CHAPTER 5

# Governance and Politics of Public Policy in Africa

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## Introduction

In the opinion of Dye (2017), public policy is about what government decide to do or not to do. This point emphasises the centrality of decision-making to public policy. It shows that public policy is about choices that are made by those with mandate and power to make such choices on behalf of the public. Policy choices are not usually made in a purely technocratic manner. This is because public policy choices are made within a political and administrative process. The mandate given to a party or candidate who wins an election is to some extent an approval of the programmes and manifestoes presented to the public, the specific policy preferences for addressing specific public problems. This may be a preference for a specific exchange rate management policy, preferred mode of social security or a new guideline for admission into public schools.

Furthermore, policy is made in the context of multiple options and in the contests of interests and preferences not only by those who have the power to make such policy choices but also in the context of diverse

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government institutions and contending vested interests around policy alternatives. Thus, politics can be viewed as a process of policy making and policy making viewed as a political process. Thus, anyone who engages public policy must look at the political and governance context in which public policy occurs.

This chapter explores the interconnections among the concepts of governance, politics and public policy and examines the political and governance issues around policy making in Africa. It is therefore structured into six main sections. The first section explores the concepts of "public policy", "Politics" and "governance", and their inter-relationship. The second section elaborates the main features of the governance context of policy making. The third examines the formal governance institutions of policy making: the arms of government and the models and systems of government. The fourth examines the party and electoral systems as frameworks of democratic governance. The fifth is focused on public policy instruments and actors in the policymaking process, including key governmental and non-governmental actors. The sixth deals with the informal dimensions of politics and public policy making. The last part is the conclusion.

## Exploring the Concepts: "Public Policy", "Governance" and "Politics"

### *Public Policy*

Three important definitions have become very popular in the study of public policy. The first given by William Jenkins (1978) sees a public policy as "a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation, where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve". This definition is more emphatic, describing public policy as a process, rather than one isolated choice. Also, it sees the policy process as goal-oriented, while at the same time taking into consideration the important aspect of implementation capacity.

A second definition by Thomas Dye (2017) loosely defines public policy as "everything a government chooses to do or not to do". This definition has been criticised for being too general because it does not differentiate between the trivial and the significant in government's

activities. However, it identifies the governmental structure as the sole agent of policy making and points to the fact that its actions must be intentional, that is, any choice for action or lack thereof must be deliberate.

A third definition by James Anderson (2011: 52–53) views public policy as "a relatively stable purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or a set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern". This definition underscores public policy as goal-oriented.

Birkland (2011: 9) provides perhaps the most inclusive definition of policy as "statement by government- at whatever level- of what it intends to do about a public problem". These could be a law, regulation, ruling, decision, order or a combination of these. The lack of such statements may also be an implicit statement of policy.

Policy in its simplest meaning is a plan or guide to action, a statement of ideals governing actions to be taken to achieve a particular state of things in society. While policy is typically identified with the public arena, in practice, policies can also be designed and adopted by individuals, private organisations, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations. Indeed, it is quite legitimate to talk about corporate policy and social responsibility policy of large corporations that are privately owned.

The idea of "public" often attached to policy defines it as a property of social or collective action, which is in modern parlance governmental action. Hence, public policy is often viewed in terms of foreign policy, educational policy, economic policy, defence policy, and so on. All of these uses of policy convey to us what government decides to do or will refrain from doing in each sphere of governmental activity. Thus, the public sector is the proper location of public policy, and policy has been identified with the public arena because of the general interest or public interest character of the governmental agencies.

From the above definitions we see that there is a range of definitions concerning what constitutes public policy. All the definitions agree that public policy refers to interventions (or decisions to not intervene) by the government to achieve public goals. This is partly the result of the diversity of individuals and groups involved with establishing the exact meaning of the concept. Pollit et al. (1979: x) and Birkland (2011: 8–9) identify the following as the essential characteristics of public policy:

- Public policy is made in response to some sort of problem that requires attention.

- Public policy involves decision-making and activity.
- Public policy is oriented towards a goal or desired state, such as the solution of a problem.
- Public policy involves a series of decisions taken over an extended period including an exercise of power or rationality.
- The process occurs within a framework of prescribed organisational roles (public policy involves institutions of state with special legal characteristics).
- It involves exchange of information and resources, discussion, and bargaining between the public, pressure groups and state agencies. In other words, it involves interaction with a variety of interest groups.
- It aims at increasing the probability of occurrence of desired states of the world in future. It is futuristic.
- The state institutions that are involved in the policy often legitimise their activities by claiming that their policies are in the general (public) interest rather than favouring sections, groups or individuals. It is made on the "public's" behalf.
- Governments ultimately make public policy, even if the ideas come from outside government or through the interaction of government and non-governmental actors.
- Public policy is interpreted and implemented by public and private actors who have different interpretations of problems, solutions and their own motivations.

Finally, the upshot of these characteristics is that policy is never closed. It involves a series of related activities carried out over a long period of time rather than a single decision. This is not to say that there are no one-off policies aimed to resolve a time-bound-specific problem. It is also not suggested here that public policy cannot be terminated or faced out if the purpose has been achieved, regardless of the time that has elapsed. The point being made is that policy covers far more than the term decision. It involves the intentions of policy makers up to and including the point at which action is taken. It also includes feedbacks into the policy process. In other words, it is a continuous process, not "a once-for-all act". It is made routinely through interactions and cooperation between elected and unelected officials, as well as actors with no formal roles in the process. A policy outcome may be different from the intentions and policy is also about the power not to do something (Cairney 2012: 24–5).

### *Governance*

The concept "Governance" is derived from a Latin word "gubernare", or more originally from the Greek word "kubernaein", which means "to steer". Based on this etymology, governance refers to the manner of steering or of directing and controlling, a group of people or a state. This is often contrasted with the traditional "top-down" approach of governments "driving" society. Thus, a distinction is often made between the governance's "power to" and government's "power over". For the World Bank governance is "the manner in power is exercised in the management of county's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank 1992: 1). This includes the process by which governments are elected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies and the respect of citizens and the state of the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

Stoker (1998) provides five propositions of governance, which are that it

- refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government.
- identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.
- identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action.
- is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors.
- recognises the capacity to get things done, which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1997 policy paper defined governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences". Kaufmann et al. (2010) use governance to refer to the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced at various levels; (2) the role of formal and informal actors in this process; (3) the capacity of the governance process to ensure effective formulation and implementation of sound

policies; (4) the respect of citizens and the state for institutions that govern economic and social interactions and (5) the steering of these interactions towards future policy improvement.

Governance is used in several contexts in business (corporate governance), in international relations (global governance) and in the local level (local governance). It is recognised that governance has both formal and informal dimensions. Thus, there are formal and informal actors involved in policy making and implementation. The main formal actor in governance is the government. The government is an institution of the state, political authority of the state, which represents, selects and implements state policy. It exists to maintain public order and facilitate collective action. Government is organised to provide these goals in a reliable, consistent and enduring manner, through law making, execution of the law and interpretation of the law.

There are however other actors in policy making beyond the government. These are often grouped under the title civil society or non-state actors. They include labour unions, news media, multinational corporations, non-governmental organisations (religious institutions, think tanks, social clubs, community-based organisations) and business associations.

There are rules and processes guiding how government works and how it interacts with itself and other actors outside government. In addition to this formal framework, there are other forms of interaction that are not formally structured. Informal decision-making structures such as "kitchen cabinets" or informal advisors, powerful families, lobbyists and organised crime may determine or influence public policy. Such informal decision-making may be the result of corrupt practices or leads to corrupt practices because they are often done behind the curtain. They affect the possibilities of a public policy. Thus, when we talk about the governance dimension of public policy, we are concerned about how policies are arrived at, whether they are appropriated to solve collective action, whether they focus on satisfying public interests or narrow interest of powerful groups and individuals. We are also concerned about the performance of public policy, the basis of and how to close the gap between policy and outcome. How do we ensure that good policies are made and that such policies are implemented in an effective and efficient manner?

As Rose-Ackerman (2017) puts it, "a fundamental challenge for governance reform is to balance expertise and democratic participation beyond the ballot box and the scientific laboratory to produce public policies that solve important social problems and are accepted as legitimate by citizens" (p. 23).

Moharir (2002) suggests six criteria for successful public policy interventions. These are as follows:

(1) Effectiveness: Achievement of goods and objectives of policy. This can be determined by the contribution policy outputs make to achieve policy objectives.
(2) Efficiency: Realisation of policy objectives in less time and with less cost. This can be determined by the ratio of outputs to inputs.
(3) Responsiveness: Degree to which policy design is responsive to the legitimate interests of different groups affected by policy. This can be gleaned in all aspects of the policy design and the process.
(4) Innovation: Creativity and innovation in policy design mainly to realise the first three criteria. In practice, it is difficult in bureaucratic environments.
(5) Political Feasibility: Degree of acceptance of policy by proximate policy makers, political executives, legislatures and interest groups.
(6) Administrative Feasibility: Willingness, capacity, and ability of implementing agencies and target groups to realise policy objectives within stated time and cost parameters.

Other criteria such as adequacy, efficacy, transparency and accountability can be subsumed under one or the other of the above-stated criteria. Also, various concerns like ethnicity and corruption could be incorporated into the criteria. Prior to and since the replacement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), sustainability has become a major criterion to determine success of public policy. This criterion brings on board concerns about protecting the environment and keeping the delicate ecosystems of our planet in balance. Another criterion is equity (or equality). There is a growing concern about poverty and inequality across the world, and the academic and policy communities have emphasised the need to integrate equity into policy design and evaluation.

### *Politics*

Inherent in governance is the struggle over and use of power to achieve public purposes. Power is at the heart of politics, particularly state power. Politics is about the state and the relations people have with government. The concept "politics" is derived from the Greek word *polis*, meaning

city-state. Politics refers to the affairs of the *polis*, in effect, "what concerns the *polis*". Thus, traditionally politics is viewed as "what concerns the state". Academic study of politics often focuses on the personnel and machinery of government and the exercise of state authority. Hence, the political has to do with the state (Heywood 2013).

Power has to do with resource allocation; hence, Harold Lasswell (1936) describes politics as *Who Gets What, When, and How?* Easton (1981) defined politics as the "authoritative allocation of values". By this as Heywood (2013: 4) puts it:

> Politics encompasses the various processes through which government responds to pressures from the larger society, in particular by allocating benefits, rewards or penalties. 'Authoritative values' are therefore ones that are widely accepted in society and considered binding by the mass of citizens. In this view, politics is associated with 'policy', with formal or authoritative decisions that establish a plan of action for the community.

According to Heywood (2013), politics can be viewed from four perspectives, namely politics as power, politics as the art of government, politics as public affairs and politics as compromise.

Politics as power and the distribution of resources is concerned about the exercise of power to achieve desired outcomes, through whatever means. Because resources are scares, there is a struggle over scarce resources. This struggle is conducted as a struggle for power over the allocation and use of resources. Politics in this sense is broad and related to the production, reproduction, distribution, redistribution and general use of resources during human collective existence. Politics is about "choosing between competing interests and views often demanding incompatible allocations of limited resources. Crucially, because it is a collective form of decision making, once a choice has been made then that choice has to be imposed on us all" (Stoker 2006: 2).

Politics as the art of government is about the exercise of authority. It is about the formal institutions of the state, especially the government that carries out public policy. It is about public administration and policy making, the formal or authoritative decisions that establish a plan of action for the political community. The word government is derived from the Latin verb "gubernare", which means "to govern" or "to manage". It is the process by which the state manages its population and exercises control over its territory. The process through which governance is carried out

involves the formulation and implementation of public policy. The government in carrying its functions would have to determine the problems of society and take a decision on how to solve those problems. In doing these, the government will examine a series of available options to solve the problem. The government then provides policy in the form of rules and steps to be followed to solve the problem. The policy will then be implemented by the government to achieve set objective which if achieved will solve the problems identified. The processes of governance also involve how the conflicts arising from the formulation and implementation of policies are resolved.

Politics as public affairs means that politics is about "public life" or "public affairs" in the sense of the distinction between the public and private realms, between "the political" and "the non-political". This may also refer to the distinction state and civil society. The apparatus of government with which the will of the state is realised such as the courts, the police, the army, the civil service, and so forth, which are funded through public resources and are responsible for the collective organisation of the political community life. By contrast, the realm of civil society is non-governmental and non-state and consists of institutions such as the family and kinship groups, private businesses, trade unions, clubs, community-based organisations that are set up and funded by individual citizens primarily to satisfy their own interests and then those of the larger society.

Politics as compromise and consensus refers to politics as the ways and means of resolving conflict, of decision-making through compromise, conciliation and negotiation, instead of the resort to coercion and violence. Here politics is simply a process of decision-making in the public realm. Heywood argues that politics is inextricably linked to the phenomena of conflict and cooperation. On the one hand, the existence of rival opinions, different wants, competing needs or opposing interests guarantees disagreement about the rules under which people live. On the other hand, people recognise that to influence these rules or ensure that the rules are upheld, they must work with others in society. Therefore, politics is often portrayed as a process of conflict-resolution, in which rival views or competing interests are reconciled with one another. Stoker (2006: 1) describes politics as the "tough process of squeezing collective decisions out of multiple and competing interests and opinions".

Public policy is the product of the political and governance processes. It occurs within the context of rules/institutions and involves a variety of actors both political and non-political actors. It is expected to help fulfil

the purposes of the state: provide the needs of society for security, peace, order and the provision of social services. Politics is the art of governance to the extent that it is concerned about governments, institutions, power, order and the ideals of justice. Politics incorporates governance in its preoccupation with the public sector, power structures, equity and service delivery. Nevertheless, politics and governance are distinct from each other in the sense that politics is broader than governance. Politics entails the concept of the "good life" and the "ideal society"; it is about how "people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live" while governance deals with how the government and the civil society arrive at a decision in meeting public needs. Public policy is the outcome of the interaction among actors in politics and governance; hence, Cochran et al. (1999) defines public policy as the "outcome of the struggle in government over who gets what".

## Governance Context of Public Policy

As noted earlier, public policy occurs within the framework of governmental organisations. These organisations operate within a governance environment. Six features of the governance context of public policy can be elaborated. These are power, law, revenue, personnel, social services and public support.

### *Power*

Power is the capacity to get things done. It is ability to get people to behave in desired ways, even when they are unwilling to do so. It is a kind of domination which those who rule exercise over those under their rule. It is an essential element of government. Those who exercise the power of government command while the citizens obey. In a logical statement, power is the capacity of a person A to cause another person B to do something he or she would otherwise not do. Power is exercised in a variety of ways and by several means. The ability to reward or punish is central to power of government. By means of rewards (incentives), the government can get us to obey the law or support its cause. By punishment (sanction), the government forces us to do its will. Power enables the government to be effective in performing its functions.

### *Law*

The state is a system of laws. Governments regulate society by law. Laws are commands or orders given by the government requiring citizens to act or refrain from acting in certain ways. They serve as constraints on our behaviour. Laws specify our rights, duties and obligations. They define the relationship between citizens and their government. Law is the basis for the exercise of governmental powers. They form the basis for the promotion of order, peace and justice in the state. Every state operates based on a body of fundamental laws called the constitution. This body of laws define the powers of government, the process for the formation of government and the responsibilities of government to the citizens.

### *Revenue*

Government need resources to operate. These include tax and non-tax revenues. Tax revenue is usually derived from taxes paid by citizens. The government may also derive money by producing goods and services, which are paid for by those who use those goods and services. Non-tax revenues also include natural resource rents and royalties. There are specific policies to mobilise and manage each of these components of revenue. The revenue of government enables it to run the civil service and provide roads and other services to citizens.

### *Personnel*

Government personnel who are elected officials act in concert with advisors from the higher levels of the administration, appointed career officials, to exercise political power, formulate and implement public policy. Such officials have legitimate authority to impose normative guidelines for action to achieve the desired goals of the state. Elected officials have the right to articulate public policy while non-elected officials are responsible for the implementation of public policy through programmes. Since policies tend to transcend the life of elected officials, the unelected officials are the custodians of public policy. They constitute the bulk of government personnel and are key to the design and implementation of public policy.

### *Public Social Services*

The government is responsible for citizens' welfare. It not only provides an environment of order and peace for us to take care of ourselves, but it also helps with certain services which may be difficult for each one of us to provide for ourselves or is better provided collectively, for instance roads, airports, postal services, telecommunication, healthcare and educational institutions. This is indeed one of the fundamental reasons why government is set up.

### *Public Support*

Governments do not last forever. In a democracy, governments are elected for a specific period, and when the period expires the people vote for another set of people to constitute government. This is because power lies with the people who are the real sovereign. Thus, a government requires the support of the people to be strong. Public support is important for the effectiveness and legitimacy of the government. Thus, governments are perpetually striving to make the people feel they are ruling in the interest of the public (people) and not in the interest of those in government. This is because the people could remove the government at the next election or revolt against the government when they feel the government is not behaving as expected.

## Formal Governance Institutions, Instruments and Actors in Public Policy

### *The Government*

The government is usually organised around its functions and powers. Governmental powers are often divided into three: law making, law enforcement and adjudication/interpretation of law. Thus, there are three arms of government: the legislature or parliament, the executive and the judiciary. Each of these branches/arms of government is expected to be constituted by different sets of people. This is done in such a way that no single person or group of persons combine two or more of these powers. The essence is to avoid tyranny and arbitrary rule. Thus, the powers are not just exercised by different persons or body of persons; each arm is expected to act as a check on the others. This doctrine, which

was popularised by Montesquieu in his famous book *Esprit Des Lois*, received an authoritative exposition in James Madison's *The Federalist*. According to Madison et al. "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny" (1992: 52). Thus, separation of powers assumes that by dividing the powers of government between different persons or body of persons, the tendency towards tyranny, and thereby encroachment on individual liberty, will be minimised. It also assumes a foreclosure to the wielding of absolute power since by allocating different functions of government to different persons; no one can be a judge in his/her own case. While in theory the functions of government can be clearly separated, in practice they overlap, hence checks and balances are built into the relations and exchanges that exist among the various arms of government. The principle of checks and balances is, therefore, a corollary of that of separation of powers and is meant to serve as a restraint on each set of governmental powers. They both constitute forms of institutional designs to ensure the accountability of public officials.

### *Models and Systems of Government*

There are three broad models of government. These are presidential, parliamentary, and Hybrid or mixed models. In simple terms the presidential system of government is one in which the president is both the Head of State and head of government, is constitutionally independent of the legislature and serves a fixed term. A system of separation of executive and legislative powers exists; the government and the legislature serve fixed and independent terms in office. Some presidents are elected by popular elections, by electoral colleges or by parliament. Also, some presidential systems are unicameral while others are bicameral. Some presidents are permitted to serve only for a single term, while the common practice is for a president to serve for no more than two consecutive terms. Examples of presidential systems in Africa include Nigeria, Angola, Uganda, Burundi, Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Equatorial Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

In contrast, the parliamentary system is one in which the government depends on the confidence of the legislature to exist as the legislative

majority may remove the government from office either by passing a vote of no confidence in the government or by rejecting a vote of confidence initiated by the government. Under the parliamentary system, when a vote of no confidence is passed by the legislature, a new government must be formed based on existing distribution of legislative seats, or where this is impossible, new elections are held in the hope that a government may be formed based on the new seat distribution. Usually in parliamentary systems, the prime minister is the head of government, while the Head of State is usually ceremonial. Countries with parliamentary systems in Africa include Botswana, Cape Verde, and Lesotho. These two forms of government are the predominant forms of government in the contemporary world. In practice, however, there are some modifications in each form, hence the hybrid model (see Cheibub 2007). South Africa, since 1994, has a modified parliamentary system where the president is elected by parliament. The president and the cabinet are individually and collectively accountable to parliament.

There are several semi-presidential systems across the world today, many of them established during the third wave of democratisation in the early 1990s. In semi-presidential systems "there is both a directly elected fixed-term president and a prime minister and cabinet who are collectively responsible to the legislature" (Elgie 2011: 3). Under semi-presidentialism there is a directly elected, or popularly elected, president who serves for a fixed term. In addition, there is a separate position of prime minister. The prime minister and cabinet are collectively responsible to the legislature. The first semi-presidential constitution was adopted by Finland on July 1, 1919. As of 2010, there are over 50 countries with semi-presidential system. Some of these countries have adopted the semi-presidential system in the bid to reduce or enhance the powers of the president (Elgie 2011). There are several semi-presidential countries in Africa: Chad (1996), Gabon (1991), Namibia (1990), Tanzania (1995), Cameroon (1991), Republic of Congo (2015), Democratic Republic of Congo (2006), Rwanda (2003), Burkina Faso (1991) and Niger (2010).

In addition to the above, the structure of government is also important to policy making. Some countries are federal while others are unitary or non-federal. A federal system, according to King (1982: 77), is "distinguished from other forms of state solely by the fact that its central government incorporates regional units in its decision procedure on some constitutionally entrenched basis". A federal system has at least

two layers of government: the national government and the state governments. This is to address problems of inclusion and representation in divided societies. First, the existence of at least two layers of government enables various sub-groups or territories to share power with the centre. Each sub-government has constitutionally guaranteed powers, responsibilities and set of institutions. It is a form of limited government in which the various levels of government operate in a framework of checks and balances.

A federal system of government is designed to foster unity among the states that constitute the federation, while also preserving their autonomy in some areas. According to Riker (1964: 11), federalism is a structural bargain that involves the existence of at least two levels of government that govern the same land and people, with each level having its autonomous spheres of authority and with the autonomy of each sphere constitutionally guaranteed and protected. The constitution of a federal system of government creates at least two tiers of government, each of which is assigned a range of governmental powers that it can exercise exclusively or jointly with the other tier.

In federal system expenditure responsibilities are usually shared between the two levels of government. There is usually an exclusive legislative list that contains areas of policy making on which only the national government can legislate. The concurrent list contains items over which both the national government and the state-level governments can legislate. The residual list contains items reserve for the states. On matters in the concurrent legislative list, state governments have liberty to make polices within their jurisdiction. This makes it possible for multiple governmental actors to play active roles in those policy areas. There are formal bodies, a variety of non-formal institutions that facilitate intergovernmental collaboration in policy formulation and implementation. Thus, in such decentralised contexts, there is always a need to "look at ways to improve capacity and co-ordination among public stakeholders at different levels of government to increase efficiency, equity and sustainability of public spending" (Charbit 2011: 5). Nigeria and Ethiopia are examples of Federations in Africa.

The non-federal or unitary system of political organisation is one in which most or all the governing power resides in a centralised government. In a unitary system of government, the central government often delegates authority to subnational units and channels policy decisions down to them for implementation. Most nation-states are unitary systems.

They vary greatly. Great Britain, for example, decentralises power in practice though not in constitutional principle. Others grant varying degrees of autonomy to subnational units. In France, the classic example of a centralised administrative system, some members of local government are appointed by the central government, whereas others are elected. Ultimately, all local governments in a unitary system are subject to a central authority. Examples of unitary states in Africa include Angola, Ghana, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Malawi, Niger, Mauritius and Liberia.

In a democracy, elections are conducted at intervals to choose leaders and representatives. There are rules and methods of counting votes to determine the outcome of an election. These constitute the electoral system. Political parties are the key players in electoral contests. They present manifestos and campaign for votes in the hope to take overpower if they win elections. A political party is an organisation that represents a particular group of people or set of ideas. It aims to have members elected to public office so their ideas can affect the way society is governed. Political parties are not policymaking organisations in themselves. But they articulate philosophies, develop policies and have methods of debating issues and formulating policies to be presented to the electorate during election campaigns. When in power, a political party attempts to put its philosophy into practice through legislation. If a candidate wins office by a large majority, it means that the voters have given him or her a mandate to carry out the programme outlined in the campaign. Political parties are platforms for community groups to influence the policymaking process.

## Party and Electoral Systems

### *Party System*

Political scientists often define party systems by the number of "relevant" parties (how one defines "relevant" parties depends upon whom you ask). The party system essentially means the way the political parties of the day interact with one another within the competitive electoral process. G. Sartori in his book, *Party and Party Systems*, describes the party system as "the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition". One party rules in a one-party system. These are found in the remaining communist states of the world (Cuba, North Korea and China). The

position of the ruling party is guaranteed in a constitution and law bans all forms of political opposition. The ruling party controls all aspects of life within that state. In a two-party system, two parties dominate. Other parties might exist, but they have no political importance. America has the most obvious two-party political system with the Republicans and Democrats dominating the political scene. For the system to work one of the parties must obtain a sufficient working majority after an election and it must be able to govern without the support from the other party. A rotation of power is expected in this system. The two-party system presents the voter with a simple choice, and it is believed that the system promotes political moderation, as the incumbent party must be able to appeal to the "floating voters" within that country. Those who do not support the system claim that it leads to unnecessary policy reversals if a party loses an election as the newly elected government seeks to impose its "mark" on the country that has just elected it to power. Such sweeping reversals, it is claimed, cannot benefit the state in the short and long term. Multi-party system is a system where more than two parties have some impact in a state's political life. A multi-party system can lead to a coalition government as Germany and Italy have experienced. In Germany these have provided reasonably stable governments and a successful coalition can introduce an effective system of checks and balances on the government that can promote political moderation. Dominant-party system is different from a one-party system. A party is quite capable within the political structure of a state, to become dominant to such an extent that victory at elections is considered a formality. This was the case under the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. For 18 years (1979 to 1997), one party dominated politics in Britain (see Heywood 2013, chapter 10).

Political parties are not policymaking organisations in themselves. They certainly take positions on important policy questions, especially to provide alternatives to the position of whichever party is in power. When in power, a party attempts to put its philosophy into practice through legislation. If a candidate wins office by a large majority, it may mean that the voters have given him or her a mandate to carry out the programme outlined in the campaign (see Heywood 2013, chapter 10).

### *The Electoral System*

Electoral system refers to the way leaders and representatives are chosen. It consists of the rules and methods of counting votes to determine the outcome of an election. An electoral system has several parts, including the electoral formula, district magnitude and ballot structure.

The electoral formula is the way votes are translated into seats or results. The electoral formula takes the specific results in terms of the number of votes and converts it to a specific number of seats. There are two primary ways of doing this: by "majority" or "proportional" methods.

The majority method allows the candidate or party that wins the most votes to win all the available seats. The proportional method allows the parties to win seats in proportion to the number of votes they win. There are also several variants of each method, including systems (mixed systems), which combine majority elections with proportional elections.

District magnitude describes the basis of representation. It defines how people are represented—whether it is based on where they live or what group they fall into. In terms of where they live, we have districts and constituencies. In this context all groups in the district or constituency are treated equally. In the context of the groups, they fall into, the concern is with representing all groups in society regardless of where they live. An electoral district is a geographic area from which political representatives are elected. Districts could have a single representative or multiple representatives, depending on the system chosen and the size of the district.

Ballot structure determines two things within the electoral system. First, it determines whether the voter votes for a candidate, for various candidates or for a party. Second, it determines whether the voter makes a single choice or if he is entitled to make several choices. Ballot structure decisions would also determine whether a list system would use "closed" or "open" lists. Thus, the various combinations of the elements of the electoral system produce different types of electoral systems.

There are three broad types of electoral systems. These are classified according to how closely they translate votes won into parliamentary seats won. The three types are Plurality/Majoritarian Systems, Proportional Representation Systems and Mixed Systems (see Heywood 2013, Chapter 9; Reynolds and Reilly 1997).

## Policy Instruments and Policy Actors

### *Policy Instruments*

Policy instruments refer to the means of government intervention in society to accomplish goals or to solve problems. Policy instruments include level of spending, funding for scientific studies or advocacy, organisational change, economic incentives/penalties, regulations and laws, voluntary agreements and resources dedicated to implementation (Cairney 2016). Policy instruments can be used as "sticks, carrots and sermons" (see Bemelmans-Videc et al. 1998). Thus, there are three families of policy instruments. The first family consists of regulatory instruments such as orders, rules and prohibitions (licences, permits and regulations). The second family embraces financial means, providing incentives. They may be positive (grants and subsidies) as well as negative (taxes and user charges) from a consumer's perspective. The third family are communicative tools, which may be used to at increase or decrease information available to stakeholders. These have got a boost due to the developments in the digital age (Bemelmans-Videc et al. 1998; Peters and Nispen 1998; Hood 2007; Hood and Margetts 2007). Policy instruments could be voluntary, compulsory or a mix of both.

Howlett (2002) provides a somewhat different classification in terms of Substantive, Procedural and Institutional policy instruments. Procedural instruments seek to modify decision-making processes with respect to policies and projects that may affect society rather than directly changing the behaviour of individuals or firms. Common procedural instruments include environmental assessment (EA) processes and gender mainstreaming. They seek to inject environmental and gender considerations into decision-making process respectively where they would not normally have been present. Public participation requirements can work in a similar way, providing opportunities for members of the public to have input into decision-making in ways that would not otherwise be the case.

Substantive policy instruments are intended to directly change behaviour on the part of individuals, households, communities and corporations. Substantive instruments include the use of law and regulation to prohibit or control certain activities. It also includes public information and enlightenment campaigns that are directed to motivate action at the individual, household or community level to act in a certain way to solve a public problem. The use of incentives to encourage voluntary action by

companies, communities and individuals to manage or reduce the environmental impact of their activities is also part of this.

The third type of policy instrument is institutional engineering, which is the creation or use of specific agencies inside or outside of government to develop, implement and evaluate policy, or provide certain services. In many African states, new organisations are often set up to regulate activities that pose risks to public safety and the environment or to manage natural resources. The environmental protection agencies or the Federal Road Safety Commission in Nigeria are prime examples.

### *Policy Actors*

Arising from the above institutional context there are two principal classes of actors in the policy process. These are the state/government actors (elected and appointed officials) and societal actors (include interest groups, think tanks and the mass media).

### *State Actors*

The government is the main state actor. As mentioned earlier, the executive, legislature and the judiciary constitute it.

The executive is usually the key player in any policy subsystem. It provides policy leadership in very government system. *It is* the law administering (carrying out) section of government. The executive is the branch of government that is responsible for the execution or implementation of policy. It is responsible for the implementation of the laws and policies made by the legislature. It extends from the Head of State to the enforcement agencies such as the police, the military. It includes both ministers and civil servants. It is the body of decision makers who take overall responsibility for the direction and coordination of government policy. Members of executives have been categorised in one of two ways: a distinction is often drawn between the "political" executive and the "bureaucratic" executive, politicians and civil servants, politics and administration. Executive branches are typically pyramidal, organised according to a clear leadership structure.

Elected officials are the politicians who get the mandate of the people to govern for a particular period. Appointed officials are those in the bureaucracy, representing a second category of primary actors. Their role is to assist the elected executive in various essential ways in the

policymaking process. As such, they include many specialists who deal with a certain policy issue on a continuing basis and are thus central figures in the policy process. They remain ultimately subordinated to the political executive, especially in very important policy domains. Resources strengthening the power and influence of the executive over public policy include the fact that the law confers it certain crucial functions and decision-making flexibility, a very large access to material resources, a wide range of skills and expertise, access to vast quantities of information, the advantage of the long tenure of members as opposed to elected officials and a semi-monopoly over policy deliberations.

The legislature or parliament is the law-making organ of government. It is usually composed of several elected people who together represent the assembly of citizens deliberating to make laws for the governance of society. They perform the critical functions of representation, public education, policy making and executive oversight.

Some countries have two-chamber parliament, others have one-chamber parliament. Historically, two issues have informed the establishment of bicameral legislature in both unitary and federal states. Tsebelis and Money (1997) show how the legislative product is improved by finding a common ground between the two chambers and stability is assured by the representation of societies' diverse preferences of two chambers, which reflected the balance of power in society. In the original formulation, the two chambers reflect the division between aristocrats and the common people. This division was mediated by the rise of republicanism and the extension of the franchise. But the same reason d'etre was underscored by the federal experiment in the United States, where there was a perceived need to balance the general preferences of the population as whole with the peculiar preferences of the states. Hamilton referred to the advantage stating that the chamber ensures that "No law can be passed without the concurrence first of a majority of the people, and then of a majority of the states" (Hamilton et al. 1961: 402); the essence is to represent the diversity of the nation in terms of population and territory. They represent the different manifestation of the people's will. Besides, it is easier to get a chamber corrupted than to get the two-chamber corrupted. Finally, the existence of two chambers also checks the excesses of the legislature. One checks the other by the mutual privilege of refusing.

Parliaments work through the committee system. Parliamentary committees are set up to find out the facts of a case, examining witnesses, sifting evidence and drawing up reasoned conclusions. They are composed of MPs based on issues and are well suited to gather evidence from expert groups or individuals.

### *The Judiciary*

The judiciary is the law adjudicating (judging) section of government. These are appointed people who have the authority to interpret the constitution, acts of parliament and other laws of the land. They also decide if laws and previous decisions apply to a particular case. The judicial arm of government is the system of courts. There is usually a hierarchy of courts with the Constitutional or Supreme Court at the apex.

The executive retains the ultimate authority to make and implement policies. This is especially true in parliamentary systems but is somewhat constrained in presidential ones. The main resources of the executive, which allows it to influence other actors, include control over information, control over fiscal resources, very good access to mass-media for advertising its efforts, direct relationship of the bureaucracy, control of the timing of introduction of some bill and assenting to bills, and so on. The executive however suffers from several constraints that limit its impact on public policy: the problem of coordination and control arising from the tendency of bureaucracies to grow, scope and complexity; the need to maintain the voter's support; organisational problems such as poor technical capacity, corruption and other inefficiencies.

The legislature, on the other hand, is less influential than the executive in policy making. In parliamentary systems, for example, its role is to ensure the accountability of the executive to the electors than making or implementing polices. Parliaments are primarily forums where social problems are identified and policies to address them are demanded, where budgets can be changed, where bills may be amended. However, in presidential systems parliament has some powers, especially powers of appropriation, which it exercises over the budget, because it is an independent body. Nevertheless, the impact of individual legislators on specific policies is rather small, although voting often occurs in committees, which may give individuals higher leverage in specific policy areas, if membership remains

constant and that members do not vote along party lines, but rather according to their own judgement. Other constraints on the legislature include term limits, which will force the much quicker executive to marginalise the legislature in crisis situations, as well as technical issues, as legislators most likely do not always have the necessary know-how for assessing all aspects of a particular policy issue.

The judiciary is the least active in public policy. But it becomes crucial where there is a major conflict concerning the interpretation of the law on the powers and role of the any two or more governmental actors where it is called in to adjudicate among the parties to the policy issue. It also exercises the power of judicial review that enables it to declare an action by any governmental or non-governmental actor unconstitutional.

The occupants of these governmental positions are either elected or appointed. Those in the bureaucracy are expected to abstain from partisan politics. They are permanent officials appointed based on their expertise and expected to be impartial and anonymous. They represent the permanent face of government. As for the elected officials the system of government, their party manifesto, the electoral and party systems under which they ascend office have significant influence on policy making and behaviour in government.

### *Societal Actors*

The second set of actors can be referred to as civil society actors. They are the aggregate of non-governmental organisations and institutions that manifest the interests and will of citizens. Civil society is often referred to as the "third sector" of society. It is distinct from government and business. Diamond (1994: 4) defines it as "the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, largely self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of rules. It is distinct from society in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable". Civil society refers to voluntary associations and interest groups, including labour unions, professional associations, the universities and research institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social movements and a pluralistic media. They are a part of the public sphere characterised by

debates and political advocacy, interest aggregation and representation, service provision. Civil society as "discursive public sphere" enables citizens to talk about common concerns in conditions of freedom, equality and non-violent interaction. They seek to ensure that government fulfils its responsibilities transparently and accountably. Civil society often seeks to influence policy, provide an alternative analysis and help educate and inform policy makers and the wider society. Thus, the range of functions includes advocacy, education, informal oversight, independent monitoring and policy support, and service delivery. The main resource that differentiates this actor from others is the specific knowledge it has at its disposal, which represents a very important advantage, since policy making is a highly information-intensive process. Interest groups can make campaign contributions to politicians and political parties that are favourable to their preferences. Their impact on policy formulation and implementation varies considerably according to their resources and presence in each specific policy case. They can associate or combine with other similar groups and thus become more powerful and improve their financial means to become more influential in the policy process.

The term non-governmental organisation (NGO) can be applied to any non-profit organisation that is independent of government. NGOs are typically value-based organisations that depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professionalised over the last two decades, principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics. Some do a lot of funds raising, from individuals and corporate entities or embark of business and use surplus for humanitarian activities. For instance, to maintain its independence, Greenpeace does not accept donations from governments or corporations but relies on contributions from individual supporters and foundation grants.

Research institutes within or associated with universities, think tanks or similar structures are influential in policy when they direct their research on policy and produce problem-solving-oriented outputs. The results from such research are usually submitted to potentially favourable politicians, attempting in this manner to influence the actual policymaking process at one or more of the relevant levels.

The mass media (electronic, print and news media) serve as a link between state and society. As such it can influence the preferences on both sides. It is particularly important during the policy agenda setting. Indeed, it is the main identifier and advertiser of problems. However, the mass

media may be inclined towards sensational reporting and may be influenced by the ideology and interests of owners/financiers.

### *International Actors*

A variety of policy issues are global in nature. These include such issues as climate change, health epidemics and security. Indeed, policy initiatives to deal with these issues are carried out by international organisations such as United Nations or any of its agencies, other regional organisations like the European Union, the African union (AU) and development or donor agencies of national governments.

There are also international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) that address issues at the global level. They are elements of global civil society. They are international not-for-profit, non-governmental humanitarian organisations. INGOs are different from national civil society organisations (CSOs) in donor and recipient countries in several respects: global operations, size and scope, range of partnership, scale, geographic reach, access to funds, budgets and roles in development. Examples of such INGOs include CARE International, Oxfam International, World Vision, Amnesty International and Greenpeace (Ghimire 2010; Shah 2005; Benessaieh 2011; Williams 2013).

Multinational companies are also key actors in public policy in Africa. They are for-profit enterprise marked by two basic characteristics: (1) they engage in enough business activities—including sales, distribution, extraction, manufacturing, and research and development—outside the country of origin so that they are dependent financially and operate in two or more countries; (2) and their management decisions are made based on regional or global alternatives. Transnational corporations or multinational corporations are among the world's biggest economic institutions. A rough estimate suggests that the 300 largest transnational corporations (TNCs) own or control at least one quarter of the entire world's productive assets, worth about US$5 trillion (Wind 2008; Aykut and Goldstein 2006; Oxfam 2015).

The power wielded by just a handful of corporations is enormous, more than many nations, compared to NGOs and other segments of society. International NGOs and CSOs play an increasingly vital role in democratic and democratising societies.

*Challenges of MNCs and INGOs for Policy Making in Africa*

| *MNCs* | *INGOs* |
|---|---|
| • Corporations are willing and able to exert leverage directly by employing government officials, participating on important national economic policymaking committees, making financial contributions to political parties, and bribery.<br>• TNCs actively enlist the help of Northern governments to further or protect their interests in less-industrialised nations; assistance that has sometimes involved military force.<br>• Business lobbies and related groups are not accountable to the public at large but to their industries and companies. Their resources and influence are immense.<br>• Many democratic leaders are under more influences (of money and power) from large corporations compared to citizens.<br>• Multinational companies deprive African governments of $11 billion in taxes each year according to Oxfam report (2015).<br>• The MNCs have impact on private sector development and industrialisation policies. Sometimes they undermine the capacity of the government to polices that support the development of a dynamic domestic private sector. | • Donor agencies can appear neutral but that may not be the case. By making various assumptions donor agencies risk becoming "creations of the outside, embodiments of external norms and goals, and materially dependent on outside rather than local sources".<br>• How INGOs have used their funding and other monies received or raised has been questioned. Criticisms range from pointing out that only small percentages go to people in need, that a lot goes to recover costs, and some have even been used to pay very high salaries of the people at the top of these organisations.<br>• Doing more harm than good, without realising it. For example, many foods aid groups where, in non-emergency situations, food is delivered from rich countries for either free, or virtually free, end up under-cutting local producers and hence have a negative effect on local farmers and the economy. This also applies to population issues.<br>• The fact that such donations are needed also serves as an indication that development policies and globalisation policies in their current form are not sustainable!<br>• The "undemocratic" nature of NGOs: the people did not choose them, yet they claim to be fighting for various issues for the people. |

Sources: Drawn from Wind (2008), Aykut and Goldstein (2006), Oxfam (2015); Ghimire (2010), Shah (2005), Benessaieh (2011) and Williams (2013) by Author

## The Informal Dimensions of Politics and Policy Making

In previous sections of this chapter, we described how laws and values of society define who can exercise political power and how policies are made. The assumption is that rulers are expected to make policy choices within institutionalised polities. In these polities, formal political institutions, such as the constitution, the structure of the state, the organisation of the legislature, or electoral rules, government systems, place constraints on the behaviour of politicians and political elites, and directly influence policy outcomes.

Many of these modern institutions characterise government in Africa today. But they were received from colonial rule. The bureaucracy, for instance, which evolved and became dominant as the administrative system in Europe came to Africa with the modern state as part of the apparatus of colonial rule.

Under the Weberian bureaucracy, competence, hierarchy, discipline and impersonal relations were expected to characterise the public service. However, experience in Africa showed that such elements were eroded after independence. Instead, informal relations such as kinship, ethnic ties, nepotism and corruption became commonplace.

As a result of these, some scholars began to argue that formal state institutions seem to have been displaced by informal institutions of governance, especially those traceable to pre-colonial Africa traditional institutions. Some even argue that there was a conflict between the imposed formal Western forms of government and African traditional institutions and ways of doing things. They therefore argue that anyone who is interested in policy performance in Africa must pay attention to informal institutions. According to them Africa is "a place where formal institutional rules are largely irrelevant" (see Posner and Young 2007: 126). They are right to some extent. For within formal organisations informal interaction among individuals often arise, largely fuelled by human nature and pre-existing kinship, linguistic, ethnic or cultural connections.

About policy making, these scholars point out that in many African countries, the exercise of power and policy making occurs more through informal channels than through the formal institutions of government. Formal institutions have been either patrimonialised (Callaghy 1984) or informalised (Chabal and Daloz 1999). A variety of explanation is offered to explain the situation. One explanation is that modern political

institutions did not upturn pre-colonial values and traditional ways of doing things in Africa. Patronage, tribute, kinship and other relationships continue to exist and permeate these modern political institutions and structures of government and sometimes overwhelm them. Others argue that Africa's postcolonial leaders have been able to subvert modern institutions by clientelism, use of state resources for political legitimation in support of their preference for personal rule.

Several concepts were used to describe this phenomenon. These include personal rule, neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, predatory rule, clientelism, and sultanism. The combination of elements of patrimonialism with modern legal rational bureaucracy is described as neo-patrimonial. Clapham (1985: 48) argues that the state in Africa is patrimonial, it is "a form of organization in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervades a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines. Officials hold positions in bureaucratic organizations with powers which are formally defined but exercise those powers … as a form of private property". Under, neo-patrimonialism, "the distinction between the private and the public, at least formally, exists and is accepted, and public reference can be made to this distinction … but are not always observed in practice…". Patrimonial elements "penetrates legal-rational system and twists its logic, functions and effects". Informal practices invade formal institutions and are ultimately linked to each other in various ways and by varying degrees and these mixes become institutionalised (Erdmann and Engel 2006: 18).

Such studies of public policies in Africa try to show that formal institutions have not been quite effective in fulfilling their roles because of these contradictions. They argue that the informalisation of the policymaking process largely accounted for the poor state of policy making and socio-economic development in Africa. These views became popular when the institutions failed to deliver effective policy performance overtime in the post-independence period. Indeed, many African economies, after the initial growth in the first decade of independence, fell into crisis and the state was unable to meet the welfare needs of the people.

Scholars who emphasise the dominance of informal institutions assume that there is a sharp dichotomy between formal and informal institutions. Some even argued that formal institutions must be made to supplant informal institutions if African states are to come out of the development quagmire of policy failures (Hyden 2013).

However, there is an alternative view about the idea of institutions, which encompasses both the formal and the informal elements. According to North, institutions are "humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction … both formal rules and informal codes" (North 1990: 3). Informal institutions sometimes complement formal ones and may serve to reduce transaction costs. Similarly, Helmke and Levitsky (2006) observe that an array of informal institutions rooted in society often support the functioning of formal institutions and structure the beliefs and behaviours of political actors. Besides, as van de Walle (2007) stresses, elements of neo-patrimonialism may be found in all polities around the world, since political clientelism is constitutive of all political systems.

Overtime, it has become clear that a one-sided view of the informal dimension of politics and policy making has been extremely pessimistic about the possibility of progress in Africa. Experience shows that African states have recorded varying degrees of performance over time and across the continent. The case studies of Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Rwanda done by Kelsall (2013) and others (Routely 2014, Hout 2014) show that provided mechanisms can be found to centralise economic rents and manage them with a view to achieving long-term policy goals, apparently neo-patrimonial systems can be harnessed for developmental ends. In other words, neo-patrimonialism can achieve a "virtuous circle" of strong economic performance when clientelism is organised; rents are used centrally to finance politics; anti-corruption is at least partly entrenched and key social services are provided. Indeed, these studies have coined the concept of developmental neo-patrimonialism. Developmental neo-patrimonialism contains the following features:

- a strong, visionary leader (often an independence or war-time hero)
- a single or dominant-party system
- a competent and confident economic technocracy
- a strategy to include, at least partially, the most important political groups in some of the benefits of growth
- a sound policy framework, defined here as having a broadly pro-capitalist, pro-rural bias.

Such developmental patrimonial states have shown that

- In some circumstances, neo-patrimonialism does not harm.
- It has sometimes helped the climate for business and investment.

- It is therefore not in-compatible with rapid, pro-poor, economic growth.
- Donors and policy makers need to recognise developmental neo-patrimonialism where it exists and understand their impact on it (Kelsall 2011a, 2011b, also see Aiyede and Igbafe 2018).

| *Developmental neo-patrimonialism* | |
|---|---|
| *Positive outcomes* | *Key features* |
| • It has sometimes helped the climate for business and investment<br>• It is compatible with rapid, pro-poor, economic growth<br>• In some circumstances neo-patrimonialism does not harm | • A strong, visionary leader (often an independence or war-time hero)<br>• A single or dominant-party system<br>• A competent and confident economic technocracy<br>• A strategy to include, at least partially, the most important political groups in some of the benefits of growth<br>• A sound policy framework, defined here as a broadly pro-capitalist, pro-rural bias |

Source: Drawn from Kelsall (2011a, 2011b)

This chapter shows that policy analysis is not just about the analysis of the policy statements, decisions and the performance of the agencies saddled with the implementation of public policy. It is in important ways about the analysis of the political and governance contexts of policy making. In this regard, a robust understanding of public policy must consider the broad institutional context, acknowledging its formal and informal components. Policy analysis stands to benefit from an analysis of the political economy context of policy, the design and functioning of institutions of accountability, the role party politics, frameworks of non-violent resolution of political competition, anti-corruption and control of abuse of power, the rule of law, and advances in regional frameworks and principles of democratic governance within the continent. Many Africans desire their governments to acquire virtues of "political accountability, transparency, rule of law and restraint of power" (Diamond 2015: 153) because these are critical to performance in public policy making.

According to Healey and Robinson (1994), who examined the several works on the policy experience in Africa, there are multiple factors that account for policy and implementation failures in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Policy making is a complex process involving diverse and competing ideas, interests, economic and social forces, structures, path dependency and institutions (Mkandawire 2015). These must be investigated to have a deep understanding of the problems associated with ineffective public policies in Africa and to make innovative and effective prescriptions for policy reform.

## Conclusion

Public policy seeks to solve a public problem on an analytic basis. But policy evolves in the context of politics and operates within a framework of governance. Policy occurs through the political and administrative process, and policy analyst must learn to understand and handle the challenges that arise therefrom. They also involve multiple stakeholders of both governmental and non-governmental actors. There are major policy decisions that are made at the global level because of the global reach of the issues and the potentials of cross-country lessons and learning opportunities. Indeed, it sometimes involves the participation of citizens, conducted in a variety of ways and media. Thus, linking governance, politics and public policy shed light on the actual nature of policy making because it engages the complex issues and broader context characteristics of public policy making. This enables an analyst, in making arguments for best policy, to consider the institutional and political constraints that straddle the formulation and implementation of public policy.

Indeed, anyone who wants to analyse public policy with a viewed to accounting for their success or failure must not just be concerned about the extent to which a particular policy effectively addresses an identified problem, an analysis of the political and governance context of public policy is critical. In many instances, the problem may be poorly defined because of varying experiences of the problem and/or because of the ideologies that underlie the preferences of decision makers. The choice of policy options may be affected by resources available to decision makers or the priorities of the government and the relative influence of various actors and interests. Thus, it is important to engage politics and governance in public policy analysis. Such engagement provides contextual understanding of the challenges of public policy making.

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