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Civic Political Culture, Participatory Governance and Political Development: An X-ray of its Interdependent Context

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Abstract

This study x-rayed the significance of civic political culture on participatory governance and its potentialities on political development. It adopted theoretical postulations in analyzing the subject matter. The analytical model showed a diagrammatic presentation of the relationship among participant culture features, elements of participatory governance and its effects on political development. Literatures were largely drawn from secondary sources. The content(s) of data gathered were appropriately analysed. This study, therefore, concluded that civic political culture has direct significance on participatory governance: it makes the creation of law

and social order to be people-driven; and enhances citizens' involvement in the political self-determination.

Key Words: Participatory Governance, Civic Political Culture and Political Development

Introduction

According to Almond and Verba (1963), civic political culture – which is otherwise known as participant culture – is described as an acceptance of the state authorities and political belief and participation in civic duties by the citizens. Remarkably, participant culture becomes crucial, but a missing culture in civic life consequent upon the following factors: parochial political behaviour by majority of the citizens, lack of civic cooperation, military rule and problem of leadership amongst others (Abutudu, 1995). These factors have brought about poor acceptance of the governing authorities and low level of civic participation, thus impinging upon yielding result of the democratic system of governance. Similarly, these factors contribute to the growing disconnect between the government and the governed; discourage the act of governing in a deliberative and collaborative manner thereby weakening democracy and governance in all of its components.

The significance of this study is based on the argument that participatory governance emphasizes civic or public engagement in all aspects of governmental affairs with a view to taking cognisance of individual demands or group demands (policy input) in public policy making, and converting these demands into government policies and actions (policy output), as well as resolving the conflicts emanating in the process so as to guarantee social welfare, economic development and political stability which are fundamental in any political system.

Relative to the foregoing discussion, elements of participatory governance become quiescent and latent without participant culture, because neither parochial nor subject political cultures signify civic engagement in public affairs. Essentially, civic political culture tends to be a critical factor for participatory governance at local level and political development at large due to its cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations towards both the input and output aspects of the political system.

Study Design

This study is a descriptive research by purpose. In the word of Ojo (2005), a descriptive research is one in which its basic objective is to describe phenomena. Best (1970) analysed further that this type of research is concerned with explaining “the conditions or relationships among phenomena ... effects that are being felt by one variable or the other.” In line with the two (2) scholarly positions, this study, therefore, x-rays the importance of civic political culture on participatory governance at local level, as well

as its potential contribution to political development in Nigeria-as it will be applicable to other developing countries of the world.

This study provided theoretical postulations in analysing the notion of participatory governance, and linking the research problem (civic political culture) to the framework of participatory governance. It further hypothesizes that the participant culture seems proficient to lay off the affective factors anguishing the practice of participatory governance.

In a methodological sense, this study is designed to provide a vivid expression of activities relating the variables; showcasing the significance of one variable to another; as well as their intended effects. Variables, in this regard, are the elements of the two (2) political concepts that informed this study: which, at the same time, are the samples to be studied. The qualitative nature of this study makes it to draw literatures largely from secondary sources of data collection. The model of analysis provides an explanatory scheme which gives a diagrammatic presentation of the effective relationship of participant culture features on the elements of participatory governance and the resultant effects of the relationship on the political development.

Theoretical Framework and Analysis

In contrast to the free-market economic reforms of the 1990s, Kelly (2011, p. 9) “maintained that most social policies now stress the value of participatory governance as both a means and end to individual and community empowerment”. As a result, elements of participatory governance have now dominated discussions in both practising and academics worlds of socio-economic development. The significance of participatory governance lies in its capability to increase the level of citizen input and local control over social policy areas such as: participatory budgeting, policy design, programme implementation, project evaluation, citizenry needs and security.

Participatory governance has its etymological roots in democracy. Fischer (2012) explained that participatory governance is a variant or subset of governance theory which puts emphasis on democratic engagement, in particular through deliberative practices. On the other hand, democratic theory is one of the theoretical propositions justifying governance at local level. This theory, according to Ola (1984), advocated more involved form of citizen participation, and creating opportunities for citizens to make meaningful contribution to policy making and political process. As such, there is complementary relationship between participatory governance and democracy

Review of Literature

The literature on participatory governance theory assumes that deliberation is key to effective decision-making. Sen (1999) argued that deliberation or open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent plays three major roles in development: participatory

governance is a direct end in itself (expanding the freedom to participate); that it plays an instrumental role by communicating the needs of the people; and that deliberation also plays a constructive role by promoting a collective understanding through open dialogue and debate. Fearon (1998) argued that deliberation reveals private information, lessens the impact of bounded rationality, encourages the public justification of demands or claims, and builds policy legitimacy among citizens. Notably, participatory governance is mechanism to promote individual freedom and build group consensus with high priority on bipartisan cooperation.

A review of the works of eminent scholars on participatory governance theory assumes that the subject matter empowers citizens directly through their participation, as well as in improving social service delivery by tailoring policies to meet local needs (Elster, 1998; Sen, 1999). Participatory governance improved the level and quality of citizen participation in large numbers under participatory budgeting in Kerala, India (Echeverri-Gent, 1992; Heller 1995, 2000; Chibber, 1999) and Porto Alegre, Brazil (Abers, 1998; Santos, 1998; Baiocchi 2001, 2005), as well as in community policing (Fung, 2001). Some studies provided its evidence of success in social service provision (King & Ozler, 1999: 24; Baiocchi, 2001: 48; Parker, 2005). Avritzer's (2009) analysis represented that participatory governance delivers better access to social services where government and citizens already agree (civic cooperation). Deductively, civic cooperation - as one of the requisites of participant culture - becomes imperative to the effectiveness of participatory governance.

However, despite the intrinsic desirability of citizen participation under participatory governance, some scholars, according to Kelly (2009), have argued that well-intentioned reforms to empower citizens may actually yield harmful consequences in a heterogenic state, for example, Nigeria. Moreso, it cannot be introduced where there is too much political contention and military rule. Many studies of citizen participation under participatory governance also demonstrate that 'illiterate' citizens will be less likely to participate due to information asymmetries and higher opportunity costs (Henig, 1994; Stone, 1998; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999). In another perspective, some argued that participatory governance may actually undermine empowerment by providing opportunities for elite capture of local institutions, corruption, the perpetuation of inequality and disillusionment with democratic practices (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Stokes, 1998; & Stone, 1998).

Studying both successes and failures of participatory governance, it is noted that, in theory, participatory governance should provide more efficient and effective social services delivery because it helps in adjusting policies to meet local needs; gives people voice in the system; and, thus, legitimizes new rules and procedures (Gambetta, 1998). Particularly, participatory governance does emphasize 'moderateness' in citizen

participation with high premium on bipartisan cooperation, true leadership with participatory vision and adequate subsidies in form of technical, expertise, material resources and oversight necessary to reinforce high quality of citizen participation.

Although, greater inclusion is desirable for directly empowering individuals, indirect empowerment through better social policy outcomes may be achieved just as well—if not better—through more moderate levels of citizen participation balanced with centralized, technical expertise, material resources and oversight (Akinola, 2003). This is not to say that participatory governance is too idealistic and should be more elitist. It is only to suggest that there is need for a balance between decentralized and centralized decision-making so as to improve social service delivery under participatory governance. Moreover, this balance depends on local needs, local capacity and the availability of external subsidies, and this balance will likely shift over time (Kelly, 2011).

Drawing inferences from the above discourse, there are requisite factors which facilitate the process of participatory governance, these are: orientation towards political system in a broad sense; pride in the aspects of one's nation; ability to voice their needs in the system; active participation in governmental activities, such as: elections and payment of tax; fair treatment from government authorities; membership and tolerance among the political associations; as well as, civic trust and cooperation. These aforementioned factors, according to Almond and Verba (1963), are listed as the characteristic features of civic political culture. Markedly, the essentials of civic culture provide congenial ground for the process of participatory governance, thus, participant culture has direct and significance relationship on the subject matter.

The term 'civic political culture' encompasses the fundamental values, knowledge, attitudes and orientation of the citizens that give form and effective substance to the political structure and the process. However, civic culture is the combination of all the three forms of political culture, although it dwells extensively more on civic political culture (participant) than the subject and parochial forms. Participant culture is antonymous to the parochial political culture; while it also eulogizes cognitive, affective and evaluative attitudes towards both input and output aspects of the political system, rather than subjectivity. Civic political culture is, therefore, a beneficial orientation and worthy of imbibing by citizens in a political system because it enables the citizens to shape the fate of the nation's socio-economic and political life. The intention of this paper is to x-ray the significance of civic political culture on participatory governance of the developing countries of the world that are facing the challenges of socio-economic and political developments. It is assumed that the features of participant culture would facilitate socio-economic changes and advance the trend of political development.

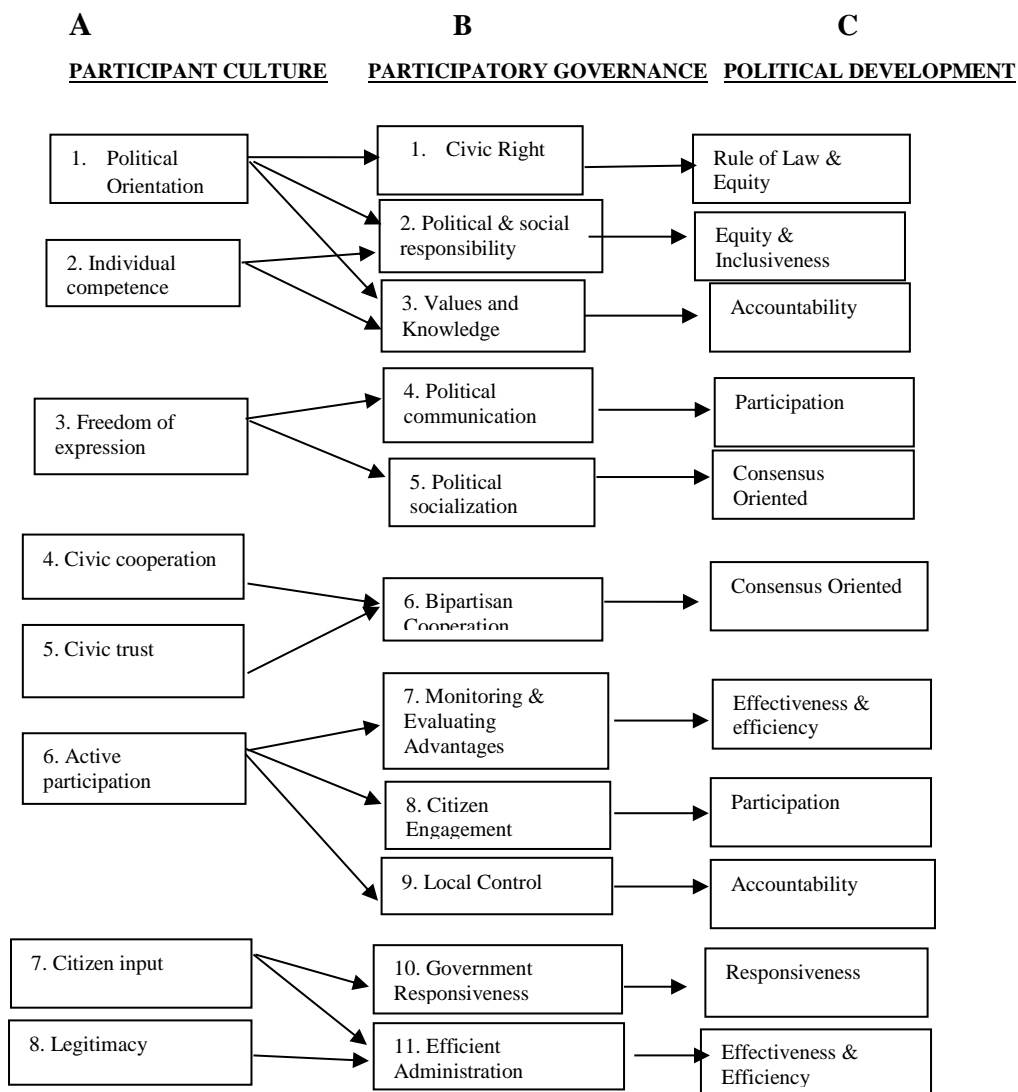
Anton (2011), in his writings, maintained that civic political culture would offer the best foundation for democracy and its practice. Various studies have shown that participant culture would enhance governments' responsiveness to the present and future needs of the society, exercise prudence in policy-setting and decision-making (Akinola & Akutson, 2000; and Popoola, 2013). It creates a platform for broad socio-political excellence as it facilitates equity and inclusiveness in the art of governance, designs the governance process that serve the interests of citizenry; as well as ensuring that the process produce best of results with high emphasis on government accountability and transparency. However, criticism of this doctrine relies excessively on non-psychological factors - such as: individual attitude, interest and sentiment - which, in critics' views, are inherent problems in any political system (Chechetto-Salles & Geyer, 2006). Nevertheless, this criticism is not enough to wither away the potentiality of this doctrine as capable of enhancing good governance and political development. This is because; civic political culture connotes citizen participation, political awareness and consciousness. Participation by citizens will provide opportunity for them to express and understand the respective non-psychological factors and capture all considerations involved in making certain that citizen interests are addressed and reflected in policy initiatives.

Several studies on the tenets of participant culture has made case for its capability to facilitate citizens' consciousness and awareness about public affairs; enabling them to voice their needs; involving in a range of social accountability practices such as participatory budgeting, monitoring of public expenditures, evaluating public services; as well as engaging public actors and demand for accountability (Adesopo, 2014; & Oyovbaire, 2007). Moreover, its emphasis on participation makes it to be primarily significant to participatory governance, the latter which in turn, is a key cornerstone to good governance (Governance Pro, 2010).

Political development, on the other hand, clearly arises from and affects individual, cultural, institutional forms (Chilton, 2004) and regularizes the patterns of social interactions between government and the governed thus leading to changes in power structure and process. The process of political development requires not only institutions but also particular individual competencies. Pye (1966) reiterated that individual proficiency not that of institutions was more important in the process of political development. Political development, thus, requires individual competency, participation, political orientation, and collaborative measures in making micro-macro connection in which proficient individuals and institutions appear as coordinate elements. Deducting from the above analysis, all required instruments in the process of political development are requisite traits of civic political culture: it therefore becomes a critical factor in political development.

To suit this text, this paper crops element of good governance as indices of political development, which of course, if these elements are identified in a country, one can relatively say that, such country is experiencing political development. The section below analyses how the effects of participant culture on participatory governance propel political development.

MODEL OF ANALYSIS (Fig. 1)



Source: Authors

The diagram above presents how the features of participant culture bring about participatory governance, and in turn, enhance political development. As shown in the diagram, A1 has effects on B1, B2 and B3. This is because political orientation is, at periphery, an attitude of the people towards the political management of the society; and it has effects on upholding the civic rights; understanding and performing socio-political responsibility by the citizens (Dal Seung, 2002). Also, citizens' values and knowledge has roots in their political orientation. Hence, attitude of the people must defy from being 'parochial' rather 'civic' towards the political system so as to be committed towards their government; having an in-depth understanding of their own roles in public affairs as well as public expectations from government. Political and social responsibility will enhance equity and inclusiveness; values and knowledge enable, at least, the citizens to engage public actors so as to be accountable; civic rights would, in practice, give room for orderliness in political participation as well as conduct of governing bodies. Besides, A2 has complementary effects on B2 and B3 with the same resultant effect on political development.

In addition, A3 is a fundamental rule of democracy. This feat is acknowledged by participant culture as capable of having effects on B4 and B5. In this regard, A3 invariably provides an avenue for the citizens to express and transmit their ideas, opinions and knowledge into the public affairs, thus enabling government to design peoples' driven policies. B5 exclusively concerns how political values, knowledge and identities are acquired about the political process so as to adapt valuably into the political system; and to willingly accept their duties in the political scheme. Hence, Anton (2011) is, for that reason, of the view that political socialization plays important role in creating responsible citizens with strong sense of affiliation to their political system with substantial level of patriotism.

The diagram also presents A4 and A5 as having joint effects on B6. Cooperation is a vital element in any organization. Public goals are not likely to be achieved, when there is dearth of cooperation among individuals, groups and institutions. Its dearth, one might say, underlines the reason for the growing disconnect between the people and government in most third-world countries, Nigeria inclusive. Participant culture, in its character, enjoins civic cooperation and trust among individuals as well as institutions. This feature would, to a large extent, become useful to the society, when any of the citizens attain public office or participate in socio-economic and political functions of the society. Civic cooperation and trust, therefore, enables individuals, civic groups and public institutions to harmonize contending issues in favour of all parties; the element of trust, in this sense, gives room for representatives to get mandates, enjoy support as well as legitimacy from the people; and the end result is that public actions and decisions are consensus oriented – which is an index of political development.

Furthermore, A6 has significant effects on B7, B8 and B9 under participatory governance. Various scholars in the field of governance have underscored participatory method for political development (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999; Okojie, 2009; Mapuva, 2011; and Popoola, 2013). This is because, it offers citizens the opportunity to engage, monitor and evaluate public policies and actions, as a result, making governing authorities to be accountable and responsible. Moreover, A7 has dual effects on B10 and B11, while A8 has singular effect on B11 leading to effectiveness and efficiency. To this end, this section has attempted to x-ray the significance of civic political culture on participatory governance as a critical factor for political development.

Concluding Note

Strategies of participatory governance, according to Elster (1998), assumed that citizens are more likely to care about a policy, if they are directly involved in the decisions surrounding it. Exceptionally, Participatory governance plays a direct, instrumental and constructive role in holistic development: It is a direct end in itself (expanding the freedom to participate); plays an instrumental role by communicating the needs of the people; and that deliberation also plays a constructive role by promoting a collective understanding through open dialogue and debate (Sen, 1999; Moynihan, 2003; & Popoola, 2013). More specifically, Fearon (1998) argued that deliberation reveals private information, lessens the impact of bounded rationality, encourages the public justification of demands or claims, builds policy legitimacy among citizens, improves the moral or intellectual qualities of the participants, and it is the right thing regardless of the consequences of the discussion. Thus, deliberation, understood as open dialogue and debate to reach a group consensus on the common good, serves as the ideal type for how citizens should best participate in order to promote individual freedom through participatory governance. Above all, the character of participant culture, in the regard, becomes significant, because its features comprise of key essentials in facilitating political participation, communication and deliberation.

This paper argued that the character of active participation, which is a hallmark of governance, endows citizens with the opportunity to dictate, monitor and evaluate government actions, activities and decisions, which in turn, facilitate efficiency and effectiveness. Also, local control is an enablement of participatory governance: it presumably improves social and economic efficiency by tailoring policies and decisions to meet local needs as well as empowering stakeholders at local level thereby enhancing political self-determination. Besides, it makes the creation of law and social order to be people driven; enables citizens to control their leaders and ousting them without the need for a 'rascal' revolution such as *Boko Haram* in Nigeria. In essence,

imbibing the participant culture by the citizens could be more of a vital mechanism for socio-political reformation.

This paper extolled the virtues of civic political culture in a political system. It therefore concludes that participant culture is worthy of imbibing by citizens in order to enhance local democracy and political development at large. Participatory governance, on the other hand, needs to be adopted by the governing authorities so as to enjoy efficient public management. Relatively, these attributes seem to possess the impetus of heightening political orientation towards the system; strengthening the capacity of individuals, civic groups and public institutions on societal issues; as well as fostering civic cooperation and trust among them.

Therefore, in striving towards political development, citizens should, as a matter of importance, imbibe civic political culture in order to ensure local control, inclusiveness, equity and participation in public affairs, thereby holding government accountable. While, government should, as a matter of necessity, adopt participatory governance as a political mechanism so as to enjoy legitimacy, citizen input and civic cooperation. Above all, rule of law and act of constitutionalism should be an enabling guide for all conducts.

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