

NAVIGATING THE LANDSCAPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: COMPARE USA AND CANADA, SIERRA-LEON AND LIBERIA

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Abstract: This study explores the evolving landscape of local administration through a comparative analysis of four distinct national contexts: the United States, Canada, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Local government plays a pivotal role in democratic governance and public service delivery, yet the structure, autonomy, and effectiveness of local administrations vary significantly across federal and unitary systems, and between developed and post-conflict societies. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research examines the legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, and fiscal capacities of local governments in each country. Particular attention is given to the impact of decentralization reforms, the role of traditional authorities, and the degree of citizen participation. The findings reveal that while the United States and Canada benefit from mature systems with high levels of autonomy and citizen engagement, Sierra Leone and Liberia face ongoing challenges including limited financial resources, weak institutional capacity, and overlapping authorities between formal and traditional governance structures. By highlighting best practices and persistent challenges, the study contributes to the broader discourse on effective local governance and provides policy recommendations for strengthening administrative systems, especially in emerging democracies. The research underscores the importance of context-sensitive reforms that balance autonomy, accountability, and cultural legitimacy in advancing local governance.

Keywords: Local Government, landscape, navigating, USA, Canada, Sierra Leon, Liberia and comparison.

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Introduction

Local government has become a vital platform for providing basic services, encouraging democratic involvement, and propelling grassroots growth in the rapidly changing field of public administration. Local administration is frequently seen as the foundation of responsive governance and sustainable development since it is the level of government closest to the people (Smith, 2019). Decentralization has accelerated globally as both developed and developing countries look to enhance service delivery, build institutional capacity, and encourage local accountability.

Because different nations have different constitutional arrangements, administrative customs, and developmental stages, the importance of local government institutions varies greatly amongst them. Local governments have a great deal of autonomy and financial authority in federal systems like the US and Canada, and they follow established legislative frameworks. On the other hand, in order to reconstruct governance structures and regain public trust at the local level, post-conflict nations like Sierra Leone and Liberia have implemented substantial reforms in recent decades, frequently with assistance from abroad (Adepoju, 2021).

With the aim of discovering shared difficulties, institutional differences, and policy lessons, this study compares municipal government in the US, Canada, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. This study fills a significant vacuum in the literature on public administration, which frequently concentrates on either industrialized or developing nations separately, by comparing

governance in both Global North and Global South contexts (Khumalo & Mokgoro, 2020).

Encouraging grassroots development is what makes local government operations run smoothly everywhere in the world. Despite the historical importance of local government administration in fostering development, a number of constraints have progressively hampered its operations. According to Akhakpe, Fatile, and Igbokwe-Ibeto (2012), these problems include, among other things, the obvious lack of human resources that are sufficiently trained and qualified, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient finance, and the overbearing control of the central governments on the execution of activities.

Many analysts consider decentralization, a major institutional transformation, to be the biggest shift since the majority of African countries attained independence (Yatta, 2015). Decentralization is undoubtedly required to close the historical governance gap between the people and the government, especially given Bo City's rapidly expanding population and rising demands for development and service delivery. Despite the difficulties, the political approach to providing local public services to the greatest number of people is efficiency in local administration (Yatta, 2015). It is important to keep in mind that in spite of the many improvements made to Sierra Leone's local government administration, not much has been done to provide basic services that will support grassroots sustainable development.

This comparison has three justifications. First, both federal and unitary political systems, as well as varying stages of democratic maturation, are represented among the chosen nations. Second, the study emphasizes the efforts made by African countries that have emerged from violence to localize government through capacity building and decentralization. Third, this study examines the ways in which contemporary administrative procedures and traditional power systems interact, especially in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the structures and powers of local government differ among these countries
- To identify the challenges local governments face in delivering public services
- To know understand the lessons that can be drawn from these systems to improve governance in developing contexts

Operational Clarification of Concepts:

Decentralization, Local Government, Governance, Federalism, Unitary State, Traditional Authority

Certain fundamental notions must be defined in order to create a clear knowledge of the important variables and concepts examined in this study. At the heart of this comparative study are the ideas of local government, decentralization, governance, federalism, unitary states, and traditional authority. The conceptual framework for examining local administrative systems in the US, Canada, Sierra Leone, and Liberia is provided by these definitions.

Decentralization

Decentralization is the process by which the central government delegates authority and responsibility to lower levels of government, including local authorities. Rondinelli (1981) categorizes decentralization into three types:

- **Political decentralization** which involves the devolution of decision-making authority to elected local officials;
- **Administrative decentralization**, which includes transferring planning and management functions;
- **Fiscal decentralization**, which involves granting local governments the authority to raise and spend revenue.

Decentralization is viewed as a strategy to improve governance, accountability, and service delivery by enhancing the role of local institutions.

Politically speaking, decentralization is usually seen as a crucial component of participatory democracy that gives people a chance to express their preferences and opinions to elected officials, who are then held accountable to the public for their actions (Alexis de Tocqueville 1863). Numerous viewpoints have been used to analyze the decentralization idea, particularly with regard to local governance, revealing both its potential benefits and inherent challenges. By giving lower level managers the ability to quickly and effectively resolve regional concerns, decentralization—which is defined as the transfer of authority from a central institution to local governments—can improve

management performance and decision-making efficiency, according to the notion (Wu, 2023). Empirical research from Italy confirms that fiscal decentralization positively correlates with municipal efficiency. This indicates that when spending and revenue decision making are aligned, local governance can be enhanced (Trisnarningsih & Ariadi, 2022).

Local administration

Local government, as described by Akindele (1990), is a crucial tool of the federal and state governments for carrying out specific critical services that are best managed locally based on a thorough understanding of the needs, circumstances, and unique characteristics of the regions in question. Because local government brings people together in a specific area to form a single organization whose functions complement those of the central government and serve the interests of the local populace by meeting shared communal needs. As government, it is the means by which the common problems and needs of a community consisting a country are economically and effectively catered for, so local government is the means by which a local community satisfies jointly its common problem and needs which would have been difficult by individual.

Furthermore, according to the federal government of Nigeria guideline on the local government reform 1976 Local Government is defined as;

Local government is carried out by legally mandated representative councils that have specialized authority within predetermined boundaries. In addition to ensuring that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized through the devolution of functions to these councils and the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, these powers should grant the council significant control over local affairs (including staffing) and institutional matters, as well as the ability to decide on and carry out projects that complement the activities of the state and federal governments in their respective areas.

From the foregoing the following are the main features defining the local government:

- A given territory, population and constitutional jurisdictions (that is representative body).
- A range of powers and functions developed and delegated to it by higher tier of government – central and state governments.
- A political entity, with power to sue and be sued.
- A creation of a state, superintending government thus, a subordinate government.
- It is not totally a sovereign government, but should enjoy substantial autonomy though relative or guided form of autonomy (Lohdam, 2001) Governance.

Governance:

Is used to describe the way power is used to administer a nation's administrative, political, and economic affairs. Transparency, accountability, participation, rule of law, responsiveness, and inclusivity are all components of effective governance, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997). Governance in the context of local administration refers to the methods by which citizens participate

in the decision-making and implementation processes at the local level.

Federalism

Federalism is a permanent institutional system of political power wherein a country's national government and its regional governments each have independent powers to uphold law and order, enact legislation, impose taxes on individuals' incomes, purchases, and property, and deliver public services. According to Ronald L. Watts, a leading federalist specialist, 40% of the world's population lived in countries structured according to federalism at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The United States, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, and Switzerland are examples of these federal countries. Many people think that the European Union has been moving toward a federal-style structure. Federalism emerged and endures because it offers an expedient way to harmonize separate smaller governments to achieve larger goals, especially to foster commerce and improve military security.

Today, federalism is ingrained in American culture. The number of citizens employed by state and local governments is significantly higher than that of the federal government. In 2014, around 2.7 million Americans were employed full-time by the federal government, 4.3 million by state governments, and 14 million by municipal governments. \$3.5 trillion was spent by the federal government in 2013. State and local governments spent around the same amount in the same year, totaling over \$3.4 trillion (including funds from federal grants).

Unitary State

A unitary state is a form of government in which a single central body controls all legislative authority. Instead of operating under a constitutional division of powers, sub-national entities like municipal or regional governments are subject to the central government's whims and are empowered by national legislation. According to Gerring et al. (2011), decentralization is a policy decision rather than a mandated constitutional provision in unitary governments. Unitary states that have recently sought decentralization changes include Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Traditional Authorities

Governance systems founded on traditions, cultural norms, and ancestors' leadership are referred to as traditional authority. Traditional leaders like chiefs or elders are important in resolving conflicts, managing land, and organizing communities in many African situations. Logan (2009) asserts that a dual-governance system is frequently created when traditional authority and contemporary state institutions coexist. Traditional leaders have been formally or unofficially incorporated into the local government structure in both Sierra Leone and Liberia, which has an effect on representation and accountability.

Numerous articles have discussed the abuses of the chieftaincy system and customary law in Sierra Leone, such as how the system was used as a tool for colonial rule, how young men and strangers from weaker lineages were excluded from land and marriage, how harsh and arbitrary fines were imposed, and how discriminatory practices against women were practiced. Many have argued that the civil war that raged in Sierra Leone in the 1990s was fueled in part by the abusive and autocratic practices of traditional authorities, which drove disgruntled young men into the

various armed factions and away from their villages in rebellion against a social structure that kept them in the rural underclass. On the other hand, many people see the traditional justice and governance systems as important mechanisms for maintaining peace and social order, particularly in rural areas.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Clarification

Local government:

Local government, according to Osuagwu (2008), is a form of government in which a body of elected or appointed representatives of the local community manages public affairs in each locality. This body has a significant number of duties and discretionary authority to manage the local community. Enemuoh (1999) believed that local government is the lowest level of government in a state that is legally distinct, with the authority to raise money and carry out duties under elected leadership, making the grassroots government answerable to the local populace. The United Nations (1998) stated that local government is a political division in a federal system that is constituted by law with prescribed purposes.

Augustine (2009) posits further that local government is a tier of government through which popular participation, both in the choice of decision makers and in the decision making process is conducted by local bodies. While recognizing the supremacy of the central government, local government is able to accept responsibility for its decisions within its area of jurisdiction.

Local government, which is legally distinct as the third tier of government in the federation to carry out specific responsibilities that are unique to the local community, is the lowest level of government in a contemporary state, according to Oyediran (1998). According to James (2003), local government is a political body established by state law with the mission of delivering necessary local services to the community for which it was established. There are various models of local administration as a kind of government. Thus, Simeon (2014) believed that Ultra Vires model of council administration is a guide to the local council authority, which identifies relevant sections of the constitution in relation to the restriction placed on the degree of local government autonomy while the General Competence model of local administration stimulates local governments to render variety of services to the people at local level in order to demonstrate latitudes towards provision of basic amenities in the areas of their jurisdiction.

According to Adegbolu (2003), in a federal state, the system is established by enabling legislation of the state government through an instrument that specifies its borders, structures, functions, and powers, whereas in a unitary state, the law of the central government creates the local council in modern administration. Consequently, the local government is a legal body that has the ability to sue and be sued. The goal of local government, according to Ugwu (2000), is to bring the government closer to the rural residents who require more basic amenities. All of the aforementioned definitions essentially acknowledged that local government administration is a form of governance that is unique to the grassroots growth of the populace. This paper

therefore aligns with the above conceptual framework. The work is qualitative in its approach to discussing the comparative study.

Local Administration According to the 1948 United Nations Articles of Declaration, a local government is a legally recognized political division or sub-unit of a country with significant authority over local affairs, including the ability to levy taxes and demand labor for specified uses. It is the "sub-political administration of the smallest sub-divisions of a country's territory and population," according to the New Columbia Encyclopaedia (4th Ed). "The lowest unit of administration to whose laws and regulations communities, who live in a defined geographical area with common social ties are subject," is how Ugwu (2002) defines local government. The Federal Government of Nigeria defined local government in the 1976 Local Government Reform as:

Representative councils created by legislation to exercise particular responsibilities within designated areas serve as the local government. By delegating functions to these councils and allowing the people and their traditional institutions to actively participate, the council should be able to ensure that local initiative and responses to local needs and conditions are maximized. It should also have significant control over local affairs and the staff, institutional, and financial power to initiate and direct the provision of services as well as to determine and implement projects in order to complement the activities of the State and Federal Government in their respective areas.

The following characteristics unique to local governments have been identified from a reading of the aforementioned definitions: Local government is government at the grassroots level; it has its own legal status and autonomy; it has certain powers, can impose taxes and incur costs; it is located within a defined territory; it is regarded as a separate level of government; it must have authority over a certain population; it must provide channels for advancing the welfare of the community's members; and it is made up of elected officials like the chairman and council members.

Significance of Local Government

In order to relieve the load and functions of the Central Government or State Government and to offer services that are local in nature, the idea of Local Government was born out of the necessity or compulsion to decentralize authority and powers (Alao et al, 2015; Osaghae, 1990:84). Transferring political, administrative, and financial power from the national government to subnational entities is known as decentralization. According to Katorobo (2004) and Enemuo (1999:314), decentralization can be

achieved by deconcentration, devolution, delegation, and privatization. Decentralization shall be defined solely by devolution for the sake of this discussion. The following qualities must be present in decentralization through devolution: the authority or power transferred must encompass political, administrative, and economic powers under the direction of the central government of deconcentration. When it is proven that the subnational government's governing body was democratically chosen by the local populace, devolution is in place. The subnational government must have financial authority and be a legitimate legal entity with the ability to sue and be sued. Only when a nation's subnational government is independent, democratically elected, and empowered to make legally enforceable decisions on certain policy issues can it decentralize through devolution (Katorobo 2004). According to Alao et al. (2015) and Enemuo (1999:314), local government can be appropriately viewed as devolution or deconcentration in arrangement because of the aforementioned.

The necessity to decentralize the roles of the federal and state governments and encourage grassroots participatory democracy are two of the main reasons local governments exist in many nations throughout the world. Promoting the values of liberty and equity, offering practical solutions to issues at the local level of government, and providing civic services are also included. It guarantees effective and efficient management of grassroots affairs, acts as a training ground for upcoming or emerging leaders, and facilitates communication between the State Government and the populace at large (Alao et al, 2015; Ohiole and Ojo, 2014).

Relevance of Comparative Study

The main focus of a comparative study of local government systems of different countries is to measure the noteworthy differences and similarities and examine the extent to which the solutions adopted in one Local Government can be applied in another. The study's findings can be introduced or used by other States or countries to improve their Local Government system in terms of structure, functions, and operations with the necessary modifications, with the aim of improving the living standard or condition of the people who reside in the Local Government areas. Essentially comparative study of Local Government of countries affords a country a vantage ground to evaluate its policies, strategies and programmes in order to advance the Local Government system and achieve a better living condition for its dwellers.

Historical Background of United States of American Usa Local Administrative System

Capital	Washington, D.C. 38°53'N 77°1'W
Largest city	New York City 40°43'N 74°0'W
Official languages	None at the federal level
National language	English
Ethnic groups	By race:

(2020)	61.6% White 12.4% Black 6% Asian 1.1% Native American 0.2% Pacific Islander 10.2% two or more races 8.4% other By origin: 81.3% non-Hispanic or Latino 18.7% Hispanic or Latino
Religion (2022)	70% Christianity <ul style="list-style-type: none">34% Protestantism23% Catholicism2% Mormonism11% other Christian 21% unaffiliated 2% Judaism 6% other religion 1% unanswered
Demonym(s)	American
Government	Federal presidential republic
President	Joe Biden
Vice President	Kamala Harris
House Speaker	Mike Johnson
Chief Justice	John Roberts
Legislature	Congress
Upper house	Senate
Lower house	House of Representatives
Independence from Great Britain	
Declaration	July 4, 1776
Confederation	March 1, 1781
Recognized	September 3, 1783
Constitution	June 21, 1788
Area	
Total area	3,796,742 sq mi (9,833,520 km ²) (3rd[d])

Water (%)	7.0 (2010)
Land area	3,531,905 sq mi (9,147,590 km ²) (3rd)
Population	
2023 estimate	▲ 334,914,895
2020 census	▲ 331,449,281 (3rd)
Density	87/sq mi (33.6/km ²) (185th)
GDP (PPP)	
2024 estimate	
Total	▲ \$28.781 trillion (2nd)
Per capita	▲ \$85,373 (8th)
GDP (nominal)	
2024 estimate	
Total	▲ \$28.781 trillion (1st)
Per capita	▲ \$85,373 (6th)
Gini (2020)	▲ 39.4 ^[f] medium
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.927 very high (20th)
Currency	U.S. dollar (\$) (USD)
Time zone	UTC−4 to −12, +10, +11
Summer (DST)	UTC−4 to −10 ^[g]
Date format	mm/dd/yyyy
Driving side	right
Calling code	+1
ISO 3166 code	US
Internet TLD	.us

The United States of America's (USA) current local government structure developed from ancient times. The communities in the United States were referred to as Civic Republics in the past. In a Civic Republic, the community's government was either consensus-based or based on the views of

the majority. A Civic Republic's citizenry shared traditional beliefs and participated in public affairs (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014). Over time, a community-based corporate enterprise that was driven by economic interests emerged. At last, a community of consumers arose. The government provides public products and services, and

people are the consumers in the consumer market community (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014).

The United States of America, a federal system consisting of 54 states, has both a single-tier and multi-tiered local government structure. The United States of America is a large country with a diversified population. The USA was able to handle the conflicting rights and varying interests that existed within the large province by implementing a federal system of government. In the United States, local governments can be divided into two categories: single-tier and multi-tier. The goal of local government as a tier of government in the United States is to step down local government and provide grassroots citizens a voice and the opportunity to engage in governmental matters. Local governments that perform a variety of governmental duties are considered multi-tiered. Three different forms of local governments are included in the multi-tier: municipalities, which include cities, boroughs, villages, and incorporated towns; and counties, which are the primary units of local government. Municipalities in both urban and rural areas are multi-level governmental entities. School districts and special districts are examples of single-tier governments. Consequently, the United States of America has five different forms of local government: counties, municipalities, townships, school districts, and special districts (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014; Noun, 2010). The counties are areas established by the state to serve as the state's administrative divisions. States differ in the characteristics and purposes of their counties. The assessment and collection of taxes, upholding law and order, maintaining roads, allocating funds, and issuing bonds are often the counties' principal responsibilities. Counties are also responsible for mass transit, industrial development, pollution control, hospital maintenance, and social and welfare services. It can also perform some optional tasks that the State may occasionally delegate to it.

A democratically elected body known as the "board of commissioners or supervisors" is in charge of overseeing the counties. The body serves as a county's main policy tool. A municipality or city is defined as the pattern of habitation in a legally recognized territory. The residents of a specific county region may petition the state to recognize the territory as a municipality or city. The region in question needs to meet a number of fundamental criteria, like a minimum population or density. Each state has different benchmark populations needed for a municipality to be incorporated. Most of the time, a referendum is necessary. Once a city is incorporated, the State concerned grants them a charter which confers a legal personality to the city with the powers to elect officials, levy taxes and provide services to its residents.

Like counties, cities are general-purpose units of local government. However, in practice, cities have more latitude and decision-making authority than counties. Once more, compared to many counties, cities provide a greater range of services to their population. Any of the following forms of government may be used by municipalities or cities: mayor-council, council-manager, or city-commission. The presence of an elected governing body known as a municipal Council is a common feature shared by these three municipal government types. The City Council has the authority to make policies. The executive branch is arranged according to the divide or mark that runs through the three different types of city structures (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014).

Although they are distinct from county and city administration, towns and townships are general-purpose divisions of local government, just like municipalities and cities. Direct democracy is practiced in many new communities in the United States. Town meetings are used to carry out this type of government. Residents or city inhabitants participate in policy decisions on issues impacting the community during an annual town meeting or assembly. In addition to passing local rules, levying taxes, and adopting budgets, the inhabitants elect town leaders. According to Ohiole and Ojo (2014), the town meeting operates as a legislative body, and the residents in attendance exercise legislative functions. Special Districts: These are established to carry out initiatives that other local governments are unable or unwilling to undertake. They are created to carry out specific projects that will meet the needs of particular area. School districts: These are species of special districts. The spirit propelling the creation of school districts is that the fewer the number of people the more effective or efficient they are formed (Ohiole and Ojo, 2004).

Functions

Municipalities and cities do a variety of tasks, such as building conference centers and sponsoring festivals. Cities and municipalities maintain traffic signals, sweep the streets, check eateries, pick up trash and debris, and plant trees. The management of schools, public works, libraries, and recreation, public utilities, city planning, public health, airport, harbor, and housing are, in general, among the duties performed by local governments in the United States (Alao et al., 2015). In the United States, local governments have a great deal of autonomy in exercising a wide range of functions, even if they are still subject to state government oversight. They have revenue streams, are democratically organized, constituted, and run, and are legal entities with the ability to sue and be sued under their corporate identities (Noun, 2010).

Sources of Revenue

In the United States, the state is the primary source of funding for local governments. Local governments receive about 40 percent of all state spending. However, there are conditions associated with the State funds. Roads, hospitals, public safety, public health, social welfare, and public education get the majority of state subsidies given to local governments. Thus, when it comes to spending, local governments have little discretion. Local governments, including counties and cities, have their own revenue streams. These consist of company license fees, user fees, and property taxes. The growing expectations for spending from their inhabitants and residents fall on the local governments. This is despite the fact that the State has given local governments very little authority or power to raise new funds. The Local Governments oftentimes run to the State for financial assistance, thus the major source of revenue to the Local Government is the money from the State account (Alao et al, 2015).

Britain's Local Authorities System The national or central government and the local government share authority in Britain's unitary system of governance. Its sense of administration is innate to the British Local Government system. In Britain, local governments are commonly referred to as "local authorities." In the UK, local governments are established by parliamentary acts. It uses a multi-tiered local authority structure designed to meet the

specific needs of the local populace. The Local Government Act of 1972 established the current framework for local government in Britain. The equally enormous Act of 1933, which comprised the basic law regulating local authorities, elections, processes, powers, functions, and funding, was replaced by the massive Act, which established a new structure of regions and authority. The Local Government Act of 1994 came after this Act. The British local government system saw significant alterations as a result of these two Acts (Wade and Fotsyth, 2004: 111-112; Wade and Philips, 1977:358; De Smith, 1981:392). Non-Metropolitan County Councils, Metropolitan County Councils, County Councils (Wales only), NonMetropolitan County Districts, County District Councils (Wales only), Parish governments (England), and Communities (Wales) are the many forms of local administration in Britain. Generally, Britain operates a three-tier structure of local authorities except that in Wales the name Parish has been changed to community (Wade and Fotsyth, 2204:112; Wade and Philips, 1977:241; Noun, 2010).

In Britain, local governments are divided into parish councils, district councils, and county councils. A council's governing body is made up of authorized delegates who operate both independently and collectively on behalf of the populace. The chairman, an alderman, and council members are the principal elected positions. The council or group of aldermen elects the chairman. He has a one-year term in office. The Council members elect the Aldermen. Their tenure is six years. Half of all aldermen retire every three years, and they are elected in a 1:3 ratio. Aldermen must be honorable individuals who have made significant contributions to the growth of their immediate local government. The voters elect the council members. Every three years, they are elected, and they are free to run for office again or stay in office. The succession plan ensures continuity in the administration of the local government, which makes the position or office of the alderman distinctive. By the time the council is disbanded after three years, half of the Aldermen are no longer there. After the newly elected Aldermen had three years to leave office, the other half would stay in office for the following three years. The chairman and council members hold the most important positions in both urban and rural counties. A member of the council chooses the chairman. The chairman must be a person who holds the position of justice of the peace of the county. Councillors occupy their positions through elections conducted either yearly or every three years. Every year, 1/3 of the councillors would leave office with the dissolution of the council unless they are re-elected. Thus, by the end of three years, the whole council would have been renewed (Noun, 2010).

Rural Parishes:

A parish council in a rural area is composed of at least 300 residents. The chairman and members hold the primary positions. A parish council's governing body consists of a chairman and five to twenty-one members, depending on what the county council decides. When the parish council is dissolved for a fresh election, they are in office for three years.

County and Non-County Boroughs Councils:

This council's ruling body is comparable to the administrative council. The mayor, an alderman, and council members make up this body. The councils choose the mayors, who serve one-year terms. The council sets their compensation

and they perform ceremonial duties. From among the Councillors, they select their deputies. The terms of office for two thirds of the council members expire annually, and they are elected to three-year terms. The Aldermen are chosen either from among the Council members or based on their qualifications, or merit. A total of two thirds of the council members are aldermen. Half of the Aldermen retire every three years, and they serve six-year terms (Noun, 2010).

Sources of Revenue

In Britain, there are two main sources of funding for local governments. These are donations from the central government as well as money earned or generated by the local governments themselves. A variety of receipts, including rent, fees, transportation expenses, entertainment, and service fees, make up the local authorities' revenue. Council tax and non-domestic rates are also significant sources of funding for local governments. Rates are municipal taxes levied on buildings and land when they are occupied (Wale and Forsyth, 2004:117; De Smith, 1981:403). The local governments' own revenue-generating or -raising efforts frequently fall well short of meeting the demands of their numerous and extensive tasks. Thus, in order to fulfill their responsibilities, the local governments rely significantly on funding from the central governments (Wade and Forsyth, 2004:117; De Smith, 1981:403). According to a 2014 National Audit Office study, the British Central Government provided £36.1 billion in funding to local authorities in 2013–2014. However, this did not include funds that were sent straight to individuals and schools. According to Alao et al. (2015), it should be mentioned that the Central Governments' subsidies to local governments came with a number of restrictions, such as being ringed or unringed. The long-standing problem of local authorities in Britain has been their excessive reliance on funds from the central government (Wade and Forsyth, 2004:117).

Functions

The main functions of Local authorities in Britain are contained in many provisions of the Local Government Act, 1972. The assignment or allocation of duties and functions in non-metropolitan areas which are composed of County councils, District councils and parishes or community councils or meetings are as follows:

- **County Council:** Education, town and country planning and development, social services, food and drugs, roads, refuse disposal, libraries, highway, traffic, public transport, recreation, fire service.
- **District Council:** Housing, town and country planning and development, public health and sanitary services, food and drugs, minor urban roads, refuse collection, entertainment, recreation, coast protection, local licensing.
- **Parish or Community Council or Meeting:** Footpaths, allotments, bus shelters, recreation grounds, village greens, burial grounds, parking places for motor cycles and bicycles, car-sharing schemes, grants for bus services, taxi fare concessions, traffic calming, crime prevention (Wadeand Forsyth, 2004:115).

Generally, Local authorities in Britain perform three broad functions classified as environmental, protective and personal (Alao et al., 2015). In spite of various controls which the Central

Governments exercises over them, they are allowed appreciable autonomy and democratic independence or self-government (Noun, 2010).

Representative democracy and constitutional government serve as the cornerstones of the United States of America, which was established in 1776 after declaring its independence from British colonial rule. A federal system that separated powers between the federal government and the various states was established in 1787 with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. This system was created to provide a powerful and cohesive national government while maintaining the autonomy of each state.

Naturally, the area that the continental United States represents has already been found, possibly more than once, prior to Christopher Columbus's explorations. When Columbus landed, he discovered that the people living in the New World were probably originating from Asia. These earliest residents most likely came from Asia in a series of migrations across the Bering Strait to North America between 20,000 and 35,000 years ago. Indigenous people, often known as Indians, had colonized every region of the New World by the time the first European settlers arrived.

Colonial Roots and Early Governance

Before independence, the American colonies operated under British authority but had developed their own local governance structures. Colonial assemblies, town meetings, and county governments allowed settlers to practice self-governance. These institutions laid the groundwork for post-independence federal and local governance in the United States.

They created and nurtured them. Like children, the American colonies grew and flourished under British supervision. Like many adolescents, the colonies rebelled against their parent country by declaring independence. But the American democratic experiment did not begin in 1776. The colonies had been practicing limited forms of self-government since the early 1600s.

The vast Atlantic Ocean provided a secure environment for American colonists to learn self-government techniques. England could not conceivably control the entire American shoreline, even if it tried to control American trade. Colonial traders quickly discovered how to conduct business outside of British law. Last but not least, people who fled religious persecution in England called for the ability to practice their religion freely.

Every one of the thirteen colonies had a charter, which was a formal contract between the colony and Parliament or the monarch of England. Royal colonies' charters allowed the king to rule directly. Male property owners elected a colonial legislature. However, in theory, governors held nearly total power and were chosen by the king. The legislatures had authority over the governor's pay and frequently used this power to pressure the governors to follow colonial directives. The Virginia House of Burgesses, which was founded in 1619, was the first colonial legislature.

The Constitution and Federalism

The U.S. Constitution formalized the federal structure, delineating powers between the federal government and the states. The Tenth Amendment reserves powers not delegated to the federal government for the states and the people. This division

allows for a system of shared sovereignty and autonomy across different levels of government.

System and Structure of Government

Because the United States of America has a federal system of government, the federal and state governments share authority. (The total number of states is 54). Federalism was embraced in response to the country's enormous territory, the issue of nationality, the forces of diversity, and—above all—the best chance for peaceful, harmonious coexistence following the nation's historic war between the northern and southern states, which raged from 1861 to 1865.

The United States Constitution distributes authority across the levels of government in such a way that federal culture has "exclusive and concurrent" power exclusively. Despite being the cornerstones of the entire state organization, local governments are established by the states. Nonetheless, the constitution mentions them and grants them residual authority.

The legislative and executive branches of government are examples of political institutions that exhibit government administration. The president of the United States is an executive chief executive, and the entire country is his electorate. This is known as the presidential system of government. The status of his cabinet is distinct from that of parliament.

The House of Representatives and the Senate, the latter being the upper house, make up the national parliamentary system, sometimes known as Congress. This bicameral legislature, which occasionally has the vast authority to hold the president hostage in financial concerns, enacts legislation for the state's proper governance. Naturally, the president exercises his veto power occasionally.

The state has governors as chief executive running similar administration as in the centre. Parliament however is unicameral. It makes law for the good governance of the state, and like the centre, it is a "watchdog" over the executive.

The fact that organizations like political parties create and regulate political activity is one theme that unites the way government is organized at all levels. With the exception of one or two independent candidates, party candidates typically fill all elective positions in government. The prevalence of party candidacies and interest greatly influences even appointment positions. Now let's examine how municipal governments function in this kind of constitutional and democratic environment.

Units of Local Government

Alderman's book, 80,000 Governments, has a caption. He talked on sub-national American politics in it. This sums up the American system, which consists of one federal government, fifty-four states, and local governments. This concerning number results from both the several local government units and their proximity to the average citizen. Among these, the counties—the most representative name for local government—are prominent. Townships (rural equivalents of municipalities and rural counties) might make up counties.

The second classification of the units of American local government is incorporated place or municipalities. This includes cities, boroughs village and incorporated towns. (Some of these

were created at the instance of the people's desire for the provision of services).

It should be mentioned that although being physically part of the county, the municipalities do not report to the county government on an administrative level. The county government has no authority to monitor the actions of the local government. The county serves as the fundamental unit of government in areas without rural municipalities.

System of Administration

Local governments in the US are governed by laws of the states and not those of the national government; therefore no national pattern of local government exists. The law and practice of local government varies from state to state.

State governments have direct legal control over the counties which operate as agencies of the state to enforce state law. Nevertheless, these local units are powerful because they enjoy enormous power by way of legal competence, financial resources (especially in cities) and their democratic base.

System of Local Government Administration in USA

The United States of America's (USA) current local government structure developed from ancient times. The communities in the United States were referred to as Civic Republics in the past. In a Civic Republic, the community's government was either consensus-based or based on the views of the majority. A Civic Republic's citizenry shared traditional beliefs and participated in public affairs (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014). Over time, a community-based corporate enterprise that was driven by economic interests emerged. At last, a community of consumers arose. The government provides public products and services, and people are the consumers in the consumer market community (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014).

The United States of America, a federal system consisting of 54 states, has both a single-tier and multi-tiered local government structure. The United States of America is a large country with a diversified population. The USA was able to handle the conflicting rights and varying interests that existed within the large province by implementing a federal system of government. There are two types of local government units in the United States: single-tier and multi-tier. The goal of local government as a tier of government in the United States is to step down local government and provide grassroots citizens a voice and the opportunity to engage in governmental matters. Local governments that perform a variety of governmental duties are considered multi-tiered. Three different forms of local governments are included in the multi-tier: municipalities, which include cities, boroughs, villages, and incorporated towns; and counties, which are the primary units of local government. Municipalities in both urban and rural areas are multi-level governmental entities. School districts and special districts are examples of single-tier governments. Consequently, the United States of America has five different forms of local government: counties, municipalities, townships, school districts, and special districts (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014; Noun, 2010). The counties are areas established by the state to serve as the state's administrative divisions. States differ in the characteristics and purposes of their counties. Generally, the primary duties of the counties include the assessment and collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order, road maintenance, appropriation of

money, issuance of bonds. Counties also maintain hospitals and carry out health care services, pollution control, mass transit, industrial development, social and welfare services. It can also carry out certain optional functions that may, from time to time be assigned to it by the State.

A democratically elected body known as the "board of commissioners or supervisors" is in charge of overseeing the counties. The body serves as a county's main policy tool. A municipality or city is defined as the pattern of habitation in a legally recognized territory. The residents of a specific county region may petition the state to recognize the territory as a municipality or city. The region in question needs to meet a number of fundamental criteria, like a minimum population or density. Each state has different benchmark populations needed for a municipality to be incorporated. Most of the time, a referendum is necessary. Once a city is incorporated, the State concerned grants them a charter which confers a legal personality to the city with the powers to elect officials, levy taxes and provide services to its residents.

Cities are general purpose units of Local Government like counties. Cities, however, essentially have greater decision-making powers and discretion than counties. Again, Cities offer a wider range of services to their residents or citizens than many counties. Municipalities/cities may operate any of these structures of government namely:

A Mayor-council form, a Councilmanager form, or a City-commission form. A common trend running through these three structures of city government is the existence of an elected governing body called a City Council.

The City-Council has a policy making power or authority. The mark or line of division running through the three types of city structures is the manner in which the executive branch is organized (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014).

Towns/townships, like municipalities/cities are also general-purpose units of Local Governments but different from county and city government. In USA, many new towns practise direct democracy. This is a form of government exercised through town meetings. Every year, a town meeting or assembly is held in which residents or citizens of the city participate in policy decision making on matters affecting the community. The residents elect town officials, pass local ordinances, levy taxes and adopt budgets. The residents present at the town meeting exercise legislative functions and the town meeting functions as a legislative body (Ohiole and Ojo, 2014);

Special Districts: These are created to carry out projects which other Local Governments cannot or will not do. They are created to carry out specific projects that will meet the needs of particular area.

School districts: These are species of special districts. The spirit propelling the creation of school districts is that the fewer the number of people the more effective or efficient they are formed (Ohiole and Ojo, 2004).

Functions The functions of municipalities/cities include city-sponsored festivals and city-constructed convention centres. Municipalities/cities pick up garbage and trash, sweep streets, inspect restaurants, maintain traffic signals and plant trees. Broadly speaking, the functions of Local Governments in USA include the

management of schools, policing and fire protection, public works, libraries and recreation, public utilities, city planning, public health, airport, harbour and housing (Alao et al, 2015).

Despite the fact that Local Governments in USA are under the control of the State Governments, they enjoy relative autonomy in that, they exercise a wide variety of powers. They are juristic persons that can sue and be sued in their corporate names, have sources of revenue and are democratically structured, constituted and administered (Noun, 2010).

Sources of Revenue The major source of revenue to Local Governments in USA is the State. About 40% of all the State expenditures are given to the Local Governments. The State grants, however, have strings attached to them. Most of the State grants to Local Governments are earmarked for public education, social welfare, road, hospitals, public safety, and public health. Thus, the Local Governments have little discretion to exercise in terms of expenditure. Cities, counties and other Local Governments have their own direct sources of income. These include property taxes, user fees, and business license fees. The Local Governments bear the burden of increasing expenditure demands from their residents/citizens. This is in the face of very limited authority/power granted by the State to Local Governments to raise fresh finances. The Local Governments oftentimes run to the State for financial assistance, thus the major source of revenue to the Local Government is the money from the State account (Alao et al, 2015).

Local government in the United States has evolved through the influence of two main doctrines:

- **Dillon's Rule:** Established in the 19th century, it posits that local governments are creatures of the state and have only the powers explicitly granted to them.
- **Home Rule:** Emerging in the early 20th century, this doctrine provides municipalities with the authority to govern themselves with minimal state interference, provided they do not violate state laws.

Local governments are generally organized into four types:

- **Counties:** Counties are usually the largest political subdivisions, and their primary function is to administer state laws within their borders. Among other duties, they

keep the peace, maintain jails, collect taxes, build and repair roads and bridges, and record deeds, marriages, and deaths. Elected officials called Supervisors or Commissioners usually lead counties.

- **Townships:** These units of government do not exist in about half the states, and they have different responsibilities in those that have them. A township may simply be another name for a town or city, or it may be a subdivision of a county.
- **Special Districts:** These units of government have special functions. The best known example is the local school district, but other types are growing in numbers, especially in heavily populated areas where county and city governments may be overloaded with work.
- **Municipalities:** City, town, or borough governments get their authority to rule only as it is granted by the state. Today about 80% of the American population lives in municipalities, and municipal governments affect the lives of many citizens. Municipalities may have elected mayors, or they may be managed by appointed city managers.

Over time, states have increasingly adopted Home Rule provisions, enabling cities and counties to manage local affairs more autonomously. This flexibility has allowed local governments to become major actors in policy implementation, particularly in areas such as education, transportation, land use, and emergency services.

Modern Role of Local Governance

Urbanization, economic growth, and the growing need for locally based service delivery have all contributed to the substantial expansion of local governments' roles in the 20th and 21st centuries. Public health, zoning, sanitation, infrastructure development, and policing are just a few of the many services that local governments oversee.

The expansion of federal grant programs and mandates has also shaped the behavior of local governments, creating complex intergovernmental relationships. Despite these challenges, local governance remains a cornerstone of American federalism, promoting grassroots participation and responsiveness.

Canada

Historical Background

The Local Governments System of Canada

Capital	Ottawa  45°24'N 75°40'W
Largest city	Toronto
Official languages	English French
Demonym(s)	Canadian
Government	Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy

Monarch	Charles III
Governor General	Mary Simon
Prime Minister	Justin Trudeau
Legislature	Parliament
Upper house	Senate
Lower house	House of Commons
Independence from the United Kingdom	
Confederation	July 1, 1867
Statute of Westminster, 1931	December 11, 1931
Patriation	April 17, 1982
Area	
Total area	9,984,670 km ² (3,855,100 sq mi) (2nd)
Water (%)	11.76 (2015)
Total land area	9,093,507 km ² (3,511,023 sq mi)
Population	
2024 Q1 estimate	▲ 40,769,890 (36th)
2021 census	▲ 36,991,981
Density	4.2/km ² (10.9/sq mi) (236th)
GDP (PPP)	2024 estimate
Total	▲ \$2.472 trillion (16th)
Per capita	▲ \$60,495 ¹ (28th)
GDP (nominal)	2024 estimate
Total	▲ \$2.242 trillion (10th)
Per capita	▲ \$54,866 (18th)
Gini (2024)	▼ 29.2 low
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.935 very high (18th)
Currency	Canadian dollar (\$) (CAD)
Time zone	UTC−3.5 to −8
Summer (DST)	UTC−2.5 to −7
Internet TLD	.ca

Evolution of Local Government

In Canada, local government is a duty assigned to the provinces rather than being firmly established by the constitution. Through provincial legislation, each province creates its own municipal, city, and town structure. Urbanization and the growing need for local service delivery during the 20th century led to a considerable expansion of the role of municipal governments.

Local governments in Canada are important players in governance, even though they are not recognized by the constitution. They are in charge of a number of services, such as public transportation, sanitation, land use planning, local

infrastructure, and law enforcement. Although funding sources differ per jurisdiction, intergovernmental transfers and property taxes are frequently used by local governments.

Local government in Canada can be defined as all elected local authorities which are legally empowered to make decisions on behalf of its electors, excluding the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments.

System of Administration

Canada is a federal bicameral parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy with a highly varied local government

system. Legislation for local government in Canada can be defined as all elected local authorities which are legally empowered to make decisions on behalf of its electors, excluding the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments.

The organization in charge of Canada's federal administration is the government. As the sole corporation under a constitutional monarchy, the Crown plays three separate roles: the executive (Crown-in-Council), the legislative (Crown-in-Parliament), and the courts (Crown-on-the-Bench). The Crown's powers are exercised by three institutions: the Parliament of Canada, the courts, and the Privy Council (traditionally known as the Cabinet).

More often, the phrase "Government of Canada" (French: *Gouvernement du Canada*) refers exclusively to the executive branch, which corporately markets itself as the Government of Canada, formally known as His Majesty's Government (French: *Gouvernement de Sa Majesté*). This includes the federal civil service, which is led by the Cabinet, and the ministers of the Crown.

The Government of Canada employs more than 300,000 people in more than 100 ministries, agencies, and crown companies. (See Canadian Federal Government Structure.) These organizations implement the policies and uphold the laws set out by the Canadian Parliament.

With the exception of the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and the governments of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, local government in Canada refers to all elected local authorities that have the legal authority to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. Municipalities, school boards, health authorities, and so forth are examples of this.

Municipal government, which is a local council authority that offers local services, facilities, safety, and infrastructure for communities, is the most common type of local government in Canada. All citizens of a municipality, which is a specified geographic region, are served by municipal governments, which are local general-purpose authorities.

The three levels of governance in Canada are local/municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal. The Constitution Act of 1867's Section 92(8) states that "In each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to... Municipal Institutions in the Province." [5] Thus, the term "creatures of the provinces" is commonly used to describe local governments. In 2002, Canada had roughly 3,700 municipal governments.

Local government is intricately organized. For example, regional, county, and municipal governments are the several levels of local administration found in different provinces. Certain unincorporated regions also have specific service districts. Cities, towns, and villages are only a few of the different types of municipal local administrations. Additionally, there are countless authorities with specific purposes. 'Police commissioners, health units, conservation authorities, public utilities commissions, parks boards, and school boards' are among the at least 2000 of these organizations in Ontario province alone (Tindal & Tindal 1995, p. 2). The school trustees are chosen to serve on school boards, which often provide education locally.

The federal government's organization and structure was established at Confederation through the Constitution Act, 1867—as a federal constitutional monarchy, wherein the Canadian Crown acts as the core, or "the most basic building block", of its Westminster-style parliamentary democracy. The Crown is thus the foundation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Canadian government. King Charles III is the head of state and is directly represented by a governor general, who is presently Mary Simon. The head of government, Justin Trudeau, is invited by the Crown to form a government after gaining the support of the House of Commons. This is usually accomplished by electing enough members of a single political party in a federal election to form a governing party and a majority of seats in Parliament. The remainder of the Canadian Constitution outlines additional aspects of governance, including unwritten customs that have been established over generations and written statutes in addition to court decisions.

According to the Canadian Constitution, the King's Privy Council is the group that counsels the sovereign or their representative on the use of executive authority. This role is practically completely carried out by a committee of the King's Privy Council termed the Cabinet who jointly set the government's policies and priorities for the country. It is made up of Crown ministers and is presided over by the prime minister. The prime minister, who is often chosen from the House of Commons or, less frequently, the Senate, advises the sovereign when choosing the members of the Cabinet. During its time, the administration must retain the confidence of the House of Commons, and some critical votes, such as the adoption of the government's budget, are considered as confidence motions. Laws are formed by the passage of bills through Parliament, which are either sponsored by the government or individual members of Parliament. Once a bill has been approved by both the House of Commons and the Senate, royal assent is required to make the bill become law. The laws are then the responsibility of the government to oversee and enforce.

a. Types Of Executives

There are three levels of government in Canada - Federal, Provincial and Municipal - each with its own set of responsibilities.

Federal

Located in Ottawa, the nation's capital, the federal government is responsible for issues that affect Canada as a whole country such as international relations, immigration, criminal law, taxes, national defence, and foreign policy.

The federal parliament consists of the Senate, which is made up of senators chosen by the prime minister, the House of Commons, which is made up of 338 Members of Parliament, or MPs, from each province and territory, and the Governor General, who represents the monarch. The federal government is formed by the political party that elects the most Members of Parliament. Their leader becomes the prime minister, who leads the federal government.

Provincial

Located in Ontario's capital, Toronto, the provincial government is responsible for issues that affect the province as a whole. These include education, health care, the environment, agriculture and highways.

The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario represents the monarchy, while the 124 elected Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) from throughout the province make up Ontario's parliament. A riding is a defined geographic area of the province that is represented by each MPP. The provincial government is formed by the political party having the most MPPs. The provincial government is led by their leader, who also becomes the premier.

Municipal

The province government is the source of authority for the municipal government. Bylaws pertaining to public parks, libraries, social services, local law enforcement and fire departments, trash collection, recycling, and public transportation are decided by the city or town council. Mayors in cities and towns and Reeves in villages and townships are in charge of municipal governments.

Democratic Structure of Canada

The notion of democracy has evolved over time considerably. The original form of democracy was a direct democracy. The most common form of democracy today is a representative democracy, where the people elect government officials to govern on their behalf such as in a parliamentary or presidential democracy.

While supermajority and consensus have also been essential to democracies, majority rule is the most common method used in day-to-day decision-making in democracies. They primarily take precedence on a constitutional level because they counterbalance majoritarianism by serving the vital function of inclusivity and wider legitimacy on delicate matters. While the constitution protects the minority and restricts the majority through the enjoyment of specific individual rights, such as freedom of speech or freedom of association, the common variant of liberal democracy allows the majority to exercise its powers within the framework of a representative democracy.

D. Council/City Managers

It's useful to have a basic understanding of the most prevalent forms of municipal governance and how the city manager function fits into them before delving into the specific duties of a city manager. The council-manager government is one of the most prevalent forms of local government. Under this system, the city council, which serves as the main legislative body of the city, is elected by the citizens.

The city council members appoint a city manager (not an elected official) who acts like a chief executive officer and carries out the directives of the council. In some towns, the city council may also have an elected mayor. However, in the council-manager form of government, the mayor has few or no powers above and beyond those of the other council members.

If a city can be compared to a company, then a city manager is like a chief executive officer. The city manager is charged with overseeing the daily affairs of the municipality. These professionals have a broad range of responsibilities, including the following:

Creating and preserving the city's financial plan Giving the council members advice on a range of topics and council decisions (albeit the city manager does not have a vote on the council)

Putting the council's passed legislation into effect selecting department leaders and overseeing senior city workers. Ensuring the smooth operation and public accessibility of city utilities and services Organizing tasks related to city development Communicating with the public and city workers, as well as meeting with representatives of charities, unions, and other city organizations Depending on the municipality, a city manager may have different responsibilities and authority. A city manager in one city could be more powerful than one in another.

The city manager also serves as the public face of the local government. They may routinely meet with members of the media to answer questions. If a crisis occurs, such as a natural disaster, the city manager may hold a press conference and will work to help the town navigate the problem.

E. Finance of Local government

Local government finance is about the revenue and expenditure decisions of local governments. It covers the sources of revenue that are used by local governments such as taxes (e.g. property, income, sales), user fees, and intergovernmental transfers.

The Department of Finance Canada is responsible for the overall stewardship of the Canadian economy. This includes preparing the annual federal budget, as well as advising the Government on economic and fiscal matters, tax and tariff policy, social measures, security issues, financial stability and Canada's international commitments.

We collaborate closely with our partners and oversee the Government of Canada's Finance portfolio.

Because the earliest European explorers believed they had arrived in the East Indies, they discovered that all of Canada was inhabited by aboriginal peoples they referred to as Indians. Some of the indigenous people hunted and collected food, while others grew crops to support themselves. Like the Iroquois, the Huron-Wendat people of the Great Lakes region were hunters and farmers. The Northwest's Cree and Dene were hunter-gatherers. Following the herd of bison (buffalo), the Sioux were nomadic. Arctic fauna provided the Inuit with their food. People from the West Coast smoked and dried fish to preserve it. Aboriginal groups frequently engaged in warfare as they fought for resources, land, and prestige.

The local way of life was permanently altered by the entrance of European colonists, traders, missionaries, and troops. Numerous Native Americans perished from European illnesses to which they lacked antibodies. Nonetheless, throughout the first 200 years of cohabitation, which established the groundwork for Canada, Aboriginals and Europeans developed close military, religious, and economic ties.

The Icelandic Vikings who settled Greenland a millennium ago also made their way to Labrador and Newfoundland. L'Anse aux Meadows, the remnants of their town, is a World Heritage site.

European exploration began in earnest in 1497 with the expedition of John Cabot, who was the first to draw a map of Canada's East Coast. John Cabot, an Italian immigrant to England, was the first to map Canada's Atlantic shore, setting foot on Newfoundland or Cape Breton Island in 1497 and claiming the New Founde Land for England. English settlement did not begin

until 1610. Between 1534 and 1542, Jacques Cartier made three voyages across the Atlantic, claiming the land for King Francis I of France. Cartier heard two captured guides speak the Iroquoian word *kanata*, meaning “village.” By the 1550s, the name of *Canada* began appearing on maps.

Democratic institutions developed gradually and peacefully. The first representative assembly was elected in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1758. Prince Edward Island followed in 1773, New Brunswick in 1785. The Constitutional Act of 1791 divided the Province of Quebec into Upper Canada (later Ontario), which was mainly Loyalist, Protestant and English-speaking, and Lower Canada (later Quebec), heavily Catholic and French-speaking.

The Act also granted to the Canadas, for the first time, legislative assemblies elected by the people. The name Canada also became official at this time and has been used ever since. The Atlantic colonies and the two Canadas were known collectively as British North America.

Confederation and Federalism

Canada's federalism was shaped by its desire to accommodate linguistic, cultural, and regional diversity, especially the distinction between English and French Canadians. There are federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments in Canada. The responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments were defined in 1867 in the *British North America Act*, now known as the *Constitution Act*, 1867.

In our *federal state*, the federal government takes responsibility for matters of national and international concern. These include defence, foreign policy, interprovincial trade and communications, currency, navigation, criminal law and citizenship. The provinces are responsible for municipal government, education, health, natural resources, property and civil rights, and highways. The federal government and the provinces share jurisdiction over agriculture and immigration. Federalism allows different provinces to adopt policies tailored to their own populations, and gives provinces the flexibility to experiment with new ideas and policies.

Each province has a Legislative Assembly that is elected, similar to Ottawa's House of Commons. Despite having smaller populations, the three northern territories' governments and assembly perform many of the same tasks as provinces.

With British assistance, officials of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Province of Canada collaborated to create a new nation between 1864 and 1867. The Fathers of Confederation are the name given to these persons. The federal and provincial levels of government were established.

The old Province of Canada was split into two new provinces: Ontario and Quebec, which, together with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, formed the new country called the Dominion of Canada. Each province would elect its own legislature and have control of such areas as education and health.

The British Parliament passed the *British North America Act* in 1867. The Dominion of Canada was officially born on July 1, 1867. Until 1982, July 1 was celebrated as “Dominion Day” to commemorate the day that Canada became a self-governing Dominion. Today it is officially known as Canada Day.

Sir Leonard Tilley, an elected official and Father of Confederation from New Brunswick, suggested the term Dominion of Canada in 1864. He was inspired by Psalm 72 in the Bible which refers to “dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.” This phrase embodied the vision of building a powerful, united, wealthy and free country that spanned a continent. The title was written into the Constitution, was used officially for about 100 years, and remains part of our heritage today. The Constitution Act, 1867, created two levels of government:

- **Federal Government:** Responsible for national matters such as defense, trade, and foreign policy.
- **Provincial Governments:** Granted autonomy over areas like education, health care, natural resources, and municipal affairs.

This structure was designed to prevent the concentration of power and to maintain unity while respecting regional differences.

Local Government Administrative System of Sierra Leone

Historical Background

The fierce competition for imperial territories by European countries, particularly Britain and France, during the 19th-century colonial rush, produced the current Sierra Leone's borders. However, the history of the nation is very old. There were organized governments with social, political, and economic systems, some of which were founded on traditional conceptions of the relationship between the rulers and their subjects, even if the peoples of the modern republic did not have a history of great polities. In addition to economic interactions, agricultural production and local, regional, and long-distance trade promoted cross-cultural interactions between nearby and distant peoples. Before Europeans arrived in the West African region in the 15th century and the Atlantic slave trade took off, this created an integrated process that facilitated population increase and state expansion. The transatlantic system upended the preexisting political, economic, and social structures, but the peoples' extraordinary fortitude allowed them to recover before they were subjected to British colonial control from 1808 to 1961. From the time of its founding until 1896, when a civil rebellion turned into a war of attrition between the interior Sierra Leonean population and the British colonial state, British colonization faced opposition in one form or another. Until the post-World War II era, when educated Africans throughout the continent aspired to achieve freedom, British dominance and control over the colonial economy persisted. The educated elite of Sierra Leone banded together to demand independence, which was eventually given in 1961, albeit along ethno-regional lines. Political megalomania, the encroachment of ethno-regionalism, corruption, and frequent military interventions in the state undermined the democratic experiment that followed independence. The state's use of subaltern youth in national politics ultimately resulted in a group of young people who wanted to use violence to change from being political groups' foot soldiers to a military junta, which engulfed the nation in a civil war that lasted ten years, from 1991 to 2002.

Structure of the Local Government in Sierra Leone

With the creation of the Freetown City Council in 1893, for instance, a contemporary local government system based on the United Kingdom's was progressively incorporated into the directly governed Colony of Sierra Leone starting at the end of the 19th century. Regarding the Protectorate that was administered indirectly, the colonial authorities chose to preserve and utilize the old system of governance rather than attempting to establish a local government system akin to that of the West. As a result, the Protectorate did not formally establish a local government structure until the interwar years, namely 1937. This does not, however, imply that the Protectorate did not have a local government-like system in place for the forty years that followed its establishment in 1896. Indeed, indirect rule, whereby traditional rulers would govern as 'native leaders' under the auspices of the Governor heading the colonial administration, was in a sense considerably akin or analogous to a system of local government. In fact, the system of local government in post-independence Sierra Leone traces its historical origin, at least in part, to the system of indirect rule that existed in the Protectorate during the colonial era.

A District Commissioner, a white administrator chosen by the Colonial Governor, oversaw each of the five administrative districts that made up the Protectorate of Sierra Leone at first: Karene, Ronietta, Bandajuma, Panguma, and Koinadugu (see Map 1). The District Commissioners were the only white administrators in the Protectorate of Sierra Leone for 25 years, from 1896 to 1921. The colonial government was able to maintain its "rule" over the Protectorate through just five of these District Commissioners (Kilson, 1966: 24–25). But as was already mentioned, this was really an indirect, nominal control that was mediated by the conventional kings; it did not amount to direct power. The colonial government of Sierra Leone separated the traditional rulers into three groups as part of its indirect authority of the Protectorate, which was overseen by the District Commissioners. These included: (1) Headmen, who served as the leaders of village communities; (2) Sub-chiefs or Section Chiefs, who were subordinate to a Paramount Chief and governed only a portion of that Paramount Chief's realm; and (3) Paramount Chiefs themselves. Additionally, each Paramount Chief's territory was classified as a chiefdom by the colonial authority. The Paramount Chiefs of these chiefdoms were supervised by the District Commissioners, and under their direction, they ruled the locals through Sub-chiefs or their attendants, known as Speakers. This created an indirect rule structure. Viswasam (1972: 84), who conducted a study on a report on local administration in Sierra Leone in the early 1970s, estimated that 216 Paramount Chiefs were appointed soon after the Protectorate was formed, and that the number of chiefdoms at that time was comparable. The traditional rulers often served two purposes under the indirect administration of the Protectorate, as the 200+ chiefdoms served as the fundamental administrative division. Tax collection was the first function. The colonial government of Sierra Leone imposed what was technically known as the home tax, but was more often known as the hut tax, on the Protectorate in order to finance its authority once it was established. Each chiefdom's Paramount Chief was required to collect this direct tax from the residents and deliver it to the colonial government. Each year, Paramount Chiefs had to work with their sub-chiefs and headmen to collect five shillings in hut tax from the residents, and deliver it to their District Commissioner after deducting a rebate of up to 5 per cent.

Maintaining peace and order, mostly through judicial action, was the second duty that the colonial authority expected of traditional rulers. Court of the Native Chiefs, Court of the District Commissioner, and Court of the District Commissioner and Native Chiefs are the three court kinds that were established in the Protectorate by the Protectorate Court Ordinance of 1896. According to common law, a Court of Native Chiefs had jurisdiction over all native criminal cases, with the exception of some situations like murder and offenses connected to secret societies, as well as all civil problems among Native people, with the exception of land disputes. As members of the bench, the Paramount Chief, elders, and sub-chiefs would render verdicts. The Court of the District Commissioner, on the other hand, was made up of just one District Commissioner. This court had jurisdiction over instances involving conflicts between natives and non-natives or between non-natives and non-natives in the Protectorate. It also heard cases involving slavery, witchcraft, and land disputes. A District Commissioner and two or more Paramount Chiefs made up the third category of courts, known as the Court of the District Commissioner and Native Chiefs. This court rendered judgments in matters outside the jurisdiction of the other two categories of courts (Alie, 1990: 134; Fofanah, n.d.: 43; Hailey, 1951: 311). The Circuit Court of the Supreme Court of the Colony thereafter took the position of the Court of the District Commissioner and Native Chiefs, which included both traditional rulers and a white administrator, after it was disbanded by the Protectorate Courts Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1903. The courts in the Protectorate were reorganized into three new categories by the Protectorate Courts Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1932: (1) the Court of the Native Chiefs, also referred to as the Native Court; (2) the Native Appeal Court; and (3) the Combined Court. In this approach, the colonial authority created a new higher court that gave natives who were unhappy with the court's ruling in the first instance a way to appeal (Hailey, 1951: 311-312).

Native Administration System 1937-1949

The nearly 40 years that followed the establishment of the Protectorate of Sierra Leone in 1896 saw no significant changes to the indirect rule system previously mentioned. However, the excessive demands for forced labor, tributary gifts, and tax money embezzlement by the traditional rulers had caused the Protectorate's citizens to become increasingly resentful of them by the end of World War I. The colonial authority was also shifting its stance on traditional governance at about the same period. Aware of the necessity to improve the Protectorate's public services, including as water supplies and sanitation, the colonial authority sought a contemporary substitute for traditional governance. As a result, it formally established the Native Administration System of local government in 1937 and gradually expanded its use throughout the Protectorate. The Protectorate of Sierra Leone had institutions similar to local governments for the first time after the installation of the Native Administration System, which was initially an indirect rule system based on Britain's experience of colonial authority in places like Nigeria.

The Native Administration System differed from the system of indirect rule in at least three ways.

First, a new organization known as the Tribal Authority was created by the Native Administration System. Accordingly, there were no unified legal provisions on the composition and function of the chiefdom leadership, leaving these matters to local

custom. This was the case with regard to traditional rule in chiefdoms headed by Paramount Chiefs, with the exception of the broad categories of traditional rulers such as Paramount Chief and sub-chief. However, the colonial government established a de facto local government system with a Tribal Authority in each chiefdom and codified its composition and functions in legislation with the enactment of the Tribal Authorities Ordinance of 1937, which served as the legislative foundation for the Native Administration System. In particular, the ordinance made it clear that a Tribal Authority is made up of the "Paramount Chief, the Chiefs, the Councillors, and notable individuals elected by the people in accordance with native law and custom, authorized by the Governor, and commissioned as Tribal Authority for the area concerned under this ordinance." With the governor's approval, Tribal Authorities can institute bylaws and issue ordinances as needed. The second distinction was the establishment of a new financial management organization, the Chiefdom Treasury, under the Native Administration System. The chiefdoms had no formal system in place for managing their finances prior to that time. With the exception of a small number of Paramount Chiefs, traditional leaders would therefore not be regularly compensated and would hardly offer any public services to the populace. The Chiefdom Treasuries Ordinance of 1937 was an attempt by the colonial authority to remedy this issue. Chiefdom Treasuries were formed in each chiefdom or group of chiefdoms under the decree. It further mandated that the chiefs' sources of income, hut tax and court fees, should be paid into the Chiefdom Treasuries and utilized for public services or the compensation of "local government officials," such as the Paramount Chiefs, Speakers, and court staff. The introduction of a chiefdom tax, intended to provide money for the native administration, was the third way that the Native Administration System deviated from the indirect rule system. Chiefs and headmen were given a new duty by the Chiefdom Tax Ordinance of 1937: to collect the Chiefdom Tax, a poll tax, from citizens and turn it in to their Tribal Authority. Therefore, the implementation of the Native Administration System signified a number of changes to local institutions, such as the creation of Tribal Authorities at the chiefdom level, who were formally authorized to exercise administrative and legislative authority, albeit with restrictions, and the setting up of a financial structure that would allow the Tribal Authorities to carry out their duties. The Native Administration System, in other words, was an early attempt to transition from a traditional, non-institutional form of governance to a contemporary, institutionalized system of local government. The shift in the number of chiefdoms that embraced the Native Administration System between 1936 and 1949. The system was first piloted in two chiefdoms in 1936, the year before the legislation was passed, and then it was introduced in 18 chiefdoms in 1937, 14 chiefdoms in 1938, and 26 chiefdoms in 1939, as the table shows. But in the years between the end of World War II and the post-war era, the colonial government's introduction of the system slowed down. Even in 1949, there were only 136 chiefdoms that had accepted the system overall, making up just 71.2% of all chiefdoms more than a decade after it was initially implemented.

One of the main reasons the Native Administration System took so long to spread throughout the Protectorate was that the colonial government took a "going slow" stance, meaning it did not force chiefdoms to adopt the system but instead let the traditional rulers make the decision. Traditional leaders gained a significant

advantage by integrating the Native Administration System within their chiefdom. For instance, they would obtain regular compensation, access to colonial government subsidies, and administrative and legislative power such as the capacity to enact ordinances and bylaws. However, there were drawbacks to take into account as well: The rulers would lose the rights that have historically been granted to chiefs, most notably the authority to require tribute offerings from the populace, and the District Commissioner would be encouraged to intervene politically. As a result, the implementation of the Native Administration System was met with fierce opposition from certain traditional chiefdom leaders. It took a while for the system to spread since the colonial authority chose to take a "going slow" approach in response to this objection. The Protectorate of Sierra Leone had a dual system of local administration for many years after 1937, consisting of "reformed" chiefdoms, those that joined the system, and "non-reformed" chiefdoms, as a result of the Native Administration System's slow proliferation as previously mentioned. Chiefdoms, those which had not adopted the system and were instead maintaining the non-institutional traditional system of rule. Furthermore, at the risk of repetition, the reformed chiefdoms each had a Tribal Authority with administrative and legislative authority, a treasury, the chiefdom tax, and remuneration paid to chiefs. The non-reformed chiefdoms, on the other hand, underwent none of these reforms. The traditional rulers were not given the power to enact bylaws, and since they did not collect chiefdom tax, chiefs were neither compensated or provided with public services. The reformed chiefdoms had three different court types starting in 1937: the Native Court, which was presided over by traditional rulers; the Native Appeal Court, which was a higher court than the Native Court; and the Group Native Appeal Court, which was established at the request of several chiefdoms. However, in the chiefdoms that were not changed, no such judicial reform was put into place (Hailey, 1951: 313). In conjunction with the institutional reform at a chiefdom level, the colonial government also embarked on institutional reform at a Protectorate level. In 1940, it established in Freetown a new office, Secretary for Protectorate Affairs, which would coordinate the overall administration of the Protectorate. The colonial government created the Province in 1946 as an additional administrative entity above the District. The Protectorate was separated into 13 Districts prior to then. These would now be combined into three provinces, which would form a 13-district system: the Southwestern Province, the Southeastern Province, and the Northern Province. A Provincial Commissioner, an administrative position above the District Commissioner, would lead each of the three Provinces. Furthermore, the colonial authority in Freetown appointed the Chief Commissioner of the Protectorate in the southern town of Bo to oversee District Commissioners in lieu of the previously mentioned Secretary for Protectorate Affairs. There were just 12 Districts left in 1949.

District Council: 1950-1960

The Protectorate Native Law Ordinance of 1905 is at least as old as the initiative to create a "Council of Paramount Chiefs" within the Protectorate. According to this ordinance, each area's Local Tribal Assemblies should be composed of all Paramount Chiefs. Tribal District Assemblies composed of representatives from the Local Tribal Assemblies should sit above these assemblies, and a Tribal General Assembly composed of representatives from the Tribal District Assemblies should sit above these assemblies. Nonetheless, at the start of the twentieth

century, the Paramount Chiefs lacked any feeling of unity and had little experience running the Protectorate. As such, it was probably unfeasible to lay down this regular system of rule broadly across the Protectorate ; hence, the purport of the ordinance failed to become a reality (Hailey, 1951 : 315).

That said, as part of its Protectorate-centred policy for economic and social development in post-war Sierra Leone, the colonial government issued the Protectorate (Amendment) Ordinance of 1945, which established, at a protectorate level, a Protectorate Assembly and, at a lower level, District Councils.

Ten legislators from the colonial government, including the Chief Commissioner of the Protectorate and three Provincial Commissioners, and thirty-two non-governmental legislators (two each from each of the thirteen District Councils and six designated governors to represent business and missionary interests) made up the Protectorate Assembly, which was established in 1946 after the previously described procedure. The Protectorate Assembly essentially served as a mustering of Paramount Chief delegates from the Protectorate, as evidenced by the makeup of its members. Although this assembly did not always correspond to the Council of Paramount Chiefs, the Paramount Chiefs nearly always made up the majority of the 26 delegates from the District Councils (Hailey, 1951: 316). However, the Protectorate Assembly was ultimately an advisory body that deliberated on matters brought by the colonial government, and so it never developed into a local government.

The District Council was the organization that eventually evolved into a central local government that held a higher rank than the Tribal Authority. The District Councils, which were established in 1946 with the Protectorate Assembly, were presided over by a District Commissioner and were mostly composed of all Paramount Chiefs and one representative chosen from each Tribal Authority in the district in question. The District Council's responsibilities included advising on issues brought by the colonial administration, proposing changes to the Protectorate Assembly or colonial government that affected the lives of the local populace, and creating guidelines for changing native law and custom (Alie, 1990: 156).

Therefore, the District Councils were originally consultative bodies made up primarily of Paramount Chiefs, just like the Protectorate Assembly. The District Councils Ordinance of 1950, however, was passed by the colonial government in 1950 and required that each District Council have four non-chief members drawn from the common populace. Additionally, the act gave District Councils administrative power, allowing them to carry out plans for economic development. In addition, the colonial government adopted the 'precept' and began giving the District Councils subsidies to make sure they had the money they needed.

The precept states that a Tribal Authority must give its District Council a share of its tax revenue. At first, Tribal Authorities would voluntarily pay the precept to their District Council; however, starting in 1954, payment of the precept became required. Tribal Authorities began transferring 44% of the local tax, which had been created the year before by combining the chieftom and hut taxes, to their District Councils in 1956. This set of changes gave the District Councils their own funding source, albeit a small one, enabling them to function as local governments that offer public services.

Therefore, after first establishing the District Councils as advisory bodies, the colonial authority transformed them into local governments and took action to strengthen their roles. The colonial government took this measure as a result of growing skepticism and discontent with its chieftom governance system, which was centered on the Tribal Authority. As was previously indicated, the colonial government attempted to establish Tribal Authorities as local governments during the interwar period by introducing the Native Administration System at the chieftom level. But in many of the chieftoms, the old way of ruling persisted even after the system was put in place, and unethical behavior was common. These included chiefs' abuse of power, arbitrary levying and collection of taxes, the continuation of tributary gifts despite the illegal nature of such activity, obscure accounting, chronic corruption, and nepotism. The Tribal Authorities themselves were also involved in the issue; it became clear that the majority of the budget was being consumed by the officials' salaries, including those of the Paramount Chiefs, leaving little money for public service delivery. In order to address this situation, the colonial government increased its political intervention in the Tribal Authorities after World War II and implemented a number of reforms, such as consolidating chieftoms that were indifferent to reforms and chieftoms whose continued existence as independent entities was judged ineffective due to their small size. The colonial authorities did not, however, succeed in making the chieftom administration much better. By the early 1950s, the colonial government, having become keenly aware of the limits of the Tribal Authorities' ability to act as local governments, was changing its approach ; it now sought to develop the District Councils, instead of the Tribal Authorities, as the local governments.

Although the District Councils replaced the Tribal Authorities in part by acting as local governments, they were still administrative bodies made up mainly of representatives from the Tribal Authorities, so they shared the same issues as the Tribal Authorities, including political corruption and a lack of administrative capability. In fact, it is instructive to compare the budget breakdowns of the District Councils and Tribal Authorities. As was previously indicated, the former's staff expenditures accounted for over half of the overall budget, leaving little for public services. Since the overall percentage of the budget devoted to staff expenditures was lower in the later case—between 15 and 20 percent—the remaining funds may theoretically be used for public services (Kilson, 1966: 212). However, the District Councils often performed their accounting in an inappropriate or obscure manner. In the late 1950s, there was a series of incidents surrounding the Building Materials Scheme. These events exposed the fact that the District Councils, which had close ties to the Tribal Authorities, suffered from both political corruption and subpar administrative operations. In conclusion, the following summarizes the evolution of the local government system in the Protectorate of Sierra Leone during British rule: When the Protectorate of Sierra Leone was first established in 1896, it operated under an indirect system in which more than 200 chieftoms were independently governed by traditional leaders such as Paramount Chiefs, who were overseen by the District Commissioners. However, the colonial government formally launched the Native Administration System in 1937 with the goal of modernizing chieftom administration, establishing Tribal Authorities as de facto local governments. Nonetheless, the

colonial authority took a "going slow" approach to the spread of this system; as a result, the administrative system, which included both "reformed" and "non-reformed" systems, continued to exist for a considerable amount of time. Additionally, many chiefdoms still displayed the autocratic or capricious control of traditional rulers even after the Native Administration System was implemented, which further demonstrated the Tribal Authorities' incapacity to operate effectively as local governments. After World War II, the colonial authority created the Protectorate Assembly and District Councils as two advisory organizations in response to this situation. Furthermore, it tried to establish District Councils as local governments in the 1950s, replacing the Tribal Authorities—many of which were small, ineffective, and often corrupt—and gave them more authority. In terms of delivering public services like roads and school buildings, the District Councils had some degree of success. Additionally, the administration became more democratic in the late 1950s when elections were largely implemented. But as Sierra Leone got closer to independence, the District Councils were dealing with a number of issues and concerns in their capacity as local governments, such as widespread political corruption, nepotism, and poor accounting.

Local Government Administrative System of Liberia

Historical Background

The conclusion of the Cold War itself has been a significant contributing factor to domestic conflicts in Africa in the post-Cold War era. Africa was sidelined and mercenaries and weapons of devastation were made available when the Cold War ended, removing the global fabric that could have suppressed, contained, and managed the undercurrents of conflicts in the separate domains of the super powers (Adejumobi, 2001). However, these wars are not sudden; rather, they are the product of a long-term degenerative process and have deep roots in the history of the states involved (Lemarchand, 1998). It is obvious that Liberia's dilemma of anarchic warfare and total normative breakdown surpasses even the most gloomy forecasts. The so-called "rebel war" that swept over the Mano Region of Liberia and Sierra Leone in less than ten years after Charles Gbarngay Taylor led a group of 150 ragged rebels from Cote D'voire to enter Liberia's Nimba County (Kieh, 1998). Up until 1980, Liberia had been a state for almost 150 years and had adorned itself with many titles, including "Africa's longest republic," "an oasis of tranquility in a continent awash with political crises and civil wars," and "an African outpost of Western civilization" (Zartman, 1995). But Liberia was headed toward self-destruction after a violent coup d'état in 1980 and a rebel invasion nearly ten years later in 1989. The incursion turned into a seven-year, deadly civil war that had all the hallmarks of a state in disintegration: a central government that was paralyzed and ineffective, unable to ensure the safety of its citizens, and a socioeconomic system that was decimated. In 1991, the violence seems to have spread from Liberia into Sierra Leone with such destructive power that all official state structures fell and a significant portion of the populations of both nations were either

killed or displaced. The Mano River Region is home to both Sierra Leone and Liberia.

West Africa's Liberia is bordered to the west by Sierra Leone, to the north by the Republic of Guinea, to the east by Cote d'Ivoire, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. With a pre-war population of roughly 2.1 million people (based on the 1984 Census), Liberia should have, under normal circumstances, offered its citizens a welfare system rather than a military one. Liberia is a country rich in natural resources, such as alluvial diamonds, gold deposits, iron ore deposits of global significance, and forest resources (Robin, 2000).

Evolution and Structure of Local Government System in

Liberia

One of the oldest political entities in the West African subregion, Liberia was established in 1822 and gained independence in 1847, with the late honorable J.J. Roberts serving as its first president. When compared to other West African nations, the Liberian local government structure presents a stark contrast. For example, the central government appoints the members of the Liberian local government, who have no specific duties or authority.

The central government makes all decisions about policies, programs, and financial expenditures, and local governments are required to follow its instructions. Liberia's unitary system of government bears striking similarities to the constitutions of the United States and Great Britain. The Liberian constitution, like the British one, is unitary and inflexible, with the president holding most of the country's powers. This, together with the predominance of a one-party system (the True Whig Party), places the central government above all other levels of government, including regional and local ones. From the national to the local level, the Liberian True Whig Party maintains strong influence over the political and economic activities of the entire nation. All governmental units in Liberia are more or less cells of the party and they function in strict conformity with centrally planned programmes of the central government (Ibodge 1999). Olawole (1980) noted that "the main responsibility of local government in Liberia is to carry out to the letter instructions of the central government and to implement the laws and programmes of the central government".

One may argue that the ethnic division between the Americo Liberians and the tribal Liberians is ingrained in Liberia's local government structure. Accordingly, the modified system indirect rule, which was implemented at President Arthur Barclay's request, not only maintained the tribal people's division into twenty or more districts and ethnic groups, but it also gave the ruling official justification for keeping them out of the Liberian State's national life (Karna 1926). The Liberian local government system demonstrates characteristics of the socialism or communist system. In addition to serving as branches of the governing party, the local government is set up to oversee the administration of the country's public affairs and centrally planned programs.

Comparative Analysis: Local Administration In The Usa, Canada, Sierra Leone, And Liberia

Similarities and Differences

Feature	United State	Canada	Sierra Leone	Liberia
System of Government	Federal	Federal	Unitary	Unitary
Constitutional Status of Local Government	Subordinate to states	Subordinate to provinces	Created by national legislation	Created by national legislation
Local Autonomy	Varies by state (Home Rule vs. Dillon's Rule)	Varies by province (no constitutional status)	Limited; under central government control	Limited; under central government control
Decentralization Type	Political, administrative, fiscal	Political, administrative, fiscal	Mostly administrative	Mostly administrative
Role of Traditional Authority	Minimal or symbolic	Minimal or symbolic	Significant in local governance	Significant in local governance
Electoral Local Governance	Widespread; elected mayors, councils	Widespread; elected councils	Mixed; some appointed officials	Mixed; some appointed officials
Revenue Generation Capacity	Strong (local taxes, federal/state grants)	Moderate (property taxes, transfers)	Weak; relies on central allocations	Weak; relies on central allocations
Service Delivery	Highly localized	Localized with provincial oversight	Centralized with limited local capacity	Centralized with limited local capacity

Discussion of Effectiveness and Areas of Reform**USA:**

- **Effectiveness:** Strong legal and fiscal autonomy at the local level enables innovation and responsiveness.
- **Challenges:** Disparities in local capacity and funding; tension between federal and state policies.
- **Reform Areas:** Strengthening intergovernmental collaboration and equity in funding.

Canada:

- **Effectiveness:** Balanced autonomy allows provinces to tailor local systems; strong service delivery.
- **Challenges:** Constitutional silence on local government; urban-rural service gaps.
- **Reform Areas:** Constitutional recognition of municipalities and more equitable funding mechanisms.

Sierra Leone:

- **Effectiveness:** Revival of local councils after civil war improved grassroots participation.
- **Challenges:** Weak fiscal base, capacity gaps, and overlapping roles with traditional authorities.
- **Reform Areas:** Enhancing local fiscal autonomy, training, and clearer role definitions.

Liberia:

- **Effectiveness:** Ongoing decentralization efforts show promise in post-conflict governance.
- **Challenges:** Political centralization, weak institutional capacity, and corruption.
- **Reform Areas:** Devolving more decision-making power, strengthening local institutions, and enhancing transparency.

Lessons for Developing Nations (Sierra Leone and Liberia)

1. **Constitutional Clarity:** Clear legal frameworks, as seen in the U.S. and Canada, are essential for effective local governance.
2. **Autonomy and Accountability:** Local governments must have the power and resources to act, while being held accountable by citizens.
3. **Capacity Building:** Continuous investment in local human capital and institutional structures is vital.
4. **Stable Fiscal Transfers:** Predictable and adequate funding mechanisms (e.g., grants, revenue-sharing) improve local service delivery.
5. **Civic Participation:** Engaging citizens through local elections and consultation processes enhances trust and responsiveness.
6. **Integration of Traditional Structures:** Leveraging traditional authority where appropriate—while aligning with democratic norms—can strengthen legitimacy.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts democratic-participatory and efficiency theories to compare and analyse the Local Government systems in USA and Canada, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Theory of Democratic Participation Local government is a key component of authentic democracy, according to the Democratic-Participatory paradigm. Local government should serve as the cornerstone of a true democracy rather than the federal or state levels; otherwise, the democratic system will inevitably falter and be financed. In a real democratic system, local government is crucial because it develops future state and national leaders. The fundamental characteristic of local government is that it gives the people a way to engage in governance, contribute to it, and have a say in their own affairs. This involvement is essential to democracy's development. The involvement of the citizens in the

planning, execution and assessment of projects designed to improve their living condition promotes community commitment to the socio-economic development. Local Government is best regarded as the nursery bed of democracy (Cole, 1974:64).

John S. Mills, a leading proponent of this idea, had a significant impact on it through his writings on representative government, liberty, and utilitarianism. Regardless of the services it offers, he claims that local government is an essential component of democracy. He goes on to say that when all kinds of individuals can participate, governance is genuinely representative. The closest thing to broad involvement and contribution is provided at the local government level. The advocacy is supported by Panther (1953). He contends that since people learn the craft of practical politics and respect and tolerate one another's opinions in the society, participation is essential to democracy. Panther claims that political elites are now being trained for higher levels of government in local governments. In certain regions of the world, there is ample evidence of the advocacy. President Shehu Shagari, Umar Dikko, Ali Mongumu, and several others started their ascent to national leadership from the Local Government as the first step in the ladder, according to Alao et al. (2015), Tony (2011), Ajayi (2000), and Ademolekun, Olowu, and Taleye (1988). There are also numerous examples in Nigeria's Delta State. Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, the governor of Delta State, started his political career at the local government level. Additionally, the Delta South Senatorial District's Senator James Manager started off in the local government. According to David Butler's 1964 study on the British general elections, former Local Authority Council members made up 53% of the Labour members of Parliament and 45% of the Labour candidates who lost the election (Noun, 2010). Mankenzie (1954), who shown that over half of Italy's deputies and roughly the same number of senators rose from the Local Government level, further supports the idea that local government is a breeding ground for democracy. The institutional structure and direction of nascent democracies may make it challenging to accomplish the objectives of democratic-participatory theory. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the theory's dominating significance remains unabated. Participatory democracy at the Local Government level can record a great measure of success albeit with its attended difficulties (Alao et al 2015; Aragone and Sanchez-pages, 2008).

Efficiency Theory

In opposition to the democratic-participatory philosophy promoted by J.S. Mills and Bricks, the efficiency theory emerged. The efficiency theory's central tenet is that local government exists primarily to serve the needs of the community. Accordingly, one of the theory's main proponents has adamantly maintained that local government is the most effective way to deliver services that are fundamentally local in nature (Sharpe 1970:168). According to him, local government is an essential organization that can provide those services in the most effective and satisfactory way. It is its responsibility to carry out the designated local performance at the highest efficiency standard and in the best tradition required by the Central Government, not to approximate the efficiency standard. Alao et al. (2015) use Mackenzie's (1954:14) assertion that "Local Government exists to provide services and it must be judged by its success in providing services up to a standard measured by national inspectorate" as support for this advocacy. The efficiency argument is predicated on the reality that many contemporary states have sizable populations and geographic areas, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the central government to

provide for the fundamental needs of residents living in remote areas. Therefore, in order to promote efficiency and administrative convenience, the Central Government must delegate authority and power to lower divisions. In essence, the purpose of local governments is to relieve the central government of some of its responsibilities.

According to the efficiency theory, local governments are the most effective representatives of the federal or state governments in delivering public goods and services to the populace at the far-flung governmental levels (Alao et al., 2015). Sharpe (1970:168) has criticized the theory on the grounds that local government has been acknowledged as a bulwark of equality and liberty, but it has not shown that it has effectively fulfilled its duty as a governmental unit or agency to provide services that are fundamentally local in nature (Alao et al., 2015).

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate the local administration environments in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Canada, and the United States. Clear explanations of the research design, data collection and analytic techniques, and the justification for using a comparative case study framework are intended to be provided.

In order to examine the significance of local ownership in democratic military governance during the SSR process, this article uses a comparative analysis and review of historical documentation (secondary data from agency reports, academic articles, and newspaper stories) as well as keyword searches on local ownership and democratic governance of SSR in both countries. According to Burnham et al. (2008), qualitative analyses yield a wealth of information from several sources and offer a comprehensive examination of a phenomenon. It provides a more complete and accurate account of the case that is being examined. The study extensively examined the literature and secondary data on military reform in both nations instead of using any source data points. The relationship between local ownership of SSR and democratic government in post-conflict environments is the main topic of this article.

Yin (1984) and Creswell (Citation2009) both suggested that qualitative data collection should be an efficient method of data preparation, updating, and cleaning, in addition to identifying relevant subjects, information, and observations. Stig (Citation2009) promoted the definition by suggesting that qualitative data analysis is how the qualitative data collected is transformed by understanding and describing the research being done.

In comparison to the above opinions, Huberman and Miles (Citation1994) concluded that qualitative data analysis would require the coding of all data collected to identify consistent patterns and topics in the collected data. The authors have referred to systematic and reliable collection procedures, analysis, and recording results. It was also recognized as a data processing spiral in Creswell (Citation2009), a system that combines data collection and data analysis. In comparison to the perspective of Patton (Citation2002) and the above principles were used to understand the gathered approved data from the data collection before using the data to form the complete answer to the question. Yin (Citation1984) states that a researcher will carefully and regularly

compile and retain many data sources. The details must be organized to reveal converging question lines and patterns. During the analysis, this method was used to code the literature and identify specific terms for analysis and understanding.

Following the data's clean-up, each sequence of data notes was transcribed. The Micro Excel system has been used to code the data under the belief that it is one of the most reliable tools for qualitative data coding. The results were validated separately based on the central themes captured in the literature (Stake, Citation2010). The information was compiled and authenticated as per viewpoints and components. Besides, descriptions of the findings were written based on the coding knowledge. Each literature text was authenticated and checked independently (Stake, 2010). The notes were written on a single sheet of paper and sessions cut and pasted. These notes were labeled and arranged based on the main themes centered on literature, and the answers to the research question in the results chapter described the critical problems gathered and coded from the data collected. The researcher maintained a high degree of knowledge and use of triangulation to satisfy the ambition and had other security experts who helped the researcher come up with the conclusion and interpretation of data. The idea for analyzing the data has been condensed into issues related to the primary and secondary research questions. Therefore, the primary research question motivating this study is:

Research Design

This study adopts a **qualitative comparative case study design** using anthropological and ethnographic techniques, and particularly in-depth. This design is particularly suitable for exploring governance structures and administrative practices in different country contexts. A qualitative approach enables in-depth exploration of the complex dynamics within each country's local government system, while the comparative element allows for cross-national analysis to identify patterns, contrasts, and lessons.

The use of case studies facilitates contextual analysis of each country's administrative framework and enables a holistic examination of their local governance systems. This design supports both descriptive and interpretive objectives of the research.

Case Selection Justification

The four countries—United States, Canada, Sierra Leone, and Liberia—were selected using **purposive sampling**. The selection was guided by the need to capture diverse governance systems:

Data Collection Methods

The research relies exclusively on **secondary data sources**, ensuring a comprehensive review of existing literature and institutional materials. Key data collection methods include:

- **Documentary Analysis:** Examination of constitutional texts, local government acts, policy papers, and administrative guidelines from each country.
- **Academic Literature Review:** Analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and research papers accessed through databases like Google Scholar, and Research gate.
- **Institutional Reports:** Use of publications from international organizations such as the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) (www.usa.gov, www.canada.ca), scholarly articles (JSTOR), World Bank governance reports.

All documents selected were published in English and focused on governance, decentralization, or local administration.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using **thematic content analysis**, which involves identifying, analyzing, and comparing themes across the different case studies. The key themes analyzed include:

- Legal and institutional frameworks
- Governance structures and responsibilities
- Fiscal autonomy and capacity
- Citizen participation
- Challenges and innovations

Limitations of the Methodology

The methodology is subject to the following limitations:

- **Limited access to up-to-date data** for Sierra Leone and Liberia, especially at the local level.
- **Reliance on secondary data**, which may carry author biases or lack contextual nuances.
- **Absence of primary data** (e.g., interviews or surveys), which restricts the depth of insight into current on-the-ground realities.

Despite these limitations, the use of multiple data sources and cross-checking of materials helped to ensure reliability and validity of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

Although primary data were not collected, ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process. All secondary sources were properly cited to maintain academic integrity. No confidential or proprietary information was used, and the research adheres to fair use and intellectual property guidelines.

Conclusion

The structural designs, historical contexts, and governance practices of municipal government in the United States, Canada, Sierra Leone, and Liberia have all been examined in this comparative study. According to the study, there is a significant difference between unitary systems (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and federal systems (USA and Canada), especially when it comes to constitutional clarity, fiscal capability, local autonomy, and the efficiency of service delivery.

Local governments in established federal states like the US and Canada gain from legal legitimacy, fiscal empowerment, and structured decentralization. Local governments in Sierra Leone and Liberia, on the other hand, continue to face difficulties related to restricted authority, weak institutional frameworks, and subpar service delivery, which are made worse by political centralization and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Recommendations

Policy and Administrative Reforms for Sierra Leone and Liberia

To strengthen local administration in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the following reforms are recommended:

A. Legal and Constitutional Clarity:

- Enshrine the roles and responsibilities of local governments in national constitutions.
- Clearly delineate the relationship between local councils and traditional authorities to reduce overlap and conflict.

B. Fiscal Empowerment:

- Develop stable intergovernmental transfer systems and grant mechanisms.
- Allow local governments to raise their own revenues through property taxes, service charges, and licenses.

C. Capacity Building:

- Invest in the professional development of local government staff.
- Establish training institutes or collaborate with academic institutions to build administrative and managerial competence.

D. Democratization of Local Governance:

- Ensure free, fair, and regular local elections.
- Empower citizens to hold local officials accountable through town hall meetings, audits, and feedback systems.

E. Integrated Traditional Leadership:

- Define the advisory role of chiefs in local governance while maintaining democratic legitimacy.
- Provide training and inclusion frameworks to ensure traditional leaders support, not hinder, development.
- Importance of Citizen Participation and Fiscal Autonomy

Effective local governance depends on the active involvement of citizens. Participation builds trust, strengthens accountability, and ensures policies reflect community priorities. Fiscal autonomy, meanwhile, equips local governments with the resources needed to respond promptly and effectively to local needs.

Both elements are crucial for achieving inclusive development and democratic stability. Policies must therefore prioritize citizen inclusion and financial independence at the grassroots level.

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