

CHALLENGES OF CRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE CULTURAL POLICY FOR MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

Management and governance of people from different cultural backgrounds can be made possible through a cultural policy. As a multicultural nation, Zimbabwe is expected to have legislation to govern people from culturally diverse areas. It is against this background that the Zimbabwe draft cultural policies of 2007 and 2016 were put in place, although they seem to be deficient, resulting in the failure of their implementation. Guided by the theory of hegemony and ideology, this article seeks to unravel the challenges hampering the generation of an appropriate cultural policy for governing cultural diversity in Zimbabwe. Using a qualitative research approach through document analysis of the draft policies and interviews with policymakers and cultural practitioners to gather data, the study established that Zimbabwe's draft cultural policies of 2007 and 2016 are not accommodative of various cultural groups and, hence, pose many challenges to governance.

Keywords: Cultural Policy, Cultural Diversity, Governance, Management, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Due to the lack of a uniform definition of the word, culture as a concept is a fairly contested terrain (Gray, 2009). It is because of the challenging nature of the term that even the formulation of a cultural policy becomes problematic. Gray (2009: 579) notes that:

‘Cultural policy’ can be identified from the perspectives of sociology, cultural studies, political science, urban planning and economics, community cultural development, cultural diversity, cultural sustainability, cultural heritage, the cultural and creative industries (Craik, 2007). Lifestyle culture and eco-culture (Craik, 2005), planning for the intercultural city (Bloomfield and Bianchini, 2004), cultural planning *per se* (Evans, 2001), support for national languages (Gray and Hugoson, 2004), ‘current controversial issues in the wider society’ (McGuigan, 2006: 203), the ‘culture wars’ in the USA (Singh, 2003, especially chaps. 1–2), ‘the production of cultural citizens’ (Lewis and Miller, 2003) and being concerned with ‘representation, meaning and interpretation’ (Scullion and Garcia, 2005: 116) identified and being a ‘transhistorical political function’ (Ahearne, 2008: 2) are also perspectives from which cultural policy can be. It is evident that whilst there may be a lot of talk about cultural policy, there is no agreed, clearly defined model of what it actually consists of.’

This means that the concept of culture is defined relationally and is seen from different angles by different individuals of different backgrounds, yet, it can be a national unifying factor, which different nations such as South Africa and Tanzania have used successfully to unite people. It follows that when cultural issues are addressed, there has to be an all-inclusive policy to guide the various stakeholders associated with the subject. In this vein, people should take notice of the fact that culture is perceived differently by different stakeholders and that their various cultural perceptions should be enshrined in a comprehensive cultural policy. As such, the creation of a comprehensive policy then needs to be undertaken by a wide spectrum of stakeholders. It is of paramount importance, however, to give the context on the background of the need for cultural policy formulation in Zimbabwe.

Cultural policy in Zimbabwe has gone through two distinct historical periods and is currently experiencing its third epoch. The two previous historical periods are the pre-colonial and colonial. In the pre-colonial period, there was no written cultural policy, because Zimbabwean communities back then had no written documentation. There is, however, no doubt that the pre-colonial Zimbabwean communities had cultural guidelines through their oral art forms and indigenous knowledge systems that clearly distinguished their way of life from other groups across the nation. These communities managed to maintain their cultural identity so much that the colonisation process did acknowledge the challenges it encountered during its efforts to dislodge the indigenous people's cultures. In line with the diktats of cultural imperialism, during the colonial era, it is quite obvious that the policies which guided the people were centred on entrenching the white minority's culture, especially in such cultural sectors as religion. In addition, the documented cultural policy mainly addressed other fields of human life such as education, the economy, and politics among others. There also did not exist any cultural policy intended to unite the indigenous majority, since this would defeat the colonial divide-and-conquer agenda.

Furthermore, during the colonial period, the view existed that there was almost nothing of the indigenous people's way of life, which was worth documenting for posterity. Instead, the entire way of life was rubbished as 'uncivilised' and important attributes of the indigenous African people's life, such as religion, were summarily dismissed as 'pagan'. Most policies and legislation of the colonial period segregated the traditional African culture. Seda (2004: 136) notes that 'in Southern Rhodesia (the colonial name for Zimbabwe), cultural and social life had been marked by forced segregation, prejudice and cultural polarisation'. This means that the black people's way of life was not taken on board by the colonial government and, thus, the regime could not and would not draft a cultural policy or any guidelines to that effect. The same sentiments are echoed by Kaarsholm (1990: 249) who affirms that in the narrowly exclusive Rhodesian colonial cosmology, drama and other cultural modes of expression of black Africans were firmly situated outside the boundaries of art or

culture and relegated to the dark hinterlands of anthropology. The above sentiments also conform to Trevor-Roper's allegations that Africa was a dark continent with no history whatsoever (Trevor-Roper, 1962).

The final epoch is the post-independence era that began on 18 April 1980, when Southern Rhodesia ceased to be a British colony and became the independent state of Zimbabwe. This period saw Zimbabwe formulating policies, which were Afro-centric and black-centred to assert political power following the black majority's emancipation from colonialism. The first policy, which the post-independence government embarked upon was the policy of national reconciliation, which was quite important as the new nation needed an end to its former warring citizens' hostilities against each other to allow the building of a strong and united nation of Zimbabwe. It is logical to note that the new nation realised the importance of further uniting its citizens through the national culture concept from the onset. Thus, in 1982, after the country participated in the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico, one of its chief cultural officers was tasked with leading the process of formulating a cultural policy for Zimbabwe. However, this process encountered various challenges, such as the transfer of the cultural function from one ministry to another, the allocation of some cultural components over various government departments and the lack of funding, among others, (Mukanga, 2001).

Additionally, there came a 2007 draft of the cultural policy, which was a declaration without implementation due to circumstances surrounding its formulation and implementation. The 2007 draft never made it to the implementation stage. After the 2013 constitution gave previously marginalised languages official status, there appeared the need to revisit the draft policy in a bid to synchronise the Draft Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe with the country's home-grown constitution that clearly articulated the cultural aspirations of the people. The move to forge ahead to the next level of policy formulation is captured in the *Newsday* newspaper article of 24 November 2016, which reports on the then Minister of Home Affairs, Comrade Abedinigo Ncube, acknowledging the need to revisit the 2007 draft, which resulted in a new 2016 draft. Below is an extraction from the paper in which the Minister informed the public of the government's approval of the draft policy:

'Speaking at a National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee meeting in Harare, Ncube said the policy, which was first crafted in 2007, drew attention to issues that had not received adequate consideration. "The review of the policy was a lengthy, collaborative effort by previous ministries of education, sports, arts and culture, with various stakeholders through broad and inclusive consultation," he said. "There were researches and outreaches held in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Education and the Culture Fund Trust of Zimbabwe." Ncube said the successful implementation of the policy would depend on active political, administrative and technical

support for the translation of goals, objectives and strategies into practicable and actionable programmes at all levels of Zimbabwean society. He said, in order to ensure that the policy remains relevant and valid to its sector-specific needs, the government would make sure it is periodically reviewed and realigned after every five years or whenever need arose' (*Newsday*, 24 November 2016).

The fact that Zimbabwe's cultural policies continued to remain in draft status proves that it is challenging to come up with a definitive document that could be implemented to ensure the governance of diversity in Zimbabwe.

Ideally, a cultural policy should be a national cultural identity document, which considers every different group of a distinct cultural background so that they cannot be marginalised and that they can be cultural propagators within a nation. In Zimbabwe, where there exists sixteen (16) officially recognised languages (Zimbabwe Constitution, 2013), the cultures represented by these languages are bound to be part of the country's cultural policy. When a cultural policy formulation process is undertaken, the procedure of coming up with a policy should be clear and well-documented to demonstrate the involvement of all stakeholders. The source and reason for the cultural policy idea and the guidelines which will ensure the national character of the policy should equally be beyond doubt. In light of this, this article seeks to articulate the challenges that are associated with crafting and implementing an appropriate cultural policy for managing cultural diversity in Zimbabwe.

The Interface Between Cultural Diversity and Cultural Policy

A detailed understanding of the relationship between these two subjects is critical at this stage. The most common denominator in these concepts is the word 'culture'. Here, culture is understood to mean a defined way of life that a group of people adheres to. For this to be possible, there exists the need for a clearly defined *modus operandi* to assist in the organisation of diverse communities belonging to one state. The gist of the matter is to bring out the link between cultural policy and cultural diversity, and how the two disciplines affect and effect each other in a Zimbabwean context. Jervis (2006: 652) defines culture as;

The totality of what a group of people thinks, how they behave, and what they produce, that is passed on to future generations. Culture binds us together as human beings but also separates us into our different communities.

Culture is, thus, the totality of a people's way of adapting to their environment. It can also be perceived as a double-edged sword, which means it can be a unifying force among people and a divisive factor as well. This, therefore, means that culture can never be universal and that is why it is enacted by people in different communities in different ways.

On cultural diversity, diversity basically entails incorporating acceptance and respect. This implies understanding that each person is unique and accommodating these individual differences. Wellner (2000) hypothesises diversity as representing a multitude of individual differences and similarities that exist among people. It can incorporate many diverse human characteristics such as language, origin, age, gender, ethnicity race, and religious and political beliefs, among other aspects. More so, Claussen et al., (2008) define diversity as a complex notion that entails differences of many types, including physical attributes such as race, sex, age or physical ability; social attributes such as education, and income level; and cultural attributes such as beliefs, values and preferences. In addition to actual differences, perceptions of difference may also play a role in diversity. Thus, diversity is best defined as the presence of differences among members of a social unit that lead to perceptions of such differences and how they impact the societies in which they prevail.

Cultural diversity embodies a broadly defined topic normally referring to any approach which identifies differences. It puts emphasis on accepting and respecting cultural differences by recognising that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another. Singh (2009) conceptualises cultural diversity as differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion and sexual orientation as represented within a community. A community is said to be culturally diverse if its residents include members of different groups. The community can be a country, region or city.’

Based on the aforesaid, a cultural policy is a public document, which represents the citizenry of a country and as such, its purpose is to foster national unity. For it to properly represent the citizenry of a country, it has to accommodate all people irrespective of where they belong for national unity to be observed. Saukkonen and Pyykkonen (2008) note that cultural policy is undoubtedly one important aspect in the political organisation of ethnic and cultural diversity. As a public policy, cultural policy legitimises, restricts or prohibits forms of cultural self-expression, creates conditions for group-specific creative activities and self-understanding and grants resources for specified forms of artistic and cultural activities.

More so, Lewis and Miller (2003) aver that cultural policy is already a means of governance. If this is so, then there are supposed to exist a set of guidelines, which should be followed when formulating such a policy. In this regard, the management of diversity will be made easier when established legislation is in place. Critiquing the challenges of managing cultural diversity in the absence of a policy will help the policymakers to improve on the way public policies are crafted in order to produce non-elitist but stakeholder-driven policies. Furthermore, if cultural policies implied the management of populations through suggested behaviour, any movement towards a progressive or democratic culture or cultures depends upon the implementation of such a policy. Miller and Yudice (2002) suggest that cultural policy is a product and process, a framework for making rules and decisions that are formed by social

relations. Hence, cultural policy can be understood as an action by both government agencies and other authorised institutional bodies and stakeholders, and, in the current context, needs to also thematise decolonisation within the national framework to change the existing system of power relations. Cultural policy can be regarded as a system of ultimate aims, practical objectives and means pursued and applied by an authority that fosters sustainable development of cultural activities, and in this way, cultural diversity can be managed.

The 2005 Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions notes that ‘Cultural policies and measures’ refer to those policies and measures relating to culture, whether at the local, national, regional or international level, that either focus on culture as such or are designed to have a direct effect on cultural expressions of individuals, groups or societies, including on the creation, production, dissemination, distribution of and access to cultural activities, goods and services. At the national level, parties within the framework of its cultural policies and measures should adopt measures aimed at protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions within its territory. Therefore, a cultural policy can be regarded as an instrument that provides a framework for the promotion and protection of cultural diversity. Cultural policies provide a framework that links the global to the local in the promotion of the cultural dimension of public policymaking and respect for diversity. They provide the context and modalities within which the process of open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups, and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or worldviews can take place. The policy spells out how participation by different groups will be implemented.

Watanabe (1996) states that cultural policies involve a broad area of activities such as arts and entertainment, media, communication, humanities, aspects of education, cultural industry, intellectual property, town planning, the improvement of the quality of life and preservation of heritage, including the natural environment and tourism. All these are cultural activities that bring out diversity and are carried out by a variety of institutions. Cultural policy can be regarded as an instrument that should provide a framework within which to consider all these in order to grasp the dimensions of public involvement in the field of culture. Furthermore, it is an instrument that provides a framework that fosters sustainable development of culture and peaceful accommodation of each other in divergent communities. It is also a framework that acts as a guiding principle that facilitates the access of all members of society to cultural experiences and participation in their cultural activities.

UNESCO (2008) also suggests that cultural policies are important documents because they offer a framework for action for regulating the public space in order to ensure respect for values and provide direction on how cultural issues and industries are supposed to be conceived of and run. This means that in the absence of a sound and all-accommodating cultural policy, cultural diversity is difficult to manage. In

support of this idea, Craik (2007) notes that cultural policy should be viewed as the regulation of a marketplace of ideas and creative practices. This definition posits that cultural and creative activities occur as part of everyday life in modern societies. Therefore, the government should be responsible for creating strategies for the facilitation, regulation and shaping of the production and consumption of cultural activities, goods and services in relation to the development of national cultures. Only then can national cultural policies work as vehicles for the promotion and protection of cultural diversity and expression.

Theoretical Underpinnings

In the process of articulating and critiquing the challenges of generating a comprehensive policy for managing cultural diversity in Zimbabwe, the researchers employed Gramsci (1968)'s theory of hegemony and Althusser (1971)'s theory of ideology. Both Gramsci and Althusser's theories fall under Marxist Critical theory, which the researchers deem fit to deconstruct, demythologise, and de-mystify some of the repressive state apparatus, which are rendered as common sense in policymaking. Gramsci developed the theory of hegemony during his incarceration and when he wrote his major work, 'Prison Note Books', written in 1932. The theory was later translated into various languages and published by different scholars. Gramsci propounded the theory in order to explain why the people were not revolting as had been predicted by orthodox Marxism, which had predicted that, a socialist revolution, which would overthrow capitalism was inevitable. Gramsci (1968) developed the theory of hegemony which highlights that the ruling ideas in every epoch are dominant ideas. Hall (1992) says that Gramsci uses the concept of ideology to illustrate how the state and civil society produce and maintain consent to the classes' hierarchies of capitalist societies. Gramsci (1971) is of the view that hegemony is achieved by popularising, institutionalising and legalising the ideas of a particular group within the society. The state, in this case, can use hegemonic apparatus to dominate the masses (Buci Gluckmann, 1980). According to Gramsci (1971), hegemony is the rule by consent. It is political power that flows from intellectual and moral leadership, authority or consensus as distinguished from armed forces. Culture is used as hegemonic state apparatus to dominate the masses into objects and not subjects. Laclau and Mouffe (2001) say that hegemony is not purely physical dominance, but also ideological, institutional and cultural dominance of control. In the context of this article, the concept of hegemony refers to domination in terms of crafting, designing and implementing the national culture policy by the state from a Zimbabwean perspective.

Bo-Seon (2006) observes that state policy is well designed for the existing social order in such a way that the policy is fundamentally shaped by capitalist pressure on policymaking. The article further suggests that the government uses state-centered approach in cultural policymaking. Therefore, culture policymaking is actually derived

from the state's political and economic goals, which create a political environment just to benefit a few interest groups. Findings reveal that culture policy is actually used as hegemonic apparatus to force the dominated class internalise traditionalist values through the inculcation of high culture. Marxist approaches show that the direction of policy is to be determined, in final, by the demand of the capitalist. Marcuse (1991) is of the view that cultural production is just dominated by the ruling class. Most policies are characterised by the use of a top-down approach instead of being inclusive. The culture policymaking in terms of its organisational approach is merely dominated by a few interest groups. Gramsci (1994) argues that the modern state reproduces the existing social order, not by mere domination but hegemony through which the state induces people to accept the capitalist order as morally right. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is employed in the paper since culture policy in this modern state is elitist in nature. Therefore the theory also informs on how the issue of dominance led to the failure of the two draft policies to be implemented.

On the other hand, Althusser (1971) says that ideology is a system of ideas used by the state to dominate others within a society. He further suggests that the state makes use of repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus to foster its own ideology. The ideological state apparatus (ISAs) are used as instruments by the ruling class to dominate the people. Cultural institutions are used by the ruling class to foster its own ideology. The article further argues that cultural hegemony is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, who manipulate the culture of the society, the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values, and mores, so that their worldview becomes the one that is imposed and accepted as the cultural norm; as the universally valid dominant ideology that justifies the social, political, and economic status quo as natural and inevitable, perpetual and beneficial for everyone, rather than as artificial social constructs that benefit only the ruling class. Ngara (1985) defines ideology as the dominant ideas of an epoch or class with regard to politics morality, religion, art and science. Althusser (1971) is of the view that people accept their domination through ideological interpellation hence, they are trained to accept their domination. Whatever is being said to them becomes normally common sense because they are just being made objects not subjects by the ruling class. Barker (2008) is of the idea that issues of cultural representation are political because they are intrinsically bound up with the questions of power. Culture policy is more likely to reflect the ideas of the dominant class. Therefore, Marxism is important in this article because it clearly points out hegemonic and dominance tendencies in culture policymaking. The theory of hegemony and ideology gives an insight into who informs policymaking, how it is supposed to be legitimised, who influences over the content, formulation process and implementation of the national culture policy in Zimbabwe.

Research Methodology

The article adopted qualitative research approach to bring out an in-depth understanding of the challenges of coming up with a comprehensive culture policy for effectively governing cultural diversity in Zimbabwe. As noted by Creswell (2012), in using a qualitative approach, one can employ the constructivist worldview, which helps the researcher in establishing the meaning of the phenomenon from the participants' point of view. This research philosophy was considered of considerable significance here as it captures reality as seen and experienced by the people. Thus, it values their understanding or worldview rather than relying on fixed judgements by outsiders. Content analysis included an extensive review of the archival documents to check on the formulation process of the draft policies. Subsequently, researchers also analysed the content of the 2007 and 2016 draft policies. Peer-reviewed materials obtained using desktop research were critical in understanding issues of hegemony and ideology and cultural policy dynamics. Most of the information was inferred through document analysis such as newspaper and media reports. The study applied purposive and snowball sampling techniques for data collection from twenty interviews with some policymakers and cultural practitioners taking into account their roles, experience and knowledge in cultural policy formulation process. Snowball sampling was used in order to link with the key knowledgeable subjects of the study through face-to-face interviews conducted with some cultural officers and policymakers. In a bid to achieve the above, the study is guided by the following questions:

- 1) What are the challenges of generating a comprehensive and accommodative cultural policy in Zimbabwe?
- 2) Are there any set-out parameters that guide the process of cultural policy formulation?

To accord firm grounding of the analysis, the study alluded to hegemonic and ideological theories. These two were chosen based on their schema to appreciate the shortcomings of the government in coming up with an all-inclusive policy for the governance of diversity. Regarding ethical issues, the study took into account all possible and potential ethical issues of concern. Given that the other data was collected through discursive interviews, thematic issues were drawn from them to form some of the challenges presented in the paper.

Presentation of Perceptions on Absence of a Well-defined National Cultural Policy

The absence of a well-defined cultural policy in Zimbabwe is one of the issues which had been brought forward to the audience's attention by the Symposium on the Policies, Strategies and Experience in the Financing of Culture in Africa held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in 2000. The lack of a well-defined cultural policy has contributed to the lack

of direction of culture as a whole, resulting in the promotion of fewer tools of culture. It should be noted that because of the lack of a defined cultural policy, little is being done to support the arts since they are treated as if they have nothing to do with nation-building. To this effect, one of the Zimbabwean cultural officers who had attended the above mentioned symposium laments that, '*...the symposium was an eye opener to the issues that affect us as Zimbabwe. As long as we do not have a cultural policy we will continue to lose many talents, especially in the area of art because they are not recognised. This is a sad reality...nationalism can only be realised in the country when people are united*'. The absence of a well-defined cultural policy results in shortages of required resources or an underestimation of the complexity of the culture. It also results in a lack of awareness of the importance of having a national culture policy and this has actually affected the formulation process because the government is not aware of the cultural needs of the people. Another interviewee stated that, '*in the absence of a cultural policy, the other groups still consider themselves as marginalised because of failure to be recognised through their culture. If necessary measures are not taken in terms of coming up with a people-driven cultural policy from the grass-roots, then governance of diversity may be difficult to achieve...*' Mpofu (2012) describes culture as a pillar of sustainable development as it allows greater diversity in development policies. Hence, culture can be used to eradicate poverty by providing wealth creation and generating livelihoods for artists and their families. Another respondent (cultural practitioner) points out that, '*Zimbabwe is rich in talent and innovation. If the artists are given the platform and support they need, our economy would be somewhere. Sustainable development is in human capital and that needs to be embraced.*' Hawkes (2001: 33) avers that culture is one of the four pillars of sustainability, the others being economic, social and environmental development'. Therefore, a national cultural policy compliments, promotes and strengthens the overall development goals of the country. Similarly, the Stockholm Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development (1998) notes that cultural policy is one of the main components of endogenous and sustainable development policy. Governments should endeavour to achieve closer partnerships with civil society in the design and implementation of cultural policies that are integrated into development strategies. Sen (1999: 59) says there is a link between development and culture and the connection relates to both the ends and to the means of development. Therefore, the basis of having a national culture policy is that it is a guiding instrument, which spells out what is important with respect to the development of the arts and culture sector within a country. In that regard, the development of the industries is not observed or contributing to any economic development because they are not manageable in the absence of a policy.

Failure to Work Towards the Preservation and Conservation of Cultural Heritage

National cultural policies are important because they provide a framework for the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. The preservation and appreciation of cultural heritage enable people to defend and promote cultural identity. The Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage (1972) suggested that there is a need to adopt policies, which aim at giving cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community. Therefore, cultural policymakers should integrate comprehensive planning programmes that are aimed at promoting the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. In light of the above, it is difficult to preserve and protect such heritage in Zimbabwe, because these heritage sites are situated in different areas and the way each group values their sites is different from the other. Locals are critical in the preservation of a cultural heritage institution, but when there is a policy that is put in place to preserve a site, oftentimes, they feel dismembered from the control of their heritage. Cultural heritage preservation is an important component in a national cultural policy document as it fosters a strong sense of national identity, pride, and unity which promotes a stimulating power in the development process. In the same vein, this preservation is of significance as it provides strategies for the development and preservation of both the intangible and tangible cultural heritage and that can be cherished by communities. Ngoro et al. (2009: 107), state that during the colonial period, what was traditional became superstition and was often condemned. Even in post-independence Zimbabwe, with the adoption of Christianity as a religion by many, people still condemn witchcraft and yet that is the tradition that is supposed to be cherished. In this regard, a cultural policy should avoid the hegemonic tendencies of promoting the interests of the elite at the expense of the ordinary people so as to avoid challenges in the governance of diversity. Whilst citizens have such high regard for a comprehensive cultural policy, the following challenges came up as hampering its generation:

Absence of Expertise to Carry out the Task

The absence of skilled labour is one of the main challenges affecting the management of diversity through a cultural policy in Zimbabwe. There is no partnership and cohesion amongst ministries concerned with providing specific academic training in the field of cultural management. As a result, many shortcomings are seen in terms of the actual formulation and implementation of the policy because there is lack of management personnel. Cultural experts are needed because they assist in the evaluation of the cultural sector in terms of quality and quantity so as to establish reliable statistics that may be used to analyse national cultural policies. One respondent in the study points out that; *‘Vamboripo here vanhu vanoziva zvinhu izvi. Vanoziva vacho havapiwi basa ravo. Vanotobuda kunze kunoita zvevamwe zvedu zvakamira. Dambudziko nderekuti muno zvese zvinongoiswa kupolitics. Unoona Ministry yakakosha kudaro ichipiwa*

munhu asingazivi kuti oendepi nayo ipo paripo pane mari yese' (Are there people in Zimbabwe who know about cultural policy? Those who know the job are not given the task to do so. They end up leaving the country and working for other nations whilst we remain behind. The problem in Zimbabwe is that everything is politicised. You find such an important Ministry of Arts and Culture given to somebody who does not even know where to start from and yet there is a lot of money in the cultural sector.) Therefore, in spite of producing very skilled personnel, the development of a cultural policy has been hampered by the absence of these skilled experts in designing and formulating a comprehensive national cultural policy due to brain drain inspired by the failure of the government to value their contribution and utilise them. This works against the human agency concept advocated by the Afrocentricity theory. Zimbabweans should take the lead in addressing this situation. Expert Zimbabweans need to be recognised and retained. This would be of great benefit to the nation, though this is only possible after the ruling elite has understood the importance of the move.

Lack of Appropriate Funding

It also emerged that lack of appropriate funding is another challenge faced in the formulation and implementation of a cultural policy in Zimbabwe. Corkey et al. (1995: 71), say that the extensive involvement of external agencies impacts on policy formulation in sub-Saharan Africa. Many African states relied on foreign aid for their development; hence, donor conditionalities affect policy at both macro- and sector-levels. This means that with aid from donors, usually conditions are given for any development process than for it to take its natural course. For example, Zimbabwe was a British colony and these European donors may come to assist in the formulation process but may still uphold the Western values of culture at the expense of promoting indigenous interests. The lack of sufficient institutional capacity to cope with scale and strength of external intervention increases this impact on policy formulation. Doornbos (1990), holds that the state as a nerve centre for national policymaking may risk collapse when the citizenry's interests are not protected. The policies that will be formulated will reflect the donor agenda and, thus, a national cultural policy for Africans might just become another form of colonialism. If non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would be excluded from the process, then lack of appropriate funding might negatively impact on the challenges of the formulation of workable policies.

Over-centralisation of Policy Decision-Making

The centralisation of policy decisions has also weakened better decision-making in the formulation of cultural policies. Kaseke et al. (1998), are of the view that, since the attainment of political independence, many African countries adopted a top-down approach to policymaking based on one-party systems and the absorption of

independent states as the norm in Africa. In Zimbabwe, for example, this system is quite prevalent as decisions are made at the top and an elitist manner of decision-making is promoted. This deprives the local and indigenous people from grass-roots level to be heard in terms of their cultural expectations in the cultural policy. The interviews generally emphasised that this is the major challenge in the designing and implementation of a national cultural policy as it is mainly politicised to an extent that the representation of all groups is not transparently achieved resulting in it serving only the interests of those on top. This is supported by Barker (2008), who asserts that issues of cultural representation are political because they are intrinsically bound up with questions of power. Barker also notes that culture is political and ideological as it reflects on the social relations of power (2008: 98). Therefore, cultural policymaking exercises end up reflecting the ideology of the ruling party instead of the reality on the ground. The impact of the foregoing was captured by one interview respondent who argued that ‘culture belongs to the people at the grassroots, not in the offices. If these are not involved in the process of coming up with a policy, then we are shooting ourselves in the foot. Local and indigenous people need to participate in these exercises so that they also find themselves involved in upholding the expectations’. In support of that observation, Corkey et al. (1995: 85), argue that the centralised top-down approach has actually confined policy formulation to the elite. In Tanzania, for instance, the overall responsibility for policy management was given to weak government agencies. The system in practice amounted to equating policy-management with control of everything and everyone (Mukandla and Shellakindu, 1991) and, therefore, reflects the dominant ideology. The International Cultural Policy Database (2011) also suggests that, for over 20 years, the administrative systems and decentralisation process in Egypt promoted by the Minister of Culture were merely political propaganda and all cultural institutions suffered from bureaucratic flaccidity and established hierarchy in terms of decision-making and implementation. The issue of centralisation of decision-making has resulted in the absence of coordination in terms of cultural policy formulation and implementation in Zimbabwe.

Political and Economic Instability

Political and economic instability has also impacted on policy development issues in postcolonial Africa (Kaseke et al., 1998). Political and economic instability led to the underdevelopment of the African market and, thus, distribution and consumption of cultural activities, goods and services have been hampered. In Zimbabwe, lack of continuity due to political instability is rife, where the changes in ministers affected continuity in the process of policymaking. Arguably, this is the reason the 2007 draft policy is still being used despite its lack of substance in accommodating every culture and its failure to be ratified (Mukanga, 2012). Even the 2016 draft still remained a draft, which has also never been implemented to the detriment of marginalised

groups. This goes back to the issues of hegemony and ideology which are mentioned in the article. There is no agency as far as the political will is concerned hence, the elitist needs to stand. According to Corkey et al. (1995), sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has to formulate policies, especially in environments where governments have been pre-occupied with nation-building and with complex social and political problems inherited from their colonial past. It appears from the foregoing discussion that these pressures have actually reduced the ability of African states to formulate policies that serve the interest and priorities of the local people. However, apart from that, the government's will and support had also affected the formulation and implementation of cultural policies in many African states, and Zimbabwe is not an exception. According to Forbes (2010), a culture policy provides a framework of how the government is going to deliver the range of services mentioned in the policy. Such a policy will indicate areas for government participation. The government does play a critical role as it is its responsibility to craft pieces of legislation that will impinge on the operations of the arts, culture and the heritage sector. A policy will clearly state who is going to implement the services and how the government is going to establish institutions and organisations to do so; also, how it will divide the expenditure on arts and culture, cultural and creative industries, heritage, regional and international co-operation between the different spheres of government, and decide on the most effective locations for implementation. With regard to this enlightenment, the Zimbabwean context is a bit complex as the government itself is a politicised institution such that there is no political will to implement these efforts to achieve the ease of governance of diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the researchers established that whilst the cultural practitioners and policymakers have considerably high regard for a comprehensive cultural policy, there are a number of challenges in crafting and implementing a comprehensive cultural policy in Zimbabwe. It demonstrates that whilst cultural diversity has been in existence since time immemorial and the indigenous people lived in harmony through their belief systems, enshrined in their indigenous knowledge and oral art forms, it has to be taken into consideration that the establishment of a national cultural policy under colonial rule had been a divide-and-rule tactic on the part of white supremacy. It focused on eradicating and demonising the local cultures thereby leaving a mark that is proving quite difficult for the local government to erase. This article notes other challenges that derail the crafting of the policy such as lack of expertise and absence of government will among others. It demonstrates the need for the government to understand the importance of designing and implementing such a policy for the development of the nation.

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