THE LEGISLATURE AND CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF ANAMBRA STATE 6TH ASSEMBLY

Anthony Ngonadi PhD, Godwin Jack and Rita Okika
Department of Political Science, Tansian University Umunya, Anambra State.

Abstract
It is truism that the legislature is generally seen as a crucial institution of the State in any democratic governance. This is attributable to the central role legislature plays in public policy process and the fact that its representative nature is such that strives to convey or put into cognizance the opinions of their constituents why performing their representative duties. In Anambra State, the Anambra State Legislature carries and indeed performs the duties of the legislature. This study therefore examines Legislature and Constituency Relations in Nigeria, with a specific emphasis on the Anambra State 6th House of Assembly. It argues that executive dominance of legislative activities, poor constituency project implementation and inadequate oversight function has grave legislative implications on the relationship of the constituents and the legislature in Anambra State. The study uses documentary methods which entails qualitative descriptive analysis. It is guided by structural functional theory. It concludes that imperious executive influences and poor relations of the legislators contributed to slow pace of development in the State within the period under study. It therefore recommends administrative and financial autonomy of the legislature both at Federal and State level to ensure effectiveness and unhindered legislative activities of the legislature in the State.
Keywords: *Anambra State, Constituency Relations, Legislature, Legislator, Nigeria*

Introduction

Legislators are human beings and as such some outperformed others in their core and peripheral functions. The cause and consequences of their effectiveness or otherwise has been studied by various authors. In Nigeria, accessing such impact has remained a daunting challenge because of paucity of data and failure to build relevant variables. Thus, to many Nigerians, the legislators have not been able to rise beyond or even at average to the reasonable expectations of their constituents. Others argue that legislative functions in Nigeria are underdeveloped and the legislators are inexperienced as a result of the long-standing military dictatorship that weakened the legislature and totally positioned it to be like appendage of the executive arm of government (Egwu, 2005; Benjamin, 2010). However, after many years of representative democracy, representative politics is yet to show apparent evidence of people representation or show tangible evidence of achievement in the various constituencies (Yusuf & Zengeni, 2018).

The above assertion is essential especially when put into cognizance the functions a legislator is saddled with. In fact, Wahike (1962) posited that they are four basic

functions of the legislature. According to him, in virtually every political system, the legislature performs decisional, legitimizing, representative functions.

While we acknowledge that a legislator performs all functions as a representative, yet it would be right to state that a legislator performs two key field functions; Law making and oversight". Thus, the law making function includes the participation in debate and actual making of the laws, rules, guidelines and regulation that enhances governance within the state, whereas the oversight functions are those regulatory and supervisory functions of the legislature. This enables legislators to ensure that other arms of government are operating within the ambit of the law and, perhaps more importantly, in the interest of the citizenry. When looked at in a different way, it would be said to be the representation of the electorates in controlling their government agencies.

It would therefore be right to assess the relationship of the legislators with the constituent in their performance of the representative function which is core, and their personal productivity as an individual state officer. Interestingly, in spite of the enormous expectation of the people especially on their representatives, it appears that many legislators turn their back on their constituents. To some of them, it was a case of serving the bigger master (the entire state) as the smaller master's interest is by that also protected. While this argument should not stand, it raises the question on whether the legislators are really becoming productive (which is their second function), even at the detriment of the core representative function. Again, is to look at how consciously they applied the legislative and legal processes in achieving their objectives, this is in consideration that the people's opinions were already encoded in the constitution.

The measure of performance of the legislative functions of law making has always been through the nature of debates that take place in the various legislative Houses (and in the committees). Yet, good numbers of legislators, through their conducts, do not seem to understand their duties as representatives of the people or their constituencies, those who supposedly have elected them. It is shown in the dearth of consultation between the people and their elected representatives.

Evidently, from the challenges facing the legislature in Nigeria, two major arguments appear discernable. One, is that over two decades of its existence under democratic governance in Nigeria, the legislature both at the federal and the state levels has failed to provide necessary guide for efficient and effective governance and is yet to march peoples' expectation (Egwu, 2005; Agbeje& Adebanwi, 2005; Lafenwa, 2009; Ewuim, Nnamani & Eberinwa, 2014; Akomolede & Bosede, 2012; Omenka, 2008). In their separate views, poor performance of oversight functions has not encouraged accountability and responsiveness in governance.

Second, is a group of scholars who have interrogated the continued party influences on the legislature and the conflicts arising from these influences, the impacts of corruption in the process of carrying out legislative responsibilities and how it has impeded legislative performance in Nigeria and more specifically in Anambra state (Mba, 2014; Nnorm & Odigbo 2015; Nnabugwu, & Odigbo, 2017; Awotokun &Okotoni, 2020). More specifically, Nnorom & Odigbo (2015) contended that the need to reduce legislative-executive friction, enhance legislative performance and closeness to the constituents necessitated the commencement of constituency project in 1999 to bridge the widening gap between the people and their representatives, provide avenue for interaction and ensure a minimum presence of government in every constituency by having some grass-roots projects sited in each constituency, during the budgeting process.

Literature Review

The concepts of Legislature and Constituency Relations Examined

The legislature is a strategic institution in governance all over the world as it represents the people, makes laws and participates in policy making as well as checks particularly on the Executive arm of government (Lefanwa, 2006).The term legislature has been given different names across nations of the world. It is referred to as "Parliament" in Britain, „National Assembly" (the central legislature) in Nigeria, "Congress" in United States etc. (Lafenwa, 2009). In spite of the variations in nomenclature, scholars seem to be more consensus than divergence in their definitions and perceptions of the concept of legislature.

As can be seen, the definitions of legislature have focused more on the critical roles and functions the legislature performs in every society. Thus, Awotokun (1998)sees the legislature as the branch of government made up of elected representatives or a constitutionally constituted assembly (body) of people whose duties among other things are to make laws, control executive activities and safeguard the interest of the people. In view of this functional definition, Anyaegbunam (2000) conceptualizes the legislature as having the role of making, revising, amending and repealing laws for the advancement and well being of the citizenry that it represents. In doing this, the legislature is saddled with huge responsibilities to guide and also prescribed, amend and watch over the government of the day.

Similarly, Lafenwa (2009) defines the legislature as an official body, usually chosen by election, with the power to make, change, and repeal laws; as well as powers to represent the constituent units and control government. For Okoosi-Simbine (2010) the legislature is a law-making, deliberative and policy persuading body operating for the sole aim of deepening democratic practice in a political system. He describes the legislature as the First Estate of the Realm, the realm of representation and the

site of sovereignty, the only expression of the will of the people. It follows from this analysis that the authority of the legislature is derived from the people and should be exercise according to the will of the people who they represent.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that representative democracy has continued to spread all over the world. Very recently, such form of governance seems to be described as a requisite condition for responsive and effective governance. Thus, in every representative government, there is a practice of demarcating, dividing and grouping people for the purposes of voting. This political demarcation is mainly known as constituency. A constituency according to Benjamin (2010) is a community or an area represented by an office holder. He further stated that it is a community whose electorates send a representative to the legislature. A constituency is a political community or electoral district in a country divided for the purposes of elections, and from which the legislative members are elected to serve in a parliament (Benjamin, 2010).

In Nigeria, every state is demarcated into three senatorial districts and there are also 360 federal constituencies in the entire country (Benjamin, 2010). In Nigeria, the constituencies are the creation of the constitution. For instance, section 71 of the constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria provides that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is to divide every state of the federation into three districts for the election of senators. Moreover, subject to the provision of section 49 the INEC is to divide the country into 360 constituencies for the election into the federal House of Representatives (Benjamin, 2014). In division and delineation of the entire country, population index is important.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

At the heart of this study is finding explanation on the actions, activities of the legislature in Anambra State and perhaps more importantly, is to interrogate how the 6th Assembly manage the recurring issue of legislature and constituency relations in Anambra State. In the literatures examined, explanations for the widening gap between the legislature and constituencies vary.

Indeed, it is important to note that explanations of the trajectories of ineffectiveness, abandoning of the constituencies and poor representation in Anambra State cannot be exclusively located within the context of internal dynamics of poor performance of institutions (legislature) of the state which is a subset of the contest, rather, the explanation should also be sought from the character of the State and the unrestrained drive by political leadership to influence and direct the actions and inactions of institutions saddled with the responsibilities of making good laws for the people they represent. However, the emphasis of this study is to interrogate how legislature and its relationship with constituents engendered peace and progress in Anambra State especially the 6th Assembly. Following from the above illustrations thisstudy adopts the structural functional theory as its theoretical framework.Thus,

the structural-functional theory is an earlier version of system theory that emanated from sociology. The theory was developed by Gabriel Almond and J.S Coleman in 1960.

Functionalism became important when Darwin evolutionary theory began to influence thinking about human and institutional behaviour (Ishiyama & Breuning, 2010).The theory emphasizes how different part of the societal structures fit together and how each part contributes to the stability of the whole society. (Ormerod, 2020; Brym cited in Olutola, 2019, p.3). As rightly deduced from the proposition of functionalist theorists such as; Durkheim, Spencer, Merton, Radcliff-Brown, all systems have social structure, subsystem and institutions that are independent and interrelated, it's self-maintaining functions and orders influences changes that may likely affect the efficacy and functions of the others.This implies that the functioning of any political system, is predetermined by the role or functions performed by the structures, which could be synonymously be referred to as the institutions. These institutions could however be political parties, pressure group, the mass media, judiciary, legislature, specialized agencies among others. According to Almond (cited in Anifowose & Enemuo, 2015) every political system performs certain functions which included among others the input and output functions of the political system.

In the application of structural functionalism to the study therefore we interrogate how the legislature as a political structure functions in Nigeria with specific reference to the Anambra State 6th Assembly. The major issue of legislature-constituency relation is anchored on the fact that the representative of the people will always sort for contributions and perceptions of the people he represents. This will make him or her to make an informed decision on what his people want or did not want. Regular consultations also endear the legislature closer to the constituents. In fact, such legislators are easily re-elected by the constituents.

Undoubtedly, this institution (legislature) tends to have suffered more in Anambra state than other institutions. The implication is that the people the legislature represents also have suffered unduly under a supposedly people oriented government. The poor relationships of the legislature in Anambra State and the people are seemed from two perspectives. First, the overarching interest of the chief executive is constraining the legislature from listening to people and making more people oriented legislations. The executive also determine the funds of the legislature thereby using it as a tool to checkmate legislative activities. For instance, the inability of the legislature in Anambra State to have official offices at the legislative house in Awka created a problem of no avenue of discussion. Until, very recently and more specifically in 2016, the legislators in Anambra State did not have offices in the Assembly complex. This makes visitations and consultations difficult especially when virtually all the legislators did also not have constituency offices.

However, the completion of the StaCte Assembly complex that offers the legislature the opportunity to have offices can essentially be critical to cementing robust relations between the legislature and the constituents. The sixth Assembly appears to have enjoyed popular support. This can be attributed to the entire governance stability and the closeness of the people to their representatives. However, such closeness has not commensurately impacted on the constituency development and consideration of the views of the constituent in the process of legislative bills.

This theory is essential as it has been able to explain the place of the legislature in a political process and the extent it can help to ensuring that the opinion of the constituents are considered in the law making process. This theory is therefore fundamental if not the bedrock of this paper.

Enhancing Legislative Relations in a Democratic Setting

The enhancement of legislative relations for an effective representation is paramount in any democratic setting. Notwithstanding the constraints identified with effective legislative-constituent relations, the question is how can they be strengthened? Accordingly, Johnson, (1997) outlined activities and structures to enhance legislative constituency relations. These according to him include:

Inadequate, inaccessible meeting facilities and insufficient time for legislators to meet with constituent's act as constraints on relations between legislators and their constituents. Legislative buildings may be inaccessible to constituents. In many nations citizens must pass guards armed with machine guns to enter the national legislature, and may not enter without an appointment. On the other hand, in many western democracies, legislative buildings are open to the public, there are public galleries in the legislature so that any citizen can observe parliamentary proceedings, and parliamentary debates are broadcast and/or televised to the general public. School children often make visits to legislatures, meet legislative members and observe legislative proceedings.

Secondly, legislators in many nations are provided neither the time, space nor resources to interact with their constituents on a regular or meaningful basis. In the opinion of Johnson (1997) newer parliaments and many developing country legislatures, the procedures, processes and codes of conduct guiding parliamentary operations and members of the parliament activities are primarily focused on the internal workings of parliament and on its legislative and oversight responsibilities. However, in order for MPs to effectively fulfill their representational role, they require routine communication and easy access to their constituents in order to exchange views. Some opportunities for constituency interaction include the following:

Thirdly, in many countries, each legislative member is allocated office space within the legislature. These offices serve as a venue for legislators to meet with and be informed by individual constituents, civil society groups, and/or experts independent of the legislature.

Fourthly**, i**n most countries constituents live too far from the capital to be able to travel to it to meet with their legislators. Some nations bring legislators to the constituents by establishing district offices where legislators or their staff can meet with citizens, handle constituent problems, meet with local citizen groups and learn about local concerns and issues to raise in the legislature.

Fifthly, constituent offices and constituent affairs do not run themselves. They require staff, budgets and the time of legislative members. In developed countries, parliaments provide budgets for legislative members to hire staff and to run constituency offices. In many cases, volunteers augment staff resources. Constituency office staffs play an important role in dealing with press relations, preparing press releases for members, in hearing constituency complaints, responding to mail from constituents and in arranging appointments for members with constituent groups.

Finally, just as citizens must understand the legislature in order to influence it, so must civil society groups. In countries with a poor history of legislative democracy, state agencies, civil society groups tend to lack the knowledge of legislative processes even though they may be well organized around a particular issue and/or at implementing programs to address their particular concerns. And yet, in legislative systems, civil society organizations have a critical role to play whether in lobbying legislators for policy change or in representing the aspirations of their constituents at public hearings. Legislative information in the form of publications or the Internet information referred to above can help supply some of the knowledge needed, but civil society groups also can benefit from formal training designed to help them deal more effectively with the legislature.

Opinion of the Constituents and the debates of the Legislators in the floor of the Anambra State 6th House of Assembly

Traditionally, law making remains the exclusive preserve and concern of the legislature. In the contemporary societies, the law making process is also practiced and observed in other ministries, institutions that are not legislature. The outcome of this is that many issues emanating outside the legislature, play a vital role in shaping, determining and forming what is generally seen as legislative output or what is simply called an act of the parliament. Thus, the theory of separation of power between the executive and legislature tends to give way to the practice whereby the executive or the government takes a considerable large initiative in introducing, initiating and drafting of proposal bills to the legislature and sometimes gives

impetus to unbearable executive influences. A bill is a draft or proposal law waiting for consideration by the legislators. A new bill or bill tends to repeal, change or make new law, if considered and assented.

Thus, sections 58 and 100 of 1999 constitution state that the exercise of legislative powers is by means of bills passed into law by the legislature (be it the States or National legislature) and assented to by the chief executive (president or governor). Legislative practices have shown that legislative bills can be initiated through three principal sources. According to Udoh (2009) the three principal sources are the executive, the legislators themselves, and interest, professional groups or private individuals. He further stated:

(a) Executive: the president or in the case of a State, the governor, can initiate in the House what is known as government or executive bill. The contents of such bills are formulated by heads of parastatals, ministries and corporations, assisted by civil servants (in some cases) and are usually deliberated and approved by the cabinet before they are presented or forwarded to the legislature.

(b) Members of the legislature: any member of the legislature acting alone or in conjunction with a number of his or her colleagues can come up with a private member bill. The bill, which may seek to make a new law, amend or out rightly repeal an existing one, may arise from sundry sources including campaign promises made during elections and the observation of lapses in the application of the existing laws.

(c) Interest or pressure groups associations who feel concerned with the making or amendment of a particular law can initiate a bill through a member of the House who would sponsor it (see Udoh, 2009. p.36-37).

However, why it is important to state that processes of law making in Nigeria and indeed Anambra State House of Assembly with specific reference to 6th Assembly appear not to have being in dispute, there is still divergent opinions on the extent of inclusiveness or whether the opinions of the constituents are consider in the process of law making in Anambra State. Since the return to democratic governance in 1999 it is common knowledge that a good number of members of the legislative houses at both federal and state levels pursue pure personal interests that often inhibit them from combating the challenges of law-making. For instance, members tend to pursue contracts from the leadership of the houses and even from the executive and tend to easily compromise when it comes to contributing meaningfully to debates on the floor of the house. More worrisome is the degree of negligence of the opinion of the people or disregard to subjecting developmental policies and programmes of the state government to the public through public hearing or enlightenment.

Specifically, the present increasing state of indebtedness by Anambra State government can be attributed to legislative compromise by the 6th Assembly Legislature that leverages the executive to borrow more and invest less.

Arguably, it is a legislative tradition that all matters concerning the people, government expenditure, agencies and parastatals are resolved on the floor of the House through debate. But it is more fundamental to point at the lapses, compromises and inordinate pursuit of personal gains that have limited members of the 6th Assembly from resolving matters on the floor of the house to reflect the aspirations and wishes of the people. It has also led to a condition where majority of bills passed in the Anambra State House of Assembly are executive bills. The members who represent the people introduce little and sometimes their bills after passing rigorous processes would not be signed by the executive. Some of the bills passed by the 6th Assembly are stated below as:

Table:1 Some of the Bills Passed by the 6th Assembly in Anambra State

S/N	Title	Sponsor	Date Passed	Date Assent
1	Anambra State Gaming Bill 2017	Executive	21/03/17	20/02/18
2	Anambra State Data production Bill 2017	Hon. Uche Okafor and 28 others	21/03/17	07/04/2017
3	Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Amuku, Awka Bill 2017	Hon (Dr.) G. Nnamdi Okafor and 16 others	13/06/17	Bill Accordingly stood down 13/07/17
4	Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital Amuka Awka Bill 2017	Executive	29/06/2017	6/07/17
5	Anambra State Polytechnic (Establishment) Bill 2017	Executive	13/07/17	22/08/17
6	Customary Court of Appeal (Repeal) Bill 2017	Executive	13/07/17	18/07/17
7	Anambra State Housing Corporation Bill 2016	Executive	09/4/16	Not Stated
8	Anambra State Vigilante and Security Bill 2016	Executive	06/06/16	Not Stated
9	Tourism and Hospitality Bill 2016	5 Members	11/02/15	Not Stated

Compiled by the author from (Nation Newspaper, 2016; Sun Newspaper, July 2017; Vanguard Newspaper, April 2018).

While the above listed bills were aimed to touch the lives of the people, ensure security of lives and property, its applicability is dependent on the extent people

were consulted in the process of making the laws. Most importantly is to note that the 6th Assembly passed 10 bills and over 100 motions within one year of its existence.

However, a worrisome issue that also resonated within the same period is the increasing trend of some members resorting to absenteeism from the floor of the house and sometimes they do not participate at all in the proceedings except during budget approvals and discussions on some rewarding executive bills. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly is the fact that many of the legislators have ambitions to contest for leadership positions in the house or membership and chairman of juicy committees. A lot of valuable legislative time is wasted while pursuing these ambitions.

It is often rumored that bills hardly sail through the legislature until members have had their hands greased. The 6th Anambra State House of Assembly is always accused of this especially when the executive sends bills to permit it to borrow. However, in more critical issues representatives mostly rely on opinions of their constituents through public hearing and consultation. When people are not well consulted, Nnorom & Odigbo (2015) argued that people seem to oppose state policies. For them, this is because people are either not consulted, not informed of the importance of the policy or that the policy seems to be different from the priority needs of the people. Indeed, people may sabotage a good policy if not well informed. Such undermines the essence of constituency, representation and representative governance in Anambra state and Nigeria in general (Nnorom & Odigbo, 2015).The implication of this, therefore, is that debates on such bills either at the plenary or committee levels cannot be subjected to thorough scrutiny in the best interest of the constituents who are the objects and subjects of such bills eventually when they become laws. It is not too gratifying that such primordial and mundane issues have roles to play in passage of bills into law.

In all, the very reason for representation seems to be defeated in a situation where constituents are not consulted for laws purportedly meant for them. A true representation is not only expressed by the presence of someone but by the degree upon which the representative carries along the opinions and aspirations of his/her constituents.

No doubts, debates of the legislature are very crucial to arriving at people-oriented laws. Therefore, bills must be for the best interest of the people. Incidentally, while bills are rarely sponsored by members of the public, most bills sponsored by either the executive or members of the State Assembly are subjected to public hearing. Public opinions are by this harvested to enable the law-makers reflect, where necessary, the concerns and interests of the public in the bill before it is finally

passed into law. For instance, on October 1st 2021, Anambra State House of Assembly held public hearing on open grazing bill. At the end, the acceptance of anti-open grazing bill in Anambra State is based on peoples' decision and palpable evidence of shortages of land in the State. More logically, the state who is in dire need of land following the menace gully erosion and the size of the State cannot afford to designate lands for personal businesses. Thus, following from the data presented and the analysis made, we therefore validate our first hypothesis which says that the opinion of the constituents is included in the debates of the legislators in the floor of the Anambra State 6th House of Assembly.

Oversight Function of the legislators' and Effective Implementation of Constituency Projects in Anambra State

The return of civil rule in 1999 led to the inauguration of the National Assembly and State Houses of Assemblies. As a result, the political atmosphere was seemingly unconducive for adequate functioning of the legislative institution. This can be attributed to years of military regimes that created legislative lacuna in the Nigerian political space. Indeed, at the beginning of the democratic practice, there seems to be bitter conflicts and rivalries that resulted in persistent change of leadership both at the National Assembly and State Assemblies. It did actually not provide the atmosphere for legislative scrutiny of ministries and prompt oversight functioning.
Also, unbearable executive interferences on legislative matters tend to undermine legislative oversight performance that would assist effective implementation of programmes and policies of government. These interferences characterized the first eight years of democratic experiment under former president Obasanjo's government. Evidently, between 1999 and 2007 during former President Obasanjo dispensation there was reckless executive interference in the affairs of the National Assembly which also trickled down to State Assemblies in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, crisis ridding political environment, interferences in legislative issues seem to create room for political instability that tends to undermine implementation of some critical policies of the state.

Legislative oversight refers to the set of activities that a legislature performs to evaluate the implementation of polices (Micabbin & Schwartz, 1984; Olson & Mezey, 1991). It has also been defined by Kaiser (2006) as referring to the "review, monitoring and supervision of federal agencies, programs, activities and policy implementation".

In Anambra State, the 6th Assembly engaged in several forms of oversight activities. These include the visitation of parastatals and investigation into approved constituency project under execution by the members of the House. For instance, in October 8th 2016, the Anambra State House Committee on Public Account visited Onitsha North Local Government Area, to verify the account of the Local

Government. The essence of this oversight duty is to discourage or uncover financial recklessness. It also keeps parastatal and government bodies in check and ensures compliance to government approvals. Also, on September 25th, 2017, House Committee on Public Account embarked on verification of financial transactions of ministries, departments and agencies in Anambra State. This activity conducted at the state level is also geared towards compliance government expenditure.

On the other hand, in Nigeria, implementation of constituency project is sometimes faced with controversies. Beyond earlier contestations that it will amount to legislators usurping executive function, the prevailing challenge is on where to site the project, when and who to certify its implementation. As it is, no lawmaker has direct control over the implementation of projects aside from oversight function. Legislators occupy a better position to monitor and proactively ensure the execution of every project by reaching out to agencies in charge. Financing and supervision of projects are the best preserves of appropriate agencies (monitored by Legislature), citizens and civil society organization also have the right to engage both the legislature and executive to request details and implementation status.

Surprisingly, the federal of government in 2019 announced that in the last ten years, the government allocated a minimum of one trillion for constituency projects. Incidentally, some of these projects are abandoned, not sited or even replicated different budget year. It therefore heightens the issues surrounding the rational for constituency projects in Nigeria. Many legislators have not realized the enormity of abandoning the project meant to bring governance closer to the people.

In Anambra state, the implementation of constituency projects by the legislature is faced with the similar challenges as in the case of Federal Legislature. In fact, constituency projects have remained more haphazardly done or totally abandoned. Onu (2016) explained that over 15% of constituency projects in Anambra State are either partially implemented or completely abandoned. For instance, the legislators in some cases provide transformers to various communities and will fail to ensure that such transformers are connected to the national grid. At the end of the day, monies earmarked for connection are embezzled with no one asking right questions. It is also important to note that half done constituency projects only attract criminals to vandalize and steal the existing ones. Indeed, despite the huge amount of money that has been annually allocated to constituency project in Anambra State, yet the actual projects completed are not commensurate with what was budgeted. The implications are numerous. First, it has defeated the real essence or rational behind constituency projects. It could be recalled that the major argument for constituency projects is to bring closer to the people the minimum presence of government to the grassroots especially through developmental projects.

Thus, following from the data presented and the analysis made, we therefore validate our second hypothesis which says that theoversight duty of the legislators' in the 6th Assembly has failed to ensure effective implementation of constituency projects in Anambra State.

Representative Duties of the Legislature andConstituents' Relations in Anambra State

The roles the legislature performs in a democracy and the extent to which the roles are performed vary. In many democracies, the systems of government in place also vary from one country to another so as the duties of the legislature. Essentially, the legislative institution provides for the citizenry the platform to participate in political process.

Government in a democratic system implies the rule of the majority. Apparently, the legislature is one democratic institution that allows the various constituencies to which a state is delineated elect their representatives. When elected, the representatives are expected to represent the views, concerns and interests of their constituents in the legislature. In fact, central to representative democracy is the notion that elected representatives of the people constitute the legislative arm of government (Kousoulos, 1982). Indeed, representation of citizens in parliament is at the core of liberal democracy.

The legislature, hence, is saddled with enormous roles in any democratic system. This is even especially so where the institution enjoy a huge measure of autonomy in determining their internal operations, where there is constitutional provisions for operational and institutional independence. According to Fashagba (2009) in modern democracies the roles of representation, law-making and oversight of administration are often ascribed to the legislature. It is however important to point out that while legislatures are often vested with the law-making role, some legislatures contribute effectively in initiating bills and raising policy issues for the House to deliberate upon but others simply debate whatever proposals the executive present to it. Of course, the former in addition to initiating bills deliberate on policy proposals and bills emanating from the executive.

The modern legislature equally performs representational function. Principally, the people's representatives for the singular fact that they are elected by the people, especially under a democratic regime, hold the mandate of their constituencies within the polity (Davies, 2004). Implicitly, it therefore means that the essence of representative democracy lies in the delegation of governmental power and responsibility to a small number of people by the citizenry as a whole' (Davies, 2007, p. 179).

Essentially, the elected members of the parliament are expected to pursue good public policies for national development; this is most characteristic of electorates in the developed democracies of the world. In the emerging democraciessome variation may be seen, in terms of what the representational roles of the legislators specifically are. Beyond public policy goals, patronage opportunities for members of the constituencies are expected, by electorates in emerging democracies, from their elected representatives in the legislature. This other electorates are so predisposed as the result of their high level of impoverishment and their neglect especially under the prolonged military rule.

It is noteworthy that the modern legislature serves as an agent of reform in the state (Reed &Scheimer, 2003). In a state where some members of parliament are ideologically inclined the desire to implement their reform agenda will greatly influence their behaviors in the assembly. There is the instance of Japan in 2003 when some members of the ruling party switched parties to form a new party: the party defectors sought to push for their reform agenda which they could not achieve in their former part. Moreover, Nelson Polsby (cited in Ornstein, 1992) observed that the legislature may be broadly categorized into area and transformative legislatures (cited in Orstein, 1992).

Thus, a legislative assembly serves as forum for discussion of ideas and policies. In fact it drives the process of discussions and debates on the affairs of the people and state. It provides a formal platform for deliberation among significant political forces in the life of a political system. Conversely, the transformative legislature actively translates ideas into laws. The transformative legislature enjoys a huge measure of institutional autonomy to act on bills or policy proposals emanating either within the assembly itself or from the executive arm of the government. They mold and transform bills and proposals into laws, irrespective of the source.

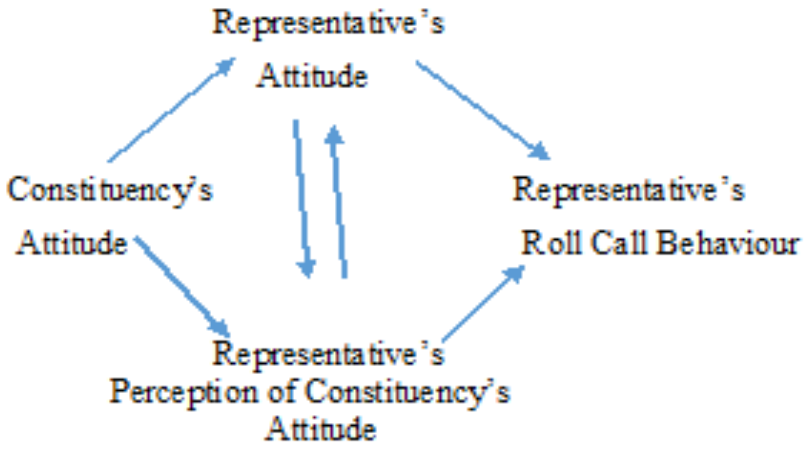
Nevertheless, a legislature can be transformative in function, a reformer in character, but such behavior is cautiously exhibited. According to Saffell (1989, p. 66), a common strategy is for congressmen to be conservative, clinging to past positions, while cautiously reaching for new positions on a few issues. This suggests that a legislature may sometimes find it very difficult to openly and passionately champion the necessity for a drastic reform, unless the action will improve the political fortune of the members pushing for the reform. Discarding old ideas for new ones thus means that not only has the society bought into the reform proposals but also the expected benefits of electoral rewards for the proponents far outweigh the cost. When this is the case, very many legislators willingly pursue reform agenda in the legislature. However, where the political cost is seen to outweigh the benefit, personal interest of the legislators will dictate that they tread with caution, as far as reform agenda are concerned. This perhaps explains why reform agenda have been difficult to push through in the Nigerian

legislature in the current fourth republic. Notwithstanding, some legislators have attempted to push for one reform or the other (Lewis, 2009).

The Anambra State House of Assembly has numerous duties being performed by the legislature but at different frequencies. The approaches and manners in conducting or executing these responsibilities tend to bring the legislature or legislators in the State closer to the constituents. Apart from initiating and executing projects in their various constituents, the legislators attend ceremonies and functions in their constituents. They also assist constituents who have individual problems and strive to attract the attention of the government (executive) to come to the aid of their constituents.

Legislators in Anambra State especially the state assembly legislators are fundamentally closer to the people and play critical role for the development of their constituencies. Such roles are symbiotic as both sides (both the legislator and the constituent) reinforce each other. Warren & Stokes (1963) demonstrated how constituencies influence the representatives and vice-versa. They argue that constituents are said to control the actions of representatives by choosing candidates who so share their views that, in following their own convictions they act in the constituents will, or by representatives following what they perceive to be the constituency attitude in order to win a re-election, they are being controlled in some way by the constituents. This idea was succinctly developed in their famous triangle which provides a model that shows the connection between constituent attitude and the representative role call behaviour where the constituents tend to control in some way the actions of their representatives.

Figure 1: Constituency's Attitude and Representatives Roll Call Behaviour



Source: *Warren & Stokes (1963, p. 51)*

The triangle shows that the representative's vote is according to what he thinks the constituent wants because he believes that his opinion is the same as that of the constituent. This is shown by the arrows connecting the two intervening factors

which are the representative's attitude and the constituency attitude. Warren & Stokes (1963) however reported that the results of their analysis are different for different policy domains. In the domain of legislative representation in Anambra State there is seemingly correlation between the roll call behaviour of the representatives and their constituency relations. It needs to be noted that while, the triangle shows some kind of connection between the constituency views and the representative's votes in the House, it fails to show whether the votes were influenced by the constituents' preferences or how much control the constituents may or may not have over the actions of the representatives. Following from the above, we therefore validate our third hypothesis which says that the representative duties of the legislature have enhanced its relationship with the constituents in Anambra State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

We have to reiterate that we evaluated the Legislature and Constituency Relations in Nigeria's Fourth Republic with specific focus on the Anambra State 6th Assembly and to this end the study found that the 6th Assembly was faced with perennial challenge of consultation. This makes it difficult for the legislature to understand properly the views and perspectives their constituents wish to want government follow in addressing critical issues affecting them.

This has made relations between some of the legislators and rulers in Anambra State to be less harmonious. It is based on the above analysis that we state the following findings; that in spite of the visible relations between the constituents and the legislature, there is still gap between the legislature and the constituents in the 6th Assembly in Anambra State. This is as a result of poor consultation. The 6th Assembly in Anambra State was not able to explore all necessary avenues for inclusive engagement; that the oversight duties of the legislators' in the 6th Assembly have failed to ensure effective implementation of constituency projects in Anambra State**; t**hat the representative duties of the legislature have enhanced its relationship with the constituents in Anambra State.

In the light of the above findings of this study, we put forward the following recommendations for policy makers or decision makers in Anambra State:

1. There should be an expansion of the forum for legislative consultation in Anambra State. This will enable the legislators to exhaust all stages of consultation prior to contributing to the debates in the floor of the House. Such wider consultations are needed for people to be carried along and the constituents to fill sense of belonging in the process of law making in Anambra State.

2. The State Legislature should establish a framework of evaluation that will enable independent body to determine the extent of implementation of constituency project in Nigeria and specifically in Anambra State.
3. There has to be a legislative orientation at the beginning of any legislative assembly. This will provide the opportunity to educating especially debutant legislators on their responsibilities especially as the representative of the people.

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