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**AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN
PUBLIC POLICY MAKING IN NIGERIA:
A Study of ASUU and MAN**

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ABSTRACT

This study takes a critical look at the ways CSOs participate in public policy discourse in Nigeria. It holds that centralized approach to policy making characterized the African political system due largely to the long years of military rule in the continent and that the return to democratic rule fueled the clamour for the participation of CSOs in public policy making. The paper argued that the cost implication of neglecting CSOs in the policy process is that the economy will suffer as policies are made out of the consent of the citizenry and as such authoritarianism will thrive. This paper notes the complacency of past administrations and CSOs in according the citizens their basic democratic rights (participation in the policy process) in the political system during this period. It concludes that even though progress has been made by CSOs to step up their participation in public policy making in Nigeria, such efforts have had little or no impact on policy outcomes, this we argue is due largely to the fact that, policy making is dominated by the interest of the minority and the clamour for CSOs participation in the policy process is for their parochial interest and not for the public good.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on the role and place of civil society groups and organizations in decision-making has assumed added urgency in Nigeria. Civil society is assuming increasingly greater prominence as the role of the state is being redefined. Hitherto, the Nigerian state was organized in such a way that there was an overbearing influence of the state in the lives of the people (Okoye, 2000:3). This influence comes through the establishment of schools, banks, insurance companies, hospitals etc. as a result of government decisions to solve societal problems.

In government however, there are multiple avenues through which decisions are made that affect the lives of the citizenry and the livelihood of the nation. These decisions shape the product of government we call "**Public Policy**". Policy making is solely the responsibility of government, but the environment within which any national government has to discharge this responsibility is increasingly pluralistic with a much wider range than heretofore of individuals and groups with an input into policy formulation (Osborne and Ankumah, 1997). In their submission, Kamba and Olowu (1997) attest to this statement, when they argued that;

"In a democracy, decisions on policy are taken by the government which in turn is accountable to the electorate, the electorate is generally not satisfied with being consulted once every four or five years. People in all countries are becoming more educated and much better informed. Increasingly, they are better able to articulate their needs and have the confidence to put them forward."

In this environment, it appears that if governments are to produce the most effective policies, they need to consult the people at large, as well as relevant interest groups. The need to take account of the views of the governed lends impetus to current trends towards the participation of civil society organizations in public policy-making. Today, global or national policy making is more far-reaching than ever before. Because, so many crucial areas of life are affected, all sectors naturally want to be part of this policy-making including civil society. In reality, the African experience has been a little different from the other Less Developed Countries (LDCs) generally. Up to the independence era, the trend described above is generally held in many countries (Kamba and Olowu, 1997).

There is no doubt that the citizenry placed a lot of importance on civil society organizations as having the capacity to influence policy-making by participating in public matters that affect them, with a view of persuading or influencing policy makers to promote their particular interests by changing public policy pertaining to the society (Benveniste, 1989). Nevertheless, it is crucial that the potential benefits of having an active civil society base be explored so as not to cut off this valuable source of quality policy for a country. It is this development that has generated a lot of writings on civil society in Africa and Nigeria in particular both by Africans and Western scholars. How civil society organizations like Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) and Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) particularly participate in decision-making in Nigeria, is what this paper intends to find out.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Participation of civil society organizations in policy-making in Nigeria coupled with the ever increasing demand for it has been an arching problem to successive administrations since the attainment of independence in Nigeria. It is interesting to note that the demand for the participation of civil society in policy making and civil society organizations themselves do not challenge the state as commonly perceived, but can instead supplement the functions of the state at various level. This, however, can only be the case if and when civil society organizations are actually allowed to contribute to the policy making and implementation process.

Research has shown that successive administrations in Nigeria have tended to adopt a non-participatory approach or highly centralized approach to policy formulation and implementation (Moru, 2005). The implication is that the economy collapsed as policies were made out of the context of participatory approach to policy making and as such authoritarianism thrived. As a result, several civil society organizations have emerged to

champion societal cause against the autocratic state or to defend the collective interests of their members since colonial rule (Barkan, McNurlty and Ayeni, 1991: 475). Post colonial governments do not appreciate the importance the citizenry placed on civil society organizations as having the capacity to influence policy-making, rather they have generally tried to establish their supremacy in policy-making over civil society organizations thereby failing to recognize that the concept of governance incorporated also the institutions, organizations and individuals that comprise the civil society, as they actively participate and influence public policy that affect peoples lives (Olaniyi, 1997).

Scholars like Pollard (2005), Moru (2005), Rojas (1999) and Edwards (2004) have also argued that the political system operated in the past in the country tends to limit the participation of civil society organizations in policy making. It must be pointed out that one of the underlying assumptions of democracy is that the citizenry should be actively involved in decision-making process. This, however, vary from one political system to another (Olaniyi, 1997:43). Apart from this, the type of government a country operates goes a long way to determine the level of participation of civil society organizations.

Not only that, some civil society organizations have become collaborative with the state to the extent that some of them have become extension of state power – they have colluded with the state in the marginalization of interest they claim to serve. In this environment, authoritarian and non-performing governments are bolstered (Olojede, 2002) and government in this scenario do not consider participation – even in decision-making as a basic democratic right of the people.

Besides, the practice of authentic civil society participation in decision making in most states is generally lacking. Civil society organizations are subordinate to the state. The state controls and dominates the civil institutions or organizations including the press and labour organizations. A vast section of these organizations does not even understand how policy is formulated and implemented. No wonder, Abubakar (2005) submitted that "civil society has often been regarded as the "third sector". The word 'sector' here refers not to a particular segment of the economy, like agriculture or industry, but to a component of a larger concept as "political space" which Garry Rodan (2003) refers to as an "arena of contestation" which may be simultaneously a "site of conflict" as well as a "site of negotiation and agreement" between various sectors since as a third sector, civil society organizations cannot compete with other two sectors in the state (government/politics) and the market (economy) in the political space of Nigeria to influence policy outcomes.

While civil society role in the development of Nigeria has been well covered, its role in decision making has sadly not received equal attention. In Africa, the level of participation of civil society organizations in decision-making is null. This low participation of civil society organizations in decision making initiated the need for this research. Despite the broadening immense campaign, orientation and education of civil society organizations to step up their participation in the policy process and the particular relevance of their participation in the process, no known attempt has been directed towards investigating empirically the following: (a) the role (if) any played by civil society organizations in decision-making in Nigeria, (b)

What accounted for the low/non-participation of civil society organizations in decision-making in Nigeria? (c) The effectiveness of each approach/method adopted by civil society organizations in an attempt to step-up their participation in decision-making. This study intend to fill these gaps and proffer solution to these problems

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

Recent years has seen a proliferation of the literature about civil society. Civil society is an allusive concept (Whitehead, 1997; 11). Again, the concept of civil society is not new. It has been contested within political philosophy, sociology and social theory for hundreds of years. What is new is the increasing emphasis on the concept over the last decade; 'civil society' has become a buzzword within international and national development.

In his book *Civil Society and the State in Africa*, John Harbeson quoted by Fajonyomi (2001: 2) offered what has been as a process or functionalist definition of the concept of civil society. According to him "individuals, groups, and associationsare part of civil society to the extent that they seek to define, generate support for, or promote changes in the basic working rules of the political game". Some authors also view the civil society as an elongation of the state. Bratton (1994), for example, posits that civil society is a public realm, analytically distinct from the state, which serves as a source of legitimation for state power. It goes by extension that if it serves as a source of legitimation for state power, it can also be used to control state power, its apparatus and modus operandi thereby serving the key function of moulding basic societal values which regulate the political sphere (Fajonyomi, 2001:2)

To Fukuyama (1995:8), civil society is seen as the realm of spontaneously created social structures separate from the state that underlies democratic political institutions. In the views of Dunn (1996) civil society is broadly regarded as the domain of relationships which falls between the private realms of the family on the one hand and the state on the other. Some definitions are often rooted in different organizations.

Diamond (1994; 5) describes civil society 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 shared entity between the private sphere and the state, excluding individual and family life, inward looking group activity, profit making enterprise and any political ambitions of taking over the state". Chazzan (1992:281) agreed with Diamond when he argued that civil society is distinct from society in general although the two have all too frequently been used synonymously. In recent literature, civil society refers to that segment of society that interacts with the state and yet is distinct from the state. Choi (1998:4) buttressed this distinction between state and civil society when he asserted that civil society is a "realm which exists outside the domain of the state with a degree of voluntary vis-à-vis the state".

Edward (2004:6) sees civil society as a political association governing social conflict through the imposition of rules that restrain citizens from harming one another. Ekeh (1992:207) described civil society as those "associations and institutions that enhance the prospects for

individual liberties and personal freedom by operating outside the state's control and that do possess the capacity to confront the state when these liberties are threatened". Fathom (1995:67) further reinforced the state - civil society dichotomy, when he contended that "civil society represents a counterweight to state power". In reality, however a sharp dichotomy between state and society does not exist.

In the context of the paper, civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group. It is safe to assert that civil society organizations are "organizations that work in an arena between the household, the private sector and the state to negotiate matters of public concern.

Again, it is paramount to state that, it is not quite explicit for scholars, authors and practitioners to define policy. This is, because, there are extensive views and literatures about policy. This frequency of the concept in the discourse among this group of people has infact made it more ambiguous and confusing (Ikelegbe, 1994:1). According to him, a policy is simply actions to be taken or taken and not taken or not to be taken by government or private organizations. It is a statement of what an organization wants to do, what it is doing, what it is not doing and what would not be done. He further stated that, a policy could be regarded as general rules, regulations, guiding practices or actions in a particular activity or problem area. Political scientist, Harold and Philosopher Abraham (1970:71) claimed that policy is a projected program of goals, values and practices". Eulau and Kenneth (1973:465) who are also political scientists conceive policy "as a standing decision, characterized by behavioural consistency and repetitiveness on the part of both those who make it and those who abide by it.

On the other hand, public policy according to Dye (1981:4) is the description and explanation of the cause or consequences of government. In the words of Sambo (1999:283) public policy refers to "the relationship of government unit to its environment". Of paramount importance is the definition of activities, whether direct or indirect, that affect the lives of citizens. Again, Onuoha (1999;277) argued that public policy is a proposed course of action of government within a given environment, providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy proposed to utilized and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective as a purpose. While Kilpatrick (2000) sees public policy as "a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives". In the context of this paper, public policy may be

defined as those action and in-action of government aimed at addressing problems which are detrimental to the goals of society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

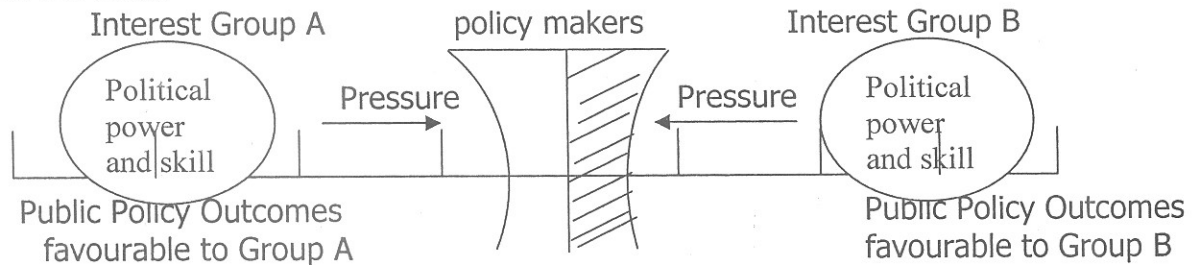
As Allen Worth (1973) observed, the reasons for a study should determine the approach and the theoretical framework. For the purpose of this paper, *Group Theory* is relevant for our analysis. The choice of this theory is based on the fact that, the study of groups or their influence on the process of public decision making has generally been done under the "Group Theory". Group theory is an approach to comparative political analysis whose leading exponents include Arthur. F. Bentley (1949), Earl Lathan (1955) and Mancur Olson (1965). Group theory considers the human groups as the major component of the political system rather than the individual as the distributive model sees it. It argues, however, that individuals are important in politics only when they act as part of, or on behalf of, group interest. It sees group as an essential bridge between the individual and his government (Edosa, 1997:109). The theory conceives of a society as, essentially, a complex of groups that compose it – a sort of magic. In other words, a society is not an individual affair but a mass of activity. A group is defined as a collection of individuals who have some characteristics in common and interact with some frequency on the basis of their shared interest.

Sambo (1999:292) asserted that group theory believes that individuals are important in politics only when they act as part of, or, on behalf of, group interests. According to the Group theorists, "politics is the process by which social values are authoritatively allocated. This is done by decisions. The decisions are produced by activities, each activity is not something separate from another, but masses of activity have common tendencies, in regard to decisions. These masses of activity are groups, so the struggle between groups or interests determines what decisions are made" (Ekstein and Apter, 1963:391). What advocates of this theory are driving at is that interaction amongst groups is the central focus of politics and that politics is the struggle between groups in society. They view the political process as a continuous stream of interaction amongst groups which pursue their particular interests in competition with one another. Thus, policies could be viewed as the struggle among groups to influence public policies. (Edosa, 1997:110).

Accordingly, group theorists see public policies, at any given time, as the equilibrium reached in the group struggle. This equilibrium is determined by the relative influence of the interest groups on the political system. Edosa (1997) claimed that a change in the relative influence of any group may result in changes in the public policies. Similarly Lathan (1955) suggests that public policy is the equilibrium in a group struggle at any given moment and this represents a balance which the contending groups constantly strive to tilt in their favour.

Again, group theorists argued that, conflict often results from the interplay of group forces. Consequently, "the task of the political system" according to Dye (1997:20) is to manage group conflict by; (i) Establishing the rules of the game in the group struggle, (ii) Arranging compromises and balancing interests, (iii) Enacting compromises in the form of public policy,

and (iv) Enforcing these compromises". To ensure their influence, the groups maintain access to the key points of decision making in governmental institutions such as the legislative committees, the executive, administration and even the judiciary. The influence of any group depends on its leadership organization, resources and strategic position (Ikelegbe 1994:34-35). In his contribution, Jemibewon (1978:177) submitted that, decisions reached are a 'compromise' after balancing and reconciling the various groups. He noted however, that sometimes a decision is not the best that could be taken on a given issue, but the various factions and considerations must be given due weight to. The resulting decision which is often a compromise may be the second best but it is the only way of holding the society together, in order to do justice to a broad spectrum of the entire community constitute the state.



Source: Nicholas Henry (2004, 299) *Public Administration and Public Affairs*, New Delhi; Prentice Hall private Ltd, 8th edition.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

Now we come to the most difficult and most controversial question: What are the roles of civil society? Different people see different benefits and harms in the roles of civil society. As Rousseau simply put it, civil society engenders both "the best and the worst -both our virtues and vices" (Fine, 1997:16). One major role of civil society is economic. According to Gang (1998:6), there are both pessimistic and optimistic stories about the economic functions of civil society. One of the pessimist, Mancur Olsen, building on his own logic of collective action, argues that small interest groups have no incentive to work toward the common good of society and every incentive to engage in costly and efficient "rent-seeking" ...lobbying for tax breaks, colluding to restrain competition, and so on (Putman, 1993:176) Rousseau also pointed out that "men are forces to care and destroy one another at the same time" in civil society (Fine, 1997: 17). Worse yet, as Olson holds, in the absence of invasion or revolutionary change, the ticket of special interest groups in any society grows over denser, chocking off innovation and dumping economic growth. More and stronger groups mean less growth (Putman 1993:176).

Other scholars, however, hold that civil society has the function of provoking economic growth. Analyzing Italian regional level data from the nineteenth century to the 1980's Putnam found that levels of economic development even better than did economic variables. Inglehart (1977:228) tries to reconcile these two diametrically opposed theories about the economic functions of civil society. Analyzing data from 43 societies, he concludes that relatively dense networks of associational membership seem to be conducive to economic growth in the earlier stages of development, just as Putnam has argued. However in Olson's

opinion, these associations can become hypertrophied and excessively powerful in advanced industrial societies, distorting policy to defend well-organized interests at the expense of overall economic growth.

Another role of civil society organizations is stabilizing role. The question is to what extent can civil society stabilize the state? Both Tocqueville and Putnam stress the importance of network of voluntary associations in support of a culture of trust and cooperation, which are essential to the successful functioning of democratic institutions. However, the answer to the question from other empirical test and theoretical analysis seems to be "not necessary". Ingleharts (1997:229) multiple regression tests, although membership in voluntary associations is strongly correlated with stable democracy, the variable did not show a statistically significance impact when the effects of other variables are controlled for. Schmitter (quoted in Whitehead, 1997:106) also argues that "civil society... can affect the consolidation and subsequent functioning of democracy in a number of negative ways".

In addition, the democratic roles of civil society seem long recognized. As Almond and Verba (1963:32) conclude from the examination of the survey data from five nations: the organizational member, political or not, compared with the nonmember, is likely to consider himself more competence as a citizen, to be more active participant in politics. The member, in contrast with the non-member, appears to approximate more closely what we have called the democratic citizen. He is pertinent, active, and open with his opinions. The most striking finding is that any membership—passive membership or membership in a nonpolitical organization has an impact on political competence, and thus on pluralism, one of the most important foundations of political democracy (Almond and Verba, 1963:321).

Nie, Powell and Prewitt (1969:808) also investigate the democratic functions of civil society in terms of its effects on political participation. As shown in the figure above, as the density and complexity of economic and secondary organizations increases, greater proportions of the population find themselves in life situations that lead to increased political information, political awareness, sense of personal political efficacy, and other relevant attitudes. These attitude changes, in turn, lead to increases in political participation. Civil society has yet another democratic function; that is facilitating democratic transitions. Montesquieu quoted in Harbeson, Rothchild and Chazan (1994:26) clearly believed from a theoretical perspective that civil society should function as a counterbalance to government in order to inhabit their tyrannical tendencies; he also suggested that civil society actually did perform in this capacity.

To Olojede (2000) the roles and activities of civil society organizations also vary. They include the representation of interest of specific groups in relation to government and other sectors of the society. It also includes the mobilization of the social actors to increase their consciousness and impact, the regulation and monitoring of state performance and the

behaviour and actions of public officials. Finally, it includes the development or social action role to improve the wellbeing of their constituencies or groups.

CSO PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS

The complex and fluid nature of the civil society sector made tracking its participation or influence a challenging task. Current thinking has essentially moved from models of influence derived from debates on categorizing CSOs, to models oriented around the activities that CSOs undertake and strategies that they use.

CSO participation can be explained by the 'level' at which they work. In the mid-1990s, many writers based their explanations of how CSOs created influence around the typologies they use to describe the sector (Pollard and Court, 2005:16). CSOs were often categorized by 'level'— authors sorted them according to whether they worked locally, national or globally, and argued that this structured their influence on policy processes. Macdonald (1997), for instance, suggests that international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and popular organizations work in distinct, if overlapping, arenas, which confer each group with particular roles, capacities and responsibilities. Fisher (1998) makes a similar distinction, dividing CSOs into "grassroots organizations" (GSOs); grassroots support organizations' (GRSOs) and networks between these groups (GSO networks and GRSO networks). The level at which they work affects the way groups must balance three factors affecting their policy influence. These include financial anatomy, mediating between a mass base and policymaking as well as capacity building led by the grassroots.

CSO participation can also be explained by political context. If a focus on level was too simplistic, other writers moved to explain CSO participation through the building block of many debates on the nature of civil society and its relationship to the state. Grugel (1999:3), for example, argues that the political context in which CSOs operate at local, regional or international levels will condition the extent to which organizations can influence policy. Comparing examples from Europe, Africa and Asia, she suggests that the participation of CSOs will grow in inverse proportion to the influence of the state, directly corresponding to the relationship they hold with state actors. Writers such as Rojas (1999:110) have argued the CSOs' position in opposition to the state has led them to embody particular social political values, suggesting that the notion of 'sustainable development' was the 'legitimate and true expression' of the sector. This to Rojas is that civil society not against the state, but against complex flows of power emerging in a political context and can make 'civil society' to be 'unrivalled'.

However, uncivil actions emerge when groups become estranged and disconnected from their political contexts – when they are no longer part of the society. Other authors have emphasized the role of civil society sector as an independent, autonomous entity. Edwards (2004:16), for example, argues that the mandate of many CSOs to build social cohesion at the community level places limit on their role as a political player.

The problem of how to participate in policy making has become a key challenge for many CSOs as they strive to clarify and legitimize their role in development. While some CSO have lost popularity when they have become too partisan, steering a course through the pitfalls of party politics and the intrinsically political nature of some CSO work has become a feature of CSOs effort to negotiate their relationship with government (Pollard and Court 2005:17). Coston (1998:107) proposed a typology of CSO relationships with government, in order to help establish how the political relationships of CSOs affect the influence they can have on policy processes. She identifies eight types of relationship, from those with the maximum 'distance' from government to those where organizations are able to 'link' philosophically in order to accomplish shared goals. Each different type: including repression, rivalry, competition, contracting, third party government, cooperation, complementing, and collaboration is associated with specific forms of CSO policy influence.

Moreover, CSO participation can be explained by their activities. Lewis (2001:41) described how explaining CSOs participation through their activity avoids the problems earlier writers have had after taking Western models of civil society as their starting point. This focus avoids assuring that CSOs must be volunteeristic, be made up of free association, or take specific litical positions. Analysis based on CSO activities has also been successful in translating an understanding of policy participation into practical steps that CSOs can take up to increase their activities. Najam (1999:15) identified five roles which a CSO can take up, defined by its activities as;

Monitor, with the function of keeping policy 'honest' Advocate, lobbying directly for the policy

- ❖ nitor, with the function of keeping policy 'honest' Advocate, lobbying directly for the policy
- ❖ vocate, lobbying directly for the policy

options they prefer or against those they oppose. Innovator, developing and demonstrating

- ❖ novator, developing and demonstrating

ways of doing things differently and highlighting the value of being missed by options that are not adopted or considered.

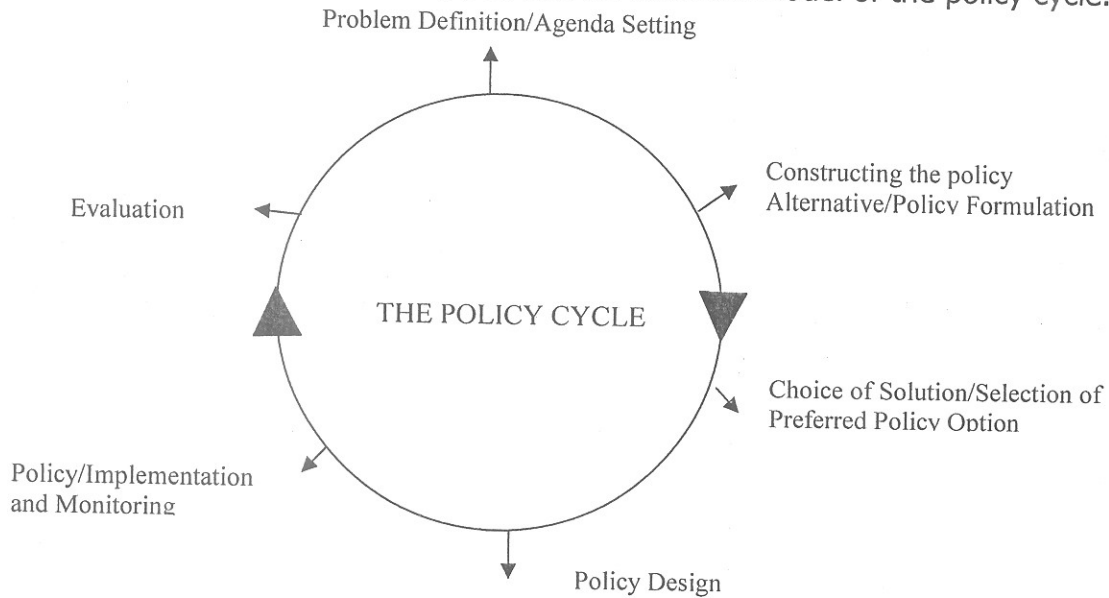
- ❖ Service provider, directly acting to fulfill a service need, especially to the marginalized and undeserved.
- ❖ Capacity builder, providing support to communities or other CSOs.

These according to Najam can operate during four different components of the policy process; in the agenda setting, policy development, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation phase. Keck and Sikkick (1998:41) also provided two axes on which to compare CSOs (tactics and motivations), in their case focusing on transnational advocacy networks. They identify four different tactics which groups can use to illicit political influence:

- Information politics: The ability quickly and credibly to generates politically usable information and move it to where it will have most impact.
- Symbolic politics: The ability to call up on symbols, actions or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away.

- Leverage politics: The ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence.
- Accountability politics: The effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies or principles.

Furthermore, there are extensive literatures on how CSOs can participate in the policy process (Hill 1997, Sabatier 1999, Sutton 1999). Policy process refers to the methods, conditions, procedures activities, interactions and stages by which policies are made (Ikelegbe, 1996:67). The idea of a policy process gives the impression of a sequential, orderly process of policy making. Any policy cannot be achieved in one fall swoop; it has to be gradual, chronological and sequential. Again, a process is a cycle of activities which tend to perpetuate itself from time to time (Tijani, 2004:165). The processes of stimulating the emergence, growth and survival of new policy must be chronological. The policy process is usually considered to include agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation and policy evaluation. We stress that policy-making is not linear and does not in reality work through these stages logically. Following Lasswell (1977), the most common approach to the study of public policy disaggregates the process into a number of functional components. These can be mapped into an idealized model of the policy cycle.



Source: Young and Quinn (2002) *Writing Effective Public Policy Papers: A Guide To Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest: LGI Publications Ltd.

It is a fact that policymaking may not in reality work logically through these stages, this model does provide a useful entry point for thinking about how CSOs may influence different part of the process. If policy processes tend to have similar functional elements, it is likely that CSOs will participate in their various aspects in different ways. It may well be that success in influencing an agenda, for example, often requires a different kind of approach than participating and influencing the implementation of policy.

For the purpose of this paper, the functions of the policy processes are simplified into four categories.

- ❖ Problem identification and agenda setting.
- ❖ Formulation and adoption.
- ❖ Implementation.
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluating (and reformation).

These four functions will be used to organize the literature in this section. In each part, we will map the specific issues that arise as CSOs attempt to influence or participate in different parts of the policy process. Problem identification and agenda setting refers to the awareness of and priority given to an issue or problem in order to introduce a problem to the policy agenda-or 'turn the problem into an issue' (Young and Quim 2002; 13) it is necessary to convince the relevant policy actors that the problem is important. For many CSOs, being part of setting the policy agenda allows them to play to their strengths. CSOs with practical experience are often in an excellent position to crystallize and articulate the problems facing the ordinary people with which they work (Pollard and Court 2005:21). CSOs can also be much proactive in creating policy opportunities. Falobi (2000) documents the contribution of Journalists against Aids, working in Nigeria to highlight the urgent need to address issues around the disease. The work was successful in identifying the problem to both policymakers and the general public, because of the way the group combined personal testimonies and micro-analysis-emphasizing both the gravity of the situation and the opportunity for action.

Influencing the formulation and adoption of policy is yet another functional area. For many CSOs, involvement in the formulation and adoption of policy is central to a mandate of "representing" the interests and view of the poor people. CSOs are often key in both outlining the different policy options and deciding between them. This role according to Pollard and Court (2005; 23) gives them status as 'democratic' actors. Some CSOs work as mediators, participating in the formulation of policy by influencing the process in which it is formed. While some moves towards participatory policy-making-involving local communities in decisions which will affect them – have had more influence 'outside the tent' than inside, where they were originally directed (ibid). Thus, some policy processes, explicitly require civil society to be involved in the formulation process. CSOs have often been critical agents in facilitating this.

CSOs can also participate in the implementation of policy. Many CSOs directly participate in the implementation of policy, being the primary agents responsible for instituting policy shift and making it a reality 'on the ground'. They (CSOs) may be commissioned as 'service providers' by governments or donors, or they may work independently (Pollard and Court 2005:25). CSOs can also provide valuable expertise to other agencies responsible for implementing policies and can at the same time offer technical advice on how policy can better be implemented. Participation of CSOs in the policy process, especially the implementation stage brings out three points. First, expertise from CSOs can help improve service delivery. Secondly, the sharing of experience on the ground- 'seeing is believing'- can

be very convincing for policy change. Thirdly, there seems to be a need for more effective ways to link implementation experiences with other parts of the policy process.

Finally, CSOs can monitor and evaluate policy. The effectiveness of CSOs participation in the monitoring and evaluation processes depends on two factors: whether they can have enough influence to make a sound assessment of policy; and whether use information to demonstrate their legitimacy in doing this. CSOs have a key role in making information on policy publicly available in an accessible format (Pollard and Court, 2005:3). Where they retain independence from the state, media organizations have often led the CSO community in this task placing policy within the public domain has historically been the main contribution of the media to democracy.

GROUP AND PUBLIC POLICY MAKING; THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

This section examines the Nigerian experience with "Group Theory". Here attempt is made to consider public policies, that have been adopted on behalf of certain powerful groups in Nigeria such as the National Council of Women Society (NCWS), Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, the Kaduna Mafia, the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) and Women In Nigeria (WIN).

In the first place, the decision to build the Kaduna Refinery (in Kaduna in the Northern part of the country), hundreds of kilometers away from the sources of crude oil down south, at a staggering cost of 500 million undervalued naira, appears to have been backed or influenced by the Kaduna Mafia (Edosa, 1997;111). So also certain "Northern elements" seems to have influenced the decision to install the Iron and Steel Industry in Ajaokuta in the North despite the fact that feasibility studies had revealed that there would be maximum benefits to the entire country if the enterprise were located in the Eastern part of Nigeria, near the source of its main raw material, iron ore (Awa, 1976; 83).

Moreover, the Kaduna Mafia confirmed the "Northern" hegemonic status in the Nigerian political system as well as proved that it is the sophisticated faction of the northern bourgeois establishment, (Takaya and Tyoden, eds, 1987). As gate-keepers of the North, they have had considerable success in providing a strong support base of federal powers, and, therefore, in influencing major national issues. According to Othman (1984:448) such issues as have been associated with them include;

the creation of 12 states in 1967; the consolidation of a northern grip on the military hierarchy; the redressing of the indigenization scheme's benefits in favour of the Northern bourgeois; the insistence on geographical balance as a criterion for Federal loans to local capitalists;.....

The group also achieved most success during the first era of President Olusegun Obasanjo's government, where many of its members were appointed to key positions of power and used its alliance to obtain patronage and disburse favor to friends and associates.

In addition, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in collaboration with the Arabs appears to have influenced the decision of the Babangida regime to 'smuggle' Nigeria into the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), as well as the sacking of Tom David West and Bolaji Akinyemi as ministers. Pen ultimately, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) seems to have been adopted on the influence or sponsorship of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and certain retired top military officers and civil servants, in order to promote, amongst others, their private business interests, and those of their foreign partners – under subtle but unrelenting promptings and general direction of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Edosa, 1997:113). In the same vein, MAN in 2002 successfully lobbied for compensations to member-companies affected by the Lagos bomb explosion.

Moreso, NCWS through its intense lobbying of policy makers influenced positively economic policies in favour of women. In 1961, NCWS through its member Chief (Mrs.) Wuraola Esan (a prominent politician) lobbied the Western Region House and the National Assembly to enact favourable economic policies in favour of women. In 1991, NCWS also lobbied Minister of Budget and National Planning to adopt favourable tax and budget provision to alleviate the conditions of women in Nigeria. This produced positive results as the announced tax relief measures favoured women.

MAN and ASUU are engaged in economic and policy advocacy with the ultimate aim of affecting the political life of the country and their members. The difference between the approaches of these two organizations lies in the ideological orientation. ASUU's activities center on broad national issues, and stood firmly against oppressive, undemocratic polices of the country (*asuunigeria.org*). While MAN activities revolve around liberal notions of improving the conditions of its members to provide them access to enabling environment for industrial development, growth and prosperity of the society at large (*manufacturersnigeria.org*).

Since the creation of MAN in 1971 up till date (2009), MAN had/has engaged in policy advocacy and policy interventions for its members. As we still see later, the immense human and material resources at its disposal has enabled it carry out its activities with relative ease. MAN has made giant strides in the areas of policy advocacy, business information and development as well as outright direct participation. Some of its achievements are listed below:

- ❖ MAN has successfully positioned itself as a leading business Association recognized and respected by Government.
- ❖ There is a very high level of consultation between the Federal Government and the Association such that the views of the Association are sought at the conception state of policy formulation.
- ❖ In the management of the economy, the relevance of MAN has been appreciated through invitations to serve on many committees set up by government and each organizations viz:

- Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting-Abuja 2003 Business Support Group
- Presidential Committee on Lagos Explosion Disaster Relief Fund.
- Specialized Committee of Stakeholders to Review the status of the Pre-shipment Inspection Scheme Preparatory to the introduction of Destination Inspection Scheme.
- House of Representatives Committee on World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements.
- Presidential Committee on Modalities for Engaging Nigerian Professionals in the Execution of Project.
- MAN-NPA Fast Track Delivery Committee on Consignment of Raw Materials
- Regional organizing Committee on 3rd EXOWAS Trade Fair
- National Organizing Committee on the 8th OAU Trade Fair
- ❖ Participated in the Reduction in, and adoption of base mechanisms for calculating Interest Rates.
- ❖ Intervened in the abolition of Dual Exchange rates.
- ❖ Policy advocacy to establish a linkage between the maximum Bank lending interest rate and the minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR) of the Central Bank of Nigeria. (*Manufacturersnigeria.org*).

Again, MAN has successfully lobbied for compensations to member-companies affected by the 2002 Lagos Bomb explosion disaster, mediating on behalf of members on issues directly affecting their customs, police, Port Authority and Local Government harassments, Liaison with Federal, States and Local Governments on behalf of members of specific problems affecting members' operations. Successfully advocated for the take-off of support institutions i.e. Bank of Industry (BOI), SMEDAN etc. to provide finance and Strategic Intervention for the revitalization of industries in Nigeria.

ASUU on its own part focused on assault on academic freedom throughout the 1980s and adopted strike and protest as a basic instrument. In 1980-1981, ASUU had a struggle with the Shagari Government. Its concerns were funding, salaries, autonomy and academic freedom, the brain drain, and the survival of the University system. It took debates on the direction and context of national economic, educational and other policies. Throughout the military period, ASUU waged its struggles around the survival of the university system – with three components – the conditions of service (salary and non-salary), funding and university autonomy/academic freedom; the defense of the right to education.

Not only that, its activities also covers broad national issues such as anti-military struggle, the struggles against military rule, the struggle against privatization, against the structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), and the World Bank's attempt to take over the universities, for example, the World bank 120 million dollars (US) loan under Babangida's military rule and the Nigerian Universities Innovation Project (NUSIP) during Obasanjo's regime; the struggle against the re-colonization of Nigeria and Debt peonage (*asuunigeria.org*).

Unlike MAN, ASUU has not made any appreciable in-road in influencing or participating in policy making in Nigeria. While ASUU advocates for freedom of academic or academic freedom, autonomy of universities, poor remuneration etc via communiqués, publications and organization of struggles, MAN in participating in policy making has witnessed in the change of centralized or isolated approach to policy process in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The method used for carrying out the study involves the collection of data by means of structured questionnaires. The subjects used in the study were members of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU)-Lagos State University Chapter, who were randomly selected. A total number of 200 members (male and female) of both ASUU and MAN, with an average age of 30 to 45 years were selected. In addition, majority of the respondents (95.4) % had formal university/polytechnic education.

The sampling design adopted is the random sampling method which is the most fundamental method of probability sampling. It uses the principle of randomization which is a procedure of giving every subject in a population an equal chance of being selected. The first step is to ensure that each individual in the population is listed once. The next step it to associate a number with each position on the list and once this is achieved, one can make use of some statistical procedure. The questionnaire which was the major instrument of data collection was constructed into five sections A, B, C, D, and E. Section A requested of the respondents background information.

Section B of the questionnaire requested for the respondents evaluation of the relationship between participation in public policy making and policy outcomes. Section C of the questionnaire requested of the respondents evaluation of the relationship between political system and participation of CSOs in public policy making. Section D of the questionnaire also requested for the respondents evaluation of the relationship between the size, finance, and organization of CSOs and the level of their participation in public policy making. Finally, section E of the questionnaire required the respondents to assess the techniques/methods employed in public policy making. The piece of data was collected using a five-scale, ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to strongly disagree" (1).

Administration of data collection instrument entails traveling to the corporate Headquarters of MAN at 77, Obafemi Awolowo Way, Ikeja and ASUU-LASU Secretariat, Ojo campus of the Lagos State University. At the corporate headquarters of MAN, the researcher met with officials of the organization (Economic Department) and informed them about his mission. Consequently, permission was granted. At the Lagos State University, Ojo campus, the researcher administered the questionnaire personally to members of the Academic staff. Of the 200 questionnaires administered, 196 were properly responded to and returned, while 4 questionnaires were not returned. Therefore, the analysis of data is based on 196 samples that returned their questionnaires.

Finally, based on the nature of questions posed to be analyzed, the most appropriate technique for data analysis used is simple percentage. The problems encountered in the process of generating relevant data for the purpose of this study includes; lack of resources (men, materials, time and machines); inaccessibility to respondents, attitudes of manufacturers to research, inability to administer personal interview and the inability of the respondents to distinguish between civil society organizations (CSOs) and civil liberty organizations (CLOs).

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected were presented and analyzed as shown below.

Table 1: Analysis of Response

Classification	ASUU	MAN	Total	%
Returned	99	97	196	98
Net Returned	01	03	04	2
Total	100	100	200	100

As shown in table 3 above, the analysis revealed 99 respondents in ASUU and 97 of them in MAN representing 98% provided answer to the questionnaire and returned them accordingly, while only 4 respondents representing 2% of the respondents failed to return the questionnaire. Therefore, data analysis will be based on 196 (One hundred and ninety-six) respondents (out of which ASUU accounts for 99, while MAN accounts for 97) returned the questionnaire.

Table 2: CSOs and Policy Participation

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	58	58.6	64	65.9
Undecided	7	7.1	31	31.9
Disagree	34	34.3	02	2.2
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

From Table 7, the responses indicated that 58.6% of the respondents in ASUU and 65.9% of the respondents in MAN affirm that CSOs participate in public policy making in Nigeria. Also, 34.3% of the respondents in ASUU as well as 32% in MAN think otherwise. While 7.1% and 2.2% of the respondents for both ASUU and MAN respectively, were undecided. The high scores indicate that the vast majority of the respondents are aware of the participation of CSOs in public policy making in Nigeria. Thus, it is possible to attribute this level of awareness to the respondents' educational background.

Table 3: Participation and Policy Outcomes

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	97	98.0	93	95.9
Undecided	2	2.0	4	4.1
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

From the perspective of the respondents as shown in the analysis above, participation in policy making can go a long way in shaping public policy outcome. 97 respondents in ASUU and 93 in MAN answered in the affirmative. While, 6 (2- ASUU and 4-MAN) of the respondents were undecided. However, for both ASUU and MAN, none of the respondents answered negatively. Again, the high scores have shown that participation is crucial at any stage of the policy process. This is because it affords the policy makers the opportunity to obtain information about public conditions, needs and desires.

Table 4: Centralized Approach as a Panacea for Policy Failures.

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	42	42.4	43	44.3
Undecided	28	28.3	36	37.1
Disagreed	29	29.3	18	18.6
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

The foregoing analysis reflects that 42 respondents in ASUU and a correspondent 43 of them in MAN attest to the statement that centralized approach to policy making is responsible for incessant policy failures in Nigeria, 29 (ASUU) and 18 (MAN) disagree. While 28 respondents in ASUU and 36 of them in MAN were undecided. The implication of these responses is that policy making in Africa and Nigeria in particular has continued to manifest in an autocratic manner.

Table 5: Bias of Political Leaders.

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	43	43.4	17	17.5
Undecided	38	38.4	50	51.5
Disagree	18	18.1	30	31.0
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

As the above table shows, the respondents in ASUU-43.4% believed that political leaders tends to favour some CSOs to the detriment of others in policy making in Nigeria and 17.5% in MAN corroborated this notion. Also 18.2% of the respondents in ASUU and 38.4% in MAN, disagree. While 38.4% in ASUU and an overwhelming 51.5% in MAN were undecided. The implication of these figures is that there is a tendency for the respondents in MAN to "behave out of character" or adjust their behaviour due to suspicious of our intention. This may however be attributed to the nature of relations between MAN and political leaders in Nigeria.

Table 6: Political System and CSOs Participation In Policy Making.

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	62	62.6	62	62.9
Undecided	31	31.3	20	20.6
Disagree	06	6.1	16	16.5
Total	99		97	

Source: Field survey, Oct/Nov 2006.

The data in respect of political system and participation of CSOs in public policy making revealed that, 62 of the respondents in ASUU and 61 of them in MAN agree that political system is related to participation of CSOs in public policy making in Nigeria, 06 of the respondents in ASUU and a corresponding 16 of them in MAN however disagree. While 31 (ASUU) and 20 (MAN) respondents representing 31.3% and 20.6% respectively were undecided. Conclusively, it is safe to assert that, political system is related to participation of CSOs in public policy making in Nigeria. What this implies is that whether in a democratic or military system of government, it is determine the level of CSOs participation. However, the level of CSOs participation in public policy making may be low even when the political system is democratic, this may be due to the prevailing socio-economic situation in a state.

Table 7: CSOs Collaboration and Responsibility of Government.

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	0	0	4	4.1
Undecided	16	16.2	51	52
Disagree	83	83.8	42	43.3
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

The data in respect of CSOs collaboration with government in public policy making and the responsibility of government shows that an overwhelming 83.8% of the respondents in ASUU and a corresponding 43.3% in MAN disagree with the statement that collaboration between government and CSOs in policy making can lead to a reduction in the responsibility of government. Again, the vast majority of the respondents in MAN 52.6% and 16.2% of them in ASUU were undecided. While a small minority of the respondents in that rather than lead

to a reduction in the responsibility of government, majority of the respondents in both ASUU and MAN believed that collaboration with CSOs will compliment the responsibility of government.

Table 8: CSOs, Government Collaboration and Citizens Interest.

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	0	0	0	0
Undecided	12	12.1	09	9.3
Disagree	87	87.9	88	90.7
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

As shown in Table 14, a vast majority of the respondents 87 representing 87.9% in ASUU and 88 consulting 90.7% in MAN argued negatively that public policies which results from the collaboration between government and CSOs tend to marginalize the interest of the citizens. Again, 12.1% and a corresponding 9.3% of the respondents in both ASUU and MAN respectively were however undecided. While none of the respondents in both ASUU and MAN affirm this statement positively. The implication of this is that CSOs tends to protect the interest of the citizens rather than marginalize their interest as this was the popular notion amongst scholars. This may be attributable to the fact that, the citizens placed a lot of importance on CSOs as having the capacity to protect their interest in the policy making process.

Table 9: Finance, Size and Political Culture As Impediment To CSOs Participation in Policy Making

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	49	49.5	26	26.8
Undecided	08	8.1	19	19.6
Disagree	42	42.4	52	53.6
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

Table 15 above reveal that 49(49.5)% of the respondents in ASUU and 26 (26.8%) in MAN affirm positively that factors like finance, size of the organization, political culture, have been known to be responsible for the low participation of CSOs in public policy making, 42(42.4)% of the respondents in ASUU and a corresponding 52(53.6)% of them in MAN however disagree. While, 08 (8.1)% of the respondents in ASUU as well as 19 (19.6)% of them in MAN were undecided. The high scores vary between that two organizations; hence it is difficult to conclude any of these factors have both responsible for the low participation of CSOs in policy making. Finance might have hindered ASUU and other CSOs in their policy advocacy, however, same may not be for MAN considering its huge financial resources as a manufacturing organization.

Table 10: Lobbying as Effective Strategy for Participation in Policy Making

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	92	92.9	87	89.7
Undecided	07	7.1	10	10.3
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

Table 19 above reveals a whopping 92.9% of the respondents in ASUU and a corresponding 89.7% of them in MAN affirms positively that lobbying or influencing policy makers is an effective strategy for CSOs to participate in policy making. While 7.1% in ASUU, along with 10.3% in MAN, were undecided. However, none of the respondents in both ASUU and MAN default this statement. Again, what this means is that lobbying or influencing policy makers is an effective strategy employed by CSOs in an attempt to participate in public affairs.

Table 11: Presentation of Evidence and Submission of Memoranda.

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	40	40.4	48	49.5
Undecided	19	19.2	33	34.0
Disagree	40	40.4	16	16.5
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

As shown in the analysis above, 40 representing 40.4% of the respondents in ASUU and 48 constituting 49.4 % in MAN attest that presentation of evidence and submission of memoranda by CSOs is a new dimension to their participation in public policy making in Nigeria. Another 40 representing 40.4% in ASUU and 16.5% in MAN, however differs. While 19.2% in ASUU, as well as 34.0% in MAN, were undecided. This disparity of response makes it difficult for us to arrive at an acceptable conclusion for both organizations.

Table 12: Representation of Group Interests as an Effective Strategy

Category	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Agree	67	67.7	71	73.2
Undecided	16	16.2	11	11.3
Disagree	16	16.1	15	15.5
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

The data in the analysis above shows that representative of group interest by CSOs is more comprehensive and effective in an attempt to step-up-their participation in policy making 67 representing 67.7% of the respondents in ASUU and 71 constituting 73.2% in MAN perceived this, 16 or 16.1% in ASUU and 15 or 15.5% in MAN however think otherwise. While 16 or 16.2% of the respondents are in ASUU, alongside 11 or 11.3% in MAN were undecided. Conclusively, it is safe to assert that representation of group interest is comprehensive and effective, because it provides the room for common interest and combine efforts with in effect protect individual interest.

Table 13: CSOs Participation and the Policy Process

OPTION	ASUU		MAN	
	F	%	F	%
Problem identification/ Agenda setting	21	21.2	48	49.5
Policy formulation stage	25	25.2	12	12.4
Implementation/monitoring stage	25	25.2	12	12.4
Evaluation/Reformulation stage	16	16.2	19	19.6
All of the above	15	15.2	08	8.2
Total	99		97	

Source: Field Survey, Nov/Dec 2009.

Respondents as shown in the analysis above vary in their submission. 21.2% of them in ASUU as well as 49.5% in MAN believed that CSOs can better participation at the problem identification/agenda setting stage, 25.2% in ASUU and 12.4% in MAN however posited that, it is during policy formulation stage. Again, 16.2% in ASUU and implementation/monitoring stage, while 22.2% in ASUUs and 10.3% in MAN argued that it is during evaluation/reformulation stage that this occurs. However, 15.2% of the respondents in ASUU alongside 8.2% in MAN affirmed that CSOs whether encouraged or not can participate effectively at all stage of the policy process.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study focused on the participation of CSOs in public policy making (A case of study ASUU and MAN) using variables such as political system, centralized approach, finance, size, organization of civil groups, participation, policy outcomes, policy actors, political collaboration, literacy level, international coalition, lobbying , campaigning, presentation of evidence, representation of group etc.

The raison deter for the study is to examine the participation of CSOs in public policy making and ascertain whether these variables are facilitators or hindrances in the participant of CSOs in the policy process.

The study reveals that majority of the CSOs member/officials are in their middle ages. The logical conclusion that one can draw from this is that their wisdom, experience and vitality have been brought to bear in their participation in policy making. Also worthy of note is the fact that CSOs in Nigeria consist of highly educated individuals who, Ipso-facto, are adequately equipped with various grades of qualifications and one can conclude that the quality of there is participation will be greatly enhanced by their innovativeness,

independence of thought and capacity for sound judgement. While research has earlier shown and our findings has corroborated the importance scholars to participation in public policy making as a basic democratic right of the people, where such exist our analysis has shown that, it is granted at the mercies of the political leaders. In conclusion, it is safe to argue that CSOs in opposition to the state, find it difficult to participate in policy making in Nigeria.

The pervasive nature of centralized approach to policy making and its attendant policy failures has been reflected in the ever increasing demand (both locally and nationally) for CSOs participation in policy making. It would however appear that centralized approach to policy importance the citizenry placed on CSOs as having the capacity influence policy-making and in the fact that CSOs participation will not lead to a reduction in the responsibility of government. It is also interesting to note that finance, size, organization of civil society groups, literacy level, political collaboration, international coalition, lobbying, campaigning, and presentation of evidence may not have been responsible for the low participation of CSOs in policy making. This study is however aware of the surrounding economic and political system within which CSOs operated and the techniques adopted in an attempt to set-up their participation in policy making.

Conclusively, it is safe to argue that even though progress has been made by CSOs to step up the their participation in public policy making in Africa and Nigeria in particular, such efforts as demonstrated by this study have little or no impact on policy outcomes, this is due largely to the fact that, policy making is dominated by the interest of the minority and the clamour for CSOs participation in the policy process is for their parochial interest and not for the public good.

In view of the findings of this study and the far reaching conclusions or submissions, it is therefore recommend:

- There is need for governments (local, state and federal) of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular to draw from the wisdom, experience and vitality of CSOs in policy making. This will not only ensure CSOs participation in decision making but also provide valuable sources of quality policy, criticism and input in the political system.
- Political leaders and policy makers should endeavor to preserve and protect the basic democratic right of the citizenry, by opening up the political space for non-state actors to participate in policy making and not encouraging unrepresentative but pliable groups (often referred to as "*a cabal*" in Africa) to come forward.
- The establishment of a forum by government which enables equal partnership between CSOs and Government in the conceptualization, formulation, planning, implementation and monitoring of public policies and programmes. This forum will provide a platform for adequate articulation and aggregation of interest in the political setting
- CSOs on their part should work in partnership with government to formulate policies that are in the interest of the public, so as not to loose the importance the citizens

placed on them as having the capacity to influence policy matters. This will in turn revive the dead participatory approach to policy making.

- For partnership to be effective, CSOs should adhere to a code of good conduct vis-a-vis their adherence to patriotism and accountability for citizen's right through access to policy making platform; as this will encourage the emergence of grassroots CSOs to influence policy at this level.
- Government should remove all legal and bureaucratic constraints by opening up the political space for non-state actors to participate in policy making. As such government will be seen as facilitators and regulators rather than a provider of goods and services to meet the basic needs of the people by involving CSOs in the policy process, agenda setting and service delivery as well as the recognition of CSOs as partners in development.

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