Public Policy Making in Zimbabwe: A Three Decade Perspective

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Abstract

This article reviews how the interplay of socioeconomic dynamics shaped policy decisions over the decades. Research findings suggest that the spirit and temper of policy decisions generally bear the imprint of the prevailing macro dynamics. During the first decade of independence, the imperative of nation building informed policy decisions across all sectors of the economy. Policy making was interventionist and social welfare oriented. During the second decade when the state was in economic crisis, policy interventions were mainly contractionary and low note on local ownership and social acceptance. Third decade policymaking was under highly untenable social, political, and economic conditions. A climate of siege and anxiety prevailed within state and civil society. Though the substantive intents of major policies adopted during this decade were in rhythm with the post independence imperatives, policy making approaches had a partisan, temperamental, exclusionary, hurried, and short-term bent.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Rationale

While various conceptions of public policy have emerged in literature over the years (see Anderson, 2005; Pal, 1989; Dye, 2002), definitions generally locate the source of public policy in government. By virtue of this source, public policies are legally binding, public ends-driven and universal in application. They apply to those within the state and non-state sector. The issue of source as a defining characteristic of public policy that distinguishes it from private policy is aptly captured by Pal (p: 5) who observes that "what makes a policy a public policy is not its *impact* but its *source*" (our emphasis). Dye (p: 12) also underlines this thus "a policy does not become a public policy until it is adopted by some government institution". As distilled from these definitions, public policies denote courses of action or inaction taken by a government in response to a known problem or set of problems. Policy problems are those "conditions or situations that produce dissatisfaction on a wide spectrum of people and for which government redress is sought" (Anderson, 79).

The above remarks point to an organic relationship between public policies and government institutions. The nature of government (its institutional and leadership practices), have a direct bearing on public policies while policy outcomes in turn impact on government legitimacy. Public policies are central instruments through which the "fundamental choices" of the political authorities are executed (Dye, 14). They regulate societal behavior and extract, allocate and distribute resources to different segments of society within the economy. They thus play key promotional roles in national socioeconomic development. Soundly crafted national policies provide feasible channels through which governments communicate and respond to citizen demands. They enable society to read and interpret the mindset and priorities of the national leadership.

Public policies also serve as key instruments at both the domestic and international fronts. At the domestic level, they serve as mechanisms of conflict management, harnessing and balancing competing values and interests within the nation. Individuals who comprise society hold different and often conflicting values on what policy problems, goals and options should be prioritised at a given time. At the international level, public policies constitute means through which governments relate and market themselves to the outside community. Underlined here is the need to ensure that due attention is given to the formulation of both domestic and foreign policies. Domestic policies in the form of land policy, defence policy, tax policy, labour policy, investment policy communicate certain messages to the regional and international community.

Notwithstanding these positive attributes, gaps usually exist between policy intents and policy action. Well intentioned public policies do not always deliver benefits to target groups. They have notoriety for benefitting third parties. Hidden agendas are also pursued under the guise of public motive. As observed by Pal (1996, 6), "beyond official or explicitly stated goals are the unstated or hidden ones--but which in practice usually influence policy decisions". The public motive is best served where public policy making processes are inclusive, transparent, accountable and responsive.

Equally important is the need to appreciate the intimate link between public policies and their ecological contexts. In fact, public policies in terms of content and practice usually carry the imprint of their environment. Each environment has its own set of socio-politico-economic dynamics which interact to either facilitate or disable sound policy making in the polity. Implied here is that public policy making is inherently embedded in the politics of its environments. A study of public policy making in any country inevitably raises fundamental questions on the nature of the state politics. Viewed from this angle, a three decade study of policy making in Zimbabwe should unravel how the interplay of socio-politico-economic dynamics in each decade influenced and shaped the policy making approaches and practices. It should help us characterize policy making in post independence Zimbabwe. Reference to milestone policy decisions is made throughout the study in order to analyze issues within their empirical contexts.

2.0 First Decade Policy Making

Zimbabwe achieved its independence in 1980 after a gruelling seven year armed struggle. This historical reality remains a decisive factor in national policy decision making to this day. At independence, the new government faced the pressing challenge of reconstituting and realigning the inherited national policy making structures in line with the new socio-politico-economic dispensation that had set in. Inherited national policy making systems and processes needed to be transformed from minority-focused to majority-focused institutions. The inherited economy was also fraught with embedded inequalities in income and wealth distribution, with the agricultural, education, industrial and banking sectors among the most visibly affected. Against this background, the need to address inequalities and injustices wrought by yesteryear policies underpinned policy making during the first decade. It also underlined the state-centric nature of policy making in parastatal, agricultural, health, education, labour and social welfare sectors. The new government viewed itself first and foremost as the central instrument through which yester-imbalances were redressed.

2.1 Reconciliation Policy

The nationalist agendas of nation building are most manifest in the adoption of the policy of reconciliation in Zimbabwe immediately after the attainment of independence. The policy was based on the need to build sustainable peace, equality and peaceful co-existence between races and ethnic groups in the country. This policy thus symbolized a radical departure from the yester era of racial discrimination and parallel co-existence. In a statement after the announcement of the first democratic elections in independent Zimbabwe, the then Prime Minister Robert Gabriel Mugabe emphasized the need to establish a society in which there is "space for everyone…a sense of security for both the winners and the losers- forgiveness and forgetting." (Davies et al, 1981, 206). The policy was initially shaped by the relations between blacks and former Rhodesian whites, and between major nationalist movements, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic-Front (PF-ZAPU).

Noble as the policy is, unfolding events in subsequent years posed threats to the success of the reconciliation policy, notable among these being the tribally-based political tensions between ZAPU and ZANU between 1982 and 1987 to which government responded by setting up a 'dissident-cleansing' campaign code named Gukurahundi. Although sanity eventually dawned with the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord between ZAPU and ZANU, these events constitute a sad chapter of Zimbabwe's post independence history. Overall, the success of the reconciliation policy continues to be haunted by questions surrounding some societal ethnic minority groups such as the Tonga in Kariba, some sections of the Ndebele around Matabeleland, and the Ndau in south-eastern Zimbabwe, who seem to have been overlooked in the reconciliation discourse. To date, they have largely remained forgotten isles in the national unity agenda.

The policy of reconciliation has received mixed reviews with extreme ones describing it as a case of "reconciliation on behalf of the unconsulted majority in 1980" (Muponde, 2004, 186).

For those who hold this view, the policy reflects the position of the governing elite rather than the consensus of the nation. Some however read public good motives in the policy of reconciliation, viewing it as reflecting concerted efforts to manage a possibly volatile socio-political environment created by the recent change of government (Mandaza, 1986). For these, while political survival motives may have played a hand in the adoption of this policy, on the basis of cost-benefit analysis, the social gains that were derived from this policy overshadowed any political survival factors related to it. The new government was faced with bitter racial questions on the one hand, and inter-tribal and ethnic coherence challenges on the other (Ibid, 42). It is also important to note that state and nation building are delicate processes that can hardly thrive in unstable socio-political environments characterized by intense suspicion and hostility. This realism that animates the 1980 policy of reconciliation echoes through the Unity Agreement of 1987 and the Global Political Agreement of 15 September 2008.

2.2 Growth with Equity Policy

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited a dual economy characterized by a relatively well-developed modern sector and a largely poor rural sector that provided livelihood to about 80 percent of the country's population (GoZ MDGs Report, 2009:1). Against this backdrop, the government resolved to direct its spending towards social sectors with emphasis on the expansion of rural infrastructure and redressing social and economic inequalities through the land resettlement programme. For urban populations, policies pursued covered areas of minimum wages, black affirmative and indigenization policies to ensure an increase or rise in living standards for the urban population.

Growth with Equity policy statement provided a framework for overall sectoral policies and in this way constituted the basis for national policy planning. In general, it asserted government desire to develop the country guided by socialist and democratic principles in the allocation and distribution of resources and social benefits. The positive returns of Growth-With-Equity policies were most visible in the education and health sectors where access to public services, resource allocation and distribution was deracialized. The state transformed into a "distributive and welfarist state" (Zhou and Masunungure, 2006:16). It viewed itself first and foremost as a benevolent father with a historical mandate to decide what it thought was good for its people in the long term pursuit of the aspirations of the liberation struggle. The new government was led by a party that had waged the armed struggle that yielded political independence.

Noble as these welfarist policies were, sustaining them proved a major challenge, especially in a stagnating economy that prevailed in the first decade of independence. There was minimal citizen involvement and participation in the designing and planning of the whole policy process, leaving everything in the hands of the bureaucracy. Furthermore, the national economy was not yet fully integrated in the international economy and was also suffering from the adverse effects of the war in neighboring countries such as South Africa and Mozambique. Widespread regulations and other inherent distortions further weighed it down, making clear the need for restructuring the economy and sound economic planning.

2.3 Education Policy (Education-for-All)

Colonial governments from the BSA Company of 1890 to the Rhodesia Front of 1965 pursued consistent racist education policies whose primary motive was to advance more whites than blacks in order to minimize black competition on the job market in all sectors of the economy. It was a separatist and dual education policy premised on fiscal allocations that were grossly skewed in favor of the whites. In the years 1976-77, for instance, state expenditure per African pupil was Z$43.2, and Z$475.2 per European pupil; in 1972-73 it was Z$28.8 per African pupil against Z$377.8 per European pupil (Riddell, 1978). It was against this backdrop that the first black majority government crafted a new education policy based on what was enunciated in the 1980 election manifesto of the ruling party, ZANU-PF. These included the need to (a) abolish racial education and utilize the education system to develop in the younger generation a non-racial attitude and a common loyalty to the state; (b) establish a system of free and compulsory primary and secondary education; (c) abolish sex discrimination in the education system; (d) orient the education system to national goals; (e) give every adult who had no or little educational opportunity the right to literacy and adult education; (f) make education play an important role in transforming society; and (g) place education in the category of basic human rights and strive to ensure that every child had an educational opportunity to develop his mental, physical and emotional faculties (*ZANU-PF Election Manifesto, 1980).*

The 1980 Election Manifesto thus provided the basis for launching a socio-economic revolution to allow for social equality along the precepts of Marxist-Leninist socialism adopted by the government at independence. The education policy aligned with the goals of scientific socialism, seeking to achieve equality in access to education and to better the plight of the black population. Advancing many blacks in education promised to provide the key to national development and raising standards of living for the previously marginalized population. There was to be free and compulsory primary and secondary education for all children. The government also sought to use its education policy to dismantle the established grip of capitalism, which had created glaring income differences and highly unbalanced living standards in the country.

Noble as the policy was, provision of free and compulsory primary and secondary education presented a huge financial, material and human resources burden on the state. Given that the policy came in the early years of independence, the state was not capacitated enough to meet the resource needs of providing free educational services at both primary and secondary levels. At independence, the government had so many priorities besides education. It was involved in numerous other development programmes such as the resettlement of persons displaced by the war, agriculture, health, defense and telecommunications, among others. It sought to achieve broad-based development in many sectors of the economy. The massive resources needed to achieve broad expansion in education would produce lopsided development by denying other national programmes adequate financial support. These factors lent an ambitious and unrealistic tag to the education policy.

2.4 Health Policy (Health-for-All)

Policies on education and health share a similar background of black marginalization and the accompanying skewed resource allocation and distribution processes which largely followed the pattern of white settlement. Class and racial structure of society was replicated in the health care delivery system. Consumption and distribution of health goods and services followed both racial and social class patterns, with the have-nots of society consuming the least, and the haves consuming the most. The infant mortality rate among whites was 17 per 1 000 while among blacks it was 120 to 220 per 1 000 (Agere, 1986: 359). Urban-based sophisticated hospitals serving about 15 per cent of the population absorbed about 44 per cent of the publicly funded services while 24 per cent went to primary and secondary level rural health services (Sanders, 1990:6). This, as argued by this author, was despite the fact that over 70 per cent of the population lived in rural areas. This inequitable distribution of resources in the health sector was largely consistent with the pattern of distribution of political and economic power in society. Africans in both rural and urban areas were not involved in medical aid schemes that covered mostly whites. As argued by Razemba (1998:104), life expectancy among Africans was very low across gender: African male, 49.8; African female, 53.3; European male, 66.9; and European female, 74.0.

Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Health adopted a policy of "equity in health" which saw resources being shifted from urban to rural and from curative services to preventive services. The decade also witnessed the establishment of clinics, health centers and hospitals across the country, in both rural and urban areas. However, achievement of most goals of the health policies proved a major challenge due to resource constraints. The goal of "health for all by 2000" turned out to be too ambitious for a nation still struggling with nation building issues (*Zimbabwe Human Development Report, 2003, 13*).

2.5 Agricultural Policy

Colonial agricultural policy was specifically designed to serve and satisfy interests of the settler class. Legislative frameworks coupled with a cluster of economic measures denied Indigenous African peasants access to land, resources and agricultural markets. The independence era needed a new agricultural policy that secured a level playing field for all races through equality and equitability in the allocation and distribution of resources in the sector. However, the new government found itself in a dilemma as there was need for delicate balance between equity and efficiency considerations. In practice, colonial policy was continued in the independence era without much departure from the previous policies. Land redistribution policy was based on the 'willing seller-willing buyer' basis, a framework that yielded limited and low quality land for African resettlement.

2.6 Concluding Remarks on First Decade Policy Making

Overall, while policy making during the first decade was centralized and top-down, social welfare and nation building considerations were uppermost in most policy decisions. Policies of reconciliation and growth with equity provided a macro policy framework that was consistent with the imperatives of the new socio-politico-economic dispensation.

Though fraught with implementation challenges, policy making generally had a social face. The public good motive was apparent in both policy making and action. Policy choices and action pointed to some visible organic link between the political leadership and the grassroots. Policy making was generally expansionary and redistributive with a definable bias to meet the goal of widening accessibility of public goods and services. These fundamentals anchored the growth-with-equity macro policy which guided and influenced fiscal policy planning, agricultural policy, education policy, health policy and reconciliation policy, among others. In fact, policy making scenarios in Zimbabwe in the first decade generally resonate with Adesina (2007)'s conclusions that policy-making experiences in Africa during the first decades of independence were largely influenced by the nationalist agendas of nation-building and economic growth.

3.0 Policy Making in the Second Decade

Second decade policy making has to be analyzed within the broad policy framework of Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAPs) that were adopted across Africa and the rest of the world in the 1990s in line with IMF and World Bank prescriptions. ESAPs are neo-liberal market-driven policy measures which were adopted as prescriptive solutions to the economic crises of the 1980s. They also sought to reverse the expansionary policies of the 1960s and 1970s which had resulted in big governments. Prescribed policy measures entailed reducing government expenditure by retrenching 25 percent of the civil service establishment, withdrawing subsidies, commercializing and privatizing some state owned companies, introducing user fees in the health and education sectors, among others.

In Zimbabwe, The Economic Structural Adjustment Policy Document (1990:6) sought to "de-emphasize its expenditure on social services and emphasize investment in the material production sectors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing". Its specific targets included

- Achieving an annual GDP growth rate of 5% during the period 1991 – 1995;
- Raising savings to 25% of GDP;
- Raising investment to 25% of GDP;
- Achieving export growth rate of 9% per annum during the period 1991-1995;
- Reducing budget deficit from 10% of GDP 5% by 1995; and
- Reducing inflation from over 17% to 10% by 1995.

The ESAP policy document also specified measures for achieving these targets. These included trade and exchange liberalization, domestic market deregulation, financial sector reform, and other institutional reforms. However, the Zimbabwean experience with SAP policy prescriptions points to processes that were generally haunted by structural and situational constraints. Their impact on the economy was low note as an annual growth rate of less than 1% was recorded (ZIMPREST, 1998, 5). The budget deficit remained high. In fact, by the 1994/95 fiscal year, it had increased to 13 percent of the GDP while inflation levels also worsened in the years, going beyond set targets. Parastatal losses continued to mount rather than decline. They thus remained a major drain on the fiscus (Zhou, 2001). The ZIMPREST document refers to "only modest reductions in the aggregate public enterprise sector financial deficit during the phases of ESAP" (1998, 4). While there were some visible progress in the area of commercialization, progress on the privatization front was very low note. In fact, by close of the ESAP programme, not a single parasatal in Zimbabwe had been fully privatized (Zhou, 2000). Policy implementation was further compromised by lack of legislation to guide the privatization of state companies and an autonomous privatization agency as was the case in other African countries such as Zambia and Malawi.

The implementation of cost recovery measures in the education and health sectors had a very heavy toll on the welfare of the population, especially the rural poor. It compromised the access of the poor segment of society to education and health facilities as most people failed to pay the required user fees (GoZ MDGs Report, 2009:2). The Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) Programme and the accompanying Social Dimensions Fund (SDF) which were meant to cushion the suffering and vulnerable social segments were overwhelmed by the rampant structural poverty in both urban and rural areas. Overall, the minimalist reform programmes of 1990 – 2000 impacted negatively on social welfare in the country (Mlambo, 1992).

3.1 Zimprest

The ZIMPREST programme which was supposed to have been launched in 1996 was delayed by two years. Drawing lessons from the weaknesses and shortcomings of ESAP, it sought to restore macro-economic stability, poverty alleviation as well as facilitating public and private savings and investment.

In its strategy to eradicate poverty, ZIMPREST prioritized employment creation. It aimed at creating an enabling platform for entrepreneurship, developing human capital and involving various stakeholders in the process. However, its inauguration came at a time when resources had already been allocated through the three-year rolling budget system. There was also a mismatch about the supply and demand for foreign currency. Two years into the ZIMPREST, the budget deficit was still at 10 per cent of GDP, inflation above 50 per cent and unemployment around 60 per cent (GoZ, 2009:130). The export sector performed poorly in terms of the US dollar; exports collapsing from about 12 per cent in 1996 to about 20 per cent in 1999 (Ibid: 131.). ZIMPREST suffered from lack of international financial support to fund programme implementation. It was also too ambitious, encompassing a host of goals to be achieved: poverty reduction, land reform, employment creation, institutional reforms, decentralization, and others, without clearly spelling out the budgetary implications of each one of these policy objectives.

3.2 Concluding Remarks on Second Decade Policy Making

Second decade policy making had a contractionary bent in line with the philosophy of austerity that was espoused in the neoliberal ESAP model. Despite visible support from the IMF and WB, enforcing austerity measures proved a challenge as they had a tendency of reversing important social gains of the first decade. Policy prescriptions under this decade also suffered from lack of local ownership. They were viewed as IMF and WB imposed measures as access to balance of payments was on condition of compliance with these measures (Zhou, 2009). ESAP policy measures also carried high political and social costs for both society and the political leadership. Cutting the size of the civil service and privatization of state owned enterprises, withdrawal of subsidies and grants and the introduction of user fees in hospitals carried huge socio-politico-economic costs for the public and the national leadership in most African countries. The political will to implement these reform prescriptions and bear the attendant social costs was low note. This was worsened by the absence of enabling legal and institutional frameworks. The net picture is one of policy implementation under protest.

4.0 Policy Making in the Third Decade (2000-2010)

4.1 The Policy Environment

The third decade generally characterized policy making under turmoil and uncertainty. The period experienced a socio-politico-economic meltdown whose peak year was 2008 (Cousins, 2003; Phimister, 2004; Raftopoulos, 2009; Kanyenze, et al, 2011). On the political front, the decade witnessed a resurgence of more competitive party politics under the banner of the MDC. For the first time since independence in 1980, the then ruling party ZANU PF felt politically threatened in elections at the local, parliamentary and presidential levels. Subsequent elections were fraught with violence, with the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections and the 27 June Presidential Run Off emerging as the most affected. The period also saw government shifting to the fast track land reform, a process that received mixed reviews within and outside the country with most extreme reviews describing them as processes driven by political motives of expediency and survival. The year 2005 had also seen government embarking on a very controversial Murambatswina programme aimed at demolishing all unregistered residential settlements in urban areas. This tense and emotional political climate produced regressive policies and the accompanying restrictive legislation the nation has to date under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). This political mood was also manifest in most major policy decisions and actions of the decade. On the economic front, the country experienced an unparalleled hyperinflation year after year, with the rate of 7 982 in September 2007(MDGs Report, 2009:3). There was also an acute shortage of basic commodities which included maize mealie, drugs, fuel, electricity and foreign currency.

4.2 Selected Policy Areas

4.2.1 Land Policy

Following the widespread land dispossession that took effect in the colonial times the land question has for a long time been a major concern in the country. It dominated the Lancaster House Conference Agreement, especially its acquisition, allocation and distribution amongst the races. There were four types of land tenure that the country inherited at independence (Large Scale Commercial Farmers (LSCF) and urban areas; Freehold Tenure of Small Scale Commercial Farms (SSCF); Communal Areas and State Land) with 4 000 large-scale white commercial farmers occupying 11,2 million hectares; more than 1 million rural families occupied 16,3 million hectares of dry, less fertile and less productive lands; 10 000 small-scale farmers occupying 1,2 million hectares; 70 000 families were resettled on 2 million hectares, and only 0,5 million hectares were left for state farming (Takavarasha, 1994, 165).

At independence therefore, the government sought a redress in land allocations and distribution with the view to reduce rural poverty and give space to the participation of indigenous people in the national economy. The Lancaster House Conference Agreement fell short in providing adequate frameworks for acquiring and distributing land, a factor that pushed the Government of Zimbabwe to enact the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 to provide an operational framework for land issues and processes. This Act authorized compulsory acquisition of land by the Government following evidence of slow delivery of land to landless blacks under the willing buyer–willing seller approach. However, the Government did not have enough resources to compensate those whose land would be compulsorily acquired for redistribution. At a donor's conference that was held in 1998 to mobilize financial support for the second phase of the land reform and resettlement programme (LRRP II), pledges were made on the condition that financial support would come only after clear land policy and accompanying mechanisms for transparency and accountability were in place – to which the Government objected. Thus, the LRRP II was never implemented.

In effect, land reforms undertaken in the first two decades were falling short of expected policy targets. This situation fuelled the rise of unhappy scenarios of random land invasions across the country, which the Government effectively managed to control. But after the advent of the rejection of the draft constitution in a referendum in 2000, the government embarked on a fast track land reform programme, arguably exploiting the land crisis for political benefit. It indirectly approved the random land invasions by landless peasants by choosing to take no action against them, and in the process making these unlawful invasions as expressive of state policy on land acquisition. This can arguably be interpreted as attempts by the state to regain lost favor with frustrated sections of the landless peasants. This was followed by numerous amendments to the Land Acquisition Act to accommodate the new socio-political developments. To date some of the processes and legal procedures relating to the land policy are unconstitutional and punitive, confusing and disorderly. Thus notwithstanding the centrality of the land issue in Zimbabwe, land reform policy approaches have largely been a case of 'implement first, formulate and legislate later". It resonates with some postulations in the 'garbage-can' model.

4.2.2 Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Policy

Drawing from the background of colonial black marginalization in almost every sector in the economy, the indigenization policy's main provisions state that every existing business with an asset value of US$500 000 or more, whether foreign or domestic, has to submit completed official forms describing the business and showing its plan for ensuring that, within 5years, indigenous Zimbabweans will own at least 51 percent of the shares (www.mydie.gov.zw). Failure to submit the forms, after a reminder, will render the owner of the business, or every director, guilty of an offence and liable to a fine and/or imprisonment for up to 5 years.

The rationale behind the promulgation of the policy is to empower black populations which were disadvantaged in the colonial era, to give them a chance to partake in the national economy through owning businesses and generally increasing their stake in the corporate sector. The strength of this policy is therefore premised on the nobility of the cause that gave impetus to its creation. This sunny side is however counterbalanced by an equally controversial and highly contentious side. Controversies have risen from the very contents of the policy, as well as the implications thereof. For instance, under Section 15 of the Act, the Minister establishes a database of people who want indigenous Zimbabweans to acquire shares in their businesses, and of indigenous Zimbabweans who wish to "partner" such people. The problem with this Section is that it gives the Minister much leeway to impose politically acceptable "partners" upon reluctant businesses, which altogether will make a marriage of the unwilling, where partners are not chosen on agreement or suitability but political merit.

Another obvious negative implication of the policy is its stalling of the investment drive. The policy makes the country an undesirable investment destination. The condition of surrendering 51 per cent to locals is an exorbitant price to pay, making the whole exercise a disempowerment of the investors. These adverse investment conditions seem to be the reasons why the Namibian Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) has been met with greater acceptance from the business community while the Zimbabwean policy has faced great resistance. The Zimbabwean policy statement is also vague on the issue of National Indigenization Fund (which is aimed at providing poor locals with start-up capital). Questions have been posed, such as how the money for the fund is going to be mobilized? What are the criteria for accessing these funds? This said, the unavoidable question of transparency automatically comes in. The policy is vague on the definition of "indigenous Zimbabweans". Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that despite numerous controversies (some highlighted above) that taint the policy, its proponents are continually mustering energies to push for its implementation.

4.2.3 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA)

AIPPA, together with POSA were crafted in the heat of political crisis when the incumbent party was desperate for political survival and legitimacy. AIPPA mainly seeks to control the media. It sets the condition that local journalists should be accredited by a government-appointed panel which is constituted predominantly of members sympathetic to the ruling party. AIPPA outlaws the full-time operation of foreign correspondents in the country. Reporting on Cabinet and other Government bodies' meetings is also forbidden. It further allows the government to suppress any publication of what the government-appointed panel may perceive as 'subversive' or 'falsehoods' that may engender public alarm or despondency. AIPPA came soon after the presidential elections, when the private media had gained much ground, exposing various excesses of government and criticizing its shortfalls. The implementation of AIPPA has seen arrests of a number of journalists and others taking forced exile. Some have ended up working with offshore radio stations such as Studio 7 in Washington D.C.

4.2.4 Public Order and Security Act (POSA)

This law is to a larger extent a 'resurrection' of its dreaded colonial version: the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA). POSA repealed LOMA, but in actual terms, POSA is almost a mirror image of the latter. There are minimal differences between the two pieces of legislation, and interestingly, they arise in almost similar circumstances. LOMA was passed at a time when political tension posed by the Black Nationalist resistance movement was rising. So the law sought to suppress black resistance. On the other hand, POSA was introduced again at a time of political tension towards the period of the 2002 presidential elections. National challenges at the economic and social fronts had bred public discontent and subsequent rise of opposition politics. So POSA was meant to suppress resistance as well. Thus the two pieces of legislation were introduced at the height of political heat, especially to strangle resistance.

POSA criminalizes the publication or making of false statements wherever such may give rise to feelings of hostility towards or causing hatred, contempt or ridicule of the president or acting president. The law appears to shield the president from criticism or condemnation, and by so doing renders it prone to various interpretations by various sections of society. For instance, it becomes less easy to draw lines between honest criticism and contempt or ridicule of the president. POSA effectively aims at killing opposition politics in the country. There is a documented trend of both subjective interpretation and selective application of this law by the police in the country. Taken together, AIPPA and POSA leave no space for peaceful political opposition. They effectively represent a forfeiture of various freedoms of the citizenry and their participation in the political processes of the country. Since their implementation, there have been reports of the arrests of journalists on the basis of these laws.

4.3 Policy making under the Inclusive Government (2009 to date)

Third decade policy making should also be situated within the Inclusive Government framework. The coalition government was formed in September 2009. It has not been easy terrain under this set up, with inter-party political tussles and infighting as well as continuing economic and social challenges. Major policies that have been crafted under the coalition/inclusive government have included the indigenization and economic empowerment policy; diamonds policy; mid-term economic policy (2011 – 2015). The birth of the coalition/inclusive government almost coincided with the beginning of a period of strong mineral (diamonds) resources fever in the nation following the discovery of diamonds in the Marange area in Manicaland Province. But of all the policies made under the inclusive government, the indigenization policy has been the centre of political controversy and contradiction. Under this policy, community share ownership trusts have been established to benefit local people. These are schemes meant for broad-based participation in the shareholding of businesses by communities living in and around areas where mining and tourism companies are exploiting natural resources. However, these trusts have courted controversy in many ways. For example, empowerment establishments such as these trusts have been dominated by men, from leadership to general membership, leaving women and the youths on the sidelines, especially in terms of benefits accruing from projects done under the schemes.

The socio-politico-economic meltdown that ensued in the third decade of independence changed the policy making landscape. Policy making reverted to interventionism, however political expediency and survival rather than long term socioeconomic welfare as the driving force. The fundamentals underpinning the interventionism of the third decade were therefore radically different from the fundamentals of the first decade interventionism. Third decade policy interventionism was motivated by the need to control the apparatus of the state and safeguard the political turf of the incumbent ruling party that was under threat from opposition politics.

Policy making was thus highly unpredictable, temperamental, exclusive, top-down and short-range in focus. The nature of policy making was characterized by what can be described as 'implement first' and 'formulate and adopt' later; policies generally implemented and enforced on the basis of political slogans such as The Look East Policy.

5.0 Concluding Remarks

The interplay between the policy environment and policy decisions is quite visible in public policies crafted and implemented in the country since 1980. The independence euphoria coupled with the assumption of control of apparatus of the state and the generally joyous mood that gripped the whole country in the first decade provides much of the background to the conception and implementation of policies under the broad growth with equity policy framework. It was policy making under state largesse. One top priority during this phase was nation-building and economic growth. The policy catchwords for the decade therefore were "equity", "growth" and "transformation". These guided most of the policy decisions made in almost every sector of the economy. It was a drive to eradicate the ubiquitous cancer of black marginalization inherited from the colonial period. But the glorious dawn of the independence decade however, soon proved too elusive and ambitious to be a permanent establishment, as economic stagnation sat in towards the close of that decade.

Reformation was to follow as a proffered solution towards resuscitation of the economy. The broad framework of ESAP provided the platform for the conception and guideline of reform policies in many sectors. The general idea of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) was partly an outcrop of the new wave of the New Public Management (NPM) movement which sought reformation of public sectors by introducing two broad principles of managerialism and marketization imported from the private sector. Following these precepts, the role of the state in the economy had to be reduced to allow the market in as a major player. This ESAP solution, however, soon confirmed itself as the proverbial medicine that kills the patient. Nothing tangible was delivered. Instead, the economy worsened, with rising inflation levels, worsening poverty levels and a general reduction in gains made in the previous decade in social sectors such as education and health.

It almost seemed like the socio-economic troubles under the economic liberalization period were a harbinger of the record-breaking economic meltdown in the decade that ensued. This is the decade that has aptly been described as a crisis decade, with consecutive years of economic decline and a tense socio-political environment that inspired the adoption of regressive and repressive legislation which largely sought the political survival, and overall control over the citizenry's various liberties by the ruling elite. The laws of this time manifest a strong regulatory bias. And besides such laws, other policies made seem hastily done, by reason of their gross inherent gaps and irregularities that even pose so many contradictions and clashes with other established policies.

Overall, policies made in Zimbabwe from independence to date have the broad attributes of distributive, redistributive and regulatory orientation. A number of cases concur with the assumptions of established theories of policymaking. Policies of the first decade, for instance, show a clear inclination to the assumptions of society centered public policies, which assume – following the dictates of the systems model – that public needs and demands in the policy environment influence policy decisions made. The policy environment is perceived as providing the trigger that turns on the policy process. However, some instances negate this perspective, demonstrating the influence of state-centered theories instead, which assume that policies are made to meet the interests and needs of the ruling elite. In this case, inputs are not necessarily from the environment, but it is now the case of policymakers originating a policy for the environment – probably in some cases following the Platonic thesis of the state playing the benevolent dictator role in the polity.

However, the Zimbabwean experience demonstrates that in as much as some cases practically concur with the Platonic thesis, some manifest an antithesis to it whereby the state runs full-stride as a malevolent dictator. Policies of the third decade of independence testify to the view, especially with the issue of political survival at stake. The need to retain political office and the desire to crush the rising tide of opposition politics led to the adoption of laws with a huge regulatory element seeking to marshal the electorate, civil society and opposition political parties in line with the whims and ends of the incumbent rulers. Hence, it is little wonder that to date the validity of these laws remains contested. This is worsened by the uncertainty dogging the constitution making process currently underway.

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