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Public Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria: Questions, Challenges and Prospects

Ideobodo Nwafor-Orizu [α], Okolo Modesta Chinyere [σ] & Eze Kierian Tochukwu [ρ]

Abstract- The nature, stability and development of any government organized country is a phenomenon that is dependent on public policy. This in all ramifications proves the paramount relevance of public policy planning, making, implementation and analysis in efficiency and effectiveness of government. The existence of public policy practice however, is not devoid of challenges as it poses a fundamental question of how best to model public policy so as to create the most efficient and effective government. Numerous previous literatures had attempted to do justice to this question; nonetheless, little or no attention has been given to basic components of this question which are 'how to aggregate diverse public interest into a public policy, and how to tackle the on-paper-non-practice syndrome of established public policies'. This paper attempts to fill this gap in literature by examining these public policy questions and establishing a panacea for them. A retrospective study of the Nigerian public policy practice was undertaken. The findings indicate that ethno-religious and tribal heterogeneity breeds non-tolerance which poses a problem to the aggregation of diverse public interest into public policy and that the implementation of public policies has been marred by corruption-bred strong-individual against strong-institution factor and the issue of citizenry acceptance of this practice as a right and non-abrogable one. This paper recommends sociopolitical restructuring and reorientation of the entire citizenry as a worthy alleviation to these public policy questions.

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I. Introduction

Man as an individual and in society is a being of social nature. Hence, the life of man is the life of social interaction. Man's social interaction does not exist in isolation of social problems and as man interacts in different spheres of life – politically, economically, technologically, educationally, and otherwise, these social problems diffuse and spread along these sectors of life. It is in recognition of these social problems and in a bid to proffer durable and reliable solutions to them that the government is always seen formulating policies in response to them and in relation to fostering development, stability, growth, citizenry wellbeing and administrative efficiency. This is necessary because if attempts are not made to address these problems as they arise, they may degenerate into uncontrollable stages with the society's socio-economic growth and development endangered (Okoli and Onah, 2012). In view of this, a policy is a conscious plan of action and the action itself, initiated to solve a specific social problem. It is a plan or course of action by a government, political party or business designed to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters (Lennon, 2009). Public policy on the other hand when mentioned, limits policy meaning to the one that has majorly the involvement of the government in policy formulation and implementation. Little wonder, Dye (1995) conceived public policy as what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it does make. Also, Ikelegbe (2006) defines it as the integrated course and programmes of action that government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct actions and practices in certain problem area. It is thus, used mainly in reference to what government does in order to meet the needs, yearnings and aspirations of the citizenry. This could be in the form of actions taken in the course of distributing, regulating and redistributing resources in the society. However, these actions do not necessarily have to emanate exclusively from the government, as the citizenry can initiate them as well. Nevertheless, no matter who the initiator of a public policy is, his initiatives would have to be acted upon by the government before such actions could appropriately be labeled as public policy (Dlakwa, 2008). Precisely speaking, the concept is central to governments, private organizations and individuals. It addresses the affairs of all persons, groups, organizations and governments in a polity. Public policy therefore, is a function of government in collaboration with the citizenry in form of agreed plan of actions and programmes aimed at solving social problems and improving positivity. It is a purposive course of action followed by a political actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or a matter of common concern (Anderson, 1984).Government commits much time, energy and resources to the development of policies. Some even take years to make, but once made, they become the regulatory instrument and/or the big guiding stick in related areas of activity. Officials in both public and private organizations spend much time in enunciating policies and explaining how actions fit into existing policies. In fact, the impression the ordinary man drives from the ado about policy is all what governments and organizations talk, make and do. The frequency of the concept in public discourse has made it more ambiguous and confusing. Individuals, families,

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clubs, cultural groups, communities, government departments, small business organizations as well as the large ones, all talk about their policies (Ikelegbe, 1994). However, the concern is always focused on government policies because it is government policies that direct the economy and reposition the society in a manner where law and order is maintained. Virtually all aspects of societal enterprise are components of the object of public policy, a dynamic and value-laden process through which a political system handles a public problem (Plank, Sykes, &Schneider, 2009; Bolaji, 2014). This is so in all government societal formation including Nigeria. The Nigerian public policy practice is one that is observably laughable in comparison to its counterparts in some other countries. From the evolution of Nigeria, the country was a merger of diverse multifarious ethnic groups; therefore its public policy should be a cross-ethnic integrative one. However, the country during the colonial era witnessed a relatively high amount of virtually colonial policies that had no contribution from its citizens as a result of the imperialist intentions of the colonial masters. Instances are the colonial Bini, Esan, Asaba and Afenmai forest reserve policy of 1937, the banking policies of 1894 and 1926, voting policies of 1922 - 1951 and political labour policy of 1895 – 1911 amongst numerous others. Similarly, with the intervention of military in government as a result of high incapacitation and aggrandizement of the civil regime, the military believed that they have the answers and solutions to all problems plaguing the Nigerian state. This resulted to their non-involvement and consultation of the citizenry in public policy formulation process. The effect of this was absolute negativity in the direction of policies, thus; resulting in decayed economy, power failure, high rate of unemployment, poor health service delivery, fall in standard of education, rise in school drop-outs, housing crisis, poor infrastructural and amenities provision among others. This awful stench on the Nigeria public policy practice followed the country even on its return to civilian rule. Several reformatory measures have been put in place from 1999 till date to ensure consultation and involvement of the citizenry in policy formulation, but as a result of the influence of colonial policy formulation methodology and that of the military regime coupled with the multifarious nature of the country's ethnicity having varied and often conflictual interests which formed the interest groups, public policy formulation has been challenged with difficulties of aggregating the interest of all ethnic nationalities into public policy without breeding conflict and outcry of marginalization. On the hand of public policy implementation, it is no news that Nigeria has been tagged a country with on-paper-non-practice public policies. This explicitly means that Nigerian public policy practice is also challenged with public policy implementation problem. Implementation problem occurs when the desired result on the target beneficiaries is not achieved. Such problem is not restricted to only the developing nations. Wherever and whenever the basic critical factors that are very crucial to implementing public policy are missing, whether in developing or developed nations, there is bound to be implementation problem (Makinde, 2005). These critical factors are communication, resources, dispositions or attitudes, and bureaucratic structure (Edwards, 1980). The four factors operate simultaneously and they interact with each other to aid or hinder policy implementation. By implication, therefore, the implementation of every policy is a dynamic process, which involves the interaction of many variables. Bringing it down to Nigeria however, the implementation problem has been attributed to all the above critical factors especially the bureaucratic structure and the attitude factor. The bureaucrats are mainly charged with the responsibility of implementing public policies. However, Okonjo-Iweala (2017) opined that the Nigerian Public bureaucracy is a den of thieves. The reason for her assertion is not farfetched as trends in Nigerian bureaucracy reveal the machinations and sub-optimalization of bureaucrats to alter policies to their favour at the detriment of the purposed goal for which the policies were established. Also revealed in contemporary regime's fight against corruption is the influence and attitudes of strong individuals in policy formulation and implementation, where these recidivistic political overlords determine which policy to be formulated and how they should be implemented especially in their favour and/or in the favour of their ethno-religious affiliation. It is in view of these that numerous questions have emerged ranging from "Are Nigerian public policies really reflecting democracy, quality representation and citizenry involvement? How can Nigerian public policies be cross-ethnically made without conflict in view of diverse and often conflicting interests of ethnic groups? How can the Nigerian public policy on-paper-non-practice implementation problem be brought to an end? How can Nigerians mitigate the incessant recidivistic favouritism in the nature of their public policy implementers?" It is in cognizance of these questions, issues and challenges that this paper attempts to bring answers and solutions to the Nigerian public policy formulation and implementation problems through an indwelling histo-analytical examination of public policy issues in Nigeria.

II. Theoretical Underpinning

The issue of policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian is an age-long one that dwells on aggregating interests and translating established policies into action. This however has been reported to lag behind policy expectations (Barrett, 2005). It is in view of this that there is a need to put forward theoretical support and evaluation that will

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evaluate the policy scenario and establish a panacea in terms of formulation, translation and execution as accurately as possible (Hyndman, Benson and Telford, 2014). In cognizance of this, this paper adopts a theoretical integrative approach, using the Pluralist-interest group theory and Elite-rational choice theory as theoretical instruments to underpin the focus of this paper.

The Pluralist-interest group theory centers on how power and influence are distributed in a socio-politico-economic process. This theory which was propounded in the 17th century and expounded in the 1950's by Alexis De Tocqueville, James Madison, David Truman amongst others, holds that in every society, there exists groups with often varying and conflicting interests who strive to maximize the achievement of their respective interests foremost. According to Merriam-Webster (online Dictionary), pluralism advocates for a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of common civilization. This theory paints a realistic picture of Nigeria; a country with multifarious ethnic nationalities having varying and often conflicting interests who strive to ensure that each of their various interests are captured, accommodated and actualized. This poses a serious problem to incorporating interests into public policy as most of these interests are divergent and conflicting, thus, cannot all be accommodated into a single uniform policy without breeding conflict. Little wonder, Truman (1950) opined that in pluralism, lines of conflict are multiple and shifting as power is a continuous bargaining process between competing groups. Thus, the Nigerian public policy practice is well captured by the pluralist-interest group theory as there exist a number of ethno-religious groups with different and often conflicting interests who compete to influence and control government policy.

The Elite-rational choice theory which is the second theoretical support of this paper is a merger of Elite theory and Rational choice theory. The elite theory propounded and developed by Vilfredo Pareto (1848 – 1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858 – 1941), Karl Marx, Robert Michel, Wright .C. Mills etc. holds an accurate view of reality of power relationships in contemporary society. The theory posits that a small minority consisting of members of economic elite and policy planning networks holds the most power and that this power is independent of the states' democratic election process; thus creating a power bourgeoisie-proletariat society. This implies that the society is stratified with the masses at the bottom and the ruling class elite at the top (Mosca in Dlakwa, 2008). These elites are the strong individuals of the society, they are wealthy and share common belief; they have strong political affluence if they themselves are not politicians and as a result, they use their influence to dictate public policies. Deductively, any policy which goes against this class could be predicted to fail. The theory holds that these elites are usually public regarding and displays a sense of noblesse oblige, thus, they easily manipulate the citizenry with philanthropic acts. Philanthropy then becomes an instrument with which they reduce the threat that the masses will demand for a more positive citizenry-affective policies; instead, the masses are seen laying ignorant blames on the government of the day and ascribing praises to these elites.

The Rational choice theory of 1960's whose proponents are George Homans, Gary Becker, William Stanley Jevron amongst others, on the other hand holds that individuals always make prudent and logical decisions. These decisions provide people with greatest benefit or satisfaction given the choices available and also in their highest self interest. The implicit of this in the application of the theory to the Nigerian public policy practice scenario reveals that policy influencers, initiators, makers and implementers pursue their own self interest instead of any national interest in the policy formulation and implementation process.

In integrating the Elite and the Rational choice theory to become Elite-Rational choice theory, a clear picture of how the power bourgeoisie (strong individuals) who are policy formulation and implementation influencers in a bid to achieve their own self interest through logical decisions uses their strong political influences to dictate public policy formulation and implementation at the detriment of the citizenry.

Conclusively, a critical look at the functionality of Pluralist-Interest group theory and Elite-Rational choice theory in Nigerian public policy practice will paint a realistic picture of the presence of multifarious ethno-religious groups having strong oligarchy (power bourgeoisie) each, whose varying and often conflicting interest is what the Nigerian government have been trying to incorporate into public policy and not that of the citizenry. A closer watch also reveals that at each point that the government internalizes the interest of the citizenry irrespective of the ethno-divergent nature of the country into public policy, implementation problem arises as these strong individuals tend to use their influence to ensure that the policy develops the on-paper-non-practice syndrome having logically reasoned the outcome of the policy on the power and interest of their oligarchy.

III. Histo-Analytic Review of Some Nigerian Public Policies

The Nigerian state in a bid to ensure efficient and effective governance has established and witnessed numerous policies; all usually geared towards the attainment of five principal objectives which are to establish Nigeria as: (i) a united, strong and self reliant nation (ii) a great and dynamic economy (iii) a just and

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egalitarian society (iv) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens and (v) a free and democratic society (2nd national dev. Plan, 1970 – 1974). In light of this, the Nigerian policies cover a wide spectrum of activity areas spanning through all sectors of the country. This justifies the reason that public policies like an octopus touches on various aspects of life of the people. This paper outlined below some prominent public policies that had been established by the Nigerian state and they include: (i) Agrarian Revolution Policy of 1963 (ii) Gowon 3-R Policy (iii) Green Revolution Policy (iv) Ethical Revolution Policy (v) War Against Indiscipline(WAI) Policy (vi) War Against Indiscipline and Corruption(WAIC) Policy of 1994 (vii) Better Life Programme for Rural Women(BLPRW) of 1987 (viii) Family Support Programme(FSP) of 1994 (ix) Indigenization Policy of 1972 (x) Deregulation, Commercialization and Privatization Policy of 1986 (xi) Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery(MAMSER) Policy of 1987 (xii) Family Economic Advancement Programme(FEAP) (xiii) National Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme of 1986 (xiv) Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Programme of 1986 (xv) Agriculture Sector Employment Programme(ASEP) of 1986 (xvi) Operation Feed The Nation(OFN) (xvii) National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Nigeria of 2015 (xviii) National Policy on Food and Nutrition in Nigeria of 2002 (xix) National Health Insurance Scheme(NHIS) Policy (xx) Structural Adjustment Programme(SAP) of 1986 (xxi) Poverty Alleviation Programme(PAP) of 2000 (xxii) National Poverty Eradication Programme(NAPEP) (xxiii) Petroleum Subsidy Policy (xxiv) New Automotive Policy of 2013 (xxv) National Industrial Revolution Policy (xxvi) National Enterprise Development Programme (xxvii) Fiscal Policy Measure on Rice of 2014 (xxviii) National Cashless Economy Policy of 2012 (xxix) Economic Naira Devaluation Policy of 2014 (xxx) Treasury Single Account(TSA) Policy of 2012 (xxxi) National Social Investment Programme(NSIP) of 2016 (xxxii) Anchor Borrowers' Programme of 2016 (xxxiii) Seven point agenda policy of 2007. (xxxiv) Go back to land policy. (xxxv) Rebranding Nigeria policy (xxxvi) Vision 2020 policy.

However, to drive home the thrust of this paper and effect a reliable study, six policies were selected randomly on 10 years interval starting from the country's independence till date (1960-1969, 1970-1979, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2000-2009, 2010 till date). One from each year bracket. The selected policies are studied through analysis below:

Agrarian revolution policy of 1963: This was an agricultural policy of the first republic launched by Alhaji Tafawa Balewa led government in 1963. This policy was aimed at boosting agriculture which was the mainstay of the national economy at that time. The foundation of this revolution was laid by the erstwhile colonial administration which promoted agricultural production through the introduction of large scale farming between 1940 and 1960, resettlement and partnership scheme, establishment of production and development corporations, establishment of farm settlements and farm institutes, education of farmers through extension and logistic supports, establishment of control boards which later became marketing boards, establishment of model farms such as the Moore plantation (established in Ibadan) and Samaru as experimental stations to promote agricultural research activities (Obasi et al, 2009). The agrarian revolution policy made Nigeria a major exporter of such major cash crops as groundnuts which were produced mainly in the northern Nigeria, palm produced in the eastern Nigeria and cocoa in the western Nigeria. Unfortunately, the policy met its untimely death with the emergence of civil war of 1967-1970 and its concomitant colossal infrastructural damages. Although, prior to this time, the dividends gotten from this policy were looted by the political cabals which served as a remote cause of the January 15, 1966 military coup led by Kaduna Nzeogwu.

Gowon 3R Policy of 1970: In a bid to re-order the society which has been battered by the Nigerian-Biafran civil war, the Gen. Yakubu Jack Gowon led administration established a three in one policy popularly referred to as 3R – reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Reconstruction policy was aimed at the physical assets like roads, buildings, hospitals, air and seaports, markets, schools, refineries, government and private properties, the rehabilitation policy at the disabled, those that lost their jobs and properties during the war crisis and reconciliation policy sought to bring all the ethnic nationalities involved in the war and even those that didn't together once more. The formulation of this policy though have been argued to be of good motive have also been greatly linked to the decisions of the northern mafias, an elite ruling class cabal that championed the July 29, 1966 coup and installed the then military head of state and from whom he takes advise and instructions(Azichukwu, 2010). Little wonder, the policy implementation witnessed a series of ethno-religious critique. Instances are the issue of little or no reconstruction in the east (the Igbo ethnic nation) where the highest asset damage was done whereas the reverse was the case in the northern region and even western region where the effect of the war was relatively felt. These regions (northern and western) received capital intensive constructions such as third mainland bridge, FESTAC, Murtala Mohammed international airport and national theatre whereas government demolition of remaining assets was seen on the Igbo land where the emergency airport constructed in Nsukka was demolished instead of being reconstructed into a

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more standard one. On the part of rehabilitation, not much attention was paid to the Igbo ethnic nationality, most of the Igbos lost their houses and properties to the instituted indigene ownership Acts especially at the current river state province. They were paid only 20pounds no matter how much they had in the bank before the war based on the dictate of the military head of state. An amount not sufficient to start a new life and thus, made them incapable of participating in the federal government indigenization policy which came 2years after the war and required huge capital. On the part of reconciliation, who would be stripped of his hard earned wealth and properties and still want to be friends with the stripper? It is in view of this that Erondu (2010) asserted that Gowon won the war but lost the peace. From all indications, the northerners through their elites (the northern mafia) and the military head of state used this policy both in formulation and implementation to handicap the Igbo nation who was their main opposition during the war.

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1986: The structural adjustment (SAP) was a multifaceted economic programme initiated on June 27, 1986 by the Babangida led administration to restructure, diversify, and revitalize the nation's economy. The introduction of SAP became necessary when the Babangida administration took a hard look at the poor performance of the national economy since the military came into power. The programme was aimed at tackling four fundamental causes of Nigerian economic problems: (1) a decrease of Nigerian domestic production ever in the face of increasing population (2) dependence on imports for both consumer goods and raw materials for Nigerian industries (3) a grossly unequal gap between the rich and the poor (4) the large role played by public sector in economic activities with hardly any concrete result to justify such a role (Federal ministry of information and culture, 1986). However, the core objective of the programme according to Aromaye in Ijere and Ayoola (1995) was to reduce through promotion of non-oil exports, the excessive dependence of the Nigerian economy on crude petroleum as the major foreign exchange earner. To achieve the aim of SAP, several policies were attached to it. The first among these policies was the austerity measure which sought to teach Nigerians and Nigeria a lesson on the need for one to cut one's coat according to one's cloth. This measure brought a great deal of hardship on Nigerians, especially drastic cut in, or withdrawal of government largesse, scarcity of essential commodities, retrenchment of workers and galloping inflation. The second, third, fourth and fifth of these policies were second-tier foreign exchange market, privatization, commercialization and deregulation policies which was aimed at economic liberalization of the country through encouragement of controlled privatization, commercialization and promotion of non-oil exports (Madu et al, 2000). Despite the positive laudable intentions of the policies of this programme and the programme in its entirety, it has its seamy side and thus, failed for the following reasons: (A) depreciation of naira (B) non-consultation of the citizenry in its formulation as it was alleged that the policy was the making of the military president (Babangida) and his elite cabals for their own self interest (C) high cost of importation of raw materials, spare parts and other industrial inputs (D) decline in industrial production as many industries suspended production or produced at less than their production capacity as a result of non-availability or scarcity of raw materials (E) high cost of industrial products, some of which were beyond the reach of average Nigerians (F) Accentuation of unemployment as many of the idle industries and those under limited production inevitably laid-off many of their workers (G) social hardship as many Nigerians found it difficult to make ends meet and (H) high import bill which constituted a drain on the economy.

War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) Policy of 1994: The war against indiscipline and corruption (WAIC) policy was launched in 1994 by the Gen. Sani Abacha's administration as part of the administration's search for a good society. The purpose was similar with Gen. Muhammadu Buhari's WAI and these were to introduce sanity and respect among Nigerians, promote respect for traditional institutions, imbibe right attitude to work in Nigerians and eradicate criminal tendencies both morally and economically among Nigerians. Though of similar purpose with Buhari's WAI, WAIC took a different approach and was practically a mere paper work since even the initiators and the leaders were more undisciplined and corrupt than their subjects. As observed by Agulanna(2000), Abacha's regime carried out the worst and the greatest looting of the national treasury at the highest level of government and in the entire history of Nigeria. As if to corroborate Agulanna's observation, the former president of Nigeria Chief Olusegun Obasanjo once revealed during his civilian regime that the late Sani Abacha embezzled the sum of three billion dollars, also Abacha's wife once said that no matter how much Nigeria recover from their family, that they can never be as poor as Africa's wealthiest man – Aliko dangote. It is no surprise therefore that the WAIC policy was a colossal failure.

7-Point Agenda Policy of 2007: Following the need to revamp the economy of Nigeria and accentuate the country's development, the Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'adua led administration launched the 7-point agenda policy on August 1, 2007. This policy just like the name implies, hinged on seven key areas where it aimed to address critical issues. These areas are power and energy, food security and agriculture, wealth creation, transport sector, land reform, security and education. The

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objective of this policy was to attain 10000MV of power, ensure food availability and sustenance through improved agricultural system, diversify the economy so that it becomes revenue-generative, provide wonderfully networked transportation system both in regards to roads and vehicles, revamp the land Act of march 29, 1978 to become citizenry beneficial, improve security and education. This policy achieved little success until it met its waterloo with the death of President Yar'adua. After Yar'adua's death, the policy influencers and recidivistic elite capitalist restlessly fought against the further implementation of this policy subjecting it to continuity deficiency and consequently, on-paper-non-practice syndrome. Taking instance from land reform, the elite capitalists knew that full implementation of 7-point agenda will bereave them of the dividends accruable to them from the land Act as obviously the Act which states that all land belong the government makes it possible for them to use it against their perceived opposition or enemy by ceasing their land, also it made it possible for them to allocate land to themselves, their relatives, loyalists and party faithful based on patronage and favouritism.

Treasury Single Account (TSA) Policy of 2012: The treasury single account policy is a financial policy launched by Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration in 2012 based on the recommendation of the international monetary fund (IMF) to consolidate all inflows of revenue from all agencies of government into a unified account structure (single account). This policy was aimed at reducing the proliferation of bank accounts operated by the ministries, departments and agencies of the government towards promoting financial accountability among organs of government as over the years, proliferation of bank accounts operated by the government has resulted in inappropriate accountability and looting of the national treasury by people occupying viable positions in government ministries, departments and agencies. The policy was partially implemented under Goodluck Jonathan's regime before being fully implemented in 2016 under President Muhammadu Buhari. Despite the laudable positivity of the policy, it violated section 162(1) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as well as the banks and other financial institution Acts by appointing a non-banking institution called System-specs to collect the inflows through REMITA e-collection process with a 1% of the total inflow as commission. Also, attention of fraud has been drawn to the national assembly on Tuesday, 10 November 2015 by Dino Melaye, the senator representing Kogi west who opined that the 1% of the total inflows collected by System-specs as commission is fraud and should be investigated for possible corruption. On another note, former Governor of Ekiti state – Ayo Fayose also alleged that the funds collected by System-specs through TSA is an instrument of APC party with which they finance gubernatorial elections in Bayelsa and Kogi state. Though the allegations against TSA policy has been debunked by the cabals of the present government and most especially APC chieftains; like other Nigerian government policies, the negative truth behind it shall one day be exposed like those of the previous policies, as it is no news that when elite cabals start holding up hands for a policy or debunking negative charges against a policy, that there are always cockroaches hidden in the cabinets of such policy.

IV. Observed Challenges of Nigerian Public Policy Formulation and Implementation from the Review

Deductive from the above analysis of the past and present policies of Nigeria are seven core challenges of Nigerian public policy practice as it regards to policy formulation and implementation. These challenges are:

Intolerance and Conflict: As a result of the heterogeneous nature of the country which is fully represented in its multiethnic nationalities; aggregating the interest of all groups seems difficult as what is favourable to one ethnic group might not be favourable to another; of which the latter will not tolerate if it is made into a policy and the aftermath of this is conflict. An instance is the unification policy that was passed as a decree in 1966 which was not tolerated by the northerners and thus resulted into the july 29, 1966 coup and consequently civil war, serving as a sword struck in the Achilles heels of majority of the public policies in existence as at that time.

Corruption: This is an *anguis in herba* – a snake conveniently hidden in the grassland of Nigeria social scene. It is a moth that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian public policy practice. Observable from the analysis is that corruption manifests itself in different shades in Nigerian public policy practice ranging from (a) most Nigerian policies are formulated based on the interest of the public office holders and political leaders alone, the interest of the strong individuals of the society (economic and political elites) and political Godfathers, or the interest of the maker (be it the leader or public bureaucrats) and not citizenry-beneficially oriented; therefore the policy goals becomes subordinate to these interests (b) most policies in Nigeria are made to attract public attention and used as political tool to sustain power rather than the real developmental gain (c) most Nigerian policies are corruptly formulated without the contribution of the citizenry (d) most Nigerian policies are made and implemented as a Machiavellian tool to subdue perceived oppositions be it in persons, parties or ethnic groups (e) most Nigerian policies perceived as threat to the strong individuals of the society are corruptly killed. The consequence of this is that most

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policies in Nigeria are either inappropriately formulated or lack well defined objectives and programmes for their effective implementation. Little wonder, Okoli and Onah (2002) state that implementation of policies in Nigeria take the form of "learning process" or "trial and error". In this context, policies or programmes are haphazardly implemented and even sometimes abandoned or dismantled midway because the basis for formulating the policy was not, in the first instance, predicated on existing data, realities or need. Hence as note by Makinde (2005), Nigeria has no comprehensive policy standards and objectives to guide the bureaucracy in its policy formulation and implementation activities and procedures.

Strong Individual Factor: This is undoubtedly one of the highest challenges of the Nigerian public policy practice. Ocholi (2009) quoted Ekpu as saying that "the government institutions were strategic to the country's pursuit of democratic ideas but instead of serving as the bulwark of democracy, they have become weakened by inefficiency, corruption lack of commitment, incompetence, tribalism, hooliganisms and other sundry handicaps". The implicit of a weakened government institution is the emergence of corruption-bred strong individuals who forms circles of elite cabals and through their influence dictate which policy to be formulated and which to implement in Nigeria.

Citizenry Acceptance and Approval of Moral Laxity and Corruption: This is another challenge facing the Nigerian public policy practice. The Nigerian society is morally bedridden and nationalistically handicapped. The society celebrates corruption at its own detriment. No one wants to question neither the policy formulation process nor the role of the citizenry in it. No one wants to question the ineffective implementation of formulated policies. Every individual within the society wallows in ignorance and fear, and pretends that public policy concerns them not whereas in actual sense, public policy is meant to reflect their welfare. This leaves me with one question, how will their interests be incorporated into a policy when they don't strive to even partake in it? When this is the case, the society has not only accepted but has also approved corrupt practices in the Nigerian public policy practice.

Inadequacy of Resources: Some agencies or institutions saddled with the responsibility of formulating and implementing given policies do not possess the requisite manpower and financial resources to effectively implement them. It is not as if these resources are not available in Nigeria, of course they are as Nigeria is endowed with abundance of financial, material and human resources, but it is inadequate budgeting, the formulation of wrong policies at the right time, corruption in form aggrandizement of policy fund and discriminative funding of some policies that has led to the problem of inadequate resources (Ikelegbe, 2006; Dick 2003). There is thus politics of implementation because, the resources needed for adequate implementation of relevant policies are not provided to realize policy objectives. This has resulted to situations where laws could not be enforced, services were not provided and reasonable regulation not developed and applied (Makinde, 2005). The Poverty Alleviation Policy for instance, according to Nweke (2006) is brilliantly articulated but yet to realize its essence due largely to inadequate fund or resources.

Wide Policy Scope: This is another challenge facing the Nigerian public policy practice. Most of the Nigerian policies are over ambitious and has too many agenda. This makes it difficult to be fully implemented thus resulting to on-paper-non-practice syndrome. Makinde (2005) noted that most of these over ambitious and too many agenda policies are not borne out of genuine or sincere effort to bring about rapid and radical development but just to boast the ego of the political leaders. Instances are those policies directed towards complete eradication of poverty which is clear to all and sundry that not enough resources are available to achieve even in the advanced countries.

Continuity Deficiency Problem: This is a core problem bedeviling the Nigerian public policy practice. The Nigerian public policies are usually deficient in continuity, this is as a result of non-consultation of the citizens, ego, change of regimes, influence of strong individuals and godfathers etc. policy sustenance is a war that Nigerian government is not willing to win as each successive government is bent on establishing new policies without implementing those established by the former governments. The consequences of this are abandoned projects and policy inefficiency.

V. Public Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria: the Way Forward

The challenges facing the Nigerian public policy practice in regards to formulation and implementation is one that needs to be tackled for the benefit of the Nigerian citizenry, the government, the multifarious ethnic groups and the Nigerian state as a whole. It is in light of this need that this paper recommends the following:

1) There should be sociopolitical restructuring of the Nigerian state in such a way that the governmental institutions are re-strengthened. This will go a long way to tackle the existence and influence of corruption and that of strong individuals in Nigerian public policy practice. This restructuring should also be done across ethnic line in a way that policies that regards ethnic cum customary interests are done by the different ethnic groups while those that hinge on peace, unity and national development of the

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country be done by the federal government. This will alleviate in all forms the problem of intolerance and conflict emanating from policies.

2) There should be citizenry reorientation, sensitization and ideological social engineering to correct their laissez-faire attitude towards corruption, societal ills and public policy. This will enhance their involvement in both public policy formulation and implementation and act as a check on public policy practice.
3) The working condition and salaries of the Nigerian public bureaucrats responsible for policy formulation and implementation should be improved. This will be a driving force for their maintenance of neutrality and commitment to duty without being monetarily influenced to inefficiently formulate and implement policies or formulate policies based on the interests of the politico-economic elites. It will also make them to subordinate their interest to policy goals, thus curtailing suboptimalization and apprehending on-paper-non-practice disease of Nigerian policies.
4) Policy continuity should be ensured at all cost. Every succeeding government should evaluate the policies of the preceding government, adopt, implement and sustain the positive impacting one and abrogate the negative ones. This will ensure policy sustenance and discourage continuity deficiency syndrome of the Nigerian public policies.
5) There should be reduction of influence in Nigerian public policy practice. Influences from political and economic elites should be curtailed so that they stop imbibing their personal interests into the Nigerian public policies.

VI. Conclusion

Public policies are powerful developmental instruments in the hands of government operational countries. The reverse should not be the case for Nigeria because of its heterogeneity and other bedeviling factors, when these factors can be technically and strategically handled. Therefore, urgent steps in line with the above recommendations should be taken to enhance the Nigerian public policy practice and make Nigeria a better country for the citizens, government and even dwellers.

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