Abstract
Public Policy making is central to achieving governmental goals but the process of making and implementing it, is characterized by a lot of short comings in Nigeria. The process of making and implementing policy is essentially the work of government and its agencies. In principle, civil society organizations may have roles to play in policy making process but in practice, they are very far from the domain of the process. A number of ways of interpreting the concept of policy were discussed as well as policy making in Nigeria, where principle of federal supremacy exists. Historically and structurally, a great deal apart from the human factor are important in achieving desired goals. The paper found that there is a missing link between the few elite and masses who are major. Also, within the elite itself, differences exist leading to policy miscarriages most of the time and the consequence is untold hardships are imposed on the masses. The way out among others, are wider consultation, strong synergy among intergovernmental agencies is very much desired and the principle of policy continuity is necessary.

Keywords
Policy, Public Policy, Policy Process, Public Opinion, Interdisciplinary, Consultation and Implementation.

Introduction
Policy is a concept used on daily basis by virtually every body. Individuals, families, clubs, cultural groups, communities, government departments, small business organizations as well as large ones, all talk about their policies. Policy – making cannot be understood simply in terms of how decisions are made. This is because it involves not only clusters of decisions but also different kinds of decisions.1

In modern political system where political and administrative powers are not concentrated in only one agency or authority, the process of making public policies can be complex relatively. This is because it is an exercise that comprises a number of stages, each of which is vital for the overall success of the venture. In his view, 2 observed that, the process through which public policy is conceived, formulated and implemented is one of the most important processes of governance and societal development; and its importance lies in the fact that it serves as the political, legal and administrative context and framework within which functionaries of government and institutions of governance interact with non-governmental stakeholders to synthesize ideas on how to satisfy identified needs and aspirations of citizens, convert these into executable policies and then mobilize resources to provide goods and services aimed at addressing these identified needs and aspirations as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Public Policy Interpretation
This is a familiar concept used on a daily basis. Due to the diversity of circumstances in which the term is used or applied, there are different interpretations attached to the concept. For instance, 3 sees the concept as, what government does in order to meet the 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 necessarily do not emanate exclusively from the government; the citizenry can initiate them as well. It should be noted that policy-making process is often influenced by a number factors or variables such as public opinion. However, in Nigeria the attitude of the members of the political class towards the feelings and opinions of the masses is quiet disdainful. The situation in post colonial Nigeria clearly shows that, as important as public opinion in policy-making process, public policies hardly reflect the opinions of the people. This is to say that, various administrations hardly consider the genuine opinions and desires of the Nigerian masses and hence, public policies appear to be self-servicing of the political elite.

The interdisciplinary nature of the concept constitutes serious problem and the only way which it is demarcated, an epithet is used to reflect the area of interest like economic policies, educational policies, population control policies etc. However, the controversy existing in political science literature on what constitutes the boundary of public policy, 4 argued that, public policy is deciding at any time or place what objectives and substantive measures should be chosen in order to deal with a particular problem, issues or innovation. Furthermore, 5 observed that, public policy is the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or governmental concerns.

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The various interpretations of the concept in our view clearly shows three important variables:

- Policy makers are aware that human wants/problems are insatiable.
- The available resources to accommodate these wants/problems are inadequate.
- Prudent management of the meager resources to meet the pressing demands.

**Policy-Making Process in Nigeria**

The dominant feature of policy-making process in Nigeria is the principle of federal supremacy which is constitutionally conditioned. Under the constitution, the federal government is expected to provide the overall direction and leadership in the planning process right from the formulation stage through the implementation and evaluation stages, 6 chapter 2 of section 16(4) of the 1999 Constitution refers. For instance, the National Economic Council presided over by the Vice President to advice the president concerning the economic affairs of the federation, and in particular, on measures necessary for the condition of economic planning efforts or the economic development programmes of various state governments of Nigeria. The institutions that are involved at the early stage are Federal Ministries of Finance, National Planning, National Manpower Board and Federal Office of Statistics apart from other interdepartmental and intergovernmental agencies and institutions that participate in the decision-making process.

According to 7, in Nigeria, the relationship between public opinion and policy making is a complex one. This is because people are not usually informed about an issue and therefore do not participate effectively in shaping the policy. The few that are informed about, and are interested in an issue, may have divergent opinions and may not be able to convince the government to adopt their preferred position. Also, the government itself is not a disinterested actor in the opinion policy process, it takes several attempts to shape, organize or mobilize public opinion in support of its own policies.

Under normal circumstances, public policies are meant to benefit the citizens who could have been considered as the core actors. However, in Nigeria and indeed the underdeveloped countries, in spite of the existence of both human and material resources, the public seldom influence policy-making process. As 8 put it, the situation is worse in developing countries where policy making is not made explicit but dictated in most if not all cases by men at the top.

At this juncture, it is necessary to reiterate that Nigeria is a class and an exploitative society, a neocolonial state firmly controlled and dominated by few wealthy Nigerians and their foreign collaborators in whose interests the policy-making process in Nigeria is primed. e.g. the circumstances surrounding the introduction of the Special Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the 1980s by the then government was a complete negation of the majority of Nigerians. The consequent outcome was enslavement of Nigerians to the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund. This clearly showed that, the people had their say but the government had its way.

**Framework for Public Policy Implementation in Nigeria**

An essential instrument for policy implementation apart from the human factor is the institutional and structural arrangement put in place for achieving the desired goals. This is because, without the effective and efficient application of the instruments in implementing policies, such policies will only be good as the papers on which they are formulated. Therefore, administrative structures and facilities for implementation are very critical in the policy-making process. In Nigeria these institutions could be committees, panels, adhoc tax forces, agencies of government etc. These institutions in most cases are created through enabling laws as subsidiary legislations. Thus, such institutions eventually exercise discretionary powers, where the subsidiary legislation constitutes code of conduct of the established institution e.g. Code of Conduct Bureau, the 6-3-3-4 education policy implemented by the Federal Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education (UBE), 36 state ministries of education and Federal Capital Territory as well as the 744 Local Governments in Nigeria.

In his contribution, 9 summarized the problems of policy implementation in Nigeria this way:

- Multiplicity of agencies involved in the implementation.
- Lack of coordination which can hinder effective implementation.
- Differences in the interests of the policy-makers and implementing agencies especially during party-politics.
- Implementation may not automatically follow from policy decisions but needs to be treated as a positive purposive process in it.

**1.5 The Missing Link**

Observers hold the view that, there is a disconnect in policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. This has caused very serious problems of policy miscarriage most of the time. The repercussions cause untold hardship on the citizens as it affects effective service delivery. The stratum nature of the Nigerian society also worsened the situation due to differentials in class struggle among the elites themselves, hinged on inter and intra-party rivalry, ethnicity, regionalism among others. This clearly shows the existence of a missing-link among the elites who are the policy makers and the masses that are at the receiving end of any poorly formulated and implemented policy.

**The Way Forward**

In order to connect the nexus that can guarantee perfect public policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria, policy should be looked at as an agenda which concerns not only the elite but also the masses who are always the majority. The mass (public) has to be mobilized all the time with proper education on specific public policy. Their inputs must be respected. Wider consultation and mass participatory governance must be ensured in order to connect the masses with the elites during the process of public policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. Strong synergy
among inter-governmental agencies is very much desired in this regard. The practice of the incumbent government seeing the policies of the previous administration as crime to be continued should be avoided to allow for continuity and where need be, little modification could be made can also connect the nexus. That is to say, reviving former policies and connecting them to the present policies can bring about policy coherence and sustainability in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The problem in Nigeria is not policy formulation alone but its implementation as well. This is as a result of conflicting interests of the elite class who sharply differ in ideology. More often than not, policies are beautifully designed but the matching resource to implement them is a big problem.

References