

Democratic leadership practices in Edo State Nigeria: A justification for a Biomimetic-based democratic alternative

Ugwoegbu, T. I. 1 ✉; Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria.

Abey-Fashae G. C.2; Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria & Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, Faculty of Education University of Benin, Nigeria.

Abstract: This article - the last of a two-part assessment of leadership practices in community development processes, noted that since Nigeria's independence 6 decades ago, only the past 2 decades has experienced uninterrupted democracy. Considering the importance of ideal democratic processes in actualizing progressive community development, the paper examined participation in politics, relative to leadership among geese to justify the need for nature-based alternative leadership practices in egalitarian developing communities. Analysis of empirical evidences from literature was used to evaluate key leadership issues, discuss political situations, and models of citizens' participation across Edo State communities in Nigeria. Observed democratic leadership in the study area turned out as "practices that are alien to democracy" because it lacked the basic tenets of democracy. Several indices of participation in politics were articulated and matched against practices among the geese towards articulating a Biomimetic-based Democratic Leadership Practices for community progression. Recommendations were made and implication drawn.

Keywords: Biomimetic leadership practices; Community progression; Deepening Democracy, Democratic leadership; Participation in politics

✉ ugwoegbu@unizik.edu.ng

Citation: Ugwoegbu, T. I. & Abey-Fashae G. C. (2023). Democratic leadership practices in Edo State Nigeria: A justification for a Biomimetic-based democratic alternative. *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*, 4(3), 533-546.



Copyright ©2020 Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)
Published by Universitas PGRI Madiun. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

INTRODUCTION

This article is the second of a two-part assessment of leadership practices in community development processes. The focus of the first was the evaluation of community leadership practices in Edo State Nigeria, to establish the need or not for a Biomimetic-based community leadership practices in community development. This second part, assessed democracy, democratic leadership in Edo State, and its processes to justify the need or not for a Biomimetic-based democratic leadership.

It is common knowledge that democracy is conceptualized as the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It can therefore be referred to as the political process of majority rule which demand citizens' participation in issues affecting their lives. Democracy connotes an all-inclusive political system where the opinion of majority of the citizens or community members is the determining factor in decision-making and governance process. Several scholars have different view about politics, that they categorised its processes into different groupings. For example, it is considered that citizens' participation in political life and political leaders' responsiveness especially in a democratic setting are two core aspects of political process (Mamanovich, 2021; Linde & Peters, 2020; Peterson & Godby, 2020). The two aspect of political processes identified above portends a two way political process where citizen's participation in political life leads to the establishment of a political order headed and managed by government leaders whose responsiveness to issues of governance is sharpened by citizens' participation in decision-making processes of the State. In 2020, Školník explained that political participation takes many forms, including establishment of political

assemblages, active participation as affiliates of political groups, elections at regular intervals both for representatives and for policies in referenda, and engaging in legal or illegal protest. Magstadt (2020) conceptualised politics as the art and science of government, governance, and the entire process of decision-making in the face of limited resources and unlimited wants/needs. Magstadt inferred further, that aside the organisation, roles and practises of government, the very main core of politics is policymaking.

Conceptualizing politics in the Nigerian context, Onah, Asadu, and Amujiri, (2022) described politics as the process of who gets what, when, and how according to a system of authoritative allocation. In other words, politics is the scientific art in which individuals in power manipulate society by making and enforcing choices as a group. That being the case, the term "collective decisions" connote decisions made by many persons acting as a group in a participatory process.

In developed countries such as the United Kingdom and United States of America, which to a very great extent practice democracy in the real sense, citizens are conscious of their roles, rights, and responsibilities and therefore participate in political processes. This is just as each goose member of a flock is conscious of their individual roles, and do not at all fail to responsibly execute those roles for the progression of their community and actualisation of a common goal (Bhatty, 2023; Xu, 2020). Unfortunately in most developing communities, there is limited participation in politics. For example, the limited participation in politics was evident across communities in Edo State Nigeria during the 2016 and 2020 Governorship elections. Records from the national censuses conducted by the National Population Commission (NPC) in 2006 indicate that Edo State had a

population of 3,233,366, which was projected to be 4,124,835 in 2015 (Department of Statistics, 2013). However in 2016, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) records showed that only 1,900,233 of Edo population were registered voters (INEC, 2016). Furthermore, INEC reported that out of the total number of registered voters, only 622,039 were accredited voters, and the total valid votes casted was 613, 244 in the 2016 governorship election in Edo State. If the above figures as released by INEC were juxtaposed with 4,124,835, which was the NPC projected population of Edo State for 2015, the statistical results are that only 46.07% of the citizens were, at the time of the governorship election in 2016, registered voters; only 15.08% of Edo State population went out to actually participated in the process on the day of election. The indication is that 16 years after the military paved way for democratic politics in Nigeria in 1999, there is still a very poor level of participation in politics among citizens of Edo State. If as opined, participation and collective actions breeds sustainable community development (Haldane et al., 2019; Abildgaard et al., 2020), the abysmal level of participation in the political process of electing democratic leaders in Edo State portend dangers to the development of communities in the State and other such developing climes. Therefore, this article considers citizen participation in political processes as imperative. The said imperativeness of participation in democratic politicking for fostering development of communities is evident in natural inclination of each goose to communal involvement and community development as suggested by Bhatti; and Xu.

It is it is plausible therefore to opine that participation and its attendant collective actions denote the soul of a system that is “of all, by all, and for all”, more so since Gismar (2021) suggested that representation is the soul

of democracy. Simply put, participation denotes the soul of democracy. It is therefore worrisome that there could still be such abysmal level of citizen participation in politics in Edo State since the military paved way for democracy in 1999. The worry is further compounded when it is evident, as a natural pattern among geese (Bhatti, 2023; Xu, 2020), that participation greatly influences the success of community development initiatives and deepens democratic processes (Obi & Dokubo, 2021). In relation to this unsatisfactory situation, and the need to deepen democracy in developing climes such as Edo State Nigeria, into a full blown well-structured and sustainable democracy where ideal leaders oversees political responsibilities, this paper used reviews and analysis of position and empirical evidences from the literature to evaluate the political situation in Edo State; citizens’ participation and its importance in a political system; models of citizen participation and implications for effective governance; global indices for participation in politics; principal factor to enhancing citizens’ participation for deepening democracy; making informed recommendations; stating implications of the study.

BRIEF HIGHLIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN EDO STATE NIGERIA

The political system adopted by Nigeria at independence and reflected in all its States including Edo State, is Westminster-based which according to Aristotle in Brown (2013), is unsteady because of undue self-centred inspired influence exerted on the political system by an elite class who lack confidence in their intent and sincerity of purpose towards the socio-economic and political progress of the State, thereby not allowing the electorate to truly chart the course of democratic progress. The elites are basically groups, among the citizen, who for one reason or another feel superior to the other citizens. These

elite class as highlighted by Brown, uses political parties as instruments or vehicles to project a political culture that undermines ideal democratic politics and hinders it from growing. Brown stated further that the actions of these elites negatively affect ideal democratic policies and often time, their characteristic behaviours translate into values that are inconsistent with the parent political-style of democracy copied from Britain and America, thus making the attainment of good governance impossible. Elites are the political gladiators who constantly manipulate the political processes and citizens, for the advancement of selfish agenda (Fagbadebo, 2019; Olawumi, 2023).

It is evident from the natural order of social and resilient bio-entities such as geese and ants, and their communities, which has been sustained over several millennia (Bhatty, 2023; Smart, 2013; Xu, 2020) that elitism in communal relationships and community politicking is alien to social equality (democracy). In fact Bhatty; and Smart are positive there is no dominant goose or ant who rules the flock or colony. Relatively, such leadership is intermittently distributed in a circumstantial democratic style of social equality for the good of all and the development of community. Corroborating the position on elitism, several scholars affirm that elitism is either a misrepresentation of democracy or completely alien to it (Damele & Campos, 2022). The implication is that elitism is not one of the views of democracy, neither does it represent any aspect of democratic politicking, which is based on social equality of all community members. On their part, Ononogbu and Okoroiwu (2019), suggested that in the absence of true tenets of social equality in democratic politicking as evident in communities within Edo State, attainment of consolidated democracy and good

governance would be impossible to achieve in any developing clime.

Following the viewpoints of Brown (2013) and Fagbadebo (2019) on the notion of political elites, democracy in Edo State and Nigeria at large can be described as the government of a few elite cabal, by the elite cabal, for the elite cabal, and not of the people, by the people, for the people. This implies that the contrast is the order of the day. Though democracy and political participation are ideally interrelated and complementary, in Nigeria they are inferentially somewhat opposite concepts in practice (Joseph, 2014; Othman & Okpe, 2021). Thus making true participatory democracy alien to Nigeria and to Edo State in particular. Further inference from Joseph; Othman and Okpe is that the resultant effects of practicing democracy as conceptualized by the few political elites in Nigeria is a process pervaded by electoral violence, manipulation of election results and political participation constraints in all States of the country.

In the same vein, Othman and Okpe, (2021) observed that though the goals of politics is to enhance peace, social order, stability, growth and development in any society or nation, the political situation in Nigeria where Edo State is a constituent part, had been one of chaos, disintegration, instability, and social disorder. Further submissions by Joseph suggest a deep rooted misconception of partisanship and its tenets by the political class, is one of the factors behind the current state of injustice, polity disintegration, State retrogression, and poverty in the present-day Nigeria. The views are also corroborated by Ndubisi and Ufearoh (2023). Unfortunately, observation of the actions and inactions of new entrants into politics show they are sought of inducted into this misconceived philosophy of politics in developing climes, instead of being grounded in nationalistic perception, which breeds unity, and involvement of

citizens in the pursuit of community matters, including politics. Implicitly, wherever nationalistic values are lacking, there could hardly be genuine participation of citizens in pre-election, election, post-election and other decision-making activities. Rather, each ethnic or social group would tend to cooperate and be partisan, sometimes with violent tendencies, along their individual, social, ethnic, and religious lines (Musa, 2016), a situation that would hardly foster or sustain ideal democracy. The observable democratic politics in Edo State fits exactly to Darr's "virtual democracy" in Nilsson, Morrow and Quinn (2017), which was described as a type that lack basic tenets of democracy. Unlike is evident in geese communities, where as implicitly established by Blocken et al. (2018), involvement of every goose/cyclist in activities and leadership processes of the flock/peloton is required to achieve overall communal objectives. In geese communities, the tendencies for positive involvement of each goose in communal endeavours are naturally inborn and usually instinctively implored through general honking and systematic flapping of wings during flights. The reverse is the case of true citizens' involvement in democratic processes generally within most communities in Nigeria.

In Edo State, citizens are schemed out of popular participation in public decision-making on economic matters, policies and expenditure. These manipulation and monopolisation of the democratic processes is achieved through the use violence and electoral fraud to secure legitimacy, as well as peripheral participation of citizens which deters far-reaching influence on the outcome of policy choices. For example, in 2016 the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre noted among other issues that the electoral process in Edo State was characterized by low turnout due to voters' apathy, pockets of violence, and "wanton vote buying practice" in the full glare of the national

electoral umpire - Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials and the police. Similarly, Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room suggested in their report that the acts of scheming was not different in 2020. But within the geese communities and especially during migratory flight, individual goose are naturally disposed to the common interest of the flock rather than individualistic tendencies. In fact, suggestions are that individual participation of each goose in communal matters is natural inborn (PETA, n.d.). This article summates that flock members' participation in communal activities including "approval and acceptance" of, and provision of leadership among geese is a core practice to the sustainability of the species over the millennia, without which a reversed circumstance would have the prevailed. That being the case, why not among citizens of several communities in Edo State and other "democratic" developing climes?

CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN POLITICAL PROCESSES

Citizens' participation in political processes is a basic demand of democracy, just as Bhatti (2023) and Xu, (2020) suggested that participation of individual goose in a community of geese is germane to their communal behavioural patterns and leadership actions. It is the involvement of citizens in decision-making activities and policy enactment for the purpose of orienting government programs toward community needs, building public support, and cohesive communality within neighbourhoods (Armstrong, 2013; Falade, 2014; Mustapha, 2017). Citizen participation in politics infers that every citizen must participate in all electoral phases of choosing leaders/representatives; decision-making process with respect to choice of projects/programmes to be executed in

the community; and management of community affairs/initiatives. The inference of submissions by Armstrong; Falade; and Mustapha is that citizens' participation in political processes, and other community development initiatives including socio-economic activities, is very critical to the development of any given community, as it is fundamental to all processes of community life. This is possibly because improved living standard of the citizens and infrastructural development of communities is the goal of all community socio-economic and political initiatives.

Implicitly, community participation is the involvement of members of a community in decision-making processes in relation to issues that affect their lives, socio-economic and political well-being, as well as their involvement in the series of actions essential to the actualisation of the tangible goals and objectives of the collective decisions, which they have made. When people are involved in the political process that affect their lives, they are not only able to suggest ways of finding lasting solution to their perceived problems and felt- needs, but equally able to suggest and implement ways to preserve, concretize and sustain democratic processes from its embryonic state into full blown and well-structured democracy that could stand the test of time. The preceding submission about peoples' involvement in political process. In the section that follows, the Easton model and National Democratic Institute (NDI) models of political system are used to illustrate the role of citizens in political participation.

DAVID EASTON'S MODEL OF POLITICAL SYSTEM

Easton's model of political system articulate the role of people in a political system. The main thrust of Easton's model of politics is the use of system theory to establish a theory of politics

for effective governance through the description of intermeddling factors – inputs from people, institutions, and the resultant outputs in a political system (Bang, 2020; Shirin, Bogolubova & Nikolaeva, 2014). In Easton's model of political system, the gate keepers represent the different political parties, each of which is a group of people whose participation in a given political party is supposedly based on certain common ideologies, and that the sum total of the output in the system is a factor of participatory inputs. It is not in doubt therefore, that inputs in a political process cannot be comprehensive without citizen participation.

This paper interprets the results of the intermeddling factors of Easton's model to simply mean the result of citizen participation in community activities via the various existing community structures. This is so much, as the result of the participation of each cyclist in a Peloton drawn from the reports by Blocken et al. (2018). Though not mentioned in their report, the study of aerodynamic drag on a peloton by Blocken et al., is an unwitting Biomimetic-based study of the outcome of strategic participation. The modelled participation was mimicked and adopted by peloton cyclists, from the behavioural flight patterns of geese. And this article harped on the Easton model of political system to buttresses the very important applicability of geese's strategic participation in human democratic politicking

According to Shirin, Bogolubova and Nikolaeva (2014), the virtual society known as the World Wide Web is a political system, as each space or website within the virtual society is guided by rules and regulations which are often referred to as terms and conditions to which users must agree before they are granted 'stay to live' in the website. These terms and conditions are tandem to regulatory laws in any given real political system such as that of Edo State. Consequently, in the

application of Easton's Model to the political aspects of the studies on the development of the World Wide Web, Shirin, Bogolubova and Nikolaeva further demonstrated the importance of citizens' participation through quality inputs to attain quality democratic outputs.

Implicitly, just as demonstrated and established among geese in terms of attaining communal objectives and sustainability of their kind, there cannot be an ideal democratic output from political processes in Edo State, when there is no reasonable input through citizens' participation.

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE'S (NDI) MODEL OF POLITICAL SYSTEM

The main idea of NDI (2013) model of political system is the iteration that citizens' participation in politics is a powerful, transformative force in political and socioeconomic development for establishing democratic norms and practices. It explains the NDI theory of change occasioned by citizens' participation in politics. The NDI model mainly shows that without participation there would be no deepening of political processes nor enhancement of democratic processes. It depicts the intermeddling factors of citizens' voice, government accountability and political space (political process). Implicitly, there cannot be any form of citizens' voice in a political space without citizens' participation in the political process. Further evaluations of the ideologies of NDI reveals a deep relatedness to the innate communal participatory practices of geese (Bhatty, 2023; Blocken et al., 2018; Xu, 2020).

Relative to political processes in Edo State, it is evident from the NDI model that Edo citizens' voices are synonymous with political participation. When the said involvement is coupled with a responsive and accountable

government in any political space, the resultant output would be the enhancement of democracy.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DAVID EASTON'S MODEL AND NDI MODEL OF POLITICAL SYSTEM

In the same way as opined by Bhatty (2023); Xu, (2020) that collective involvement of every goose in a geese commune is germane to attain communal goals, David Easton's model and the NDI model both summate the core values of citizens' involvement in democratic political systems. The two models showed that without the participation of citizens in a political system, there could be no political groups or parties, nor the requisite inputs for the parties and ultimately for government to function. Consequently, to grow democratic processes in Edo State, there must be inputs born out of the participation of citizens in political parties, in electioneering processes, in government, and in the processes of governance, including those of decision-making. This political philosophy perhaps inform the bases for the various definitions of politics. For example, Crick in Gamble (2023) defined politics as the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance for the welfare and the survival of the whole community. This is in the same way as each adult and experienced goose in a flock has equal opportunity to participate in all activities of the geese, and to also lead the flock in flight (Addison, 2022).

Furthermore, according to Gamble (2023), Crick also defined a political system as a type of government where politics proves successful in ensuring reasonable stability and order. It also include conciliation of different interest and giving them share in power within Communities or State for the purpose of ensuring stability and order,

implies taking into cognisance the important concept of participation, which is evident through citizens' inputs with its attendant responsive democratic outputs in a systemic political process as depicted by the Easton and NDI models. The evidence of real citizen participation in politics in any given environment is manifested in certain characteristics described as global indices of participation in politics.

GLOBAL INDICES OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS FOR DEEPENING DEMOCRACY

Indices of participation in politics refers to certain observable and measurable factors that are indicative of actual citizens' participation in a political system. Some of the said measurable factors have been deduced from the patterned behavioural communal practices of geese (Bhatty, 2023; Blocken et al., 2018; Xu, 2020), and put forward in this paper as the global indices of citizens' participation in politics for deepening democracy. The deduces factors, are presented in line with Larreguy and Marshall's (2013) 5 general indices of participation in politics which include interest in politics; voting; contacting local government councilors; participating in community associations; and supporting democratic initiatives. The highlight of global indices of citizen participation are summarized as follows:

- a. Civic Indicators refers to the degree to which citizens are involved in performing their civic responsibilities in the States or Communities. These indicators are articulated to include the degree of citizens' active participation in group or organization (including political parties) as demanded by the constitution and the 'law of positive social interaction'. It also include the degree of citizens' participation in

community problem solving. For example, voting is a civic responsibility, and ensuring societal/communal orderliness and peace is a social responsibility. The tendencies for each goose in a flock of geese to participate, and actual participation in collective activities is innate.

- b. Electoral Indicators refers to the degree of citizens' participation in performing their civic responsibility of voting. They also refer to the degree to which the citizens make informed and independent decision as to the choice of political party affiliation, choice of political candidate to vote for. It is equally indicative of the extent to which citizens are involved in political activities and the extent to which they vote regularly. Decision making as to which goose assumes leadership role per time is always very seamless, with very high acceptability by all other flock members.
- c. Indicators of Political Voice implies the degree to which citizens participate in political discuss both at party and intra-party levels in the State/Community. Participation in political discuss here include, observation of political trends, giving attention to political details and debates through listening regularly to radio and or television news, reading newspaper regularly, and contributing generally to discussions and debate on politics. It also include the degree to which citizens can organise themselves to take informed opinionated stand and push for their voice or opinion to be heard, through boycotting (i.e. deliberate withdrawal or

refusing to participate in political activities as a mark of protest until their voice is heard or opinion is considered), boycotting, which is deliberate participation to counter a boycott. Honking among geese is tandem with political voice among the citizenry. It is a mark of effective and result oriented participation.

It is obvious from the aforementioned indicators that the necessary indices for citizens' political participation in Edo State and other developing communities include:

- i. Correct conceptualization of politics, its goals and democratic processes by political parties and their elitist members
- ii. The degree of values consistent with true democracy that political parties and their elitist members place on politics and the deepening democracy
- iii. Degree of self-less participation of elitist community members in politics
- iv. Non-use of position, influence and political structures to negatively affect ideal democratic policies for personal or tribal gains, both at party, ward, local council area and State levels
- v. Degree of political awareness of community members
- vi. Non-coerced, non-egocentric, nor financially induced participation of community members/citizens in politics
- vii. General fund raising for community cause (including payment of taxes and community levies), and community problem solving
- viii. Making informed independent judgment necessary for boycotting or buycotting issues
- ix. Signing collectively written petitions (including emails where applicable)

- x. Contacting officials and media organisations
- xi. Protesting and canvassing within the ambits of the law;
- xii. Listening to radio news and watching television news regularly
- xiii. Reading newspaper regularly, and following government and public affairs "most of the time"
- xiv. Talk "very often" about politics with family and friends.

FACTOR TO ENHANCING CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

Political education or political awareness education that is built on lessons learnt from social bio-entities like geese, which has very strong commune and natural collective participatory tendencies is germane in dethroning virtual democracy while enthroning ideal democracy. Such education is achieved only through sensitizing citizens (including elites), increasing political awareness among community members, helping the citizens to understand the right concepts of politics, its goals and democratic processes. In regard to political awareness, and relative to increased degree of citizens' participation in politics, Larreguy & Marshall (2013) posited that education is the major factor that has helped in growing and sustaining democratic processes in the United States of America (USA). This is because according to Larreguy & Marshall, it fosters tolerance, lays foundation for a strong, viable and enduring democracy. Similarly, perspectives from Europe, articulated by the London School of Economics Enterprise (LSE) (2013) indicate empirical evidences suggested that political education is pivotal to citizens' participation in politics. Buttressing this position, LSE asserts that political education must be free and provided with all intent and purpose from age 12, while Larreguy and

Marshall established further that Nigerians who attain at least primary education are considerably more likely to engage in the activities referred to as indicators of participation in politics.

Implicitly, a well-articulated political awareness and civic education are major factors necessary for increasing citizens' participation in politics so as to actualize ideal democracy in Nigeria, and Edo State in particular. However, inferences from scholarly reports, suggest that for education to bring about democratic growth and sustain democratic politics, there must be an institutionalized environment that fosters equal participatory opportunities for all social groups (Larreguy & Marshall, 2013), just as is common within geese communities. In addition, such environment according to Larreguy and Marshall, must not tolerate inequality between and within groups in any community.

Summarily, beside the provision of strong civic and political awareness education to citizens, for increased participation towards developing democracy, it is equally important to provide awareness education necessary for institutionalizing systems within the State. This refers to providing awareness education necessary for building societies where equality is entrenched among citizens, law and order is hallowed, and the law is especially allowed to always take its course against erring citizens, politicians and institution. Simply put, it calls for an in-depth appraisal of the behavioural characteristics of geese, so as to articulate effective models of Biomimetic-based democratic practices for a progressive and sustainable community leadership practices.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ENTRINCHING IDEAL DEMOCRACY IN EDO STATE

Based on the ideas and issues expressed in this paper, it was

recommended that Biomimetic lessons should be learned from the geese, and that from lessons learnt;

- i. The government should ensure institutionalization through the deliberate entrenchment of community environments where legal enforcement is high; where formal institutional rules and orders does not change with successive government or political power. Put differently, every institution within the State should be strengthened in every regard including making them independent and legally empowered to dispense their mandate in accordance with extant laws. The relevant institutions should be empowered to sanction erring officers, organizations and citizens irrespective of their elitist status, their sponsors and their affiliation to ruling party/government.
- ii. The government should provide political awareness/civic education and training for citizens at both formal and informal levels, through the design and implementation of political awareness/civic education curriculum.
- iii. The government should ensure equal participatory opportunities for all social groups within the Communities/State, by ensuring that inequality between groups is not tolerated or enshrine in the political system.
- iv. Government must respect the voice and opinion of participating citizens by creating forums for feed-back, accommodating constructive criticism, evaluating feed-backs towards reviewing or making new policies where necessary.
- v. The citizens should always observe formal institutional

- laws, by strictly following approved rules and regulations of socio-political participation.
- vi. The citizen should embrace political awareness and civic education and training by asking questions when in doubt, and seeking clarification about existing but confusing policies, or entirely new policies on politics. They should always avail themselves of provisions for political awareness and civic education at every opportunity, and when the need arises.
 - vii. Opportunity must always be created for community members to attend political awareness campaign, workshop or training.
 - viii. The Citizen should have mutual respect for one another, by ensuring there is equal participatory opportunities for all community members in political processes at the community level. Nobody should be undermined on the basis of status.
 - ix. The citizens should learn to disagree to agree, and have respect for the voice and opinion of others. They must learn to submit to superior positive arguments after deliberations on issues of varying opinions, without any particular group or person insisting on their own opinion against majority opinion.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

This paper provided analytical evidence indicating that the type of democracy practiced in Nigeria and Edo State in particular is a variant of “true democracy” and is fraught with ideologies that serve only a few political elite. It is a democracy, which does not reflect the government of the people, by the people, for the people. In other word, democracy in the State is devoid

of true participation and involvement of community members. Consequently, the political situation in the State has to be overhauled through the implementation of recommendations suggested in this paper. Otherwise, the State cannot experience nor entrench sustainable democracy.

CONCLUSION

Participation is the heart and soul of democratic politics. However, the type of democracy practised in Edo State is a variant of “true democracy” and is fraught with ideologies that serve only a few political elite. This democratic situation is contrary to what is obtained in geese communities, where their natural inclination to communality and inborn disposition to collective participation devoid of selfism has contributed to helping them build resilient communities through several millennia. Notwithstanding the situation in Edo State, the government and other stakeholders can nurture and restructure prevailing circumstances so as to attain a democracy that is well-developed, ideal and full-blown. This paper submits that attaining ideal democracy is possible upon drawing Biomimetic lessons from bio-entities such as the geese, to overhaul the political situation in Edo State. Thereafter, it would be easy to formulate necessary effective strategies to pave way for

- i. institutionalized structures in all ramification
- ii. the practice of true democracy, which would involve equal participation by all citizens in political and decision-making processes
- iii. true democracy which would be upheld, implemented and sustained with loyalty and a high sense of communality as in communities of geese and other social bio-entities.

REFERENCES

- Abildgaard, J. S., Hasson, H., von Thiele Schwarz, U., Løvseth, L. T., Ala-Laurinaho, A. & Nielsen, K. (2020). Forms of participation: The development and application of a conceptual model of participation in work environment interventions. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 41(3), 746-769
- Armstrong, E. (2013). *The role of active participation and citizen engagement in good governance*. New York: Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UNDESA.
- Bang, H. P. (2020). David Easton's political systems analysis. In D. Berg-Schlosser, B. Badie and L. Morlino (Eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Political Science* (pp. 211-232). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Bhatty, A. (2023, February 20). A gaggle of geese: A guide to gallant leaders. *Teacher Leadership Magazine, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy* Retrieved April 16, 2023 from https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/teacher-leadership/teacher-leadership-magazine/articles/guide_gallant_leaders.html
- Blocken, B., van Druenen, T., Toparlar, Y., Malizia, F., Mannion, P., Andrienne, T., ... and Diepens, J. (2018). Aerodynamic drag in cycling pelotons: New insights by CFD simulation and wind tunnel testing. *Journal of Wind Engineering and Industrial Aerodynamics*, 179, 319-337
- Brown, G. M. (2013). Nigerian political system: An analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(10), 172 - 179.
- Damele, G. & Campos, A. S. (2022). Introduction. Elite Theory: Philosophical Challenges. *Topoi* 41, 1-5
- Department of Statistics (2013). *Edo State Statistical Year Book, 2013 (4th ed)*. Benin City: Edo State Ministry of Budget, Planning and Economic Development. Retrieved March 23, 2022 from <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/213>
- Fagbadebo, O. (2019). Corruption, governance and political instability in Nigeria: A dysfunctional conundrum. In M. Handaric *et al.*, *Current Research in Education and Social Studies. Vol. 1*. Book Publisher International (a part of Science Domain International), 55-68(14). doi:10.9734/bpi/cress/v1
- Falade, D. A. (2014). Political Participation in Nigerian Democracy: A Study of Some Selected Local Government Areas in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human- Social Science*, 14 (8), 16-23
- Gamble, A. (2023). Book review forum marking the 60th anniversary of Bernard Crick's In Defence of Politics (1962). *Soc* 60, 233-236
- Gismar, A. M. (2021). Is Indonesia losing the soul of its democracy? A look at 11 year trend of Indonesian democracy. *Journal of Social Political Sciences*, 2(1), 54-69.
- Haldane, V., Chuah, F. L., Srivastava, A., Singh, S. R., Koh, G. C., Seng, C. K., & Legido-Quigley, H. (2019). Community participation in health services development, implementation, and evaluation: A systematic review of empowerment, health, community, and process outcomes. *PloS one*, 14(5), e0216112.
- Harry, D. M., & Harry, M. O. (2022). The Nigerian state and democratic governance: A need for revisitation of democratic ethos. *African Journal of Law, Political Research and Administration* 5(1), 52-62
- INEC (2016). *APC candidate, Godwin Obaseki, declared winner of Edo Governorship Election*. Retrieved

- April 06, 2022 from <https://inecnigeria.org/?news=apc-candidate-godwin-obaseki-declared-winner-of-edo-governorship-election>
- Joseph, R. A. (2014). *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the second republic* (African study series: 56). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Larreguy, H. A. & Marshall, J. (2013). The effect of education on political engagement in weakly institutionalized democracies: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Economic Literature* 51(2), 125-156.
- Linde, J., & Peters, Y. (2020). Responsiveness, support, and responsibility: How democratic responsiveness facilitates responsible government. *Party Politics*, 26(3), 291-304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068818763986>
- Magstadt, T. M. (2020). *Understanding politics: Ideas, institutions, and issues*. Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Mamanovich, R. K. (2021). Components of political culture in political processes. *Academica: an international multidisciplinary research journal*, 11(2), 953-959.
- Musa, A. K. (2016). Democracy, party politics and good governance: The role of electoral management bodies in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 3(3), 5-11.
- Mustapha, A. I. (2017). An assessment of citizens' participation in the 2016 governorship electoral process in Edo State, Nigeria: A content analysis approach. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)* 6(4), 114-123. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v6i4.10>
- National Democratic Institute (2013). *Citizen participation and technology: An NDI study*. Washington: Author
- Ndubisi, E. J., & Ufearoh, A. U. (2023). The question of leadership and political restructuring in Nigeria. *AJAP-AMAMIHE Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 21(4), 29-40
- Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (2020). *Edo State governorship election report 2020*. Abuja: Authur. Retrieved from <https://situationroomng.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Edo-State-Governorship-Elections-2020.pdf>
- Nilsson, A. N., Morrow, E., & Quinn, R. (2017). *An Analysis of Robert A. Dahl's Democracy and its Critics* (1st ed). London: Macat Library.
- Obi, J. O., & Dokubo, C. (2021). Perceived Influence of Citizens' Participation on Community Development Process in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies* 9(1), 17-28
- Odo, L. U. (2015). Democracy and good governance in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 15(3), 1-8.
- Ogbonna, E. C., Ufomba, E. E., & Solomon, A. (2021). The selling of birth right in Genesis 25: 29-34 and vote-buying in Nigerian elections: Interrogating the role of poverty. *Humanus Discourse*, 2. (2), 1-9.
- Olawumi, K. (2023). Separatist groups, political instability, and democracy in Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, 26(2).
- Onah, C. C., Asadu, I., & Amujiri, B. (2022). Dynamics of the politico-administrative conflicts of resource control in Nigeria: Exploring the oil politics of who gets what, when, and how. *Natural Resources Forum*, 46(2), 245-259
- Ononogbu, O. A., & Okoroiwu, W. (2019). Effects of internal party democracy of the All Progressives Congress (APC) on Nigeria's democratic consolidation. In A. Okolie, H. Saliu

- & G. Ezirim (Eds). *State, Governance and regional Integration in Africa*. Pp. 930-945. Published by the Nigerian Political Science Association.
- Othman, M. F., & Okpe, V. V. (2021). Assessment of Political Participation and Democratic Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. Humanit*, 29(1), 547-563.
- PETA (n.d.). *The hidden lives of ducks and geese*. Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/factory-farming/ducks-geese/hidden-lives-ducks-geese/>
- Peterson, M., & Godby, R. W. (2020). Citizen participation in political markets: Extending service-dominant logic to public policy. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 39(4), 412-429.
- Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (2016). *Edo State 2016 governorship election observation report*. Abuja: Author
- Shirin, S. S., Bogolubova N. M., & Nikolaeva J. V. (2014). Application of David Easton's model of political system to the World Wide Web. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 30(8), 1083-1087
- Školník, M. (2020). The effects of corruption on various forms of political participation in Colombia. *Latin American Policy*, 11(1), 88-102.
- Smart, A. J. (2013, September 13). Organizational culture: Why organizations should embrace randomness like ant colonies. *Harvard Business Review*. [https://hbr.org/2013/09/why-organizations-should-embrace](https://hbr.org/2013/09/why-organizations-should-embrace-)
- Xu, Q. (2020). The Application of Air Boosting Effect in the Formation of Geese Flying in Student Management. *Revista Científica de la Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias*, 30(3), 1330-1339.