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Keywords: *governance, local institutions, local governance, and conceptual analysis.*

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Governance, Local Institutions and Local Governance: A Conceptual Analysis

Lamidi Kazeem Oyedele [α] & Ajayi Olubusayo Ayooluwa [σ]

Abstract- This paper analyzed the trio of governance, local institutions and local governance from conceptual perspectives. It specified the analytic features of governance and local institutions, as well as their conceptual reflections on local governance. Specifically, this paper provides a set of instructions and the ordering of governance, local institutions as well as local governance in social sciences debates. In general, the granularity of these concepts is governed by the needs of the writers/researchers. However, this conceptual analysis has specified them in such a degree of details that displays the interconnections and differences between them. Nonetheless, it does not formalize them in a conceptual framework; rather it simply states the set of instructions for using them as concepts and the kind of problem motivating their applications, as well as a well-known piece of philosophical research.

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I. Introduction

This paper had a central theme focussing on the provision of the analytic tradition of governance at the local level within the purview of residual institutions. Previous efforts appeared to be merely definitional (Lewis, 1970; Lewis, 1994; Strawson, 1992; Bealer, 1998; Jackson, 1998; and Peacocke 1998). However, arguably the most prominent analyses should be of concepts or propositions (Chalmers & Jackson, 2001; Goldman, 2007; Jenkins, 2008; Henderson & Horgan, 2011; and Chalmers, 2012). Conceptual analysis is primarily concerned with the breaking down or analyzing concepts into their constituent parts to gain knowledge or a better understanding of a philosophical issue in which the concept is involved (Beaney, 2003). The method of conceptual analysis tends to approach such a problem by breaking down the key concepts about the problem and seeing how they interact. Thus, this insight becomes discursive within the sphere of the long-standing debate on whether the local institution is compatible with the doctrine of governance.

The task of conceptual analysis is basically about providing the definite description of the governance which is devoid of vagueness, and however, depicting the strong evidence of existentialism in the operations of local institutions; thereby making the concept of local governance understandable. In this regard, a conceptual analysis is one of the main traditional methods in social sciences, arguably dating back to Plato's early dialogues. The basic idea is that questions like 'What is knowledge?', 'What is justice?', or 'What is truth?' can be answered solely based on one's grasp of the relevant concepts. The ideal result of a conceptual analysis would be a definition or analysis of the relevant prerequisite that is typically formulated as necessary conditions for the term in perspective. For example, a typical formulation of the classical analysis of governance tends to justify the standard procedure for testing such an analysis with its counterexamples, typically in the form of hypothetical cases as they are used in thought experiments. A counterexample may speak against the necessity of some of the conditions, or the sufficiency of the conditions. Almost, all the elements of this traditional conception of conceptual analysis are controversial, but it continues to guide a considerable amount of philosophical research.

In contemporary discourse, the rise of conceptual analysis on key social science concepts are not unconnected from the existing debates of G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Nonetheless, these philosophers were certainly not the first to provide conceptual analysis (Earl, 2005), nor were they the only ones to perform it (Beaney, 2007), but they explicitly aimed to provide such analyses usable on contemporary treatise. The central role of conceptual analysis on governance and local institutions gave rise to analytic purposes of the subject matters. In this paper, our aim is to specify the conceptual features of governance and local institutions, as well as their conceptual reflections on local governance.

II. Governance

Governance is one of the concepts in social sciences. It is most often elusive due to its widest eclectic relevance in sociology, economics, history, and political science. In contemporary times, there appear to be notable changes and growing awareness of the ways through which humanities are being organized. These changes have eminently been attributed as a transition from "government" to "governance," where government referred to a state-centered, hierarchical, command type

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of governing; and governance implied a flexible, diverse, multi-actor style of steering (Căjvăneanu, 2011). Put simply, "government is one of the actors in governance" (Benson, 2010, p. 126). To understand the basics of this concept, Streeten (2002) presented the succinct meaning of governance from dictionaries. According to him, the American Heritage Dictionary (AHD) defined governance as "the act, process or power of governing"; the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as "the act or manner of governing, of exercising control or authority over the actions of subjects; a system of regulations."

Governance is a multidimensional concept with varied corollaries. This is consequent upon the fast-changing and interdependent global space. No state can afford to stand aloof and adapt to a bad governance system that is corrupt, expensive, ineffective, outdated, and slow in this globalisation era (Khan, 2003). Rather, the quest of every nation is to facilitate the elements of good governance for standard performance. Governance, though, is increasingly widely used, it is not a new term. It was first used in the fourteenth century. At that time, it was used in two senses. In the first case, it meant action and method of governing; and in the second sense, it included action and manner of governing (Khan, 2006).

In modern times, the purview of public administration has advanced from debates about government towards the concept of governance (Newland, 2002; Sehested, 2003). Government and governance are two (2) concepts with parallel meaning in terms of political involvement of the people, decision-making activities, societal control systems and public problem-solving. These concepts are not extremely diverse in terms. There is still connectivity because the government is a sub-set in the set of governance. For instance, Kamarck (2002) distinguished governance from the government. Governance was defined as "what a government does". The discourse on government is somewhat restrictive, while governance is ever-expanding. Rahman (2016) observed governance as a kinetic exercise of management, policy, and power. Government, on the other hand, is an institution that coordinates the exercise at all levels.

The World Bank (1998), cited in Ijere (2014), defined governance as the approaches in which powers are being exercised towards enhancement and efficient management of socio-economic resources for development. For the World Bank, governance identified three (3) dimensions: the nature of political regimes; the exercise of authority in the management of socio-economic resources; and the government capacities on policy formulation and implementation as well as effective service delivery.

The concept of governance is not an incontestable one. As Johnson (1997) observed that governance is a concept that is extremely susceptible to frequent use by behavioural scientists without a succinct definition. However, numerous definitions of governance could be subsumed into two broad categories. On one hand, some scholars have viewed governance in a technical sense. In this case, the governance draws directly from its practice in the corporate world. It infers the effectual management of public institutions. Governance emphasises the issues of public accountability, rule of law, natural justice, social security, public sector management and transparency in government procedure. This is the restricted view of governance adopted by the (World Bank, 2004). The essence of this governance is to synergise government and other institutions for economic, social and political purposes.

On the other side, governance as a conceptual perspective seems to be a holistic one which surpasses the state and its apparatus. Governance is seen as the process of piloting state and societal groups towards the actualisation of collective goals. It highlights the dynamic, most often contradictory and problematic relationship between the society and state (Pierre & Peters, 2004). Furthermore, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), cited in Achimugu, Ata-Agboni and Aliyu (2013), viewed governance as a development of social commitment between government and the governed in the political community. Its component parts comprise standard settings, decisions making, as well as, management of regime structures, methods of social interactions and systemic evaluation of outcomes.

The United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) (2010, p.13) viewed governance "as the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising the process, complex mechanisms and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights and mediate their difference". It encompasses the political, legal, economic, social and judicial administrative authority. In practical terms, it is interplay among the government, the informal sector and the society. While there are divergences in this holistic perspective of governance, there is a general agreement on the main actors or agencies of the governance project.

Governance has been one of the mostly quoted by other scholars due to its explicit nature. It is seen as the process through which state agents and citizens interact to express their preferences, reconcile their differences, exercise their rights and obligations, and cooperate to produce public goods and services (Adebayo, 2006; Benson, 2010; Enuka, 2008; Ijere, 2014; Adeyeye, 2016). It is the task of making the society a better place. It aims at producing the collective goods and services upon which people are socially interdependent. Besides, these goods and services cannot be provided or utilised individually.

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The list of collective goods and services include: security of lives and properties; provision of public roads, schools and hospitals; control on epidemic diseases among other health challenges; efforts to encourage people to invest in productive assets and enterprise; a functioning and effective judicial and police/penal system; technological initiatives; measures to combat domestic violence; ecological control; cash transfer programmes for the poor; and many other ways in which public authorities set out to achieve for general interest. Governance, therefore, is the various actions and inactions of the state and civic groups through their institutional frameworks within which collective goods and services are pursued.

III. Local Institutions

Local institutions are very diverse but could be classified based on their membership (such as religious, ethnic, castes, gender, services provision) or objectives (simple or multiple). A careful review of existing works on local institutions revealed three (3) of its most important attributes, such as localised nature or micro-constitutionality; accountability to their membership; and involvement in development activities (Olowu, Ayo & Akande, 1991; Olowu & Erero, 1997; Okunade, 2007).

Moreover, local institution has most often been noted with dual classification: it could either be formal or informal. As clarified by Olowu, *et. al* (1991) and Amin (1999), those institutions created by government at one level; and the others are, on the one hand, regarded as formal or official. On the other hand, those organisations which are run by the people themselves and which do not involve government intervention are tagged informal or non-official. Local institutions, as described by Ellis (2000), represent mechanisms of both dynamism in the societies and culture continuity. They are means through which individuals can socialise and adapt to changes in degrees of social coherence and continuity.

Irrespective of their classifications, Olowu and Erero, (1997), Okunade (2007) and Pike (2010) concomitantly eulogised that local institutions exist for governance purpose in clans and villages within respective African communities. These institutions are established in various forms. They are either traditional (i.e. carry-overs from pre-colonial times) or relatively recent indigenous responses to the limitations of the post-colonial state institutions. These include political/administrative institutions which revolved around newly created chiefs, age-grade groups, trade and professional guilds, town/village unions, community development associations, women's groups as well as social and religious organisations.

The above eulogy of local institutions appears very explicit and lucid for the discourse in this research. More recently, Olaleye (2016) averred that the above-mentioned institutions at the local level play significant roles in the administration of justice, peace-making, maintenance of law and order, peace-keeping, conflict resolution and provision of security. Furthermore, series of research conducted by research groups on local institutions in Nigeria have placed a high premium on the significant roles of local institutions in the provision of socio-economic services. Some examples are: building of schools and health facilities, constructions of roads and bridges, management of markets, community banks, construction of police stations, revenue generation, as well as, court houses and labour mobilisation for community projects and for mutual aid and welfare (Olowu & Erero, 1997; Albert, 2001; Oladoyin, 2001; Layder, 2014).

The institutional landscape of local institutions is likewise a variable and constantly dynamic. This is consequent upon the influx of countless factors and mechanisms that determine citizens' relationships with their localities. Local institutions are inwardly contested and highly flexible across cultures. Its elasticity remains adaptable to reactions of both environmental and social changes. For instance, the role of local institutions in the Sahel had, at a time, been redirected towards the non-climate drivers and severe droughts in the 1970s and 1980s (Crane, 2013).

The variability is also evident in the establishment of new institutions for decentralisation policies, prominent change in kinship, and growing recognition of youth organisations as well as women's groups (Batterbury & Warren, 2001). Similarly, in the *Borana* zone of Ethiopia, local institutions have swung into mediation of land and water use, as well as, social order. These institutions are vulnerable to transformation owing to intersecting climatic, social and political events (Watson 2003; Kamara, Swallow & Kirk, 2004).

For the purposes of this paper, local institutions were operationalised for specific means. It covers formal organisations, such as local councils and traditional institutions; informal organisations, such as professional and occupational groups; as well as semi-formal organisations, such as community bodies, religious associations and social groups, and their regularised social practices on issues of gendered divisions of labour and customary tenure. All of these are also included in the concept of local institutions (Angassa & Oba, 2008; Howard, 2012).

Furthermore, local institutions are regarded as groups with two characters; namely, accountability and legitimacy. They are primarily established at the village or local levels where they operate. This puts them in contrast to external institutions, such as higher levels of governments or International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), which are established beyond the scope of the villages and regions where they often operate (Kamara, *et. al* 2004; Agrawal, 2008; Crane, 2013). While the distinction between these two (2)

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institutions is partly illogical and overly simple, it is also experimental for alluding to power differences between actors.

Local institutions are, at first, humanly created. In recent decades, it was categorised as formal and informal groups that shape behaviour, interactions and social expectations of the people (Ostrom, 1990; North, 1990; Bates, 1981 cited in Agrawal, 2008). Succinctly, therefore, local institutions stand for either formal or informal local groups. It is largely informal, which aimed at strengthening the formal organisations on numerous activities of governance at the local level and sustaining the socio-economic developmental pace as well as political stability and social tolerance among community residents.

IV. Local Governance

The concept of local governance has its roots deep-seated in the history of human race. Recently, this has generated extensive discourse in the academic and current literature. However, the concept is indispensable and yet to be fully incorporated by social works. Local governance has a longstanding tradition in the quest for community development. The technical focus is more on the institutional environment that is either facilitating or retarding cooperation, conflict and competition among individual networks and group norms that drive public interest in the local areas (Shah & Shah, 2006).

Much academic literature has offered so many definitions to this concept with none found to be irrelevant, but with a variety of proclamations on the subject matter. This becomes possible as a result of its multi-dimensional nature. However, UNDP (2004) asserted that local governance encompasses a set of institutional processes and mechanisms through which individuals and groups express their interests, exercise their rights, articulate their human needs, mediate their differences and needs, mediate their differences and perform their obligations at the local level. Furthermore, UNDP (2009) emphasised:

> local governance as a collective action towards improving social service delivery as well as deliver high-quality services. It also works to deepen and strengthen democratic participation by providing platforms for the engagement of marginalised groups and local leaders to promote inclusion, accountability, transparency, and participation, as well as the citizens' representation across strata. (p.19)

Few scholars, Rhodes (1997); Bailey (1999); Stoker (1999); Dollery and Wallis (2001), have recently argued that local governance enjoys the presence of vast institutional networks beyond government. This, however, makes it implausible to interrogate governance activities as responsibilities of a single entity (Goss, 2001). It is moreover important to put into consideration the broader elements of governance to develop a framework for local governance with essential features. This includes providing local services that are in tandem with citizens' preferences. In practice, institutions of governance emphasise accountability, cost economy, and effectiveness. However, Shah and Shah (2006) argued that the institutional characters appear to be in contrast with the traditional role of local institutions.

Local governance is of global concern, it is a universal phenomenon. In broad terms, it is defined as the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. Thus, it comprises the dual directive roles of formal local institutions and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal groups, networks, community organisations and neighbourhood associations. These collaborations and integrations aim at pursuing collective action and defining a clear framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective policy and decision making, and local public services delivery (Shah & Shah, 2006; Adeyeye, 2016; Rahman, 2016).

Local governance, therefore, encompasses the varied objectives of living in vibrant working, and environmentally preserved self-governing communities (UNDP, 2010). Specifically, this is not only about providing a range of local services, but also about preserving the life and properties of the citizens. This concept is however central to the creation of space for civic dialogue and democratic participation. It, however, supports the economic pace and sustainable local development agenda. These trends facilitate results that enhance the social quality of citizens' life. From its operational point of view, local governance is basically a process by which stakeholders' interest are articulated, ideas are cross-fertilised, policy decisions are made and executed, and the decision makers are held accountable (Bakker, 2003 cited in Aminuzzaman & Sharmin, 2006).

Local governance might be a way of creating binding decisions for a collective entity, which implies that governance practice can be understood in terms of a political order or a political system. Through the co-operation and co-production of several actors or organisations, the collective decision-making that takes place is, in essence, a political decision-making on the allocation of public goods or public values for a community (Fenger & Bekkers, 2007). Its inquiries are mainly into the legitimacy of these governance arrangements. For instance, who is responsible for the quality of this decision-making process and its output and outcomes in these governance arrangements? Or, who has access to these 'new' decision-making processes that go beyond the established decision-making processes of the traditional institutions of representative democracy?

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It becomes obvious that the local governance has, over the years, garnered academic momentum and quest for a wider meaning. This is not far apart from being an instrument to public affairs management. It is a gauge of political development. Hence, local governance is, thus, a useful mechanism to facilitate inclusiveness, engender support and public legitimacy (Pierre, 2000). More lucidly, local governance broadly deals with the political process that attempts to raise the living standard of the people to create an environment for them to enjoy the benefits of freedom equally. The political philosophy and objectives of different governments, the economic policies, the internal and external security of the nation and the relationships with other nations are important aspects that shape the type of governance (Gunapala, 2000).

Rahman (2016) demonstrated that the operation of the concept incorporates every group, association and lineage in the society. It transcends from the family to the state, and embraces all societal mechanisms used by societies for the management of local affairs, the exertion of power and distribution of local resources. More so, for clarification purpose, local governance is thus a subset of governance wherein local problems and resources are efficiently managed for an effective response to essential needs of the society.

Local governance places a high emphasis on accountability, popular participation, and transparency. This emphasis gears towards fair promotion of the rule of law as well as equitable principles and effectiveness of public services. Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2005) idealised that local governance provides a platform for understanding the needs, wishes and aspirations of the poorest and the most vulnerable, as well as their representations in policy decision-making over the re-distribution of development resources and prioritisation of economic, social and political agenda.

Three stakeholders are critical for sustaining peaceful co-existence: first, the state creates favourable legal and political environments; second, the private sector provides jobs and generates revenue for government; and third, civil society enables socio-economic and political interactions. Sequel to the economic globalisation trends, there is a dual task for the state: One, it is to find a means of reaping economic gains from transnational market opportunities; and two, the state should domestically safeguard the socio-economic environment (Mehta, 2000; Kumar, 2000; Rahman, 2016).

Local governance, just like any other political and administrative concepts, remains inexhaustible. However, within the context of this study, a watchful integration would be done between what local institutions mean to this study and governance itself. Local governance could, therefore, be understood to be valuable activities and moral roles of both formal and informal local groups in the maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, peace-making and peace-keeping, provision of security and conflict resolution at the local level.

V. Conclusion

The method of analysis is somewhat characteristic of the conceptual terms. Its status continues to be a source of great controversy even among analytic social scientists. Furthermore, the analytic method seems to rely on some sort of definitional structure of concepts, so that one can give necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the concept. But one might worry that the 'proclaimed' necessary and sufficient conditions do not apply in every case. Wittgenstein, for instance, argues that language (i.e., concept) is used for various purposes and in an indefinite number of ways. Wittgenstein's famous thesis states that meaning is determined by use. This means that, in each case, the meaning of concept is determined by its use in a context. So, if it can be shown that the word means different things across different contexts of use, then cases where its meaning cannot be essentially defined as seem to constitute counterexamples to this method of analysis. This is just one example of a critique of the analytic method derived from a critique of conceptual analysis. There are several other such critiques (Margolis & Laurence 2006). This criticism is often said to have originated primarily with Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations.

Above all, various kinds of problems solvable by conceptual analysis include gaining better knowledge of the language (governance, local institutions and local governance) we use. It remains an enablement for knowing all its parts or having a complete correct theory of those languages. Specifically, it provides a set of instructions and the ordering of governance, local institutions as well as local governance in social sciences debates. In general, the granularity of these concepts are governed by the needs of the writers/researchers. For many purposes, this conceptual analysis has specified them in such a degree of detail that displays the differences between them. For each of the three concepts, this paper discusses the kinds of problems in which they are used, as well as the respective kinds of backgrounds. However, it does not formalise them in a conceptual framework, rather it simply states the set of instructions for using them as concepts and the kind of problem motivating their applications, as well as well known piece of philosophical research dealing with an instance of that kind.

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