



# **PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA'S CROSS-ETHNIC STATES OF IMO AND AKWA IBOM: TURNING THE LENS OF DEMOCRATIZATION ON PARTICIPATION<sup>+</sup>**

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**Abstract:** While it remains fanciful for most countries to claim or aspire to be democracies (as government of the people and by the people), not much scholarly effort has been devoted to finding out if the people in ethnically/culturally diverse Third World countries, participate and/or desire to participate in governance. Assuming that participatory governance is more likely to be a viable system of governance for attainment of sustainable development, this paper examines the relationship between participatory governance and sustainable development in two cross-ethnic states of Nigeria – Imo and Akwa Ibom: (1) To find out if and why the people desire participatory governance, and if there is any ethnic variation in their perceptions; (2) To determine how the people perceive the potentials of participatory governance in the achievement of sustainable development. Using descriptive-survey and correlational designs, the study found that (1) Across ethnic lines, people desire participatory democracy/governance because the existing representative democracy is perceived to be bad/corrupt/corruptive; and (2) Participatory governance is perceived to have potentials/preferred more for attainment of sustainable development at the local/community level. This potential for sustainable human and environmental development is perceived more in Imo than in Akwa Ibom. This paper therefore recommends: (1) Expanding the scope of this study nation-wide, and (2) that policy efforts should be put in place to establish community-grown participatory system of governance (COMPAG) at the local government levels to set the pace for Nigeria's chances in attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2016-2030).

**Keywords:** Democratization, Participatory Democracy, Participatory Governance, Sustainable Development, Cross-Ethnic States.

## **Introduction**

For both developed and developing nations, democracy is commonly associated with elections for the development of representative democracies. While it remains fanciful for most countries of the contemporary world to claim or aspire to be democracies (government of the people and by the people), scholarly efforts are growing in the study of participatory democracies in developing countries.

Following the events since World War 11, when Almond and Verba (1963) saw sufficient reason to worry about the future of democracy, they asserted that the New World political culture must be a political culture of participation.

According to this idea, emerging nations are presented with two different but equally appealing models of the modern participatory state: the democratic and the totalitarian. The democratic state offers the ordinary man the

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opportunity to take part in the political decision process as an influential citizen, while the totalitarian offers him the role of the “participant-subject” (Almond and Verba, 1963). In other words, while the **participant-citizen** develops for a democratic state, a participant-subject develops for an authoritarian/totalitarian state (Unanka, 2001)

Thus, all emerging nations on the path of democratization are presented with two different but equally appealing models of democracy – representative democracy and participatory democracy. While representative democracies are products of elections and their associated corruptive non-democratic malpractices and controversies, participatory democracies are products of an emerging civic political culture which develops the participant-citizen for the attainment of true democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

#### **The Problem**

Nigeria, as an ethnically/culturally-diverse developing nation is not exempted from the raging wind of democratization and consequently, not exempted from questions involving citizens’ participation in governance for good governance and sustainable development.

Governance has been categorized in various forms – good and bad, democratic and authoritarian. The main declared objectives of these governance types, are the maintenance of the common good -- a just and egalitarian society and the overall development of the society.

Nigerian governments at national, state and local government levels, desperate to achieve greater economic and social well-being for the citizens, have variously claimed to embrace good governance and democracy for the achievement of sustainable development. These claims are prompted because the right of citizens to participate in governance as evidenced in Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights asserts that “Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity ... To take part

in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives...” (UN, 2008). As a result, the growing emphasis on good governance and democracy as the foundation for achievement of sustainable development has generated widespread scholarly interests on how to truly democratize governance for effective and sustainable development (Osmani,, 2008).

All through the beginning of the twenty first century, a paradigm shift is occurring in the way in which government, business and community sectors relate to each other, challenging each to redefine their respective roles and responsibilities, and suggesting a possible participatory framework for progressive collaborative arrangements (Edwards, 2001). In spite of the efforts of national and state governments at adopting or claiming inclusiveness or other variants of participatory governance policy, sustainable development continues to elude them. This suggests either that they have not actually applied the appropriate participatory governance system or the people do not want to participate in governance.

In a relatively recent study on participatory governance in the South East (Ibo) of Nigeria, Unanka (2016) was limited in scope in his survey of 485 residents of three urban state capitals of Owerri (Imo State), Awka (Anambra State) and Enugu (Enugu State), which found the eagerness of the people to participate in governance but failed to find evidence of any functional participatory governance system that is truly rooted in the tenets of participatory democracy for the realization of sustainable development goals.

This paper therefore focuses on finding out if the people, across ethnic lines (in ethnically/culturally diverse Nigerian states) participate or desire to participate in governance and if they perceive such participation of any significance for the achievement of national development. In examining the relationship between participatory governance and sustainable development in two cross-ethnic states of Nigeria – Imo and Akwa Ibom, the **objectives of this paper** are: (1) To find out if and why the people desire participatory



governance, and if there is any ethnic variation in their perceptions; (2) To determine how the people (across ethnic lines) perceive the potentials of participatory governance in the achievement of sustainable development at the various levels of government.

In pursuing these objectives, this paper assumes that participatory governance is more likely to be a viable system of governance for attainment of sustainable development at the local/community level of government, if it is not a top-down (imposition) on the people.

Following this assumption, this study is justified because, given that the politically developed countries of the world must have attained Almond and Verba's (1963) participant political culture and the people (citizens) assumedly participate in governance, discussion of the democratization process in the developing nations require turning the lens not only to citizens' involvement in elections for the development of representative democracies, but more importantly to their participation in governance for the development of participatory democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

To be sure, studies have reported that direct community participation have improved the efficiency of irrigation systems, water, sanitation and public work projects in many parts of the developing countries (e.g., Chambers, 1988; Ascher and Healy, 1990; Ostrom et al, 1994; Manikutty, 1997, 1998; Adato et al., 1999, 2003; UN, 2008). Over the course of the post-World War II development epoch, donor agencies and developing countries in many parts of the world launched many programs and projects embracing a participatory component of one sort or another (Blair, 2008), viz: India's Community Development (CD) Program & the Panchayati Raj, South Africa's post democratic transition Public Works Program, The Water Aid's work with communities around Hitosa in Ethiopia, Participatory Budgeting in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, The People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning (The Campaign) in Kerala-India, and the Participatory Budgeting in Fissel, Senegal.

However, evidences of participatory governance notwithstanding, community participation does not automatically enhance efficiency, as participation can in some instances be injurious to technical efficiency (Khaja, 2004). Success of participatory governance may depend, not only on how well a society deals with three distinct but inter-related gaps that stand in the way of effective participation – viz., the capacity gap, the incentive gap and the power gap (Osmani, 2008), but very importantly on the structure of the participation.

In the following section of this paper, we shall conceptualize and discuss our choice of relevant theories that support and also explain the relationship between participatory democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### CONCEPTUALIZATION

The concept of **governance** reflects the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic, political and social resources for development purposes. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) states that:

Governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

Governance is not restricted to governmental machineries alone. In this sense, governance is a democratic process as includes citizen participation, which refers to the involvement of the citizens of a state in the selection and election of their political leaders as well as their contribution in formulation and implementation of development policies (Oyeneye et. al, 1995). To Okolie (2004), citizen participation implies the expressive right to rule, freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of



communication, influence, decision making process and right to social justice.

Davies (1963) perceives participatory governance “as taking part in the making of the basic decisions as to what are the common goals of one’s society and as to the best ways to move towards these goals.” Charturvedi (2006) stresses that participatory governance “involves the deliberate, systematic mobilization of constituent groups around issues and problems of common concern, the organization of fora for the expression of alternative views on the issues, and implementation of decision-making procedures based on majority rule.”

**Participatory governance** is an open method of governance/administration where the people are openly invited to participate as veritable partners in the initiation and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at sustainable development. Participatory governance, also known as **participatory democracy**, is a process of governance that emphasizes the broad participation of citizens in the direction and operation of political systems, implying a more involved form of citizen participation in governance than the traditional representative democracy.

Whereas **governance** means the whole range of state sector activity fitted together at all levels of government – national, state/regional and local, participatory governance refers to the process where citizens, whether as individuals or in groups, play significant roles in the governance process (Blair, 2008). So, participatory governance is getting the people to be involved in those activities that ordinarily and traditionally have been perceived as state sector activities in the traditional representative system of government, viz., public decision-making, planning, budgeting and implementation of public projects.

Supporting **bottom-up growth of community organizations**, Friedman (2006) conceptualizes **participatory governance** as a regulatory framework in which the task of running public affair is not solely entrusted to government and public administration, but **involves cooperation between state institutions and**

**civil society groups**. In other words, participatory governance is similar to cooperative government, which has to do with the interlocking of the state and societal groups in a mix of public-private policy networks in the formulation and implementation of public policy. In this light, participatory governance is the qualitative enhancement of participation in local groups/rural communities as administrative and developmental units -- an arrangement which includes organized citizen groups in making and implementing policies.

**Development** is an encompassing human process, resulting to meaningful progress and change (including growth) in needed economic/material, political and human goods that are fairly accessible to all members of the society, and which enhance their good and long life as well as maximize their happiness in a sustainable manner (Unanka, 2001).

The intrinsic value of participation has been recognized by the **international human rights** discourse as it is explicit in the **Declaration of the right to Development** adopted by the United Nations in 1986, which says:

The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which **every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate** in, contribute to **and enjoy** economic, social, cultural and political **development**, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized (UN, 1986).

Development is the widely **participatory process** of social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other values) for the majority of the people through gaining greater control of their environment (Rogers, 1976; Rodney, 1974). “Development is not something to be decided by experts; simply because there are no experts on the desirable goals of human life...Development is the desirable course to be taken by human beings in a particular situation (Berger 1976).

Development aims at the satisfaction of man’s economic and socio-cultural needs in the most effective



and rational way (Karadima, 1979). Development means ensuring the humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs of expression, creativity, and conviviality and for **deciding his own destiny** (Wignaraja, 1976). In other words, development is a freely needed productive experience. Development is meaningless and unsustainable when it is not needed. People must therefore participate not only in the physical production of material and social goods but also in the determination of what is produced in forms of policy initiation, planning and implementation of needed goods and services.

**Sustainability** refers to meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations (World Development Report, 1996). To Jhingan (2005), sustainable development is development that is everlasting and that contributes to the quality of life through improvements in natural environments. **Sustainable development** is a type of development that is characterized by freedom and equity in the development process and therefore that is socially responsive to the problems of poverty and inequality between classes, -- i.e., development that accounts for ecological and environmental balance to avoid development today at the expense of tomorrow; ensuring that technological, economic and social development does not compromise human needs today against the needs of the future. When people are involved in the determination of their needs of today and the future, they are bound to be relatively satisfied and sustained in the outcome of their thoughts and actions (Unanka, 2001).

In August 2015, the United Nations member states, following and expanding on the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2001, established the following 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** to guide in framing their agenda and development policies over the next 15 years, ending 2030. **The 17 SDGs**, officially adopted at a UN summit in New York in September, 2017, and which became applicable from January 2016 (*The Guardian*, 2015), are as follows:

**The 17 SDGs**

1) End poverty in all its forms everywhere	10) Reduce inequality within and among countries
2) End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	11) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
3) Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages	12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the <a href="#">UNFCCC</a> forum)
5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
6) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	15) Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all	17) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for
9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation	



	sustainable development
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For the purpose of this study, **sustainable development is measured as the achievement or perception of tendency to achievement of the 17 SDGS collapsed into the following three developmental categories (Economic, Social/Human and Environment) and their associated indicators as follows:**

Developmental Categories	Indicators
Economic Development	<i>Ensuring:</i> Power Supply, Industrialization and Productive Work and Employment
Social/Human Development	<i>Achieving:</i> Elimination of poverty, hunger; Increasing Agricultural/food production, Quality Education, Good Health, Water, Sanitation and Justice
Environmental/Ecological Dev.	<i>Combating</i> Ecological/Environmental Pollution and stopping the destruction of land resources, forests and rivers/oceans

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In development studies, the weakness of orthodox western liberal theories has made the search for alternative explanatory theories/approaches a necessity.

From the Third World perspective, the viable alternatives include the inward looking self-reliant and participative theories/models, which have found the outward looking representative derivative of the classical theory of democracy wanting.

The classical theory of democracy traces back to the days of Ancient Greek city-states of Athens, where, according to the Athenian leader (Pericles, 495-431 BC) and Historian (Herodotus, 484-424 BC), democracy is respectively defined as “people power” and a system in which leaders are accountable to the people for what they do (Johari, 2014). To Pericles, “a citizen must be an active participant in the affairs of the state.” In the modern period, Abraham Lincoln reaffirmed this notion in his Gettysburg oration of 1863, calling it “a government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Edwards et al. 1996).

According to Johari, the pivot of the tenets of the classical theory of democracy posits two choices, which holds that: Power is vested in the people and **its exercise is given to them (participatory democracy) or to their chosen representatives (representative democracy)**. To be sure, democracy, as practiced in most parts of the world (especially in the developing countries such as Nigeria) tends to be pivoted more on the representative choice of democracy. It is the failure of representative democracy to achieve social and human development in Third World countries (including Nigeria) that has led to the desperate search for an alternative or possibly a blend of governance theories/models that will accelerate the achievement of sustainable development. The Self-Reliance and Participative theories/models posit as the viable alternative.

The Self-Reliance model sees the promise of development in depending on the energy and skills of the indigenous people (Unanka, 2008). Abdalla (1980: 15) justified the model at the world system level, arguing that, “since objectively industrialized nations cannot take care of our development, we have to rely on our means.” And as Tanzania’s former leader, late President Julius Nyerere advocated in his famous 1967



policy – Education for Self Reliance, high priority must be placed on rural development, formal schools are to be linked with the communities they served, schools would use local resources and in turn teach adults in the community, and schools (like other institutions) were to become “production units” based on the principle of self-reliance (Sheffield, 1978; Unanka, 2001). By extension, the people in the Nigerian communities should be saying: since our political elites in representative democracy cannot take care of our development, we have to rely on ourselves and participate in governance to care for ourselves and give ourselves sustainable development.

No doubt, several models of governance or public decision-making abound. Lemay (2002: 136-158) identified five of such models of decision-making – viz: Rational-Comprehensive Model, Bargaining Model, Incremental Model, Participative Model, and Public Choice Model. How best states in a backward country like Nigeria can develop depends on how intelligently and correctly the government chooses from the myriad of alternative models of public decision-making. Following Nyerere (1967), Sheffield (1978), Abdalla (1980), and Unanka (2001), it is fashionable to choose the **Participative Model**, which holds that the most rational decision is the one that involves the participation of those who will be affected by the decision.

In the next section of this paper, we shall discuss the methodology used to address the objectives of this study -- finding out if and why the people in the two cross-ethnic states desire participatory governance and how they perceive the potentials of participatory governance for achievement of sustainable development at the various levels of government.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study was sponsored by the Nigerian Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) –Institution-Based Research Fund (IBRF). The study uses the descriptive-survey and correlational designs. Data were collected through a combination of survey, available documents and observational methods. The survey targeted the

2011 estimated populations of two **cross-ethnic states** of Nigeria – Imo (3.9 million) and Akwa Ibom (3.9 million) (NPC, 2006). A sample size of 500 each was chosen – i.e.,  $500 \times 2 = 1000$  for the two states, which are respectively above the maximum attainable sample size (400) for any large target population, using the Yaro Yamane’s formula for computation of sample size (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006).

A combination of cluster and simple random sampling methods were used to draw the sample, which comprised of individuals of voting age, who by their constitutional rights to vote and be voted for, qualify to be involved in governance in the two **cross-ethnic states** of Imo and Akwa Ibom states, which are predominantly Ibo and Ibibio, Annang, Oron, etc ethnic groups respectively). Out of the one thousand (1000) questionnaires that were administered, nine hundred and four (904) were retrieved. Table 1 below presents a summary of the ethnic composition of the survey respondents across the two states of Multi-Ethnic Nigeria.

**Table1: Ethnic Composition of Survey Respondents**

TRIBE/ ETHNIC ORIGIN	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENT			
	Akwa Ibom	Imo	Missing	Total
Ibo	70 (18%)	443 (99%)	4	<b>517 (57%)</b>
Annang	51 (13%)	0	*	<b>51 (6%)</b>
Ibibio	204 (52%)	0	*	<b>204 (23%)</b>
Oron	23 (6%)	0	1	<b>24 (3%)</b>
Others*	45 (11%)	6 (1%)	*	<b>50 (6%)</b>
Missing			58	<b>58 (6%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>393 (100)</b>	<b>449 (100)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>904 (100)</b>

\*Adun (1), Bakor (1), Bette (1), Efik (3), Ejeghara (1), Eket (2), Ekid (1), Esan (1), Hausa (1), Ibani (2), Ibeno (1), Ibibio (1), Ijaw (4), Ikotnna (1), Ikwere (2), Ini (1), Isoo (1), Itam (1), Nsit (1), Ogoni (4), Oro (1), Tiv (1), Ugep (2), Ughobo (2), Urueoffo (1), Uyo (3), Yoruba (4). **(ALL DATA SOURCE: SURVEY)**

The observational and survey data from the two cross-ethnic states are correlated with various nominal variables, viz: Preferred Type of Government, Preferred Democracy at Local, State and Federal Government



levels, Preferred Participatory Type of Governance, Description and Perceptions/Rating of Local, State and Federal Governance and Preferred Governance for Sustainable Economic, Social/Human and Environmental/Ecological Development. The data are analyzed using descriptive statistics – frequency tables and relevant correlational and observational methods.

In the following sub-section, the empirical data are correlated on various nominal variables relevant in providing answers to the questions on the perceived problems of democracy, good governance and sustainable development in the two cross-ethnic states of multi-ethnic Nigerian nation.

**(Objective 1.1): Preferred System of Democracy**

**Table 2: Perceptions of Democracy and Governance By State of Origin/Residence**

PREFERRED DEMOCRACY	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENCE					
	Akwa Ibom		Imo		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Participatory Democracy: Local Govt. *	256	63	296	67	552	65
State Govt. **	231	57	229	52	460	54
Fed. Govt. ***	186	46	200	45	386	45
Representative Democracy: Local Govt. *	151	37	148	33	299	35
State Govt. **	177	43	211	48	388	46
Fed. Govt ***	220	54	247	55	467	55
Totals: .....	407	100	444	100	851	100
.....	408	100	440	100	848	100
.....	406	100	447	100	853	100

\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.02 (0.5);  $\chi^2 = 1.3$  (0.2)

\*\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.05 (0.2);  $\chi^2 = 1.8$  (0.2)

\*\*\*Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.01 (0.8);  $\chi^2 = 0.6$  (0.7)

Source: Survey

The data in Table 2 above shows preference for Participatory Democracy at local and state government levels in both Akwa Ibom (63%; 57%) and Imo (67%; 52%) but preference for Representative Democracy at the federal government level in the two states (54%; 55%) respectively. The reported Phi and  $\chi^2$  values shows that there is no relationship between state of origin/residence and preference for participatory democracy at local and state government levels and preference for representative democracy at the federal government level.



**(Objective 1.2): Prevailing System of Government/Governance**

**Table 3: Perceptions of Citizen Participation in Government/Governance  
By State of Origin/Residence**

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT/ GOVERNANCE	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENCE					
	Akwa Ibom		Imo		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
People/Citizens are Involved .....	118	28	84	19	202	23
Government Does All .....	298	72	362	81	660	77
Totals: .....	416	100	446	100	862	100

Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.11;  $\chi^2 = 10.89$  (0.001)\*

Source: Survey

The data in Table 3 above shows that by the prevailing system of government in the two states, the people (citizens) are perceived not involved in governance. Rather, the government is perceived to be doing all in the initiation, planning and implementation of policies and projects in both Akwa Ibom (72%) and Imo (81%). This perception tends to vary across the two cross-ethnic states. Citizen-involvement is perceived more in Akwa Ibom (28%) than Imo (19%), while the government is perceived to be doing it all alone more in Imo (81%) than Akwa Ibom (72%). This relationship between state of origin/residence and perception of system of governance, though weak (Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.11) is significant ( $\chi^2 = 10.89$  (0.001)\*).

**(Objective 1.3): Rating of Governance**

**Table 4: Perception/Rating of Local, State and Federal Government/Governance**

RATING OF GOVERNANCE	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENCE					
	Akwa Ibom		Imo		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Good:</b> Local Govt. *	119	28	62	14	181	21
State Govt. **	176	42	85	19	261	30
Fed. Govt. ***	113	26	51	11	164	18
<b>Somehow/Bad:</b> Local Govt. *	183	43	158	35	341	39
State Govt. **	146	34	161	36	307	35
Fed. Govt ***	181	43	146	32	327	38
<b>Corrupt/Very Corrupt:</b> Local Govt. *	121	29	228	51	349	40
State Govt. **	102	24	204	45	306	35
Fed. Govt ***	134	31	257	57	391	44
Totals: Local Govt. *	423	100	448	100	871	100
State Govt. **	424	100	450	100	874	100
Fed. Govt ***	428	100	454	100	882	100

\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.3;  $\chi^2 = 76$  (0.00)



\*\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.3;  $\chi^2 = 85$  (0.00)

\*\*\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.3;  $\chi^2 = 85$  (0.00)

\*\*\*\*(39 + 40 = 79%), (35 + 35 = 70%), (44 + 38 = 78%)

The data in Table 4 above shows that in both Akwa-Ibom and Imo states, the local, state and federal governments are rated more as somehow/bad, corrupt/very corrupt (79%, 70% & 78%)\*\*\*\* than good (21%, 30% & 18%) respectively. However, the local governments are rated more as good in Akwa Ibom (28%) than in Imo (14%), while the state and federal governments are rated more as somehow/bad and corrupt in Imo (36 +45 = 81%) and (32 + 57 = 89%) than in Akwa Ibom (34 + 24 = 58%) and (43 + 31 = 74%) respectively. This variation in the rating of governance at the various government levels across the two states is found to be statistically significant as per the reported  $\chi^2$  values.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS (OBJECTIVE 2):**

**GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Data is presented in Table 5 below to determine how the people (across ethnic lines) perceive the potentials of participatory governance in the achievement of sustainable development at the various levels of government.

**Table 5: Preferred Governance for Sustainable Development  
By State of Origin/Residence**

PREFERRED GOVERNANCE	STATE OF ORIGIN/RESIDENCE					
	Akwa Ibom		Imo		Totals	
FOR SUSTAINABLE:	N	%	N	%	N	%
*Economic Development: Rep. Demo	136	39	152	42	288	40
Partic. Demo	216	61	211	58	427	60
Totals.....	352	100	363	100	715	100
**Soc/Human Development: Rep. Demo	94	27	130	36	224	31
Partic. Demo	255	73	234	64	489	69
Totals.....	349	100	364	100	713	100
***Env/Eco Development: Rep. Demo	106	31	145	41	251	36
Partic. Demo	240	69	211	59	451	64
Totals.....	346	100	356	100	702	100

\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.03 ;  $\chi^2 = 0.7$  (0.3) Not Significant

\*\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.1 ;  $\chi^2 = 6.3$  (0.01) Significant

\*\*\* Phi/Cramer’s V = 0.1 ;  $\chi^2 = 7.78$  (0.005) Significant

Source: Survey

The data in Table 5 above shows that in both Imo and Akwa Ibom, participatory governance is perceived to have potentials/preferred more for attainment of sustainable economic, social/human and environmental/ecological development (60%, 69% & 64%) than representative democracy (40%, 31% &

36%). However, this potential/preference for participatory governance is perceived for sustainable social/human and environmental/ecological development in Imo than Akwa Ibom ( $\chi^2 = 7.78$  (0.005); 6.3 (0.01)).



## CONCLUSION

### Summary of Findings

It is evident from our theoretical discourse that participatory governance is a theory-driven approach to development, designed (1) to achieve social justice and equity through improvements in the quality of participation; and (2) to enhance sustainability through self-reliance.

From the empirical analyses, the following findings are made:

1. In Imo and Akwa-Ibom states, there are preferences for Participatory Governance at local and state government levels, but preference for Representative Democracy at the federal government level.
2. In the two cross-ethnic states of Imo and Akwa-Ibom, the people (citizens) are not involved in governance. Rather, the government is perceived to be doing all the initiation, planning and implementation of policies and projects. Citizen-involvement is perceived more in Akwa Ibom than Imo, while the government is perceived to be doing it all alone more in Imo than in Akwa Ibom.
3. In both Akwa-Ibom and Imo states, the local, state and federal governments are rated more as somehow/bad, corrupt/very corrupt. However, the local governments are relatively rated better in Akwa Ibom, while the state and federal governments are rated more as bad/corrupt in Imo.
4. In both Imo and Akwa Ibom, participatory governance is preferred more for sustainable economic, social/human and environmental/ecological development (60%, 69% & 64%) than for representative democracy. In other words, participatory governance is perceived to have potentials/preferred more for attainment of sustainable development. However, this potential for sustainable social/human and environmental/ecological development is perceived more in Imo than in Akwa Ibom.

### Discussion and Recommendations

Participation is valued for both instrumental/functional and intrinsic reasons. Participation in governance, (especially at the local and state levels) could be **instrumental** to the achievement of more efficient and equitable outcomes in many different contexts of decision making, such as allocation of budgetary resources, management of common property and delivery of community services (Osmani, 2008). Electing representatives for running the government (representative democracy) at the national level is a significant type of ensuring people's instrumental, albeit, indirect participation in the conduct of public affairs. The **intrinsic** value is derived when the act of participation is valuable in itself, quite apart from any instrumental or functional value it may have in helping to achieve other good things (Osmani, 2008).

At the community/local level, participation could be achieved through a **top-down decentralization** of administration or **bottom-up growth of community** organizations, often performing better in terms of both efficiency and equity (Osmani, 2008). In many countries, civil society organizations no longer rely on the top-down participative approach to improve governance but instead are demanding bottom-up **good governance** by directly participating in public decision making and resource allocation, monitoring government performance, and ensuring accountability in the use of public resources (Malena and McNeil, 2010).

As Sen (1999) exposed the idea of "development as freedom", development has rightly been conceptualized as consisting of the expansion of a range of freedoms to do and to be the things that human beings have reasons to value, and the freedom to participate meaningfully in public affairs is seen as one of those valuable freedoms (UN, 2008).

**Participatory governance** is a variant or subset of **governance theory** which puts emphasis on democratic engagement (Fisher, 2012). It is a theory-driven approach to development that is **designed to enhance**



**sustainability through self-reliance**, and also to achieve social justice and equity through improvements in the quality of participation.

Accordingly, this paper **recommends as follows**:

1. In view of the fact that both Imo and Akwa-Ibom states are southern states of Nigeria known characterized by the decentralized (relatively more democratic) traditional political structure, the scope of this study is recommended to be expanded nationwide to cover the northern states of Nigeria that are characterized by the centralized traditional political structure.
2. To set the pace for the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2016-2030) in Nigeria, policy efforts should be made to adopt the bottom-up-community-grown participatory governance COMPAG) system to replace the current representative democracy at the local government levels in Imo and Akwa Ibom states.

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