



THE INEVITABILITY OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN [MULTINATIONAL] FEDERALISM: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Federalism is just an institutional arrangement whereby the power constitutionally (theoretically) divided between the central and federating units. It needs the formal or informal arrangements binding the system vertically or horizontally. Thus, Intergovernmental relations have become the glues that attach the central government with the regional constituents and the local governments with the regions or the centers according to the mechanisms precisely designed by each federal state with its respective agenda of organizing the IGR. Particularly, in multinational federalism where the peoples and the nationalities of different backgrounds united, it needs to work to evaporate the feelings of asymmetric treatments. To do so, it then mandates to have a forum of communal representation to all nationalities either in executive or legislative spheres and which consequently brings the sense of belongingness. So, the lubricated operation of the federal system requires the establishment of intergovernmental relations.

Key terms: *Federalism, Intergovernmental relations, central government, regional government.*

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INTRODUCTION

Theoretically, it seems there is a clear-cut demarcation between the powers of the central government and the regions when the system is federal type. But some may disregard that the central government and regional ones are the components working for the capability of the state and its citizen. The divided competency doesn't necessarily mean the divided national goal. For this communal goal there is a need for interaction between and among the tiers of the government where competition between the levels of the government reduced, the mutual respect and understandings are created, the feelings of rivalry mediated, the imbalance of the resources to be equalized and the gaps of implementation in all constituent units to be balanced. Besides this, the considerations should be underlined to handle the diversified interests of different ethnic groups in multinational federations. So, to take the advantage of the cooperation between the center and the constituents, and among the constituents, it remained necessary to look for the defined or undefined formulas of interactions. This consequently, makes it clear that it is impossible to practice the federal system in absence of frameworks binding the center and its constituents. Thus, the aim of this paper is to review the inevitability of intergovernmental relations in federalism and assess the reasons behind the increasing need for

intergovernmental relations as determinate for the healthy functioning of [multinational] federalism.

1. Conceptual Review

Aseffa Fisha (2009:353) conceives IGR as "very broad notion referring essentially to the dealings (formal or informal) between the federal government and constituent states or the structure below the state concerning the coordination of policies on shared programs according to country specific criteria guiding the relations." Likewise, Philmore (2013:229) defines intergovernmental relations as "set of multiple formal and informal processes, channels, structures and institutional arrangements for bilateral and multilateral interaction within and between spheres of government" With a small distinction, Okoli (2005) pointed out the IGR as vertical and horizontal, governmental and non-governmental policy-making connections at distinctive levels according to the most features spelled out within the constitution, transcendentally in an agreeable design in a federal administrative structure.

Precisely Poirier and Cheryl S. (2015:1) associated IGR to government framework saying "intergovernmental relation could be a measurement of the hone of federalism in alliances including the peaceful or conflictual modalities." Be that as it may, Meghan S. (2016:1) delimited IGR to depict the political forms by which central and subnational leaders mutually arrange political struggle and administration issues, compelled

but not characterized by the surrounding regulation structure.

In a broader view, Chiamogu (2020:7) characterizes IGR as the political, financial, programmed, and definitive shapes by which the central government offers incomes and other resources to the state and adjacent governments. By suggestion, interim relations are the sets of courses of action and components by which the interaction between/among levels of government are supervised.

Concerning on its significance Akume, (2014) opines an intergovernmental relation as a mechanism to provide understanding, cordiality, balance and collaboration between and among units of government, and between government and citizenry.

Finally, despite of the variance of expressions intergovernmental relations can be summed up as any kind of relations (formal or informal, coercive or cooperative, horizontal or vertical, sectorial and non-sectorial) between the central and substituent states, among the substituent states themselves, may be between the central government and local governments or between the regional states and local governments with in federal or other forms of state arrangements.

2. Why the IGR has become a necessity in [multinational] federal system?

Elazar (1984:2) characterizes federalism as the mode of political organization that joins together isolated polities inside an overarching political framework by dispersing power among general and constituent governments in a way outlined to secure the presence and authority of each. This linear approach influenced the logic of federal structure. Hence as Fenna (2012: 753) states, their fundamental conviction was that “the two imperative levels of government would work intents and purposes autonomously within the arrangement circles assigned to them by the parts and commitments assigned within the constitution.

Though it is conventionally defined as a form of government where the powers and functions of the levels of government are constitutionally delineated and principled in a way that no level of the government is the subordinate of another, it became clear that this separation of activities through a coordinate form of government was unrealistic and unlikely to last. Having the constitutionally defined power was not enough to indicate that the federal system could automatically operate without making any relations as theoretically divided while practically unified under the territorial sovereignty of one overarching state. This is mainly we are talking about federalism not about confederation.

This was realized due to fact that, as governments expanded in estimate and scope amid the twentieth century, modern issues emerged that the first constitutions had not expected. Approach ranges that had once in the past been seen as nearby things got to be things of national social, financial or natural centrality or at slightest things of political and approach intrigued to national governments as Philmore (2013:228,230) argues.

Concerning this necessities and complexities, Saunders Cheryl (2003:1) insists that; in the twentieth century, the experience of federations all through the world appeared that anything the hypothesis, it is not one or the other

conceivable nor in a few cases alluring for part governments in a government nation to work out their powers totally in segregation from each other. However carefully powers are distributed between the spheres of government, substantial interaction and cooperation are inescapable, since of the complexity of the social organization, expanded financial integration, and the exigencies of legislative issues. Thus this developed the allegory of federalism as a marble cake instead of as a layer cake.” Moreover Fenna (2012: 754) as cited in Philmore (2013:228) identified the reasons for increasing necessity of intergovernmental relations as a result of affirmative and detrimental spillovers in regions like transport, water, the environment, and commerce direction implied that parts and obligations between levels of government were not clear cut which IGR of a few sorts were required to set up policy positions and accountabilities as well as regulatory conventions between governments.

These developments and necessities revealed that federalism as a commonplace thought - not more than an apparatus unit of machinery of government for overseeing territorially complex centrifugal and centripetal forces in political systems (Chiamogu2020:2). This is to denote that federalism is a mere principle of governance defining power structure and describing decentralization. So, it needs the conduits of interaction between the central and regional entities for its smooth running. The functionality of federal system among other things can be influenced by the level, type, institutions and process of intergovernmental relations. Accordingly, Kena D. (2017:126) argues *“The federal-states intergovernmental relations have a direct impact on the operation of the federal system and very important in understanding the operational part of a federal system since it tends to alter or entirely change the constitutional division of power. This is so because intergovernmental relations are inherent in federations which give life to the federal system through practice after the constitution divides powers between orders of government. Some federations deal it in their constitution while others develop through legislation. Some rely on an institution that manages these relations.”*

Correspondingly, Poirier and Cheryl (2015:3,5) pinned that “intergovernmental relations are processes are the lifeblood of real-life federalism(p5) presupposing are an integral and significant part of every federal system; a form of oil of friction in any federal machine.p3” In line to this, Villiers and Sindane (2011:3) expounded the value of IGR stating it as “the oil of the engine’ that lubricate the frictions to be channeled into positive energy and movement and it is the unseen layer that allows the various parts of government to operate, to reach their potential and to serve the interests of the whole.” In similar sense it is valued as the ‘glue’ that holds the levels of the government together (Ugwu Ogbu and Fred Ezeh (2019:3, Freinkman, L (2007:17), Ofilia Saavedra & Kailash (2002:10), Paulsen (2016)) As a result of this fact, Nigussie Afesha (2015:343) argues that “intergovernmental cooperation is both an inevitable and desirable feature of federal political systems.”

Consensually, IDEA (2019:6) urges that “ensuring positive intergovernmental relations in a federal system,

which is critical since cooperative intergovernmental relationships between levels of government help to build a spirit of partnership that is central to make federalism work” Subsequently, these arguments affirm that the operation of federal system could healthily run as long as there are intergovernmental coordination mechanisms, which can bring together the highest executive of the federal and regional governments, or serve as a platform for coordination among the regions.

Moreover, based on different literatures the reasons behind the inevitability of IGR in [multinational] federal system can be reviewed as follows.

2.1. Efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery

Kenna D (2014:1) associated the origin of the IGR with strong concern for the effective delivery of public services to clients. In like manner, Kabau, (2016), insisted it as basic for the effective and proficient benefit delivery by governments, as an critical component of any political framework with more than one level of government. Moreover, Niekerk and Bunding-Venter (2017) acclaimed that the point of intergovernmental relations is to empower the government activities, basically benefit delivery through cooperative energy, effectiveness and adequacy in delivering supervisions to maintain democracy and reinforce delivery capacity across all circles of government for the common good.

By the same token, D. K. Manyala (2021:19) argues that, in federalism, service delivery is assessable from; political stability, fiscal accountability, economic growth and administrative cooperation, which can only be achieved through sound and effective inter-governmental relations. Akin to this, Akume (2014:174) stated the role of IGR as a mechanism of improving the governance by fostering effective and efficient delivery of public service.

Therefore, one of the aims of governmental relations in federal system as Ugwu Ogbu and Fred (2019:3) argued is primarily to enable service delivery through synergy, effectiveness and efficiency, to sustain democracy and strengthen delivery capacity across all spheres of government for the common good.

2.2. Communication and Information Sharing for policy making and implementation

Coming from the experience of federations all through the world, it is neither possible nor –in a few cases– desirable for member governments in a federal nation to exercise their powers totally in segregation from each other as Saunders Cheryl (2003:1) contends or nor the dispersion of power in a federal system is based on the presumption that the subject of government action is disconnected from each other as Niguse Asefa (2016:349) argues.

In reality, there are things that are particularly given to different levels of government and where they ought to be directed by distinctive and competing orders of government, each level of government carries out its functions freely, in any case, in the event that a given work needs joint arms of both levels of government, they can work together. Alongside desires of joint exertion, the federal government has the obligation to see that such laws are executed all through in one way or the other” (Assefa Fisha 2009:353).

According to Nigussie Afesha (2015:342), IGRs regulate and enhances communication between the institutions of the two levels of government despite of their defined jurisdictions. In face of this, as Paulsen (2016:59) puts, the interaction is not limited to the center-state or vis versa communication reminding for the vitality of horizontal IGR among the member states. Through these communications “they share information, pool power and resources, and implement cooperative arrangements that determine who should do what” as inscribed by Poirier and Cheryl (2015). Besides this as Niguse Aseffa (2015:346) argues, having successful and effective intergovernmental relations will offer assistance to attain, inter alia, approach coordination, discussion, sharing of experience between the levels of governments and among states/units/regions. In like manner in a nutshell, most federal frameworks have created a few kinds of informal and formal structural forms to facilitate and encourage inter-governmental relations.”

Thereupon, the purpose of a system of intergovernmental relations is to promote co-operative decision-making; to ensure the execution of policies through the effective flow of communication; to co-ordinate priorities and budgets across different sectors and the prevention of disputes and conflicts between spheres of government (*White Paper on Local Government, 1998:38*).

According to Hanson Russell (2016:29) “intergovernmental policy making is needed due to the fact that, today’s social and economic problems outspan the local, state, and national boundaries in a situation where the solution could not be given by a single level of government. Such problems cannot be ameliorated by one size fits all policies directed from above. Nor can they be solved at the local level without significant financial, technical, and legal assistance from the top. Intergovernmental systems of governance offer flexibility in meeting complex challenges insofar as they produce general policies that can be adapted to fit local circumstances, assuming governments cooperate.

It is therefore Ayana (2019:19) argues intergovernmental relations are the responses that have been developed to facilitate cooperative policy making and implementation among divided governments within federal system. While doing so it needs to consider that the IGR doesn’t necessarily meaning that the states should execute the federal policy at the cost of their competences. Rather, as Kenna (2017:140) forwarded it is to establish the institutional framework that networks the center and the regions without jeopardizing the competencies of the orders of the government.

2.3. Responding to the changing circumstances

The world is changing instantly that the roles, competencies, responsibilities and powers discerned for the either levels of the governments are may be wading, merging, or changing as response to alarmingly changing circumstances like population, industrialization, urbanization, agriculture, natural resources, transportation and communication and changes in social outlook. Accordingly, as Villiers and Sindane (2011:11) ascertained,

“In recent years the changing circumstances have put pressure on the various levels of government to increase

cooperation, especially when it comes to economic planning and management, the provision of social services and other areas where common standards are expected across the nation.”

As proposed by Lowatcharin.*et.al.*(2019:50) “responding to these changing conditions, public entities seek solutions that involve complex linkages of shared purposes and organizational resources with other public and non-public entities.” Thus, as substantiated by Niguse (2015:347) intergovernmental relation can serve as a means to adjust changing circumstances without having to resort to formal constitutional revisions. There's rule of participation inferred from the concept of federalism that seem overcome gaps in power disseminations. The aim of intergovernmental relation is to create adjustment within the existing constitutional distribution of power instead of going through a thorough constitutional alteration process, particularly where the formal constitutional correction procedures are unbending and unworkable.

Therefore, in federal system the need for adapting to the changing social, economic, technological and political situations have been prompting the cooperation of the central and constituent governments.

2.4. Conflict Resolution of jurisdictions

According to Niguse Asefa (2015:346), it is inconceivable to have a watertight conveyance of administrative or authoritative jurisdiction among governments or to avoid overlaps of functions. Shared programs are unavoidable, and intergovernmental cooperation is one of the instruments of relieving strife within the course of such programs. In this sense, IGR mechanisms are seen as instruments that encourage transaction on things that include difference. Such interactions create common understanding between the federal and territorial governments. Such kind of exchanges between governments may be implemented in order to manage (possibly, even to prevent) potential conflicts over the formal distribution of competences, and to overcome them through political rather than judicial means as underlined by Razetti (2014:21)

But these all is not to say that the intergovernmental relations are (should be) just cooperative and conflicts would never to happen. As it remained inevitable to run the federal system without IGR, again it remained inescapable that inter-governmental relations have never operated without some conflict” as worded by Chima *et.al.*(2018:16). Linking to this, as Nweke (2006, p.46) pointed intergovernmental conflict develops “when the process of the relationship among the tiers of government that possess a varying degree of authority and jurisdiction degenerate.” Additionally, Olugbemi, (2000, p.113) perceives that “the transactional process among units of government isn't continuously smooth and cooperative, and without a doubt, those inter-jurisdictional clashes appear to be the rule instead of the exception. To the opposite to the esteemed role of intergovernmental relations in federations, there are scholars giving rise to emphasis to the competitive relations. Among them, Color (1990) and Kenyon and Kincaid (1991), have emphasized the significance of competition between federal and state governments and among state governments. Breton (1985) as cited in R. watts (1998:130) has indeed gone as distant as to

contend that citizens' inclinations are likely to be better served by such competition than by “collusion” between governments.

3. IGR in multinational federalism

Among other things according to R. watts (1967:11) “the advancement of common confidence and trust among the diverse groups inside a federation and an accentuation upon the spirit of tolerance and compromise has been similarly vital for the successful operation of federations. Specifically in multinational federalism where the regional constituent units are organized based on the ethnic line, it remains troubling the successful functioning of the federal system in absence of intergovernmental relations. In touch to this, R. Watts (1998:131) argues that; cultural differences inside federations have been much more profound and have indeed come to the level of ethnic nationalism. As a result of this, modern world has been stamped not as it were by worldwide pressures for bigger financial and political units, but also in certain regions by solid pressures for ethnic nationalism. Hence, the joining together of constituent units that are based on distinctive ethnic autonomies into a few shape of federal framework appears to be one way of containing nationalist pressures for political fragmentation.

This is mainly because the units and constituents of such societies adhere to their groups and reinforce their exclusivity thereby seeking respect for their local autonomy. In that order, political elites take advantage of remarkable primordial cleavages to advance attuned group behavior that promote centrifugal and divisive tendencies in the state” as cautioned by Chiamogu (2020:1)

Thus, in multinational federalism the IGR components ought to be fortified in order to recoil extreme ethnic fans, create common understanding, the feeling of representativeness and association. One of the ways of doing is usually through the shared-rule dimension of federalism. According to (IDEA 2019:9), the shared rule is the way in which the subnational units are given acknowledgment and included in central institutions and decision-making forms; this will improve a feeling of national solidarity and possession over state affairs. Shared rule can be designed in a number of ways, either through representation in several branches of government (executive, the judiciary or most frequently, it takes the shape of representation in within the moment chamber.

Substantiating this, Yonatan (2018:70) stresses for the right of the ethnic groups to manage own affairs, according to which a group is allowed to exercise some form of political and/or territorial autonomy, and the co-management of the multi-ethnic society, which among other things, could require the representation of the different ethnic group in important national institutions. Under these circumstances, the functioning of the federal system specially in multinational system can be conditioned by the extent to which the ethnic groups consider themselves as properly represented, the policies and programs are collaboratively digested and agreed upon, the conflicts of jurisdictions are adjusted and diversified needs and interested are properly accommodated. This is to reconsider that unless there are frameworks that bind the operations of the federal

and regional or local in vertical dimension or horizontally together, the federal system will remain lethargic.

4. CONCLUSION

Intergovernmental relations have become the glues that join the central government with the territorial constituents and the local governments with the regions or the centers according to the instruments particularly designed by each government state with its individual motivation of organizing the IGR. This is often not to conclude that the interactions between the substances of the government framework might as it were be conducted by the formalized institutions as there is colossal way of interactions between the bodies. For the most part in older federations where the constitutions of the time planned to constrain the powers of the federal government, the values of the casual relations are fundamental.

In federal system the level of the interactions between the member states and the central government has become a determinate factor of the healthy functioning of the federal systems as a result of whose absence the federal system could be managed to blip. This mainly because the efficacy of the federal system to achieved its supposed purpose may be determined by its ability to respond to the ever arising global and national circumstances, deliver public services efficiently and effectively, resolve the conflicts of jurisdictions and make and implement policies in cooperative manner exerting lower power. This cannot happen because of the establishment of the federal system alone. Rather it needs the development of mutual faith and trust among the different groups within a federation and an emphasis upon the spirit of tolerance and compromise for the effective operation of federations.

Along to this, it needs the greater considerations when the federalism is being operated in multinational settings where local/ constituent arrangements are based on the primordial ethnic formulas. In this kind of federal system, to make the federal system the working machine, it needs the process and mechanisms that bind the different groups together. To do so, there must be an environment where each ethnic group thinks they are represented in different federal institutions.

Finally, establishment of federal system doesn't make any effective sense in a condition where the center and the states seeing each other as constitutionally autonomous without having a ground of cooperation. Thus, intergovernmental relations (IGR) are viewed as a central feature of any federal system without which the federal system is likely to falter.

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