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CRITERIA FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN ETINAN VILLAGE

Nkereuwem David Edemekong
&
Blessing Joseph Edet

Abstract

Ibibioland in the precolonial period had a well-defined political leadership structure. In fact, political culture of the Ibibio is rooted in the in-built mechanism of the governmental system to breed and foster indoctrination of the young, responsible, patriotic and visionary citizenry. The changing patterns of governmental system following the colonial rule, even till the present, do not differ completely from what obtains in Ibibioland. In the course of this study, it will be seen that the concept of leadership in the 21st century is not asymmetry to Ibibio's conception of leadership. While the Nigerian society appears to be cut in web of leadership malfeasance, this study, thus, aims at identifying those qualities and criteria that makes for good leadership as practiced in Ibibioland and also recommends same to be followed in the bid to enthrone able, tested and trustworthy leadership anywhere in Nigeria.

Introduction

Leadership, anywhere in the world, is a critical tool for ensuring a progressive political engineering. In Nigeria, leadership has become a matter of grave concern with its manifestations in the

corrupt, mediocre and fraudulent activities of the supposed leaders. These manifestations seem to suggest a deviation from certain standard which accentuates good leadership. This work, therefore, considers leadership from the standpoint of Ibibio people. Thus, we shall attempt to realize the following objectives in this study.

- i. Give a brief account of Ibibio land;
- ii. Explain the meaning of the concept of leadership ;
- iii. Identify the principles that underlined effective political leadership in ibibioland;
- iv. Portray super-structure political leadership in Ibibioland as a reference point and change in continuity of European models of leadership.

IBIBIO: THE LAND AND LOCATION

The Ibibio live in the Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, located in the South Eastern corner of Nigeria between latitudes 4° 25' and 5°30' north of the equator and longitudes of 1030 and 8030 east, and west of the Cross River. Its area is about 7,246.01 square kilometers. The state is bounded on the North-West by Abia State, on the South-West by Rivers State, on the South by the Bight of Bonny, and on the East by the Cross River State of Nigeria. According to Antia (2005), Akwa Ibom State had about 5 million people, based on the 2006 census projections.

LEADERSHIP: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The concept of leadership evokes several meanings and studies elaborating different dimensions of it abound. Scholars such as Weber (1905); Burns, J. (1978); Page, G., (1977); Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939), Greenleaf (1977) Rowley and Rovens (2000) Carmazzi (2005); Fiedler (1967) have remarked, categorized, or conceptualized leadership. They view leadership as having a formal aspect (as in most political or business leadership) or an informal one (as in most friendships). Leadership, in its broadest sense, means a group of people functionally responsible for running a Nation-State, heads of families, mosques, churches, pressure

groups, political parties, local, state, national and international institutions (Atimomo, 1981). Leadership involves:

the inducement of followers by the leader to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivation, the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leader and follower” (Burns, 1978).

Leadership can also be defined in terms of direction and example provided by any person or group of persons who are chosen or who by an accident of history find themselves at the helm of affairs in a country or any vital part of it or in departments or institutions delegated to them for the purpose of overall development and good government of the country (Osuntokun, J. 1987). These scholars (listed above)) have also analyzed types of leadership styles such as the bureaucratic leader, the charismatic leader, the autocratic, the democratic leader, the laissez-faire leader, the people – oriented leader, the task-oriented leader (deal maker), the servant leader, the transaction leader, the transformation leader and the environment leader.

Sanskrit literature identified ten types of leaders. Defining characteristics of the ten types of leaders are explained with example from history and mythology. Aristocratic thinkers have postulated that leadership depends on one's blue blood or genes. Monarchy, the “Divine rights of Kings” took an extreme view of the same idea and may have propped up its assertion against the claims of mere aristocrats by invoking divine sanctions. Contrariwise, more democratically inclined theorists have pointed to examples of meritocratic leaders such as the Napoleonic Marshals profiting from careers open to talent. (Hall and Kirk, 2005; Spodek, 1998; Sabine and Thorson, 1973).

In *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Thomas Carlyle (1841) contended that world civilization had developed because of the activities of the heroes. The author's hatred and fear of democracy and praise of feudal society were

reflected in much of the subsequent writings especially in *Chartism* (1839) and *Past and Present* (1843). This scholar demonstrated the concept of leadership associated with a position of authority. In praising Oliver Cromwell's use of power to bring King Charles 1 to trial and eventual beheading. Carlyle (1845) further wrote the following:

Let us remark, meanwhile, how indispensable everywhere a king is, in all movements of men. It is strikingly shown, in this very war, what becomes of men when they cannot find a Chief Man, and their enemies can (p.65).

Within the context of Islam, views on the nature, scope and inheritance of leadership have played a major role in shaping sects and their history in the 19th century, the elaboration of anarchist thought called the whole concept of leadership into question. One response to this denial of elitism came with Leninism, which demanded an elite group of disciplined cadres to act as the vanguard of a socialist revolution, bringing into existence the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Lenin, 1975; Marx, 1978).

Other historical views of leadership have addressed the seeming contrasts between secular and religious leadership. The doctrines of Caesaro-papism have recurred and had their detractors over several centuries. Christian thinking on leadership has often emphasized stewardship of divinely – provided resources – human and material and their deployment in accordance with a Divine Plan (Newman, 1997).

Looking the concept of leadership from the background of politics, we can also understand that to aspire for any political demands certain criteria to be met. For example, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) - the body with the constitutional mandate to conduct elections Nigeria outlines the criteria for elections into political leadership as follows:

- a). **Area Council Election in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)**
- i. One must be a citizen of Nigeria.

- ii. One must be registered as a voter.
- iii. One must have attained the age of twenty five (25) years for Councilor and thirty (30) years for Chairman/Vice Chairman.
- iv. One must be educated to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent.
- v. One must be a member of a political party and be sponsored by it.

b. Member of House of Assembly

- i. One must be a Nigerian;
- ii. One must have attained the age of thirty years;
- iii. One must have been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent;
- iv. One must be a member of a political party and be sponsored by it.

a) Member of the National Assembly

- i. One must be a citizen of Nigeria and must have attained the age of thirty five (35) for Senate; and thirty (30) years for the House of Representatives
- ii. One must have been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent;
- iii. One must be a member of a political party and be sponsored by it.

b) Office of the Governor of a State

- i. One must be a Nigerian by Birth;
- ii. One must have attained the age of thirty five (35) years;
- iii. One must be a member of a political party and be sponsored by it;
- iv. One must have been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent.

c) Office of President

- i. One must be a Nigerian by birth;

- ii. One must have attained the age of forty (40) years;
- iii. One must have been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent.
- iv. One must be a member of a political party and be sponsored by that political party. (INEC, 2015)

Olayiwola (2013), in his account, *Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria* outlined the following criteria as representative of the attributes of leadership:

- (1) The existence in an individual of a clear set of ideas, values, aspirations reflecting those of the majority who are the subject of followership.
- (2) The existence of practical, purposeful initiative by the individual, reflecting the objectives of held ideas, values and aspirations.
- (3) The existence of concrete achievements involving the extent to which intended effects are produced by the leader.

He further stated that leadership is the activity of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to achieve an objective. To achieve objectives, the Leader must:

- (1) Establish a clear vision;
- (2) Share that vision with others so that they will follow willingly;
- (3) Provide the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision;
- (4) Coordinate and balance the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders. A leader steps up in times of crisis and is able to think and act creatively in difficult situations.

The great traits that a leader must have have been debated over time, and most people agree that these are the key traits for all types of societies, organizations or governments. First, as stated

earlier, you must have a vision. Consider the saying, “you must stand for something, or you’ll fall for something”. But what does that really mean? Standing firm when it comes to your institution’s policies and procedures is all well and good, but it does not speak of having a vision. As a leader, you have to learn to communicate your vision or the vision of your organization to the people you want to follow you. According to Umoette (2009), “you must have passion, you have to show your team that you want to accomplish the goals, as badly as they do, and your passion will drive them. You must learn to be a great decision maker”. Sometimes, leaders must face times of pressure where they are forced to make quick decisions; a great leader must have this skill. The royal father contended that your team responsibilities, and trust them too, and you must slowly make them greater and greater. You must have character, without character, all the other limitations play a critical role in your leadership style. The real question is, are you aware of just what role these character (traits) play. All great leaders have taken steps to learn about their individual personality and what part it plays in their leadership style.

Leadership, as it boils down to the Nigerian political scene, is a distorted and highly misplaced concept. The emphases have shifted from basic socio-cultural, religious principles and patriotism, to intellectual and economic might of the personality. Meaning that the criteria into many leadership positions have been characteristically determined by how wealthy and educated a man is. Education which should be vested in the cultivation of norms, values, and mores that make living meaningful have been shortchanged to imply the pursuit of power, wealth, and exploitation of the polity. This development perhaps accounts for reason personalized and sit-tight leadership as opposed the people-centred leadership is common in Nigeria.

Achebe concludes:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership...in spite of conventional opinion, Nigeria has been less than fortunate in its leadership. A basic element of this misfortune is

the seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of our founding fathers, a tendency to pious materialistic wooliness and self-centred pedestrianism (Achebe, 1985).

CRITERIA FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN ETINAN VILLAGE

There were various factors that formed the criteria for occupying leadership positions in Ibibio communities prior to colonial rule. These criteria included, inter alia, property ownership and control, descent superiority, kinship affiliation, royalty and nobility, six, membership specific organizations, religion and age. Two elements of the ethno-philosophy of leadership were in full force in leadership selection. The first was the “due process” element sanctioned by spiritual element which ensured respect for the rules of the game as the deities were invoked to intervene in helping the king makers make the right choice. The second was strict adherence to constitutionality- established conventions, norms and customs of the land- in the selection of the leaders and in their conduct of their official duties.

The issue of leadership in Ibibioland or elsewhere in history has always been resolved by the question of who should govern or rule and how? The question of who should govern or rule was always resolved by the legitimates, qualified, credible and capable people as to or in respect of satisfying the following and other questions: is he a bona fide citizen? (*Ab.k attip ay.n isoñ*). Is he law abiding? Can he keep secrets? Is he emotionally stable? Is he the type of person that can dispense justice to all without fear or favour? How about his personality and carriage? Is he tolerant and considerate? What about his hospitality and patriotism profile? Is he loving or selfish? People who satisfied these criteria were adjudged capable and given the chance to lead the society. There was no competition such as we experience today. The incidence of bribery and corruption was unheard of. Sometimes, people who were chosen were not aware of the proceedings leading to their selection.

After due consultation among the elders, and the village council *idion* was consulted by a delegation of the kingmakers. Following the consultation of *idion* whose confirmation of the candidate was usually indispensable, Edemekong (2008) espoused that in Mbioto Obio

Such an unsuspecting candidate will be seized and the symbol chieftaincy selection, “Udak” hung on his neck. It was not the practice for the information on such arrangement to be disclosed to the candidate, even by his closest relative who was privy to such plans (Oral tradition).

In Obong Enoch Eno Udofia's argument “leadership had always been in the hands of strong people, because of their wealth, large family size, and many children”. Udofia (2009) contended that such leader

May have been at the head of that group during their migration. They were usually feared and resented by others because they were strong. When the group settled, they may be made the leaders. They must have to be strong men and belong to *idion* cult, initiates in *Ekpo Anyokho* society. They must usually have large families and many children. These make them ahead of others (Oral Tradition).

But is it true that the chiefs were always wealthy? What of the Ibibio proverb that *Idoho awuo okpokpon idip mma ada uboñ*? –meaning that “the appointment or election as a chief is not predicted on being pot-bellied”. In other words, a “pot belly” is no prerequisite or criteria for the appointment or election of a chief. The literal connotation of this proverb is that suspicious wealth was not a criterion or qualification for appointment or election as a chief. Only people with sterling character and upright virtues were allowed to become chiefs in the indigenous Ibibio governmental system.

The point to note here is that in any given Ibibio community, certain groups or individuals assume pride of place in the authority and leadership structure. This is often considered by reason of the descent of the person aspiring to such political office. According to Okududu (2006), such a descent group that assumes superior identity would lay more claims to leadership positions. This is the first principle known as descent superiority. In Etinan village for instance, the family of Nung Umo Etuk Udo had successfully assumed descent superiority and firmly established their ascendancy to the village Headship. In a "Memorandum on the Rights of Nung Umo Etukudo to the Obongship of Etinan village" the family of Nung Umo Etukudo asserted that

Ours is very simple and straight forward case. Etinan has a TRADITIONAL chieftaincy. The first born family provides the chiefs, the second born provides regents, when necessary, all chieftaincy matters are at the instance of the first born, and their consent is paramount (Report, 1980).

Etinan is made up of nine families. They are

1. Nung Umo Etukudo
2. Nung Otuoyo
3. Nung Akpaete
4. Nung Isemin
5. Nung Akpan Efiok Unam
6. Nung Osurua
7. Nung Udo Inyang
8. Nung Udo Akpa Uso
9. Nung Ofong ESSION (Udofia, 2009)

Out of the nine families, Nung Umo Etukudo is the ruling family, Nung Otuoyo provides only the regents and the concession at the instance of the first born family of Nung Umo Etukudo. As a consequence of descent superiority, Nung Umo Etukudo assumes pride of place in the authority and leadership structures of Etinan. They had always assumed superior identity and laid more claims to

the village headship position. For instance, in 1918, Mr. Udo Ema of Akpan Asukpong of Nung Umo Etukudo the sixteenth Village Head who reigned from 1918 – 1926. Thirty years later, that is, in 1948, Mr. Harry Inyang Etuk, also of Nung Otuoyo failed to capture the traditional stool in an epic contest that conceded victory of the chieftaincy stool to chief Jonah Akpan Nsek also of Nung Umoh Etukudo, who reigned from 1948 to 1970. A bitter succession dispute ensued after his demise and lasted for more than ten years.

According to the Report (1980)

In 1918, Udo Ema from Nung Otu Oyo contested the village stool and lost to Akpan Asukpong of Nung Umo Etukudo, and in 1948, Harry Inyang Etuk also from Nung Otu Oyo contested the same stool and lost to Jonah Akpan Nsek of Nung Umo Etukudo. These all point to the fact that Etinan Village Headship had never belonged to Nung Otu Oyo or to any other family – in Etinan (p. 63)

To buttress the above, the third chieftaincy dispute that engulfed Etinan from 1971 – 1980 was resolved, yet, in favour of Nung Umo Etukudo as the ruling family. Consequently, the principal disputant, Mr. James Udo Inyang of Nung Out Oyo lost to Chief Sampson Usen Mbek the eighteenth Village Head of Etinan from Nung Umo Etukudo. On August 07, 1980 the resolution of Etinan Traditional Council which was held on that day settled the dispute thus

In view of the fact that Etinan Village Headship dispute has lasted for over ten years, and in view of the fact that the Etinan Traditional Council has sat over the dispute for over ten times; and in view of the fact that Nung Umo Etukudo has been found from the evidence before the council to be the only Ruling Family in Etinan; And in view of the fact that Chief Sampson Usen Mbek has been selected

by the evidence before the council to be the only Ruling Family in Etinan; And in view of the fact that Chief Samson Usen Mbek has been selected by the ruling family- Nung Umoh Etukudo, as the village Head designate for Etinan; be it resolved; and it is hereby UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED this 7th day of August, 1980 that:

1. Nung Umo Etukudo is the only ruling family in Etinan.
2. Chief Sampson Usen Mbek is recommended to the Cross River State Government for recognition as the Village Head of Etinan Village, in Etinan Local Government Area of the Cross River State of Nigeria.
3. The long standing village headship dispute is hereby finally settled (Nsek, 2009 and Osukpong, 2009; Udofia, 2009).

From the foregoing therefore this analysis has shown how descent superiority strengthened Nung Umo Etukudo's claim to the village headship position in Etinan Village in 1918, 1948 and 1980. It is worthy to note that in 1971, despite the fact that Mr. James Udo Inyang enjoyed overwhelming support of the other eight families, except Nung Umo Etukudo and was appointed by the Town Council's resolution dated April 24, 1971, Nung Umo Etukudo faulted the procedure and insisted that "our Chiefs have been appointed by resolution of the Town Council. We of Nung Umo Etukudo cannot abandon our birthright".

The second principle which is closely tied to the principle of descent superiority is *kinship affiliation*. This is necessary because the basis of citizenship or membership of any community is through the kindred of the person. This is indeed the ability to trace of one's genealogy. Thus, the capacity of individuals to exercise leadership and authority depend on their ability to show that they belong to a

particular kin group (Osuntukon et al., 2003; Okodudu, 2006). This can be vividly illustrated using Etinan Village, once again. There have been twenty (20) crowned village Heads in Etinan in remembered history and all of them from Nung Umo Etukudo, the "First Born Lineage" (*Ufok Akpan*), the direct descendant of Inan, the founding father of Etinan.

Information from oral tradition and written sources confirm that the 20 village Heads of Etinan in serial succession in accordance with the tradition of Ufok Akpan (first born lineage) have been

1. Inan
2. Eti Inan
3. Edok Eti Inan
4. Akpan Edok Eti Inan
5. Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
6. Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
7. Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
8. Nduke Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
9. Emin Etesu Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
10. Udonsek Ekwo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
11. Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
12. Akpan Ukpong Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan
13. Idem Ekong Umo Ekududo Ofon Nte Akpan Etok Eti Inan
14. Akpan Nsek Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (1888-1914)
15. Mbet Anako Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (1918-1914)
16. Akpan Osukpong Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (1918-1926)
17. Jonah Akpan Nsek Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (1948-1970)
18. Sampson Usen Mbek Anako Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (1971-1986)
19. John Dickson Ekwere Offiong Umo Etukudo Ofon

Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (1986-2002)

20. James Jonah Akpan Nsek Umo Etukudo Ofon Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan (2002-present) (Udofia, 2009; Udoro, 2009; Osukpong, 2009).

Altogether, there have been twenty-five (25) reigns over Etinan up to 2010. These include three minority regencies, one usurpation, and one concession,

1. 7a - Akpan Ekaette Oturua-Regency I
- 11a - Umoren Akpan Ekaette alias Umoren Nkpoata – Regency II
- 14a - Utin Akpan Ekaette - Regency III
- 16a - Udo Utin Akpan Ekaette (1927 – 1947) – Regency IV (Report, 1980).

All the four regencies came from Nung Akpan Ekaette Oturua, an arm of Nung Umo Etukudo. It should be noted that Oturua was adopted by Nte Akpan Edok Eti Inan, the fifth rule of Etinan and Umoh Etukudo's great grand ancestor, and that Oturua was subsequently sent to inherit Otuoyo's property because Otuoyo', the second son of Akpan Edok Etinan and Nte's Brother had no child. It is this kinship affinity of the descendants of Oturua that gave them legitimacy to hold the four regencies as recorded above when the ruling family could not produce any substantive leader (Report, 1980).

As the third principle that dictated those who performed leadership role in Ibibioland, only those of royalty and noble background exercised authority over the others. In most of Ibibioland, leadership was inherited on the basis of the individual's circumstances of birth. Especially, only those who possessed blue blood in their veins were said to belong to the "ruling family" and could aspire and indeed, took on indigenous governmental leadership positions. However, this principle did not include leadership of all type, such a Idiong and Ekpo Anyokho etcetera.

For instance, the current Chairman, Akwa Ibom State Council of Chiefs who is also the village head of Itok Udo Oto in

Etinan Local Government Area as well as the Clan head of Iman and Paramount Ruler of Etinan Local Government Area has supported this thus

I was born into a royal family. My great grandfather founded this village (Ikot Udo Oto) some 300 year ago, and incidentally, I am surrounded by loyalty. My mother was a daughter of the Deputy Village Head of Ikot Abasi No. 1, Late Chief John Akpanatia. On my father's side, my great grandmother was the first daughter of the then village Head of Ikot Isong. So you can see that in my circle, I am being surrounded by royalty (Oral Tradition).

Sex was the fourth principle or criterion for occupying privileged leadership or authority positions in ibibioland. For example, in most traditional authority situations, the female-folk were often not taken into consideration. Women were generally seen as not only the weaker sex but also as a social category that should be controlled. Some Ibibiowise sayings and philosophy lend credence to this as they were deliberately crafted to justify discriminatory practices based on gender. These include, *inter alia*: *Abudu awunwan atre ke ufok ubom* meaning that a woman's jurisdiction of authority is the kitchen; *Awunwan esedat itid isidadta anyen* meaning a woman has an inalienable right to possess redness in the vagina but not in the eyes. The other woman who was contained by the severe hardships imposed on her by the customs and social practice was so relegated to the background that she was derisively referred to as *Awunwaan Itid Uduang* and many others. The concept of *Awunwaan Itid Uduang* was a contemptuous comparison of the average Ibibiowoman with *Itid Uduang* (the anus) whose notoriety for facilitating farting and excrement rendered it as useless and the least respectable part of the human anatomy. That is, a part of the body where nothing decent, honourable or worthy to be applauded had ever emanated from. In other words, a woman like the anus was good for nothing and so was relegated to the background in Ibibioculture.

However, certain circumstances arose where the functions of a position can only be performed by a woman. For instance, certain leadership obligations that were associated with the wife of a chief (Anwan Obong) or the mother (Eka Obong) or the first daughter (Adiaha-Obong) were of necessity occupied by a woman. Eno Ikpe (2005) observed in this direction that

There is a tendency to homogenize women as a group subject to oppression and marginalization. Yet women in their socio-cultural and economic realities do not represent a homogenous group. The Ibibio culture recognize this (p. 79).

The author argued that this recognition of a woman of achievement in Ibibio culture gave vent to the concept of Awowaan or Awunwaan Itiaba, which means literally “woman, seven times over” or “a woman like seven women or even men or a woman with capacity of seven women or even men”. The author further espoused that “*Awowaan* or *Awuwaan Itiaba* is therefore a woman of achievement who achieve as much as seven normal achievers are supposed to achieve” according to the scholar

Such a woman who (sic) is not oppressed, not marginalized, not weak, not battered, and not empowered. This is the type of woman described...as “Eagle Woman”...Indeed; this is the type of woman described...as empowered (p.79)

Thus, though leadership was exclusively reserved for the male, a heroine, a skillful, and intelligent; a brave and empowered woman of substance and excellence that blazed the trail and achieved historic feats was recognized on merit as *Awunwaan Itiaba*. Examples of this type of women included Madam Asonko Ekpo Umoh of Mbioto Obio, and Unwa Etok Nwa Akpan of Ekom Imam both in Etinan Local Government Area. Madam Adiaha Akpan Anya should also be noted as cook and caterer par excellence. She is credited with the saying that “*Awuo ama obok afere kan Adiaha*

Akpan Anya, atoño uduañ asin” translated it means, any cook or caterer who outclasses Madam Adiaha Akpan Anya would certainly be spicing such cooked food with an excrement. For the Ibibio woman of the class of Madams Asonko Ekpo Umoh, Unwa Etok Nwa Akpan, Adiaha Akpan Anya and others who were best educated, sophisticated and best educated, sophisticated and best equipped to lead others, Eno Ikpe (2005)

Awowaan Itiaba is thus a differentiation category, which defines an empowered woman, a woman of achievement. Awowaan Itiaba is not an official title but a title informally given, in recognition of a woman's achievements, these include her capacity to work fruitfully, organize and mobilize others both in the private and public spheres. By her achievements, she commands the respect of the women and the men-folk in the society (p. 80).

Chief Ekpenyong Effiong Akpan Udo Itina, Family Head of Nung Aman. Ikot Udo Enang, Mbioto Obio, informed this writer in his palace on December 28, 2008 that Asonko Ekpo Umoh and Unwa Etok Nwa Akpan were such exceptionally talented women whose popularity were hailed throughout Iman clan. They were the only female folk known to have climbed the oil palm tree to harvest the fruits. Apart from weaving the roofing mats by themselves, they are not known to have allowed any man to climb the roof of their huts for matting purposes. They were very knowledgeable in all the ovations and traditional jobs meant for the men folk. Within the environs, they held the record of being the only women in history to have been initiated into Ekpo cult. These were typical examples of *Awunwaan Itiaba* in Imam Ibom clan. The former was born about 1898 and was still holding sway in 1989 and was still holding sway in 1989 when she died (Itina, 2008).

As the fifth principle of political role performance, individual who inspired to perform political roles must belong to some age-long specific indigenous societies (Uko, 2009).

Membership of *Ekpo, Ekpe, Ekoon, Ataad, Abon, Ikwood* and so on, in the indigenous societies is necessary. In various clans and communities, priests and priestesses of specific shrines and deities were accorded specific leadership functions (Ndoon, 2009). For instance, Oku Itina Iman Ibom, Okuku Anantia Ibiono Ibom, Oku Ukana Offot, Oku Awa Itam, Oku Anyang Nsit, Oku Udoe Oku, Oku Abaam, Oku Ndem Uruan Inyang Atakpor. In Uruan Local Government Area, for instance, Oku Ndem Uruan Inyang Atakpor is in charge of the religious affairs of Uruan clan (Essien, 1994).

Finally, the sixth principle of leadership recruitment is *age*. Age was generally a factor that determined who occupied certain offices in the indigenous Ibibio society. Usually people occupied political positions and dispensed with authority that was associated with such an office because of their age (Inyang, 2009). Ibibio traditional political system was largely gerontocratic. Even in contemporary times, it still largely remains that way.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, we have shown that Ibibioland was not a “static” society. It had evolved its civilization before colonialism. The evidence that has been provided in this study using the Ibibio Example has proven beyond doubts that there were states in form of *Idung* or *Obio, Aduuk, Essioon* or *Ikpaisong*. Leadership and authority systems in pre-colonial Ibibio communities, indeed largely facilitated the policy of indirect rule system by the British colonial administration in the area, and in Nigeria as a whole. Additionally, it is proven that in terms of ascension or rising to political leadership, certain cherished attributes, singly or collectively that were derived from the values of a society must be found in individuals aspiring to political office. In other words, ascension to leadership position was determined by certain group of factors. These show the high level of organization and political administration before the colonial intercourse. Put differently, there was political administration and there were definite rules that determined individuals' roles in the system. On the whole, the political culture stressed male dominance and tended

to subjugate whatever was female, though they still had their rights. Kinship, heredity, integrity thorough grounding in the mores and values of the society were the basic prerequisites for appointment or election and ascendancy to the leadership and chieftaincy positions.

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