The Challenges of Public Administration under Inclusive Models of Governments
The Case of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Inclusive models of government entail executive power reconfigurations that invariably change the landscape and conduct of national administration and policy implementation. This article examines the dynamics of public administration under the inclusive government of Zimbabwe, particularly interrogating the ecological contexts, the structure of government bureaucracy, the distribution of executive powers, cabinet decision making, working relations within co-shared ministries as well as institutional capacity for policy implementation and monitoring. Research findings indicate that while the macro environmental contexts have substantially stabilized, the major frontiers of public administration are in a frail state, choked by a top heavy government bureaucracy, inter-party bureaucratic politics and patronage, weak fiscal resource base and lack of collective will at the levels of decision making and policy implementation. Observed scenarios underline the need to institutionalize a culture of complying with the fundamentals of public administration. Formal structures of authority need to be empowered against informal structures. Best practices of inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, merit, national focus and political neutrality should inform and guide the practice of public administration within the three arms of government.

Key Words: *Public administration and decision making under inclusive government, structure of bureaucracy, bureaucratic politics, policy implementation and monitoring.*

1.0. Introduction

1.1. The Public Administration Question

While by the 1990s, inclusive models of governments had been embraced in several African countries (Carl Le Van, 2001; ICG, 2009; Jarstad, 2006; Bates, 2008; Bratton, 2008), systematic research and scholarly publications on public administration under these models is on the lean side. This is despite the fact that inclusive models of governments entail executive power reconfigurations that inevitably transform the structural and operational frameworks of public administration. The adoption of inclusive models of governments also carries the risk of smuggling inter-party struggles into government bureaucracies. It is also instructive to note that under inclusive governments, ministries are administered on co-sharing basis-scenarios that may generate relational challenges within ministries. Slight signs of discord between the political bureaucracy and the appointed bureaucracy, is set to communicate conflicting signals to administrators at various levels of government.

The inclusive government of Zimbabwe presents an interesting case study because since the dawn of independence in 1980, its political leadership had been drawn from one political party-ZANU PF, a party that is closely linked with the seven-year grueling liberation struggle against colonial rule. Over the years, the boundary between government and party increasingly got blurred, resulting in scenarios in which loyalty to government is synonymous with loyalty to the political party in power (Makumbe, 2011; Herbst, 1990; Nhema, 2002, Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa, 2005). At the time of the formation of the inclusive government, the ruling political party had become institutionalized in all government ministries and state bodies, almost constituting the de facto face of government. Cursory review of public administration literature suggests that these scenarios have had far reaching effects on the capacity of the bureaucracy to comply with fundamentals of public administration such as political neutrality, merit-based recruitments and appointments and accountability (Lungu, 1998: Levitan, 1942, Adu, 1962, Agere, 1998).

A fundamental question in this article is how public service structures that had operated for over three decades under a political leadership drawn from one ruling political party, will be able to render impartial loyalty to an executive leadership that is drawn from three political parties. Equally critical is the extent to which the multi-party-constituted cabinet will be able to make decisions that reflect collective will and vision. Interrogation of these fundamental issues was guided by the following questions:

- To what extent do prevailing environmental contexts facilitate sound public administration?
- To what extent does the structure of the inclusive government facilitate effective public administration?
- Does the distribution of executive power create a framework for good public administration?
- Does the conduct of cabinet business reflect collective focus?
- To what extent have bureaucratic bodies such as the parliament, the council of ministers, JOMIC and the Organ of National Healing and Reconciliation effectively executed their mandates?
- How does the political bureaucracy relate within government ministries?
- To what extent has the professional bureaucracy conducted itself under the multi-party led government?
- Can it be concluded that the inclusive government of Zimbabwe has created space for best practices of public administration?
- What measures should be put in place to strengthen public administration under inclusive models of government?

2.0. The Inclusive Government of Zimbabwe

The inclusive government of Zimbabwe was formed in 2009 as a follow-up to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that had been signed in 2008 among the three main political parties-the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change-MDC-T and MDC-M. The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the ruling party since 1980, is an ensemble of the two main liberation political parties-ZANU and ZIPRA. The two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change emerged as an opposition political party around 2000 and ran as one party until 2005 under the banner of the Movement for Democratic Change. The GPA, through its twenty five Articles, created the framework of the inclusive government of Zimbabwe by outlining the structure of the bureaucracy, executive power distribution, formalities guiding appointments of senior posts as well as principles that should underpin the conduct of business. In this way, the GPA provides the structural and value consideration that should inform and guide public administration under the inclusive government. Article XX of the GPA was incorporated into the Constitution of Zimbabwe as Schedule 8 following Constitutional Amendment Number 19 of 11 February 2009. Schedule 8 specifically provides for the appointments by the Executive President, of two Vice Presidents, a Prime Minister, two Deputy Prime Ministers and 31 cabinet ministers and 15 deputy ministers while other Articles (as shown below) outline the expected principles, namely:

- unity of purpose (Articles 1, 11, 111, and IV),
- inclusiveness, transparence, non-partisanship, impartiality (Article V, VI),
- equality and cooperation (Article V11, X, XII, XIV and XVIII),
- observance of institutional authority, rule of law, merit-based recruitments (Articles VIII, XI and XIII),
- political neutrality (Article XIV), and

periodic monitoring and review of government programmes (Article XX111) (*Government of Zimbabwe*: *Global Political Agreement*, 2008).

It is instructive to note that the principles espoused under the GPA are generally consistent with those in classical and contemporary public administration literature (Brewer, 2007; Heady, 1991; Mosher, 1968; Riccucci, 2010; Dwivedi, 1978; Riggs, 1980; Nigro and Nigro, 1984; Dobel, 1990; Geuras & Garofalo, 2005; Menzel &White, 2011; Lungu, 1993; Langbein & Knack, 2010). There is an implicit assumption in the GPA that observance of these administrative principles holds the key to the socioeconomic recovery and enhanced public service delivery. To this end, how far these principles are reflected in the conduct of business within government ministries and state organs is a central question in this article.

Prior to the formation of the inclusive government, the country had witnessed a decade-long socio-politico-economic implosion in which the economy and general living standards had declined to unsustainable levels, inflation soaring to an all historic level of 231 million percent by July 2008 (*Government of Zimbabwe Budget Statement*, 2009). Most government ministries and state bodies, including those in the health and education sectors, had been relegated to hollow entities- with little resource capacity to execute their mandates. In some cases, ministerial jurisdictional boundaries got blurred. For instance, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, traditionally a functionary of the ministry of finance, had through involvement in quasi fiscal activities, intruded into the fiscal sphere almost elbowing out the ministry of finance. By the close of 2008, the local currency had become valueless.

3.0. The Challenges of Public Administration in Zimbabwe

3.1. Political Challenges

While the socio-political environment has visibly improved with structures (such as the Organ of National Healing and Reconciliation and Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) in place; partisan politics remained a major setback to sound public administration under the inclusive government. The inclusive government appears captive to the decisions of informal structures of power. Scenarios since the formation of the inclusive government suggest that decisions arrived at the ZANU PF Politburo (the top most decision making organ), are almost treated as government decisions, seemingly overshadowing those of the cabinet (the apex decision body of government). Indications are that the ZANU PF party wields most of the powers and privileges it enjoyed as the only ruling party before the formation of the inclusive government. Its interests seem to predominate in the national print and electronic media. Conferment of the National Hero Status is largely unilaterally decided by the ZANU PF politburo. Inter-party political dynamics are also thwarting efforts directed towards national healing and reconciliation. The minister of finance identifies informal centers of power as one of the "triple demons" dogging the inclusive government (Government of Zimbabwe, Budget Statement, 2012, 5). While an Organ for National Healing and Reconciliation (with a three-party ministerial structure) was established, its impact is thwarted by lack of common vision on how to tackle its delicate mandate. The Organ is also yet to have an enabling legislation.

3.2. Economic and Fiscal Challenges

A stable economic and fiscal environment is critical to effective public administration and policy implementation. Public administration without adequate fiscal support is a nullity (Goel, 1995). Research findings point to an economic climate that has assumed relative stability and predictability since the formation of the inclusive government. Annual inflation has declined to single digit figures while critical sectors such as tourism and finance have also experienced some notable growth. Several measures have also been adopted to strengthen fiscal space, namely;

- The signing of the Zimbabwe Economic Trade Revival Facility (ZETREF) which is aimed at channeling funds towards manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, tourism and textiles.
- A five-year Distressed and Marginalized Areas Fund (DiMAF) established between Government and Old Mutual Zimbabwe.
- A Diaspora Bond in which the government seeks to mobilize potential savings from non-resident Zimbabweans.
- The launch of the Accelerated Arrears Clearance, Debt and Development Strategy (ZAADDS) which provides a policy framework arrears clearance, debt management and re-engagement with the international financial institutions .
- The establishment in 2010 of the Zimbabwe AID & Debt Management Office (ZADMO) to assume responsibility over debt management.
- Efforts directed towards reconciliation and validation of the external debt, with technical assistance from UNCTAD and the Macro-economic and Financial Management Institute (MEFMI) (*Government of Zimbabwe, Accelerated Arrears Clearance, Debt and Development Strategy*, 2012, pp: 1-26)

However, notwithstanding these improvements, the economic and fiscal contexts of public administration decision making remained visibly stressed at both the structural and ecological fronts.

The productive sector continues to experience financing and power supply challenges while the mobilization of external financing emerged as a major challenge to the inclusive government; the donor community generally opting to channel aid through NGOs rather than through government structures. Equally disturbing is that despite the discovery of diamonds in 2006 in the Chiadzwa village of Marange in the Manicaland province, the diamond revenue head has generally underperformed, the Minister of Finance ascribing this to "transparency challenges over diamond revenue streams from mining at Chiadzwa and the rest of the mining sector" (*Government of Zimbabwe, Budget Statement*, 2012, pp: 13, 68).

3.3. Top Heavy Government Bureaucracy

Public administration is executed within a top heavy government bureaucracy comprising 41 ministers, 20 deputy ministers and 6 principals. This structure is 33 per cent above the legal requirement of 31 ministers and 15 deputy ministers provided for in constitutional amendment number 19 of the GPA. A governmental structure with two vice presidents and two deputy prime ministers, three ministers of the Organ of National Healing and Reconciliation is a luxury which the inclusive government can hardly sustain, fiscally. Management literature generally associates obese bureaucracies with problems of coordination, duplication, wastage, corruption and inefficiency (Knack, 2007; Peters & Savoe, 1994, Zhou, 2011; Kernaghan, 1973; Shafritz & Hyde, 2007). The bureaucracy is also a major drain on the fiscus. Huge budgetary allocations have had to be channeled towards ministerial salaries and emoluments of office (*Government of Zimbabwe: Budget Statements*, 2010, 2011 & 2012). Political expediency appears to have motivated the creation of additional portfolios-most of which are yet to justify their existence in terms of execution of mandates. Some sectors ministries could either have been collapsed into one ministry or operate as departments rather than fully-fledged ministries. These include ministries responsible for environment and tourism, ministries in the information sector, ministries responsible for justice and constitutional affairs, among others. This could have saved some of the conflicts arising from blurred lines of responsibilities, notable ones being those between the ministry of Information Communication Technology and the ministry of Media, Information and Publicity. The inclusive government also dented its legitimacy by failing to comply with the 31-member cabinet legal requirement. Emerging from these observations is that the inclusive government bureaucracy is a potential encumbrance to effective public administration and policy implementation.

3.4. Distribution of Executive Powers

The way executive power and authority is shared in government has a direct influence on governance within the state (Spears, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2005; Kettle & Fessler, 2009; Carl Le Van, 2001). Those in control of the formal levers of power directly shape the nature of decisions and policies adopted in government bureaucracies. He who governs determines the overall choice of administrative instruments. In the inclusive government, distribution of power and authority is visibly skewed towards the Executive President who is Head of State and Government, Commander in Chief of the armed forces, Chairperson of the Cabinet (the top most decision making organ of government) and the National Security Council (which includes army, police and security services).The President is also the president of ZANU PF. The impression is that deviation from the GPA provisions resulted in the President's political party (ZANU PF) being effectively in the majority in government and the cabinet. In the government, ZANU PF has 25 ministers while the MDC factions (MDC-T and MDC-M) have 22 ministers. In the cabinet, ZANU PF ended with 22 posts while the MDC factions have 20 posts. The table below illustrates this:

Table 1
Distribution by party in Cabinet and Government

	Posts provided in GPA		Actual posts in government and cabinet	
	ZANU PF	MDC factions	ZANU PF	MDC factions
Principals	3	3	3	3
Cabinet Ministers	15	16	19	17
Cabinet Total	18	19	22	20
Non Cabinet Ministers	0	0	3	2
Total in Government	18	19	25	22

Source: www. insiderzim.com

This skewed executive power distribution is also manifest at the ministerial level where powerful ministries such as defense, foreign affairs, local government, home affairs and security are effectively under the ZANU PF component of the inclusive government. Any party in control of these portfolios effectively controls the formal and informal substantive levers of power. This distribution of executive power appears to have distorted the separation of powers and even weakened checks and balances within the inclusive government. Since the formation of the inclusive government, approval powers traditionally reposed in the legislature appear to have shifted to the cabinet, in particular, the Principals. Critical bills are first endorsed by the cabinet before being debated in parliament-scenarios that critics view as having relegated the role of the bicameral parliament to mere rubber stamping cabinet decisions (Jonathan Moyo, Tsholotcho MP quoted on www.newzimbabwesituation.com, accessed on 3/5/12)

3.4. Cabinet Decision Making

The cabinet is the engine of government. Its conduct of business has a direct bearing on public administration. Cabinet decisions set the tone and broad framework guiding the implementation of public policies and programs. They also reflect national priorities. The inclusive government has a thirty-six-member cabinet that serves as its apex decision-making body. It is chaired by the President and through its various committee structures, evaluates and adopts all government policies and programs as well as ensuring that government ministries and state bodies are sufficiently resourced to carry out their functions. However, cabinet decision making generally suffers from lack of collective vision. There is also mutual distrust among cabinet members. The chair and the deputy are pulling in different directions-bickering over policy priorities while cabinet ministers see themselves first and foremost as party ministers. There is also a lackadaisical approach to cabinet business at a time when the cabinet is expected to act as the central agent for transforming the economy. Its effectiveness has also been dogged by frequent rescheduling of cabinet meetings.

Cursory review of most of the deals negotiated by the inclusive government cabinet raises questions on its commitment to national interests. One case in point is the sale of the Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (ZISCO), a national steel company (with an estimated value of US$30 billion) which was sold in 2011 for US$700 million to an Indian company Essar Africa Holdings. The Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara later criticized the deal as having been done without "due consideration to issues of quantity and value of iron ore involved by a cabinet that is blind, deaf and dumb"(http://forum.newzimbabwe.com; www.thezimbwemail.com/zimbabwe).

Another testing case is the civil service salary issue. Civil servants are currently earning a net salary ranging between US$200 and US$300 in an economy whose poverty datum level is well above five hundred dollars. In the pre-inclusive government era, the civil service sector lost most of its highly skilled personnel to neighboring and overseas countries. Since its formation, the inclusive government suffered from perennial threats of industrial action. The cabinet is yet to make a clearly articulated policy statement on this issue; the leadership preferring to react to the issue in their individual capacities at political rallies and social gatherings which regrettably politicized the salary issue. Given that the civil service is the administrative machinery of the inclusive government, a lassie faire attitude towards this sector not only destroys the foundation of public administration and policy implementation, but also puts the economic recovery drive into jeopardy.

Equally questionable is how the inclusive government cabinet regulated diamond mining activities in the Chiadzwa area of Marange in Manicaland. Diamonds were discovered in this area in 2006 and since then four mining companies (Mbada, Anjini, Diamond Mining Corporation and Marange Resources) have been licensed to operate in the area. While diamond mining had the potential to serve as the national cash cow for the inclusive government, diamond mining activities have been dogged by lack of transparency and accountability in the marketing and remittance of diamond revenue to the treasury, the minister of finance even expressing fear of the existence of structures that are parallel to the treasury (see *Government of Zimbabwe: Budget Statements* 2010, 2011 and 2012). The cabinet appeared to have adopted a policy of inaction over the issue. A coherent cabinet position on this matter is yet to emerge. The case is even more pressing given that national efforts directed towards re-opening of foreign credit lines is not performing as expected. Under these conditions of limited external financing, fiscal authorities turn to the diamond sector for bail out. This explains why in the 2012 national budget, the inclusive government projected US$600 million revenue contribution from the sale of diamonds. Could this lack of active policy action on such a substantive issue be pointer to an inclusive government cabinet in captivity by sectional interests?

3.5. Capacity to Supervise the Implementation of Government Policies

Periodic review of government policies and programmes is critical in ensuring that intended benefits are delivered to target groups (Langbein & Knack, 2010). The inclusive government set up a Council of Ministers (chaired by the Prime Minister) with a mandate to serve as the executive arm of the cabinet by overseeing the implementation of the work of government and cabinet decisions. The Council of Minister (which as the name implies comprise all ministers), has since the formation of the inclusive government, rolled out a Government Work Programme that outlines government priorities, objectives and targets covering provision of basic services, infrastructural development, as well as advancing and safeguarding basic freedoms through legislative reform and constitutional processes. Its mandates are therefore all-sector-encompassing. Notwithstanding the existence of this plan of action, its operational visibility has been low note. The Council of Ministers suffered from lack of cooperation from other inter-party structures in government. Government ministries, departments and public entities appear hesitant to provide information. Scenarios point to traces of fear within government bureaucracies. Provincial and district tours by the Prime Minister (as chairperson of the Council of Ministers) have often been met with little cooperation from relevant authorities. The impression is that officials conducting government business are viewed as doing party business. It would also appear that institutions created on the basis of the GPA are not viewed as formal structures of government. The chairperson of the Council of Ministers appears legally powerless to enforce compliance. Its reliance on suasion is not making visible inroads.

3.6. Compliance Monitoring

The inclusive government monitors its compliance with the GPA through the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC). All complaints relating to the implementation of the GPA are obliged to be channeled through this body whose membership is drawn from all the three parties in government. JOMIC serves as a catalyst in creating and promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust, dialogue and understanding between the parties. In line with these mandates JOMIC has since its creation, established a website (www.jomic.co.zw), landline number (04 307787/9), email (jomic2009@jomic.co.zw) and JOMIC Face book page-in a bid to facilitate interaction with members of the public. Its website refers to the setting up of inter-party liaison committees at provincial and district level to deal with media issue and disputes arising from the land reform exercise. Notwithstanding these efforts, JOMIC's performance is lowly reviewed. Its recommendations appear overshadowed by those of the principals. It is further weakened by lack of statutory existence. In the absence of such legislation, it has no power to enforce its decisions. It relies on moral suasion. JOMIC's composition also raises issues of conflict of interest as its members are also the ones who are implementing GPA (Moyo, 2011). Under these scenarios, the implementer becomes the evaluator-a recipe for subjective appraisal. Compliance monitoring is also weakened by lack of consensus on how to monitor issues relating to youth programs, enforcement of the national healing and reconciliation programs, removal of sanctions, security and media sector reforms, among others. Scenarios of this nature send conflicting signals to public managers in various sectors of the economy.

3.7. Legislative Oversight

A probing legislature is integral to effective public administration. It strengthens merit, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and efficient resource use within government ministries, departments and state bodies (Mulgan, 2000; Brewer, 2007). The inclusive government inherited a bicameral legislative system operating through committee structures, some of which have been very visible in scrutinizing policies and actions of cluster ministries falling under their jurisdiction. One such committee, the Budget Committee, was actively involved in pre-budget hearings and post budget reviews while the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) through its scrutiny of audited reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General, has helped in revealing abuses of assets in government ministries (*Parliamentary Debates, Volume 31*, No.8, 13 October, 2004 p: 423). These activities go a long way in strengthening the oversight roles of parliament. However the quality of parliamentary debates has not lived up to expectations. The inclusive government legislature is generally viewed as having adopted a business as usual approach to parliamentary business, some members of parliament bunking meetings for twenty one consecutive parliamentary sittings without official leave (www.voanews.com accessed on 11/05/12). There is a visible perception that the inclusive government parliament played second fiddle to the cabinet, generally rubber-stamping decisions made by cabinet. Parliamentary debates have also tended to be partisan, petty and low note in development thrust.

4.0. Public Administration Experiences in Selected Areas

4.1. The Public Service

The civil service is the engine of every government. Public administration is executed by civil servants operating within various government bureaucracies (Peters & Savoe, 1984; Adu, 1969; Lungu, 1998). In recruiting the civil service, the PSC is expected to adhere to the merit principle. However, unfolding scenarios suggest that inclusive government inherited a public service with a severely compromised recruitment record-struggling to wad off allegations of 75 000 ghost workers on its payroll. Although the inclusive government carried out a nation-wide public service audit in 2009 amid high expectations that it would lead to the flushing out of the alleged "ghost workers", its findings are yet to be tabled before parliament. They remain a closely guarded secret while the "ghost workers" raising the risk that the fiscally hamstrung treasury may continue to be prejudiced (*Government of Zimbabwe: Budget Statement*, 2012, p: 13).

The inclusive government also inherited a top civil service bureaucracy that has strong kinship ties with the ZANU PF party, the bulk of which have ties dating back to the days of the liberation struggle. Public service structures are struggling to maintain political neutrality under the context of the three-party executive leadership structure. Some top brass members of the civil service have been frequently quoted openly declaring their political allegiance to the ZANU PF party and even castigating the political leadership from the MDC factions (*NewsDay*, 26/06/12). Such pronouncements regrettably send wrong signals to lower level civil service structures. The net picture is of a public service that was struggling to comply with the fundamental ethics of public administration.

4.2. Public Enterprises

Public enterprises are the central instruments through which governments provide essential services to its citizens. This sector is also critical because it is among the highest loss making sectors of the economy (Zhou, 2007). Analysis of decisions made in this sector throws valuable insights into the nature of state administrative capacity. Under the inclusive government, public enterprises are expected to play a key role in promoting the economic recovery drive. There is a ministry of State Enterprises and Parastatals responsible for spearheading the restructuring of public enterprises. A Corporate Governance Framework for State Enterprises and Parastatals was launched in 2010 to provide principles and guidelines aimed at improving accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of public enterprises. A State Enterprises and Management Bill paving the way for the establishment of the Enterprises Restructuring Agency was also approved by cabinet while ten state parastatals (ZiscoSteel, Noczim, Agribank, Zimbabwe Power Company, Grain Marketing Board, Cold Storage Company, Civil Aviation of Zimbabwe, Air Zimbabwe, Allied Timbers and Sedco) were also identified for restructuring (*NewsDay,* 16 June 2011).

However, in spite of this institutional framework aground, the restructuring exercise has experienced little progress. The only sale involving the Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (ZISCO) that was concluded in 2011 between the inclusive government and Essar Africa Holdings of India was stalled over the transfer of ore reserves amid revelations that this sale of US$750 million could have been prejudiced the government of around US$30 billion (www.newzimbabwe.com). Equally worthy noting was that despite the launch of the corporate governance framework in 2010, legislation is yet to be put in place. The parastatal sector remained riddled with viability challenges, scenarios that saw the Air Zimbabwe grounding its operations at the end of 2011. Most parastatal boards remain poorly constituted in terms of membership, autonomy and capitalization. Interference by parent ministries is still widespread, ministers selecting investors and partners without consulting relevant government entities and inter-ministerial committees (wwwvoanews.com-accessed on 11 May 2012).

4.3. Urban Authorities

The inclusive government inherited a national urban local authority predominantly run by elected MDC councilors and Mayors. These local authorities fall under the Ministry of Local Government, National Housing and Urban Development. The responsible minister is a ZANU PF party ministerial nominee while the deputy minister is an MDC T party nominee. Scenarios in urban local authorities suggest a sector that has emerged as a hotbed of inter-party politics. There is mutual mistrust between the two political heads of the ministry.

There was also friction between MDC councilors and mayors with the responsible minister whom they accused of being partisan and unilateral in decision making while the minister, in turn, accused of inefficiency and corruption. Under these circumstances, the sector has been home to frequent cases of firing of elected councilors and mayors and the setting up of commissions viewed as unilaterally appointed by the minister.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The inclusive government of Zimbabwe has not created enough space for best practices of public administration. The core frontiers of public administration are in a frail state. It is suffocated at the structural and ecological level. Its contexts are encumbered by inter-party politics and limited fiscal space. In fact, the inclusive government casts an institution captive to informal structures of power. Fiscal space is weakened by lack of external financing coupled with lack of transparency and accountability in the remittance of revenues into the treasury. The inclusive government treasury is struggling to exercise control over the entire frontiers of national revenue.

While the shift to multi-party executive leadership model in Zimbabwe was a positive development, this however transferred inter-party struggles into government bureaucracies. Inter-party struggles are now fought within bureaucratic institutions-scenarios that are compromising national vision and collective responsibility within the cabinet, parliament, council of ministers, JOMIC, ministries, local authorities and state organs. These inter-party tussles are also communicating discordant signals to subordinate structures within the national administrative system. The top heavy inclusive government bureaucracy is stifling prospects for effective public administration and policy implementation. Besides creating coordination, duplication and budgetary support challenges; the bureaucracy was generally at odds with the role and mandates of the inclusive government as an agent for socioeconomic recovery.

The distribution of executive power in the inclusive government tilted the balance of power towards one party in the inclusive government, scenarios that do not augur well for sound public administration and institutional governance. This skewed executive power distribution is also manifest at the ministerial level where powerful ministries such as defense, foreign affairs, home affairs and security are effectively under the ZANU PF party component of the inclusive government. Control of these key portfolios reposes that single party with substantive control over formal and informal levers of power in the polity. This asymmetrical distribution of executive power may have accounted for the observed one party dominance at the policy formulation and implementation levels of the inclusive government.

The cabinet is in principle the engine of government. Its decisions set the tone and broad framework of national administration. In the inclusive government, the cabinet is expected to play a proactive role in engineering socioeconomic recovery. However, the rather oversized thirty-six-member cabinet is undermined by lack of collective focus among its members. The principals are pulling in different directions-bickering over policy priorities while cabinet ministers confuse their roles as party and government ministers. Cabinet has a rather lackadaisical approach characterized by a policy of inaction even on matters that pose a threat to socioeconomic recovery. Review of most of the deals negotiated under the inclusive government raise serious questions on its commitment to national interests.

A probing legislature is the handmaiden of effective public administration and policy implementation. It strengthens accountability, transparency, responsiveness and efficiency in resource use within government ministries and state bodies. While parliamentary portfolio committees remained visible in scrutinizing policies and actions of cluster ministries falling under their jurisdiction, this probing has not been reflected in parliamentary debates which have in the main assumed a disturbing a petty and partisan bent. A parliament in which some members of parliament bunk meetings for twenty one consecutive sittings without official leave does not augur well for effective public administration. The effectiveness of public administration mainly hinges on how national service systems are constituted. Public policies are executed by civil servants operating within government bureaucracies. There is need for merit in recruitment plus political neutrality in the day to day conduct of public service business. The inclusive government inherited a severely skill-drained and politically-compromised civil service that is yet to wad off allegations of ghost workers on its payroll.

Policy implementation and service delivery capacity is largely determined by how ministers (as political heads of ministries) relate with permanent secretaries (as administrative heads of ministries). Unfolding scenarios in most ministries point to working relations that are generally characterized by politically-induced mistrust and friction. This friction is visible at both the horizontal and vertical levels of government bureaucracies. At the horizontal level, it pits the minister against the minister while at the vertical level it is evident between ministers and top civil structures.

In ministries headed by the two MDC nominees, permanent secretaries appear more powerful than their political heads. In fact, scenarios in the inclusive government of Zimbabwe point to a possibility of portfolio ministers with no substantive power to enforce their directives.

5.2. Recommendations

- The contextual, structural and operational frontiers of public administration needs to be reconstituted and strengthened by:

    - Empowering formal structures of authority against party structures.
    - Cultivating a culture of transparency and accountability in the conduct of government business. Particular effort should be taken to breathe transparency in revenue collection processes.
    - Ensuring that state bodies such as JOMIC and the Organ of National Healing and Reconciliation are backed by legislation. Without such enabling frameworks, they risk being hollow and symbolic bodies that have no power to enforce their recommendations.
    - Cabinet needs to take stock of its conduct of business. It has to shift from the business as usual approach to a transformative role. This is critical because its decisions determine national priorities and the pace with which policy implementation is executed.
    - Ensuring that public service structures conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with their professional code of ethics. Public servants, as career officials do not belong to any party. They should be apolitical.

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