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## **Part II**



# The Oduche Complex and the Public Policy Environment in Africa: A Nigerian Case Study

Remi Okeke

## Abstract

*The Oduche complex as an analytical construct depicts the contradictions that characterize the weltanschauung of the African postcolonial elite. It is attributable to Professor Damian Opatá.<sup>1</sup> But Opatá also derived his germinal classification from “Arrow of God,” one of the influential works of Chinua Achebe, easily regarded as the father of African literature. I use the Oduche complex as an analytical template in this paper to study public policy articulation in Africa and the attendant public policy environment. I use Nigeria (the most populous country in the continent) as case study to interrogate the problem of impotence that characterizes public policy in Africa. The study is centrally, critically concerned with the issue of why public policies fail in Nigeria and Africa.*

**Keywords:** Oduche complex, public policy, policy environment, Africa, Nigeria.

## Introduction

Africa is a troubled continent. The other continents on the planet possess their own shares of distress. But what makes the African trajectory of trouble highly worrisome is the character of its leadership. This leadership deficiency essentially leads to a public policy environment that gives rise to ineffectual policies. What, then, gives rise in the first place to this type of public policy milieu, which consequently produces ineffectuality? This is the central research question in this study. This paper proceeds to examine the possibility/plausibility of the Oduche complex—“a term that refers to the phenomenon of postcolonial subjects who through their immersion in western ideological frames and structures betray their own culture, even without intending to do so”—as the cataclysmic factor in the ineffectualness of public policies in

Africa. We use Nigeria, the most populous country in this region of the world, as the focus of the study.<sup>2</sup>

The question may arise: why Nigeria? The reason was articulated by Adebani and Obadare, who have contended that “Nigeria offers a magnificent template for examining the chronic schizophrenia that characterizes the African postcolonial state and the resulting social (de)formations that (re)compose, and are, in turn, (re)composed by, the state.”<sup>3</sup> Adebani and Obadare further argue that “Nigeria ironically contains perhaps the greatest combination and concentration of human and natural resources that can be (re)mobilized in creating an African power state with a capacity to stand at the vortex, if not the centre, of continental revival and racial renewal.”<sup>4</sup>

But principally, ineffective public policies are functions of frail leadership(s). On the other hand, weak policies (particularly in the case of Africa) engender the environment that the same untoward leadership exploits in perpetuating its tragic performance on the polity. The continuing result of this in the overall African context is a persistent incidence of mass poverty. The World Bank thus posits that half of the extremely poor persons on earth live in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>5</sup> This is an indictment in generic terms of African leadership. The Copenhagen World Summit on Development cited by Nwokeoma gave an absolute conception of poverty as a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.<sup>6</sup> It depends not only on income but also on access to services.<sup>7</sup> The commonness of extreme poverty in Africa, in other words, implies the dearth of minimal conditions for the meeting of basic human needs by the African masses. It is indicative of the bankruptcy of public policies in the continent.

Public policies are furthermore conceptually translatable to pro-people policies. In pure empirical paradigms as well, such courses of action should constitute the consummate mechanisms for solving the problems that commonly confront a country’s citizenry. Thus, when the policies are bad, the experience of the populace with the state and the impact of the state on the lives of the common people continue to remain bewildering. Hence, what the modern state means to the typical African has continued to be immensely confounding. Consequently, public policies in the

continent have continued to nurture and sustain in office some curious breeds of ostensible leaders.

Let us take a few examples: Mobutu Sese Seko's sleaze in Zaire, Robert Mugabe's brutalities in Zimbabwe, Laurent Gbagbo's love for power in Côte d'Ivoire and the earlier epicurean ways of Felix Houphouët Boigny, the maladies in Uganda of Idi Amin and Yoweri Museveni, the dictatorships of Marcias Nguema and his nephew Teodoro Obiang Nguema in Equatorial Guinea, Hastings Kamuzu Banda in Malawi, Abdoulaye Wade in Senegal, Jean-Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic, etc. This list of so-called leaders who were unable to establish a dichotomy between private and public policies appears to be endless. We still recall the shenanigans of Blaise Compaore in Burkina Faso, Al Hadji Yahya Jammeh's repressions in the Gambia, Paul Biya's impositions in the Cameroons, Idriss Déby's dubious methodologies in Chad and the civilian dictatorship of Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria.<sup>8</sup>

It is consequently postulated in this work (in the context of the Nigerian case study) that the comparative ineffectualness of public policies in Africa stems from the Oduche complex, which invariably characterizes the worldview of the African postcolonial leader.

## **I: Conceptual Elucidation(s)**

### ***The Oduche Complex***

*Arrow of God* is a fictional depiction of the victory won by the Christian-British colonial culture over the African traditions of the Igbos in Southeast Nigeria. The story's locale is the imaginary community of Umuaro. Ulu is one of the central deities in Umuaro. Idemmili is another god of central influence in the community. The Chief Priest of Ulu is Ezeulu, while the Chief Priest of Idemmili is Ezeidemmili. The other deities in the work include Eru, Udo and Ogwugwu. The unanimity of the circumstances surrounding the institution of the Ulu god, by the six federating villages of Umuaro, is clearly spelled out in the *Arrow of God* narrative. Despite the unrepentant detractions of Ezeidemmili against Ezeulu, we take it that Ulu has a superior position relative to Idemmili and the other deities in the area. For example, it

is Ezeulu that announces the date of the new yam festival. Ezeulu was therefore a central character in the relations between the British colonial administration (and its Christian cultural accompaniment) and the people of Umuaro.

Ezeulu sent one of his sons, Oduche, to join the adherents of the new Christian religion, which by implication created the opportunity for the boy's exposure to Western educational influence(s). With time, the new religion, its educational component and the colonial administration unexpectedly became increasingly dominant over the worldviews of the local population. This threatened Ezeulu's religious and secular leadership position among his people. The turn of events thus made Ezeulu bemoan his decision of sending Oduche to embrace the new British colonial-Christian culture. In Achebe's work, Ezeulu expresses his disappointment to Oduche in this manner:

I called you as a father calls his son and told you to go and be my eye and ear among these people . . . I called you by name and you came here . . . and I sent you to see and hear for me. I did not know at that time that I was sending a goat's skull. Go away; go back to your mother's hut. I have no spirit for talking now. When I am ready to talk I shall tell you what I think. Go away and rejoice that your father cannot count on you. I say go away from here, lizard that ruined his mother's funeral.<sup>9</sup>

We can gradually begin to approach the scenario depicted by "your father cannot count on you," as being analogous to "your constituents/your country/your continent cannot count on you." Opatata consequently declares:

This experience of Ezeulu, traumatizing no doubt, has led to the phenomenon I choose to call the Oduche complex. This simply refers to the phenomenon of postcolonial subjects who through their immersion in Western ideological frames and structures betray their own culture, even without intending to do so. This betrayal comes about in the process of the dynamic interplay of self, new self, and context. Sometimes it masks as a form of character objectivification and actualization of the individual's original imaginary. It is a psychological problem in the process of people's adaptation to emerging ideas that impose themselves in an alien environment.<sup>10</sup>

In effect, when Ezeulu sent his son, Oduche, to learn the ways of the white man, his action was significantly informed by his hope that Oduche would attain a position of adding value to the systems of his own people. But Oduche was yet unable to do anything in this regard. In fact, he acted negatively against his people. Oduche's only notable act in the entire work was the attempt he made to kill the sacred python, an act forbidden by his own culture, by locking the thing up in a wooden box. Hence, betrayal of one's own culture (one's own people) is the other operative phrase in the Oduche complex.

The betrayer's immersion in western ideological frames and structures is also interwoven with this complex. Critically, betrayal could occur even without the betrayer intending to do so and can thus be a pitiable character. There is the inevitability of the interplay of self, new self and context, under which the betrayer operates. The struggles for character "objectivification" and actualization of the individual's original imaginations are also understandable in the circumstances that the postcolonial African leader/official (i.e., bureaucrat) finds himself. But it is also in these processes that he betrays his culture, his country or his continent. As posited by Opata above, the Oduche complex is describable as a psychological problem, thereby according it the possibilities of personalized hues. But for leaders and public officials, it also usually entails immense undesirable social consequences.

Accordingly, the public official that has been bitten by the bug of the Oduche complex would regale his local audience with concepts such as public strategic planning but leaves unaddressed such issues as public accountability. Public strategic planning would under such circumstances achieve no objective. For the postcolonial political leader, who is smitten with the Oduche complex, he becomes and remains a caricature of his peoples' expectations and at the end of the day leaves behind records of political tragedies and monumental leadership infamies as legacies.

### ***Public Policy and the Policy Environment***

Policy is understood as a set of plans that is used as a basis for making decisions.<sup>11</sup> Policy has also been described by Adamolekun as course-setting, involving decisions of the widest ramifications



and longest time perspective in the life of an organization.<sup>12</sup> Ibi-etanadds, however, that the views of Adamolekun only seem to capture the essence of policy when it is not delineated into public and private. In other words, by focusing on “the life of an organization” this definition fails to recognize that there is “private policy”<sup>13</sup> In this study, we are of course squarely interested in public policy. We have only touched upon the wider concept of policy and its public-private dichotomies as a logical prelude to our reification of public policy. In consideration of the foregoing and other sources, it is opined in this work that public policies refer to planned actions of government.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, Ibi-etan sees public policy as a specific guide to governmental action and programs of action in solving specific societal problems.<sup>15</sup> The government, therefore, uses public policy to impact all sectors of the society, and the effectiveness of this impact depends critically on the level of rationality infused into the public policy-making process.<sup>16</sup> Public policies are what public administrators implement.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, public administration is conceivable as a set of activities with the purpose of realizing the policy objectives of government.<sup>18</sup> According to Henry, there are manifold approaches to public policy, and it is this multifariousness of approaches that constitutes the environment of public policy.<sup>19</sup> Because the atmosphere (environment) we now talk about is created and controlled by people, inclemency in the public policy processes in Africa is attributable to people as opposed to the vagaries of the elements.

## **II: Anatomy of the Public Policy Environment in Nigeria**

### ***Educational Policy Articulation and the Consequences***

By general consent, education is the fundamental cultural process that prepares an individual to live, work, function and survive in a given society.<sup>20</sup> Education is also conceivable as the initiation of the individual into activities or modes of thought and conduct considered worthwhile by the society; an educated man is accordingly not only knowledgeable, but is also committed to the ideas and norms of his society.<sup>21</sup> Education, therefore, is an instrument of cultural transmission. It is a tool used in the transfer from one

generation to another of cultural antecedents and cultural preferences in a given society.

Consequently, while a man may be considered educated by the standards of one cultural setting, by the standards set under another cultural milieu he becomes uneducated. This fundamental truism about education is seemingly not recognized in the educational policy contexts of Nigeria. Because of this, products of the Nigerian educational system reveal cultural contradictions. Funke Egbemode (cited in Onuoha) has thus raised the following issues, which are currently as germane as when they were first raised in 2008:

What kind of country plants tomatoes and does not have plan for tinned tomatoes? What kind of nation has fisheries everywhere, but imports sardine and geisha? What kind of country plants corn in all its regions and imports canned sweet corn? Which other country do you know where cows obstruct vehicular traffic in all its state capital cities but still imports corned beef? Which nation has fertile land to plant all the food it needs to feed its citizens but leaves it to weeds? Welcome to Nigeria.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, as of the last quarter of 2016, highways in Nigerian capital cities were still blocked by cattle.<sup>23</sup> The country with all these ungainly tendencies is a country where educational policies are egregiously at variance with cultural realities. In such countries, the educational policies are articulated for foreign economies, not the domestic market. When youths graduate from the disarticulated educational institutions, they remain unemployed. Fashola laments further:

If ever there was a country of immeasurable employment opportunities, that country is Nigeria. More than any other country of our population and size, we have houses, roads and bridges to build. Looking around us, it cannot be hard to see that we urgently require engineers, technicians and artisans in their hundreds of thousands. With acres and acres of land to farm, we obviously need trained agricultural scientists and semi-skilled farm workers. And with such a vast network of inland waterways and contiguity to the sea, we could do with men skilled in modern methods of fishing and fish farming. Indeed . . . we have such an enormous amount of work to do, and we have such alarming shortages of all kinds

of professionals—teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, firemen, waste management personnel, administrators, etc, who are ready, able and willing to work. It is therefore a worrisome contradiction that in a country with so much to do and to build we can talk of unemployment.<sup>24</sup>

The critical issues here hinge on the educational system. The central issues are the educational policies. The problem with the policies derives from the worldview of the policymakers/political leaders. There seems to be an immense dichotomy between cultural realities and the curricula of the various schools. Consequently, while the indigenous Nigerian pharmaceutical companies and pharmacist-products of Nigerian educational institutions may not be able to create employment opportunities for Nigerian youths, the country's citizens distribute Chinese pharmaceutical products throughout their own nation. This occurs under strenuous and exploitative multi-level marketing arrangements and sustains the Chinese economy more than the Nigerian economic system.

The Oduche policymakers in education thus permit their home front to stagnate while they claim that there are semblances of educational policies in place. Let us relate this to the wider African context. The “education” obtained by the seemingly educated African, under the Oduche-inflicted postcolonial direction, paradoxically throws him (the African) into deeper poverty. Consequently, the more expansions recorded in educational opportunities, the wider the increases in abject poverty on the continent. This scenario is further interwoven with the incidence of the poverty of ideas that cyclically breeds tragic political leadership in Africa. Some of these appalling political characters have already been identified in the introductory section of this essay.

### ***Economic Policy Framework and the Attendant Immobility***

Okoli and Onuigbo have argued that “the role of public policy in promoting innovation and effective knowledge management for economic growth lies essentially in aggregating, articulating and packaging sound plans to stimulate innovative diffusion, knowledge acquisition (storage and dissemination) and sustainable economic growth, within the contexts of politico-organizational and socio-cultural settings.”<sup>25</sup> It is indeed here that the quagmire

occurs. When policymaking is marred by the Oduche complex, public personnel cannot deliver on this tall order. Such public officers may appear dark in their skins (as Africans) but their cognitive capacities have all been whitewashed. In this condition, their bag of tricks remains inexhaustible. According to Onuoha, therefore, “Nigeria has experimented with all kinds of ideologies and economic management theories to move the economy forward to no avail.”<sup>26</sup>

In the Nigerian setting, one of those economic stunts that easily come to mind is the claim by the policymakers that they had “rebased” the Nigerian economy.<sup>27</sup> While the Oduche policymakers shouted *alleluia*, Nigerian citizens experienced hunger, starvation, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, collapse of medical and educational infrastructure, dilapidated roads, unpaid salaries of workers, kidnapping, terrorist activities and massive economic insecurity. The Oduche policymakers’ economic policy framework, which is alien to Nigerian citizens, is usually embedded in “visions,” referring to the policy goal dates, either Vision 2010 or 20-2020 (claiming Nigeria would become one of the twenty leading nations by the year 2020). Only the editorial teams that produced these documents can attempt an explanation of what the dreams are all about, and on the bases of these “visions”; the visioners are invited to all parts of the planet for international awards honoring their visioning wizardry.

The next generation of policymakers will undoubtedly discard the existing visions and formulates its own prophecies. Where it was previously axiomatic that figures do not tell lies, the figures of these managers of Nigeria’s visions are templates of incredulity. They will show you the number of roads they have constructed, the number of houses they have built for the masses, schools they have built, hospitals, factories, etc., all on television. The only elements they have yet to show in the media are the people for whom they have created employment. And it must be painful for them that they cannot display such counterfeits. Do they not claim to have provided jobs for about 3 million citizens a year? Mathew Hassan Kukah, the cerebral Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese in Nigeria, asserts:

Our projected growth has often been measured by what I call  
PowerPoint civilization . . . Discovered by the United States

military, we are daily inundated with dazzling, mesmerizing and psychedelic slides that project growth in road and railway mileages, megawatts and kilowatts of electricity which never leave the screens. Billions of dollars later, the consultants pick up their briefcases and return to Washington or London, leaving us with more death traps and darkness.<sup>28</sup>

In their Oduche complex, the Nigerian policy actors and their expatriate consultants understand each other. And although the consultants equally understand their local needs at home, the Nigerian policy actors are incidentally not fully knowledgeable about their own local realities. Between them and the Nigerian masses, there remains a terrible chasm. Hence, to their other portrait of Nigeria as an emerging market, Kukah responds: “Is there really and truly an emerging market in Nigeria? If so, where is the market emerging from and what is its destination? Furthermore, what are we marketing and who is our target?”<sup>29</sup> We respond to Kukah’s positions as follows: We are marketing economic immobility.

Hence, the Nigerian system was proclaimed the strongest economy in Africa in April 2014. But by August 2016, this same economy was officially declared by its Nigerian visioning managers to be in a recession.<sup>30</sup> Nigerian citizens were literally dying of hunger and starvation. In the World Bank’s position that half of the world’s poor were in Africa, Nigeria features prominently, since it is the most populous country on the African continent. We argue here that the critical character of Nigeria’s boom and bust economy, which feeds the incendiary poverty in Africa, is tainted by the Oduche complex. In this setting, public officials are profoundly enamored by such “redolent” economic terminologies as “rebasement of the economy” and “increases in GDP,” while the reality on the ground reflects incredible increases in poverty and starvation.

### *A Consideration of the Agricultural Sector*

According to Madukwe, “Nigeria’s official farm policy (even after independence) concentrated attention on export commodities, in the belief that food production activities (which bordered on the indigenous knowledge and welfare of the farmers) should take care of themselves without any governmental intervention.”<sup>31</sup> This is, of course, inaction as policy. Maduekwe’s contribution (an inaugural lecture at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, delivered April

29, 2008) was actually in the area of agricultural extension services. He further remonstrates that in contradistinction to genuine research in agricultural extension as a major driver of agricultural extension practice and policy, the so-called findings of the conducted studies rather blame the farmer for the deficiencies in the agricultural extension sector, referring to the farmers as “illiterate,” “conservative” and “peasant.” “The broader and indeed more relevant issues, such as institutions, policy, markets and consumer-food preferences,” Madukwe continues, “were rarely addressed.”<sup>32</sup>

We contend that these references to the farmers as illiterate, conservative and peasant were typical Oduche tendencies that have not made food cheaper in Nigeria (nay in Africa) since independence in 1960. Ibietan further agrees with Madukwe that “the first Nigerian republic (1960-1966) was almost inseparable from the colonial era in the sense that the agricultural policy was geared towards the cultivation of export crops; thus it can be persuasively argued that there was a continuation of the British agricultural and rural development policy in this postcolonial period.”<sup>33</sup> It was indeed an export-oriented policy that apparently met the needs of the erstwhile colonizing metropolitan center, under the watch of the ostensibly independent policymaking Oduches. Ibietan has presented highlights of the agricultural (and rural development) policies of the different Nigerian regimes since independence in 1960, which show that agricultural policies have led to nowhere in particular in the Nigerian nation.<sup>34</sup>

In summary, Ibietan submits that “time will reveal the justification of these programmes/projects, upon which government believes that the Nigerian agricultural and rural development sector would be taken to the next level.”<sup>35</sup> But as we wait for time to reveal the justification of the programmes and projects, it is opined in this work that the Oduche complex contributed immensely to the formulation and consequent implementation of the attendant agricultural policies. In the Oduche-tainted worldview of the agricultural policymakers in Nigeria, whatever that would take the agricultural sector to the next level must conform to international standards. In the meantime, the food on their table, whenever they are at home in Nigeria, comes from the farms of the “illiterate, conservative and peasant farmers.” Each year, they create (with their mouths only) “at least one million jobs,” yet unemployment persists.

### *A Focus on the Housing Sector in Nigeria*

According to Dikenwadike:

The aims and objectives of the national housing policy in Nigeria are: to establish a two-tier institutional arrangement for the housing finance system with the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria as the regulatory apex institution; to involve and encourage the private sector in establishing primary mortgage institutions that would mobilize house-hold savings for long-term lending, and to promote a rational evolution of institutional structures, which would in turn accelerate or speed up the development of financial intermediation within the housing delivery system.<sup>36</sup>

Dikenwadike further highlights that the Mortgage Institutions Decree (1989) in Nigeria was promulgated to permit private initiatives in the establishment of primary mortgage institutions (PMIs). The PMIs are consequently empowered to mobilize savings and lend the proceeds as long-term loans to individuals for the purpose of buying, building or renovating an existing house. The National Housing Policy, the NHF, was established by Decree No.3 of 1992 mainly to address the constraints of the mobilization of long-term funds for housing development, and to ensure that every Nigerian has access to housing loans at affordable rates of interest.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, according to Ibimilua and Ibitoye, the economic liberalization policy of Babangida's (military) administration (1985-1993) supported the participation of the private organization in housing delivery.<sup>38</sup> This was followed by the promulgation of the Urban and Regional Planning Decree 88 of 1992 as well as the National Housing Fund (NHF) Decree No 3 of 1992. The NHF was saddled with the responsibility of ensuring continuous flow of funds for housing construction and delivery.<sup>39</sup> Ibimilua and Ibitoye further highlight:

The policy of "housing for all in the year 2000" was formulated and rigorously pursued, but it was besieged by administrative bottlenecks which made the policy objective not to be realized by the year 2000 (and even till date). Nevertheless, in 2002, the Housing and Urban Development Policy was formulated. This policy was meant to correct the

inconsistencies of the Land Use Act and to allow land banking and ownership to operate in a free market economy.<sup>40</sup>

Other studies also have made references to some other Nigerian national housing policies, particularly the housing policies of 2006 and 2012.<sup>41</sup> However, an objective observation would reveal that between all the decrees and policies and programmes, the difference has been similar to the difference between six and half a dozen (no difference). The major aim of a housing policy is to solve housing problems.<sup>42</sup> We are in very specific terms making reference to the provision of shelter for human beings, ensuring through state policies that the citizenry in a country do not predominantly reside in shanties and slums. It has therefore been disclosed as follows, by Enoghase and others:

Nigeria has been grappling with [a] huge housing deficit for the better part of the last century. The turn of the new century, however, has been a story [of] from bad to worst. The country's housing shortfall has been put between 16 million units and 17 million units. Today, it is ironic that Nigeria with a population of about 170 million people is currently facing a national housing deficit of about 17 million units, and requires a minimum of [an] additional one million housing units per annum to reduce the national deficit in order to avert a housing crisis in the country.<sup>43</sup>

At this intersection of the study, let us highlight that lack of access to shelter is a major and critical index of poverty, which is a titanic problem in Africa. We consequently contend that all the wordy and academic designs of the national housing policies in Nigeria are replaceable by a single national housing agenda. This agenda could, for example, set yearly targets for each local government council in the country on the number of housing units it must deliver to the national housing grid. Rural local councils could deliver housing units, tailored to the size of their pockets, while urban-based and affluent local government councils could deliver housing prototypes, tailored to the tastes of their affluent denizens. The looming housing crisis in the Nigerian nation invariably translates to an acute indictment of public policies in Africa and a terrible commentary on the worldviews of the formulators and the implementers of such policies.



Okoli and Onuigbo strongly argue that a public policy's effectiveness in addressing and finding a solution for a public issue depends critically on the key players (policymakers and formulators) and their professional competence, intellectual endowment, skills and knowledge, personalities, ability to subordinate their personal interests to public interest, and political and religious affiliations, and further, that all these variables acting individually and/or collectively on policymaking, determine the rationality and, therefore, effectiveness of any public policy.<sup>44</sup>

Invariably, if the key players in the formulation of a Nigerian national housing policy are largely driven by an Oduche complex, a consummate national housing agenda will remain an illusion. Thus, despite symbolic architectural displays in urban centers, many Nigerian citizens still reside in squalid quarters in the peripheries—locations unworthy of human occupation. This is simply because the worldview of the housing policymakers has continued to be tainted by the Oduche complex. They see national housing as being synonymous with Western-styled structures. In the process, neither the Western-styled structures nor the locally desirable types are provided to the citizenry. Everybody, then, has to build his or her own house. And even so, profound shortages remain.

### **III: The Sociocultural Setting of Policymaking and the Aftermath**

The ambivalences of the Oduche complex manifest most clearly when viewed through the sociocultural lens. The critical issues here border on whether policies embody what the people want or merely encompass what the policymakers think is good for the people. The problematic issues are: Who determines what the people want, and how does one select what is in the ultimate interest of the people? The sociocultural milieu of public policy may appear innocuous, but it is deeply central to what happens in other areas. Let us look at some examples.

Perceptive observers of Nigeria would discover that more and more numbers of Nigerian citizens (even adults) are learning or practicing imported accents. This has nothing to do with if they trained abroad or even currently reside in such foreign lands. The point is that these are the policymakers on Nigerian

soil, enunciating policies for Nigerian citizens. The issue is that in a contradictory postcolonial setting, these citizens still want to speak like the former colonial masters of the distant past epoch. But when Nigerian nationalists were fighting for Nigeria's independence, they did not copy the white man in speech style and were able to communicate with their Nigerian stakeholders.

With specific reference to cultural festivals, the new brand of Nigerian policymakers prefers street carnivals (copied from other cultures) to indigenous African masquerade festivals. Masquerades are considered demonic by these Oduche-influenced policymakers; however, they apparently do not consider it demonic for near-naked men and women to parade through the city during such street carnivals. Further, these "demonic" masquerades have helped regulate social conduct, rendering public corruption, hired assassins, kidnapping for ransom, terrorism, prostitution and all the other demonic social evils that characterize contemporary Africa completely inconceivable. Hence, having conquered the sociocultural setting, the Oduche-tainted public official culturally belongs to nobody but the policies that he formulates negatively impact almost everyone.

#### **IV: The Oduche Complex and the Policy Environment in Africa: A Summative Thesis**

We return now to *Arrow of God* and to the thesis of the tragedy of Ezeulu (the Chief Priest of Ulu) and the impotency of the god, Ulu, which could not save its Chief Priest from the disasters that ended with his ignominious death. Ulu was cast in the novel as the god who founded the Umuaro community and always protected it.<sup>45</sup> However, as the plot of this African classic thickened; Ezeulu (the Chief Priest of Ulu) took various actions against the desires of his people, ostensibly to please Ulu.

For instance, it was the responsibility of Ezeulu to announce the date of the new yam festival. It was only the marking of this feast day that signaled the commencement of harvesting of yams by the people from their individual farms. There were twelve symbolic yams that Ezeulu officially consumed (one yam per month) at the end of which he would announce the date of the celebration. However, while Ezeulu was incarcerated by the white man for his refusal to respond to the colonial officer's summons, three

of the yams were not eaten. Ezeulu decided not to call the festival on the grounds that the yams were not yet completely eaten and he did not want to incur the wrath of Ulu in such circumstances. This prompted hunger and starvation for the people, as no farmer would then dare to harvest yams.

It later became evident that Ulu was an impotent god who had nonetheless led its Chief priest to an ultimate failure of leadership. We underscore the fact that Ezeulu went against his people on several occasions, in his policymaking and in his intransigencies and ambivalences.

Secondly, Ezeulu sent Oduche to be his eye and ear among the people with the new Christian culture, partly because he saw the possibility of a superior way of life emerging from the white man's new religion. In Achebe's text, Ezeulu opined to Oduche:

The world is changing. I do not like it. But I am like the bird, *eneke-nti-oba*. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wing, he replied, "Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching." I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place.<sup>46</sup>

The above were the words of an ostensibly reliable, visionary policy thinker. Therefore, part of the tragedy of Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* is that his vision was subsequently impaired. Encountering this in Achebe's work, one might think that it merely referred to the real, physical impairment of Ezeulu's vision. Hence, Achebe had posited that Ezeulu did not like to think that his sight was no longer as good as it used to be, and that someday he would have to rely on someone else's eyes as his grandfather had done when his sight failed.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the text implies that due to the impairment of his vision in figurative terms, Ezeulu was unable to keep abreast of the trajectories of the new culture. More importantly, he was unable to successfully monitor and mentor Oduche—an indication of leadership failure. It is so contended in this work because we see through Achebe that:

At first Oduche did not want to go to church. But Ezeulu called him to his *obi* and spoke to him as a man would speak to

his best friend and the boy went forth with pride in his heart. He had never heard his father speak to anyone as equal.<sup>48</sup>

Hence, at the onset of Oduche's journey to the new culture, Ezeulu had an influential position over him. Speaking to the boy as an equal provided a great leadership template with deep potentials. Oduche was not abducted by the missionary invaders, but went because of Ezeulu's bidding. If he were unable to bring home his father's share of what he saw as the benefits of the new culture, Ezeulu would share the blame. The Oduche complex therefore indicts leadership at the super-ordinate level. The Gordian knot truly arises when the super-ordinate leadership position is also marked by the Oduche complex, which typifies the public policy-making environment in Africa. It is therefore this pervasiveness of the Oduche complex that debilitates Nigerian and African public policies in empirical terms. As Nnadozie further contended:

Public policies are instruments of the state through which the government addresses the problems and needs of the people in any country. In the course of doing this, the country moves forward . . . the society develops. The basic functions of government in any society, namely, the protection of life and property and finding solutions to the basic needs and problems of the people are usually done through the instrumentality of public policies. Any government that fails to do these twin duties is not worthy of the name.<sup>49</sup>

Has government in the Nigerian state been worthy of its name? Have other governments in Africa been worthy of their names? In the specific case of Nigeria, there has been a continuing ineffectual battle between government(s) and the harbingers of corruption in the country. This gives public policy in the Nigerian nation-state a highly colorless and leaderless character. Furthermore, if governments in Africa have been worthy of their names, why has poverty remained a central characteristic of the continent and her citizenry?

### **V: The Leadership Factor, Policy Environment and the Oduche Complex**

Indeed, part of the tragedy of Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* is that as the paramount leader in Umuaro, he was equally guilty of the Oduche

complex. Captain T.K Winterbottom, the European District Officer under whose jurisdiction Umuaro fell, was depicted as Ezeulu's good friend in the novel. Ezeulu confirms that he and the officer, whom he called Wintabota, were good friends.<sup>50</sup> To that extent, Ezeulu, the ostensibly stubborn upholder of the cultures and traditions of Umuaro and the dutiful Chief priest of the Ulu deity, was also an admirer of the white man. Invariably, he also admired the white man's culture, which included the white man's religion. It took Ezeulu five years to fulfill the promise he made to Wintabota of sending one of his sons to join the church. It was only after he had satisfied himself that "the white man had not come for a short visit but to build a house and live" that he fulfilled the promise.<sup>51</sup> Thus, Ezeulu was becoming more and more comfortable with the new culture, yet he did not take the necessary leadership decision to fully embrace the new culture and in doing so, add value to the lives of his people. The Oduche phenomenon (the Oduche complex) was accordingly a product of Ezeulu's ambivalence.

Furthermore, when Oduche committed the abominable act of attempting to kill a sacred python, Ezeulu was profoundly outraged and embarrassed. But out of pride, particularly as it related to the longstanding feud between him and Ezeidemili, he refused to propitiate the land, which technically (and abominably) placed him on the side of Oduche in the attempted killing of the sacred python.<sup>52</sup> This must have been considered unbecoming of the Chief Priest of Ulu, whose responsibility was to appease this particular god in the event of such abomination. Ezeulu's rationalization of the abomination was based on the fact that Oduche only tried to kill the python and there were no laws among the people against an unsuccessful bid to kill the sacred beast. This act of not vehemently standing on the side of his culture was part of Ezeulu's tendencies in the direction of an Oduche complex.

Further illustrating Ezeulu's leadership failure, Ogbuefi Ofoka, one of the worthiest men in Umuaro, said this to Ezeulu:

First you, Ezeulu, told us five years ago that it was foolish to defy the white man. We did not listen to you. We went out against him and he took our gun from us and broke it across his knee. So we knew you were right. But just as we were beginning to learn our lesson, you turn round and tell us to go and challenge the same white man. What did you expect us to do?<sup>53</sup>

Ezeulu perhaps expected them to be confused. Hence, in non-fictional terms, when an African policymaker is afflicted by the Oduche complex, he is always dressed in African attire while bestriding the international space, preaching Western philosophies. He frequently visits European policy centers, advocating their models of development for his home country. Back home, he preaches patriotism and home-grown democracy as useful negations of the Western models. The Oduche-tainted policymaker therefore usually leaves his constituency confused as to what constitutes the best policy option.

Over policy matters, therefore, a man struck by the Oduche complex is an official given to prevarication, a man with an unstable worldview. Ezeulu was such a man. Ezeulu's admiration of the white man's style even extended to how Mr. Clarke, who stood in for Wintabota to receive Ezeulu during his altercation with the white men, wrote with his left hand. The first thought that came to Ezeulu upon seeing Clarke was to wonder whether any black man could ever achieve the same mastery over literacy as to write with the left hand.<sup>54</sup> To further demonstrate the impact that this incident made on the prevaricating worldview of Ezeulu, Achebe narrates that he further deeply wanted Oduche to know all that the white man knew, including being able to write with his left hand.<sup>55</sup> Ezeulu accordingly encouraged his son to take on aspects of the new religion and new culture. In effect, he was sowing the seeds that would destroy the extant religion that he, as Chief Priest of Ulu, currently professed.

But we must return to non-fictional contexts. In our estimation, there are two African political leaders who were completely free from the Oduche complex: Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. These two leaders were undoubtedly exposed to Western ideological frames and structures like others but they were never tainted by such exposure. Their leadership tendencies were not marked (or marred) by the greed of their peers. The masses in their nations could identify the directions that their leaderships were headed. Even over issues that might be considered tangential, as in attire, these two leaders kept it simple. The public policies they engendered as leaders were highly thoughtful. We posit further that when leadership is smeared by the Oduche complex, policy direction leads to catastrophic consequences. This is what happened in the fictional case of Ezeulu

in Umuaro, and what has also happened in the empirical cases of the African leaders listed in the introductory section of this study.

Under the Oduche complex, betrayal could occur even without the betrayer intending to do so. Hence, in *Arrow of God*, the character Nwaka of Umunneora further illustrates that Ezeulu and Winterbottom were very good friends. When the indecisive Ezeulu summoned the elders of Umuaro to consult them about whether he should go to Okperi to respond to the summons of the white man, Nwaka states, inter alia, “The white man is Ezeulu’s friend and has sent for him. What is so strange about that? . . . Does he want the white man to be his friend only by word of mouth?”<sup>56</sup> As it turned out, Winterbottom invited Ezeulu to offer him the position of a Warrant Chief, thereby making him the de facto leader of his people, in the new dispensation. Ezeulu curiously rejected this offer.

*Arrow of God* is largely a story of what the British colonial masters met on the ground among the Igbos of Nigeria. The Igbo communities did not have easily identifiable leaders. (They generally did not have monarchs, except in a few cases.) Policy coordination was difficult for the colonizers, so they chose Warrant Chiefs for communities where it was difficult to identify a ruler, as in the other parts of Nigeria. This Chief became the undisputed leader of his people in the new dispensation. In other words, Ezeulu rejected the opportunity of being the duly recognized leader of his people, which would have afforded him the opportunity of propagating the culture of his people. Consequently, Ezeulu, who felt so strongly about the positive aspects of the new culture (in his friendship with the white man and in encouraging Oduche to follow the white man’s ways) by rejecting the white man’s offer also betrayed his people and betrayed the white man (his friend). Thus, Ezeulu was a character who neither stood for his people nor the white man. He was an unstable, prevaricating character, who in this work precipitated the Oduche complex.

## **Conclusion**

When public officials, political leaders, and policymakers in Nigeria and Africa continuously fail to deliver on their mandates, engender change, and reverse the poverty trend in their continent through the instrumentality of purposeful public policies, it

is akin to Oduche's attempt of killing the sacred African python in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*. We further opine that the Oduche complex is an elite phenomenon. Ordinarily, elite interests manifest in a tendency to sustain the status quo ante or to precipitate a change in the desired elite dimension, but under the scenario of the Oduche complex, the elite interest is uncharacteristically ambivalent.<sup>57</sup> The elite intriguingly leave one leg of their interests in foreign fantasies and the second leg in local pipe dreams. Consequently, the public policy environment is marked by uncertainties.

Principally, we have attempted to demonstrate in this work (using a Nigerian case study) that public policies in Africa are rendered impotent by an environment polluted by the Oduche complex. The ultimate public policy challenge in the continent, the study concludes, is for the initiators and implementers of policies in the region, to always act in the interest of the people.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Oyata is a Professor of English and Literary Studies, a former Head of Department and also former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Oduche Complex is taken from his "Delay and Justice in the Lore and Literature of Igbo Extraction" (28th Inaugural Lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, March 27, 2008), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Damian Ugwuntikiri Oyata, "Delay and Justice in the Lore and Literature of Igbo Extraction" (28th Inaugural Lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, March 27, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Wale Adebani and Ebenezer Obadare, "Introducing Nigeria at fifty: the nation in narration," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 28, no.4 (2010), 381.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank, "Overview," October 2016, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>.

<sup>6</sup> B.N. Nwokeoma, "Poverty, Religion, and Breakdown of Social Support Systems in Nigeria: Implications for Crime and National Security," *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences* 8, no.2 (2012): 17-33.

<sup>7</sup> The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, *World Summit for Social Development* (New York: United Nations, 1995). Quoted in Nwokeoma, *ibid.*



<sup>8</sup> A profound focus on the despotic tendencies of some erstwhile and contemporary African leaders is indeed slightly outside the central point of this current study. However, further details on this unfortunate scenario are available in, Remi C. Okeke, "The Purpose of Political Power: An African Dimensional Contemplation." *African Journal of Governance and Development* 4, no.1 (2015): 59-74.

<sup>9</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (Essex: Heinemann, 1986), 220.

<sup>10</sup> Opata, "Delay and Justice," 24.

<sup>11</sup> Fidelis C. Okoli, and Richard A. Onuigbo, "The Role of Public Policy in Promoting Innovation and Effective Knowledge Management for Economic Growth," *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities* 7, no.8 (2010): 1-9.

<sup>12</sup> L. Adamolekun, *Public administration: A Nigerian and comparative perspective* (New York: Longman Inc, 1983): 142. Quoted in Jide Ibietan, "Public Policy Making Process: Agricultural and Rural Development Policies in Nigeria (1960 to date)," *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities* 8, no.9 (2011):95-108.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ralph C. Chandler, and Jack C. Plano, *The Public Administration Dictionary* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1988); Thomas R. Dye. *Understanding Public Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992); Martin Ifeanyi Okeke, *Theory and Practice of Public Policy Analysis* (Enugu, Nigeria: Bismark Publications, 2001); Chikelue Ofuebe, and Kenneth. C. Ozoemenam, "Public Policy Formulation in Nascent Democracies: A Study of Gender and Development (GDA) Project in UNICEF 'A' Field Office Area, Nigeria," *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities* 4, (2007): 190-208; Taiwo A. Olaiya, The Roles and Responsibilities of Public Officials in Public Policy Formulation and Implementation. *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities* 7, no.8 (2010):3 7-46; Ibietan, "Public Policy making Process," 95-108.

<sup>15</sup> Ibietan, "Public Policy making Process," 96.

<sup>16</sup> Okoli and Onuigbo, "The Role of Public Policy," 2.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Henry, *Public Administration and Public Affairs* (New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India, 2004), 297.

<sup>18</sup> Fidelis C Okoli, and Sam C. Ugwu, "Tracing the Historiography of the Nexus between Policy and Administration in a Challenging World," *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities* 8, no. 9 (2011): 55-70.

<sup>19</sup> Henry, "Public Administration," 297.

<sup>20</sup> Anya O. Anya, "Education, Scholarship and the Wealth and Health of the Nation: The Search for the Dialectics of Sustainable Development" (A Valedictory Lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 14, 2008), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>22</sup> Jonah Onuoha, *The State and Economic Reforms in Nigeria: An Exploratory Note on the Capture Theory of Politics* (Nsukka, Nigeria: Great AP Express Publishers, 2008), 5.

<sup>23</sup> See Ebuka Onyeji, "Abuja Administration Bans Movement of Cattle on Public Roads," Premium Times [Nigeria], October 25, 2016, accessed October 25, 2016,

<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/213613-abuja-administration-bans-movement-cattle-public-roads.html>. Public policy has remained unable to tackle this issue even in the federal capital city of Abuja.

<sup>24</sup> Babatunde R. Fashola, "Nigeria and its Abundance of Possibilities," (40th Convocation Lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, February 24, 2011), 11.

<sup>25</sup> Okoli and Onuigbo, "The Role of Public Policy," 1.

<sup>26</sup> Onuoha, "The State and Economic Reforms," 5.

<sup>27</sup> BBC News, "Nigeria Becomes Africa's Biggest Economy," BBC News [London], April 06, 2014, accessed October 25, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-26913497>.

<sup>28</sup> Mathew Hassan Kukah, "Nigeria: Flying Without a Black Box," Keynote Speech at the Annual General Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), September 04, 2012, accessed October 25, 2016. <http://saharareporters.com/2012/09/04/nigeria-%e2%80%9cflying-without-black-box%e2%80%9d-says-bishop-kukah>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>30</sup> BBC News, "Nigerian Economy Slips into Recession," BBC News [London], August 31, 2016, accessed October 25, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37228741>.

<sup>31</sup> Michael C. Madukwe, "Practice without Policy: The Nigerian Agricultural Extension Service," (30th Inaugural Lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, April 29, 2008), 5.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibieta, "Public Policy making Process," 101.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Although published in 2011, the focus on Ibieta's study seems to have stopped at 2009. We therefore conclude that "1960 to date" in the study means from 1960 to the administration of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, which terminated in 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>36</sup> C J. Dikenwadike, "The Philosophy and Goals of the National Housing Fund in Nigeria," *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2004): 145.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Adewale F. Ibimilua, and Oyewole A. Ibitoye, "Housing Policy in Nigeria: An Overview," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 5, no. 2 (2015): 53-59.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> E.O. Ibem, A.B Adeboye, and O.A. Alagbe, "Similarities and Differences in Residents' Perception of Housing Adequacy and Residential Satisfaction," *Journal of Building Performance* 6, no.1 (2015): 1-14.

<sup>42</sup> Ibimilua and Ibitoye, "Housing policy in Nigeria," 58.

<sup>43</sup> Sylvester Enoghase, Andrew Airahuobhor, Philip Oladunjoye, Emmanuel Okwuke, et. al. "Nigeria's 17m Housing Deficit: Challenges before Buhari," *Daily*

*Independent (Nigeria)*, April 13, 2015, accessed October 26, 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Okoli and Onuigbo, "The Role of Public Policy," 2.

<sup>45</sup> Achebe, "*Arrow of God*," 15.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Uchechukwu O. Nnadozie, "Public Policy for Public Interest and National Development in Nigeria: Whose Policy, Whose Interest and Whose Development?" (112<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, July 28, 2016), 1.

<sup>50</sup> Achebe, "*Arrow of God*," 36. "Wintabota" is the corrupt form of calling Winterbottom by the locals.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>57</sup> Henry, "*Public Administration*," 299.