officers, convicted of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Acts, there were 14 local authority members and 70 local government officers. In Nigeria, the New Nigerian (5 January 1979) spoke of the "corruption and wanton financial mismanagement that characterized the local government councils so far investigated".

Thus, Norton concludes that the reform in England and Wales has brought little progress in terms of efficiency:

> The changes led to a heavy strain on resources. Workloads
> expanded dramatically, a heavy loss of staff could not be
> made up economically by recruitment, and new standards and
> new establishments tended to be set at more generous levels.
> Competition among authorities for the rarer categories of
> staff was expensive. Staff commissions set up with an
> oversight on staff matters had only a marginal effect on the
> inflationary tendencies of such a period, concerned as they
> were more with protection of staff interests than with
> economy (Norton, 1980, pp. 273-4).

The reform in Nigeria has brought little or no improvements in the internal administration of the councils. The new system is designed to equip local government everywhere professionally and financially for its task, but as we have tried to show so far in this chapter, it has been one big mirage. Finance, equipment and qualified personnel are in short supply. Money is unavailable because tax collection is poorly organized or, more importantly, as local government becomes more dependent on the centre for revenue allocations, higher levels of government fail to deliver promised grants on time. Staff are in short supply. A few examples from Anambra State will serve to illustrate the problem. Ihiala in 1979 had one social welfare officer for a population estimated at 203,339. Anambra local government had two community health assistants and three health orderlies for nearly 300,000 people. Igbo-Ekiti had 233 teachers and the same number of auxiliaries for its primary schools.

Elsewhere the problems are just as great. Zaria cannot maintain its roads or dispose of the growing amount of refuse created by a growing urban population. In Bornu State the present provision for primary education can only cater for 15 per cent of the school age population and another 70,000 classes are needed (West African, 7 January 1980). Most authorities experience difficulties in organizing revenue collection. Implementation is often further impeded by maladministration. These factors are an important qualification to the picture we have of service provision by Nigerian local authorities.

Considerable anxiety has always been shown about the high proportions of local revenues which are spent on personal emoluments rather than projects. Such expenditure has often consumed half the budgets of local authorities in the north, for example. This matter should be dealt with cautiously. Local government services are often labour intensive, especially in the social welfare and educational fields. It should not be automatically assumed that because there is a high level of spending on salaries, wages, superannuation and so on that a service is necessarily unproductive. It may be difficult to measure the productivity of, say, teachers, but that is in the nature of the public good being provided. Much of the 'product' of local government will inevitably take the form of a service delivered by professionals direct to members of the public. The success of local government should not only be measured by miles of road built or number of boreholes drilled.

Of greater concern is the high proportion of expenditure devoted to administrative costs. Many of these have to be borne in support of particular services, but it must be remembered that the expenditure on services such as education, health and agriculture also includes the cost of administrators and clerical staff as well as teachers, health superintendents and agricultural officers. The new system of local

government does not appear to have reduced significantly the cost of

administration than under the old system: over .22 per cent in 1979-80

(see Table 8.6) compared with the Western State where local authorities

allocated 20.1 per cent of their budgets on administrative costs in

1965-66, and 16.4 per cent in 1966-67 (Western State, 1967, Tables 6 and

7). In the north, however, Kaduna's 17.7 per cent is an improvement

on North Western's 22.4 per cent in 1971 (North Western State, 1971;

North Central State, 1975), but the fact that in Bauchi the bulk of local

budgets is devoted to administrative costs suggests little improvement in

priorities there (Aliyu and Koehn, 1980). A certain amount of

expenditure on new premises was perhaps inevitable in the period immediately

TABLE 8.6: DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING BETWEEN SERVICES
1962 - 1980 (WESTERN REGION AND OGUN STATE)

	WESTERN REGION 1962-3		OGUN STATE 1979-80	
	£ '000	%	₦ '000	%
Administration	1,277.4	14.1	5.6	22.3
Judicial	1,154.7[a]	12.7	0.4	1.6
Education	3,077.1	33.9	2.0	8.0
Health	1,089.1	12.0	3.5	13.9
Public Works	1,464.9	16.2	13.3	53.0
Agriculture	237.6	2.7	0.2[b]	0.8
Trade and Industry	4.0	0.1	--	--
Other	750.3	8.3	0.1[c]	0.4
TOTAL	9,055.1	100.0	25.1	100.0

a Includes police and prisons
b Includes trade and industry
c Community development in Ogun State
Sources: Western State (1968); Ogun State Local Government Estimates
1979-80

following the reorganization of local government, but it is doubtful whether

much of the expenditure on staff quarters, guest houses, housing for

district heads, and council accommodation can be justified, especially when
development objectives have been set for local government.

Two other problems are worth pointing out. First, it is rather
surprising that the concept of corporate management is still unheard of
in Nigeria at the tail end of the twentieth century. Second, just as there
have been problems between state and local government officials, so also
there is serious conflict within the councils themselves. The difficulty
of drawing a line between policy and administration at the local level
has become a source of friction. There have been numerous clashes between
political functionaries (chairmen and supervisory councillors) and the
chief executive (secretary to the local government). The political
functionaries, who are full-time appointees, tend to interfere too often
in the running of the local authorities. For example, a supervisory
councillor for works in a local government in Bendel State was reported to
have dismissed a road labourer without the knowledge of the chief executive.
Yet the councillors were given no control over staff under the new
system.

It is certainly difficult to see what significant improvements have
been achieved by the reforms in Britain and Nigeria, especially the latter.
Local authorities in Nigeria, however, have made some achievements in
education and minor constructions such as motor parks and markets. In
Britain, most of the authorities now have chief executives and all of them
have management teams.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL STABILITY

In view of the emphasis placed in federal policy statements on the
significance attached to local government as an agent of development it
is surprising to note how expenditure on agriculture, trade, industry
and public works such as roads, has declined to negligible proportions

in some states.   Yet in 1968 a United Nations expert had noted North

Central's N.A. expenditure in these fields standing at under 4 per cent,

commenting that "high standards of social services can only be maintained

if the wealth of the community is sufficient to maintain them; and to

expand the former and ignore the development of the services which increase

that wealth is to court financial disaster" (Smith, 1968, p. 2).

Assessing the position throughout the country a year or two later Adedeji

and Rowland noted the relatively insignificant role which local government

was playing in the development process compared with the states, and its

'poor performance' in areas relevant to the productive capacity of the

local economy such as public works, agriculture, forestry and industrial

development.   Much capital expenditure was spent on replacements and

minor repairs.   The total budgetary picture for a state could be dominated

by a single large authority such as Benin, Bornu or Ibadan, with others

having no capital budgets at all.   Significantly local government was not

mentioned in the Second National Development Plan for 1970-74 (Adedeji and

Rowland, 1972, p. 8).

Nevertheless, there were some states in which capital development

projects were planned.   Between 1969 and 1975 in Kaduna State for example

local authorities budgeted over 7 million naira for development projects

such as roads, wells, dams, forest improvements and plantations.   The

problem appears to have been one of implementation, since no authority in

the state was able to complete even 50 per cent of its projects during

the period.

The designers of the new system were aware of these shortcomings and

clearly wished to see local government making a much greater contribution

to the development effort.   Education is clearly crucial to development,

and here local government is playing its part.   But in other fields there

has been a move away from involvement in socio-economic development.

Indeed, it is not uncommon to find some local authorities spending more on the maintenance of traditional offices than on agriculture, trade and industry combined. Ogun State's 1.2 per cent of local budgets on community development does not suggest that local government is in the forefront of the development effort, and compares unfavourably with even the meagre 4.2 per cent spent on veterinary services, trade, industry, forestry and agriculture in the Western State in 1966-67. Nor does Anambra's 2.7 per cent on agriculture, though it is an improvement on the average performance in the Eastern Region in the mid-1960s (see Table 8.4). Also the local authorities have planned a considerable level of capital expenditure on markets which, if implemented, should make a contribution to development by encouraging trade. But the general picture does not support the assumption that local government is serving as a mechanism for socio-economic development, and it certainly cannot be inferred that the more local authorities there are the greater the level of development (New Nigerian, 15 December 1979).

The development role of local government is more clearly understood if it is seen as part of the provision of an infrastructure required by capitalist production and enterprise. Then the emphasis on the construction of markets, council offices, roads, and water supplies is more comprehensible. The role assigned to local government reflects the dominant ideology of the Nigerian political leadership. It is very characteristic of municipal government at a time of early capitalist development with a democratic ideology. It in part explains why 'development' at the local level is so often measured by the quantity of physical constructions completed, a habit which allows maternity centres to remain unequipped and classrooms to be used for storage space (New Nigerian, 22 February 1979). But more importantly the powers devolved to local government reflect the interests of those who control the state

level and the extent to which they are prepared to loosen control over important inputs provided by the government to a growing industrial, commercial and agricultural business class.

Budgets only reflect in part the priorities assigned by locally elected representatives to different local needs and interests. They also reflect the powers which the centre is prepared to devolve. They should also be seen in the context of varying levels of implementation and uncertainty stemming from fluctuations in the regularity of grant payments by higher levels of government. All these factors, only some of which are controlled by local authorities, mean that there will be different patterns of spending and service provision from one part of the country to another and from time to time even within a single authority. Local traditions will also have their impact on patterns of local government expenditure, traditions such as community development through voluntary donations and self-help by lineages and kinship groups. Communal effort releases local government for other objectives. It will also alter the pattern of state grant allocations. The role which such traditional or communal groups can play in local government will be the main theme of the next chapter, 'Recommentations'.

Thus, the role which local government is expected to play in socio-economic development and national stability is not only ill-defined, but it has also become impossible to achieve anything substantial in view of the problems we have analysed in this chapter. There is little to suggest that the recent reforms have increased local government's development capacity. In many parts of the country local authorities do little more than administer part of what has become an increasingly -centralized educational service. Elsewhere, public works absorb the resources of local authorities, but much of the expenditure is on maintenance work of government buildings. In our survey we asked

administrative officers to evaluate the problems that hinder economic

and social development in their local government areas.   26 per cent

of them felt that one of the problems is lack of understanding of

state government's goals for development at the local level.   6 per

cent mentioned the loss of local administrative officers to state

governments as one of the serious hindrances.   The majority of those

interviewed (54 per cent), however, said that lack of motivation and

participation on the part of the citizens is the most acute problem.

The remainder mentioned things like lack of cooperation of local

authorities with the state government and political opposition to state

government efforts.   When we asked the administrative officers what

they thought was the most effective way of instilling citizen

participation in development, 64 per cent of them mentioned citizen's

involvement in the planning stage.   Only 18 per cent of them opted for

education (adults and children) as the second most important way.

Thus, there can hardly be any development if the people cannot participate.

And until such a time when the Government restores the 'functional

integrity' of local authorities and realises that local democracy in its

various facets is an inevitable part of national democracy can local

government play any positive role in enhancing socio-economic development

and national stability.

CHAPTER NINE

RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

> To raze the simplified conceptual structures erected by one's
> predecessors is not only a frolic for the young in spirit,
> but also a necessary step toward the discovery of truths
> that have eluded scholars in the past (Fesler, 1957, p.139).

Nowadays 'realists'. in government talk more about the

'management' of problems than their solution. Therefore, if our

recommendations help in the 'management' of the problems which

we have identified then this research has been worthwhile. It

is unlikely that any major reform of local government will take

place in Britain in the next decade although there is talk of some

'organic change' which would abolish counties, and restore power

to districts over education and social services (Organic Change in

Local Government, 1979; Ashford, 1981, pp.192-94). The present

structure in Nigeria is not likely to enjoy such a 'permanence'

because every state government has promised to reform local

government again. Whatever the case, however, there must be

arrangements for adapting the present patterns to social, econo-

mic, demographic and technological changes and to change in the

demands that both countries make on local government. Any

approach to the reform of local government areas will require

considerable insight into the area's probable future economic

and social development in order that sufficient scope for

development may be given to new units at the time of their

creation. Since local government cannot be abstracted out of the

society of which it is a part, participation and efficiency will

be enhanced if the dynamics within the society or culture, such

as the institution of age-set in Nigeria, are exploited (see

below). Restructuring of local government boundaries,therefore, should be oriented towards the future rather than the present; otherwise, they will soon prove inadequate for what is often considered to be their major role : social and economic development of their areas.

There is considerable merit in retaining a two-tier system in Britain, each tier having clear responsibilities, but incorporating a reasonable measure of flexibility in its application, and endeavouring at all times to secure the right balance between efficiency and democracy, recognising that these are frequently in conflict. We would advocate, however, that the local authorities should be smaller than at present constituted because if we take the most basic definition of democracy - that government acts in accordance with the wishes of citizens - then democracy is undeniably a diminishing function of scale. It may be impossible to take Mill's advice and make every town a municipal council (1968, p.350) but his insistence on the primacy of the urban entity ought to be the starting-point for any future reform and not the hypothetical requirements of the functions it happens to provide. We cannot emphasise too sharply that the essence of local government is that it should be local.

We must of necessity talk in highly generalised terms, but other things being equal, we may say that a small unit is likely to be more democratic than a larger unit for a number of reasons. First, because in small units representatives are more likely to be responsive to citizens' views; second, because a smaller unit makes it possible for citizens to participate in decision making; third, a smaller unit leads to a more favourable ratio of demo-

cratic representation since there will be less voters per elected

representative; and fourthly, in smaller units there is a greater

likelihood of political homogeneity among the citizenry, thus making

possible more clear-cut majorities on issues and more popular con-

trolof leaders (Barry, 1974, p.497). People are no longer satis-

fied with just voting; they want to participate in decision making

and take part in activities that directly affect them. We do accept

the need for services to be performed efficiently and that this

requires larger units of local authority. Perhaps the solution

to these functionalist claims is to create an intermediate tier

at the regional level between the centre and locality with powers

and functions not dissimilar to those of the states in Nigeria or

the United States of America. This would not necessarily distort

the unitary system of government in Britain. Such an intermediate

tier would head off the pursuit of ever-larger local government

units, either for irrelevant motives like that of reducing the

workload of central government, or to achieve some functional

capacity that is either unattainable or should properly be the

task of the intermediate tier. Furthermore, the need to make more

accountable the growing number of non-departmental organisations

that at present exist between central and local government jus-

tifies the creation of intermediate tiers. There may also be a need

to establish an intermediate tier in response to Scottish and

Welsh nationalism. Lastly, such an intermediate tier is likely to

protect local government from further centralisation. This upper

tier should be responsible for such activities as transport,

planning, education, police and fire. District councils could be

responsible for housing,social services, recreation, libraries

and public health matters. To overcome the deficiencies at grass-

roots level and promote participation, neighbourhood councils could perform a valuable role by identifying local needs and having recognised links with the upper tiers of local government. In like manner there is a need for a state-like authority to co-ordinate matters affecting London as a whole. Certainly the Greater London Council is involved in far too many detailed issues which are better left to the London boroughs.

A wide-ranging reappraisal would also be needed to embrace not only the present local authorities and their areas and functions, but also central/local government relationships, finance and the ad hoc bodies such as water and health authorities. A serious attempt should be made to reduce central interference with local government and to widen the scope for local authority initiative and action to identify and satisfy local needs and aspirations. The independence of local authorities has been deeply undermined by their reliance on financial help from the central government. This problem would be reduced if the recommendations of the Layfield Committee are implemented since local councils would be free to make their own spending and taxing decisions. Certainly, local councils could not attain such financial autonomy without fresh taxing powers. To give them such independence, the Layfield Report proposed the introduction of a local income tax to replace part of the grant and to supplement rates. The target was to reduce grant from 65.5 per cent at least to 50 per cent; in fact, the Committee found that if the objective of grant were limited simply to equalisation, to compensate for disparities in re-sources and spending needs, then grant could fall to 40 per cent of local revenue (Committee of Inquiry into Local Government Finance, 1976, p.219). So the Layfield solution, which we agree

with, was that local income tax would take up the financing of the
25.5 per cent of local expenditure previously filled by grant,
believing that "a greater measure of financial independence is
essential if Local Authorities are not to be treated as agents of the
Departments" (Chester, 1951, pp.30, 369).

The anxiety about declining councillor calibre goes beyond the
personnel of government to deal with what the fundamental relation-
ship is, and should be, between dominant interests and the inter-
ventions of the local representative bodies of the state. Re-
organisation has long been seen as urgent because of an implicit
conception of the necessity for dominant interests controlling
local government more directly. Moreover, reform has held out the
possibility that changing facets of the local government apparatus
could actually achieve this result. A number of other issues are
also involved. We are forced to consider the implications of
universal suffrage and the rise of the Labour Party. We have to
pay particular attention to the impact of state intervention and
public expenditure on dominant interests. Finally, we must have
regard to the constraints on that intervention - constraints that
tend to manifest themselves in particular moments of economic, and
therefore, political crisis, even though we must recognise that
the problem of state intervention and public expenditure is built
into the system. These points need to be taken into account
in any future reform.

We have pointed out that the problem of local government in
Nigeria is more attitudinal than structural. That is not to say
that the present structure is perfect. Far from it. In fact,
the local governments must have more taxing powers so that they
can generate enough revenue to employ adequately qualified staff

and to reduce their over-dependence on central government grants.

The local authorities need to tighten their taxation methods

and improve the collection of taxes. This will help their finances

and reduce central controls. But more importantly, there is an

urgent need for the state and local government officials, espe-

cially the former, to change their attitudes. For me, as for

Professor Langrod (1953), democracy implies, above all, the active

presence of a kind of 'ethics', of a certain 'public spirit' which

in particular involves respect for human rights and the rights of

minorities, fair play, decent methods, tolerance, unselfishness

and observing the rules of the game. The strengthening of

democratic local government should be the aim of all patriotic

politicians.

Apathy which is caused by alienation and ignorance will

be reduced if the press are empowered to report on council pro-

ceedings. The press is invaluable to local government because it

will improve the relationships between the electorate and their

representatives on the one hand, and the local authorities and

the state government on the other hand. Recent demands for more open

local government are encouraging - and worth encouragement. Infor-

mation should be made easily available to public, press, the mass

media and especially the researcher or academics whose recommen-

dations may prove invaluable to local government and the nation on

the long run. There is an urgent need for local government

information office, local public relations officers, council

publication of documents analogous to the consultation and policy

papers now commonly issued by state and federal governments as a

preliminary to legislation, and many other new devices for

encouraging genuine discussion between the electorate and their

representatives. There is also an urgent need to establish the

office of the ombudsman so that citizen's grievances can be re-

dressed impartially.

The establishment of a national body of local government

officers, comparable to NALGO in Britain, will enhance efficiency

and cooperation. Such a national body would encourage joint

co-operation and reduce duplication and wastage, say, in building a

dam to supply water to neighbouring towns instead of each authority

building its own. That would also save money, energy, resources

and allow more personnel to concentrate on the councils' other

duties. The establishment of local government associations would

give local government an added voice in national affairs since

they would be able to speak with a single voice. More significantly,

such an association would confront a potential governor who wants

to gerrymander local authorities or who wants to punish a council

for political reasons.

The efficiency and effectiveness of local government would be

improved if some form of corporate management and management tech-

niques such as PPBS, O. & M., network analysis, operational research,

employment of private consultants, work study, cost-benefit analysis

and the use of computers are introduced.

Fears used to be expressed that frustration would set in among local

decision makers if an increase in their calibre was accompanied by a

decrease in the significance of what they were empowered to do. One way

of avoiding such frustration is to create institutions whose members

do not expect to exercise any discretion. This is what the dis-

solution of elected bodies, and their replacement by agents of the

centre, effectively does. However, this is likely to pass the

frustration on to groups at the local level who are excluded from

even the opportunity to win office through democratic procedures.
The functions devolved to local institutions cannot be disassociated
from the autonomy with which powers once delegated can be exercised.
When local government is returned to a representative and democratic
basis, in line with the requirements of the constitution, some
further thought will need to be given to whether its present role
is consistent with the objectives originally laid down for it.
In other words, it is not enough to give local authorities powers
and functions on paper; they must be given the opportunity to
perform those functions and exercise those powers if they must remain
truly democratic.

The central problem here is to separate local government and
state power in the consciousness of the political community. At
the moment this is impossible. This is not because voters are likely
to judge state governments by what happens at the local level and
the decisions made by local authorities. That will always happen.
It is rather that what happens at the local level in Nigeria is
critical for the electoral success of individual state legislators,
and perhaps even more importantly, for the returns which are made
in gubernatorial elections.

What chance is there of local government not being used, as
it so often has been in the past, as a means by which electoral
support for candidates for state office can be manipulated? Only
if local authorities are given a measure of autonomy and devolved
powers which are free from discrimatory intervention by a central
(state) government in pursuit of electoral advantage. Central
controls will always be called for in any system of devolution.
But the more these are used to discriminate against individual
authorities the more difficult it will be to extricate local

government from the partisan inclinations of central politicians
and make it a viable institution in its own right. Only when it
becomes a working assumption that central control should be used
for state government policy objectives and not electoral advantage
can local government play any part in a democratic society (Smith
and Owojaiye, 1981, p.217).

Giving local government tasks and discretion is only a neces-
sary, not sufficient, condition of its viability as an institution
for community self-government. Other conditions are obviously
required, not least a guarantee of free and fair elections. But
the devolution of real powers with a degree of discretion in the
way they are used is an essential prerequisite for a local govern-
ment system to show a degree of responsiveness to local political
forces rather than be a mere tool in the hands of whoever wields
power at the centre. Certainly the exploitation of the traditional
institution of age-set (see below) will ameliorate things. It will
elicit responsiveness and participation of the citizens, help to
improve the power and image of local government and help increase
efficiency by removing some of the burdens which are presently
taxing the energy and resources of local government. The establish-
ment or intensification of the idea of community councils or
neighbourhood communities to handle community development projects
is likely to achieve the same result in Britain since they bring
out a strong sense of esprit de corps.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We define community development as a movement designed to
promote the voluntary participation of the people themselves in
efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as

possible on their own initiative, self-help and mutual help, and

make these more effective. With little to guide us in the

literature and with little that is significant emerging from

theorising on the subject, we have to turn to the reality of

community development in practice to understand fully the aims (see,

however, Green, 1974, pp.5-16; Smith, Lees and Topping, 1977,

pp.237-272; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1973). Somehow we

have to examine the variety of experience which exists and, even

though it may be impossible to devise a framework which would

embrace all experience, we must nevertheless attempt to strike at

the heart of the transaction in each case in order to discover

those factors which are common to all.

The Objectives of Community Development

In reality the primary objective of community development is

simply stated. It is to promote, sustain, support and maintain

community action. It stands in relation to community action in

very much the same way as education stands in relation to learning.

We know for example that learning can take place without any form

of educational process: we suspect that frequently a good deal of

education takes place unaccompanied by a corresponding learning;

and we know also that it is possible for an educational process

to stimulate a mindless form of learning that we call rote-

learning. In similar fashion community action can occur without

the stimulation of community development. It is possible also for

a highly sophisticated and lavishly supported community develop-

ment programme to complete its scheme of work without ever having

produced any form of real community action. And it is also true

that it is possible to promote a mindless kind of community action

in which the energies and aspirations of participants are frittered

away in activities which deviate them from their best interests.

It is even possible to promote community action as an end in itself;

it may very well be that there are occasions when it is both nece-

ssary and right to induce some kind of action as a therapeutic

measure to restore strength or to allow raw social wounds to heal -

a kind of communal basket - weaving. Valuable though this may be

in certain circumstances it would not be community development.

Community development as the term itself suggests is concerned

with development, with going forward towards defined goals, with

purposeful activity aimed at real achievement. The aim of com-

munity development is community action which must promote de-

mocratic participation, increase self-determination, overcome

alienation, resolve social problems through self-help and create a

caring society. The _ideal_ of community action which it seeks to

promote is in respect of real problems about which there is genuine

and deep concern in the community; it is in respect of problems

which are competently analysed; it is aimed at realistic and

realisable goals with the aid of appropriate strategies; it is

moreover a community action which realistically takes into account

the costs of action and weighs in the balance of its own interest

the disadvantages of reaction against hoped for benefit.

At another level, the concept of community development is a

reaction against the traditional forms of political organisation;

against "ossified and unresponsive local government" (Green, 1974,

p.5). More specifically it is a criticism of the representative

system of government and the inability of political parties to

make it work. We have tried throughout this thesis to prove that

local government reform became necessary in Nigeria and Britain

not only because there have been political, economic, technological,

cultural and social changes, but also because the social values of

the citizens of both countries have changed. People are no longer

satisfied with just voting during elections; they now want to

partake of decision making and execution. People are no longer

satisfied that the government-central or local - is providing

services; they now demand that these services are performed

efficiently and effectively. They no longer see the provision of

services as a privilege; today they see it as a right. They no

longer want a government that is paternalistic, hanging on their

necks like an albatross.

There are three main differences between Nigeria and Britain

in the type of community development action which we envisage will

engender participatory democracy, reduce local government workload

and thereby help improve its efficiency. In Britain it is urban

oriented as against its rural base in Nigeria. In Britain it is

an experiment; in Nigeria it is indigenous to the culture and

therefore spontaneous. In Britain it was initiated by the Govern-

ment; in Nigeria it is initiated by the people themselves. Because

of these differences, we will be treating our recommendations for

the two countries separately.

Britain

Since the Second World War local government has not actively

involved many people in more than once-yearly voting. Few people

attend council meetings. Few attend ward party meetings. Few

attend election meetings. Yet the system continues. Many people

have found the organisation of local political parties (especially

Labour) ineffective either as a forum for debate about local issues

which vitally affect them, or, ultimately, as a means of controlling

their outcome. My central proposition is that the newer forms

of participatory democracy embraced by community groups are a

reaction against old and incapable political institutions. It is an

essentially political interpretation of cause and effect. First,

residents are prepared to engage in public debate - prepared to

discuss their private interest openly and merge it with collective

action. Second, more importantly, the representative system which

relies so heavily on the principle of aggregate is particularly

vulnerable when dealing with issues which have a spatial component,

something unique to a particular area at a particular time.

Whereas education or health policy can be reduced to a set of pro-

cedures or rules which are applied in every town or city, planning

policy depends so much upon what is on the ground. In order to

be successful, to satisfy resident priorities, it cannot rely on

aggregate political principles but instead requires local debate

and locally sensitive solutions.

In short, participatory politics are increasingly recognised as

a counter to the insensitivity of a progressively centralised

system of formal constitutional representation. Many politicians

argued for some institutional form of neighbourhood politics to

sustain grass-roots debate within the new and larger units of local

government. Although voluntary organisations and community

activities have been known in Britain for a long time, and was

certainly given a boost in the late sixties and early seventies,

there is every need to intensify them. The need is even more

urgent now than ever before in the face of the present economic

and therefore political crisis, and the wave of riots which the

country is experiencing now. One of the brightest prospects for

the future health of many local services lies in the growing involvement of the citizens. The Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services - the Seebohm Committee - (1968) had no doubt that the expansion of personal social services which it thought necessary, called for a huge increase in the involvement of neighbours in their community, however much was also needed from the local council and the state. It seems equally clear that the present system of national health, if it is to serve the patient and avoid the risk of clinical and bureaucratic inhumanity, needs even more support from unofficial volunteers than the old system had from 'Leagues of Friends' attached to scores of individual hospitals. It has become clear that the existence of representative institutions are not sufficient for democracy. If these institutions are to function well, "socialisation, or 'social training', for democracy must take place in other spheres in order that the necessary individual attitudes and psychological qualities can be developed. This development takes place through the process of participation" (Pateman, 1974, p.42). Therefore, since the 'participatory value' of modern local government is 'an important element in a modern democracy', populist democracy needs to be intensified at the local level (Sharpe, 1970, p.174).

Following the Seebohm Report, most social service departments have delegated day-to-day responsibilities to a number of teams with a defined catchment area. In the Coventry and Liverpool Community Development Project Areas, many service agencies have joined together to provide their services from one building. The archetype for many, perhaps the ideal, is the Craigmillar Centre in Edinburgh which houses some combination of day nurseries, health visitors, home helps, rent collectors, citizens' advice

bureau, nuns, doctors and general practitioners, probation officers, marriage guidance councillors, the RSPCC, the DHSS, an employment exchange, research facilities, community workers and social workers of . various kinds (Green, 1974, p.15).

One obvious way in which non-councillors can participate in local government is through co-option. The involvement of groups in local decision making itself allows many ordinary citizens to participate in local democracy. Thus, in 1972, a total of 75 non-councillors were co-opted onto council committees and sub-committees in Bromley, the number swelling to over 170 when other 'official' committees were included. The vast majority of these co-opted members were not appointed on an individual basis, but rather as representatives of prominent local organisations. Thus, the 'populist' element in this direct participation is somewhat modified (Cousins, 1977, pp.41-2). Other forms of direct participation also exist. For example, local people in one ward of the London Borough of Lambeth physically transformed a council-owned site into a park and neighbourhood play area with the active encouragement of the council (Cousins, 1977, p.41). Such examples are still, however, comparatively few. Schemes have been devised by some council housing managers whereby council tenants would actually manage their own estates, with a committee of their own choice and an allocated budget. So far as I know, none of these schemes has been put into effect. Yet these are efforts worth reviving and intensifying.

The creation of small-scale, urban neighbourhood councils or community councils to undertake community development projects offer a number of opportunities. First, the whole issue of

decentralising control to the public, and of the ordinary person's

ability to handle the responsibility of his own public decision-

making, can be raised continually, so that people begin to see that,

at least, they are not as incapable of responsible action as

their exile from responsibility has led them to believe. The

unresponsiveness of higher authorities to their efforts will show

them the practical emptiness of community councils as they stand,

leading them to demand more effective participation and change.

Second, and to complement the first, internal self-help projects,

although not likely to achieve immediate comprehensive improve-

ments in the quality of life in working-class neighbourhoods,may

in the long run, give people practical experience of self-

reliance and their ability to create their own solutions to the

problems they face, even if the larger ones still require a

strategy of nationally co-ordinated campaign. After all, "any

practical project that breaks down the dependence effect of a

centralised, paternalistic and none too magnanimous welfare state

will be a step away from spectating and alienation" (Clarke, 1977,

p.138). Third, community councils would remove distance and

other forms of barrier between the government and the governed and

increase accessibility to local residents. Fourth, they would

increase officials' awareness to resident needs so that they

may respond more effectively. Fifth, successes enjoyed by

community councils on apparently 'unimportant' issues may have

feedbacks whose ramifications were totally unforeseen by the

authorities. For example, community councils should be in a

good position to keep track of test cases in such issues as

condensation in council houses and flats, in other parts of

Britain. Such links and such capitalisation of successes may

well create a spirit of optimism that will encourage activity

throughout an active community council's area, and encourage

other councils to follow suit. Lastly, such voluntary organisa-

tions would relieve local authorities of some of their burdens and

therefore help to enhance their efficiency. We must add that these

benefits are also applicable to Nigeria.

Nigeria

As we said earlier on, community development or rural

development as it is sometimes called in Nigeria (we will be

using these two terms interchangeably) has three main features

which differentiates it from that which we are recommending for

Britain: it is rural-oriented since about 75 per cent of the

Nigerian population is still categorised as rural both in the

spatial and occupational connotations; it is indigenous to the

culture and therefore spontaneous; and it is projected by the people

rather than the government. That is not to say that the govern-

ment-central or local- has not initiated some community develop-

ment projects or that they have not offered technical and

financial assistance to communities that have established

development projects. Examples of such abound, although the

government has not been very successful when they initiate them

for people.

One outstanding feature of many developing countries is the

magnitude of their internal disparities in the degree of socio-

economic development. Of major importance are the contrasts

between rural and urban areas. The rural areas in most parts

of these countries generally exhibit great poverty, poor health

local wishes and initiatives by devolving and delegating them
to local representative bodies" (Guidelines, 1976, p.1). Thus
an important reason for the reform was to develop more effective
popular participation in local affairs, including activities of
the central government that are carried out locally. Or as the
Guidelines (1976, p.1) put it, the reformed local authorities
are to perform duties which need local responsiveness and under-
standing. Such participation, according to the Government, not
only enhances the dignity of the individual and the sense of
community at all levels, but also adds vitality to governmental
programmes and provides a means for local control over them. It
makes the programmes more responsive and better adapted to local
needs. Moreover, through participation, members of the community
may be induced to do more on their own initiative and to make a
fuller contribution to government programmes. This amounted to
fine political rhetoric which was hardly matched by public invest-
ment and performance in the rural sector. The emphasis which the
Government placed on participation and local initiative in the
Guidelines was not transformed into action because of the implicit
preoccupation of the Government with transferring a Western model
of local government to Nigeria. Yet, the mere fact that a type
of local organisational pattern has been used 'successfully'
in one country does not necessarily mean that it will be equally
successful under different circumstances. It is this belief
that leads us to recommend the integration of our socio-political
structure, in this case the age-set, into the system of local
government. Innovation must be coupled with experimentation and
critical evaluation. Such fresh approach as we are proposing

should go hand in hand with the modernisation of technical, fiscal and

personnel procedures which we have recommended, to help the tradi-

tional units meet the emerging problems more effectively.

An important facet of local mentality and attitudes is virtually

important and neglect of it has been the cause of many a disappointment

in foreign aid and central government projects. This is that whatever

is done to improve the lot of the rural poor should reflect what they

want, or have been successfully persuaded to want. Moreover, they

should feel that whatever is created is theirs to use, to maintain and

eventually, where necessary, to replace or enlarge. If the foreigner

(either the central government or country giving the aid) gives only

what he thinks is necessary, in the way he thinks is best, he will be

able to count on little if any self-help on the part of the beneficiaries

and will have to pay the full price for any local effort he must mobilise

to carry out his projects, the remnant of which, once he is gone, risk

being left to fall into disuse. The rural poor must feel that whatever

is being done in their locality is their idea, their effort (with help

they choose to accept from outsiders), for their benefit, to build their

future and that of their children. Basic services such as good elemen-

tary schools and adequate roads from farms to market towns are indis-

pensable prerequisites to economic development, and such services can

only be provided in adequate measure when local people have the power

to tax themselves to pay for their own basic services. The impor-

tance of local participation is evident in the results from my questionn-

aire. I asked people, "How practical and effective do you consider

the suggestion that community development plans should start, like the

Macpherson Constituion, with a discussion at all levels of the society

in order to arouse the enthusiasm and participation of the citizens?"

62 per cent of my respondents feel that it is not only practicable,

admirable and desirable, but that greater effectiveness would be achieved

if local people are involved in the initiation and execution of

development projects in their areas. In a separate question, about

74 per cent of the administrative officers whom I interviewed feel

that the local communities in the areas where they are serving or have

recently served are involved in development projects designed and carried

out by the citizens, and it has meant more effective planning. My survey

also shows the people have 'little enthusiasm' or interest in community

development projects initiated for them by the Government. I feel that

such community development efforts should be intensified and the only

effective way is to make use of our traditional institutions, especially

the age-set concept.

We are not advocating that the age-set system should replace local

government, but that it should be exploited by integrating it into the

new system of local government. Some measure of correspondence has to

be found between local government and the mechanics of age-set. Our

recommendation takes the form of a synthesis of the substratum and the

superstratum, that is, of tradition and modernity, a wedding of the

traditional institution of age-set and the modern quintessence of

local government. Local authorities will have three main functions to

perform in this synthesis: it will be the organ of co-ordination

between various administration departments and agencies at the level

which is closest to community development projects; it will be a source

of resources - technical, financial, etc. - insofar as it pays part

of the capital costs of projects and part of the recurrent expenditure

where necessary; and thirdly, the local authority will be an agent

of extension insofar as it is a channel of ideas both ways, between

itself and its public. These propositions may seem bold, broad and may

be even vulnerable, but they are nonetheless valuable. Public admini-

stration is a science which must always be open to suggestions which

may be productive of knowledge. Scientists speculate and guess, they are

intuitive, all of which is part of the 'context of discovery'.

After all, wisdom does not come to him who gapes at nature with an empty

head.

THE AGE-SET SYSTEM

An important aspect of African culture is the concept of age-set,

sometimes referred to as age grade or age group . They are known in

different parts of Africa by different names: it is known as gada in

southern Ethiopia (Stewart, 1977, p.16); it is called lixula among the

Tiriki tribe of western Kenya (Sangree, 1965, p.46); the Afikpo people

of south eastern Nigeria call it ekpe (Ottenberg, 1965, p.16); it is

known as egbe among the Yoruba tribe of western Nigeria (Lloyd, 1965[A],

p.563); and the Tiv people of northern Nigeria call it kwagh (Bohannan,

1965, p.535). Though age-set systems are described in some ethno-

graphies (see, for example, Gulliver, 1963; Rivers, 1968, pp.136-8;

Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Jones, 1962, pp.191-210), a few of them mention-

ing their significance in tribal societies in Africa, no writer has

exhaustively dealt with this concept in its essentiality, vis-à-vis

community development and local government. This may be due to the fact

that the few ethnographers and social anthropologists who have mentioned

this concept but who have not delved into its socio-political signifi-

cance, are foreigners who are unable to understand its intrinsic

importance. These anthropologists can be excused for not relating it

to rural community development and local government since this is out-

side their area of study. We will therefore look into the concept to

see how it pervades the idea of communality and how it can be used to

lessen the burdens of local government, and of course central govern-

ment, by bringing about rural community development.

Probably most cultures in the world have linguistic categories

into which they classify people according to age and position in the life

cycle: boys, youths, middle-aged men, the elderly, or some such series

of descriptive terms. In Africa, the list usually runs something like

this: newly born infant, child on the lap, uninitiated boy , initiated

bachelor, married man, elder, retired elder. Shakespeare, it will be

recalled, reported eight such stages. Each of these descriptive terms

represents a stage or position recognised by the culture. The people

in that position - who play the roles implied - represent a category

in the total population. These categories are usually referred to as

'age-sets'. Thus, age-sets are recognised divisions of the life of an

individual as he passes from infancy to old age, that is, from infant,

boy, youth, young married man, elder, and retired elder. The total range

of age-defined roles may constitute a graded system, which emphasises

the progressive movement from role to role, that is, from set to set,

and prescribes the relationships between people in different sets..

There is usually a specific time for moving from a younger set to an

older one, often ritually established, or at least marked by 'rites

de passage'. In this case there is a periodic achievement of increas-

ing seniority. Persons of junior status must give respect and some

degree of obedience to those of more senior status; conversely, the

seniors expect deference but must also acknowledge obligations to

assist, teach, test, or lead their juniors.

As we said above, age-set institutions are very prevalent in

Nigeria. I shall, however, use the example of age-set in my local

government area, where it is called are, to describe its characteris-

tics. Among the Yagba people of Oyi Local Government in Kwara State,

the are is a socio-political organisation which is divided into six

stages (see Table 9.2), each stage marked by ritual ceremonies. The

age-sets pass through these formal stages together by cooperative

ceremonies at the tribal level. It normally takes nine years before

an age-set can graduate to the set above it.

TABLE 9.2: <u>AGE-SET STRUCTURE AMONG THE YAGBA TRIBE OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA</u>

Names of Age-Sets	Age of Members	Duties of Members
Ijoye	Above 55 years	Judges, priests, diviners,etc.
Iba Erun	45-55 years	Diplomats, etc.
Omo Logun	35-45 years	Warriors, etc.
Iba Eta	25-35 years	Policemen, warriors, etc.
Alarin	15-25 years	Heavy building labour and work etc.
Are Mode	5-15 years	Tidy up market places & public halls

The first stage, <u>Are Mode</u>, have no part to play in community decisions. Their role is to <u>tidy up market places</u> and public halls, <u>hoe roads</u> from farms to market towns, and act as 'servants' to the older members of the community. Theirs is a wholly pre-adult status. The second stage, <u>Alarin</u>, share with the <u>Are Mode</u> heavy building labour and work on roads and paths. In wartime they are expected to help the <u>Iba Eta</u> who are the warriors. Members of this third set are not regarded as mature enough to participate fully in ritual or politico-jural affairs nor knowledgeable enough to be of consequence in them. They may attend clan or community assemblies but even their spokesmen remain quiet unless specifically required to represent the interests of their age-set. They undertake 'police' duties and tasks requiring some discretion such as carrying an important message, on the order of the elders. The <u>Omo Logun</u> are the experienced warriors and they are expected to lead their infantry in wartime. In peace time, they drum and sing the younger sets into a state of ecstacy and frenzy during communal activities. They participate fully in all ritual and politico-jural affairs. Their spokesmen convene and administer community assemblies, and in consultation with age-mates, facilitate the approach to decisions on matters in discussion or dispute. The <u>Omo Logun</u> are fast learning Yagba custom, ritual procedures, ceremonial conventions, judicial techniques and details of past precedents. They no longer undertake the heavier labouring tasks. Members of the fifth set,

Iba Erun, are the repositories of experience, knowledgeable of past affairs and specialists in the diplomacy essential to delicate matters. The last stage, the Ijoye, are the judges and jurors who settle local quarrels and disputes and impose fines. The more elderly among them are herbalists, fortune tellers and priests to oracles. They are acknowledged ritual experts and the most efficacious herbalists and diviners. When settling difficult disputes they sometimes appear as egwugwu or masked spirits to put the stamp of ancestral authority on the verdicts of the communal tribunal.

Thus, the following are the general characteristics of the age-set system: (a) There is a total ordering on the sets given by the order in which they begin recruiting. In other words, the sets begin recruiting one after another - it never happens that two (or more)sets begin recruiting simultaneously; (b) each set recruits members for a whole year after which recruitment ceases permanently; (c) no individual joins a set before the enrolment age; and any individual who has not yet joined a set, but who has reached this age, joins a set as soon as there is one which is recruiting members, usually nine years after the preceding set; (d) babies that are born just after the Are Mode have been initiated or who have not reached the age of enrolment at the time, will have to wait for at least nine years to get initiated into the next set; (e) all members of a set are automatically promoted to the next age-set after nine years; and (f) no individual is at any time a member of more than one set. Nowadays when a considerable number of people leave the community to seek employment in the towns and cities, their children have to be initiated in absentia, symbolically represented by a fly-whisk.

We should remember that the community which we are describing is a rural one, depending mainly on subsistence agriculture. Members of the community either work on family/clan farms or they are self-

employed farmers. It is therefore relatively easy to fit in com-
munity duties around one's everyday work. The duties performed
by members of an age-set are usually announced at least a fortnight be-
fore the occasion so that every one can plan ahead. For example, if
a Bailey bridge or a latrine was going to be constructed, the Alarin
would be told of the day or days of the month when they have to leave
their farms and go and work on the building of the bridge or latrine.
Nowadays when some members of an age-set are, for example, nurses in
the dispensary or are in salaried employment, they have to pay a levied
amount of money as a substitute if their work does not permit per-
formance of the community duty. This does not preclude the fact that
such employed persons may still willingly contribute their labour when
they are free, say, on Saturdays. This also applies to the community's
'sons abroad' (see below) who not only contribute money, usually a
fixed percentage of one's salary, but will be required to contribute
their labour when they visit the community, even if it is no more
than a symbolic gesture.

Thus, in my local government, as in other parts of Nigeria, the
social system and the social tradition are favourable to community
development. Age-sets are still a force in society, and impose on every-
one an obligation to contribute money or labour for community improve-
ments. Equally relevant are the 'tribal improvement unions' which have
grown up during the last 30 or 40 years as a result of emigration to
the cities. 'Sons abroad' have formed their 'expatriate' unions and
have sent money home for development, thus stimulating age-sets in the
communities themselves which have spent the money in useful and con-
structive ways, for instance, to build and equip a maternity centre
or to employ midwives to staff it. The functions of these improvement
unions or omo ibile as they are known, include : (a) General ethnic
leadership, and the provision of help for their members in the cities
who are in need and succour to those in distress; (b) the channelling

of communications between political representatives and the community; (c) the organisation of community development projects; and (d) the securing of patronage and community amenities. This favourable atmosphere has resulted in a great deal of valuable public work being executed. Audrey Smock (1971, pp.320-41), like Achebe's A Man of the People (1966), gives a detailed and interesting account of the political role of such ethnic unions among the Ibo-speaking people of eastern Nigeria.

With the help of the age-set institution, therefore, my town and the neighbouring villages, for instance, have achieved a lot. Over the last decade, we have successfully executed projects - pipe borne water supply, a town hall, a post office, two colleges, a modern market - worth over six million naira but actually spending about one and a half million naira because labour is offered free. The local magistrates court is not congested because minor cases are dealt with in the traditional way. With the current wave of armed robbery in Nigeria, the third age-set help the police in policing the community. Whereas a number of people evade taxes imposed by the central and local authorities, the community effectively taxes its people because they know who can pay what. Lastly, although corruption is very rampant in the public sector of Nigeria because the nation's wealth is regarded as a national cake to be 'chopped', no one dares embezzle a community's money because of the disgrace and social sanctions which such an act would incur to oneself and one's family. These are just some of the ways in which community action through the age-set institution have helped in reducing the burden on local government (Tables 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5 graphically portray the community development projects embarked upon by some other communities in Nigeria).

TABLE 9.3: <u>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN IKWERE/ETCHE LOCAL</u>

<u>GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE 1971-79</u>

·Project	Total No. Completed	Total Number Nearing Completion
Town Halls	18	15
Markets	27	7
Roads/Bridges	21	2
Maternity/Health Clinics	4	4
Pit Wells	1	-
Embarkments	1	1
Agricultural Extension	8	3
Postal Agency	1	-
Industry	1	-
TOTAL	82	32

TABLE 9.4: <u>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS EXECUTED BY THE PEOPLE OF</u>

<u>EDU, KWARA STATE, 1977-8</u>

Project	Total Cost(N)
Construction of 2 Dispensaries and purchase of equipment.	20,000
Construction of Maternity centres and purchase of equipment	30,000
Well-sinking and Rural Water Supply and purchase of equipment.	8,000
Construction of Slaughter Slabs and Slaughter Houses	10,000
Construction of incenerators and purchase of waste disposal materials.	8,000

<u>Source</u>: Kwara State of Nigeria, 1978, pp.32-33.

In short, 'voluntary' action at the village level is rooted in the age-set system, customs and communal ownership of lands, with sanctions, not unlike those available to local authorities, applied for failure of members to contribute their services. These traditional organisations, because they reach decisions on the basis of a wide concensus of the adult members of the community, are useful for introducing new ideas and practices (e.g. political education), effecting community improvements and associating the people with government programmes of technical services. In such cases, local leaders may need training for their new responsibilities, but if the customary form of organisation can be adapted to perform new functions, while continuing to perform important traditional ones, it may be an element

TABLE 9.5: NUMBER AND COST OF SELF-HELP PROJECTS IN KWARA STATE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND BY SOURCES OF FUNDS 1972-76

Local Government Area	Road Projects	Bridge Construction	Pipe Borne Water	Electricity	Town Hall	Post Office	Primary School	Secondary School	Maternity	Hospitals	Clinics & Health Centres	Public Latrines	Water Dam	Markets	Market Stalls	Culverts	Well sinking	Leprosy Clinics	Class Rooms	Others	Total Cost of Projects N	Contribution by Community N	Contribution by Government N
BORGU	45	7	-	-	2	-	4	-	-	-	1	2	4	4	4	4	19	-	10	26	73227	61444	7,300
EDU	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	28	1	77538	25938	4,700
ASA	27	4	-	-	1	3	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	13	-	-	8	-	171650	141005	22,100
ILORIN	4	32	-	-	2	3	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	49	1	1023226	1014276	4,350
MORO	41	-	1	-	7	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	4	-	-	19	2	280590	264290	6,300
IFELODUN	11	6	-	3	1	2	-	2	5	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	-	-	46	2	3410453	3403425	8,208
IREPODUN	3	6	-	1	-	-	2	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	9	1	301989	289474	21,515
KOGI	15	15	1	-	1	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	1	6	-	-	23	-	191650	141890	22,888
OKEHI	11	4	-	-	-	2	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	16	-	152400	132102	11,700
OKENE	11	10	5	-	-	1	3	3	5	-	-	2	-	-	2	6	-	-	22	-	251558	229050	11,998
OYI	4	11	3	-	3	4	21	9	3	3	1	2	1	2	4	11	2	-	55	5	888140	674208	113,480
OYUN	15	3	1	-	-	2	2	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	4	2	-	12	2	221838	211238	10,600

Source : Kwara State of Nigeria, 1976, p.20

of strength in the national structure and merits treatment accordingly.
As the late Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, puts
it,

> to the villager there can be no meaning, no significance in
> national plans and policies unless someone can translate them
> into actual examples locally. Local government should assure
> popular endorsement of policy and its execution so that public
> support and effective authority converge (cited in Weatherhead,
> 1963, p.167).

Community efforts, with central and local government support, are needed
to continue to raise a balanced country-wide prosperity, to meet the
rising expectation, and to alleviate the frustration and dissension
that can and has threatened national unity. For when a community builds
a new school or a feeder-road, it often serves as a stimulus for neigh-
bouring ones to do likewise; when the central or local government does
so it can serve as a source of resentment that a neighbouring area was
more favoured. In this way community development projects, with the
support of the government will reduce rather than accentuate sectional
tensions, and alleviate the strains on national unity.

It is important that we recommend the integration of the age-set
concept into the present system of local government because the chara-
cteristic pattern of development in Nigeria is lopsided and urban-oriented
(see Table 9.1). We shall also take a stand on the need for change in
the existing pattern of policy, and, in the process indicate some of
the highly desirable advantages that we believe will flow from the di-
rection of change. We shall use the 'growth pole' hypothesis to prove
the need for the creation of more town councils which will act as
foci of development and we shall also prove that a meaningful and
rational attempt at national development and modernisation should
embrace the aim to arouse and mobilise the zeal of the local/rural
communities (via age-set institutions) for self-betterment so that they
will eventually acquire the ability to make a significant contribution

to the aggregate level of progress achieved by the whole nation of
which they are integral parts. This latter purpose is graphically
portrayed in this expression that focuses the basic need of eliciting
"the increased participation from the periphery of the social order
inward to the core", and accents the fact that "it is the directional
flow of this participation which is the key to the movement"
(Braibanti, 1969, p.98). This we shall call the 'Diaspora' hypothesis,
which is not diametrically opposed to but rather complementary to the
'growth pole' hypothesis. It helps to bare the root of the matter in
community development and to draw a sharp conceptual line of distinc-
tion between our approach which seeks to trigger development from the
grassroots, using mass participation which is traditionally achieved
through the age-set institution, and those approaches seeking to
foster development from the top down. Of course the age-set insti-
tution has to be adapted to meet the modern age and needs. Not only
will the aim of community development be defeated, but also it may not
be technologically and administratively feasible, if each village has
to execute, say, a pipe-borne water project. The solution to this
problem is a consciously formulated, systematic, multi-sectoral
programme to attain the integration of the people in the rural areas.
In order to fully harness the potentials of the age-set institution,
it will be necessary for the state and/or local authorities to delegate
some powers and functions to the small towns which will form the
developmental foci of the satellite rural villages around them. These
towns we refer to as growth pole centres.

GROWTH POLE STRATEGY: A SUGGESTED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH
FOR NIGERIA.

The growth pole hypothesis was first outlined by Perroux in an
attempt to understand the mechanism whereby developmental impulses are

transmitted throughout a whole economy. According to him, growth poles are foci or centres in abstract economic space "from which centrifugal forces emanate and to which centripetal forces are attracted. Each centre being a centre of attraction and repulsion, has its proper field, which is set in the fields of other centres" (1950, p.95). Rather than allow our present geographical delimitations to cause territorial hostility in this era when we should be devaluing such frontiers, we should harness it for its economic and human resources which will delocalise not only the "progress of our technique, but also the progress of our scientific conception of the world" (Perroux, 1950, p.96). Thus, according to Boudeville, a growth pole can be described as "a geographical agglomeration of activities rather than as a complex system of sectors different from the national matrix ... (they) appear as towns possessing a complex of propulsive industries" (1966, p.112).

For a growth pole to have a beneficial effect on development, it must not simply bring about proportional increments in all the component units of the economy, that is, achieve mere growth in volume and magnitude. It must occasion substantial increments differing in size in the component units as a result of significant structural transformations. in all dimensions - economic, social and institutional.

Diaspora, which is complementary to growth pole, is also here defined as spread effect, an expansionary momentum generated from a centre of economic growth and directed towards other regions, resulting in a substantial and sustained increase in demand, incomes, investment, production and overall development. Our strategy is based essentially on the idea that through concentrating investment capacity in a rural town which forms the focus of the satellite villages around it, expansionary momentum can be generated in the economy of its region.

Our model begins by assuming the existence of a rural town surrounded by a large rural landscape in a certain part of Nigeria. Scattered throughout the rural landscape are numerous small villages supported primarily by a subsistence agriculture although some people may be involved in cash crop production and small scale cottage industries. Each of the villages is primarily self-centred; extent of the village influence on the landscape is established by prevailing modes of movement which in many cases may not be of more than 10 kilometres radius. Within this space village dwellers live and outside contacts are few and infrequent. Relations between the primary centre and the rural settlements are weak and at more distant points non-existent.

Required to initiate an integrated rural development in such a model of rural economic space is the introduction of new factors that will promote change and encourage innovation. For instance, an effort could be made to introduce new and suitable cash crops that will provide the economic base of the rural area. Special attention could be given to technical assistance, access to sources of agricultural credit and an agricultural bias to education. Whatever help is offered, however, the villager must be left to carry out his duties within his custom, again, using the age-set institution in this case. These changes in the rural economic base can only be effected if the inertia characteristic of the existing spatial patterns in the rural areas is overcome. Thus there is need to evolve new and different spatial arrangements such as the integrated system we suggested earlier and which is elaborated below. In this way market towns will emerge in various parts of the rural landscape.

Growth Poles as Instruments of Integration

A clear distinction must be made between historic growth poles such as Kano and Ilorin, which have emerged spontaneously as a manifestation of the process of polarisation and concentration of economic

development, and planned growth poles such as New Bussa, deliberately
implanted or dynamised in the periphery as an instrument of regional
policy. In the latter case implantation of the pole is usually
achieved on the basis of an 'industrial complex' located in the vicinity
of a relatively large rural centre already in existence or purposely
created; this industrial complex is formed by a highly dynamic 'pro-
pulsive industry' and by industries of induced growth integrated
vertically or horizontally with the former and situated near it. More-
over, existence of the complex also induces a series of supplementary
activities which serve both the industries and inhabitants of the pole.

Use of the growth pole concept as an instrument of regional
policy consists, in fact, of the planned activation of the hypothe-
tical process of spontaneous diffusion of development from the his-
toric pole to the peripheral areas, a process which has been scarcely
effective in Nigeria. The impact of the growth pole on the economic
development of its periphery may be visualised in terms of diffusion
processes, by which economic development spreads to the periphery
as a consequence, on the one hand, of communication and human inter-
action in general and, on the other hand, of the demand in the pole
for the raw materials, semi-manufactured inputs or manufactured
goods the periphery can provide. This induces the corresponding
mining, agricultural and possibly manufacturing activities and
determines a degree of dynamism in the periphery and increasing
integration of local economies in the national economy represented
by the growth pole.

The idea of deliberately implanting new growth poles in the
periphery derives from the premise , that this process of diffu-
sion can be induced, accelerated and given greater territorial
scope. The very fact of implanting a new planned pole, which is
to act as a new focus for the concentration of activities, already

implies a measure of deconcentration with respect to the historic
pole and,through economic interdependence and mutual interaction,
should represent a step in the integration of the national space-
economy.

It is therefore important that a well-conceived strategy of
polarised local development should consider both the implementation
of new growth poles in the periphery and, at the same time, additional
action directed toward strengthening and restructuring the urban
system in general and the networks which link it together. Some
urban centres should be strengthened in their function as 'central
places' and assigned a role as regional distribution and service centres
with broad territorial influence. On the other hand,other small urban
centres or large rural centres may be able to act as secondary centres
of industrial growth and, therefore, of population concentration.
The transport and communication networks will provide channels for
exchange and interaction between the growth poles, the secondary growth
centres, the regional service centres and the rest of the urban system,
and their development will make these more accessible to one another.
Together, these elements should make it possible to transmit the
dynamizing and integrating impact of the growth poles to the periphery
and, lastly, to the rural areas.

In the rural areas, villages have to be grouped together to form
a 'Block' for planning purposes. Each block should comprise an area
of about 150 square kilometres with a population of about 20,000.
The block should be headed by a generalist development officer who
will co-ordinate the activities of extension officers in the fields
of agriculture, animal husbandary, health, rural or cottage indus-
tries, social education, co-operatives, etc. The focus of the inte-
grated work at the block level should be the block plan. The block
plan will comprise the village plans viewed as a whole and co-ordinated

in addition to development programmes for which the block is directly responsible. Basically it should cover a minimum programme in the fields of agriculture (including minor irrigation, soil conservation and animal husbandary), rural industries, development of co-operatives, elementary education, rural water supply and a programme of minimum rural amenities - including health, approach roads and so on.

The concept of the block as a unit of planning and development envisages the pooling of all development funds at that level, including not only the schematic budget, but departmental funds and local community effort. The block should act as the common agent for all departments in the field of development both for planning and implementation of programmes, and should help the villages to evolve technically sound plans which can be executed efficiently. We must realise, however, that unless the technical departments are brought squarely into the programme and the block developed as their common agency the objectives of the programme will not be realised. This brings to the fore the problem of co-ordination at the level of policy-making and at the level of execution in the field. This is where the local government has to exert its influence.

At the policy level local governments should set up co-ordination committees for the purpose of taking an integrated view of development programmes and taking decisions jointly. Certainly it is inconceivable that a local authority would be in a position to take over the running of all community development projects embarked upon or executed by the local people. Yet as we pointed out earlier, it can serve as a source of resentment that a neighbouring area was more favoured if the local government takes over the managemetn of a community's projects while leaving others to run their own. The solution to these problems is an effective integration of policy and planning. The policy and co-ordination committee for community development

which we suggested earlier should be made up of leaders of communities (the <u>Ijoye</u> and the <u>Iba Erun</u>), the extension officers, local government officers, local government officials and the generalist development officer. In this way the local government would be able to know what projects are being planned by each community and would be able to offer technical advice as to the feasibility of such projects and how their costs can be reduced if two or more communities join hands to carry out the projects. A few examples from my local authority area will suffice to explain what I mean. In 1976, eight different villages within a radius of 12 kilometres to one another, wanted to establish a secondary school each. Then the government stepped in to tell them that although their projects were laudable, there was no way each village could command enough resources to establish and manage a secondary school. The government therefore advised that they should pool their efforts and establish a college in a central part of the eight villages so that no village could claim that it was located within its own boundary. Furthermore, the government promised that they would be helped financially and technically if they took its advice, and that the college would be run for them once the project was executed. The result today is the well-equipped Gbarraga Grammar School, the word <u>Gbarraga</u> being an acronym.

The role of the age-set system under our model will be to contribute its communal labour, organised along traditional methods. Thus, while the <u>Ijoye</u> and <u>Iba Erun</u> can be members of the policy and co-ordination committee, the <u>Alarin</u> will be working on the construction site, aided by the stimulus of traditional drumming and music by the <u>Omo Logun</u>.

Another example of the possible 'partnership' which our model advocates is in the realm of roads and buildings construction. In some cases roads and buildings have been built by the communities in

the first flush of enthusiasm only to fall into neglect, for it is
more exciting to start something than to keep it going. It is here
that local government comes into the picture. Local authorities are
not always as good at taking the initiative as the age-sets, the improve-
ment unions or the community as a whole, but they are better equipped,
because of their statutory powers, to repair, maintain or extend what
has been created by the work of enthusiasts.

In the field of agriculture, with the development of well distri-
buted market towns for agricultural produce and other manufactured
goods the farmer is free from the middlemen traders who habitually
pay him a very poor price (Ajaegbu, 1972, p.105). With the existence
of market towns in the rural areas it becomes possible to break down
the apathy and indifference of a 'static', tradition-bound subsistence
agriculture, substituting for it the incentive of profit and commercial
exchange of agricultural commodities for consumer goods. With the
appearance of market towns serving several villages, the traditional
routines of rural life are modified and may be eventually replaced by
new ones.

The spatial framework provided by the existence of market towns
in relation to the village settlements should be used for planning the
provision of other rural development projects; for every block there
should be a growth centre , that is, the market town, and a number of
peripheral villages. In order for the market towns to be effective
in stimulating rural development it should be possible for farmers
to move their produce hence roads and road improvement become neces-
sary. As the market function of a market town develops, the new market
town becomes a nucleus for a new form of population agglomeration
which in turn attract other activities. Thus local administrative
functions and other social services such as primary and secondary
schools, health facilities, postal services and banking facilities can
be attracted to the market towns. Furthermore, such towns could be

provided with public water supply, electricity and all-weather roads. Finally, the rural market towns will be most suitable for the development of rural cottage industries.

Another aspect of our model of integrated rural development in Nigeria relates to the integrated patterns of those ecological, sociological, economic and organisational variables which together create agricultural land use systems from one area to another. This aspect is concerned with the visible and tangible landscape patterns which have arisen from man's attempts to produce foodstuffs, agricultural raw materials for industry and livestock as well as the invisible but equally significant patterns of land use systems, for example tenurial arrangements, the spread of innovations in farm operations, farmers' organisations, credit facilities, levels of literacy among rural populations and many others. Furthermore, there are those vital aspects of mobility, of functional circulation, of movement of inputs and output which should be spatially examined and planned for in relation to the existing settlement pattern. Time and distance studies are also an integral component of the spatial aspect of rural development, for example, greater attention to location, shape, area distances and directions will aid the creation of more efficient farming practices. Simply stated, movement exacts a charge on the farmer and husbandman; the greater the distance and the more time-consuming the move, the heavier the charge on productivity, that is, a reduction in output or increased costs. The journey to work of the farmer, the propinquity or otherwise of markets, of sources of inputs such as improved seed, fertilizers, tools and machinery; of storage facilities, of extension staff and so forth, all affect the efficient functioning of the agricultural system in the rural areas in a most direct way. The role which local government will play in all these cannot be over-emphasised. It would be good, at least in the initial

stages, to leave the rural farmers to organize their labour along the

traditional lines through the system of age-set whereby members of a

set exchange ideas and seeds, and cooperate by setting aside some

days to work together on one another's farms. This is a good

starting point insofar as it is the revival or encouragement of an

ancient traditional method of getting things done. Even the most

academic theorists of community development would agree that the

words mean nothing until something happens in the way of an improvement,

and this is more often than not brought about by manual labour and

cooperation. After all, the labour itself, and the feeling of

achievement that goes with it, can generate a spirit that will lead to

further improvements and to the emergence of leadership, initiative and

pride; in other words to a real community.

Our strategy advocates a more cooperative and mutually sustaining

relationship between the local government and the communities. The

need for a democratic approach to development is here based on the

premise that since people are the target of any development activity,

their needs and values must be reconciled with the objectives of any

development programme in order to secure their commitment to and

identification with such programmes. Therefore, in order to ensure

cooperation and effective direction and utilization of resources in

local development, an adequate level of planning and consultation is

imperative (see Figure 9.1).

It is very important that some leaders of the 'improvement unions'

or 'sons abroad' be included in the planning and co-ordinating committee.

Most of the 'sons abroad' go to their communities at least once every

fortnight and they are very intimate with local developments. In

Nigeria, most councillors are born and brought up within the council

in which they are serving. Therefore they are not strangers to the

dynamics of the age-set system and they will not object to some members

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FIGURE 9.1 : A PROPOSED DECENTRALISED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME FOR NIGERIA
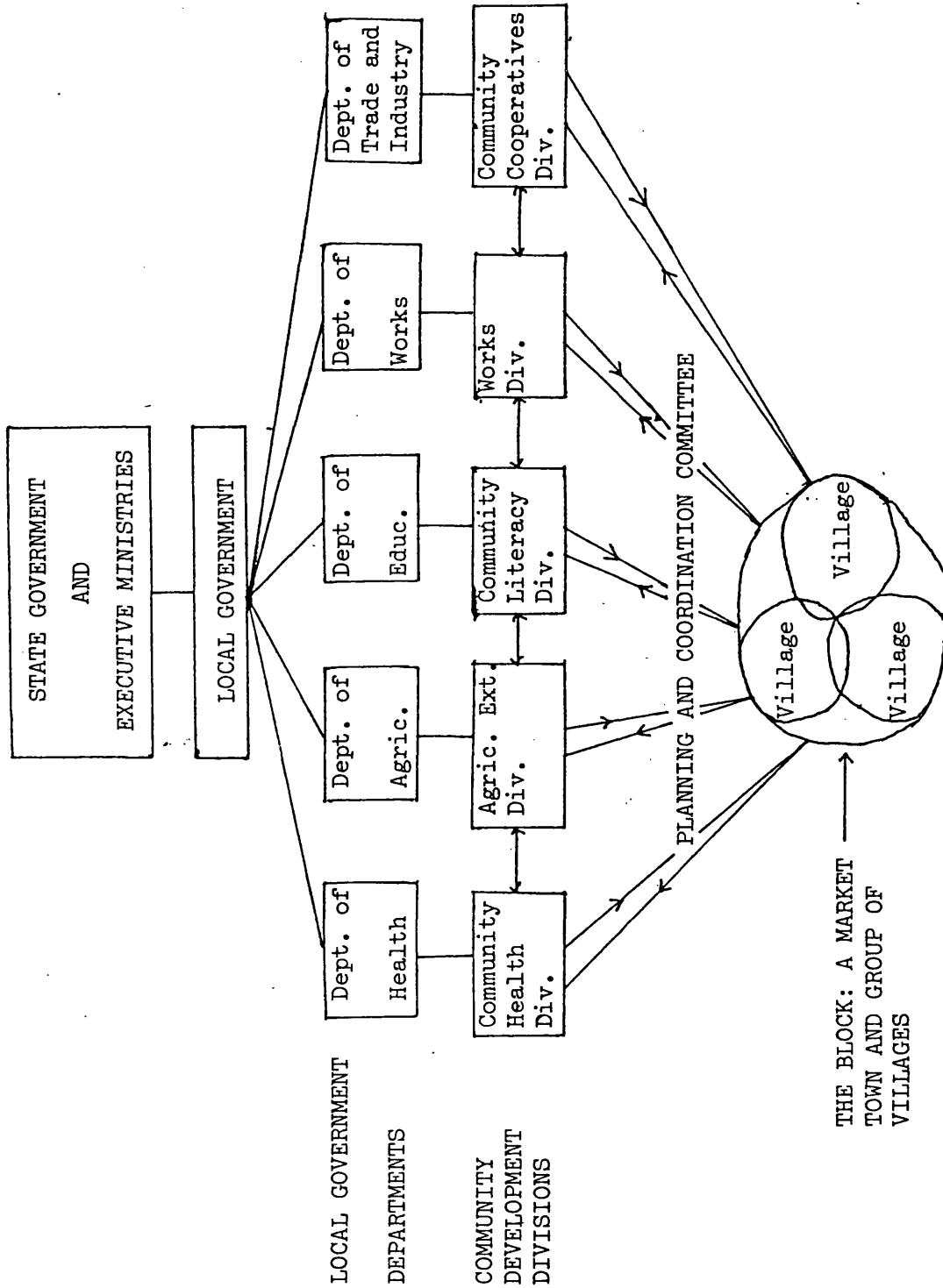
** The arrows between the components of the model indicate cooperation, flow of information, and coordination, and feedback at all stages of the process - the essential guidewords being integration and team approach.

STATE GOVERNMENT
AND
EXECUTIVE MINISTRIES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

DEPARTMENTS

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIVISIONS

Dept. of Health

Dept. of Agric.

Dept. of Educ.

Dept. of Works

Dept. of Trade and Industry

Community Health Div.

Agric. Ext. Div.

Community Literacy Div.

Works Div.

Community Cooperatives Div.

PLANNING AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Village

Village

Village

Village

THE BLOCK: A MARKET TOWN AND GROUP OF VILLAGES

of the 'improvement unions' being included in such a committee, because
(a) the local communities are likely to trust their educated sons
more than they will trust any government agent; (b) since the major
part of development funds come from the 'sons abroad', it is imperative
that they have a say in how the funds should be used; (c) since most
of the 'sons abroad' are, on average, more learned than the councillors,
they (the former) are likely to understand the technical, legal and
financial implications of joint ventures by the communities better than
the councillors, and they would be able to put their views to the
communities better than the councillors; (d) the 'sons abroad' are
useful advisers to the village members of the age-set system and
they would be an invaluable contact point between the village and the
local government departments; and (e) since the 'sons abroad' are
nearer the seat of state and federal government, say in Ilorin and
Lagos, they are in a better position to secure patronage, technical
advice and community amenities than the local councillors. For example,
a block of classrooms was donated to the girls' college in my town
by UNESCO, through the help of Chief Simoyan, an employee of UNESCO.
Such donations will surely reduce the cost of development projects both
to the communities and the local government.

Thus, the proper development of growth poles in Nigeria will have
the effect of forcing on the policy-makers greater awareness of the need
to modernize agriculture and improve conditions of living in rural areas.
In a rapidly changing industrializing situation, the agricultural sector
has a new type of demand pressure put on it. This is not only to
provide surplus food to feed the urban residents but, more important,
to produce enormous quantities of raw material which can be stored away
to ensure that machines and other investments are utilized efficiently
over a considerable period. To do this, the farmers will in the long run

have to become less subsistent and more commercial and specialist

farm-managers. Such a transformation has implications for the type

of inputs of seeds, fertilizers, equipment and other farming infrastructure

which the farmer now considers appropriate. It also affects his idea

of farm organization and what avenues of credit loans are available

to him.

With the rural producers, achievement of increasing levels of

production would involve the use of a 'stick and carrot' technique to

ensure appropriate motivation. Whilst the need of the cities for food

supplies and industrial raw material could serve as the stick driving

the farmers to greater and greater production, their enthusiasm can

be expected to wane if they do not find close-by appropriate goods

and services on which to spend their increased income. And, as has been

suggested earlier, a reappraisal of the distribution of existing market

towns and/or the creation of new ones, and the types of goods and

services they will provide for the rural masses is a vital and compliment-

ary exercise for a growth pole strategy in Nigeria.

One interesting aspect of the rural dimension of growth pole

planning is the way it forces attention on the role of frontier areas

in national development. In Nigeria, this includes the Bamenda Cross

River Basin, the Adamawa Highlands, the Hadeija - Yobe River Zone, and

the Middle Belt, a well-watered expanse of land drained by the Niger

and Benue rivers and suitable for the production of a wide range of crops

such as rice, soya beans, benniseeds and sugar cane. It also has

considerable fishing and tourist potentials.

For a growth pole strategy to succeed at the rural level, therefore,

institutions must be created for the effective organization of the rural

population for developmental purposes. The task of governmental

agencies dealing with a myriad of atomistic production units must be so

frustrating as to be self-defeating. The institution needed must have

as its primary objective the comprehensive organization of rural

communities for development and must serve as the channel for all the

relations of agencies of government with these communities. A

successful process of 'incorporation' of marginated rural populations

would not only mean an expansion of the internal market, but would

at the same time improve the living standards of these populations,

stem rural÷urban migration, and bring about a process of social and

cultural change and their gradual integration in the 'urban' patterns

of life. Moreover, with surging feelings of confidence, efficacy and

self-reliance widely and deeply infused into rural minds and institutions,

the national mind and institutions may, in their turn, increasingly

become the foci of affluent accession of identification, loyalty and

supportive orientation in rural circles and populations. Furthermore,

there is the possibility that the evolution of the type of policy

of community development being espoused here may eventually help to

lend institutions of local government the enviable criteria of

stability and legitimacy they now lack.

CONCLUSION

To usher in a viable system of community development, therefore,

there needs to be a thorough-going and purposeful reappraisal of

current policy in order to correct the aberrations that plague it and

warp the functional perspective of government action programmes designed

for community development. This implies that systematic steps be

instituted to re-think the true nature and directions of those efforts

that are appropriate to the task of vigorously and realistically

attacking the roots of rural physical and mental degradation. Inescapably,

part of the reassessment of aims and methods should include a keener

appreciation of the constructive potentialities of projects resting

on a base of intermediate technology and processes and the acquisition

of middle-level technical know-how. There should also be increasing

manifestation of a firm conviction to invest more of available

societal resources in meeting the challenge of rural animation. And,

as the crowning step of this innovative refashioning, there should emerge

a bolder and settled realization of the centrality of consultation with

the wishes and desires of the local people and their spokesmen as well

as their co-optation and participation in decisions about programmes

and projects to be undertaken and their order of selection. Better

still, the people should be allowed to decide on what projects they

think they need, and receive help from whosoever suits them, with the

government providing resources and technical assistance.

An innovative approach such as is being adumbrated here is likely

to be rewarded with developments and changes with far-reaching

impact in both the national and community spheres of activity. The

curve of national output of goods and services will likely move

upward because of the varieties of small-scale and cottage industries

that might be called into being in rural locations and whose products

will significantly add to the aggregate of national productive wealth.

These include bakery, black-smithing, carving, carpentry, knitting,

pottery, motor repairing, weaving, welding, and many of their ilk. This

state of affairs will also increasingly be conducive to wholesome

economic diversification. The varied resource-endowments of the rural

areas will form a variegated base for underpinning multifarious local

crafts and other productive forces thus lending a healthy heterogenity

to national economic growth. Knowledge of simple and intermediate

technology and skills will become slowly but surely diffused through all

strata and sections of the population. This will represent a modest

spread of the technical milieu and calculated, over time, to breed in

the behaviour and outlooks of the rural folks the beginnings of those

disciplined and rationalistic patterns of thought and action that
are widely and highly regarded.as a vital psychodynamic dimension of
modernization. More concretely, moreover, many types of employment
opportunities will tend to develop in the village and community locations.
This latter development will spell no small gain in a country suffering
from a staggering burden of unemployment, underemployment and related
socio-economic maladies.

Eventually, local exploitation and use of local resources for
local processing industries will tend to burgeon and loom larger and
larger in the national economic ken. At the moment, far too many of
these raw materials that are known to exist remain untapped and unutilized
because they are not directly needed by the sophisticated, high
technology industries that are erroneously exclusively regarded as
the sine qua non for economic development and as inherently urban-
oriented. Through close and active involvement at the planning and
take-off stages, and in the administration of these modest,
small-scale enterprises, the local community leaders will have the
opportunity to know the ropes with respect to basic secondary organis-
ational capacities and entrepreneurial skills that are required
through organic -,notmechanical-solidaristic activities. This again is
a vital pre-condition of any serious design for the emergence of modern
business aptitude and associational effectiveness at the level of
the rank-and-file of the population.

The current tendency toward over-centralizing control of the various
processes involved in community development in the hands of local
agents of remote authorities, no matter how well-meaning, tactful,
perceptive and sympathetic these may be, poses a serious hindrance
to the realization of the desirable qualities of flexibility and
equity in resource-allocations to various development sectors. For

only local leaders and representatives are capable of articulating

the needs of their communities and communicating and representing them

before the decision-makers with that degree of validity peculiarly

vested in the sufferer. Flexibility in the present context connotes

the basing of decisions on resource.allocations on criteria that

incorporate a balanced and hard-headed grasp of the nature and require-

ments of all the groups and sectors such that the justice of

commensurate allocation proportioned to felt-need and relative import

of each in the overall scheme of things developmental will redound

to the centre and the periphery alike. A thriving order of community

development relying on the principle of local consultation will help

to make assurance doubly sure that the needs of communities are

equitably considered and not neglected or submerged.

Planning must be a democratic social process aimed at the development

of local initiative, local leadership, local functional groups and

village organisations, keeping the community as the essential focus.

It must be a problem-solving process aimed at the fullest utilization

of local resources. It must be a meaningful process comprehensive

enough to break through the interlocking vicious circle of underdevelopment

and lead to a self-generating growth with increasing opportunities

for higher levels of income, consumption and aspiration. Local planning,

to be successful, must integrate the efforts of the people with those

of the governmental agencies. Local planning cannot be isolated from

national goals. It must, while satisfying local needs, be geared to the

fulfilment of national priorities. Implicit in the whole process of

planning is the growth of the community gaining enhanced ability to act

together. The community becomes a centre of creativity in the larger

community of the local, state and national government, and the broad

aim of the administrative agencies or change agents is the promotion

of this creativity. Recruitment, training, organization, control,
encouragement and supervision, technical support and guidance, financial
and budgetary patterns, indeed the entire work complex and administrative-
outlook must subserve and strengthen this purpose. I cannot but say
again that these propositions may seem bold, broad and may be
even vulnerable, but they are nonetheless valuable.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

> Today reform may be not only respectable but also desirable
> for the sake of the future (Caiden, 1970, p. 23).

In the previous chapters we have outlined the process of local

administrative reform in Nigeria and Britain.   All that remains to be

done here is to recap the major themes which were treated in the thesis

and further expatiate and elucidate the answers to the hypothetical

questions we set outselves in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 1 we said that a diagnosis should indicate the symptoms

which have to be translated into a coherent picture on the basis of which

action can be planned and carried out with a reasonable assurance that

objectives will be achieved.   We also mentioned a number of conditions

which necessitate administrative reform.   Most of these conditions were

found in Nigeria and Britain.   The existing local administration in

both countries had failed to meet the demands put on them.   The impact

of growth took them by surprise and they could not keep up with the

times (see Chapters 3 and 4).   The pattern of human settlement was

always ahead of the pattern of organization.

There were other conditions which necessitated a diagnosis and hence

the reforms in both countires.   The 1975 coup d'etat which brought

Murtala to power provided an opportunity for a thorough reappraisal of

local government.   The effect of the military take-over on local

government proves our hypothesis that local government is an organism

which must respond to environmental and political changes.   Furthermore,

the large-scale overhaul which local government faced under the Murtala/

Obasanjo regime corroborates what we said in Chapter 1:   that major

administrative reforms are usually the direct outcomes of very serious

crisis conditions faced by a government, such as the take-over of power,

through revolution or otherwise, by political groups who differ strongly

from those previously in office. And there is no doubt that the

Murtala/Obasanjo regime was ideologically different from those previously

in office (see Chapter 7). We also mentioned in Chapter 7 that the

threat of public disturbance and the fact that some sections of the armed

forces were known to be restive made the 1976 reform necessary. In

Britain we discussed the rise of the Labour Party, universal suffrage and

the effect of the Second World War as some of the conditions which

necessitated reform (see Chapters 3 and 4). In Nigeria and Britain,

poor economic performance and the need to rationalise government

expenditure was also an important factor pushing for reform (see Chapters

3 and 5).

Furthermore, it became necessary to reform local government in both

countries because the administrative systems were thought to be

inefficient and ineffective. Corruption was very rampant in Nigeria.

Other factors which we identified in Chapters 3 and 4 as responsible for

structural and behavioural changes were the growth in the size and type

of clientele served by local government; changes in problems and needs,

and, therefore, in organizational programmes as to the proper

responsibilities of local authorities; technological developments such

as the motor car which enabled extensive movement of people and local

government representatives; advancing knowledge in medicine, such as

the discovery of quinine to cure malaria, which lowered the rate of

mortality, thus leading to a population explosion and urbanization; the

growing impact of party politics in local government and its implications;

changing and usually rising qualifications of personnel, such as the rise

of professionals in local administration. The social and economic

changes which we analysed in Chapter 3 meant that local government has

expanded its scope and therefore needed expert advice to tackle these

complex problems. The late 1960s brought both an emphasis on efficiency

and management in public administration, and the emergence of new demands for local democracy, participation, community power and professional autonomy. All these changes, as we noted in Chapter 5, were taking place while the structure of local government remained relatively static.

The changes mentioned above have been accompanied by equally important developments in social thinking and public attitudes. One such development in Britain has been a new approach to unemployment and poverty. Social attitudes in the nineteenth century were very much bound up with the administration of the poor laws, founded on the belief that it was chiefly up to the individual to meet his own needs and find employment; public relief was discouraged by the principle of 'less eligibility' and the stigma of pauperism. Widespread unemployment caused by the depression of the 1880s and followed by the reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, which sat between 1905 and 1909, led to acceptance of the view that unemployment is more often the result of wider, impersonal forces over which the individual has little control and should be tackled by prevention, not deterrence.

The second aspect was the growing realisation that social ills – poverty, high death-rates, ill health, bad housing, unemployment and the plight of the destitute elderly – are interconnected. The social services of the twentieth century were developed to meet those needs and the movement was logically followed by by the Seebohm Committee who recommended the unified administration of the local authority personal social services, to reflect the fact that families and individuals have needs which have to be looked at together and not dealt with in watertight compartments (Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services, 1968).

Thirdly, there has been a great expansion of all governmental activities in Britain and Nigeria, especially in the social services,

accompanied by a change in the role of the central government. A wider

distribution of the benefits of greater national wealth required the

government to play a more positive role in order to eliminate poverty,

to maximise welfare and achieve a greater degree of both economic and

political equality. The assumption of this role has led to a great

change in the whole concept of social policy embracing social security,

health and welfare services, education and the improvement of the

environment. In the local government field this has resulted in a

significant change of emphasis. The main services are no longer those

needed to meet the environmental problems in cities or law and order in

Nigeria - they are the personal services aimed at individuals, whether

they live in towns or in the country. Similarly, there has been a

change of emphasis in the balance between central and local government.

The part played by central government in prescribing what services·

should be provided, and to what standard, has enormously increased and

these decisions in turn depend upon the national economy and the ability

to pay.

Thus, local government reform became necessary in both countries

not only because of the aforementioned socio-economic, technological and

political changes that have taken place, but also because the social

values of the citizens have changed. The public demands resulting from

industrialization and urban living have forced local authorities to

extend or adjust traditional services and to provide a wide range of new

services. People are no longer satisfied with just voting during

elections; they now want to partake of decision making and execution.

People are no longer satisfied that the government - central or local - is

providing services; they now demand that these services be performed

efficiently and effectively. They no longer see the provision of

services as a privilege; today they see it as a right. In short, they

no longer want a government that is paternalistic. Clearly human geography, patterns of life, social thinking, the functions of local authorities and the nature of local administration had all changed so drastically that the need for new institutions became inevitable.

Our analysis in Chapter 6 shows that it is perfectly possible for a developing country (Nigeria) and a developed one (Britain) to have identical reform objectives such as democracy and efficiency. It was inevitable that there were differences between the two countries in the emphasis placed on some reform objectives. For instance, both economic development and national unity were conspicuous reform objectives in Nigeria but they were only implicitly expressed in Britain. After all, if each local authority in a country effectively and efficiently performs its functions, would the aggregate not be a sound and efficient nation ?

As for reform strategies, our research proves that it is not impossible to devise a strategy with universal applicability, although with each country adapting the strategy to its own circumstance or environment. Our treatment of the reforms in both countries as a process is a strategy that is likely to meet with success in any administrative reform. Thus, it is necessary to first diagnose the defects in the existing administrative system, set objectives and strategies, implement the reform objectives, and have a feedback mechanism for the purposes of evaluation and modification of plan as originally indicated. The process approach is comprehensive in its scope and does include and focus on the interaction between and among individuals and organizations and thereby throws light on the dynamics of administrative behaviour. And in order to effectively implement the reforms, it is either that the Government allows for a legislative process so that the whole issue can be debated by the citizens and their representatives, or

the reforms are forced on the people in countries without a mature and

effective democratic institution. In either case, the usefulness of

research cannot be over-emphasized.

Perhaps the implementation stage is the most important in a reform

(see Chapter 7). Our research confirms Lee's hypothesis (see Chapter 1)

that time and leadership are two crucial variables in reform implementation.

The reforms in Britain and Nigeria were carried through because the

reformers were strongly committed and genuinely interested in it and

because the socio-economic and political environments were favourable.

Thus Backoff's hypothesis that the greater the comprehensiveness,

complexity, and magnitude of changes, the lesser the probability of

implementation can only be assumed to be true a priori. It is certainly

difficult to prove in the case of the 1974 and 1976 reforms in Britain

and Nigeria respectively because his hypothesis failed to take into

consideration other important variables such as leadership, time, and

socio-political environment of the country concerned. Our research

proves that the reforms in both countries were comprehensive and complex,

yet they were implemented because, as we said above, the reformers had

the will and the power to do so, and the time and socio-political

atmosphere were propitious.

In Chapter 1 (p. 47) we said that there are a number of methodological

points to be considered in evaluating a reform. We also set ourselves

some hypothetical questions (p. 52) which we tried to answer in the body

of the thesis. We saw in Chapter 8 that it is not sufficient to base

our evaluation purely on the reformer's goals and declarations, hence

the importance of our fieldwork. In quest of greater accuracy, we, like

Joseph Campbell's protagonist in The Hero With a Thousand Faces (1975),

had to enter areas in which revelations are harmful and persistent

inquiry is discouraged. Our fieldwork did prove that the reforms are

not as successful as the reformers want to claim. It is therefore very

important that any evaluation should be based on the people's feelings

and attitudes, those whom the entire administrative apparatus is

designed to serve.   It is very difficult to see how the reforms in both

countries have greatly improved democracy, economic development and

efficiency except within a very rudimentary and narrow range such as the

reinstatement of representative local government in Nigeria or the

introduction of corporate management structures in Britain.   Although

we do not mean to undermine the achievements of the reforms in both

countries which we analysed in Chapter 8,   our research shows that

many of the problems identified before the reforms have not been solved

(see Chapter 8).   There are still a lot of structural problems facing

local government in both countries;   central control has not diminished;

there has been no dramatic change in development;   local skills and the

so-called councillor calibre have not changed or improved;   there are no

considerable improvements in social welfare and levels of satisfaction;

public apathy in local affairs has not declined;   and duplication, waste

and corruption have not been stemmed, especially in Nigeria.   Perhaps

the most important thing which our research revealed is that the

reformers deviated from some of their reform objectives at the implementation

stage, mainly for political and administrative expedience (see Chapters

7 and 8).

Chapter 9 attempts to provide solutions to the post-reform problems

analysed in Chapter 8.   Any future reforms in both countires must take

the implications of the setting of the contemporary economic situation

into serious consideration.   At the most general level, the problem of

local government can be seen as an aspect of the overall problem of the

public sector in a capitalist economy.   This is a problem that centres

on the sources of state revenue and the scale of public expenditure, and

on the scope and direction of state intervention.   At the core of local

government struggle for democracy is the problem of the scale of its
expenditure and the nature of its interventions, a problem that any
future reforms must solve. Our hypotheses (the use of neighbourhood
councils, the age-set concept and the growth pole) are likely to help in
solving many of the problems we have identified. Surely, they would
enhance democratic participation, bring about even development, help in
reducing the work-load of local authorities thereby improving their
efficiency, and give people practical experience of self-reliance.

APPENDIX   I

NIGERIA: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANDATORY FUNCTIONS:

Social Conveniences or Amenities:

1.   Markets and motor parks:

2.   Sanitary inspection, refuse and nightsoil disposal;

3.   Control of vermin;

4.   Slaughter houses and slabs;

5.   Public conveniences;

6.   Burial grounds;

7.   Registration of births, deaths, and marriages;

8.   Provision of community and local recreation centres;

9.   Parks, Gardens, Fuel Plantations;

10.   Control of hoarding, advertisements etc;

11.   Naming of roads and streets.

Taxation and Control on Private and Public Utilities and Services:

1.   Licensing, supervision and regulation of bake houses and
        laundaries;

2.   Licensing, regulation and control of the sale of liquor;

3.   Licensing and regulation of bicycles, hand carts, and other
        types of vehicles except those mechanically propelled, and canoes;

4.   Control and collection of revenue from forestry outside the
        "Forest Estate" or gazetted Forest Reserves;

5.   Collection of vehicle parking charges;

6.   Collection of property and other rates, community tax and
        other designated revenue sources.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPTIONAL FUNCTIONS (these are run concurrently with the State Governments)

Welfare Functions.

1. Health Centres, Maternity Centres, Dispensaries, Health Clinics, Ambulance Services, Leprosy Clinics and preventive Health Services;

2. Abbatoirs, Meat Inspection;

3. Nursery, Primary and Adult Education;

4. Information and Public Enlightenment;

5. Scholarship and bursaries;

6. Public libraries and reading rooms;

7. Agricultural Extension Services; Veterinary Services;

8. Rural and semi-urban water supply;

9. Road and street lighting and drainage;

10. Provision of homes for destitutes, the infirm and orphans;

11. Provision of public utilities;

12. Pipe sewerage systems.

Protection and Environmental Functions

1. Fire Services;

2. Control of water and atmospheric pollution;

3. Control of beggars, of prostitution and repatriation of destitutes;

4. Public housing programmes;

5. Operation of commercial undertakings;

6. Control of traffic and parking;

7. Regulation and control of buildings;

8. Town and country planning.

Source: Federal Republic of Nigeria (1976), Guidelines for Local Government Reform, Kaduna, Government Printer, pp.2-3.

BRITAIN: ALLOCATION OF MAIN FUNCTIONS

Non-Metropolitan Counties	Non-Metropolitan Districts
Social Services	
Education and Related Services Education Libraries Museums and Art Galleries*	Education and Related Services Museums and Art Galleries*
Housing and Town Development Certain reserve powers, e.g. over-spill Town Development	Housing and Town Development Housing Town Development
Town and Country Planning and Related Matters Structure Plans Local plans (in special cases) Development Control (strategic and reserved decisions) Acquisition and Disposal of Land Clearance of Derelict Land* National Parks (subject to existence of boards) Country Parks* Footpaths and Bridleways Commons - registration Caravan Sites - provision* Gipsy Sites - provision Smallholdings and Cottage Holdings.	Town and Country Planning and Related Matters Local Plans (most) Development Control (most) Acquisition and Disposal of Land. Clearance of Derelict Land* Country Parks* Footpaths and Bridleways Caravan Sites - provision* licensing and management Gipsy Sites - management Allotments
Highways and Related Subjects Transport Planning Highways Traffic Parking	Highways and Related Subjects Highways - can claim powers over unclassified roads in urban areas. Public Transport - operation.
Public Transport (co-ordination) Road Safety	
Street Lighting.	Environmental Health Food Safety and Hygiene Control of Communicable Disease Control of Office, Shop and Factory Premises

Consumer Protection
Weights and Measures
Food and Drugs
Trade Descriptions
Consumer Protection.

Other Environmental Services   Other Environmental Services
Land Drainage   Local Sewers
Refuse Disposal   Land Drainage
Health Education*   Refuse Collection
                                     Litter
                                     Coast Protection
                                     Clean Air
                                     Building Regulations
                                     Street Cleansing
                                     Nuisances
                                     Cemeteries and Crematoria
                                     Markets
                                     Offensive Trades
                                     Health Education*

Police and Fire
Police (subject to amalgamation)
Fire

Recreation and Tourism   Recreation and Tourism
Swimming Baths*   Swimming Baths*
Parks and Open Spaces*   Parks and Open Spaces*
Physical Training and Recreation*   Physical Training and Recreation*
                                     Publicity for Tourist Attractions

Licensing and Registration Functions Licensing and Registration Functions
Births, Deaths and Marriages
Adoption Societies

Other Services   Other Services
Entertainments*   Entertainments*
Aerodromes*   Aerodromes*
Natural Emergences*   Natural Emergences*

NOTE:This Table ignores minor variations which may exist in Wales.

METROPOLITAN COUNTIES   METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS
                                     Social Services

Education and Related Services   Education and Related Services
Museums and Art Galleries*   Education
                                     Libraries
                                     Museums and Art Galleries*

Housing and Town Development   Housing and Town Development
Certain reserve powers e.g.over-spill Housing
Town Development   Town Development

Town and Country Planning and
Related Matters
Structure Plans
Local Plans(in special cases)
Development Control (strategic
and reserved decisions)
Acquisition and Disposal of Land*
Clearance of Derelict Land*
National Parks (subject to
existence of boards)
Country Parks*
Commons - registration
Caravan Sites - provision*
Gipsy Sites - provision
Smallholdings and Cottage Holdings.

Highways and Related Subjects
Tranport Planning
Highways
Traffic
Parking
Passenger Transport
Road Safety

Consumer Protection
Weights and Measures
Food and Drugs
Trade Descriptions
Consumer Protection

Other Environmental Services
Land Drainage
Refuse Disposal
Health Education*

Police and Fire
Police (subject to amalgamation)
Fire

Town and Country Planning
and Related Matters
Local Plans (most)
Development Control (most)
Acquisition and Disposal
of Land*
Clearance of Derelict Land*
Country Parks*
Footpaths and Bridleways
Commons - management
Caravan Sites - provisions*
licensing and management
Gipsy Sites - management.

Highways and Related Subjects
Highways - can claim
maintenance power over
unclassified roads in
urban areas.

Environmental Health
Food Safety and Hygiene
Control of Communicable
Disease
Control of office, shop and
Factory Premises.

Other Environmental Services
Local Sewers
Land Drainage
Refuse Collection
Litter
Coast Protection
Clean Air
Building Regulations
Nuisances
Cemeteries and Crematoria
Markets
Offensive Trades
Health Education*

Recreation and Tourism
Swimming Baths*
Parks and Open Spaces*
Physical Training and Recreation*

Recreation and Tourism
Swimming Baths*
Parks and Open Spaces*
Physical Training and Recreation*
Publicity for Tourist Attractions

Licensing and Registration
Functions.

Other Services
Entertainments*
Aerodromes*
Natural Emergencies*

Other Services
Entertainments*
Aerodromes*
Natural Emergencies*

* = Concurrent functions.
Source: Richards, 1978, pp.181-184.

APPENDIX II

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF SECRETARIES
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The Secretary to the Local Government as the Chief Executive to the

Local Government Council will be responsible for:

(i)   co-ordinating the work of all the departments of the council;

(ii)   initiating policy proposals for consideration by the council;

(iii)   implementing policy decisions of the council;

(iv)   giving general guidance and advice to the council on all matters

        pertaining to the treasury and the conduct of its business;

(v)   maintaining a proper system of accounts in according with the

        provisions of the law and the instructions contained in the

        Financial Memoranda;

(vi)   satisfying himself that the council is discharging its

        responsibilities for supervision of its finances as detailed in

        the Financial Memoranda;

(vii)   ensuring that the council appoints an annual Board of Survey

        on revenue earning books;

(viii) handling all personnel matters affecting the councils in

        accordance with existing regulations;

(ix)   submitting monthly progress reports on council activities to

        the Ministry of Local Government and Social Development;

(x)   security within the Local Government Authority area;

(xi)   setting targets and measuring performance of council staff;

(xii)   submitting monthly Intelligence Report in respect of the area

        to Government;

(xiii) co-ordinating Government functions in the area;   -

(xiv)   any other duties that may be assigned to him by the Ministry

        of Local Government and Social Development or the Government.

Source: ANAMBRA STATE (1976)

APPENDIX III

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND 1966-1969 VOLUME 1

CHAPTER 1. Main conclusions and how they were reached

Main conclusions

1.   The pattern and character of local government must be such
as to enable it to do four things: to perform efficiently a wide
range of profoundly important tasks concerned with the safety,
health and wellbeing, both material and cultural, of people in
different localities; to attract and hold the interest of its
citizens; to develop enough inherent strength to deal with national
authorities in a valid partnership; and to adapt itself without
disruption to the present unprecedented process of change in the
way people live, work, move, shop and enjoy themselves.   These
purposes have guided our assessment of the present and our proposals
for the future.

2.   We are unanimous in our conviction that local government in
England needs a new structure and a new map.   Ten of the 11
members of the Commission agree about the principles on which the
new structure and map should be based.

3.   England (outside London which was not within our terms of
reference) should be divided into 61 new local government areas, each
covering town and country.   In 58 of them a single authority should
be responsible for all services.   In the special circumstances
of three metropolitan areas around Birmingham, Liverpool and
Manchester, responsibility for services should be divided in each
case between a metropolitan authority whose key functions would
be planning, transportation and major development, and a number
of metropolitan district authorities whose key functions would be
education, the personal social services, health and housing.

4.   These 61 new local government areas should be grouped, together
with Greater London, in eight provinces, each with its own provincial
council.   Provincial councils would be elected by the authorities
for the unitary and metropolitan areas (including, in the south
east, the Greater London authorities), but would also include co-opted
members.   The key function of these councils would be to settle the
provincial strategy and planning framework within which the main
authorities will operate.   They would replace the present regional
economic planning councils and collaborate with central government
in the economic and social development of each province.   They will
therefore play an essential part in the future adaptation of
local government to the changes in ways of life and movement that
time and technical progress will bring.

5.   Within the 58 unitary areas and, wherever they were wanted,
within the three metropolitan areas, local councils should be
elected to represent and communicate the wishes of cities, towns,

and villages in all matters of special concern to the inhabitants. The only duty of the local council would be to represent local opinion, but it would have the right to be consulted on matters of special interest to its inhabitants and it would have the power to do for the local community a number of things best done locally, including the opportunity to play a part in some of the main local government services on a scale appropriate to its resources and subject to the agreement of the main authority.

How main conclusions were reached

6.   In the light of all the evidence presented to us, of our review of the present pattern and working of local government and of our efforts to foresee the future, we became convinced that there are four basic defects in the existing structure.   Together these structural defects seriously reduce, and will increasingly reduce, the chances of ensuring that local government works efficiently and economically, is understood by the citizens who elect it, and holds their interest.   The following are the four basic faults:

i.   Local government areas do not fit the pattern of life and work in modern England. The gap will widen as social, economic and technological changes quicken.

ii.   The fragmentation of England into 79 county boroughs and 45 counties, exercising independent jurisdictions and dividing town from country, has made the proper planning of development and transportation impossible.   The result has often been an atmosphere of hostility between county boroughs and counties and this has made it harder to decide difficult questions on their merits.

iii.   The division of responsibility within each county between county council and a number of county district councils, together with the position of county boroughs as islands in the counties, means that services which should be in the hands of one authority are fragmented among several.   The difficulty of meeting comprehensively the needs of families and individuals is thus greatly increased.

iv.   Many local authorities are too small, in size and revenue, and in consequence too short of highly qualified manpower and technical equipment, to be able to do their work as well as it could and should be done.

7,   Partly but not wholly because of these structural faults, and in spite of the devoted efforts of councillors and officers, there are serious failings in local government's relationships with the public and with national government:

i.   The complex local government machinery seems, and often is, irrelevant and therefore impotent in face of the problems that confront people in their daily lives, either collectively or as families and individuals.   Hence, the feeling of many people that local government cannot help them and the frequent sense of frustration among councillors and officers.

ii.   Parliament and central government doubt the ability of
local governors, within the straitjacket of the present system,
to run local affairs.

iii.   The variety in size and type of local authorities, and the
existence of several local authority associations reflecting
that variety, mean that local government seldom acts effectively
as a single body in its dealings with central government.

8.   In considering what changes are needed to correct these
structural and other defects there is one fundamental question.
What size of authority, or range of size, in terms of population
and of area, is needed for the democratic and efficient provision
of particular services and for local self-government as a whole?

9.   After examining each of the main services in turn, we decided
that answers to that question must be found by seeking to apply to
each part of the country the following general principles:

i.   Local authority areas must be so defined that they enable
citizens and their elected representatives to have a sense of
common purpose.

ii.   The areas must be based upon the interdependence of town and
country.

iii. In each part of the country, all services concerned with the
physical environment (planning, transportation and major development)
must be in the hands of one authority.   Areas must be large enough
to enable these authorities to meet the pressing land needs of the
growing population, and their inhabitants must share a common
interest in their environment because it is where they live, work,
shop, and find their recreation.

iv.   All personal services (education, personal social services,
health and housing), being closely linked in operation and effect,
must also be in the hands of one authority, as strongly recommended
by the recent report of the Seebohm Committee.

v.   If possible, both the 'environmental' and the 'personal'
groups of services should be in the hands of the same authority,
because the influence of one on the other is great and likely to
increase.   Further, concentrating responsibility for all main local
government services in a single authority for each area, as in the
present county borough, would help to make the idea of local
self-government a reality.   Through allocation of priorities and
co-ordinated use of resources, a single authority can relate its
programme for all services to objectives for its area considered
as a whole.

vi.   Authorities must, however, be bigger than most county boroughs
(and all county district) are at present, if they are to command the
resources and skilled manpower which they need to provide services
with maximum efficiency.

vii.   The size of authorities must vary over a wide range if areas
are to match the pattern of population.   But a minimum population
is necessary.   What this should be is a question of great
difficulty and we received much evidence about it.   We concluded
that this pointed to a minimum of around 250,000.   Though
authoritative witnesses would prefer a higher minimum for education -
perhaps as high as 500,000 - we did not accept that this was essential.
Moreover, a minimum above 250,000 would be too high to provide coherent
and reasonably compact areas in many parts of the country.   It would
also be unnecessarily large for the other personal services (the
personal social services, health and housing), which must be kept
together with education.

viii.   At the other end of the scale, authorities must not be so
large in terms of population that organization of their business
becomes difficult and the elected representatives cannot keep in
touch with the people affected by their policies.   This is
especially important in the personal services.   There was little
evidence to guide us but we concluded that a population of not much
more than 1,000,000 should be the maximum for the personal services,
though much would depend on the social and geographic characteristics
of each area.

ix.   Where the area required for planning and the other environmental
services contains too large a population for the personal services, a
single authority for all services would not be appropriate;   and in
these parts of the country, responsibilities must be clearly
divided between two levels, and related services kept together.

x.   The new local government pattern should so far as practicable
stem from the existing one.   Wherever the case for change is in doubt,
the common interests, traditions and loyalties inherent in the present
pattern, and the strength of existing services as going concerns,
should be respected.

10.   In considering what the new local government structure should
be, we first concentrated on the 'city region' since this was the idea
strongly advocated for the whole country by the Ministry of Housing
and Local Government, the department with chief responsibility for
English local government.   We examined various possible local
government maps of England in turn, and the following points emerged:

i.   The city region idea has value because it takes account of the
fact that people are now much more mobile than they were.

ii.   Witnesses put forward a variety of possible areas as city
regions, ranging in number from 25 to 45 for the country as a whole.
This suggested that the city region was not an idea which could be
applied uniformly all over England, and in some parts of the country
it did not seem to us to fit reality.   In a number of areas it does
provide the clue: around the great urban concentrations of
Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, and also in areas where a big

town is the natural centre for a wide area of surrounding countryside
and smaller towns. But in others, such as the south west, insistence
on the idea of the city region seemed to mean creating artifically
constructed areas whose people have no sense of looking to a city
centre or of sharing interests peculiar to themselves; and in the
south east the idea leads to no clear local government pattern
because the influence of London overshadows that of other centres.

iii. Many suggested city regions would be so large as to need a
second operational tier of authorites if local government is
not to be too remote for effective contact between the elected
representatives and the people. But many of these second-tier
authorities would be too small to find the resources needed for the
main local government services; and in any case the present splitting
of personal services which ought to be concentrated in one authority
would be reproduced over a large part of the country.

11. We therefore next considered various alternatives to applying
the idea of the city region to the whole country. We examined
a series of maps illustrating the other main proposals for a new
structure put to us in evidence. These proposals were:
a single tier; two tiers of various kinds and sizes; main
authorities performing most functions but with a level above them,
covering a 'province', to perform the rest. Other maps which our
staff prepared for us showed that the country could be divided into
130 to 140 areas which had some measure of coherence because of internal
social and economic ties, but many of these areas have populations
far too small to enable them to employ the range of staff needed
for the efficient provision of any of the main services.

12. Meanwhile we had become increasingly convinced by those who
emphasised the need for an organ of community at grass-roots level.
Our conclusion was that any new pattern of democratic government
must include elected local councils, not to provide main services, but
to promote and watch over the particular interests of communities
in city, town and village throughout England.

13. Our examination of England had also led us to the conclusion that
local government, however organised, needs to include a new
representative institution with authority over areas larger than any
city region, not unlike the eight areas of the present regional
economic planning councils. This provincial council would handle the
broader planning issues, work out provincial economic strategy in
collaboration with central government and be able to act on behalf
of the whole province.

14. Assuming therefore that whatever arrangements were made for the
operation of the main local government services there would be need
for complementary institutions 'above' and 'below', at the levels of
the province and the local community, we decided to re-examine each
part of England in turn, apply our general principles and ask
ourselves where there are areas in which operational responsibility
for all local government services can appropriately be concentrated;
that is to say, areas which

i.   can properly be treated as coherent units for carrying out
the 'environmental' group of services;
ii.   have populations broadly within the range of 250,000 to not much
more than a million, the size that we had concluded would be appropriate
for the efficient performance of the 'personal' group of services;
iii. can be looked after effectively and democratically by one council.

Where areas existed that met all these three conditions, the argument
in favour of one authority for each of them would be decisive.
Elsewhere responsibility would need to be divided between authorities
at two tiers; and we recognised that this would be necessary where we
found that the planning problems of big urban concentrations had to be
dealt with over areas containing such large populations that a single
authority would be unwieldy and, for the personal services, remote.

15.   In working out possible boundaries with these alternatives in mind
we had to judge in each case where the balance of advantage lay, by
weighing a number of different considerations, and in particular these
three;

i.   The pattern of living – that is to say, the distribution of population
and industry and the pattern of travel for employment, shopping,
entertainment and other purposes, together with prospective developments
likely to change these facts and modify the social and economic future
of the area.

ii.   Democracy and efficiency – the best practicable balance between
the needs of efficiency (in terms of population, geography and
resources of money, manpower and technical equipment) and the
requirements of effective representation.

iii. The present pattern of local government.

16.   It was this survey that resulted in our final conclusions. It
convinced us that over most parts of the country, 58 in all, a single
authority should be made responsible for all services, but that in
three metropolitan areas (additional to Greater London) the unit
needed for comprehensive planning, transportation and major
development was both too large for unitary government and large enough
to be sub-divided into units suitable for education, the personal
social services, health and housing; in each of these three areas
therefore responsibility for services should be divided between one
metropolitan and several large metropolitan district authorities.

Source: Royal Commission on Local Government in England (1969), Vol.1,
        Report, Cmnd 4040, London,HMSO, pp.1-6.

APPENDIX IV

A COMPARISON OF THE VARIOUS REFORM PROPOSALS 1969-72*

1. Areas	Redcliffe-Maud Report Majority Proposals (Cmnd 4040, 1969)	Labour Government White Paper (Cmnd 4276, 1970)	Conservative Government White Paper (Cmnd 4584, 1971)	Local Government Bill (1971)	Local Government Act (1972) Plus Later Orders
METROPOLITAN AREAS AND DISTRICTS: NUMBER	3 (20 Districts).	5 (28 Districts).	6 (34 Districts).	6 (34 Districts).	6 (36 Districts).
AUTHORITIES OUTSIDE THE METROPOLITAN AREAS: NUMBER	58 Unitary Authorities.	51 Unitary Authorities.	38 Counties + Districts (normally with at least 40,000 pop.). A Boundary Commission to recommend District areas.	38 Counties+ Districts as in Cmnd 4584. (Main changes in county areas: Humberside N.E.Essex: Harrogate.) (Wales:8 Counties + 37 Districts.)	39 Counties + 296 Districts (Isle of Wight a county). (Wales: 8 Counties + 37 Districts.)
PROVINCIAL COUNCILS	8 Indirectly elected.	Wait until Crowther Report.	Wait until Crowther Report.	Wait until Crowther Report.	No provisions. (Wait until Crowther/Kilbrandon Report)
PARISH OR LOCAL COUNCILS	In unitary areas present authorities become local councils. In metropolitan areas only if they so desire.	As Cmnd 4040 but with the possibility of large towns being divided into several local councils.	Present Parish Councils to continue. Urban areas left for further discussion.	Present PCs to continue. Urban PCs possible some time after 1974. (Wales present PCs to continue as Community Councils.All except 6 largest towns able to have a Community Council. Boundary Commission to review areas soon after 1974.)	Present PCs to continue. 300 MBs and UDCs become urban parishes (nearly all under 20,000 pop.), including several in metropolitan areas. (Wales: as Bill.)

2. Areas: North-West

	Redcliffe-Maud Report Majority Proposals (Cmnd 4040, 1969)	Labour Government White Paper (Cmnd 4276,1970)	Conservative Government White Paper (Cmnd 4584,1971)	Local Government Bill (1971)	Local Government Act (1972) Plus Later Orders
TOP-TIER IN METROPOLITAN AREAS	2 (SELNEC to include 90 existing authorities; Merseyside 31.)	As Cmnd 4040	As Cmnd 4040 but smaller. (SELNEC 78; Merseyside 25.)	As Cmnd 4040 but even smaller. (Greater Manchester 71; Merseyside 23.)	Smaller still.(Greater Manchester 68: Merseyside 22.)
SECOND-TIER IN METROPOLITAN AREAS	SELNEC - 9. (Wigan; Bolton; Bury-Rochdale; Warrington; Manchester-Salford; Altrincham; Oldham; Ashton; Stockport.) Merseyside - 4 (Southport; Liverpool-Bottle; St.Helens; Chester-Wirral.)	As Cmnd 4040.	SELNEC - 9. (Wigan; Bolton; Bury-Rochdale; Salford-Manchester; Stretford-Altrincham; Oldham; Ashton; Stockport.) Merseyside - 4 (Bootle; Liverpool; St. Helens; Wirral.)	Greater Manchester - 9 (As in Cmnd 4584 with minor changes.) Merseyside - 4 (As in Cmnd 4584 with minor changes. Biggest change is that 'Bootle' becomes 'Bootle-Southport'.)	GMCC - 10. (Bury and Rochdale separated.) MCC-5 (St Helens and Huyton separated.)
TOP-TIER ELSEWHERE	6 Unitary Authorities.(Cumberland; Furness; Fylde; Preston; Blackburn; Burnley.) Also South Cheshire to go with Stoke.)	As Cmnd 4040	3 Counties.(Cumberland-Westmorland; Lancashire; Cheshire.)	3 Counties as in Cmnd 4584.(Minor changes to boundaries; 'Cumbria' named.	As Bill. Minor changes by reducing metropolitan areas (Poynton. Wilmslow, Whitworth, Skelmersdale.)
SECOND-TIER ELSEWHERE	None	None	To be decided after Boundary Commission review.	To be decided after Boundary Commission review.	Cumbria - 6, Lancashire - 14. Cheshire - 8.

3. Functions

	Redcliffe-Maud Report Majority Proposals (Cmnd 4040, 1969).	Labour Government White Paper (Cmnd 4276, 1970).	Conservative Government White Paper (Cmnd 4584, 1971).	Local Government Bill (1971)	Local Government Act (1972) Plus Later Orders
METROPOLITAN COUNTY FUNCTIONS	Planning and Transport-ation; Housing policy; Police; Fire; Water; Sewage and Refuse Disposal.	As Cmnd 4040 except: (1) County to do Education. (2) County to be Rating Authority.	As Cmnd 4040 except: (1) Districts to do some Development Control. (2) County to have minimal Housing Powers. (County not to be Education or Rating Authority.)	Cmnd 4584 plus further powers for districts: (1) Local Plan-making (2) Clean Air etc. (3) Maintenance of unclassified urban roads.)	Police; Fire; Consumer Protection; Most Roads; Structure Planning; Passenger Transport; Refuse Disposal; Reserve Housing Powers; plus 'agency' (see below).
NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTY FUNCTIONS	Unitary authorities would be all-purpose.	Unitary authorities would be all-purpose.	As Metropolitan Counties above plus: (1) Education. (2) Libraries. (3) Social Services.	As Metropolitan Counties above plus: (1) Education. (2) Libraries. (3) Social Services but minus (4) Public Transport undertakings. (Wales - all districts do refuse disposal, some may run libraries.)	As Bill with minor amendments. In all areas 'agency' clause allows power sharing (not in the case of Education, Police, Social Services). (Wales - as Bill with minor amendments.)
LOCAL COUNCIL FUNCTIONS	Minor local powers plus possibility of some involvement in running of major services.	Local powers only. (Idea of District Committees of Unitary Authorities for major services floated).	Present parishes to continue with their powers.	Present parishes to continue with their powers.	As present parishes plus: (1) Right to receive and comment on planning applications. (2) Powers to spend more without permission from above.

4. Elections

	Redcliffe-Maud Report Majority Proposals (Cmnd 4040, 1969)	Labour Government White Paper (Cmnd 4276, 1970)	Conservative Government White Paper (Cmnd 4584, 1971)	Local Government Bill (1971)	Local Government Act (1972) Plus Later Orders
ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS	Abolish aldermen. Maximum of 75 councillors.	Abolish aldermen. Consult on number of councillors.	Consult on aldermen. No mention of number of councillors.	Abolish aldermen. No provisions on council size.	Aldermen abolished. Most County Councils have under 100 members, most Districts under 80, though no maxima in Act.
PAYMENT OF COUNCILLORS	Uncertain. Possibly pay senior members.	Against. Better expenses favoured.	Considering payment. Better expenses favoured.	A flat-rate taxable Attendance Allowance introduced.	Attendance Allowance.
ELECTIONS	General election with single-member wards. Election date and length of term of office – further study needed.	No proposals. Further consultations to take place.	No proposals. Further consultations to take place.	Counties – general election in single-member divisions. Districts – partial election (1/3 each time) in 3-member wards. All councillors to serve 4 years.	CCs- general election in single-member divisions. MDs-partial election in 3-member wards. CDs-either partial or general, ward size variable. All councillors-4-year terms of office.

* In Tables, 1,3 and 4 the first three columns refer to England, excluding London. The last two columns (Bill and Act) also include Wales.

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