



An Analysis of the Existing Form of Governance Politics in Zimbabwe and Proposals for a New Kind of Policymaking

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses Zimbabwe's existing governance politics, specifically focusing on the politics of policy making. We argue that the existing form of governance politics in Zimbabwe is characterised by the vertical modality of rule whereby policies are crafted unilaterally at the apex of the party-state with little or no input from affected stakeholders – including ordinary citizens – and then fed to citizens who are therefore treated as dispensable policy takers. We further argue that the current forms of politics and policymaking are similarly exclusionary in nature, relying on centralised governance approaches where the central government and the ruling party unilaterally make governance decisions and formulate policy without consulting citizens and other key stakeholders. Finally, we propose the adoption of a 'distributed problem-solving model' which acknowledges and prioritises the unique needs and interests of different social groups in governance and policy making.

Key words: inclusive policymaking, citizens, governance, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Two conceptions of politics and policy making compete with each other for dominance in the governance of the political community; one is vertical and the other horizontal. In this paper, the former is treated as 'old' style, unreformed and even predatory politics while the latter is what in prevailing literature is increasingly referred to as 'collaborative governance'. We argue that the existing form of governance politics in Zimbabwe is characterised by the vertical modality of rule whereby policies are crafted unilaterally at the apex of the party-state with little or no input from affected stakeholders – including ordinary citizens – and then fed to citizens who are consequently treated as dispensable policy takers. To illuminate into this argument, the study is divided into two broad parts. The first part of the essay unpacks aspects of the existing forms of politics in Zimbabwe while the second part considers proposals for a new kind of policymaking.

Our discussion implicitly juxtaposes two forms of politics and their attendant two forms of policymaking. Further, we contend that the current forms of politics and policymaking are less than good enough largely due to their exclusionary nature and should transition towards better politics of inclusivity that in turn lead to inclusive policy making. The challenge, therefore, is to move from the politics and policy-making of exclusion to that which is anchored in inclusiveness. Our discussion mainly posits that at the root of Zimbabwe's complex and long-running crisis is the problem of exclusionary governance whose malign effects ramify throughout the country's political economy and society.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The most significant historically rooted political fact about Zimbabwe politics is its exclusionary texture, which is integrally linked to two sources. The first source relates to 90 years of settler-colonialism whereby race [Blacks vs Whites] was the organising basis for exclusion and inclusion (Gray, 1960; Bowman, 1973; Bratton, 2014). The politics of exclusion of certain population groups on the basis of race, gender, age and other social group categorization was consolidated in the post-independence era, first under the founding president, the long-ruling and now late Robert Mugabe, and later under Mugabe's long-time lieutenant and confidante, Emmerson Mnangagwa who took the political reins in November 2017.

However, after independence, the basis for exclusion shifted from race to other fault lines such as ethnicity, regionalism, gender, nepotism and increasingly social class. The primordial variables like ethnicity, regionalism and nepotism as the basis for inclusion and exclusion have assumed prominence in the Second Republic under Emmerson Mnangagwa (Ndoro, 2022; Matiashe, 2021; Kanyenze, 2021; Masunungure, 2020).

The Rhodesian government's exclusionary tendency in decision making politics was also reinforced during the protracted war of liberation of the 1970s that not only took a racial faultline, but also strengthened authoritarian politics (Masunungure, 1998; Bratton and Masunungure, 2008). The armed struggle infused into the liberation movement a militaristic 'command and control' modality of doing things which leaves little room for consultation of civilians and those outside the command structures.

The militaristic command model of governance and decision-making politics was accentuated after the November 2017 coup when the military placed themselves at the heart of Government. Under current military rule, according to Rekopantswe Mate, Zimbabwe's governance system has been dominated by "triumphant hegemonic militarized masculinity", liberation war struggle credentials have been instrumental in determining access to public office for a "shrinking clique of men" and women and young men have been further marginalized from governance and policy making processes (Mate, 2019). The military way of doing things is also now more self-evident in some ministries that are or were headed by retired senior military officers as is the case with the Ministry of Health where the Minister (Rtd General Constantino Chiwenga) and both the Deputy Minister and the Permanent Secretary are ex-military officers. The Ministry of Agriculture also bears the footprints of the militarisation of civilian institutions and processes and Command Agriculture bears testimony to this. From its inception, Command Agriculture has always been run and commanded by military officers, mostly middle level officers (Mwatwara and Nyakudya, 2021).

Exclusion is therefore a historical legacy that runs through the political and policy life of Zimbabwe since its founding as a modern state in 1890. In sum, the history of Zimbabwe's political economy is the history of exclusion, with ghastly consequences for social cohesion and inclusive national development. Exclusion, it can be asserted, is the big elephant in the room. Further, and worryingly is the fact that exclusion is now a systemic feature, exhibiting itself in virtually every facet of Zimbabwean lives. Today, polarisation born out of an exclusionary modality of governing, is one of the most enduring and

problematic features of Zimbabwe. Empirical survey evidence in the last decade confirms the deep and deepening polarisation in Zimbabwe. Afrobarometer data shows that Zimbabwe is the most politically polarized society among all the 30+ Afrobarometer countries (Bratton and Masunungure, 2018). The analysis of Afrobarometer data by Bratton and Masunungure (2018) concludes that:

Zimbabwe represents an extreme case of political polarization. In short, Zimbabwe's profound levels of partisan polarization lead not only the Southern Africa region, but also the continent (Bratton and Masunungure 2018, p.12).

In order to understand why Zimbabwe has remained in this exclusionary mode of governance which has resulted in this deep polarization, it is important to have conceptual clarity about the actual nature of the country's governance problem. More specifically, it is about understanding the intrinsic link between politics and its most important output, public policy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: BACK TO ARISTOTLE

To be clear, public policy and politics are conjoined twins, though analytically separable. They codetermine each other. As a consequence, it is the quality of politics and public policy in a society that determines whether its citizens are happy or sombre. Critically, because public policy comes out of politics, seldom can we have good public policy from bad politics. So, the dictum should be: 'Seek ye first good politics, and all other things will follow'. The question that

comes up is whether the existing form of politics ‘good politics’ leads to good policymaking. This problematic is not a contemporary one; it is as ancient as civilization as is succinctly articulated in the works of ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle (see Miller, 2022).

Aristotle, the classical Greek philosopher wrote his ageless Politics (350BC) widely considered in Western political philosophy as one of the world’s most important works in the field. He famously declared that “man is by nature a political animal”, just as ‘he’ is a social animal (Barker, p.28). Aristotle rightfully points to how people are predestined to live as socio-political beings and that it is a vital imperative for citizens to engage in political and social life in search of what the ancient Greeks referred to as the ‘good political life’. In other words, Aristotle recognised and agitated for citizen agency, an orientation that is difficult to express in a repressive political environment.

For Aristotle, good politics “...is the way that people from different backgrounds and with diverse views manage to negotiate their clashing interests in order to solve public problems.” (Aristotle as cited in Idasa, 2009). Even more than two thousand years before, Aristotle recognised inclusion as a defining feature of good politics and a pathway to the good political life (Idasa, 2009).

We mention Aristotle for the simple reason that, he, together with many other ancient political thinkers like Confucius were acutely aware that societies thrive if they are anchored on good and inclusive politics. They were also attuned to the fact that societies suffer if they are based on bad or exclusive politics and that is why Aristotle proposed his six-fold regime

classification, comprising three bad regimes and three good ones, as depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Type of Regime

A	B	C
NUMBER OF RULERS	CORRECT GOOD	DEVIANT PERVERTED
One ruler	Monarchy/ royalty Supremely virtuous men	Tyranny/ despotism Rule maintained by force
Few rulers	Aristocracy	Oligarchy (force/corruption)
Many rulers	Polity (glorious mean) Stable middle class government	Democracy (rule by mobs) Anarchy, degenerate by nature

Of the six types of regimes or constitutions, Aristotle preferred polity, which he regarded as the best average and workable constitution (the “Golden Mean”) under most circumstances familiar to human communities. Polity is a form of democracy in which many participate in ruling, and they do so for the public good, that is, for the good of both the rich and the poor. It is a constitution that balances the aspirations of the rich and the poor to the effect that neither group is able to grasp control of the state to further its own ends at the expense of the other.

Going by Aristotle’s political concepts, it would be plausible to argue that contemporary Zimbabweans are living under one of Aristotle’s perverted regimes or constitutions depicted under ‘C’ column in Table 1. This kind of regime is based on the old paradigm of politics of command and control where those at the apex of power

assume that they have a monopoly to govern and know best how to do so. They are the policy makers in the exclusivist sense of the term while those outside the heart of Government constitute the policy takers. In terms of policymaking, this translates to a vertical and linear modality of rule where policies are dictated from above and flow in a hierarchical fashion through various tiers until they get to the bottom of the ladder.

Theoretically, this exclusionist governance style is associated with a conceptualisation of politics that Robert Dahl, an eminent American political scientist, called the ‘lump of power fallacy’ (Dahl, 2002). This is a situation whereby power is thought of as a “single, solid, unbreakable lump” that can be passed from one person to another but cannot be shared. In his seminal book titled *Modern Political Analysis* (2002), Dahl explains this monopolistic and binary mode of thinking about power when articulating that:

“Either one has the power or one has no power”. When power is conceived of as a value, it has only two values: 0 or 1. In sum, “When power is thought of as a lump ... it can be distributed in only one way: some have all the power, and the rest have none (Dahl, 2002 p.26).

ZIMBABWE’S POLICY MAKING POLITICS

The tragedy of Zimbabwe’s politics, like that of many other African countries, has a lot to do with the old-style politics and the attendant centralist policy making, that is, the dichotomous view of power. In this case, those in leadership positions in the ruling party and in the state (often the two are conflated) i.e., the ‘chefs’ hold

all the power. This is essentially why others have criticized the ‘winner-take-all’ or a zero-sum game of electoral politics whereby, the winner takes all that Zimbabwe has followed since independence in 1980. Ironically, the attempt to mitigate the winner-takes all by introducing a quota system in the 2013 Constitution and injecting proportional representation into the electoral system diminished the number of women nominated for constituency-based seats as political parties preferred male candidates for constituency seats (Hamandishe, 2018). This was the case in 2018 and is likely to be repeated in the 2023 parliamentary elections as well as local councils which now also benefit from quotas for both women and the youth. In practical terms and in the context of Zimbabwe politics, this means that when the ruling ZANU-PF party gains and exercises all the power, all other parties and political actors have no power. By extension, policy-making is also informed by this paradigm of exclusion. Those in power ‘eat’ while those outside power ‘starve’. This kind of politics is a recipe for rancorous power politics and produces deep discontent among those who are ‘out’ and are not eating against those who are ‘in’ and are eating. The land redistribution programme is a case that aptly illustrates this point. Several studies conducted have shown how the Fast Track Land Redistribution Programme has been implemented on a partisan and exclusionary basis, with issues of race, ethno-regionalism, gender and class often used to exclude others. While it is an unstated policy, the reality on the ground shows that it is not enough to be a Zimbabwean to be eligible to get land from the state, the custodian of all agricultural land. In addition to one being a bona fide citizen, one also has to be a member of the ruling party and dangle the party card to be considered as a beneficiary of the land redistribution programme

(Kanyenze, 2021 and Muzondidya, 2007). In exclusionist politics, not only is the ruling class the sole decision-makers, they are also the sole resource allocators. President Mnangagwa captured this ZANU PF majoritarian approach to governance politics emphatically in one of his public addresses delivered in 2020. He declares:

“We must be respected. We are the majority. We are the people. We are the government. We are the army. We are the air force. We are the police. We are everything you can think of. We determine who can do mining in Zimbabwe, we determine who can construct a railway line in Zimbabwe. We determine who can build a road in Zimbabwe. No any other party can do so.”¹

The majoritarian and exclusionary form of politics and policymaking can be modelled by modifying a ground-breaking model of politics developed by David Easton in his book, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*.

For Easton, politics is about ‘the authoritative allocation of values for society as a whole’. It is instructive to note that Easton’s definition of politics is also his definition of policy illustrating the symbiotic relationship between politics and policy. His model, as is clear from Figure 1, tries to describe the American democratic policy making process. It has five components: the environment, inputs; the political system, outputs and feedback.

ENVIRONMENT

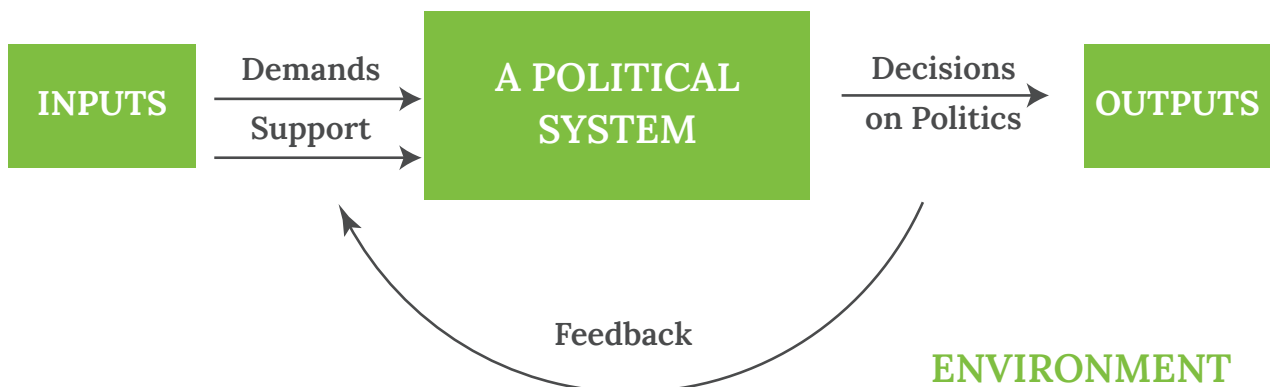


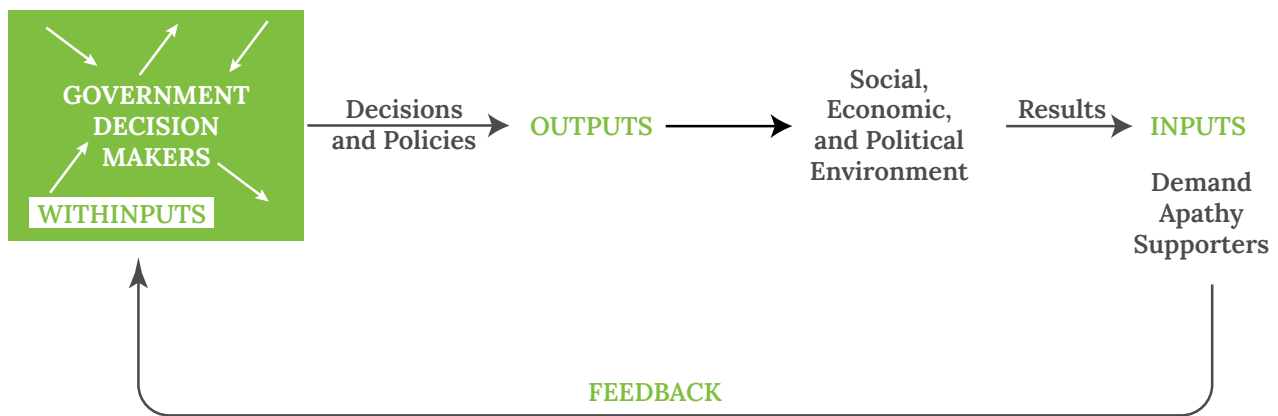
Figure 1: David Easton’s Simplified Systems Model of Politics and Policy Making

Source: David Easton (1965, p.32).

¹“Watch: Mnangagwa declares ZANU-PF superior to Zimbabweans”, Bulawayo 24, at: <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-161947.html>. Also see Godfrey Kanyenze, *Leaving So Many Behind: The Link Between Politics and the Economy*. Harare: Weaver press, 2021, especially Chapter 4. The main title of the topic (*Leaving So Many Behind*) is itself illustrative of the exclusionary developmental processes in Zimbabwe since Independence.

Easton postulates that people in the environment making demand on their policy makers to deal with a whole array of public problems that the citizens have and which they raise for the attention of the policy makers. Therefore, there are demands from citizens to the political system where the decision makers deliberate on the demands and process

some of them into outputs in the form of public policy, programmes and projects. These outputs feed back into the environment where the people who made demands in the first place express satisfaction with the policies or programmes or they express hostility if the outputs are unsatisfactory.



Source: Roskin et. Al. (1988, p.24).

Figure 2: A Modification of Easton’s Model of the Political System and Policy Making

This America-centred model is found wanting when it is applied to less democratic countries. In Figure 2, we see how Easton’s model is rightfully modified to discern the dynamics of policy making in a more closed and opaque polity like Zimbabwe where, instead of decision makers (e.g., the Zimbabwe Government) waiting for demands from the public, they instead originate the demands. Thus, the conversion box or the ‘black box’, comes first in the model to illustrate the prioritisation in the sequencing; the public reacts only later rather than initiating

the policy making process. We see in the box, a lot of demand making inside the heart of power and government. This is the engine room of policymaking and those inside the conversion box actually generate demands within (hence ‘withinputs’) and process them to produce outputs in the form of decisions and policies. In other words, the policy makers do not wait for demands to come from citizens, instead, they unilaterally produce demands of their own, process them and produce outputs. The starkest illustration of such unilateralist policy making

was in the crafting of an array of anti-Covid regulations and Statutory Instruments which the public had no option but to comply with without having contributed to their formulation. Often the effect of such regulations was that they worsened vulnerabilities of both communities and individuals (Magocha, 2021).

Significantly and appropriately, the conversion box should now also be labelled 'Black Box' to demonstrate the opaqueness of the process. Practically, this is the policymaking process taking place inside the Cabinet. In Zimbabwe, the post-Mugabe regime has thrown some light into the dark box by organising post-Cabinet media briefings where one or more ministers (often the Minister of Information) address the media, informing them of the major decisions that the Cabinet deliberated on. This is clearly a big improvement but the partial transparency is being exercised on the output side while on the inputs side, the policy elites do it themselves, consistent with the exclusionist and unilateralist governance style. The ensuing question is whether this is how it should be and the second part of this study is an attempt to answer the question.

In organising human societies, two distinguished paradigms have often stood in opposition to each other. The first defers to the elite as the guiding stars of society and uniquely gifted to rule. As has happened throughout history, this form of politics and policymaking is exclusionary and often, and perhaps inevitably, degenerates into autocracy and tyranny. The second paradigm defers to the inclusionary school of governance where power and governance are shared and the following discussion illuminates into this paradigm

THE CENTRALIST POLICYMAKING LEGACY

Experiences have shown that in the practice of policymaking, over time policy actors come to be associated with distinct styles of policy making to the extent of creating a tradition and definable historical trajectory. When that happens, observers and analysts talk of 'national policy styles' (Howlett & Tosun, 2021) that come to be associated with specific countries and political regimes. In the Zimbabwean context, the national policy style (or approach) should be appreciated from the country's historical background. Postcolonial policymaking approaches in Zimbabwe exhibit strong legacies of both the traditional authority of chiefs and headmen, and the colonial government's authority. Although distinct, the two systems of rulership relied on centralised and unitary systems of governance where the centre unilaterally made decisions and formulated policy without consultations with the base. As a matter of fact, the colonial state was not democratic neither was the traditional leadership system. The two retained hallmarks of authoritarianism, which explained the sidelining of the grassroots in the governance matrix.

Looking at post-independence governance experiences in Zimbabwe, it is apparent that the government has maintained the path of centralism in policymaking that has seen many instances of unilateral policy decisions. For Zwizwai, Kambudzi & Mauwa (2004), the whole scenario points to partisanship in action where the policymaking approach adopted by the post-independence government is based on a "partocracy system", which denotes the dominance of a hegemonic political party that does not only conflate its structures

and governmental ones (the ‘party-state phenomenon’), but also subordinates official state structures to the supremacy of the party. In such a scenario broad-based participation and engagement becomes partisan and not necessarily democratic and equitable.

Sectors such as local government provide evidence of deep-seated centralism where the central government is not showing any interest in relinquishing control over local authorities, which explains the extensive powers that the Minister of Local Government enjoys, mostly at the expense of local councils. Despite the constitutional provision for the implementation of devolution, the central government still retains a tight grip on local government, particularly urban local authorities. There is plain denial of the deserved, constitutionally sanctioned autonomy of local authorities. This is despite the fact that on the occasion of his inauguration, President Mnangagwa articulates the following promise:

“As per our pledge during the campaign, my government will be implementing the constitutional provisions with regards to devolution of government powers and responsibilities. Provinces will now be expected to plan and grow their provincial economies (Sunday News, 2018).

It is now more than four years into his tenure, but all the promises on devolution remain unfulfilled. The government has paid lip-service to the devolution agenda and to date, the provincial and metropolitan councils that, according to the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013, should run provinces are yet to be installed. Nyikadzino &

Madhekeni (2022) conclude that the scenario of devolution in Zimbabwe pits two competing forces: the constitutionally granted subnational autonomy on the one hand, and the unrelenting strong central control on the other. Hence progress or lack thereof on devolution depends on the dynamics involving the two forces in question.

Outside the centralism that characterises the government’s modus operandi in the local government sector, cases of unilateralism and centralism abound in other sectors and policy cases. Some scholars such as Makaye and Mapuva (2016) have criticized the government for failing to consult the public in its preparation of macro-policy frameworks and national blueprints such as the ZIM-ASSET (2013-2018). In other aspects such as labour issues, the government has on numerous occasions acted unilaterally on the remuneration of civil servants. The unilateralism has persisted despite the existence of negotiation platforms for labour issues. Such platforms are often ignored or completely disregarded. In a clear case of open disregard of negotiations in labour issues, in the year 2018 the Vice President Constantino Chiwenga once fired 16 000 nurses in public hospitals and clinics who were striking for better remuneration (The Guardian, 2018). In the education sector, the government unilaterally crafted a new education curriculum in the year 2015 and this was done without consulting the relevant constituencies and stakeholders. Some of the consequences of the lack of consultation surfaced at the implementation stage when the demands of the new curriculum were not matched with resource capacities on the ground. In cases like these, lack of consultation normally contributes to policy failure.

In 2022, the government, through the Minister

of Local Government, July Moyo, imposed a scandalous waste-to-energy deal that has come to be known as the “Pomonagate” or “Wastegate”. According to Shumba (2022):

“From the evidence on the project, there was never any consultations done by the government, City of Harare or Geogenix BV [contractor] before the implementation of the project (p.6).

To confirm the lack of public consultations on the deal, there was a public outcry among Harare residents, resulting in petitions to the Minister of Local Government by residents’ associations. A Member of Parliament for Harare North, Alan Markham proceeded to write a court application to the High Court appealing to have the deal cancelled citing its unsustainability and long-term harm on the finances of council and the paying residents. These practical cases serve to demonstrate the extent of the damage caused as a result of top-down, elitist policymaking practices in the Zimbabwean context.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE POLICYMAKING

Against the background of policy making process that are dominated by the elite, bucking the trend of elitism calls for an amplification of grassroots voices. The involvement of grassroots citizens has to go beyond the usual window-dressing civic engagement practices that have thus far, characterised policy making approaches. The weakness of the traditional policy process has been its failure to appreciate that processes of policy designing are deliberative and collaborative, and not top-down and non-inclusive. Unearthing these issues opened an opportunity for a paradigm shift towards the

involvement of the governed in the exercise of policymaking authority. Available scholarly literature, however, shows that the inclusive policymaking approach has been deployed mostly with a bias on marginalised populations, and not necessarily taking a ‘whole-of-society’ perspective (Lombe & Sherraden, 2008). Generally, the inclusive policymaking approach overlaps significantly with concepts such as “collaborative governance” (Ansell & Gash, 2007), “crowdsourced policymaking” (Aitamurto & Chen, 2017), participatory governance (Bussu, Bua, Dean & Smith, 2022), “beneficiary participation” (Makumbe, 1996), “social inclusion” (Açıköz, Haudenhuyse & Aşçı, 2019), among several others.

Inclusive policymaking is not an entirely new approach. Previously in July 2005, the United Nations conducted a workshop under the theme, “Towards an Inclusive Society: Shaping the Policy Process”. The workshop delved into issues of inclusivity in the public policymaking practice. Over the years, inclusive policymaking has invariably been thrown around and applied to policy domains ranging from gender, disability, development, education, human capital development and many other forms of policy domains. More recently, the concept has come to be counted among critical issues that are “...at the forefront of the 21st century development agenda” (Beacon, Murthy & Kumar 2022, p.1). What emerges from a cursory review of available literature, however, is that while the approach has been in existence for quite some time now, the existing problem has to do with its successful application in practice. Results of various analyses point to the persistence of an exclusionary policymaking trajectory in many countries (Tuparevska, Santibáñez & Solabarietta, 2020).

A re-configured policy making process envisaged in this study accords citizens a higher role as co-players and equal partners in policy development, as opposed to passive recipients of policy decisions imposed on them from above. It espouses inclusivity with the intention of embedding people-driven approaches within public decision-making processes and entrenching genuine representativeness at policy level. In this sense, inclusive policymaking becomes some kind of a 'distributed problem-solving model' which acknowledges and prioritises the public as a critical player in governance practice. Inclusivity in policymaking, if executed effectively, comes with notable merits. Involving affected populations and opening the participation process is in line with line with March and Olsen's (1998) concept of "logic of appropriateness" which points to the generation of appropriate solutions to problems because the process of searching for the solution involved exchanges between official policy actors and affected populations from the start. With the logic of appropriateness of policy solutions also comes the legitimacy of solutions. Legitimacy is born out of the deliberative and argumentative process involving citizens and officials, which implies co-ownership of solutions between official actors and citizens at the end of the deliberations. Aitamurto and Chen (2017) used the prism of crowdsourcing in discussing the benefits of inclusivity in policymaking and they concluded that value is created when policymaking is crowdsourced (that is, where there is an open call for participation in policymaking). The two types of value which were noted and are of relevance to this discussion are epistemic value and democratic value. Epistemic value in crowdsourced policymaking means that there is potential for knowledge production as a result of the involvement of crowds from

diverse professional backgrounds with different levels of expertise on specific policy issues. The knowledge—which is often experiential—gathered from the crowd may be expected to lead to significant improvements in policy quality and sufficiency in addressing specific policy problems. Democratic value is realised as a result of the fact that crowdsourcing by its nature espouses some of the constitutive tenets of democratic practice, for example, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. In addition, for policies to be holistic and fair, it is necessary that they take cognisance of three interconnected aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), without which they may generate structural barriers that preclude fair distribution of intended policy benefits (Irfan, Arora, Jackson & Valencia, 2020). The DEI aspects are issues that a crowdsourced policy approach can easily accommodate.

The reach of the inclusive policymaking approach is expected to be spurred by ICT-enabled online interactions which practically give citizens a platform to contribute towards the design of policies that are highly likely to affect their lives on a day-to-day basis (Rethemeyer, 2006). With the benefit of wide ICT capacities, inclusive policymaking has a huge chance to achieve active participation of connected populations who, as societal groups, will be exploiting the 'democratising effect' of the internet (Beacon, Murthy & Kumar 2022). As Ranchordás and Voermans (2017) argue, the advent of the internet has triggered a shift in roles in public spheres as citizens move "... from passive observers to active participants in society, economy, and politics. Instead of relying on their elected representatives and other experts, citizens resort to new technologies of participation for example by signing e-petitions"

(p.1). Experience further reveals that active participation of citizens normally follows the crowdsourcing efforts of either political figures or leaders of civic organisations, or the joint efforts of both in getting people to the participation platforms. The implications of embracing genuine inclusivity in policymaking are two-pronged. In the first place, the designing (or 're-designing') of policy making institutions will have to be done in a manner that accommodates the involvement of the grassroots. Secondly, the roles of stakeholders will be adjusted as citizens assume a higher role alongside official policy actors in the development and designing of policy. It is the official policy actors who have to create sufficient space for citizens in the policy designing arena.

REFORMING INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN FOR POLICYMAKING

Inclusive policymaking calls for the reform of institutional design for policy because the traditional designs have for long fostered exclusionary policymaking practices. Reforms are necessary, especially considering that traditional bureaucratic structures that are tasked with policy design are often impervious to external societal influences which may be in the form of policy inputs coming from citizens or their representative groups. The same institutions have often housed gatekeepers of change who are usually steeped in non-consultative cultures and organisational silos. Peters (2020) rightfully identifies organisational culture as one of the barriers to effective policy design in the sense that strong internal organisational cultures are not likely to be receptive to change nor to policy innovation. This is practically incompatible with an inclusive policymaking approach which, if

implemented, would tamper with established organisational cultures and cause a culture shift in policy practice. Organisations would therefore have to 'culturally adjust' in a manner that allows access and influence of relevant social actors in policymaking. Ideal institutional reforms are thus, expected to infuse a new participative culture which is underpinned by mass collaboration with relevant publics in respective policy sectors. The recent rise of policy innovation labs (PILs) is a new development in the structures of policymaking. PILs typically espouse inclusive policymaking practices in ways that are atypical of traditional bureaucracies. They are understood as experimental and multidisciplinary structures that apply scientific approaches to the search for solutions to social problems, but doing so by involving target populations in a collaborative manner. International experiences show that PILs can be found within governments, universities, not-for-profit organisations, or as standalone entities operating in complete independence. A distinctive feature of their operations is the generation of innovative solutions through lab-like processes involving measurement, testing and determining impact of proposed solutions before they are implemented in the broader society. Throughout this process, PILs will be collaborating with affected populations and any other interested citizens, and it is precisely on this aspect of collaboration with citizens in designing solutions where traditional policymaking structures fall short.

CITIZENS AS CO-CREATORS AND CO-DESIGNERS

In inclusive policymaking, citizens come across as 'partners' and not mere 'subjects'. This conceptualisation has led to the adoption of the

terms “co-creation” and “co-designing” from the field of engineering and architecture, to reflect the new role citizens assume under genuine inclusive policymaking. Co-creation refers to an act of collective creativity involving at least two people and co-designing is understood as “...the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process” (Sanders & Stappers, 2008 p.6). While these definitions are directly drawn from the original engineering contexts where the terms are borrowed, the logic remains that of a partnership of equal players in policy development. The different designations that players may bear become silent on the policy making arena because of the homogenising effect of the partnership which binds actors together. However, it is necessary to note that the roles of citizens as co-creators and co-designers in the context of inclusive policymaking has not gone unchallenged. Weaknesses observed on these roles included the challenge of citizen apathy and disinterest. Additionally, citizen participation tends to be inspired if there are unfulfilled demands, but once these are satisfied, citizens may disengage and retreat from the policy participation platforms.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS A PLATFORM FOR INCLUSIVE POLICY MAKING

The drive towards inclusive policymaking considers the sub-national level of government as crucial because of its potential for fostering local participation and encouraging active involvement of citizens at the lower tiers of government. This position builds from the notion that local government reflects the sense of ‘bringing government to the people’.

Implementation of decentralisation—which was promoted internationally as one of the major reforms towards democratisation of the world—further enhances the understanding by pushing governmental functions, powers and responsibilities to lower level in the hierarchy of government. The expectation was that if decentralisation was implemented in democratic local authorities, it would improve responsiveness to local needs and foster greater citizen participation in local development. With that, greater accountability of central and local government to the citizens was similarly expected (Aye, 2005). In addition, decentralisation offered an avenue of addressing political challenges arising from complexities of pluralism and social diversities by affording officials a close-range appreciation of local needs, challenges and priorities (Steiner, Kaiser, Tapscott & Navarro, 2018). In practice, local authorities in Zimbabwe already have established platforms for public engagement such as consultative meetings, town hall meetings, councillor report back meetings, query desks, participatory budgeting platforms etc. The greatest advantage of these platforms is that they permit a two-way exchange of information and foster deliberation on critical policy matters affecting communities. They further serve as ‘tools’ of social accountability.

CONCLUSION

Our review of the practice of inclusivity and state-society collaboration in policymaking reveals a long-standing penchant for unilateralism and centralism by the Zimbabwean state. A cross-sector dissection of policy cases reveals centralism as an entrenched practice embraced even by the bureaucratic machinery of the state. We argue that exclusionary

policymaking has negative implications on policy legitimacy, appropriateness, acceptance by the public and smoothness of implementation activities in the broader society. Guided by the call for democracy in governance practice, the study makes a case for inclusive policymaking

as a necessary move to foster a new kind of governance in Zimbabwe and Africa at large. This would come with new roles for citizens, as both co-designers and co-creators of policies.

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