

Policy Outcome and Policy Impact: An Appraisal of Government's Road Infrastructure Development Policy in Osun State, Nigeria (2020 – 2022)

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To cite this article:

Omolola Omotayo Towobola Policy Outcome and Policy Impact: An Appraisal of Government's Road Infrastructure Development Policy in Osun State, Nigeria (2020 – 2022). *Journal of Public Policy and Administration*. Vol. 7, No. 3, 2023, pp. 141-146.

doi: 10.11648/j.jppa.20230703.13

Received: July 20, 2023; **Accepted:** August 11, 2023; **Published:** August 28, 2023

Abstract: The standard expectation of citizens is that their governments will make on their behalf, rational choices that will serve the purpose of government. In politics, voters and governments are expected to make choices that will in the minimum, satisfy their best interest. In this regard, when voters elect a government, such governments seek to have broad policies on issues of public interest in order to guide prioritisation of government programmes, since interests of voters are diverse. The decision of the Osun State government to construct a flyover bridge in Osogbo the state capital in 2021, generated strong criticisms immediately it was announced. The flyover bridge was to cost 2.7bn naira and to cover 500 meters of road. Competing pressures for government attention however demands that the State government's road infrastructural policy be interrogated vis-a-vis general objectives of public policy, so that the decision could be objectively appreciated or condemned. The purpose of this paper is to appraise the infrastructure development policy of Osun State government for the period 2020 to 2022 with a view to determining its road infrastructure development priority. The study relied on quantitative method of data gathering to identify the policy of Osun State Government on road infrastructure development in the period of study, and to identify the policy impact. The study shows that the policy of Osun state Government on road infrastructure development in the period of study was to maintain existing roads, rebuild bad roads, and expand the road network. The findings reveal that the outcome of this policy is to improve transportation system and that in spite of the strident criticism of the decision to construct an expensive fly over bridge over a distance of 500 meters, the subject under study made an impact on members of the public such that the project became an "important" city possession. The study concluded that, for public policy analysis, there is the need to conduct reliable verification of policy impact through the affected population in the assessment of public policies.

Keywords: Policy, Policy Outcome, Policy Impact, Government

1. Introduction

The decision of the Osun State government to construct a flyover bridge in Osogbo the state capital in 2020 [1], generated mixed reactions immediately it was announced. [14]. Criticisms of the decision included, but were not limited to the following: that the spot chosen for siting the project did not need a flyover bridge as there was already a free flow of traffic in the area; that in view of this, the amount earmarked for the project was too huge to be justifiable and will amount to a "waste of the state's scarce resources"; that details of the Award of the project were

shrouded in secrecy in contravention of the State's Public Procurement Law 2015; that the flyover bridge is not an infrastructural priority for the State Government; and finally that there were more pressing road projects, particularly roads requiring dualization within the State capital, which could have eased traffic flow in the town. These criticisms were reported by Lateef Ibrahim in an online publication of Blueprint, 9 Feb 2021 [14], and credited to Ayodeji Ologun, the spokesperson of Transparency and Accountability Group (TAG). In contrast to these criticisms, some indigenes of the State capital rose in defence of government's decision. Particularly, the Osogbo United Group in a statement signed

by the Chairman of its Steering Committee, General Ademola Aderibigbe (rtd.), maintained that anyone that was opposed to such a useful project is either an enemy of Osogbo or one seeking to undermine the success of then State Governor. According to the group, calling for the stoppage of the project is not only inimical but retrogressive, anti-growth and ill-conceived. He stated further: "The proposed flyover, will among other values: help to reduce traffic congestion; decrease the risk of accidents; assist users including motorists save time and fuel and; add to the aesthetics of the physical essence of the city." [14]

Meanwhile, explaining reasons for planning to construct the flyover bridge, the State government said the Olaiya flyover is not just an iconic project designed for ostentatious purposes, but one of the government's measures to ensure the safety of citizens' lives by taking care of the traffic bottleneck around the road intersection thus preventing accidents. Government further claimed that "...we are doing this because even though the project is ultimately to the people's benefit, we have to appraise the impact..." [23]. The project covered a distance of 500 meters and cost 2.7 bn Naira net of all taxes.

The strident criticisms of Osun State government's decision to construct a 500metre-long flyover bridge at a cost of 2.7bn naira in the face of competing pressures for government attention, demands that the State government's road infrastructural policy be interrogated vis-a-vis general objectives of public policy, so that the decision could be objectively appreciated or condemned.

This paper is aimed at appraising the road infrastructural development policy of Osun State government in the period 2020 to 2022 with a view to highlighting compliance or discordance between Policy, Policy Outcome and Policy Impact in Public Policy Analysis.

Osogbo, the Capital of Osun State is the study area, while the fly over bridge at Olaiya intersection, is the study object.

2. Research Objectives

The objectives are to:

- i. Identify the policy of Osun State Government on road infrastructure development in the period under study, and the outcome.
- ii. Identify the policy impact.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The work examined the infrastructure development policy of Osun State for the period 2020 to 2022 with a view to determining the road infrastructure development priority of government. Government's priority as stated in its policy, was matched with its actual action using the selected object of study. The work adopted quantitative method of data gathering. Primary data was sourced through the use of structured questionnaire administered on selected respondents. Purposive sampling technique is used in drawing required

number of respondents. A total of 84 respondents randomly selected across vocation, age, social status, education and gender were administered questionnaires. Secondary data were sourced from published policy document of Osun State government, relevant available textbooks, journals' articles, newspapers, magazines, academic publications and internet materials. Collected data from the primary sources were analysed using SPSS. The primary data gathered was cross-matched with available secondary data for necessary analysis.

In analysing policy making, and to help an understanding of the reasoning of government in its policy decisions, Ayebe A., stated that various theories, models and approaches have been developed by political and social scientists. [5]. Ghulam Mustafa et al offered seven (7) theoretical approaches that are primarily connected with public policy formulation. [11]. These, they maintained, include rational-choice theory, incremental theory, policy output analysis, political system theory, institutionalism, group theory, and elite theory. These theories suggest some of the general causes and consequences of public policy. Group and elite theories are adopted for this work.

Group theory places emphasis on collectivism, as it emphasizes the dominant interest of a particular group of people who can influence the policy formulation process of the government. Anderson J. E. stated that many public policies do reflect the wishes of a group [3]. This is dependent on the power of any given group to dominate or influence, (whether through negotiation, wealth, leadership quality or bargaining skills), government public policy formulation. In summary, Group theory asserts that individuals with common interests come together as a group, formally or informally, to push demands upon the government.

The Elite theory on the other hand, argues that, contrary to the believe that pluralism has in-built mechanism for ensuring equality in the sharing of power and influence in the society, in reality, public policy is by and large a mirror image of the ruling elite's interest [5]. These are the few with unique quality such as wealth, skills and power. They are not necessarily those in government but are found in all sectors of society tele-guiding and manipulating political power and policies from behind the scene. [22].

The basic assumption of this theory is that Public Policy reflects the preferences and values of (governing) elites rather than the demands of the masses. That it is the elites (in or out of government), that make policies, while administrators and bureaucrats implement the elites' policy decisions [12]. Elite theory suggests that "the people" are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy; that the elites are the ones who actually shape mass opinion. Hence, public policy often turns out to be the preferences of the elite. Policies flow downward from elites to masses and do not necessarily arise from public demands. It acknowledges that although Policies might sometimes be in the interest of the public, the core short-term or long-term interest may be that of the elites. An example is where a government introduces an innovative idea at very ridiculous cost to the public just to siphon public funds

or primarily to provide patronage for political supporters. Geraint P., averred in his book *The Political Elites* that public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elites, rather than the demands of the masses [10].

4. Results

4.1. Osun State Road Infrastructure Development Policy

In its document titled Infrastructure Sector 2020 – 2022 Medium-Term Sector Strategy (MTSS) and dated August, 2019 the government of Osun State gave a very detailed explanation of its policy thrust on road infrastructure. The 159 pages which contained government's policy direction in its

minutest detail could be summarised as follows:

“the government of Osun State affirmed that policy direction in the infrastructure sector is geared towards maintaining, rebuilding and expanding the infrastructure of the state, including roads, while, based on its policy thrust, the objectives of the Infrastructure Plan are to among several others: have an expanded road network and maintain existing roads. Towards this end, government was to ensure all year round economically safe & comfortable roads in the State. Notable among the roads are those contained in the table below, which form the top priority of the road infrastructure development strategy.” [13].

Table 1. Summary of Projects Review and Prioritization (Ongoing, Existing & New Projects).

Project Name	Budgeted Expenditure in 2018 (N'000)	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4
Construction of Oba Adesoji Aderemi Osogbo East - bye Pass (17.5km)		1	0	3	1
Dualisation of Gbongan – Akoda Rd. (30km)		1	0	3	1
Dualization Of Osogbo / Ikirun-IlaodoKWSB road		1	0	3	1
Rehabilitation of Ede - Ara - Ejigbo Road Rehabilitation (23.2km)		1	0	3	1
Rehabilitation of Ijebu Ijesa - Ijeda Ijesa - Iloko Ijesa - Ilesa /Akure Express Way (10.2km)		1	0	3	1
Opening up of Roads within Valley View Estate, Osogbo		2	0	2	0
Opening up of Roads within Ilesa GRA, Ilesa		2	0	2	0
Opening up of roads within Ajeogbe GRA, Osogbo		2	0	2	0
Spot patching / rehabilitation of Aawe /Oyo junction through Round about/ Oluponna Junction, Iwo.		2	0	2	0
Rehabilitation of General Hospital road, Ikirun		2	0	2	0
Completion of Nelson Mandela Freedom Park (Phase II)		2	0	2	0
Construction/reinforcement of 33kv lines at Ife/Ikire/orileowu andOsogbo/Ila 33kv line		2	0	2	0
Opening and Widening of 7 km of Roads at Lakanre Area, beside Powerline, Osogbo		2	0	2	0
Opening and Widening of 8 km of Roads at Ori-Oke Pure Water, Ataoja Estate, Osogbo		2	0	2	0

Source. Infrastructure Sector 2020 – 2022 Medium-Term Sector Strategy (MTSS) Osun 2019. [13].

In summary, Osun State Government's policy on road infrastructure development as stated in its own document was very clear and unambiguous. These are to:

- i. maintain existing roads,
- ii. rebuild bad roads, and
- iii. expand the road network.

The expected outcome as stated in the official document is, “improved transportation system” [13]. This necessitated a review and prioritization of ongoing, existing and new road projects as listed in Table 1 above. These road projects are to be given top priority by government.

In the preparation of its policy document, government claimed that it invited representatives of groups of stakeholders for their views and suggestions. These include:

- i. National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).
- ii. Road transport Employers' association of Nigeria (RTEAN).
- iii. Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).
- iv. Okada Riders' associations (ACOMORAN, MUTUM).
- v. Relevant professional bodies.

vi. Market Women Associations.

4.2. The Policy Impact: The Olaiya Intersection Fly-Over Bridge Versus Road Infrastructure Development

4.2.1. Existing Roads Situation

In an extensive assessment of road infrastructure in Osogbo, Adedotun S. B., Ogundahunsi D. S. & Oyeniyi A. S. [2] examined the availability, adequacy and functionalities of road transport infrastructures in the State capital. After a detailed physical study of 26 routes covering a total distance of 101 kilometres, they concluded that: “road transport infrastructure facilities are grossly inadequate in the city and that the few available are completely in the state of disrepair calling for urgent attention.” [2]. It will seem as if government's policy paper released in 2019 was directed at redressing this observation.

If policy outcome is “the decision to undertake certain actions that give effect to a given policy”, [6], where then will government's decision to construct a fly-over bridge at Olaiya intersection, Osogbo, fit within the framework of

the State Government's policy on road infrastructure development as enunciated, when about 101 kilometres of road are completely in the state of disrepair calling for urgent attention? Will it fall within the realm of maintenance of existing roads, rebuilding of bad ones or expansion of the road network? Will it provide the expected policy outcome of "improved transportation system"? [13]. Will it have a desired impact on the public in the area of road transportation? In order to provide answers to these questions, the stake holders who were involved by government in making its road infrastructure development policy were surveyed on the subject.

4.2.2. Public Opinion Poll on the Construction of the Olaiya Intersection Fly-Over Bridge

A total of eighty-four (84) people (stake holders), were randomly polled with a view to obtaining their views. They consisted of:

1. Public Servants. – 30
2. Commercial Transport Workers. – 30
3. Traders/Businessmen. – 24.

All the respondents claimed to have no political affiliation, while all but one, reside in Osogbo.

A summary of their responses to questionnaires is provided in the Table below.

Table 2. Summary of Questionnaire Responses.

Serial	Question	%	%	%	Remarks
1.	Means of Commuting	Personal: 43%	Public: 14%	Mixed: 43%	
2.	Frequency of using bridge.	Very often: 54%	Occasionally: 46%	Not at all: 0%	
3.	Pre-bridge traffic situation.	Very tight: 32%	Tight: 57%	Not tight: 11%	
4.	Post-Bridge traffic situation.	Very tight: 0%	Tight: 18%	Not tight: 82%	
5.	Importance of bridge to traffic in Osogbo	Very Important: 43%	Important: 43%	Not Important: 14%	
6.	Prefer a different project.	YES: 25%	NO: 75%	-	

A quick look at table 2 above reveals that in total, 89% of respondents agree that the traffic situation in Osogbo was tight before the fly-over bridge was constructed, while 82% agreed that it was no longer tight after the bridge was constructed. A total of 86% of respondents consider the fly-over bridge as important to the city, while another 75% would not have preferred a different project.

5. Discussion

5.1. Governance, Public Policy and Policy Outcome

Policy is defined as a course, principle or plan of action proposed, agreed, adopted or chosen by an organization, a political party, a business or an individual. [17] It includes "anything a government does or does not do". [9]. Public policy is defined as a set of laws, guidelines, and actions decided and taken by governments in order to work in favour of the public, and can dictate which laws are passed, where funding goes, and so on. [7, 8]. The outcome of any given policy are the indicators which are used to determine the result of policies in achieving their objectives. Policy outcomes help to understand whether policies are well-designed in view of their objectives, and they are the underlining motivation behind policies. [18]. In essence, policy outcome is the decision to undertake certain actions that give effect to a given policy. Bamisaye opined that Policy Outcomes are the results emanating from the implementation of a given policy. He stated further that, government or public policies, which anyway are actually outputs of the political system, are "chosen for a purpose" and are meant to achieve a goal. He concluded that "the end results", that is the purpose of policy or goal of policy, is/are what is referred to as policy outcome. [6]. Adesina opines that policy outcome is the end result of government programme as intended. [4]. Considering these opinions, policy outcome would therefore be the goals or

purposes that a proposed or adopted course of action is meant to achieve, actually achieved or recorded.

The outcome of any public policy provides elected and nonelected government decision makers the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of a policy problem and possible solutions. Simon, Christopher A. submitted that, through policy analysis (which include policy outcomes), it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the projected costs and possible benefits that will emerge from the adoption of a particular policy alternative. [19]. He stated further that, decision makers often seek the most economical alternative possible—the alternative that offers the most in the way of benefit and the least in the way of cost. Government is asked to deal with a number of policy goals with limited resources. Therefore, the outcome of any given policy can help the government to know whether the policy embarked upon is a good or bad one, and also to make rational decision. As in the instant subject, if the policy of government is to ensure a free flow of traffic in the State capital, the outcome in this case was government's decision to construct a fly over bridge at Olaiya intersection. On the other hand, Policy Impact is the noticeable effect or influence that the decision (i. e. policy outcome), has on the society, groups or individuals. This effect could be positive or negative. [20]

5.2. Policy Impact and Its Implications on Governance

Policy Impact best describes the noticeable effect or influence that the goals (i. e. policy outcome), of a particular policy, has on the society, groups or individuals. It is the effect of policy outcome on the masses, and encompasses both intended and unintended effects of a given policy on individuals, groups or the political environment as a whole. [20]. The effect that government policy and its administration can have on the public or masses could be unpredictable and may come to the fore only after an evaluation of the outcome. At the onset, it appeared that Osun State government's

decision to construct a fly-over bridge at Olaiya intersection in Osogbo was at variance with its road infrastructure development policy of “maintaining existing roads, rebuilding bad ones and expanding the road network.” [13]. This is especially so, when its priority list as contained in Table 1 above is considered. However, this seeming inconsistency is resolved after an evaluation of the policy outcome and its impact on the public as reflected in Table 2 above. This is a reflection of policy impact. The fly-over bridge has made an impact on the public to the extent that 86% of respondents consider it as important to the city, while 75% would not have preferred a different project.

5.3. The Influence of Groups and Elites

In discussing this segment, it is important to highlight the status of the city in question. Firstly, Osogbo is the capital city of Osun State in Nigeria. [15]. The city is home to several academic tertiary institutions including the state-owned Osun State University and its Teaching Hospital. [21]. It also houses the Osogbo Grove, a UNESCO world heritage site. [16]. Considering the responses of respondents, with the added fact that all but one, are residents or indigenes of Osogbo, it is safe to conclude that a group acting in the interest of Osogbo as a city, might have pressurised and influenced government to undertake a project that will give their city a unique face lift. In this regard it is noteworthy that the Osogbo United Group under the leadership of General Ademola Aderibigbe (rtd), defended the project spiritedly, claiming that the project “added to the aesthetics of the essence of the city”, [14], and that anyone that was opposed to it was an enemy of Osogbo. This scenario satisfies the Group Theory. Although the large picture here is that of a group fighting for Osogbo, the individual members are elites in their own right who belong to several sectors of the society, and who are capable of influencing and manipulating political power and politics from behind the scene. This satisfies the requirements of Elite Theory. In this wise, one would be correct to aver that Osogbo elites, working or acting on behalf of the city as a group, must have influenced the construction of the flyover bridge, even when it was not contained in the listed roads prioritized for action by government. This explains the acceptability of the project by Osogbo indigenes despite its strident open criticism by public affairs commentators.

6. Conclusion

The road infrastructure development policy of Osun State for the period 2020 to 2022 was to maintain existing roads, rebuild old ones and expand the road network. The expected policy outcome was the achievement of an “improved transportation system” through the execution of prioritised road projects. [13] However, the State government in the period went outside its priority list to construct a fly-over bridge in Osogbo, the State capital. In spite of the strident criticism of this decision, the bridge smade an impact on members of the public such that the project became an “important” city possession.

For public policy analysis, this study brings to the fore the need to conduct reliable verification of policy impact through the affected population in the assessment of public policies.

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