NIGERIA PUBLIC POLICY MAKING CULTURE AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH: A SYNERGY FOR ADEQUATE DISTRIBUTION OF VALUES

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Abstract
The seeming uneven culture on distribution of resources in Nigerian polity to the various ethnic groups calls for adequate attention on the use of cause-and-effect tools. This inequity phenomenon has left the nation with the national question on how there could be equity in shared values among the citizenry. Hence, this study, appraises the effectiveness of public policy framing culture, its implementation and evaluation in 21st century Nigeria, devoid of historical research. I, therefore, argue that historical research is a viable resource for effective public policymaking, distribution of resources, and the need for sensible shared values to the Nigerian citizens. Secondary method of data collection is employed in this study as relevant literatures with selected internet sources were reviewed and Advocacy theory was adopted as framework of analysis. This paper suggests that historical research is one of the veritable tools for policymaking, implementation, and evaluation if explored adequately.

Keywords: Policy, Distribution of Values, Culture, Nigeria.

1. Introduction
The seeming uneven culture on distribution of resources in Nigerian polity to the various ethnic groups calls for adequate attention on the use of cause-and-effect tools. This study appraises that the usage of historical methods as one of the adequate instruments that will improve the country's public policymaking, implementation, and distribution in the 21st century leaving the national question unresolved. Nigerian national question centers on the fundamental challenges that have been facing the country as a nation-state with which without it cannot survive. Public policymaking,

implementation and distribution have been a critical issue that still remains unresolved. Historical research method centers on cause-and-effect tools[1]. This study examines how public policy and its implementation is affected by the paucity of historical research. This research therefore x-rays critically how historical research has been thriving through the 21st Century in Nigeria? What relationship should have existed between the provision of public policy and historical research? How has the culture of Nigerian politics devoid the usage of historical research public policy making and implementations? What damages have been incurred and prospects made so far by the various historical periods. This study x-rays further, through Advocacy Theoretical Framework, what likely synergy could exist between the historical research and the 21st-century Nigerian public policy that leave Nigeria with the unequable distribution of the national values? This paper tries to critically examine these issues above and make suggestions that gear towards sustainability of the Nigerian polity in the 21st century and beyond through the usage of historical researchers and methodologies.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study employs Advocacy Theory. This theory is best suited for this study as it embraces the pursuit of influencing the process of policymaking, implementations, social justice and human rights. According to Singh, the Advocacy Theory is a political process that encourages the populace to advance the processes of partaking in the decisions and actions that concern their lives. It is, on the other hand, influencing results on the public policy, resource distribution decisions within political, economic and social institutions which directly touch peoples' lives. In addition, Advocacy theory is a rational argument for a change in policies and practices on explicit issues[2]. Further, David Cohen as cited in Singh asserts that:

> Advocacy is organized efforts and actions that use the instruments of democracy to strengthen democratic processes. These instruments can include elections, lobbying, mass mobilization, civil disobedience, negotiations, bargaining, and court actions. Efforts and actions are designed to persuade and influence those who

> hold governmental, political and economic power so that they will formulate, adopt and implement public policy in ways that lives of those with less conventional political power and fewer economic resources acquire a greater share of each (n.p)[3]

The employment of the Advocacy Theory by this study encourages a thorough examination of how effective the process of the policymakers or public policy and implementations of national resources through equitable distributions to the Nigerian varied constituencies has been. The Advocacy Theory creates a conducive window for bargaining, negotiating, or lobbying to influence those in the Nigerian government on who to be part of the policymaking and how to improve its policy processes to enable it to achieve the intended goals. This is also evident in the process of historical research which has to do with making inquiries and doing the analysis of the evidences for the truth that truly represents any given social, economic and especially political phenomenon. Nonetheless, this Advocacy Theory especially creates a platform for researchers to make new conclusions from the already existing public policy processes in Nigerian historical periods in politics.

3. Historical Research in the 21st Century: An Insight

In historiography, one of the roles is to provide vital justification to issues as social, moral (even surrogate or religious), and especially political which this study tries to view through historical research methods[4]. Historical research primarily deals with the causation, progress, and widening of the horizons of any phenomenon. These primary factors in historical research are practicable in solving issues through the strengths and weaknesses of the past to predict the present and probably the future[5]. Though historical research methodology (particularly the usage of oral tradition) was condemned with contempt and intellectual disdain by the Eurocentric writers in the past, evidence rather prove beyond doubt that African writers, through it, had developed successfully contemporary African historiography.

In the foregoing, historical research methodology has again been receiving notable attention negatively by the social scientists in

the 21st century[6]. The social scientists claim that historical research methodology is unscientific while its proponents advance the view that historical research method is scientific. The social scientists based their attack on the assumptions that historical research, in the main, premises its research hypothesis on authority and experience formulations. In the light of the latter, Eregare argues that though historical research methodology is viewed as unscientific research, it is not mutually exclusive to scientific methods[7]. The concepts of collection, collation, and colligation are scientific: the verification process of the sources consulted, the analyses of the data collected for reliability and the organisation of the data collected is scientific[8]. Though the social scientists claim that the historical research methodology are classified as rich sources, they misconstrue the facts that historical research methodology tends towards common sense which enables a researcher to justify reliable conclusions[9]. Baiyeri opines that historical research connotes discovery through a thorough search over and over until discoveries or findings are made as answers to question or problem situation instead of assumption or generalization[10]. These processes often take a systematic rigorous approach until findings are made[11].

To strengthen the understanding of the concept of historical research, there is a need to walk back into word history. From Greek etymology, the word *historia* means searching to find out. History, in a specific sense, is searching or finding out the truth about an event[12].Historical research is not only on searching for what happened in the past but the interpretation of past phenomenon on attitudes, events and evidences. Historical research methodology involves the use of primary sources (such as oral communication, diaries, letters, newspaper articles, photographs, government documents and first-hand accounts) and secondary sources (such as articles and books written by historians on evidences that had undergone examination and interpretation)[13]. It is unambiguous that human beings are products of the past and use the past to solve the challenges of the present. Therefore, to understand the present, the study of past events is essential. It is believed that if people do not understand where they are coming from, they cannot understand where they are going as a people. It is unequivocal that historical research is a tool that importance cannot be overemphasized to a

given government or any human institutions. Furthermore, historical research is a quest that analyses documents, artifacts, interviews with eyewitnesses to gain insight into past events. This involves the science of authenticating the documents used and contents as valid from the grassroots[14].In a broad sense, historical research tries to achieve basic insights and conclusions that could be presumed from the past events having been subjected carefully to analyses and interpretation[15].

According to Wallbank, Schrier, Maier & Gutierrez-Smith, historical research is the revelation of where the present begins which determines the future[16].Historical research searches for the truth though there are no fixed truths or transcendental realities in history. There are rather truths. In like manner, we have histories and not the history. This latter suggests the multi-faced views to proffering solutions through historical research methodology[17].

3a. Public Policy and Historical Research in Nigeria

Public policy is the instrument of the government and its agencies to decode goals and objectives to pragmatic actions that influence positively the citizenry. Public policy primarily centers on the distributing, regulating and redistributing of resources in the society.[18] Robert and Clark as cited in Dahida and Maidoki state that Policymaking is:

> Series of steps taken by a government to solve problems, make decisions, allocate resources or values, implement policies and in general to do the things expected of them by their constituencies[19].

Having successfully established what public policy stands for in Nigerian context, it is expedient to examine how historical research has also undergone varied changes and continuity. Historical research though is tagged an unscientific research method as earlier mentioned is not mutually exclusive to the scientific method[20].During the pre-colonial period, historical research was in its embryonic stage where sources, save for the traditional historians, were relatively in abundance. The general influx of Western thought thereby dominated the earliest part of the historical writings of the

African territories. There was a high numerical value of the influx of traders, missionaries, consular, and travelers, to mention a few. The advent of the Europeans' stampede placed the African sources of data collection under an unflorish status[21].

The Europeans who visited the coast of West Africa especially the Nigerian territories were the Portuguese. The immigrants were made up of traditional farmers and fishermen. There were three basic features that propelled their immigrations. They were mainly economic, political and religious factors. The causative factors which led to the Portuguese migration was because of their fishermen's experience in travelling on long journeys through the Atlantic exploration. This made their migration a possible venture. They migrated to Nigeria due to their ambitious rulers, poor economy and weak man-power resources. However, one other factor that facilitated their migration to Nigeria was the geographical location which provided a direct access for the Portuguese to Africa. The Portuguese actually sought for political domination to enable have a full control over the raw materials. The coming of the European domination established imperial system of government which brought about the use of public policy as a tool for governance in Nigerian polity[22].

Since then, there had not been the intentional use of historians in the public policy making which this study tries to make clear the effects of intentional employment of the historical research in public policy making, implementing and evaluation. Marculey submits that since 19th Century up till date there had not been a traditional and intentional use of the historians to employ the historical research methods in public policymaking, implementation and evaluation. This study through advocacy theory bargains that the intentional employment of the historical researchers by the government on public policy making and distribution of national resource will be reached adequately. The usage of the historical research methodology by the historians helps to generate clear translation of plans, implementation and evaluation of the Nigerian public policy for a visible sustainable development. The historical research professionals employ the truth about any given phenomena through oral inquiry from the grassroots. The oral inquiry instrument reflects the truth about the actualization of the government's public

policy to the given society. The paucity, however, shall reflect a generalized truth about a given public policy. The generalization approach has, over the years, reflected in the national instability management in the area of energy, electricity, welfare, urbanization, population shift, water resources, land management and governmental accountability in Nigeria, to mention a few from the day of independence[23].

4. Nigerian Public Policy, Government Agencies and Historical Research

Public policy especially in Nigeria focuses on the distribution, regulation and redistribution of resources to the society. Since Nigeria became a British Colony, the public policy making has been the instrument of positive governance. Nonetheless, evaluating the implementation the case has been otherwise. In the actual sense, recent studies indicate that there has rather been a debilitated missing link between the government, the public policy makers, and the implementations. The society has not actually been impacted with the basic life amenities or infrastructural facilities that are needed for the comfort of the citizenry from the grassroots. This devoid the process that encourages specifically the cause and effects form of assessments which are common to the historical research methodology[24].

Further, Nigeria has designated agencies through which the government carries out the implementation of the public policy. Some of the notable agencies are: the Federal Capital Territory Authority, Universal Basic Education Commission, Office of the Special Assistance to the President, Border Communities Agency, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria, Energy Commission of Nigeria, Nigeria Institute of Oceanography and Marine Research, National Directorate of Employment, Nigerian Building and Road Research Institute, Project Development Institute and Nigerian Stored Products Research Institutes, to mention a few. Studies, through elite's theory, have suggested that elites should be part of the Nigerian policy making, implementation and evaluation of Nigerian public policy as the historians. These agencies have not been able to successful implement the public policy due to the lack of visible cause-effects methodology or approach over the years in

Nigeria. The historical research is a veritable tool that deals with the truth and grassroots investigative process for adequate evaluation. This will reduce government policy imposition when professional bodies as the association of historical researchers are adequately involved using the cause-and-effect methods for the planning, execution and evaluation public policy without any generalization of facts and figures[25].

The historical methodology embraces a systematic, inductive and not generalized evidences-based truth. Words of what actually happened instead of the usage of generalized figures (Scientific methods). The scientific methodology is as well a systematic, deductive, generalized and made through numerals in representing facts. When historical research methodology is used, there would be true representation of goals being either implemented or not[26].This positive approach provides actual cause and effect development especially if employed for public policy. If the historical research is employed in the implementation of the government intended goals, the government can easily be appraised if positive or negative in their development goals. The study submits that the usage of the historical reach methodology pictures the actual than a generalized evidence. Generalized concept or non-historical methodology would not allow the citizenry to grasp the true picture of development in the society.

5. Nigerian Politics up to the 21st Century: A Reflection

Nigerian politics has undergone various phases in Nigerian history. Politics in Nigeria entails the enablement to control or influence the behaviour of people with the mind of achieving the intended goals[27].Power in politics is a relationship and how it is being influenced. This section thus views the various phases of Nigerian political history, their distinctive characteristics, and varied systems of governance and how effective has been the influence of their public policies before and after the coming of the Europeans and infer the true state of their influences. It further shows what systems of governance were employed at their various political historical periods[28].In the eastern region, political organization before colonialism was in form of village republic and was made up of the various clans. The political structure had no central authority under a

king as it were in some other parts of Nigeria. The village usually was a political unit that consisted of council of *Amala* (a council of villages' elders) and an assembly whenever there was an emergency to address. Therein, decisions were taken on consensus[29].This system of government implies a sort of democratic system of government in which decisions were taken, implemented and probably evaluated. The decisions imply a kind of public policy because the decisions were for their subjects in a given community- a communal binding decision. Afigbo adds that the Igbo communities were further influenced by a modern system of governance because of their interactions with their neighborhood of Benin and Igala kingdoms (Midwest and Northwest). These neighbours system of government grew into a formidable centralized system of government which became central of attraction where other emulated. Basically, the Igbo community in the pre-colonial era was characterized by democratic system of government where the public policy or decisions towards development can be implied to have been democratically formed and implemented to enable achieve equitability of shared resources to the populace[30].

History narrates that the pre-independence political organization of northern Nigeria was characterized by leadership that comprises of a group of hamlets under the control of a family head or ruler. The leader ensured the peace, safety, and general wellbeing of his peoples. The pursuit of peace, safety, and the general well-being of peoples in such community can be described as intent goals or public policies to improve the standard of their citizenry's living[31]. The development in the areas of security, policymaking, economic, social and even spiritual were a communal issue to the northerners. The northern region could thus be implied to have been living in a communal system of government that was set to satisfy the intent communal goals. By eleventh century, the northern regions had developed into strong and formidable empires and kingdoms with central powers.

Nonetheless, the Yoruba, especially, had in the beginning, a central political leadership from the Ile-ife mythology with a monarchical system. The Nigerian independent communities were well governed by respectable and constituted authorities under the leadership led by elders or chiefs[32]. The influence of Islamic

influence on politics began in the eleventh century while that of Christianity was as old as its re-entrance into the country in the nineteenth century, at the second coming[33].The two major religions therein became some of the primary factors that influenced the public policies of the Nigerian states. From northern Nigeria, Islamic religion began to enjoy unparalleled favours and strength in their formidable centralized powers in their various kingdoms across the present-day nation-state[34].

From the southern region, Christianity forms the primary motives for policies on government or governance. Christianity thereby had also great overwhelmingly influence on the various centralized kingdoms and empires till the present-day. It was observed, however, that the traditional system of government was only weakened since major parts of the indigenous peoples' territories were overtaken by the two major foreign religions. These attempts did not completely crush the traditional religion rather some of their territories and traditional beliefs are still being upheld. These above-mentioned factors could be inferred to have formed the basis for the Nigerian secularized state. The period of foreign economic, religious, and interference in the affairs of the pre-independent period, Nigerian politics culminated into the colonial period which lasted until 1960[35].

The contemporary or post-independent political system in Nigeria emerged based on the victory of the Allies during the Second World War from colonial domination[36].The Second World War came with numerous challenges that left the colonial masters with no other choice but to let Africans governthemselves[37]. The defeat of fascism brought to Africans self-determination or self-consciousness to govern themselves by going back from the basics of pre-colonial territorial sovereignty to unified national sovereignty. The coming of independence was based on the consciousness of the indigenous peoples to be freed from the bondage of colonialism. The colonial-era exposed Nigerians to the knowledge of western politics. The religious factors that have been hand in hand with colonialism still influence the intent development goals of the nation up to date. The religious beliefs appeared presently with a clear struggle for supremacy in the Nigerian policy-making processes and intended goals[38].

The dramatic revolution in the political system of Nigeria took place between the colonial state and the independent nation of Nigeria. This period set in with the issue of who gets what, how and when to shared values (power, national resources, to mention a few). This period was set to protect the interest of the people in its various consistencies. In addition, this inter-transitional period enjoys continuity up to date as it is popularly described as the unresolvable issue, national question. The national question does not have to do anymore alone with the marginalized but the highly favoured at the expense of the other. That emerged because there was a dare need to make a unified Nigeria with equity in the nationally shared values among the multi-ethnic groups. Put differently, it is a need to better serve the interests of the populace of the new Nigeria. The coming of new Nigeria brought a sense of unity into various sub-groups by giving up a small identity for a larger identity to enable smaller identities to have advantages[39].The ultimate goal of national question has been to make sure the interest of all groups is met without discriminations or favours as much as it is visible in the 21st century[40].Based on the generally acceptable periods in Nigeria history, there are also three basic political periods that have been distinguished by remarkable prospects and challenges.

6. Prospects and Challenges of Historical Research on Nigerian Public Policymaking

The prospects and challenges captured, in this section, are the colonial and the post-colonial political periods. The Nigerian government and its agencies rely more on their prerogative to satisfy self-interest and manipulation of public policy to their private or religious advantages[41]. This phenomenon impedes the protection of the interests of the citizenry which should be primary between the public policy and the Nigerian masses. There is also the class wagon in the selection of those who partake in the Nigerian policy-making which devoid of other agencies[42].

The colonial political epoch under the British in the early 1900s was primarily characterized by the political quest for superiority, economic exploitation and domination, rivalry, oppression, and inequality of the interests of the various ethnic groups. This venture was the precursor of the issue of the national

question. Though this period is not without its prospects as it enhances the development of Nigeria. It, further, exposes Nigerians to a new culture of governance and method of government. This exposure led Nigerians to the formation of the centralized administrative system of power and unification through basic policies that govern the post-colonial Nigerian state. The coming of this period brought as well different dimensions to the socio-economic development of Nigeria, among others[43].

The post-independence political era came with the challenges of detaching completely from the British political gimmicks which were premised with policies that were characterized by stringent restraints to wholesome freedom from their political slavery. The problem of identity crises crept in with multiple needs to satisfy the interests of the Nigerian peoples. This crisis led to the Nigerian Civil War, the engagements of the military in government, maneuvering, and establishing policies that would re-structure Nigerian politics. This was still made to the credit of the British. This generates the implication that public policy from the transition of the colonial political period to the post-colonial political period is characterized by the selfish tone in interests. There exists with this in mind the ideology of not willing to allow a wholesome satisfaction of the interests of the Nigerian populace. These and other struggles led to the establishment of the democratic system of government which would better situate the nation to meet the needs of all the components of the country[44].

The understanding, interpreting, implementing goals of Nigerian-state public policy would be best understood in the use of the historical research methodology by the submission of the Advocacy Theory. The usage of the historical method reveals "gains, strengths, weaknesses, errors, and threats of the past events and human endeavors" which devoid overgeneralization of interpretation of data collection and collation (p.4)[45]. These latter submissions provide a platform to avert errors or strengths or exploitations of the past especially in the context of public policy makings through the policy makers and implementers. The result of historical research could help this present generation of policy makers in knowing how to share, undertake or tackle new projects through the study of mechanism of the past to better understand the present or how

implementation could undergo positive change for the present from the negative antecedents. More so, politics in Nigeria has assumed a complex nature that needs a pragmatic approach as historical research to resolve issues as they emerge which devoid overgeneralizations of every datum necessary to be tackled to ensure equity[46].

Historical research not only helps to uncover the past, it is a creative, interactive methodology that encourages how to get to the grips of various layers of evidence and interpretations contained in peoples' memories. Historical research possesses a dialogic approach that could be described as scientific in nature and be carried out through deliberative democracy to understand the citizenry's opinions, from the grassroots, and interest which would help the public policy to enable achieve the intended goals in Nigeria[47]. Historical research provides a sense of modesty. The view of history is the view of what life entails. Life without history is no life. Therefore, a national policy without the employment of the historical research methodology through professionals could appear as ineffective or selfish public policy or policymaking agenda[48].

From a historical perspective, Nigeria's polity has failed in the past based on the series of wars (both cold and real war) especially the Civil War of the 1960s. Osadolor admits that the failure was based on its inability to provide favourable mechanism to mediate and integrate the series of over long standing conflicts and contradictions that had arisen from the country's assemblage of class, ethnic, economic and social forces[49]The Nigerian state's inadequacies to define the pattern of integration since 1914 had impeded the achievement of the shared values, mutual trust and common national identity that should have existed[50].

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reveals that Nigerian politics can be summarized into three major historical facets: the pre-colonial, Colonial and post-colonial political periods. The pre-colonial political era made use of public policies at their respective empires or kingdoms or villages. The policymakers were majorly chosen through a representative system of governance. This implies there was a democratic system of governance from the Pre-colonial Nigeria. The pre-colonial

political period was characterized by peaceful, organized, respected leadership culture and governance without any interference of any foreign policy. The Colonial political period was organized, superior contended, unpeaceful, oppressive culture and not so respected by the indigenous peoples. The post-colonial political period is featured with an imposed public policy which were highly organized, fiercely contended with the issue of the national question, continuity on promises of developmental goals, evolves around un-dynamic implementations skills, instability in nature of governance or government yet left with continuous critical evaluations or gaps. The post-colonial political era has the ability to make policies that will meet the needs of the citizenry evenly but the class elite through the government and its agencies had through their private agendas had impeded expected evenly distributed values as in education, health services, infrastructural facilities, shared power, to mention a few. Taking a cursory look at the three major political historical periods, it is clear to imply that the colonial and post-colonial public policy makings or makers might not have been in the culture of learning from the past to avoid the recurrent errors till the present dispensation.

To enable deal adequately with the issue of inequalities in meeting the needs of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria over the above-defined two political periods, this study employed the Advocacy Theory. This theoretical framework creates a conducive window for bargaining, negotiating, or lobbying to influence those in the Nigerian government on who and how to improve its policy processes which this study intends to achieve through the sustainability of the national conscious development goals. The Advocacy Theory allows the participation of the citizenry in the decisions and actions that concern their lives, especially through professionals.

Based on the above submission, this study suggests that the Federal Government should appoint tested and trusted professionals from historical researchers to serve among the Nigerian government agencies especially in charge of policy makings and implementation. This action will import the characteristics of historical research which evaluates critically the weaknesses and strengths or gains (cause and effect), without generalization, of preceding Nigerian

policy-making processes and how it has favoured the masses evenly in the past and it would form the template for the present and probably the future public policymaking process.

For sustainable governance, the Federal Government of Nigeria should also give a special place to the colleges that deal with historical research as the Ibadan School of History where Political History would be introduced as a course of study or discipline with an emphasis on public policy as one of the areas for study. This would serve as a conscious effort to grow policymakers through historical research methodology for the present and posterity. Further, there should be the formation of concerned historical research groups, at all levels, that would engage governmental and non-governmental organizations in the public sensitization on the study of History through scholarship provisions. This would encourage those interested in the field of historical studies to engage in it without many restrictions.

This study recommends, among others, that professionals in historical research should be appointed as members of the public policymaking, implementation, and evaluations to grow evenhandedness in the distribution of the national values. It is imperative that the Federal government should consider the adoption of deliberative democracy (a process that resolves around discussions from the grass root with fairness and reasoning with the masses). This process is rigorous yet verifiable to ensure the capturing and considering of the citizenry desired goals at any given historical period. This can be successfully carried out through the historical researchers who would come up with the truth and how effective the public policies and implementations have thrived at the local levels. The issue of public policy is not situated in the area of natural science but in the Social Sciences therefore the best approach to tackle it should be through Social Sciences especially through historicism.

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