

# Values: Intellectuals and Policy Process in Nigeria: A Theoretical Cum Ideological Explanation

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## Abstract

This work studies the intellectuals in Nigeria and their roles in the policy process. After a careful identification of the roles which have been played by Nigeria's intellectuals since Nigeria's independence, the paper adopts the belief system framework of public policy analysis together with three ideological categorization of individual personalities. It provides a theoretical cum ideological explanation for the different roles played by these intellectuals in different areas of the political system. These ideological linings of Nigeria's intellectuals were also seen as contributing both positively and negatively to the actions and inactions of intellectuals in particular and the policy process in general. The paper finally sees the policy process as a rational enterprise which has to be seen as such by intellectuals and the government for meaningful development of Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Values, Intellectuals, Beliefs, Policy, Development

## BACKGROUND

Knowledge-seeking forms the bedrock of human life and societies that have advanced in the past decades achieved such by the application of knowledge acquired through education and research. While Freeland (2004) regards education as the most revolutionary movement in human history and the most powerful force for social justice ever conceived, Porter (1990) as cited in Aiyede (2011) sees knowledge as the most important factor for economic development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and determines a country's global competitiveness. Also, Sutz (2006) has noted that education is a crucial tool for overcoming underdevelopment. Thus, the place of education and research in the advancement of nations is unarguable. In line with this assertion, Plato has identified the need for proper education and series of tutelage which a leader should undergo before he is qualified for the task of governing the state (Stumpf, 1971).

Thus, governance requires specialization and professionalism. If a leader is expected to acquire a certain degree of knowledge through education, then those who have chosen education as a career remain very relevant to politics and policy in any state. On this ground, intellectuals and the academia, play the vital role of being the power house of policy advice and directions to the government based on empirical research and verified theoretical bases; thus the relevance of intellectuals to the policy process which the Behaviouralists in Political Science (Varma, 1975) called for. Though intellectuals have been excluded from governance in some military regimes (Ayoade, 1990; Aiyede, 1995; Ukachukwu, 2010), they have at different times in the history of Nigeria, played different roles in the policy process in Nigeria through research and publications, consultancy, as members of boards of parastatals, commissions etc. In these roles they played, some have been seen to have represented the expectations of being an intellectual while others at some time, have been perceived to have derailed from the expected roles. Thus, intellectuals in Nigeria are seen to have contributed positively and negatively to the policy process in Nigeria.

The above situation founded the conceptualization of this work and to properly dissect the work, the researchers have raised such questions as, who are intellectuals? What roles do intellectuals play in the policy process? What roles have intellectuals in Nigeria played in the policy process? The work further adopts theoretical models to explain the roles played by intellectuals in the policy process in Nigeria where intellectuals have been grouped into idealists, realists and Marxists. The Belief System Model of public policy making acts as our theoretical framework to offer explanations between ideological beliefs and actions which are defined by roles.

This research seeks to contribute to the long-time debate among public policy analysts on the bases for the success and/or failure of public policies in Nigeria, who have most times hinged the reason on presence and absence of political will by the leaders. The work has gone beyond this position to state that the bases for one to have or lack political will stems from the values held by these political leaders which we term "Belief" here. This work also makes a theoretical contribution to the analysis of public policy in Nigeria using idealism, realism and Marxism.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### The Policy Process

Policy<sup>1</sup> has been construed differently by scholars (Akindele and Olaopa, 2004; Sharma and Sadana, 2010; Olaniyi, 1998; Ikelegbe, 1996). However, the recognition of the importance of research and strategic planning makes the definition by Mala Singh (1992) very outstanding and useful to this study. According to Singh, “Policy refers to a framework or plan devised to address some social need, problem or demand. It encompasses, on the one hand, the values and principles underlying political, organisational and institutional choices, and on the other, the investigation, research and strategic planning required to operationalise those choices.” Singh goes further to state that, “given the increasing complexity of social systems and the demands of legitimation, policymakers and decision makers seek data analyses and researched options for more effective or persuasive governance. For this purpose, they either train their own cadre of policy researchers or draw in relatively independent sources of expertise.”

The emergence of policies entails various processes which could also contribute to the success or failure of such policy (Dimock et al 1953; Onyeoziri, 2002; Sharma and Sadana, 2010). The process also involves typologies of actors who bear a lot of influence on the final outcome of the policy. Aberman et al (2010) has defined policy process as the manner in which policies are decided on: a process can involve many actors (individuals and organizations) and is defined by the local (and sometimes external) political, social (cultural and belief systems), and institutional realities (bureaucratic structures and capacities) within which it operates. One of such individuals, organizations or institutions that affect policy outcomes involves intellectuals who include the academia<sup>2</sup>. Who then is an intellectual or who are intellectuals?

Mazrui (1978) sees an intellectual as a person who has the capacity to be fascinated by ideas and has acquired the skills to handle some of those ideas effectively. Mazrui goes further to enumerate four types of intellectuals: academic, literary, political and general intellectuals. According to him, academic intellectuals are the category that relates intellectual pursuits to higher learning and commits its mental resources to the arts of teaching and research and are found at university campuses. For Hyden (1967), “one can define an intellectual as any man with a defined system of values and the capacity to command influence on the general trends of change in society by mastering oral or written means of persuasion.” Shils (1960) in Hyden (1967) maintains that intellectuals are: all persons with an advanced modern education and the intellectual concerns and skills ordinarily associated with it. Montefiore (1990) as cited by Omotola (2007) also sees an intellectual as ‘anyone who takes a committed interest in the validity and truth of ideas for their own sake’. Addressing the same issue from a functional perspective, Omotola (2007) also cited Said (1994) to have defined intellectuals as ‘those engaged in the production and distribution of knowledge’. For us, an intellectual is that person who has undergone that process of refinement through knowledge acquisition and thus, engages in the production and distribution of such knowledge in the society.

### The Role of Intellectuals in a State

For Singh (1992), intellectuals as researchers constitute one agency within the policy generation process. Singh goes further to give an elaborate explanation arguing that, there is no single unambiguous definition of intellectuals because there is no single unambiguous role played by them. In the domain of power, they have been critics as well as advisers to those in power and, sometimes, themselves wielders of power. Within the context of the division between mental and manual labour, their activity has been to articulate, interpret, evaluate and disseminate ideas, concepts, theories and symbols. Through their work they serve, in crude and subtle ways, a variety of interests, not excluding their own. Race, class, gender and ideology are crucial determining factors in how this stratum is constituted and socially located. In Amuwo’s view (2002), “indeed, intellectuals are considered agents of a universal, timeless set of truths which their training and temperament lead them to pursue and valorize.” Shivji (2006) following Mazrui (1978)’s classification of intellectuals holds intellectuals to high esteem and expectation in his view that partisan environments need bodies and institutions which can rise above partisan politics and concern themselves with larger social and national issues. He sees the student body and institutions of higher learning as part of that intellectual organization that has the potential to rise to the occasion. He further notes that the intellectual body is like a mirror, it gives the society its own image. They articulate people’s hopes and fears, help them give meaning to what may look like the obvious, the innocuous and the mundane. For Amuwo (2002), “the contemporary African academic intellectual, whatever else she or he is, is little more than a theoretical personality functioning in two different worlds: the world of the idealistic academic,

<sup>1</sup> Policy here stands for Public Policy.

<sup>2</sup> Academia is a collective term for the scientific and cultural community engaged in higher education and research. (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia). Charles Olungah, in his article titled ‘The Role of Academia in Democratization in Kenya’ said the term has come to connote cultural accumulation of knowledge, its development and transmission across generations and its practitioners and transmitters.

a merchant of knowledge and an incubator of ideas of both heuristic and developmental value; and the practical world in which knowledge often plays second fiddle to politics and power.” He further states that, “it is expected of intellectuals that they take a stand or choose a side either for or against the powers-that-be, particularly when critical political, social, economic, and moral issues are at stake. To do otherwise is objectionable and at odds with the historic role of the intellectual.” Hyden (1967) writing on intellectuals, who occupy government positions, cited Mannheim (1954) to have opined that “as the philosopher-kings, the intellectuals in power have often been considered as the “national conscience”. The view of their role has come close to the idea of the *freischwebende Intelligenz*; the belief that intellectuals are not attached to particular social classes and are therefore in an optimal position to judge the interest of the society, present or future.”

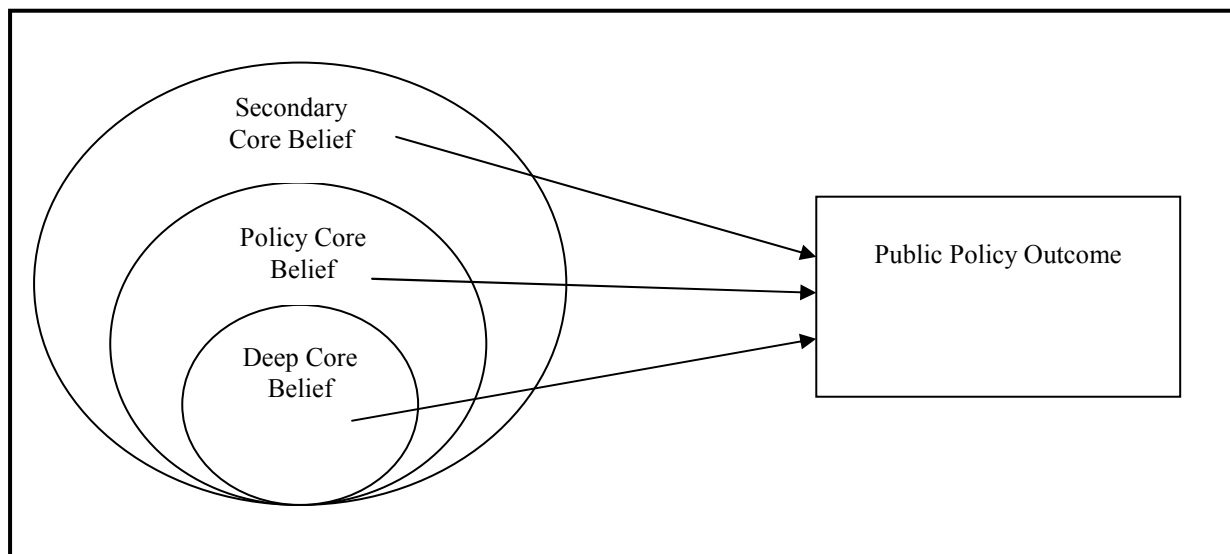
On the part of government, Gouldner (1970) as cited by Mbanefo (2006) asserts that the government expected the social sciences to help solve ramifying practical problems. In particular, it is expected that social science will help administrators to design and operate national policies, welfare apparatus, urban settlements, and even industrial establishments. Again, the President of India, in an address to the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities in Punjab on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2006, (abrachan.net) reiterated the role of universities in nation building. According to him, “the Universities have a major responsibility in nation building through enriching science, engineering, technology, humanities and arts by providing value based education to students to make them moral leaders.” The above reviewed literature demonstrates the role and importance of intellectuals in any society as recognized by both the government and the society.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This work adopts the Belief System Model to attempt at offering answers to the reasons why intellectuals in Nigeria have played the various roles in the policy process in Nigeria. The model derives from the Advocacy Coalition Framework developed by Paul Sabatier and H.C. Jenkins-Smith in 1993, in the work titled, ‘The Advocacy Coalition Approach: An assessment’, which forms a chapter in the book ‘Theories of the policy process’ edited by Paul Sabatier. The framework sees the policy process and policy outcome as result of interactions, struggle between coalitions (organisations, institutions, groups, individuals with common interest) who share different beliefs systems and are guided by these beliefs systems in their choice of policy supports and advocacies. Sabatier (1988), made clearer, who and what consists of Advocacy Coalitions in his work ‘Toward Better Theories of the Policy Process’. According to Sabatier, an Advocacy Coalition consists of actors from many public and private organizations at all levels of government who share a set of basic beliefs (policy goals plus causal and other perceptions) and who seek to manipulate the rules of various governmental institutions to achieve those goals over time. Conflict among coalitions is mediated by “policy brokers,” i.e., actors more concerned with system stability than with achieving policy goals. To these Advocacy Coalitions, intellectuals belong. Weible et al (2008), explains further Advocacy Coalition positing that, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) posits a clear model of the individual who is boundedly rational with limited abilities to process stimuli. To make sense of the world, this individual relies on a three-tiered belief system to filter or distort stimuli in a way that removes direct challenges to their belief system and to accept stimuli that bolsters their belief system.

The ACF comprises of three belief systems which are borne by policy actors and which influence and form the bases for their choices and trade-offs in policy making and implementation: the Deep Core Beliefs, the Policy Core Beliefs and the Secondary Core Beliefs.

In the explanation given by Weible et al (2008), at the broadest level are deep core beliefs, which span multiple policy subsystems. Deep core beliefs are normative, fundamental beliefs that are largely a product of childhood socialization and very difficult to change. Components of deep core beliefs include (i) normative and ontological assumptions about human nature; (ii) concern about the relative priority of values, such as liberty and equality; (iii) concern about the proper role of government and markets; and (iv) general priorities about who should participate in government. In the middle of the ACF’s belief system lie policy core beliefs. Policy core beliefs are subsystem-wide in scope and include normative priorities and empirical components such as the seriousness and causes of major problems spanning a subsystem. Policy core beliefs are resistant to change but are more malleable than deep core beliefs. At the bottom of the belief system lie secondary beliefs, which are narrower in scope and address issues pertaining to only a portion of a policy subsystem, such as detailed rules and budgetary decisions. Changes in secondary beliefs are most likely to occur due to new information and learning. New information can be received by an actor from many sources, such as news from events internal or external to the subsystem, scientific reports and policy analyses, and face-to-face communications. The diagram below shows the three belief systems inherent in a policy actor which acts on and contributes to the outcome of his policy choice and action. The Deep Core Belief forms the nucleus and the most important which is never changed followed by the Policy Core Belief which is malleable to change but in lesser degree to the Secondary Core Belief.



Schemata of Belief System Framework of Public Policy Analysis

Belief systems are important for understanding the underlying logic of the ACF for a couple of reasons. One reason is that the ACF presumes that policies and programs are best conceived as translations of belief systems. One can, therefore, compare the belief systems of policy actors to better understand actual policies or use belief systems to generate expectations about future policies. Another reason is that belief systems are essential for understanding the formation, maintenance, and structure of coalitions. The ACF assumes that beliefs serve as the causal driver for political behavior and bind actors together in coalitions. Thus, this paper argues that intellectuals being policy actors by the position they occupy in the policy process, have been guided by their beliefs which determine the advocacy coalitions they belong to and hence; the roles they have played and continue to play. In the same vein, Amuwo (2002) argues that, "different academics go to government with different values, creeds, moral convictions, and expectations, irrespective of labeling and taxonomy. Some academics may become "radicals"-or may simply become radicalized-in order to gain attention and be tapped by the government. Others, for purposes of self-aggrandizement and self-preservation, may turn out to be defenders of the status quo."

### **IDEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF INTELLECTUALS IN NIGERIA**

With the help of our theoretical framework in this work (Belief System Framework), we shall attempt an explanation into the bases for the roles of intellectuals in Nigeria based on ideological alignment which include the Idealists, the Realist and the Marxists. This categorization however, does not entail a clear cut division among intellectuals in Nigeria but will serve as a tool for clarity of our discussion.

The first group of intellectuals, according to our classification, is the idealists. Intellectuals who belong to the idealists group are those who believe in what ought to be. Thus, they are normative in their thought patterns as well as their actions in the policy process. This group of intellectuals imbibe the 'do it right' principle no matter the environment and condition they find themselves. They tend to make every effort to bring the political system and the policy process to the ideals of the profession. This group is usually silent but still play roles through writings, granting of interviews to the press, organizing programs and fora as well as when they are appointments into government. Thus, Giroux (1995) in Amuwo (2002) argues that, "most academic intellectuals are wont not to intervene in policy debates and politics for several reasons. For one, consciously or otherwise, they see themselves as part of an elitist social institution that the university has essentially been, one that is "a cultural gatekeeper for dominant values."

The second group of intellectuals is the realists who are not considerate of whatever ideal that may exist but who go about their role with the orientation and belief that the policy process must reflect the nature of the society where it operates; what is referred to as 'ecology of public administration' in public administration parlance. Thus, if the system is corrupt, they follow the corrupt trend and vice versa. The tendency here is that this group of intellectuals, though are aware of what ought to be, but are not eager either to advocate for a change or be at the vanguard of the change. They often wine and dine with the government in power to keep the statusquo going whether for the general good or not. For this group of intellectuals, the end justifies the means.

The Marxists believe that the policy process is a process of struggle between different segments of the society and between the leaders (the few) and the followers (the many) each seeking for superiority of interest. Hence,

policy outcome is the result of this struggle where the strong triumphs. Guided by this belief, this group of intellectuals always sees the masses as weak group who are ignorant of the policy process and so must be protected by the intellectuals to which they belong. This group always find themselves in constant battle with the government and its agencies finding loopholes in most government policies which may be detrimental to the people and seeking for change. When they find themselves in the position to make such policies, their point of reference always becomes the people or the masses.

## **EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLES OF INTELLECTUALS IN THE POLICY PROCESS IN NIGERIA**

A major focus of post-independence scholarship on Africa was channeled on the capacity of intellectuals who fought for the independence of African countries and who received power from the colonialists at independence to transform their respective countries into developed states. The outcome of such researches showed the failure of African intellectuals in charting a new course for their people. Hyden (1967) posited that “the first generation of intellectuals in power in post-independence Africa have failed, in that only to a very limited extent have they managed to realize their model societies. Nkrumah failed in making Ghana socialist centralized; Azikiwe, Awolowo and others in Nigeria did not succeed in creating a constitutional-democratic and federal Nigeria. It has been said that intellectuals do not make good politicians... Africa has seen the failure in politics of a number of intellectuals. Nkrumah, Azikiwe, Ben Bella, Lumumba and others have disappeared as persons from the intellectual arena. Their ideas, however, might still survive.” Hyden went on to list personal behavior, use of position in power for personal benefit, operation under false assumption as reasons for this failure. Thus, though the nationalists might have had the collective goal of building their different nations, their personal interests intervened in achieving them. Williams (1998) also observed that the tripartite regional structure with weak centre after independence in Nigeria profoundly affected the intellectual coloration of political struggle in Nigeria in the First Republic with the three factions of the political class in control in the three regions which resulted in the regional assimilation of intellectuals rather than national and regional allegiance to political leaders. What emerged in post-independence Nigeria (First Republic), according to Williams, were mafia-like intellectual groups that coalesced around the regional leaders. Obi (2004) further described the nature of the role of intellectuals immediately after Nigeria’s independence. According to Obi, “most intellectuals that articulated the projects of the Nigerian nation-state in the decolonisation phase ended up as politicians, civil servants, or academics at the various tiers of the Nigerian federation. It did not take long after independence for the cracks to begin to appear in the nation-state project. At that point, hitherto suppressed ethno-regional passions were unleashed as the divisions between the factions of the Nigerian political class widened. Unfortunately, the intellectuals were not left out of these divisions based on their class interests. Even those who were apolitical, or even truly nationalist, found themselves in a minority, and unable to stem the strong influence of ethno-regional sentiment among the masses.” Some clear evidence of the above could be found in the Western Region electoral crisis in 1965, the coups of 1966, the pogroms in Northern Nigeria, and the mobilisation of the Igbo ‘nation’ for secession in 1967 and the ugly descent into civil war in the same year.

With the intervention and interruption of the First Republic and subsequent take-over of government by the military in Nigeria, intellectuals’ contribution to national development was totally lost owing to the perception of intellectuals as enemies of the state by the military which also shaped the relationship pattern between the duo (Freeland, 2004; Mamdani, 2007). Prof. Olayiwola Abegunrin cited by Abidde (2012) recently accused the military of destroying Nigeria’s institutions by some of the policies they promulgated and pursued, beginning in the General Yakubu Gowon era. Some of the policies they pursued, along with all the coups and countercoups, helped weaken, and in some cases, destroyed the sense of nation-building and sense of self in Nigeria. A great many of Nigeria’s national treasure were prosecuted, persecuted, harassed, jailed, or sent into exile; and in some cases, the military simply made life and living miserable and unbearable, Abegunrin maintained.

The Second Republic was no better than the previous years (Dudley, 1982) as intellectuals played little or no role in policy process and governance in terms of relevance. In the words of Aiyede (1995), it is surprising that during the Shagari Administration (1979 – 1984), little or no regard was given to intellectual and professional input on policy. Although the number of universities and research centres had increased, they were never exploited as sources of policy advices. Appointment of Ministers was rather based on partisan party reasons, thus such top to flight executive positions in the public and civil service were occupied by individuals bereft of the ability and leadership quality or experience to effectively take charge of their ministries. Furthermore in Nigeria’s history, Shehu Shagari displayed the highest neglect for intellectuals by the government (Aiyede, 1995; Erinosh, 2006). Those of them who found themselves in the service of government never had the freedom to play noticeable roles. The period was rather dominated by personal and special advisers and ministers who were bereft of the policy process. In this situation, it could not be determined the ideologies that guided the intellectuals in that era.

The dramatic appearance of intellectuals in governance and policy process was heavily witnessed in Nigeria during the Babangida regime when a lot of intellectuals played different roles both in and out of the corridors of power. While Joseph (1987) observed that “the first signal that intellectuals were to play a major role in the formulation and execution of policy under General Babangida’s rule came with the composition of his cabinet. Amuwo (2002) recorded that, “more than any other government - military or civilian, before it and after it - the Babangida regime hired an array of senior academic political scientists as ministers, special advisers, and experts. It was a glittering assemblage of the best and the brightest. In terms of technocratic brilliance and intellectual gifts, it was perhaps the most formidable team ever put together by a Nigerian leader. The list could hardly be faulted either on the ground of competence or geographical spread.” However, these intellectuals rather than acting on their Deep Core Values, gave way to the Secondary Core Belief and the Policy Core Belief which availed them with the freedom to support whatever policy that gives returns to their pockets whether such policy benefits the rest of the society or not.

While in theory their major role in government was to theorize and philosophize a new political culture for the government’s transition-to-democracy project-an agenda that, to all appearances, fit the bill of their intellectual responsibility within the ivory tower-in practice it does seem that intellectual responsibility and social morality were subsumed under political loyalty....” This is because the myriad of intellectuals that were involved in the Babangida’s government almost exhibited the same participation pattern. They were appointed as ministers, advisers, and heads of various committees that were charged with different functions. This period also saw the establishment of various policy and research institutes like the Centre for Democratic Studies (CDS), the Directorate of Food, Roads and Infrastructure (DFFRI), etc. Some other bodies established by this regime included the National Planning Commission, the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC), and the National Council for Inter-Governmental Relations, the Political Bureau, Economic Monitoring Committee etc. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which has continued to hunt this country till date must not be forgotten too. The heads and sometimes, members of these committees were core intellectuals among who were Profs. Ikenna Nzimiro, Ojetunji Aboyade, Omo Omoruyi, and so many others. It was a collection of intellectuals with different belief systems and ideological linings (idealists, realists, Marxists) but they tended to play along the same line of action. Even the acclaimed Marxists like Prof. Claude Ake, Dr. Bala Usman and others were more or less insignificant in the political system (Erinosho, 2006). Thus, Jega (1997) stated that:

At one level, prominent and otherwise respected intellectuals collaborated with the regime in all its ill-fated experimentation, with democratic processes and the so-called social engineering. Some, notably political scientists, proffered the theoretical postulations and methodologies for the regime’s political transition programme. They also became ‘transition handlers’ and managers. Others served in the mobilization campaigns perceived as essential in foistering the ‘new’ political and democratic dispensation.

Erinosho (2006) further pointed out that, “It is undeniable that Babangida’s disingenuous manipulation of social scientists in national policy was a resounding success because both the conservative and radical social scientists were incorporated into the rank of his special advisers or placed in positions where they felt that they were contributing to his administration and the development of the country.”

In this same vein, Aiyede (1995:11) reiterated that,

Some academics in government have even participated in scuttling the successes of policies for the purpose of self-gratification and temporary benefices of office. Some are known to have abandoned long-cherished and avowed values and principles to temper with academic freedom, encouraging government to disregard the will of the people by not respecting freely made agreements. Obviously the Nigerian policy scene reflects the inanities, instabilities and ambiguities of the Nigerian political scene.

Little wonder General Babangida has been generally referred to as the ‘Political Maradona’, which stems from the manner he manipulated the citizens including the intellectuals in order to achieve his ill-fated goals. Thus, intellectuals in this regime could be classified as realists, who decided to take the current when it served.

An explanation for this situation has been offered by Erinosho (2006) who believes that there are three postulations that can be used to explain this situation: First is that most of the intellectuals did not know that the motive of Babangida was to disingenuously manipulate them for his own end and that they only came to realize this but could not disengage due to the possible risk to their lives when it dawned on them in the twilight of the regime. Second was that the generosity of Babangida towards the social science scholars whose, take-home pay at that time was nothing to write about blinded them on his motive, forcing them to throw overboard their revolutionary mien and to succumb to the wily General. The third postulation is that the so-called Nigerian

revolutionary social science scholars are by no means different in character, outlook and philosophy from the bunch of Nigeria politicians that were or are nurtured by the military. These scholars share an important and a distinctive trait with politicians that are the creation/product of successive military rulers in the country, namely, an uncanny neurotic need for power and money.

The roles played by these intellectuals contrasted the conventional expectations as they connived with Babangida acting as his puppets and employed their intellectual prowess in maneuvering the constitution and constitutional process in favour of the self-perpetuation of Babangida in office. Joseph (1987) further stated that this agenda was pursued through the establishment of a seventeen-member Political Bureau preceded by the inauguration of a Presidential Advisory Council, which to all intents and purposes was a kitchen cabinet, chaired by late Professor Ojetunji Aboyade, the respected and eminent economist. In his bid to ensure that all members of the clique surrounding him benefited from the largesse, as Joseph (1987) put it, the government became a movable feast. By 1992, many of the intellectuals had become ambassadors, directors of banks, members of newly created boards and commissions such as the DIFFRI, Community Bank, Peoples' Bank, Population Boundary Adjustment Commission, National Population Board, etc.

On the other hand, there were also some other intellectuals and organizations within the civil society who stood their ground guided by their Deep Core Beliefs and countered the military government in all its bizarre acts. ASUU's political intransigence, the refusal of its leadership to succumb to monetary blandishments, its sharp and well-informed commentaries on the state of the nation, and above all, its constant denunciation of the Babangida Transition as a worthless charade, were to cost the military government a substantial part of whatever legitimacy it had (Joseph, 1987).

The fourth republic has also continued to witness the active involvement of intellectuals in the policy process. The administration of Olusegun Obasanjo made use of many of them in constituting his government in different sectors of the political system. Very outstanding among them is the use of Prof. Maurice Iwuh as the INEC Chairman; Prof. Chukwuma Soludo as the CBN Governor, Prof. Dora Akunyili as the NAFDAC Chairman. Others include Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Oby Ezekwesili, Nuhu Ribadu and other intellectuals so numerous to mention who occupied one position on another in that administration. Many of them actually made serious positive impact in the policy process. However, the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo was widely criticized for its high-handedness and constant neglect of policy advice given to it by some of his economic management team and other actors in his government. This situation is often explained with the military background from which Obasanjo emerged before becoming the civilian president. Thus, positive impacts of the efforts of the intellectuals notwithstanding, the contributions were not well felt by the common man on the streets of Nigeria as government policies did not make life easy and more meaningful to the people.

The administration of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua with Goodluck Jonathan as the vice president also witnessed the active involvement of intellectuals in the policy process. In fact, the president and his vice were intellectuals themselves having come from the education sector into government. Thus, they also used people of like minds in their government. However, this administration was short-lived as result of the sudden death of the president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua not so long after he became president as result of illness.

The current president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has continued the involvement of intellectuals in his government. This started even from the elections that brought his government into power. The INEC chairman, Prof. Attahiru Jega is a seasoned Professor of Political Science. In order to ensure freer and fairer elections in Nigeria, vice chancellors and other eminent academics were used at different levels of the administration of the 2011 elections. Eventually, the aim of election integrity was achieved to very large extent in Nigeria in the 2011 elections and the same process has continued in the different elections which INEC has conducted in different states of the country under Attahiru Jega.

Furthermore, the administration of Goodluck Jonathan has continued to witness the participation of intellectuals in the policy process. Evidence of this position is also seen in the protests around the country in January 2012 led by intellectuals (like Pastor Tunde Bakare of Save Nigeria Group, Femi Falana, Tunji Braithwaite etc) through Civil Society Organizations, Trade Union Congress, Organized Private Sector etc in reaction to the policy of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria which the federal government implemented in January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. This actually led to the partial reversal of that policy and the subsequent probe into the fuel subsidy process in Nigeria which has continued to reveal several fraudulent activities that has been taking place in the petroleum industry of Nigeria.

Again, the administration of Goodluck Jonathan has also used intellectuals very extensively in constituting his government. The intention to do this was made known right from his swearing in speech where stated categorically that his administration would 'put square pegs in square holes' and government appointments would be based on competence and performance. Thus, starting from the ministers to the ambassadors and as well as the economic management team are filled up by intellectuals. These intellectuals have been making good moves in the policy process and the administration of Goodluck Jonathan. It may be too early to make conclusions at this stage of the administration of Goodluck Jonathan, but some of the policies made so far has

been criticized by the people on the grounds of ill-advised of the president by his advisers who we believe are also intellectuals, for example the policy of the removal of fuel subsidy on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

### INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Intellectuals in Nigeria have been involved in the policy process in various ways right from the colonial era to the contemporary post-colonial period. Aiyede (1995) sees the roles of intellectuals in the policy process in Nigeria as direct and indirect roles. Indirectly, according to him, they supply the policy process with the skilled labour that are employed in public policy. They also provide consultancy services and make their research available to public policy makers and public administrators and as advisers and work in commissions and panels of enquiry. Directly, he continues, intellectuals take up appointments as ministers, directors-general, commissioners and members of boards of parastatals and others.

Drawing from the military regime experience in Nigeria as discussed above and especially in the contemporary times, most intellectuals in Nigeria have failed to represent the 'voice of reason' which is expected of them. It is unfortunate that many intellectuals who have produced outstanding researches and offered excellent solutions to variegated problems of Nigeria have often found themselves "eating their vomits" when they enter the corridors of power in government. The moment they assume powers, they tend to forget all their good ideas when they were in the universities and other higher and research institutions. Not only that, they also throw over buds ideas sent to them by their colleagues in the research institutions and tend to play along with the statusquo before they came in. Ayoade (1990) reported an accusation leveled on Political Scientists by his friend in a speech that "in Nigeria, academics in government tend to use their intellect to serve the government rather than the nation. Rather than look at things from the perspective of what would benefit the entire nation, they tend to view things from the short-term interest of the particular government in power."<sup>3</sup> Two explanations can be offered to explain these situations: the 'systemic' angle as well as the 'Belief System' perspective.

On the systemic perspective, this work posits that the reason why intellectuals fail when they get into government is a result of the inherent systemic problems located within the policy environment where they operate. Thus, intellectuals, no matter how good and intelligent they may have been in their profession and how pure their intentions might be, they find it difficult to achieve those good intentions when they get into the corridors of power. Williams (1998), writing on the position of intellectuals after colonization stated that, "an assimilated intellectual simply becomes a co-opted member of an often corrupt and dissolute political class. Since what motivated the quest in the first place is personal economic salvation and not institutional radicalization or even reform, the assimilated intellectual is powerless to confront the rot and he becomes effectively defunct." In the same line of thought, Ayoade (1990) has also opined that "every decision has an environment, and a context. The context may be suffocating historical antecedents that imprison the decision maker." Thus, the intellectual has to play according to the rule set by the surrounding environment shaped by the bureaucracy and other government officials. The result is that if the environment is bad, the intellectual reflects same and if the environment is good, the intellectual in turn reflects same. Some of the characteristics of this environment include insincerity of the government who may have brought the intellectuals into government corridors, lack of good conscience from the bureaucrats who work with these intellectuals when they get into government through frustration of their efforts to succeed in variegated forms, the pressure from the government on the intellectuals to dance to their tunes as they are the piper who dictate the tune.

However, the above position seems to be shallow as the second variable, 'Belief System' seems to counter it. The position of this work on the Belief system is that intellectuals, provided with necessary requirements, are guided by their belief systems while in government. Thus, whoever fails in government, does so because he has chosen to do so as a result of his/her beliefs or values and whoever succeeds also does so as a result of his/her beliefs or values since "the hood does not make the monk". According to Tijani (2010), the intellectuals' greatest predicament is sticking to the truth; speaking the truth, and positing truth. Citing a few examples of Nigerian intellectuals who have been able to stand on that truth as a result of their beliefs becomes paramount here. Intellectuals like Prof. Attahiru Jega, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, Prof. Dora Akunyili, and others have demonstrated the fact that it is possible to stand firm to the truth if one wills. When the forces of government tend to engulf the integrity of the one concerned, resignation becomes the best option like Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala did in Olusegun Obasanjo's government. Therefore, 'Belief System' and values remain the fundamental determiners of policy success or failure in Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> Ayoade was speaking on the topic "Political Science and Critical Patriotic Scholarship" at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association Held in Jos, November 21 – 23. The position was actually taken by a fellow Political Scientist.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A nation without the presence of intellectuals risks existing without proper guidance, but existing with the presence of incompetent and ineffective intellectuals is even more dangerous. From our study, it is established that the post-colonial and post-independence intellectuals in Nigeria were more of idealists who were committed to building the nation and making positive contributions to the policy process as well as bringing about the transformation and rapid development of the country. However, the coming of the military era saddled with autocracy and clamping down on those who criticized the government saw the emergence of Marxists who were still bent on fighting the course of the masses and the Realists who were ready to dance to the tune of the government in power. In the post-independence era extending towards the first two military coups which Erinoshio (2006) described as “era of constructive engagement of social scientists”, intellectuals were seen as the voice of reason as they were involved in the policy process as already stated above. Some of these intellectuals included Late Dr. Pius Okigbo, Prof. Mabogunje, Prof. Aboyade, Late Prof. Billy Dudley and Prof. Adebayo Adedeji. The period also saw the establishment of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

It must be stated that, individual differences and interests may exist among intellectuals in Nigeria, but the principles that guide intellectualism as well as policy making and implementation still abide. The Policy process is a scientific process as well as a rational exercise and should be treated as such. Stake holders must learn to put aside their ideological linings and beliefs when they find themselves involved either directly or indirectly in the policy process. Personal values and beliefs as well as ideological linings of individual intellectuals must be subsumed under the national and public good so that proper contribution will be made to the policy process in Nigeria. This will in turn benefit the intellectuals by presenting them as the ‘voice of reason’ they should be and the country by ensuring effective and efficient policy process.

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