

# **A Political Economy of Public Policymaking and Underdevelopment in Postcolonial African States: A Marxian Perspective**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Debates over who makes public policy in postcolonial African states are lengthy, spanning from 1960s until now, even as such debates prompt pernicious human underdevelopment in this region. Driven by these unfinished debates' impervious outcomes - the impoverishment of postcolonial Africans, this paper uses the Marxian political economy perspective to determine the mischievous insights arising from these debates, which prod irrational policymaking. It argues that, although policymaking is par excellence the impeccable and inescapable normal government activity and an important political instrument for exerting exhilarating or doldrums societies, it is fraught with inequitably precarious, intricate and dispute-prone processes for mobilising, distributing and allocating resources in societies. Consequently, the paper examines this activity's shortcomings, not only through the cognitive capacities or incapacities of government officials, but through subjective irrational groups' interests. Using the rational-comprehensive theory of policymaking, it concludes that, even as policymaking is estranged by malicious contestations through soft or hard power from competing forces with undemocratic claims over rights and resources, the Marxian political economy perspective and rational-comprehensive model can dependably ensure the region's equitable development rather than underdevelopment.

**Keywords:** Political economy, policymaking, underdevelopment, postcolonial, African states, Marxian Perspective.

## **THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT: AN INTRODUCTION INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Regrettably, Alfred Chandler's 1962 strategy-structure alignment doctrine<sup>1</sup> for human development, has hardly gained grounds in postcolonial African states. Herein, it is absurd noting how this doctrine is translated as eroding ruler ships' trump cards. These so-called trump cards are the instruments for negatively manipulating state power in postcolonial African states; <sup>2</sup> and, are thus, central instruments for mediatory or non-mediatory political processes. These instruments virtually shape societies into exhilarating or doldrums.<sup>3</sup> Thus, between the interfaces of politics, economics and culture, are found the interests of state power wielders and competing forces, incessantly engaged into tangible or intangible debates over the control of public policymaking, as each lay claims over rights and resources within the governing process.<sup>4</sup>

Essentially, from these debates there arise strong or weak resource-allocation frameworks, otherwise known as public policies.<sup>5</sup> Definitely, to the ordinary citizens in postcolonial African states, public policymaking and its outcomes are equitable rational-comprehensive activities of their governments, whose intents are to solve social problems in their societies.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, such activities, should not involve any haphazard processes, which relate to the use of soft and hard power. Citizens opine that any malicious influence upon state officials from non-state officials is abusive to state power.<sup>7</sup> Ostensibly, citizens hold a misleading notion of the actual makers of public policy in societies, particularly in nascent African states. Herein, this paper's research problem surfaces, including its contextual setting, which is the character of social relations between real state power wielders and the competing social forces vis-à-vis policymaking that effect underdevelopment in postcolonial African states.

The worry here is that policymaking in this part of the world is fraught with underdevelopment rather than development, given the competing claims over rights and resources and the people's subjective mindsets. Apparently, the majority of ordinary citizens know little that, most policy outcomes are products of arrogated positioning and claims from various segments of interest groups, which impel upon the real state power wielders to twist and control state power apparatuses towards their irrational instincts for modernising their constituencies, rather than causing a wholesome national development.

Using the rational-comprehensive theory of policymaking, this paper examines and divulges the political economy of these arrogated self-positioning and claims of multifaceted social segments in policymaking processes with the view to determining who actually makes public policies in postcolonial African states. It argues that, in postcolonial African states, policymaking and its outcomes appear as the irrational combination of political leadership mindsets and strengthened restless community power players, rather than the fitting of impartial rational-comprehensive constructs of supposedly objectively minded political rulers. Public policymaking, it is believed belongs to the tenets of the electoral-box enunciated within the framework of John Locke's Social Contract Theory.<sup>8</sup> Definitely, such tenets enjoy the trust of the masses to enhance their collective well-being and, thus, must prod the equitable totality of national development. According to Locke, (1632 – 1704) "...government is created with the people's consent, to be ruled by individuals selected by the majority; and that, the ruler is obligated to rule for the interest of catering for the welfare of the majority - the voters without any distinction in society."

Essentially, given the prevailing mechanisms, which pervert rationality in policymaking in postcolonial African states, this paper sets to unveil the intricate web in policymaking, using the Marxian political economy to demonstrate how major assertive social forces actually dictate policymaking outcomes, as opposed to the general believe that policymaking outcomes are the products of rational cognitive objectivity of the ruling class. The intellectual impetus of this paper stems from the Marxian notion that, all that happens in the state is a true representation of the interests of the ruling class. Accordingly, to Marxian philosophies, the state is an agent of the ruling class.<sup>9</sup> However, the theoretical position of this paper is that, public policy making has rather strong political economy implications in every society, which strongly prevails in postcolonial African states, more than elsewhere. Cuing from the foregoing, and using the rational-comprehensive model in policymaking, I theoretically contend that, policymaking is shrouded in subjective contestations and bargaining between state power wielders and interest

groups with competing claims over rights and resources. Thus, the myopic self-seeking interests of sturdily connected social, economic and political forces propagate obnoxious mindsets against weaker segments of populations to entrench underdevelopment in the region.

### **THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS: THE RATIONAL-COMPREHENSIVE MODEL**

As a theoretical framework of analysis, the rational-comprehensive model in public policymaking is built on the assumptions that are usually referred to as either mini-max or mini-regret rules. These are (i) that, the decision-maker is confronted with a given problem that can be separated from others or at least considered meaningfully in comparison with them, (ii) that the goals, values and contexts of the policymaker are translated into comprehensive study of all choices and their effects on the outcomes in the society. Thus, rational-comprehensive model is closely related to human behaviours, as it explains the mindsets of humans that make their decisions choices above partial considerations. It enables policymakers to keep their self-interest lower than that of the common good. Thus, this theory, upholds three significant elements, namely, (i) rational actors, (ii) self and group interests, (iii) the invisible hand. Traceable to Augustine Comte (1798-1987), the model is considered comprehensively accessible, as it can be used with a wide range of cases, situations and contexts, most of which are apparently ignored by political leaders in postcolonial African states, who imbue self-seeking mindsets in public policymaking.

Essentially, the model gyrates on these steps, (i) evaluate the dilemma, (ii) think ahead, (iii) help others to think wisely with appropriate tools, (iv) gather sufficient and unbiased information, (v) engage into objective calculations of possible risks, (vi) select the appropriate choice and implement equitably. Thus, this model advocates what the term implies, a comprehensive review of all humanly possible solutions when making a policy or decision. The key focus of this model as a theoretical basis for analysis is that, it uses a cost-benefit analysis to establish the optimum selection, which is why the term rational is often included as part of its name - the rational-comprehensive model. Being the opposite of intuitive decision-making, the rational-comprehensive model, uses facts and data analysis, and step-by-step procedures to arrive at decisions, hence, it enjoys the intellectual weapon of being the most advanced type of policymaking model in all societies, except in postcolonial African societies, where its advantages appear negated.

Consequently, the non-application of the rational-comprehensive model in public policymaking causes diverted use and control of state power, which activates and fashions the attitudinal stronger class character (ruling or not ruling class) over weaker forces in policy outcomes. These policy outcomes help to further reproduce the position of the ruling class in control of the state apparatus in favour of skewed allocation of national resources.<sup>10</sup> Herein, I examine the concepts of political economy and public policy, to narrate some political economy options and how each conceives and exposes policymaking process vis-à-vis the actual maker of public policies in postcolonial Africa. Further, I divulge the role of political economy in problem solving and finally, I show how the Marxian political economy perspective studies empirical ramifications in the policymaking processes. The Marxian political economy perspective takes concrete analyses of the interactions of politics (the state), and the market (the economy), vis-à-vis man's historical development in societies.<sup>11</sup> Its intellectual focus explains the character of

exploitative or non-exploitative mobilisation, distribution and allocation of resources between different groups, individuals and nationalities.<sup>12</sup>

This description pulls particular thoughtfulness to the interplay between politics, understood as the contestation and bargaining between interest groups with competing claims over rights and resources, and economic processes understood as the mechanisms for generating wealth. In addition, how this wealth influences political choices, which encumber the entire polity and economics in society is of great interest to Marxism. Political economy analysis therefore helps us to understand what drives from political behaviours, especially of rulers and their incessant competing forces in society, and how these shape policies projects. It allows the ordinary publics, to know, who actually are the main front-runners and underdogs, and what effects surface for man's strategic growth of human societies.<sup>13</sup>

### **MARXIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY PERSPECTIVES AND THE RATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE MODEL IN PUBLIC POLICYMAKING**

Instructively, the Marxian political economy perceptive guides man to understand (i) how individual and collective interests and incentives over the mobilisation, distribution, allocation, consumption of resources, especially how the organization of the social relations of production of material conditions of wealth evolves in society. This perspective is keenly concerned about the sound evolvement of development-oriented relations between the state and economy for the benefit of every member of the society. It deals with social groups; and political elites or entrepreneurs, with external supportive mentors) and (ii) how these interest groups generate policy inputs into outcomes, which boost or thwart human and national development; (iii) the role of formal institutions; such as the rule of law and electoral processes; including the informal social, political and cultural norms that act in shaping human interaction in deep political and economic competition; (iv) the systematic impact of values, mores and ideas, including political ideologies, religious, economic and cultural beliefs, in relations to political behaviours relating to policy.<sup>14</sup>

The issues in the foregoing narrative are that, there is an evocation of consciousness to how competing social forces and their subjective claims shape supposed national political interests, through skewed policies and how economic interests shape the same national political decision-making, by failing to construct equitable national political, economic, social and emotional landscapes.<sup>15</sup> Thus, theoretically, the Marxian political economy perspective has a strong positive nexus with the rational-comprehensive model in policymaking in several aspects and respects as can be seen above, because the two models are anchored upon rationality as their substratum.<sup>16</sup> Seeing how the Marxian political economy perspective puts man at the centre of political and economic development, the rational-comprehensive model in public policymaking puts man at the interest of policymaking. These models of growth are identical in terms of lifting the ruled's safeties in the use of state power.

Indeed, public policy, which is normally considered as a purposive and consistent course of actions, galvanised as states' responses towards confronting social problems, becomes an act of a constituency interest, formulated through specific political processes, using state power mechanisms and adopted, implemented and enforced by public agencies. Some of the major substantive areas which public policy competitively addresses, especially in postcolonial African states, are the economy, agriculture, road infrastructure, provision of public utilities –

water, electricity, social amenities-harmony of education and health systems, energy, social welfare services, social and legal equality, inter and intra communal relations, defence and security, crime, domestic and global trade.

Public policy is insensitive when it fails to respond to issues and factors that emerge, sometimes with little warning, from the internal or external environment with generalised national interests, which calls for catering for the welfare of the publics that these problems affect. It is insensitive when fails to appropriately and unbiasedly bring together stakeholders and public concerned individuals and collectivities; to positively react to policymaking process through various state agencies and levels of government, with intersecting or interrelated mandates.<sup>17</sup> Such mandates must unambiguously include the equitable mobilisation, distribution and allocation of natural resources, such as dividends from extracted crude oil, copper, bauxite, and so forth, with corresponding spread among competing communities.

Public policy is proactive when it responds to triggers that are recognised because we are scanning the operating environment, to identify potential issues and factors that could affect the population negatively. Proactively, it predicts and prepares against the extenuation and/or eventualities through strategic planning, making strategic choices, against threats, identifying appropriate benchmarks, resolve primary location and creating business collaborations amongst competing communities. Admittedly, public policies may take several forms to address the needs of the society; such as (i) distributive, whose purpose is the allocation of resources to sections of the population, (ii) regulatory, which imposes the limits on the individual and collective behaviours. Other forms include self-regulatory which seeks to promote the interests of organisations and their personnel and enhance the official credibility of the organisation and the redistributive form which entails the deliberate efforts by governments to change the distribution of income, wealth, property or rights between groups in the population.<sup>18</sup>

### **THE PERSPECTIVES OF LIBERAL AND NEOLIBERAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATES**

This model has many variants; these include classical, neo-classical and modern liberal political economy, having as some their major protagonist's people such as Adams Smith, David Ricardo, Maynard Keynes, and so forth. It is important discerning how this model promotes equity in policymaking in postcolonial African states. The major arguments of the school are that (i) humans have self-interest and they are talented to act with less supervision by utilising their cognitive capacities to reason and make choices in satisfying their needs and desires by using scarce resource in the most efficient ways. (ii) Society is an aggregation of individuals with interests.

The good society is one that permits individuals to freely pursue private interests and indeed protect the individuals, while pursuing these interests. (iii) Government is created by individuals for the purpose of protecting their rights and interests as guaranteed by the constitution.<sup>19</sup> But as Ake, (1981)<sup>20</sup>, Nnoli (1983),<sup>21</sup> Alamo (2002)<sup>22</sup> there appear a great shortfall in the benefits that accrue to citizens in postcolonial African states through the foregoing tenets of this model. Thus, the marginalisation of the population into poverty via inappropriate policies appear to hold sway.

According to liberalism, the best government is that which does not go into economic production. Government is only required to foster economic growth through regulatory public policy mechanisms. (d) The market is principal coordinating agency for the economy as it is said to promote efficiency, economic growth, welfare and stability and peace in the economic system. (e) The market plays a political role, and as a political institution, it promotes justice, freedom, equity and orderliness in the economic system; and finally, (f) the model believes in the promotion of private property and the development of capitalism as the best economic and political model of society.<sup>20</sup> As Parson<sup>21</sup> observes, “... the neo-neoliberal proponents have further pushed the boundaries of the argument of the liberal school by advocating the existence of a minimalist capitalist state, which will be a precondition for state protection of the market and state protection of capital.” This position is commonly referred to as the Washington consensus and post-Washington consensus. This neoliberal ideology and thinking have hugely influenced and shaped public policy towards economic, civil service, labour, and trade reforms, and so forth.<sup>22</sup>

### **MARXIST POLITICAL ECONOMY PERSPECTIVE**

The Marxian political economy perspective draws its inspirations, strengths and weaknesses from the economic and political works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Tse-Tung, and host of other Marxian thinkers.<sup>23</sup> This perspective usually agrees that (i) human beings have both individual and group needs, which are met through collective action arrived at by their capacities for reasoned choices.<sup>24</sup> These reasoned choices are influenced by the consciousness of their material conditions, and economic factors and behaviours which are in turn significantly shaped by their social and natural environment. The social and natural environment dictates that humans cannot fully develop their talents and capacities except in association with other persons. (ii) Society is more than a collection of individuals.<sup>25</sup>

Marxists believe that, it is the living organism, which individuals are born into and in which they enter relationship with others. Thus, the society precedes the individual and as such, it has an identity and interests of its own that may potentially conflict with a particular individual's desires.

A good society is that whose institutions encourage individual development as well as collective social relations based on mutual respect. (iii) The proper role of government is to serve as a representative of the collective interests of citizens. Government should permit citizens to do for themselves collectively what they cannot accomplish as individuals. (iv) Government promotes justice in society, implying that rewards are distributed in accordance with the rights established by the democratic political process. Such rights such as right to the fruits of labour and a right to those conditions essential for human development such as material necessities and health care. Justice also includes the impartial administration of the law. (e) The goal of a good society is that which guarantees, promotes freedom, equity and redistribution amid its members, all of which are attained through equitable policy processes.<sup>26</sup>

The neo-Marxist school pays attention to issue of domestic and international relations and development to explain challenges facing humanity in the world. The proponents develop the theories of development to explain why some countries are developing while others are not. It is contended that colonial capitalism and foreign domination are perpetuate through the process of unequal exchange in trade, global structural imbalances, technological

backwardness, and so on; in addition, the phenomenon of underdevelopment and dependency are eliminated, when there is a severance of relationship between the so-called centre and peripheral countries. This will then guarantee autonomous development which a developmental state will work toward the fulfilment of equality and freedom for citizens. Public policy should be directed to self-reliance and sustainable development, which should be inclusive, anti-poor, pro-women, pro-environmental and pro-people's development.

### **ESTABLISHED OR INSTITUTIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY**

Established political economy (EPE) draws its inspiration from the fact that human nature and behaviours need constraining, because, it assumes that human beings are motivated purely by self-interest. Thus, maximising one's utility as a consumer and profiteer and producers, who are subject to budget and resource constraints. Hence, the function of the rules compelling human nature must be to limit his self-seeking behaviours. Consequently, EPE pays attention to structures or sets of legal rules and social norms, which affect human economic transactions.<sup>27</sup> This perspective sees institutions or established organisations within the state as (i) property rights laid down by law, <sup>28</sup> (ii) moral conventions or norms, (iii) types of contracts and (iv) authority relations. Thus, institutions are sets of rights and obligations affecting people in their economic lives. These EPE are also concerned with how political regulations affect economic behaviours and transactions of individuals, groups, and government and even non-state actors.<sup>29</sup> It finds out how taxation regulatory activities, might affect economic behaviours and transactions of actors in the sector. It also focuses attention on how institutions evolve in response to individual's incentives, strategies and choices. In addition, it shows how institutions affect the performance of political and economic systems.

Consequently, EPE narrates operations costs and argues that, there are two types of "transactions costs", namely, (i) those costs, which are completely associated with the efficiency of exchange, and (ii) those costs, which are associated with policing opportunistic behaviours by economic agents. The former relates to the costs of finding potential trading partners and determining their supply-demand offers, the latter to enforcing the execution of promises and agreements. They are transaction costs that are the non-production costs of an exchange. When related to public policy, "these are the costs of time and effort invested in research, which create, implement, administer, monitor and enforce policies or to imbue and fulfil to the policies so far made." <sup>30</sup>

For this chapter, we will use two theoretical contributions that have been used in the study of institutional political economy: the tragedy of the commons as a problem of collective action and the free rider problems. These proponents contend that there is a conflict between individual interests and the common good. In this situation, the "commons" is violated and overused by all its users because there is no cost for using it.<sup>31</sup> The commons are public goods, which individuals use and do not bear the entire cost of their use. When individuals seek to maximise individual utility, they ignore the costs borne by others. The individual tries to exploit more than their share of public resources. If most individuals can follow this strategy, then public resource will be gets over stretched. Some examples of the concept of 'commons' are, the contamination of waterways and the atmosphere, logging of forests, the overfishing of the oceans, the tossing of trash out of vehicle windows and rustling.<sup>32</sup>

Possibly, the solution to these tragic actions comprises, (a) that every individual agrees not to seek more than his or her fair share from the commons, (b) the enforcement of conservation measures.<sup>33</sup>

### **THE ISSUE OF FREE RIDER IN POLICYMAKING**

The issue free rider occurs when those who benefit from resources, goods or services do not adequately pay for them, or sometime do not even pay a dime. Certainly, this results into either an under-provision of those goods or services or an overuse or degradation of a common property resources.<sup>34</sup> The issue here is that, since the state is not a benevolent provider, it is normal for consumers to pay, even not exorbitantly, for the goods and services (public utilities) the enjoy. The free rider problem is a tragedy among public goods and the potential for free riding exists when people are asked to pay voluntarily for a public good.<sup>35</sup>

### **FEMINIST POLITICAL ECONOMY, PUBLIC POLICYMAKING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Most Marxian feminism thinkers argue that class system in society is essentially responsible for the oppression of women and the girl child, especially in postcolonial African states, which emerged from excruciating colonialism, and which have not yet developed strong democratic cultures.<sup>36</sup> Should someone deeply cogitate over this assertion, it might be safe alluding that, taken in its historical perspective, women did not occupy an inferior place in society, not until when the primitive-communal society broke down into classes and the introduction of private property, and the family. In this case, women began taking the back bench position to occupy household activities – cooking, taking care of children, attending to the husbands' immediate domestic necessities and so on.<sup>37</sup> The feminist political economy draws attention to the double oppression women suffer in the workplace as an exploited worker and in the family as a subordinated person with little status.<sup>38</sup>

The scholars and activists focus on major aspects of women's subordination under capitalism. The proponents are concerned with the inequality of payment of the same job; inequality of employment opportunities for women (the crowding of women into particular occupations which are lowly paid); the absence of women in higher-paid and more influential jobs; the under-valuation, and in some instances, the non-valuation of women's work in the home and in the informal sector of the economy and women's under-representation in wage employment translate to their minimal presence in working-class struggles. Women's presence in the margins of the economy and politics makes it cardinal for them to join exploited and subordinated classes to fight for liberation.<sup>39</sup>

The relatively high economic growth rates in Africa have not led to structural diversification, reduction of poverty and gender inequality. Many women do not own or control assets. Women's ownership of property does not always endow them with the bargaining power. Joint ownership of assets with spouses does not translate into joint decision-making because of dominant social norms that privilege men as decision-makers.<sup>40</sup> There is the unequal and high burden of unpaid work for women.

This is because the accompanying cuts in social infrastructure expenditures increase women's time burden in energy production, drinking water collection and mobility. Within the household, women's time burden is determined by gendered norms. Globalisation is also disrupting gendered patterns by altering conventional beliefs, mores, roles, livelihoods and

political practices worldwide, particularly in postcolonial African states. While some changes appear insignificant but grow incrementally, others represent serious challenges to the deepest assumptions, which we hold and believe in, for instance, male breadwinner roles; and most established institutions such as the patriarchal families. Consequently, most feminists argue that not only are the pecuniary benefits and costs of globalisation unevenly distributed in societies, especially the postcolonial African societies, between men and women, but also that, masculinist's theoretical and empirical bias extensively exacerbates the structural

At the reformist level, the policy option that can be adopted in the short run includes removing formal laws that discriminate against women, introducing awareness campaigns within local communities to change cultural norms and designing economic policies that create incentives for behavioural change. Women must continue to fight not only for free and equal entry into the productive sector of the society, but for the socialisation of housework.<sup>42</sup> A socialist revolution is required to end women oppression. This implies that the very structures that nourish oppression such as private property and class division must completely be abolished. Women must sustain their struggle for liberation alongside with men who suffer equal forms of oppression like them. The socialist society is that which is politically and economically democratic.<sup>43</sup> There are common themes in political economy, and they include interests and incentives, states and structures, agents, classes/actors/stakeholders, role of formal institutions in the rule of law and elections; and informal social, political and cultural norms, which impact values, ideas, political ideologies, religion, cultural beliefs, and political change.<sup>44</sup>

### **THE NEXUS BETWEEN POLITICAL ECONOMY AND POLICYMAKING: A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE**

Irrefutably, the key actor in public policymaking is the state, represented by its government, comprising officials and institutions, within the executive, legislature and the judiciary, including the decentralised collectivities and other state agencies - companies and corporations. This perspective claims that public policy is often designed to be in the interest of all citizens and groups in society, but this usually does not hold sway.<sup>45</sup> The ideology that guides public policymaking is essentially competitive capitalism, dictated by free market and private property mechanisms. These involve interest groups, social organisations, community-based organisations, rather than just the state.<sup>46</sup> Obviously, public policy ought to serve both growth and welfare considerations in the entire state, not just a section of the state, as it is the practice in most postcolonial African states.

Government should not make public policies to serve private interest, however, it should make policies to facilitate private interest participation in the economy or the government should enact policies that promote public, private participation in development.<sup>47</sup>

### **MARXISM AND PUBLIC POLICYMAKING: A DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATES**

First, it is important to assert that, Marxism sees the historical development of mankind, his material conditions and economic factors as the mainstay of human livelihood. Thus, the Marxist perspective of political economy, which the people of postcolonial African states, have failed to understand and take advantage, believes that public policy is a highly political issue, thereby, it involves class struggles and class conflicts in the process. Public policy becomes the

site for class struggle of competing forces in every society, with the strongest, (those near the corridors of power) taking the lion's share.<sup>48</sup>

The ideological projects shape class interest and this in turn shapes the public policy choices and contents. Marxists contend that the actors in public policy should imbue socialist orientations, the working class in alliance with the subordinated classes in society. Thus, the interest, which public policies claim to protect ought to be that of the working class and the masses. The ideology that guides policy making in socialist democratism is led by a strong people's state. The mechanism for the implementation of public policies is in the centralised state controlled by the interest of the working people. The goal of public policy is inclusive policy in the interest of the majority to reduce inequality, fight poverty and corruption, and promote social justice through power sharing imbued in the promotion of growth, development and the people's welfare.<sup>49</sup>

### **INSTITUTIONALISM AND PUBLIC POLICYMAKING: A GLANCE AT ACTORS AND THEIR INTRIGUES**

The actors that dominate the policy arena in institutional political economy studies are gate keepers, veto-players, principal and agents, and so on. Gate keepers according to Easton (1965)<sup>50</sup> "...constitute the political actors and institutions, which act select inputs, they filter demands into the tightly sealed political black box – the political system." The political system, Easton (1965:65)<sup>51</sup> expounded the thesis that, "it is conceived as the integrating all activities through which policymaking is formulated and executed – that is, the political system is the policy bedrock. Thus, the gatekeepers' functions are very important to note, because they determine the political agenda in terms of inputs into the political system. Most demands on the political system fail to pass through this filter.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, there exist veto players in the policymaking processes, who are individual or collective political actors, whose agreement is required to make significant policy changes. The veto-player theory is about dispersion of political power amongst various competing forces and how this dispersion affects agreements on policy change is determined by the capacities of manifest, latent and overlapping group interests.<sup>53</sup>

The quality and amount of veto-players and the policy distancing between them, also act as strong determinant of policy changes. When the policy distancing between veto-players expands, the stronger are the tendencies towards policy stability and maintenance of status quo.<sup>54</sup> Ostensibly, veto players usually occur as partisan - the parties' members within a government coalition or constitutional - a second chamber or the president, who act in terms of power relations. They both play roles in policymaking to determine the extent of policies changes. Partisan veto-players within a government coalition have veto power over governmental decisions, but since the parties need to stay in power, they are rather expected to spend time in settling internal disagreements through negotiations. The government office serves as an institutional frame in which cooperative behaviours possibly emerge.<sup>55</sup>

In most cases, constitutional veto players - the legislature and the executive, sometimes enjoy some level of independence from each other, as well as being competitive to each other. Most of the divergences amongst these legitimate veto players are more likely to lead to deadlocks and policies instabilities. Systems with partisan veto players are expected as more efficient in the policymaking processes, than systems with constitutional veto players, because, they are

more inclined to produce significant policy changes and more responsive towards the preferences of the citizen in society. The other actors in the policy environment are the “principal” and the “agent.”<sup>56</sup>

In the decision-making process according to proponent of this thought, the principal are expected to exercise control over the agents, such as voters who are the principal are expected to direct the politicians who are the agents. Policymaking according to the principle of political representation in parliament, the agent is expected to make laws on behalf and in the interest of the principal. However, there is a problem in observing the rule of the Social Contract.<sup>57</sup> This is a situation described as the “the principal and agent problem” in institutional political economy or agency dilemma or the agency problem. This problem arises in circumstances where agents are motivated to act in their self-seeking interests, which are contrary to those of their principals. So public policies are designed and implemented to serve the interest of the agents rather than that of the principal. In extreme cases, the agents capture the machinery of the policy making.<sup>58</sup>

### **PUBLIC POLICYMAKING AND FEMINISM**

Feminism is a global movement, which fight male chauvinism in all its ramifications. Thus, the actors that have dominated the policy environment for the feminist movement are the global organisation for profits and non-profits making, women organisations, neo-patrimonial state, those vested in high feminist supports, ideologues, who guide their anti-class actions.<sup>59</sup> The parliament who are policy actors are in many countries dominated by men. Undoubtedly, these public bureaucracies, which initiate policies and implement the programmes from these policies is dominated by men. These actors reproduce the patriarchal structures in state bureaucratic institutions such as the civil service, the parliament, executive, judicial apparatuses and related agencies. The control of these structures by men and international capital means the control of public policy making processes and outcomes which are usually in favour of men and profits.<sup>60</sup> The feminist advocate for more gender interests to be reflected in policy making processes. This implies more specifically increase in the representation of women in policy making at governmental, private spheres, community and family levels. Such representation ensures equitable access to resources, state and community resources. The best way to go about this is to provide incentives such as the application of enabling programmes, provide redistribution of income, grant more voice to women, and turn promote inclusive development.<sup>61</sup> implement affirmative action through mandatory and voluntary quotas for women, and public policies should in

### **COMPETING CLASS INTERESTS IN PUBLIC POLICYMAKING**

Actually, there exist a universal phenomenon in all the perspectives in the making public policymaking process, which is that, the process is fraught with contentiousness within the assorted interests, which actors attempt to defend and protect vigorously. Given that, the policymaking process is political, it connotes many existing competing interests of stakeholders. Thus, stakeholders are those who will positively or negative be affected by a policy, thus, they become interested in the policymaking outcomes. Stakeholders are individuals, groups, governments, government departments, associations, companies and communities, sometimes external organisations.<sup>60</sup> The collective of all stakeholders is referred to as the policy community. The policy community can be viewed as a series of concentric circles, with the government as the leading centre of policy issues. Thus, those who are close to

the centre become the most influence over decision-makers. The periphery or outside are the interested citizens and informal groups who do not have any mechanism to contribute to the policy process.<sup>61</sup> As previously said, policymaking is a competitive process amongst interest group; and even the major mediator – the state. These competing interests are of different levels and groups involved in shaping the policy outcomes.

These interests include economic, political, geographical, ethnic, religious, racial and gender. Some interest groups in the policy making process have a great deal more power than others because of their political position and their influence over the views represented in the mass media. For example, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) versus other medical unions in the health sector, the Teachers of Higher Education in Cameroon (SYNES), as it is abbreviated in French, the members of parliament listen more to the NMA or SYNES thereby shaping the public agenda more strongly than other groups, its opinions are reported more often by the mass media. Another example is the politicians, bureaucrats and powerful interest groups versus other citizens. The former set the agenda and decide the framework and philosophy of a policy.<sup>62</sup> So, policymaking involves political settlements, compromises or consensual processes. Mostly, this is achieved through a consensual framework for administering political power.<sup>63</sup> Further, it involves defining the outcomes amongst contending elites, the balance and distribution of state power amongst contending social groups and classes.<sup>64</sup> In addition, (a) it is the intra-elite contentions and bargaining between political and economic elites. This includes the landed and non-landed elites, regional elites, rural and urban, religious and secular. Other are (b) the contentions and bargaining between elites and non-elites, either within groups or across them, as between classes, (c) the inter-group contentions and bargaining, gender, regional, ethnic/linguistic and religious, and (d) the contentions and bargaining between those who are more widely occupy state power and society.<sup>65</sup>

### **POLITICAL ECONOMY, PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS AND CONTENTING PERSPECTIVES**

A thorough glimpse into the manner in which political scientists and economists analyse public policies represents strong theoretical component and interest in this paper. Herein, we attempt to theoretically show how public policymaking perspectives, for example, the analysis of the choice to construct a road or build a university in a particular locality in a postcolonial African state demands a lot of politicking and impulsion on policymaking, especially in the peripheral capitalist postcolonial African states. It does not look at the educational necessities of the entire state, but rather the satisfaction of particular elite preferences and power interplays.<sup>66</sup>

#### **Liberal/Neoliberal Analysis**

The liberal scholars will call on citizens to pay taxes as it will contribute towards government revenue and expenditure. The higher the taxes that the citizens pay, the higher the revenues that are generated by government and subsequently, the higher expenditure on social services – roads network, hospitals, schools and so on. The high-level progressive taxation is necessary and that low tax rates lead to reduced state revenues and as a result contribute to economic instability. In addition, high taxes stimulate economic activity and thus influence the stability of the economy.<sup>67</sup> It is argued by liberal scholars that large amounts of savings hinder economic growth and development, because these savings represent a passive form of income that are not invested in production.<sup>68</sup>

The neo-classical scholars contend that, a “taxation policy should be crafted under the assumptions that: taxes must be as small as possible, and corporations should be granted significant tax exemptions.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, liberals have some specific focus, when undertaking cost-benefit analysis. Herein, they become interested in ascertaining the cost and benefits of taxing producers, and how this hurts producers in their production processes. How can taxation be simplified so that the middle class is encouraged to pay. The character of tax policy, which can promote growth through tax incentives on profits, tax holidays.<sup>71</sup>

### **Marxist/Neo-Marxist Analysis**

This analysis categorises society into lower, middle and upper classes. It discusses the composition of society on class basis, and it draws attention to the position occupied by each class in the system in terms of the production, the owners and controllers of the means of production, the controllers of the distribution of surpluses and the control of the state apparatuses. It deals with the analyses of problems to discern, which class contributes more to the generation of wealth and who benefits more from the distribution of wealth and which class consumes more of the wealth in societies. It deals with understanding who are the losers and winners of public policy.<sup>72</sup>

A Marxist perspective to analyse a tax policy might include but not exclusive to determining: (i) the class, which influences the designs, controls the implementation of tax policies. Herein the student would obtain the answer from the following statement: “The concentration of wealth also translates into the concentration of political power, which translates further into the level of influence elites can muster on the tax system.” (ii) What tax policies favour or disadvantage classes in an economy? The proponents of this perspective contend that personal income tax (PIT) systems lack equity as the bulk of the burden is on employees.<sup>73</sup> The rich avoid and evade tax. Often income tax thresholds are too low and do not protect the poor. In many countries, the poor from the informal sector are now being compelled to pay “income” taxes.<sup>74</sup> (iii) Sharing of tax burden between classes will be the next concern of the Marxist analyst. It is argued that “in many countries, it is the poor who end up paying more taxes as a proportion of their income and this is just not right. When the rich can avoid paying their share of fiscal policies a government must rely on the rest of its citizens to make money. As tax evasion goes unrestrained, governments are severely hampered from putting in place progressive tax systems, so fairer domestic tax systems depend on global transparency measures, and this not only about taxes.”<sup>75</sup>

### **Institutionalist-Structuralist and Functionalist Analysis**

The nature and character of political, economic and social outcomes of institutions, dictated by their structure, which later determines its functionality. Thus, the institutionalist-structuralist and functionalist analysis deals with the rules and regulations, values, and so on, generally called institutions and assesses how they promote the implementation of public policy and which ones will obstruct and prevent such policy implementation.<sup>76</sup> This perspective will hold strongly that tax should be paid by every adult. There shouldn't be free riders in the payment of tax in a country. It is argued that if paid, tax will contribute to the quantum of the common good which is the common pool. The questions which a student using institutionalist perspective to study a tax policy of a country will be looking out for will include: What regulations and practices promote the payment of tax by citizens and agencies? What

regulations and practices weaken or frustrate or obstruct the payment of taxes by citizens and agencies?

It is argued for instance that the “...the growth model has led to a concentration of wealth, but income inequality is also being considerably exacerbated by the inability of governments to tax the proceeds of growth, because a large part of sub-Saharan Africa’s income and wealth has escaped offshore.”<sup>77</sup> Certainly, some tax systems, especially those in postcolonial African states have also been heavily influenced by the tax consensus, led by the IMF and supported by other multilateral institutions, bilateral donors and tax professionals.

The tax consensus has focused on reducing corporate and, to a lesser extent, personal income tax rates while expanding the base for consumption taxes and value added tax (VAT) in particular.<sup>78</sup> The other questions to be asked are: what legislations, values or ideologies encourage the attitude of “free-riding” in tax payment, that is, refusal to pay taxes but dependence on government for social services provision by citizens and private and public sector agencies? Elite successfully continue to resist paying taxes on the profits made from their real estate and stock market investments.<sup>79</sup>

### **POLITICAL ECONOMY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING**

Political economy as an analytical tool can effectively, efficiently and economically be scholarly deployed or used in searching for solutions to social, political, economic, psychological and even cultural problems in society. This is very important for the student of political science, public administration, international relations, conflict studies and development studies, or all those in the social sciences. Political economy can be deployed in problem-solving analysis. It gets beneath the formal structures to reveal the underlying interests, incentives and institutions that enable or frustrate change. The analysis is thus, geared towards understanding and resolving a particular problem at the project level or in relation to specific policy issue. It is important to note that, the “problem-driven” does not mean focusing exclusively on areas of difficulty, but also identifying opportunities and learning from where successes have been achieved.<sup>80</sup>

This framework encourages students and other users to systematically address problems or issues using the following steps:

- a. identifying the problem, issue or vulnerability to be addressed;
- b. mapping out the institutional and governance weaknesses which underpin the problem;
- c. identifying the political economy drivers (local and international) which constrain or support progressive change and
- d. designing policy reforms or changes. The student is at liberty to address any issue of interest.

Some problems which can be addressed include: what has made the smuggling of foreign products into African countries difficult to be unresolved? Why has it been difficult to curb corruption in many African countries? Why have reforms in the education, health, roads sectors been difficult to implement? etc. The student may also address the following issues from a political economy perspective with the aim of influencing the policy outcomes: poverty and inequalities, health challenges in rural Africa, falling standards of education, de-industrialisation, agriculture, environment, and so forth.<sup>81</sup>

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY AND POLICY RESEARCH**

### **Research Problem**

In fact, the deep understanding of political economy usually provides students with profound insightful knowledge for identifying social problems, and to scholarly craft researchable topics, which assist us in stating research problem.

Political economist of the various variants, especially those with Marxian tradition will not always try to address public challenges from their perspectives, between class character analysis. Consequently, their perspective enables them pursue the following: Ensure that there is a clearly identifiable social problem to be studied, with solidly convincing explanations and/or solutions to it, Warrant that there are variables that facilitate the theoretical support for such explanations, To guarantee that the variables are capable of being measured, using reliable tools, To provide that each variable has indicators describing its relevance, and Ensure that the research problem is stated in a way that it will lead to policy outcomes, which could lead to reforms.<sup>82</sup>

The research questions may capture either a challenge facing a country, a sector or a region. Examples of research questions may include: Why are policies or institutional arrangements not being improved? What explains the refusal of some beneficiaries to resist and reject the implementation of certain policies? Why are wars against corruption not yielding expected results of wiping out this economic monster in postcolonial African states? How can the state ensure the enhancement of the minimum gains already recorded in some sectors of the political, economic and social landscapes? Perhaps, its plausible asserting that, the fight against corruption policies and the pursued agenda do not appear relevant in the political, economic and social context in which they are fashioned, formulated and implemented, thereby making it difficult to truly fight corruption as a factor of underdevelopment in postcolonial African states. In this direction, we think of the nature and character of political, economic and social intentions of state power wielders, and the domestic and foreign connectedness of those people usually arrested for corrupt practices.<sup>85</sup>

### **Power Analysis**

Power analysis is based on the understanding that to address socio-economic and political challenges confronting societies, such as corruption in private and public spheres, analysts must focus attention on issues of state power asymmetries, access to resources, influence over politics as well as informal political landscapes, including their basic rules and structures. It is important to seek understanding how policy decisions are influenced by these landscapes, especially landscapes, which have close links to state officials who wield real rather than residual power. This analytical approach is designed to study issues such as rule of law, justice, equity and organised redistribution of access to the welfare among the citizens.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the power analyst will often be interested in asking the following questions: Who sets the policy agenda must the state pursue in order to eradicate corruption? Is it exemplary or compromising nature and character of the exercise of state power?

In addition, other questions can include, whose ideas and values should dominate such a policy agenda? Who gets what, when and how, and how do formal institutions shape the distribution of costs and benefits in the fight against corruption, through the policy agenda? Who knows whom, why and where stolen resources are consumed? How do informal social networks shape

the policy process, for instance, the policy against corruption in postcolonial African states? At the level of research, the information produced by this method must certainly be quantitative and not mostly qualitative. The insistence on quantitative analysis permits the public to accept policy intentions. Such information must position the possibilities of comparing data over time in a single country, so much so that, inferences can be expanded into other countries. It produces in-depth knowledge on many governance issues as well as understanding how history has shaped the contemporary distribution of power for fighting identified social problems, such as corrupt practices in society, especially the postcolonial African societies.<sup>87</sup>

### **Stakeholder's Analysis**

Stakeholders are actors who may be individuals or organisations who have stake in a policy promoted; depending upon what it is bargained for. Therefore, stakeholder analysis is a methodical way to analyse stakeholders by their relational soft and hard power and interest in relation to their connectedness to wielders of state power. The actualisation of this is possible by identifying their sources of power, influence and interests. The apt understanding this, will illuminate determination of those who may resist or work co-operatively for the success of the policymaking toward a specific or generalised public good. Concerning policy science, stakeholders' analyses are used as tools for assessing projects' stakeholders in order to know their knowledge, interests, positions, alliances and importance, in relation to the envisaged project. This understanding is necessary in several ways, such as identifying who should make what inputs into a particular policy in order to obtain, which outputs. Secondly, it is necessary for characterising the outcomes in policymaking, for the purposes of evaluation, adjustments and re-adjustments the given policy.<sup>88</sup>

### **Premeditated Governance and Corruption Analysis**

Premeditated or planned governance and corruption analysis can sometimes represent the single monitor, which is applied to the configuration and analysis of accurate data on governance. For instance, this might concern the fight against anti-corruption issues, which underscore the building of effective, accountable and transparent states mechanism, through public institutions, which thus, require or must contain strong and reliably political processes with which to interaction. This must occur between the state actors and civil society players.<sup>89</sup> At the level of enquiry, the analytical model must seek to find various reasons behind governance problems, such as high levels of corruption, low legitimacy of state institutions, and weak commitment for addressing the burning issues of human rights and poverty reduction, in postcolonial African states. At the level of policymaking, the analysis helps in identifying local and international pressures for change that would benefit poor people.<sup>90</sup> While, thinking of applying this model, the analysts must scholarly and impartially scrutinise the magnitude of government control of the territory's political, social and economic factors, which shape the political system. Indeed, this is what is in shortfall in the governing processes in postcolonial African states. In addition, it must also examine the amount to which, some key institutions of the state and society operate in accordance with the known rules in the exercise of state power. It further investigates the capacities and interests of key state and non-state actors; and how to respond to key events and pressures, which shape public policymaking.<sup>91</sup>

### **Transmitters of Social Change Enquiry**

The transmitters of social change or better still social transformation notion, represents an approach that verifies the reasons that actually drive social transformation in a country and

within specific contexts and interlocutors. These reasons and the people called to enhance them must work for the sole and complete interest of the economic, political and social conditions of all the segments of the country. Therefore, the analyst must start his study from understanding the country's social, political, economic and even psychological frames and conditions without imposing his or her premeditated conceptions, especially by trying to catapult what such actors might consider as workable in other regions. Postcolonial African states have usually been the victims of such policymaking considerations. The analysts must pay great attention to "what could work locally, contextually rather than "what might not be workable contextually".<sup>92</sup> As the analysts explore the issues of the salient transmitter of social change, attention must be accorded to:

The structural features comprising of the history of the state; natural and human resources; economic and social structures; demographic changes; regional issues; globalisation, trade and investment; and urbanisation; The institutions which are made up of informal and formal rules that determine the realm of possible behaviours by agents; in this case, political and public administration processes; and Agents who are individuals and organisations pursuing particular interests.<sup>93</sup>

### **Political Settlement Analysis:**

Political settlement analysis examines how distributions of power among groups affect the way that institutions work. It has been used to analyse economic change, agricultural policy, industrialization, corruption, social policy, conflict, and state building in several African countries. It emphasizes agreements made by powerful groups or elites that affect state stability and the possibilities of development. It assumes settlement is desirable, thus, forging and enforcing a viable and inclusive political settlement is necessary to support institutions that generate inclusion, stop war, or reduce violent conflict. Accordingly, Salisbury and Heinz (1970)<sup>94</sup> "...a political settlement is a combination of state power, institutions and intended policy outcomes that must mutually tend to be compatible and sustainable in terms of prompting acceptable levels of economic and political viability, stability and peaceful societies."

The main theoretical building blocks of the framework are institutions, power, and charges, which accrue to the beneficiaries in the policymaking processes". Of-course, given its multidimensional causes, a political settlement can have profound consequential retributions in terms of satisfying the necessary human, material and economic factors development in the circle of the distribution of the identified, sometimes even the non-identified benefits among competing groups in society.<sup>95</sup>

### **Making Choices vis-à-vis Sample Population**

Deep scholarly considerations must be given by the analyst on how well to ensure that the sample population is representative of class interests, power interplays and all the stakeholders' interests. The representativeness is crucial in helping us to have a holistic view of the nature of the problem that is being explained and tackled. This implies mapping the sample population in a manner that will reveal the groups that resist change and those that support change, or identify gainers and losers of public policy.

## CONCLUSION

This paper took rise to kindle the overly slumbering consciousness amongst postcolonial Africans vis-à-vis the region's surging human and material underdevelopment. It focused on elucidating the nexus between political economy and policymaking with the view to expound the argument and thinking that, it is scientifically worthy, and thus, beneficial, for the people of this region to understand public policymaking through the Marxian political economy perspective, in order to grasp the character of competing actors or forces in the policymaking processes. This is significance, to the people of postcolonial African states, because, public policymaking is the manifest and latent catalyst in the use of state power. Moreover, arising from these ensuing social relations created by public policymaking is the nature and character of political, economic, social and psychological failures and successes in the governing process, translated in terms of the underdevelopment or development of human, material conditions and economic factors, constructed amongst the people and their environment. Therefore, public policymaking is the only gateway, through which, are produced exhilarating or doldrums men and women in every society.

On the other hand, political economy, as a subfield of political science, offers humanity, the rigorous analytical benefits of accessing profound insights about the historical evolution of these social relations of production, as particularly constructed by the nature and character of public policymaking and its actors, in relation to the use of state power in society. Putting its emphasis on the Marxian political economy perspectives, which generally argues that, the successes or failures of public policies depend upon the varying nature and character of political struggles, or the abilities of state power wielders to mediate between political struggles, the paper debunks the egoistic and unmediated surge of competing interest groups around claims of rights over resources. In addition, Marxian political economy perspective is instructive, because, its analyses of the failures of state power and policymaking vis-à-vis the unprecedented underdevelopment in postcolonial African states as insightfully self-explanatory process towards underdevelopment in postcolonial African states. Using the rational-comprehensive model of public policymaking, the paper demonstrates that, the Marxian political economy analysis is better predisposed to assist the postcolonial African state commoners to understand how competing forces shape public policy outcomes. The paper asserts that, the Marxian political economy perspective, in combination with the rational-comprehensive model of public policymaking offers the most viable and important options in the use of state power for human development.

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