

Structural Defect in Local Government Re-Organization in Ebonyi State Nigeria: Implications on Grassroot Democratic Development

Jombo Onyekachi*

PhD Student School of Public Affairs University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui, Hefei China.

*Corresponding author: Jombo Onyekachi, PhD Student, School of Public Affairs, University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui, Hefei China, Tel: +86 1566 542 3807; +234 8107 802041; E-mail: onyekachi.jombo@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Local government are required to participate in election, to select or chose their leaders. It is wrongly changed instead of the above procedure in a democratic governance it is been challenged by the appointment instead of elections, in the above suggestion local administration should involve the principles of election, a process of choosing their leaders, so as to allow the rural people to be integrated in the participatory process of choosing their leaders with a beacon of sense of belonging, for a better policy implementation and formulation. Nigerian local government system has been an issue of concern to both local government stake holders, scholars and political actors so also Institution of learning. The main objective of the study is to identify the challenging issues in various local government reorganization/restructuring especially in Ebonyi state and analyzes the impact on local government in democratic governance in the state. Questionnaire is used for the survey, the most significant aspect of the research goes a long way in restructuring and helping the local administration sustain and achieve its obligation.

Keywords: Local government; Re-organization and re-structuring of local government; Local government reform; Development; Decentralization

Introduction

Local government reform of Nigeria 1979 [1] observation shows that shortly after the emergence of the fourth Republic in 1999, Ebonyi state government rightly recognized the local government as an instrument per excellence for bringing governance and development nearer to the communities, thus necessitating the re-organization of the local system. Local government re-organization is an effort towards creating strong, organized, and representative councils as part of administrative mechanism for improving efficiency and responsiveness in local governance. Evidence from many part of the world shows that the smaller local bodies are generally the more efficient, taking the process of decision making down to the community level given's rise to a more responsive organization on one hand, and greater community involvement in their development, electorate are allowed to democratically elect their leaders, this is a missing link in Ebonyi state and this has impacted negatively on local government democratic development.

Since the creation of modern state in Nigeria as well as the 1976 local government reform [2] different regimes have been confronted with problems of how best to reposition local government for better performances, however observation shows that achieving this is still a myth. Okunabe observed that "battle to re-order Nigeria politically, democratically, and economically will be won or lost at the local government level" [3-7] believed that "the challenges of effective repositioning of local government in Nigeria for better service delivery through reorganization and restructuring will determine the level of development to expect in the next decade in Nigeria. Ebonyi state since the fourth Republic was not left out in this search for efficiency and

development at the local government as the third tier of government. However, despite these succeeding efforts, the activities of the local government in Nigeria especially in Ebonyi state have remained in shamble to the extent that many scholars frequently calls for its scraping. The appointment and hand picking of local government officials or leaders without much training and re-training is done in error, this scenario has eroded the political sovereignty of the people at the grass root level and further compounded the problem of local government hence, and has hampered the viability of this organ as the third tier of government. On this premise, one may ask: Has the fragmentation of local government in Ebonyi state through development centers promoted political participation? To what extent has the structural reorganization of local government in Ebonyi state through the creation of Development center promoted political alienation in Ebonyi communities? This is evident in the fact that the geometrical increase of local government in Ebonyi state Nigeria from 13 to about 63 has no significant in grass root development. While admitting that development centers which are carved out from the 13 local government areas has helped in job creation in the State, they are faced with large scale of inefficiency in service delivery as a result of non-qualifications and non-competence of the management team. Since the adage that has it that He who pays the piper dictates the tune. The local government structure is negatively influenced by her personnel who only represent the interest of the people that appointed them to the position occupied to the detriment of the masses, all are done through selected guided democracy. The main objective of this study is to examine the structural reorganization of local government into Development centers and identify its defects. The work will also try to find out if the defects area affecting the local government in carrying out its statutory functions in line with the responsibilities accorded to it by the constitution including the promotion of grass roots democratic development in Nigeria, to be precise, the study has been design to achieve the following purpose. To examine the

structural reorganization of the local government and its component development centers with a view to determine its effect on, effectiveness and efficiency in democratic development of the communities. To examine the law establishing the development centers with a view to suggesting possible areas of amendment. This study on structural defects in local government reorganization in Ebonyi state is necessary as well as very significant. It is important because, it is another contribution for national discourse on repositioning local government in Nigeria. It will also be of immense benefit to other researchers in public administration and political science study in the universities and institutions of learning, the study will equally help in democratic development at the grass root level in Ebonyi state especially in promoting democratic political participation in the local areas.

Literature Review

Local government restructuring and grassroots democratic development meaning and purpose of local government

Agagu [8,9] conceives the “local government as a government at the grass root level of administration meant for meeting peculiar needs of the people”. In his analysis, he viewed local government as to be based on the levels of governance which is supposed to have its greatest impact on the people at the grass roots. Ajayi [10] defines local government as “a territorial non sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organ to regulates its own affairs, which presupposes the existence of a local authority with the power to act independently both external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of it’s own affairs through representation”

In terms of Nigeria, local government is a political sub-division of a state in a federal system of government; it is a form of decentralization. According to the UNDP (2010), Report, Decentralization means the devolving of decision making down to the lowest constituencies. It is a fundamental principal of democratic participation at the grass root level. From the many definitions above, it is obvious that there is no general accepted definition of local government. We can define local government as grass root government established by law, to see to the welfare and interest of the people at the local level. Evidence from many parts of world shows that the smaller in size of human & material resources a local government are is the more efficient, but also to say that taking the process of decision making down to the community level, gives rise to a more responsive organization on the one hand, and a greater community involvement in their development [11] argued that the “nature and functions of local government is determined by the type of government in-voke for an instance, in unitary system of government local government only exercise whatever function delegated to it from the central authorities”. Under this system local government can only serve as an instrument for executing central government policies, and issues of autonomy does not arise Whereas under a federal government as it is in Nigeria, United State of America, Both function’s as a third tier of government with some degree of autonomy.

Models of local government

Two model guide the study, in democratic practices local government is decentralized with representation, this go a long way in bringing productivity and service delivery to the rural people, Local

government in Nigeria has both legitimacy, above all- the capacity to act on the ambit of the law (constitution). But in the structural model Local government provides basic goods and services to the local people but for this to be effective there must be a change from traditional public administration to the new public management to avoid unnecessary bureaucratic delay [12]. Similarly, “the local government is also to act as a training ground of leaders for higher level of administration and act as a training ground for grassroots ‘democratic development [11]. “The closeness of local administration to the people affords them the opportunity to meet with their local representative, one on one, and present their problems for possible and immediate solutions”. In accordance with these arguments the following model is formulated (Figure 1).

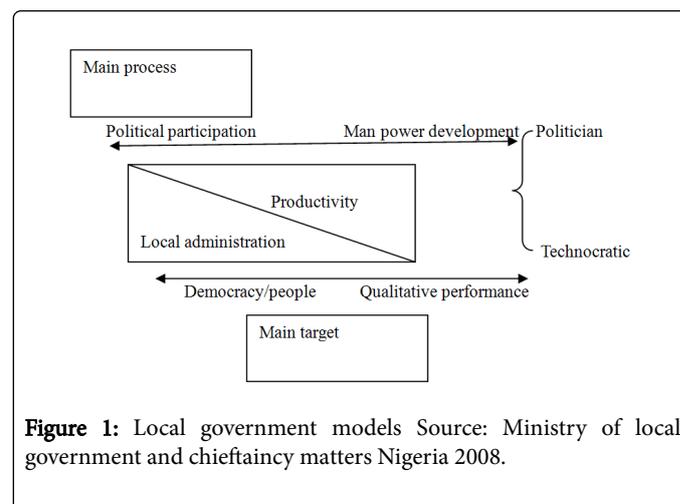


Figure 1: Local government models Source: Ministry of local government and chieftaincy matters Nigeria 2008.

Hypothesis 1: That the appointment of coordinators/management committee’s members of local government/Development centers affects the degree of political participation at the grass root level.

This may not be possible at the other level of government because of the distance and administrative bottlenecks. Essentially, the local government is saddled with the responsibility of guaranteeing the political, social, and economic development of its people Ajayi, Agagu and Augustine [3,10,13] local government structural re-organization is therefore an effort towards creating strong, organized and representative councils as part of administrative mechanism of improving efficiency and responsiveness in local governance. A nation like Nigeria, therefore cannot but constantly re-structure for effective governance, local government is an indispensable instrument of democracy. It is an avenue for government and the people to reach each other. It is important that people experience direct democracy through the local government system and development centers. It gives residents an opportunity to make the government responsive to their own needs and enables leaders embrace public accountability. The local government is essential in any good democratic system. While the local government strives to achieve unreserved access to measurable, efficient, and effective development and service delivery to the people, democracy on the other hand, ensures and assures feasibility and possibility of this service delivery and development. It offers a participatory opportunity for citizens in the choice and selection of leaders through periodic elections based on credible representatives and confers in estimates avenue for psychological self-satisfaction and self- fulfillment. This is so, that the electoral process eventually leads to the enthronement of a government and the political leadership they can call their own, rather than seen a local government as being an

imposition as is the case in Development centers in Ebonyi State. This is the missing gap in the restructuring project in the state. Apart from that, it is stated that in the fourth schedule of the 1999 constitution as follows: The system of local government by democratically elected government councils shall, subject to the section 8 of this constitution, ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils (Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution 1999), The import of this provision is that the existence of local government is obligatory under the constitution. This becomes imperative as local governments are seen as training grounds for higher level of political responsibilities in the federation. The 1999 constitution contain functions to be performed by every local government in the Federation. They are as follows:

- The consideration and the making of recommendations to a state commission on Economic planning or any similar body on-the economic development of the state, particularly in so far as the areas of Authority of the council and of the state affected;
- Proposals made by the said commission or body;
- Collection of rates, radio and television licenses;
- Establishing and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and home for the destitute or infirm;
- Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), Canoes, wheel barrows, and carts;
- Establishment and maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, Slaughter slab markets, motor parks and public convenience;
- Construction of maintenance of type c roads, street, street lighting, drains and other Public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces or such public facilities as may be prescribed from time to time by the house of Assembly of a state;
- Naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses;
- Provision of maintenance of public conveniences, sewage and refuse;
- Disposal (I) Registration of all births, deaths and marriages;
- Assessment of privately owned houses or tenements for the purpose of levying such rates as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of a state;
- Control and regulation: Out-door advertising and hoarding; Movement and keeping of pets of all description; Shops and Kiosks; Restaurant, bakeries and other places for sale of food to the public Laundries; Licensing, regulation and control of the sale of liquor etc.

The 1976 local government reform marked the standardization of the council's nation-wide. Ojah [14] noted that the objectives of the reform to include:

- Facilitating the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society;
- Encouraging initiative and leadership potentials of the local people;
- Mobilizing human and natural resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development areas and to provide two-way channel of communication between the local communities and the government;
- Bringing about even and rapid development at the local levels throughout the country.

In accordance with these arguments the following hypothesis is formulated.

Hypothesis 2: That the re-organization of local government into development centers causes political alienation at the grassroots level

Further Reform from 1984-1998 led to the nation election in to councils from 1987 till date. In 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, local government affairs is placed on the concurrent legislative list, as a result of which different states enacts different laws for the running of local government according to the need and want of the people in the local area, the method of law enactments, policies and programs of local government areas in Nigeria is not done in uniform as Nigeria has 774 Local government areas which are controlled by both state/provincial government and government at the center popularly called Federal Government. Although local government is funded directly from federation account, administration of each council today is subject to the state/provinces local government law; this explains why the manner of operation of local government councils across Nigeria in the current political dispensation varies from state to state. This to a large extend is determined by the local government law enacted by each state house of assembly thus, given the state governors some degree of freedom to restructure, re-organize and re-shape the modus parades of the local government.

Local government school of thought: Augustine [3-7] identified three schools of thought in Local government: Democratic-participatory school of thought; Efficiency-service delivery school of thought; Resource-mobilization school of thought.

Democratic-participatory school of thought: This particular school of thought is of the view that local government function is aimed at promoting democracy and popular participation at the grass root level, thereby bringing government nearer to the people, with the ideology of democracy

Efficiency-service delivery school of thought: This school of thought is of the view on efficiency and service delivery. For an instance, Ahmed stated that, "the effectiveness of local government can be judged through the local development it generates-social amenities it provide for the people well-being, which is satisfactorily accepted by the communities as a services rendered by the local government as local government is established to serve."

Resource mobilization school of thought: This school of thought argues that local government permits local resource both human and material to be mobilized for rural development. Local government is thus veritable instruments most strategically placed for stimulating grassroots development and bringing about rural transformation [8]. The above perceptions, emphasizes certain basic elements that explain the role of local government administration: Citizen Participation in the management of local affairs, efficient and effective provision of essential services or service delivery. In line with the above schools of thoughts, The Ebonyi state Government restructured its local government system, resulting in the creation of development centers.

Local government re-organization in Nigeria

The introduction of widely accepted definition of local government in Nigeria as stated by the 1996 local government reform which defines local government as "government at the local level exercised through representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the council substantial

control over local affairs; as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services, and to determine and implement projects, so as to implement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and to ensure thorough devolution of these functions to these council and through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiatives and response to local needs and conditions are maximized." By this definition, local government became recognized as a third tier of government at the local level in Nigeria. It marks the end of provinces, districts, native authority administration, this served as the beginning of democratic government in practice in Nigeria.

Secondly, the reform brought for the first time in the history of Nigeria a unified local government system with defined functions and structures to achieve democratic governance irrespective of many state in Nigeria. Thirdly, The reform resulted in the creation of 301 local government for the first time in Nigeria to exercise democratic function at the local level (now 774) The provision for elections of the political actors of the local government through secret ballot system on a non-party basis (now on party basis) gave hope for participatory democracy of the local people in politics of Nigeria. The local people are to participate, the reforms provided for 5% (now 20%) federation allocation to the local government to enhance local government financial independence and viability for democratic activities in Nigeria.

The reform resulted in the introduction of nationwide election guidelines for the conduct of both direct and indirect elections in the councils. Which resulted on January, 1977 council election using the secret ballot system, which was manifestation of the local people participating in the election of their leaders. Structurally, Blair [15] opines that the reform provided for the "political control of the local government to be vested on the council, and exercised through the councilors known as the supervisory councilors." This is a step towards political development and democratic growth of the local government in Nigeria. However, there was a contradiction to democratic development and stability in the reforms, taking local government as a third tier of government in one hand, and providing for local government service commission (LGSC) as an agent of the state to regulate local government personnel services on the other hand. The challenge is that the local government staff, which is charged with the responsibilities of enforcing the local government policies, could be manipulated or frustrated by the LGSC on event of policy disagreement between the state and local governments, thereby depriving the local government the opportunity of achieving effective implementation of democratic policies in the area (Adedeji and Bamidele; 2007).

Remarkably, the reform created an opportunity for discussion of local government democracy and development in the 197-1978 constitutes assembly, and further enshrined it in the 1979 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. Bike and Nwaodu adds that this is the very first time local government appeared in Nigerian constitution. as contained in section 7 (1) of the 1979 constitution as follows; "the system of democratically elected local government councils is under this constitution guaranteed and Accordingly, the government of every state shall ensure their existence under law, which provides for the Establishment, structure, composition, finance and function's to checkmate the activities of development center and the local government in terms of rural development indeed," In accordance with these arguments the following hypothesis is formulated.

Hypothesis 3: Is there any fundamental differences in terms of rural development between development center and the existing Local government

The above impact of the reforms speaks volume of the development of democracy in Nigeria local government system [16]. Unfortunately, despite the reforms and constitutional powers of the local government, the Alhaji Shehu Shagari led central government of 1979-84 destabilized the democratic activities in the councils; the second republic abused the constitutional provisions for local government democracy. State government created more local governments, but such local government was not recognized by the central or federal government, there by exposing the local government system to more democratic and constitutional insecurity in Nigeria. Secondly, the regime could not conduct democratic election in any council in Nigeria throughout their tenure. Gboyega [17] stated that "Councils were operated by either appointed sole administrators or care-taker committees, thereby depriving the local people the opportunity of participating in choosing their leaders." The re-emergence of the military in politics in 1984 witnessed another set of reforms for the local government with effects on local government democracy in Nigeria as follows:

- More local government was created to 453 in 1989 and 500 in 1991. The newly created local governments were recognized by the Federal Government, and it encouraged more democratic participation of the local people in politics of the state.
- The introduction of presidential system of government at the local government that also encouraged the system and practice of separation of power and democracy in the local Government. The executive council was separated from the legislative council, with defined democratic mandate to run the affairs of the council.
- Within this era, there were local government elections, and the elected chairman became the accounting officers of the council, and answerable to the local people. As an attempt to increase local participation in democracy, under the military controlled government of 1996, more local government were created in Nigeria, bringing the number of local government to 774 in Nigeria. Regrettably, the regime replaced the presidential system with parliamentary system. The parliamentary system was aimed at reducing cost of administration for the local government, but was not encouraging to the nascent democracy in the local government in terms of applying the policy and practice of separation of power. Local government experienced another reform in the era of General Abdusalami Abu baker as a military head of State in Nigeria (1998-1999). The military government reserved the parliamentary system to presidential system in the local government, and conducted successful elections in all the local government councils on December, 1998. The government further recognized and included local government for the second time in Nigerian 1999 Constitution, as contained in the section 7 of the constitution. The above had impact on local government democracy in Nigeria in the areas of increasing local participation in democracy through the presidential system of government, and the successful elections, which gave local people the opportunity to elect their leaders in the councils. The provision of the local government in the 1999 constitution empowers the local government to function as a third tier government with specific constitutional schedules for democratic development in the contrary.

Democratic participations

People's participation in politics is a popular concern amidst academics, development partners they likes of UN, agencies and even in the developing countries. Though concern is evident in every specialized branch of development studies such as economics, political science, sociology and lately public administration and public policy analysis, yet participation is still at very low ebb in most communities especially in Ebonyi state. Now-a-days, peoples' participation has emerged as an umbrella term for a new approach in development intervention at the grass root level. The term participation is generally seen depending on the context and field in which it viewed. In ancient Greece, participation was viewed as a matter of voting, holding offices, attending public meetings, paying taxes and defending the state (samad 2012). The concept of partnership comes very close to the concept of empowerment. Cohen and Uphoff viewed participation with regard to development projects as "people's involvement in decision making processes in implementing program and sharing the benefits of development programs and their involvement in effort to evaluate such program for good policy and government guideline for development." In accordance with these arguments the following hypothesis is formulated.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between effective government policy and guidelines and increase in rural development by development centers in Ebonyi State.

While popular democratic participation can be defined as the active involvement of the local people in the planning and implementation of development projects. For effective plan formulation, control of project and sharing of benefits of development, participation is necessary for effective community development.

What is development?

The conceptual base of "development" which emerged from the dominant modernization paradigm of 1950S and 1960S and which began equating development with modernization, urbanization, industrialization and westernization, has undergone considerable changes. Even the views of the 1970s, which equated development with the "fulfillment of basic needs", do not hold well today.

Development is a trend and has been treated multidimensional processes, involving major changes in social structures, acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty, this process deals not only with the ideas of economic betterment but also with greater human dignity, self-reliance, security, justice and equity [14]. Development in this study is concerned basically with the "improved quality of life that can be ushered in the grass root level through proper involvement of the people in decision making and implementation of development projects at their various communities." The participation of rural communities is essential at each stage of project identification, planning and implementation [3-7] agrees that this hallmark of community participation and democracy-participation as a process and not a product in the sense of sharing project ownership and its benefits. Participation of people is of utmost essence through electing their leader and choice of projects for rural transformation. The local government/development centers, rather than projecting democratic ideals in the rural setting, has been an instrument of exclusion of the opposition and to a large extend the ordinary people in the communities, it has suddenly become a breeding ground for undemocratic practices as it evident from the appointment of the management committee members, this creates

disconnect with the people poor public accountability, and political alienation, widespread participation, and consultation of the people as principles of democracy are conspicuously absent in the development centers [3-7] accounts for the stunted growth of participatory political culture at the grassroots level in the state. The manifestation of the absence of democracy in the local government system paves way for poverty due to the lack of democratic ideals of transforming disagreements, conflicts into debates and game. This was what the restructuring in the state intended to achieve but was not deep enough as it centered more on political consideration rather than developmental orientation. This disconnects with the people resulting in political alienation (Malvin 2004). Alienation, "this is can be said to be an extent to which our community is broken down". It is the condition in which we find ourselves dislocated from self, society, and the environment and develop little or no interest in political/administrative ecology, alienation causes lack of interest and loss of creative drive that brings about development. Observation shows that operation of the Development centers is elitist, it is an imposition and renders the communities passive in its operation and this explains the theory of alienation but democracy is incorporated in restructuring the communities as every political office has tenure.

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

The methodology used is survey method. The method is essentially concerned with the systematic collection of data from populations or samples of populations through the use of personal interviews or administration of questionnaires with a view to making analysis and conclusion that are open to verifications.

Documentary method involves the examination, analysis and interpretation of policies and documents, and constitutes the basic method of generating data in political studies [18], Accordingly, Nwana [19] states that documentary method "implies written documents that were already in use, which were written for some other purpose than the benefit of the researchers". Obasi [20] adds that documents are "published and unpublished materials on activities of public and private organizations, are found mainly in libraries, research papers and in public organizations". They are historical documents that show dynamics and trend of events as well as opinion of people. For this study, it involves the examination of various written documents on the issues of local government reorganization, reform/restructuring, and local government democratic governance in Nigeria, more specifically the Ebonyi state local government and development centers. These documents include text books, journals, local government and development center laws, etc.

Result

The hypothesis formulated was tested and analyzed using simple percentages.

Hypothesis 1

That appointment of coordinators/management committee members of development centers affects the degree of political participation at the grass root level. To test the above hypothesis, two interview questions were asked and answers as presented in Table 1.

Question 1: Do you think that effective local governance can lead to state building in Ebonyi State?

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
No	50	23.8
Yes	160	76.2
Undecided	-	-
Total	210	100

Table 1: Total number of the respondents 210 percentages (%) 100.

Table 1 clearly shows that the majority (160 persons) representing 76.2% of the respondents agreed to the realities that effective local governance can lead to state building in Ebonyi state While 23.8% which is only 50 people has a view that state building cannot be achieved through effective local governance.

Reason(s) for your answer to question one.

Because of the open ended nature of the question, majority of the respondents are of the view that if there is effective local governance through the provision of basic amenities in the rural areas, it will not only reduce the pressure on the State but can equally reduce unemployment and the high level of crime rate in the state thereby bringing about state building. Those opposed to the idea are of the view that local governance has continued to be a failure in Nigeria and that there is no way effective local governance can be achieved.

Hypothesis 2

That reorganization of local government in to development centers causes political alienation at grassroots level.

Question 2a: To what extend do you think that the development centers have so far contributed to the transformation of the rural areas? (Table 2a).

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Minimal Contributed	120	57.1
Maximally Contributed	30	14.2
Have not Contributed at all	60	28.6
Total	210	99..9

Table 2a: Total Number of the respondent 210 Percentages (%) 99.9.

From Table 2a 120 people out of 210 respondents, which represents 57.1%, accepted that the development centers have minimally contributed to the transformation of the rural area while 60 people representing 28.6% of the Respondent affirmed that the development centers have contributed nothing towards the transformation of the rural areas.

Question 2b: What do you think the state government should do to improve rural development using development centers? (Table 2b).

Response in Table 2b show that about 110 people representing 53.3% of the population accepted that retired and experienced civil servant be appointed as administrators in the development centers, 70 people (33.3) suggest that government should set developmental target for the development centers while 30 which is 14.3% agreed in increase of revenue.

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Appoint retired and experienced civil servant to man Development Center	110	52.3
Set a development target for development centres	70	33.3
Increasing revenue accruing to Development Centres	30	14.3
Total	210	99..9

Table 2b: Total number of the respondent210 percentages (%) 99.9.

Hypothesis 3

Question 3a: Is there any fundamental difference in terms of rural development between development centers and the existing local government areas? (Table 3a).

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	120	57.1
No	60	28.6
Undecided	30	14.2
Total	210	99..9

Table 3a: Total number of the respondent 210 percentages (%) 99.9.

The above table clearly shows that 120 respondent representing 57.1% agreed that there exist a fundamental difference between development centers and the existing local government in terms of development, 60 people that represents 28.6% says No, while 14.2% which is 30 persons were not courageous enough to answer the question.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Local government engage more in rural development centers	150	71.4
Development center have contributed more to rural development	50	23.8
Both local governments and development centers have not contributed anything to rural development	10	4.8
Total	210	100

Table 3b: Total number of the respondent 210 percentages (%) 100.

Question 3b: Give reason(s) for your answer? (Table 3b).

The above table is a clear indication that the existing local government contributes more to rural development compared to development centers as about 150 respondents representing 71.4% affirm that local government contributes more to rural development to development centers, 23.8% which is 50 people say that development centers have contributed more while 10 persons representing 4.8%

were of the view that both have contributed nothing towards rural transformation.

Hypothesis 4

There is a positive relationship between effective government policy guideline and the increase in rural development by development centers in Ebonyi state. In testing the Hypothesis above, the researcher used three interview questions and responses and is presented in tabular form.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	130	61.9
No	60	28.6
Undecided	20	9.5
Total	210	100

Table 4a: Total number of the respondent 210 percentages (%) 100.

Question 4a: Can operational guidelines from government policy help in making administrators of development centers to step up development of rural areas? (Table 4a).

A breakdown of the response show that 130 persons which is 61.9% of the population gave a positive response, 28.6% representing 60 persons said No in their response while 20 persons which is 9.5% of the population were neutral.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Government should set up a project monitoring committee for Development Centers	180	85.7
Government should promulgate a law placing Development centers at par with Local Government areas	30	14.3
Total	210	100

Table 4b: Total number of the respondent 210 percentage (%) 100.

Question 4b: If yes 4a suggests possible policy guidelines.

The response in Table 4b show clearly that majority of the respondents favor setting up of project monitoring committee for development centers as about 180 persons representing 85.7% of the population were in support of such policy decision and action, while 14.3% which stands for only 30 persons reasoned that government should promulgate a law placing development centers at par with the local government areas.

Question 4c: Do you suggest government should repeal the laws establishing development centre to allow only the existing (13) thirteen local government areas?

From Table 4c, it can be deduced that a good number of Ebonyi state Indigenes welcomed the existence of development centers as 140 people representing 66.7% of the respondents is of the view that they should remain, while 33.3% which is only 70 persons say that development centre's should be scrapped.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	70	33.3
No	140	66.7
Total	210	100

Table 4c: Total number of the respondent 210 percentage (%) 100.

Research Findings

A critical analysis of structural defects in local government reorganization in Ebonyi state: implication on grass root democratic development reveals the followings defects: That the development centers have serious problem in the promotion and sustenance of democracy due to the absence of elective principle, which will promote democratic participation, that the reorganization provides for third-tier local government system rather than a single-tier multipurpose local government system as provided by the 1999 constitution. That the appointment of the management team of development center has eroded the political sovereignty of the people to choose their leaders, that the reorganization has not provided sufficient ground for community participation as its still elite dominated, that the development centers as presently constituted and operated rather than projecting democratic ideals in rural setting and this has been an instrument of exclusion of the opposition in the affairs of development centers. There is need for department of public administration of universities to train and restructure local government personnel staff on ethics and code of new form of public administration instead of traditional practice.

Conclusion

The expediency for the creation of local government areas stems from the need to facilitate development at the grass root. The relevance of local government and development centers is predicated on the functions to generate a sense of belongings, popular participation and satisfaction among the population. Much reorganization has taken place in an attempt to reposition the councils to achieve the above stated objectives; this includes the Ebonyi development center creation. However, observation shows that there is significant need for improvement as the battle for democracy in Nigeria will be won or lost starting from the local government level, this agrees with [21,22]. As he stated that "democratic local government system is the foundation of a stable, democratic system at the state and national level of government"

Recommendation

Ebonyi state development center creation and related matters law should be amended with elective principle to encourage community participation. Community, institutions such as town unions leaders, traditional institutions should be incorporated in the management of development centers. The over-riding consideration in local government reorganization should not be the penetration and control of communities but primarily for development and empowerment of rural communities. There is need for training and re-training of policy makers of local government in the department of public administration for proper update on skills to face challenges.

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