



Interface between Politics and Public Policy: A Relationship of Inseparableness

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Abstract

Some scholars have argued that politics should be separated from administration while some have argued in the opposite direction claiming that there can be no dichotomy between politics and administration and that public administration is policy making and political process. In this paper, policy was substituted for administration since it is an integral part of administration. This paper attempted to establish the fact that there is interaction between politics and policy by discussing it from the perspective of politics and policy process, drawing examples from the Nigerian experience. While the paper established the fact that there cannot be a dichotomy between politics and administration, it also examined how politics and policy interact at the various stages of policy process – policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation – through the activities of the various actors. The paper discussed the roles of these actors – the executive, the legislative, the judiciary, the political party, NGOs, as well as interest groups, among others – in the policy process. The paper also attempted to establish the fact that since public policy is the heart of government, which can be manipulated positively or negatively, it gives room for policy actors to bring in their political influence at every stage of its process. The paper concluded that politics and policy interact in a way that one cannot be separated from the other.

Key Words: Policy, Policy Process, Politics, Politics/Administration dichotomy, Interface

1. Introduction

Politics, which permeates in every area of administration or governance, refers to the activities of government in the administration of the state through numerous decisions taken to allocate resources, as well as to resolve conflicts. It is from the various decisions taken that policies emerge. However, it is not all decisions that result in policies, but all policies derive from decisions. This paper examines the interaction between politics and policy by discussing the concept of politics as well as that of policy, and also by examining the interaction from the perspective of policy process. The paper briefly looks into the debate on politics/administration dichotomy which was started by Woodrow Wilson. It goes further to discuss the different stages of policy process as well as the different policy actors and the influence which they have on public policy process. All these are with a view to establishing the interface between politics and policy.

2. Concept of Politics

Politics is a particular social science involving the resolution of conflicts and the activity of government. Politics is viewed as the authoritative allocation of values such as making decision on who gets what. Harold Lasswell (1936) conceives politics as who gets what, when, and how? This is in agreement with the view of David Easton (1965), where he views politics from the perspective of the process of authoritative allocation of scarce values which may be in the form of services, goods and money, or in terms of the formulation of policies on different areas of governance such as health, education, and security, among others. According to Lasswell and Kaplan (1950:1-5), politics “is the process of making and executing governmental decisions or policies”. Khan, 1997, in his own opinion views politics as activities revolving around the decision-making organs of the state which involves the concepts of power, authority, command, and control. While Lasswell’s definition of politics appears to be all embracing taking place in all spheres of human life, that of Khan views it from its narrow spheres as it affects decision-making organ in the state. Other scholars attempt to define politics in terms of conflict resolution. According to Awopeju, 2010:116, whenever we have more than one man, there is politics because politics can be found in a church, in a family, in a trade union, school, community, and state, among others. Politics will exist when two or more people will be competing for societal values to one another’s advantage. Such interaction will breed conflict which can be resolved through politics’. It is in line with this situation that Kolawole, 1997:7 defines politics as “the aggregation of the inter-relationship of man, his environment and the management of any conflict arising from such association”. Igbo, 2006, apart from seeing politics as involving conflicts and their resolution, also sees it from the perspective of formulation and management of policies.

From the above definitions as given by various scholars, three things come out distinctly about the concept of politics, namely:

- (a) Conflict and its resolution;
- (b) Allocation of resources; and
- (c) Formulation and management of policies.

For the purpose of this paper, politics will be conceptualized as the activities of government in resolving conflicts arising from the competition for societal values by the people in the state, as well as allocating resources through various decisions resulting in the formulation of policies.

3. The Concept of Policy/Public Policy

Policy/public policy is conceptualized in this work as a final decision or plan made by government, after reviewing several available options, towards the achievement of set objectives. While a policy can be private or public, this paper

views it from the public perspective. Policy, in this paper, therefore, refers to the actions of government directed at achieving certain goals. It has been argued that policy be distinguished from decisions (Lowi, 1970), with the claim that decisions are merely components (micro) of larger entities (macro) which should be properly labeled as policies. This appears to be in order because it is not in all cases that decisions become policies, even though there cannot be a policy without a decision. This agrees with the view of Adamolekun (1983) which states that policy is a course setting involving decisions of widest ramifications and longest-term perspective in the life of an organization but which are more involving than ordinary decisions. Vickers (1965) also brings out the importance of decision when he defines policy as “decisions giving direction, coherence and continuity to the courses of action for which the decision-making body is responsible”. To this extent, policy formulation cannot exist without decisions which are selected from various policy alternatives.

The key characteristics of public policy are as follows:

- (i) It has to do with government which involves, and affects, wide variety of areas and issues involving economy, education, and health, among others.
- (ii) Public policy involves the use of the coercive agencies of government to ensure compliance, e.g. penalty for not paying tax; penalty for driving on one-way roads.
- (iii) Public policy involves the expenditure of considerable public resources;
- (iv) Public policies are meant to resolve societal problems especially those that require public or collective action.

Public policies are usually expressed in legislative enactments, laws, executive decrees or orders, executive and official statements or speeches, government budgets, judicial decisions and, sometimes, political party manifestoes (Ikelegbe, 2004). A policy is meant to address particular needs of the citizens made known through what is called policy demands (Makinde, 2013). This could be in the area of gender, security or the care of elderly citizens. After reviewing the above submissions on public policy, it seems clear that policy making cannot be done without human interactions. There must be an identified problem to be solved, and a decision to be made by people who are in a position to do so.

From the above discussion, a policy can be conceptualized as a government plan which is put in place, after considering various alternatives, as a response to the demands of the society in areas such as the economy, education and health, gender, security, and involving not only the expenditure of public resources but also the use of coercion, where necessary, to achieve the set objectives. A discussion on politics/administration dichotomy becomes important to this topic because we have to show that politics cannot be divorced from policy which falls under the umbrella of administration.

4. The Politics/Administration Dichotomy

The apostle of politics/administration dichotomy is Woodrow Wilson who was born in 1856 at Staunton, Virginia, in the United States of America. He is referred to as the father of public administration because of his contributions to the field of public administration. One of these contributions is the debate on politics/administration dichotomy where he talks of an administration which lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Wilson claims that decision in public policy should be separate from its administration. He states further that politics deals with questions of policy, while administration is concerned with the implementation. His goal, according to Polinaidu (2004:285) is to “call attention to the need for efficient administration and keep it out of partisan politics.”

The politics/administration theory was accepted and elaborated by Frank Goodnow in his *Politics and Administration*, 1900, where he made a technical distinction between politics and administration and also viewed politics as “the expression of the will of the State”, and administration as “the execution of that will. However, some scholars were not in agreement with that position. F.W. Riggs (1961) contended that “Wilson was well aware of the interrelationship between public administration and politics and that he knew that in constitutional practice a clear line could not be drawn between political and administrative organizations. Riggs’ claim is supported by Nigro and Nigro, 1989, who referred to the politics/administration dichotomy of Wilson as being fictional. According to them, “the separation of politics and administration does not mean the disappearance of politics, but the conduct of administration in political context. Thus, the study of public administration, derived from the study of politics, was to be distinguished from it, but never divorced from its maxims” and truths”. Nigro and Nigro concluded that the foundations of public administration “are those deep and permanent principles of politics”.

Further criticisms of Wilson’s theory came from Paul Appleby, Dwight Waldo, F.M. Max as well as V.O. Key and M.D. Dimock (all cited in Polinaidu, 2004: 286) who all rejected the theory in favour of the fusing of politics and administration. In his book titled *Policy and Administration*, 1949, Appleby writes that “public administration is policy-making and part of political process”. Dimock, on his part, states that “politics runs all the way through administration” while Fred W. Riggs says that bureaucrats perform both administrative and political functions, especially in developing countries (cited in Polinaidu, 2004). The young Minnbrook scholars, according to Polinaidu, who happen to be new scholars of new public administration, also believe that administrators do make policies and should make them. The public choice theory and public management have also clearly shown that the founding father’s (Wilson’s) doctrine of politics/administration dichotomy is not relevant today. They brought into focus the emerging trend towards the integration of administration and politics.

The above discussion clearly shows that politics and public policies cannot be separated. Let us be reminded that politics is defined as the authoritative allocation of resources, such as making decision on who gets what. Policy, on its part, is defined as what government chooses to do or not to do. This leads us to a discussion of policy process under which problem recognition, policy demands, agenda setting, as well as policy deliberation and policy adoption will be covered.

5. Policy Process

Policy process refers to the methods, conditions, procedures, structures, resources, activities, interactions and stages by which policies are made, implemented and impacts on the political system and its environments (James A. Robinson

and R. Roger Majak, 1967:179). It refers to how policies come about, what is involved from problem identification to policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. At this juncture, the following pre-policy stages will be briefly discussed: problem recognition, policy demands, agenda setting and policy deliberation and policy adoption.

6. Problem Recognition

This is a stage at which a problem is recognized and such a problem has to be well defined. At this stage, there must be a conviction that a public problem truly exists. A public problem is that problem which affects a large percentage of the society and which requires government intervention. A good example of such a public problem is that which affects the security of lives and properties in Nigeria.

7. Policy Demands

Policy demands are claims made upon public officials by other actors, private or official, in the political system for action or inaction on some perceived problems. For example, the decline in the educational standard of the country can form a basis for policy demand. The same goes for other areas such as health, security and economy. Policy demands usually lead to policy decisions after government must have studied the demands of the people and at the same time, sought for ways of responding to these demands. These demands are the input from the environment.

8. Agenda Setting

This is the stage at which government ruminates over the demands from the environment. Unless the identified problem is converted into political issue, it may not reach the stage of agenda. According to Cochran, et al (2003), agenda setting is always a political process in which groups struggle for power to be in control. At this stage, ideological and interest groups compete to broaden the agenda to include their issues or to narrow it by excluding issues that they do not want considered. In the current Nigerian situation, there is no doubt that the problems of security, poverty and corruption will find their way into the agenda of the Buhari government even if other interest groups would want to broaden the agenda to accommodate other issues of their own concern.

9. Policy Deliberation and Policy Adoption

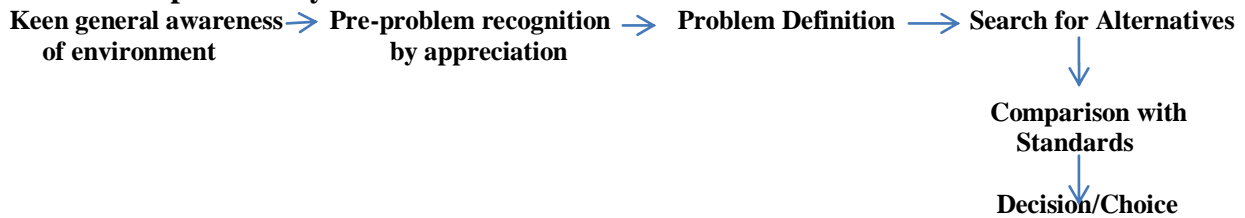
This stage involves inputs of the different stakeholders – interest groups, policy experts, and constituents. This is the level where there are debates and bargains over alternatives which are available to the decision makers. At this stage, policy decisions are taken which give a sense of direction to the course of administrative action (Sapru, 2006:6). Once decisions are made, policy statements are issued. Policy statements are the formal expressions or articulations of public policy. These pre-policy stages give birth to policy formulation. Anderson has stated that policy decisions are decisions made by public officials authorizing or giving directions to the courses of administrative action. Such actions may include decisions to issue executive orders, promulgate administrative rules, or make important judicial interpretations of law (Sapru, 2006:6). Once decisions are made, policy statements are issued. These statements are the formal expressions or articulation of public policy, leading to policy formulation. The decision of President Buhari to relocate the leadership of the Nigerian military to Borno State where the activities of Boko Haram appear to be very pronounced has given direction to the course of administrative action as claimed by Sapru, mentioned above.

10. Policy Formulation

Policy formulation stage is the period between the policy recognition and agenda setting which gives birth to policy deliberation and policy adoption. It is a period of development and analysis of policy alternatives. It is also the stage when the choice or selection of an alternative is eventually enacted as a policy. The examination of the policy formulation process raises crucial questions such as how problems are identified? who articulated them?, what are the alternatives? how is the decision made?, and who made the decision? (Ikelegbe, 2006). In response to the questions raised by Ikelegbe as regards policy formulation process, problems are identified through various means such as observation and personal experience. A situation where one observes a university graduate riding an *okada* to make a living suggests the problem of unemployment. As for problems being identified through one's experience, the inability of a person to access good medical services, when needed, enables such a person to identify that there is a problem in the health sector. The issue of articulation is not restricted to anyone in particular because articulation can come from different quarters. Citizens can do this, political parties, legislators, even the executive can articulate problems. The articulation of problems brings about the agenda setting whereby discussions are held and deliberations are made as regards what alternatives to consider for adoption. This is a stage where care is needed and where efforts need to be made to ensure that the best alternatives are selected. Decisions are then made with clear objectives which should reflect target beneficiaries and the impact expected from the policy decision. The objectives of the policy need to be clearly stated so as to give room for evaluation which will reveal whether or not the stated objectives have been attained. The above discussion shows the importance of policy formulation stage if the policy is expected to have necessary impact.

The basic steps to policy formulation, therefore, involve having a keen awareness of the environment since policy formulation cannot operate in a vacuum and this is key to the identification of the problem. The second step is recognizing that there is a problem on hand. Following this is defining the problem for the purpose of setting objectives. This is followed by a search for the type of alternatives that will be appropriate to achieve those objectives. The alternatives are then compared, taking into consideration the costs and benefits of the various alternatives, after which a decision is adopted.

11. Basic Steps in Policy Formulation



Broadly speaking, policy formulation can be viewed as involving two types of activities. The first one is deciding generally what should be done, if anything, concerning a particular problem. Such problems may be that of transportation, health, education, or poverty. The second type of activity involves the actual drafting of legislation (or writing of administrative rules). This second type of activity is rather technical and it is of great importance to public policy because the way a bill is written and the specific provisions it contains can have substantial effect on the administration and the actual content of the policy.

12. Policy Implementation

This is the stage where policy document becomes a reality whereby policies are brought into practice. It is what happens after a law is passed. It should never be assumed that policy process ends with the passage of law because it is possible for laws to be passed with little or no action being taken after that. For example, the National Energy Policy of 2003 promulgated to ensure optimal and reliable energy supply and utilization in the country has not been fully implemented. This might contributed to the failure of government to provide adequate energy for the Nigerian citizens. The task of policy implementation is to build a bridge that will ensure that the objectives of public policies are achieved (Makinde, 2013). At this stage, it is important that those carrying out any implementation know what exactly they need to do, how they will do them and when they should do them. However, there must be adequate facilities to implement the policy. At this stage also, the commitment of the actors is very crucial in order to achieve policy objectives. Failure at this stage leads to implementation gap. Policy implementation has been described as one major problem confronting developing countries such as Nigeria (Makinde, 2008). Implementation problem in developing countries is the problem of a widening gap between intentions and results. A manifestation of implementation gap is the phenomenon of the rich getting richer while the poor are getting poorer in spite of avowed stated policy goal of elimination of poverty and equality of access to the basic needs of life. Implementation gap also manifests in the “widening of the distance between stated policy goals and the realization of such planned goals” (Egonmwan, 1984:213). Looking at the issue of corruption in Nigeria, for example, it appears that there is implementation gap because much as government tries to come up with agencies of anti-corruption practices (output) such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to curb the incidence of corruption, corruption is waxing stronger in the country. At this point, it is important to note that success or failure in implementation depends, mostly, on the activities already carried out at the policy formulation stage, most important being clarity of objectives. This reminds one of Shagari’s administration which had as its slogan, “housing for all in the year 2000”. Although Shagari’s government built houses in different states of the federation including Oyo State, most of the houses in Oyo State were not occupied for political reasons as the State was under the control of the Unity Party of Nigeria. Apart from the failure of this policy due to the setting of unrealistic objective, those in the opposition party actually worked towards its failure. Even as at 2015, it is very clear that not all Nigerians have their personally-owned houses, a feat that has also not been achieved even in developed countries like Europe and America.

13. Policy Evaluation

This stage of policy process is often neglected even though it is a very important stage. Evaluation enables government to know whether or not the objectives of a policy are achieved. For example, the objective of poverty alleviation policy in Nigeria appears not to have been significantly achieved based on the various assessment studies carried out on it. The result of these assessments is expected to assist government to examine other means to achieve their objective. For instance, the Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose, while inaugurating the 16 newly elected Local Government Chairmen in Ado-Ekiti, issued a statement that the chairmen should embark on “stomach infrastructure” rather than on projects that will not put food on the table of the people.

Ekiti State Governor, Ayo Fayose, yesterday inaugurated the new Caretaker Chairmen for the 16 local government areas of the State, with a call on them to replicate his ‘stomach infrastructure’ programme at the grassroots. (Wahab, Adesina, *New Telegraph*, June 10, 2015, p. 12)

Policy evaluation can be normative or empirical. It is normative when it takes into consideration the values, beliefs and the attitudes of society as a whole, and those of the valuers themselves. It is empirical when it considers the contents of the policy, its implementation and the effects on the beneficiaries. The evaluation of policy on poverty alleviation is an example of an empirical policy evaluation. This stage of policy process is concerned with trying to determine the impact of a policy on real-life conditions as it focuses on the estimation or the assessment or appraisal of policy, including its contents, implementation and effects. Generally speaking, evaluation can, and does, occur throughout the policy process and not just at its last stage because it is a functional activity. The best evaluators of a policy are usually those affected by the policy, and this is why policy evaluation cannot be discussed without making reference to policy impact.

Policy impact is about policy outputs and policy outcomes. Policy outputs are those things that the government does, such as provision of drugs in hospitals, building of schools, “stomach infrastructure, and construction of roads, among others, while policy outcomes are concerned with the changes in the environment or with the policy system caused by policy action. In measuring the accomplishment of any policy, we need to determine not only the change in

real-life conditions that has occurred, such as reduction in unemployment rate or reduction in infant mortality rate, but also that such a change was due to policy actions and not to other factors, like private economic decisions. But, how can politics be brought into policy process. This question leads to our next discussion which focuses on politics and policy process.

14. Politics and Policy Process

The earlier discussion on politics/administration dichotomy brings out clearly the fact that politics cannot be divorced from administration. The public choice theory and public management have shown that Wilson's doctrine of politics/administration dichotomy is not relevant today in view of the emerging trend towards the integration of administration and politics. Since policy making is a crucial aspect of administration, there is no way that politics can be divorced from policy and its process. While agreeing with the submissions of the scholars discussed above on what public policy is or what it is not, it can still be argued further that public policy is the heart of government which can be manipulated positively or negatively, depending on the actors involved. This leads us into a discussion on actors in policy process. These are the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, the bureaucrats, the interest groups as well as the politicians, among others. What this section is trying to emphasize is that through the actors, politics interacts with policy process.

15. Actors in Policy Process

In line with Anderson's opinion (1975:3) which sees policy as "a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern, the significant role of actors in policy process cannot be ignored. Actors in policy process make or influence policy and the direction and level of implementation activities. The actors include the legislative bodies, the executive, the judiciary, the bureaucrats and, sometimes, the political parties (Ikelegbe, 2006:105).

The legislative bodies are involved in the policy process from the initiation and formulation to implementation, control and review. The legislators are representatives of the citizens and are, therefore, in a position to articulate and aggregate citizens' interests and demands by initiating and formulating policy proposals in the legislature. The legislative body enacts the laws, which set up policy programmes and, consequently, determine the content, extent and timing of policies, as well as the personnel, mode and intensity of implementation and source and level of funding (Ikelegbe, 2006). The legislature, of course, is one of the arms of government and, by implication, political since the legislators are elected by the people through political activities.

The Executive refers specifically to the chief executive, the cabinet, the political office holders which include the advisers and assistants. The executive possesses enormous influence on the initiation, enactment, implementation, performance and modification of public policy through the powers which they wield as overseers, supervisors, directors, coordinators and managers of administrative agencies and departments of government (Ikelegbe, 2006). This branch of government is actually a major actor in the process of policy as they participate in initiating, drafting and formulating public policies. In the area of articulating and formulating of policy proposals, the executive is involved. The policy of "stomach infrastructure", mentioned earlier, for example, has been introduced in Ekiti State, articulated by the Governor, Ayodele Fayose. This particular policy, though not yet written out, is being practiced in the State. It focuses on the need to make the payment of salaries a priority over and above all other projects of government.

After articulating and formulating policy proposals, the executive passes the proposals to the legislative bodies. Even after passing the proposals to the legislature, the executive still finds its way around to influence legislators into enacting its favoured policy proposals into law, through what is referred to as "lobbying". Lobbying is an acceptable political activity, especially within the legislative body. In Nigeria, for example, it may require financial inducement (brown envelope or "Ghana must go"). The financial inducement is not usually called "bribe" in Nigeria. The Third Term bid of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo for the Presidency of Nigeria witnessed a lot of lobbying, even though it failed to materialize.

At the implementation level, the executive is very active in the sense that it is responsible, most of the time, for the provision of all that is necessary to have a successful implementation of policies. These include provision of funds, infrastructures and personnel. This means that if the executive is not particularly interested in a policy, he can deliberately underfund such a policy to ensure that it fails. With the above discussion, there is no doubt that politics (through the legislative body and the executive) inter-relates with policy process.

The Judiciary which is another arm of government is also crucial to the process of policy making. The judiciary is the body of judges and courts that interpret the constitution and the laws. The judiciary moderates the actions and the activities of governmental policy actors, in relation to themselves and between themselves on the one hand, and groups and individuals on the other (Ikelegbe, 2006). The judiciary ensures that every governmental action conforms to the intent of the laws. This body is enabled to do this by their possession of the power of judicial review through which they could examine and determine the constitutionality of legislative, executive and bureaucratic actions and policies. Even so, sometimes, it appears that the judiciary is influenced by the executive, though in a discrete manner.

It is to be noted, however, that the judiciary does not initiate or propose policy. It does not formulate nor implement policy but reacts to policy proposals, enactment, implementation and conduct of services and personnel. Such reactions may lay the basis for policy decisions, legitimizing policies and modifying or mortifying them. Another notable thing about the judiciary is that the execution or concretization of judicial policy influence depends on the cooperation of the legislative and executive arms of government. Non-cooperation of the two bodies with the judiciary may result in the policy decisions and changes by the judiciary not being acted upon. This, perhaps, explains why some judicial orders are not carried out by government, especially if such orders do not favour it. The third point to be noted about the judiciary is that its intervention is based on cases brought before it by arms of government, institutions, groups and individuals (Ikelegbe, 2006). The judiciary, in spite of the above points raised, still remains an important influence on the policy process as it ensures sanity, propriety, fairness, legality, constitutionality, justice and moderation in the policy process.

The political party is another political actor in policy process. The political party articulates the demands and preferences of the people especially their members and supporters into the political process. The party also uses its resources to ensure that the demands of its supporters are enacted into policies. For example, in Nigeria, the political party in power may influence the citing of government structures or institutions in its preferred domain, if only to show its supporters that the party is fulfilling its election promises. This may explain the reason behind the citing of some universities in areas that are not suitable for such institutions. Political parties, through their members in public office, sometimes wield considerable influence in the execution of public policies particularly when they are in control of the government apparatus. They exercise this influence by ensuring that their manifestoes, policies and their programmes are implemented. Other actors in the policy process include the bureaucracy, interest groups, the citizenry as well as the experts and the professionals.

The bureaucracy is located strategically to generate or initiate public policy because it largely possesses the expertise, skills, competence and experience available to government at the formulation and implementation stages. The bureaucrats come in contact regularly with government business and are, therefore, familiar with the needs, problems, aspirations and interests of the citizenry as well as the shortcomings and the inadequacies and the problems of any of the policy of government. These contacts and experiences provide the public officials the challenges and ideas to formulate new policy responses. For example, the issue of petroleum supply and the marketers is largely handled by the bureaucrats who will normally recommend payments, as well as prepare vouchers for such payments.

Another set of actors are the interest groups such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). These groups exist principally to project, pursue and protect common interests. Their influence on the policy process occurs at every stage – initiation, generation and formulation of public policies, as well as in the determination of the content of the policy and the policy direction. In January 2014 when the Federal Government of Nigeria decided to remove the oil subsidy, it was this group of people that resisted the move and made the government to go back on its decision to remove, completely, oil subsidy. The interest groups sometimes initiate policy through suggestion and recommendation of policy solutions to problems that pertain to their interests.

The citizenry can be considered to be the core actor of policy process for several reasons, namely: it constitutes the human environment of policies. The human environment's perceptions, values, preferences and demands constitute the major environmental influence on public policy (Ikelegbe, 2006). Secondly, the citizens make the demands for public policy; they contribute the resources for the formulation and execution of policies through payment of tax and other levies; and finally, they have the power of electing, supporting or rejecting the major governmental actors and the policies they stand for. The citizens influence the policy process through their political parties, interest groups, elections and the mass media.

Other actors are experts and professionals who are consulted by government for policy advice and related inputs. Since the problems confronting government increase enormously by the day the services of experts and professionals become necessary. For example, the problem with the supply of electricity in Nigeria attracted inputs from professionals who advised that electricity supply should be privatized because the problem remained unsolved despite every efforts made by government. The involvement of experts and professionals is advantageous because the advice emanating from them is considered to be free from internal limitations, values and politics. However, whether or not it is completely free from politics raises a question that can generate hot debates.

16. Interaction between Politics and Policy Process

It should be noted that society is ordered, steered and directed towards desired ends by the state through policies. Therefore, policy becomes the object, the tool and the means of governance. Let us remind ourselves again that politics is viewed as the authoritative allocation of values such as making decision on who gets what, when and how (Lasswell, 1936), while policy is defined by Ikelegbe (2006) as governmental actions or course of actions or proposed actions or course of proposed actions that are directed at achieving certain goals. The above definitions confirm the fact that whether at the point of deciding on who gets what, when and how or at the point of taking action by government on specific needs, people are involved. Most of those that will be involved are those who have their own biases, values, and political preferences.

At the stage of recognizing that there is a problem to be solved, it is the people – the citizens, a group of people, the bureaucrats, the legislative body, or, even the executive – that will come up with policy demands. From the level of problem recognition to that of policy adoption, a lot of politics is involved. When the demands are made on the government on certain issues, if it is not translated into political issue, it may not get to be on the agenda. The agenda stage is that stage where government ruminates over the demands from the environment. This is always a political process in which groups struggle for power to be in control. It is also at this level that ideological and interest groups compete to broaden the agenda or include their issues or to narrow it by excluding issues that they do not want considered (Cochran, et al, 2003). After the adoption of policies, the implementation stage is very crucial and it involves a lot of politics. Remember, there is no way a policy can be implemented successfully without adequate funding and availability of personnel. Allocation of funds, infrastructures, as well as provision of personnel is political. If the government is not in favour of the policy, it is capable of frustrating it by failing to provide adequately for its implementation.

When one considers the contributions of each of the actors discussed above – the legislature, the executive, the judiciary, the political party, even the citizens and the interest groups – politics will be found at every stage of the policy process from the problem recognition to the policy evaluation.

17. Conclusion

This paper has tried to give definitions of politics and policy/public policy in a way that brings out the relevance of one to the other. The discussion on politics/administration dichotomy has brought out clearly the fact that politics cannot

be divorced from administration and, by implication, from policy which is an aspect of administration. The various actors and their contributions to policy process have been used to show the way and manner that politics is an essential part of policy process. This paper, therefore, concludes that there is an interface between politics and public policy at every stage of policy process, thereby reflecting a close relationship between the two that makes it rather difficult to separate one from the other.

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