

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**Cabinet Decision Making in Malawi and Zambia: Implications for
Development Policy Implementation**

By

CHIGOMEZGO L.D MTEGHA

SUPERVISOR: PROF. R. CAMERON

**MINI-DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE OF MASTERS OF
PHILOSOPHY IN PUBLIC POLICY**

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

SEPTEMBER 2007

Plagiarism Declaration

I, Chigomezgo L.D Mtegha, declare that the material in this thesis is based on my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise), and has not, in whole or in part been submitted towards another degree, at this University or elsewhere. The University is empowered to reproduce either the whole or any portion of the contents for the purposes of research.

Signed:

Signed by candidate

Date:

28.11.07

University of Cape Town

Dedication

For my late mother: Dr. Dorothy Mercy Chidongo Mtegha.

University of Cape Town

Acknowledgements

Many Grateful Thanks to my Supervisor, Prof. R. Cameron, for the guidance, patience, support and inspiration throughout the crafting of this Thesis and key decisions around my studies at UCT.

To my Mentor, Roger Wilson: for his inspiration, support and challenge function to my capabilities.

To my Family: for their faith in my dreams and aspirations, amidst many trials and tribulations.

Special Thanks to inspiring Cabinet Office officials from Malawi and Zambia, former and current Cabinet Ministers and members of staff from DFID Malawi and Zambia Offices.

University of Cape Town

Abstract

The study unravels the nature of Cabinet decision making in African Public Sector systems, and discusses its implications on development policy implementation. The demands on the State, and its key machinery, the Public Service, have evolved over time. Many states, including Zambia and Malawi, have since independence seen a decline in the welfare of their citizens, despite the plethora of development policy instruments that have been put in place to address this worrying situation. Weak policy implementation has been cited as the problem. At the heart of this debate, is the need to understand the key factors that impinge on policy implementation failure, especially with regards the role of political actors, such as Cabinet.

The study seeks to understand the nature of Cabinet decision making and its capability (i.e. willingness and capacity) to implement development policy. This was unpacked through two sub questions: to what extent do Cabinets in these countries conform to the core tasks of prioritization; and why is Cabinet institutionally unable to implement development policy initiatives?

The study literature establishes that Zambia and Malawi continue to face challenges in tackling developmental problems as they seek to evolve in terms of their State identities. The neo-patrimonial nature of the State inevitably demands a close interplay between political and administrative institutions, where in many cases, the former takes precedence in determining the pace and form of the developmental policy agenda.

The study reveals that Cabinets in Malawi and Zambia are involved in development policy prioritization, but in a 'subverted' manner. Decisions on budget and Public Sector Reforms suggest a preference for short term political and individual interests as opposed to the longer term public good. The incentives are to ensure that the current system guarantees the flexibility to make short term decisions and control mechanisms are seen as a nuisance. Ministers are governed by incentives which encourage informal roles that favor short-term development policies aimed at their supporters. In both countries, there are no active mechanisms for tracking Cabinet decisions and policies – mechanisms that exist are not used or are not effective. Strategic public sector reforms in

Malawi and Zambia involve political choices that should ideally be made within Cabinet. However, in both these countries, Cabinets (rationally) avoid making political choices of reforms required to improve the efficiency of the Public Sector, in favor of the status quo which allows them to capture the public sector in order to secure a political base within a patrimonial political system.

There are two critical factors that underpin the nature of cabinet decision making in these two countries. Firstly, the hierarchical structure of authority of Government supported by a powerful presidential system entails the existence of a 'big man' or powerful president. Secondly, the need to reward supporters to secure political power base means that significant resources from the public sector are directed to meet such short term needs. These affect the desire and seriousness of efforts to pursue joined up development policy and implementation; tolerance for weak systems of budgeting, coordination and public services.

There have been some changes within the current Cabinets that suggest the possibility of emerging new styles of power being used to construct a power base. However, it is clear that prospects for changes in decision making are closely intertwined with wider changes within the political system.

Table of Contents

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION	I
DEDICATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
ABSTRACT	IV
CHAPTER ONE	
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Preamble	
1.2. Background to the study	
1.3. Statement of the Problem	
1.4. Research Questions	
1.5. Objectives of the study	
1.6. Study Design	
1.7. Limitations of the Study	
CHAPTER 2	
2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
2.1 Development Policy Implementation and Institutional arrangements	
2.1.1 The Evolution of Developmental States	
2.1.2 Development Policy Implementation	
2.2 Development Policy Implementation in Zambia and Malawi	
2.2.1 Zambia: Characteristics and Development Policy Implementation	
2.2.2 Malawi: Characteristics and Development Policy Implementation	
2.3 Cabinet decision making and development policy implementation	

CHAPTER THREE

3. CABINET DECISION MAKING	39
3.1 Cabinet structure and services	
3.2 Cabinet appointments, reshuffles and coalitions	
3.3 Cabinet Communication and defence of policy priorities	
3.3.1 Cabinet understanding of development policy	
3.4 Actual roles of Cabinet in Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation	
3.5 Cabinet Communication of decisions to Departments	
3.6 Implementation rate of Cabinet Decisions within Departments	

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Conclusions	56
4.2 Recommendations	59

APPENDICES

Questionnaire for Cabinet Office Officials and Select Ministers

Bibliography

Chapter One

1. Introduction

Preamble

This Chapter provides the background information to the Research. It outlines the problems under investigation, articulates the research questions and the objectives of the study. It explains the methodology that was used to collect and analyze the data.

Sound choices and decisions about policy and resources are at the heart of a well-functioning Government and its political processes. These priorities ideally reflect the Government's interpretation of the will of the people. The Governments of Zambia and Malawi profess to be concerned with wealth creation and social protection, by creating conditions that encourage economic development and promote human development. They state these aspirations in development strategy documents. These are the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and Zambia Fifth National Development Plan. Political systems determine policy, and the allocation of scarce resources between competing interests, including those of poor people.¹ The effectiveness of Governments is determined not only by their responsiveness and accountability, but also by the capability of the State institutions.² Implementing priorities also requires a clear policy framework, sound public expenditure management, efficient public services and, as we shall see, strong political engagement to the process.

In the sub-Saharan context, the effectiveness of democratic political systems also depend on the extent of the degeneration of the informal neo-patrimonial institutions where strong man political leaders manipulate patronage, region, and ethnicity to gain and hold political loyalty.³ It has been argued that these formal and informal institutions work side by side, and at times use each others' features to advance respective interests.

¹ DFID, Making Governments Work for Poor People, 2001

² DFID, Making Governance Work for Poor people, 2007

³ ODI, Drivers of Change and Development in Malawi, 2004

All Sub Sahara Africa countries, including the two under examination, are democracies in transition. None have consolidated yet, and are "pseudo-democracies".⁴ Diamond and Joseph, define them as countries that hold elections and allow opposition parties, but competition, pluralism, rights of association, speech and media are actively constrained by the State. Freedom House classifies Malawi as an "electoral democracy", with genuine political competition, but insufficient protection of human rights, and with high probability of degenerating into a pseudo democracy.⁵ Zambia is a pseudo-democracy because it has weak political rights. The Afro-barometer reports that both these countries are experiencing a mix of steady decline of support for popular democracy, increased doubts about the integrity of elections and elected leaders, (higher in Zambia) and growing political patience: citizens are willing to give their present system of elected government more time to deal with inherited problems. There are increasing levels of trust in democratic institutions such as Elections and Political Parties.⁶

The two countries share similarities in the timing, nature and influence on their transitions from authoritarian rule. Both countries experienced a period of single party and autocratic rule after independence. Zambia held its first multi party elections in 1991, and Malawi subsequently followed with a referendum in 1992, and democratic elections in 1994. The Governments elected in the first multiparty elections retained power through two elections. During these periods, economic performance declined in part due to poor policies and weak implementation and in part to increasing corruption.

As with many divided societies, these countries have developed Constitutional Frameworks that have been largely designed to accommodate power sharing. Their institutional choices have been for a 'mixed' constitutional system, partly presidential, partly parliamentary, which also provides for the existence of Cabinet. The doctrine of the separation of powers is designed to provide checks and balances between the three main organizational parts of the state-the executive, the legislature and the judiciary-by securing for each of them some degree of autonomy and independence even though they remain inter-dependent arms of government. In both these countries, however, the separation of powers is imperfect, both formally and informally. While

⁴ R. Mattes, R. Manning; *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Democracy in Southern Africa*, 2004

⁵ R. Wilson, *Malawi Democratic Deficit*

⁶ Afro Barometer Working Paper No. 60 (2006)

President is formally part of Parliament (a hang-over from the British model)⁷, the presidential/parliamentary system leaves important levers of patronage power in the hands of an executive President who can, for example, appoint ministers from within and outside the National Assembly (typical of a presidential system). The effect of such powers is that they can effectively neutralise the independent effectiveness of other political and state institutions, including political parties, parliament, judiciary and security services.⁸ The growing trend of political competition in Zambia and Malawi has been for the legislature to be dominated by parties opposed to the President. However while this has led to vociferous opposition, it has not typically led to more effective checks on the Executive. The political landscape is characterized by party political and personal hostility and, most significantly, shifting divisions between and within major parties as leaders scramble for influence and power. Political parties are weak relative to their leaders, lack ideological content and differences, and are usually defined according to ethnic and regional distinctions. In these countries, the fluidity, degree and level of political coalition formation is extraordinary. On the positive side, it has been argued that this portrays a unique ability of formal and informal political institutions to maintain stability and peace in these two countries.

Political processes are important for poverty reduction. There is evidence that countries that involve political leadership in public policy processes have more predictable budgets and better policy implementation.⁹ Studies show that the production of policy statements does not necessarily represent a serious intention to implement policies. They are often drafted in response to donor demands. Zambia and Malawi have been highly aid dependent.

Poverty and Vulnerability Assessments¹⁰ undertaken in the two countries show that poverty levels remained largely unchanged and high¹¹. Poor governance is said to be central to this problem. Assessments have shown that slow growth in both these countries is not so much in the content of the development strategies, but the failure of 'detailed and consistent implementation. The 2006

⁷ Malawi Parliament Strategic Plan, 2006

⁸ ODI, Drivers of Change and Development in Malawi, 2006

⁹ World Bank, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty, 2003

¹⁰ World Bank Poverty and Vulnerability Assessments, Zambia (2005), Malawi (2006)

¹¹ World Bank Poverty and Vulnerability Assessments, Zambia (2005), Malawi (2006)

Afro-barometer review observed declining confidence of Malawian and Zambian citizens in their Government's ability to implement policy and manage national economies.

The Public Sector remains weak, and arguably, has been deliberately incapacitated. Politicians are said to have destroyed the State's capacity to make Policy.¹² Ministries responsible for implementation do not face the threat of sanctions from cabinet for lack of policy implementation. Afro barometer trends show that citizen's perception of leadership performance within these two countries has declined is closely related to the extent of economic management and implementation of national development programs.¹³ However, recent evaluations suggest that Zambia's policy performance is steadily improving and Malawi's economic performance has also improved in the last three years.

The **objective** of this study is to explore the nature of Cabinet decision making and its implications for development policy, especially its implementation, in Malawi and Zambia. The study aims to contribute to the development of literature on institutional choices/underpinnings of Cabinets and their role in development policy implementation. It also aims to contribute to the analysis of how state capability, accountability and responsiveness works in two poor African countries.

1.2 Concepts

1.2.1 Cabinets

Manning's¹⁴ definition: '*a series of overlapping arenas that provide political leaders (Ministers) with an opportunity to compete for political gain and public expenditure*'.

.Cabinets in Western democratic regimes would often expect to have a major influence, even the final decision, on the choice of policies priorities as well as a role in monitoring government performance and steering its overall course.

In relation to policy implementation, the Cabinet's role may include the following:

- a. Prioritize development policies within the resource envelope (budget);

¹² ODI, Drivers of Change and Development in Malawi, 2006

¹³ Afro Barometer Working Paper No. 60, 2006

¹⁴ N. Manning, Strategic Decision making in Cabinet Governments, 1999

- b. Manage legislature input and other veto players, and how these changes are translated on paper;
- c. Implement work program effectively which includes: i) implementation (and tracking) of measures that correspond with the development strategy; ii) extent to which clear structures are put in place to implement this development policy.

In practice, how and whether Cabinets executes these tasks varies and may depend, according to my hypothesis, on how Manning's overlapping arenas operate (formal and informal rules)

Implementation 'capacity' is therefore a function of political process management by and within the Executive (in this case, Cabinet).¹⁵ 'Weak' development policy implementation may mean *'the broad development policy commitments of the executive that are either not implemented, or only partially implemented, within a reasonable timescale - or if implemented, are prone to rapid reversal'*¹⁶

1.3 Research question

In an attempt to address the issues raised in the background statement, the following question has been raised:

What explains the nature of Cabinet decision making and its capability (i.e. willingness and capacity) to implement development policy?

The following sub-questions will be posed:

- a. To what extent do Cabinets in these countries conform to the core tasks of prioritization as defined by Nick Manning? See Concepts above.
- b. Why is Cabinet institutionally unable to implement development policy initiatives?

1.4 Argument

The effectiveness of Cabinet should be measured by its success and improved performance over time, in implementing explicit policies of a development nature and in managing the political process to achieve that end. However, policy implementation is not independent of the prevailing

¹⁵ Bertsman Reform Index, 2006

¹⁶ Blondel and Manning, 2002

political system. Although the formal arrangement of power suggests that Cabinet and its decision making plays a critical role in policy determination and implementation, this may not be the case. Malawi and Zambia have political systems that make Cabinets one of the arenas for the ever-evolving power sharing pacts. This in turn, determines the extent to which Cabinets are able to implement development policy and whether the Governments are accountable and responsive to their electorates.

1.6 Methodology

The research will be conducted within 2 countries: Malawi and Zambia and studies Cabinets that have existed since multi-party elections.

Data has been collected from secondary sources: databases, newspaper articles, literature on policy implementation reviews and existing case studies.

The researcher also conducted focused interviews with Ministers from current and previous cabinets; officials from cabinet offices; professionals with expertise in this area, as well as ordinary Zambians and Malawians.

The study is constrained by the limited data on Cabinet behavior and performance in the two countries. As such, an initial set of questions were developed to guide the study:

- a. How is the Cabinet structured and how is it serviced?
- b. Who determines Cabinet appointments and reshuffles? Are they coalitions?
- c. What are the actual roles of Cabinet in Budget Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation? Two key areas being explored here: a) extent of in year deviations; and b) budgetary volatility.
- d. How does Cabinet communicate and defend its Policy priorities to other veto players e.g. Legislature and 'legitimate' civil society groups? What is Cabinet's understanding of development policy?
- e. How does Cabinet communicate its decisions and how are these implemented by the various Departments? What is Cabinet's role in overseeing public sector reforms?

- f. What is the implementation rate of Cabinet Decisions within Departments and what is the rate of success in meeting performance targets in priority areas?¹⁷

1.7 Limitations

The nature of the study entailed significant qualitative data research, given that literature on this area is scanty and not readily available (black box information). It also focused broadly on development policy/strategy, rather than specific policies.

University of Cape Town

¹⁷ G. Evans, N. Manning, *Helping Governments Meet their Promises*, World Bank 2003

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This Chapter presents an overview of the literature related to the study from two dimensions: Firstly, the theory of developmental states and the evolution of development policy practice and related institutional choices within Malawi and Zambia. Secondly, it looks at the theory and practice of Cabinets in determining development policy implementation.

2.1 Development Policy Implementation and related Institutional Arrangements

2.1.1 The Evolution of developmental States

Monteiro defines the State as a set of organized institutions with a certain level of cohesion operating in a given spatial territory.¹⁸ The World Bank recognizes that an effective state is a precondition of development and is essential for a prosperous economy. Adamolekun¹⁹ argues that states are increasingly laden with multiple functions and responsibilities. On top of the five basic government tasks that weak states should strive to get right (a benign policy environment; investment in people and infrastructure; protection of the vulnerable; protection of the natural environment). A sixth task includes the provision of security of persons and property.

Although States have manifested different appearances, strengths and weaknesses, a few key paradigms have been influential both in development discourse and the design of formal policies. The central one being the 'developmental state'; a notion introduced by Chalmers Johnson in his study of industrial development in Japan. Several authors and academics have consequently debated on whether the characteristics of a developmental state can be generalised for any country, or that each State demonstrates its own unique characteristics. Monteiro argues that one common and important feature of such states is the emergence of a new feeling among the citizenship in identifying with the State, which in turn has put strong pressure on core institutions of the state such as the public administration to deliver. These demands coincided with the post-colonial and independence expectations that the state had limitless capacity in providing services.

¹⁸ J. Monteiro, Public Administration and management innovation in developing countries, undated

¹⁹ L. Adamolekun, How Administrative competence contributes to better development performance, 2004

The reality has been that most post independent States were stretched in their capacity and resources to deliver.²⁰

Meyns says that the prime task of many post independent African states was developmental and competition between rival parties was seen as a potential threat to focusing all national forces on developmental aims.²¹ Political demands also spurred governments to take over productive units and maintain or increase employment. Although the States demonstrated significant changes in function and style of management from the colonial bureaucracy, the structure and methods remained basically the same, hence the inherited structural continuities from the colonial era. Colonial rule, in its minimalist in nature, used the Public Administration as a tool to serve its interests of domination and exploitation. Post colonial states continued to use the Public Administration, in a traditional colonial manner. That is the civil service systems continued to be identified with the political interests of the current rulers, as they were with foreign rulers; and in return the civil service continued to be out of step with employment and other conditions in the wider economy and society.²²

The new political elites used the Public Administration as a means to deliver their agenda, which was to ensure both national mobilization and economic development. They sought to apply various measures introduced by the colonial administration to address emerging situations.²³ Monteiro says, in this case, it was not the economy changing the management of the state; rather, it was the State changing the management of the economy. The Public Administration therefore became an instrument of political mobilization and patronage, and blocked the development of 'neutral competence'. The public employment system was used as a resource to be distributed to followers and winners of the electoral game and, as a consequence, the Public Administration systems, especially the civil service, became heavily politicised. Other authors have argued that although public administration systems in post independence states structurally resembled those in the former colonial administration, they were different in terms of behaviour (i.e. were prismatic). Riggs argues that the prismatic nature of many of Africa's Public administration systems is explained by

²⁰ J. Monteiro, Public Administration and management innovation in developing countries, undated

²¹ P. Meyns, The creation of an enabling environment for poverty reduction, 2005

²² UNDP, Globalization and Public Sector Reform, 2005

²³ UNDP, Globalization and Public Sector Reform, 2005

the presence of transitional societies that manifest interplay between modern and traditional societal characteristics. Therefore, such societies are neither traditional nor modern. They have elements from each category, leading to a unique society that in turn produces a unique bureaucracy-the *sala*. That is, a hybrid public administration system that exhibits both modern and traditional characteristics. Chweya argues that the characteristics of the prismatic society and sala bureaucracy in Africa are underscored by factors such as ethnic, political and neo-patrimonialism.²⁴

The post-independent States were able to deliver on some aspects, especially widening access to education and health; but they also dismally failed in meeting the demands of macro-economic management. Deficits were on the rise and the first measure was to resort to foreign aid and, when aid dried up, to increasing the supply of money. This led to increased and un-payable international and domestic debt and an explosive social situation at home when governments attempted to address their economic problems. Shivji is quoted as saying 'the present crisis has more or less blown the lid off the ideology of developmentalism'. The gap between the modern state and its citizens also became wider as it made strides to adapt what it had inherited from the colonial period to the larger scope of the state.²⁵

When the initial approaches to post colonial development led to disenchantment in the 1980's where economic conditions declined sharply, many countries embarked on structural adjustment programs in order to maintain the flow of donor credits. Thus, a new paradigm emerged. Whilst post colonial economic nationalism had stressed the crucial developmental role of the state, a neo-liberal ideology advocated the strengthening of market forces and the reduction of state intervention.²⁶ Fukuyama says that reducing the size of the state became a dominant feature in the 1980's and 1990's when many of the countries including those in SSA were emerging from a dominant authoritarian rule. The advice rendered by the United States to International Financing Institutions (IFI's) was to reduce the degree of state intervention in economic affairs. This was dubbed the 'Washington Consensus'. There were attempts to control and reverse state-sector growth and the collapse of communism gave extra impetus to reducing the size of the state.²⁷ This

²⁴ Chweya, L. *The Kenyan Civil Service: Patronage, Impropriety and Public Trust*, 2000

²⁵ M. Shivji, *Marxism and Socialism in Africa: Some reflections*, 1988

²⁶ P. Evans et al, *Bringing the State Back in*, 1985

²⁷ F. Fukuyama, *The imperative of state building*, 2004

approach was also manifested through the emergence of the Public Management (PM) and New Public Management Paradigms (NPM). These approaches sought to separate politics from administration and import business management practices into the public sector. It focused on efficiency and results. New Public Management became closely associated with structural adjustment policies that the IFI's pressed on weak states. They called for a lean and mean public administration, and cutting back state intervention through privatization, expenditure cuts and labour market deregulation.²⁸

Fukuyama argues that there was nothing wrong with these reforms per se, as many of the state sectors in these countries were obstacles to growth. The problem with the approach was there was a one sided focus on reducing state activity, without placing equal focus on simultaneously strengthen those parts of state capacity that were required. As a result, these reforms were construed as cutting back state capacity across the board. He argues that, as a result despite these IFI advocated reforms; these States continue to be weak, incompetent, and undergoing severe difficulties.

The core issue at hand is the institutional capacity (or lack thereof) of many countries (especially in Sub Sahara Africa) to solve their developmental challenges. This observation is strengthened by the evidence that the extent to which many African states have institutionalised the Public Management and New Public Management approaches within the Public Administration systems has been minimal. It is argued that even traditional administration is yet to be institutionalised in many African States.²⁹ Aspects of structural adjustment, such as privatisation, proved vulnerable to elite capture and were used by elites to advance their own patronage political interest. This was the case in both Zambia and Malawi.

Many authors have argued that the loss of capacity of many developmental states has been closely tied in with the neo-patrimonial developmental state. On one hand, state resources-bureaucratic positions, power to allocate rents, provide services, determine policies and beneficiaries are effectively in the hands of personal or private networks (sometimes political

²⁸UNDP, Globalization and Public Sector Reform, 2005

²⁹ UNDP, Globalization and Public Sector Reform, 2005

parties) controlled by dominant patrons. Thus, instead of the state being an instrument governed by democratic demands and accountability and legal rules, it is effectively an apparatus serving the interests of particular groups and individuals who have captured it. Their informal institutions operate in parallel and through formal institutions and administrative rules. The state is hybrid in its character.³⁰

Mkandawire acknowledges that the features of neo-patrimonialism, such as corruption and rent seeking are also found in the more successful developmental states of Asia and that neo-patrimonialism can be combined with various policies including developmental ones. However, in Africa, these characteristics have not led to productive investment and economic growth, but rather the disappearance of funds into obscure private channels.³¹ Leftwich and Mkandawire argue that the historical points of departure for any given state and its internal constellation of political forces determine the unique characteristics of the developmental character of the state.

However, other contemporaries have argued for the existence of more positive effects of neo-patrimonialism. Tony Killick argues that not all forms of patronage have the same developmental implications. In countries like Ghana, there is evidence of a transition from personalistic to more electoral-based forms of patronage, favouring the distribution of pay-off's in more collective forms, to possibly more inclusive constituencies, and that party competition favours that. In the same vein, the negative effects of patronage could also over time, become eroded or modified with deepening democratic values.³²

At another level, Sub-Sahara countries themselves are beginning to pose fundamental questions on the 'imported notions' about the size and shape of the state, as well as its Public Administration. In South Africa, the ruling ANC and its alliance partners have begun to shape this agenda. Two strands have been pursued by the centre of the South African Government. Firstly, there is the argument that state building implies the need to develop the strategic capacity of the developmental state; and it explicitly argues for the bolstering of state and public administration

³⁰ ODI, Drivers for Change and Development in Malawi, 2006

³¹ T. Mkandawire, Thinking about developmental states in Africa, 2001

³² T. Killick, The democratic deficit and the politics of Ghana's budgetary system, 2004

institutions to deliver in the developmental process.³³ Secondly, it has advanced the need to bridge the gap between political and technical leadership. The Minister of Public Service, a crucial player in the Pan African Public Sector group, has stated that in many cases there is a disjoint between committed, visionary leadership and slow, unresponsive administrative leadership. Contrary to the traditional approach to public administration which attempts to pronounce an administrative and political divide, she argues for a more symbiotic relationship. This symbiotic relationship recognizes the realm of political control and technical expertise of Government, but she emphasizes that it is critical that the administrative leadership understands that administrative action is inherently political, and that constant political guidance and mutual adjustment are central to the building of effective developmental states and good governance.³⁴

2.1.2 Development Policy Implementation

Quade defines policy implementation as the direct change that follows policy mandate, the process of rearranging patterns of conduct so as to honour the prescriptions set forth in decisions. Ripley and Franklin state this as what happens after laws are passed, authorising program and policy for the benefit of some kind of tangible input. Roux defines it as the setting in motion of policy directives as authorised and cites 5 protocols for successful policy implementation. These are content, context, commitment, capacity and clients and coalitions. He also states that the implementation program should look at the following parameters: financial/budgetary requirements; organizational and financial requirements; human resource requirements. He also states that the policy implementation model looks at policy enactment, planning of implementation progress, preliquisites to adhere to, operationalisation of policy, M&E and feed back.

Roux's and other definitions make an 'implied' but not explicit reference to the close intertwines between implementation and political actors. On the same point, the American Institute of Public Affairs further argues that many people see the creation of public policy as synonymous with its implementation. However, while creation of public policy is important, the success of public policy

³³ R. Levin, *Integrated Service Delivery in the developmental state*; 2004

³⁴ G. Moleketi, *Leadership and role of senior civil servants*; 2005

lies in how well it is implemented. That success rests in large part on the cooperation and collaboration among certain key stakeholders in the public policy process: members of Congress, political appointees, career government executives, leaders of mid-level manager associations, union leaders, academics, and the consulting and technology communities.

Spector deals with these political issues in more detail. He argues that policy implementation is always accompanied with conflict, which is more pronounced or efficiently resolved at a political level; and that paradoxically, policy implementation cannot proceed efficiently without conflict. He concurs with Crosby, that the very tasks that compromise policy implementation are fraught with potential conflict, both within and among stakeholder groups. These tasks are: policy legitimating; constituency building; resource accumulation; organizational design and modification and resource mobilization. Thus, policy implementation must be preceded with the institutionalization of processes and mechanisms and structures that are capable of managing such disputes. Maitland further argues that such disputes may concern conflicts over policy objectives or disagreements over the means to carry out the policy. This may mean sabotage or disruptive power struggles. In pluralistic societies, the implementation of policy culminates into conflict of interest amongst the various actors within the State.

Spector suggests that there are different perspectives on policy implementation a political perspective and an administrative view. The latter views puts emphasis on putting regulations and legislation into effect, and sees conflicts involving resource distribution and differences in technocratic approaches to policy implementation. The political perspective on implementation on the other hand focuses on the wielding of political power to implement policy and conflicts may include the incompatibility of political interests.

Perhaps the most comprehensive and suitable approach and definitions to policy implementation is provided by the Bertsman Reform Index. It outlines measures to assess parameters of policy implementation that take into account the political dimensions of policy implementation; and the role of the Executive in decision making.³⁵

³⁵ Bertsman Reform Index, 2004

A complication that affects aid-dependent states at both policy making and policy implementation levels is the role of IFIs and other donor agencies. In a democratic state, development policy is usually comprised of nationally generated statements of priorities that are supposed to be the government's interpretation of the will of the people. These are expressed through manifestos, a national plan, and national budgets. In recent years, poor country governments' development priorities have been influenced by the emergence of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. These have their intellectual origin in global declarations - the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration of 2000 - which include aspirations for development policy and the relationship of citizens and the State. In practice, Rakner et al argue that many States treat these documents seriously in the sense that they are tied to funding from cooperating partners through debt relief and budget support. PRSP's have increasingly become the hub of low income countries development policy, but the degree of local ownership is very variable.³⁶

The World Bank Public Sector Strategy puts emphasis, at least in theory, on the need to shift focus from content of public policy to the way that it is made and implemented. In many cases, governments are not in control of their projects that are driven by donors and the international community and these do not reflect their estimations of problems in the sector. The question is whether these governments provide clear statements of sector policy, priorities and constraints and a clear statement of government's strategy. According to the World Bank, commonly observed difficulties hampering effective policy implementation span a number of areas and levels – from the policy formulation stage to the incorporation of intergovernmental legislation into national legal frameworks and the operationalisation of regional policy at the national level – and include, among others, instances of 'street-level' obstruction, institutional weaknesses at various levels, issues arising from cultural characteristics of implementing agents and the imperfect monitoring of implementation.³⁷

DFID's analysis accepts that policy implementation in many developmental states is, in fact, a political process. This is because there are limited resources and decisions about resources rest

³⁶ Rakner et al, Poverty Reduction Strategy processes in Malawi and Zambia, 2004

³⁷ N. Manning, Strategic Decision making in Cabinet Government, 1999

within the hands of politicians and elites. DFID acknowledges that elites may resist reform if it is seen as undermining their interests.³⁸

2.2 Development policy implementation in Malawi and Zambia

2.2.1 Zambia: Socio-economic characteristics & Development Policy Implementation

Zambia is a land-locked, country in southern Africa with a population of about eleven million people. At independence in 1964, Zambia inherited a strong mining-based economy. It deteriorated in the mid-1970s following a sharp decline in copper prices and inefficiencies in the management of the state-owned copper mines, compounded by the oil shock. Zambia's economy has seen gradual structural changes as consistent and high economic growth has been elusive. Over the period 1980 to 1990, the country's economic growth was the second lowest in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) after Mozambique. Over the period 1990 to 1999, it had the least average annual growth rate in the SADC region at one percent. This was also below the Sub-Saharan Africa rate of 2.4 percent. Real gross fixed capital formation increased from eight percent in 1990 to fifteen percent in 1999. While this is encouraging, the level is well below the twenty percent associated with sustainable growth. More recently, there are early and encouraging signs of economic recovery due to sharply rising copper prices – the country has for the first time since the early 1970s registered positive rates of growth over five successive years

Zambia's transition to multi-party democracy in 1991 stoked optimism that its dormant economic potential would be awakened and that revived economic growth would improve the lot of the nation's poor. Unfortunately, Zambia's hopes for a sustained economic recovery during the 1990s remained unrealized. The continued deterioration in the international price of copper, the collapse of major manufacturing industries, the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and acute governance and policy failures have conspired to stifle the nation's progress. At the macro level, the disappointments of the decade are reflected in the decline of GDP per capita by an average 1.5 percent per year over the course of the decade.³⁹ A Poverty and Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) shows that poverty levels remained very high compared to other countries and with no discernible change from the 1990's. This also

³⁸ DFID, Making Government work for poor people, 2001

³⁹ Government of Zambia, PRSP, 2002-2004

corresponds with very poor non-income indicators. Infant and child mortality and malnutrition has remained high, in comparison with the rest of the SSA. Rural poverty remained a particular concern, with no improvements in living conditions. Unemployment remained high. The overall impacts of years of adjustment, deterioration of basic services, HIV and AIDS was visible in education and literacy patterns. Although Zambia remains one of the most educated countries in Africa, it is clear that these dividends have not yet paid off.

Meyns argues that the development strategies that have been pursued in Zambia can be distinguished through two distinct phases, essentially, the post-colonial economic nationalist and statist phase under Kaunda and the subsequent neo-liberal phase. Both these approaches would lump Chiluba and Mwanawasa together in one phase. He justifies this by stating that they both won the presidential race on the same party ticket. He also argues that the transition from Chiluba to Mwanawasa was a change of government and not a change of the political system, and that this distinction takes into consideration the presidential nature of political rule in Zambia. However, he resorts to distinguishing the presidential terms of Zambia's heads of state since independence, and inevitably approaches the developmental paradigms through a political lens.⁴⁰

Kenneth Kaunda and UNIP inherited a Zambia with a silver spoon after independence in 1964; a country intertwined with the fortunes of firms in the mining sector, based in the Copper belt. The mining companies were traditionally the most important employers in the economy, and copper was the biggest generator of foreign exchange. The government, recognized the importance of this sector, and went as far as nationalizing them at the beginning of the 1970's. The miners and other workers became some of the most influential, vocal and political voices in the country, with an influence on wages and employment policies.

Zambia started implementing IFI supported reform programs as early as 1978. In 1987, the Government abandoned such programs, replaced the members of the economic policy team and sought to implement a home grown New Economic Recovery Program (NERP), which implied a partial return to the command economy. The NERP resulted into a reduction of fiscal deficit, but

⁴⁰ Meyns, P. The creation of an enabling environment for poverty reduction-Can Zambia's political system delivers the goods? 2005

was once again compromised by the pressures to finance the bumper harvest of 1988. The program is said to have later on collapsed in 1991 due to the pending of the presidential and parliamentary elections. The Government is said to have backtracked on reforms and switched to a short term policy aimed at winning the support of important electoral groups.⁴¹

There seems to be a gap in the literature examined on the sorts of 'indigenous' developmental policies that were pursued during the UNIP era, save for Meyers brief mention of Kaunda's 'economic nationalism' which involved an ambitious statist development strategy that proved unsustainable following the end of the copper boom. He further argues that Zambia's state under Kaunda was more commandist (though also distinct from East bloc socialism) than developmental.

Szeftel has described the clientelistic practices of patronage (in exchange for political support) and corruption which were nurtured by the statist policies of the 1st Republic. At times, he says, „it became possible to run public office as a private business. Szeftel argues the one-party state did not end patronage politics; it merely gave the centre more control over it. By institutionalizing his system of "tribal balancing" in the 2nd Republic Kaunda further undermined development efforts by putting people in positions to satisfy certain sections of the elite rather than because of their merit. It was essentially a system of patronage which stabilized Kaunda's personal rule, while leading to increasing nepotism and weakening the rational-legal functioning of the public service. Maintaining his own political power became more important for Kaunda than pursuing the development goals proclaimed after independence.⁴²

Chiluba assumed the presidency in 1991 amidst high citizen expectations of his capabilities. Lewanika says the MMD had been initiated essentially by a group of intellectuals whose declared aim was to pursue an agenda for "democracy and development leading Zambia into a political future beyond Kaunda's increasingly unpredictable autocratic rule and putting the country's economic and social development on an even keel again".⁴³ Meyns argues, however, that the conditions for development were much less favorable than they had been at independence. The national economy was at low ebb; combining a greater openness of public debate with the

⁴¹ A. Bigsten et al, *The Political Economy of Policy failure in Zambia*, undated

⁴² Szeftel, *Eat with us: Managing corruption and patronage under Zambia's three republics*, 2000

⁴³ Lewanika, *Hour of Reunion, MMD: Conception, Dissension and Reconciliation*, 2003

sacrifices needed to get the economy going again would not be easy. The capacity of the state to effectively guide the process of national recovery was limited as it had to confront entrenched interests in the state economic sector as well as, given the country's high external debt, the pressure of international donors. The state bureaucracy had suffered from years of deteriorating living conditions and the persistence of patronage.⁴⁴

Chiluba used the legitimacy his government had acquired in the 1991 elections to immediately embark on drastic measures of liberalization, particularly in the fields of agriculture and trade. In other areas, such as privatization and public sector reform, he was initially much less responsive to the adjustment demands of the international donors. Through the measures which it did implement the new regime signaled its departure from Kaunda's statist approach and its adoption of the new paradigm of neo-liberal structural adjustment. International donors responded to this paradigm shift by providing renewed aid flows which Zambia urgently needed to reestablish its capacity to service its external debt. During this era, Rakner argues that Chiluba's government was principally interested in maintaining aid flows and that neo-liberal reform were a means to that end. Donor conditionalities "were half-heartedly pursued by the two Chiluba administrations in order to fulfill Consultative Group meeting demands rather than because these reforms were part of a domestically formulated development strategy".⁴⁵

Chiluba's government also became notorious for the scale of corruption. Privatization programmes provided particularly lucrative opportunities for corruption. The benefits of corruption were spread amongst the ruling elites and traditional power bases. Mwanawasa distanced himself from the corruption although benefited from in the campaign funds for his first election. It is not yet clear where the prosecution of Chiluba and his closest allies represents more than a political response to public outrage and political positioning.

Mwanawasa's era coincided with the development and ratification of Zambia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The back bone of this document was the hypothesis that little can be achieved to reduce poverty unless measures are taken to revive Zambia's economy. The PRSP therefore focused on measures to achieve strong sustained economic growth. It was guided by a

⁴⁴ Lewanika, Hour of Reunion, MMD: Conception, Dissension and Reconciliation, 2003

⁴⁵ Rakner, Political and economic liberalization in Zambia, 2003

set of three principles that focused on macroeconomic stability/structural reforms and pro-poor growth interventions; pivotal to both growth and poverty reduction; efficient channeling of the scarce national resources only to meet those goals of the PRSP and emphasis on agricultural development as the engine of income expansion for the poor. The PRSP was seen as the development planning and resource programming tool and, that provided an overall framework for the State's planning and interventions for development and poverty reduction.

The overall coordination of the implementation of the PRSP rested with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP) with the full participation of line ministries, other government institutions, civil society, and international cooperating partners. The PRSP also stated that its successful implementation required the institution of effective systems to manage and monitor its implementation. In order to have a firm grip on government expenditures and to ensure that government interventions are within the resource envelope, a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) will be developed. In order to avoid annual budgets being thrown into disarray, thereby threatening the credibility of the PRSP, the MTEF would be used for expenditure planning in the medium term. Matching expenditures as outlined in the PRSP with the resource envelope in the MTEF will enhance the activities being realized. The MTEF process will require review and assessment of where resources are currently committed or spent and to make real decisions or choices on where Zambia's resources should be spent to further the PRSP. Increasingly in the PRSP process, therefore, expenditures should reflect the objectives in the PRSP and not otherwise. Controlling officers were not to commit resources to expenditures outside the PRSP objectives.⁴⁶

Zambia has since proceeded to develop its Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP): a medium term plan 2006-2010 with the intention of focusing the Government's policy and programming for the period. It cascades from the long-term development objectives in the National Vision 2030: "to become a prosperous middle income country by the year 2030." The Vision 2030 identifies a number of development goals, which include: (i) reaching middle-income status; (ii) significantly reducing hunger and poverty; and (iii) fostering a competitive and outward-oriented economy. The FNDP is seen as an important step towards the realisation of the 2030 Vision. The Theme of the

⁴⁶ Zambia, PRSP, 2002-2004

FNDP is, therefore: “Broad Based Wealth and Job Creation through Citizenry Participation and Technological Advancement”, while the strategic focus is “Economic Infrastructure and human resources development”.⁴⁷

The FNDP is still in draft form, and has solicited views from various stakeholders, including Civil Society organisations. One of the most critical elements of CSO's inputs has been to recommend that the Government should continue to place emphasis on the critical importance of a robust institutional framework for the FNDP, because this will be a determinant of successful implementation. They have also recommended that there be strong institutional arrangements for monitoring the FNDP, and these arrangements should include non-state actors, to be backed by legal status. Civil Society has also raised the need to strengthen coordinating mechanisms for implementation and monitoring, and have specifically noted the over stretched role of the planning department of the MoFNP.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Government of Zambia, Draft FNDP, 2006

⁴⁸ Civil Society for Poverty Reduction, 2006

2.2.2 Malawi: Socio-economic characteristics & Development Policy Implementation

Malawi's total population in 2005 was estimated at 12.3 million, of which about 60 percent is under the age of 20. It is characterized by widespread poverty: nominal per capita GDP is only US\$220--less than half the sub-Saharan African average; income inequality is the highest in Africa;⁴⁹

The economy of Malawi is based on agriculture, which has constituted about one-third of GDP throughout the 1990s, of which three-quarters is produced by smallholders. Manufacturing and mining account for 17 per cent on average and services 27 per cent of GDP. The bulk of exports, some 85 per cent, are made up of agricultural produce, of which tobacco alone accounted for 63 per cent in the 1997–2000 period. The gap between public revenue and expenditure is financed by donor grants and lending, externally and domestically. As a result, Malawi is very aid -dependent.⁵⁰

Poverty has not changed significantly for the past seven years. According to Integrated Household Survey 2004/05, the current status of poverty shows that 52.4 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The poor still have poor socio-economic indicators with malnutrition & food security a continuing threat, and problems with integrating the poor into the economic fabric.⁵¹

In general, communities have experienced a decline in social and economic growth in the last 10 years. The Poverty Vulnerability Assessment for 2006 suggests that the major factors affecting the level of household poverty are household size, education, access to non-farm employment, access to irrigation, proximity to markets and trading centers, and access to tarmac roads. ⁵²

The Human Development Index has stagnated since the mid-1990s. While there have been improvements in the education and literacy, several health indicators have worsened over the past decade. Among others, the number of physicians per population has fallen by half, and life expectancy has fallen from 46 years in 1987 to 37 years in 2005, largely due to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Childhood immunization has also decreased from 82 percent in 1992 to 64 percent in 2004. Maternal mortality rates have increased from 620 in 1992 to 960 in 2004, although they are now on a decreasing trend. Child malnutrition has remained virtually unchanged since 1992, and

⁴⁹ IMF, Malawi Country Profile, 2006

⁵⁰ IMF, Malawi Country Profile, 2006

⁵¹ Government of Malawi, MGDS, 2007

⁵² World Bank, PVA, 2006

almost half of children under five years of age in Malawi are stunted, and 22 percent are severely stunted.⁵³

Many authors have characterised Malawi's development policies as falling into in three periods. These denote sharp breaks in political interests and, subsequently, the nature of development policies that were developed.

Development policies during the Banda era were guided by a national Document called Development Policy DEVPOL. Chinsinga argues that the Banda regime capitalised on estate agriculture as an engine of economic growth and development. The economic policies were deliberately designed to serve the agricultural sector in a generally preferential manner, and other policies were designed to enable the state sector policies to be exploitative. The State played a major role in agricultural marketing and production. The 10 year development policies clearly emphasised agriculture as a potential source of revenue that would eventually lead to the financial autonomy of other sectors. The small holder sector, where the majority of Malawi's poor were, continued to be marginalised and exploited by the estate sector, with finances obtained through excessive taxes on peasants. The small holder sector continued to be marginalised even through the period of structural adjustment policies where small holder sector shrunk to 76% and the estate sub-sector increased to 24%.⁵⁴

However, things began to change in later years. The Statement of Development Policies 1987-1996 (DEVPOL) stated that the challenge in the decade ahead will be to "reduce poverty, ignorance and disease".⁵⁵ However, Chinsinga observes that, during Banda's era, there was a lack of debate on core issues related to poverty and the nature of development policies. The state apparatus systematically cultivated a culture of submissiveness and docility. The Government's limited vision prevailed that it would be sufficient if every Malawian was well fed, lived in a house that did not leak, and had adequate clothing. This policy achieved selective success initially but later the cost was unsustainable. Access to government was also limited.

⁵³ World Bank, PVA, 2006

⁵⁴ Chinsinga, *The Politics of Poverty Alleviation in Malawi: A critical Review*, 2001

⁵⁵ Government of Malawi, DEVPOL 1987/1996

A UNDP country report notes that structural adjustment programmes began to nudge the Government to implement a more realistic approach to poverty and hence to implement more wider approaches to development policy. This was exemplified by an adopted strategy of "growth through poverty reduction", which comprised of enhancement of smallholder agricultural productivity, increased social sector expenditure, expansion of employment opportunities, and direct income transfers. The Government also made commitments to increase the share of expenditure to social services sectors despite of the clear limits to the growth of Government expenditure (DEVPOL).

Malawi's first democratically elected government, which took office in May 1994 during a period of major economic turmoil, pronounced its overarching objective to be the alleviation of poverty. Key to achieving this objective was the adoption of a set of prudent financial policies designed to restore and maintain macroeconomic stability. The Muluzi era was marked by a structural shift from agriculture to commerce, as the desired hub of economic growth and development. This coincided with the election of a majority of UDF leaders who had a background in commerce and Industry. The issue of poverty led to a strong debate during the run up to the first democratic elections in 1994. The common consensus was that a majority of the Malawians had not benefited from the post independence fruits and macro-economic prosperity.

In 1994, the government instituted the Poverty Alleviation Program. Its underlying vision was that every Malawian should have access to the basic necessities in order to develop and exploit their potential to lead a productive, dignified and creative life through social, economic and political empowerment. It professed a shift in development policy focus from poverty 'alleviation' to poverty 'eradication'. The PAP's institutional matrix was comprised of the Presidential Council (chaired by the president, Cabinet, faith groups, private sector, academic institutions and traditional leaders); a National Steering Committee (headed by the SPC, with members from the CS, NGO's, private sector and co-opted members of the donor community) and eight Task Forces (from eight sectors in liaison with local communities). The management of the PAP was tasked to the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, in close liaison with the OPC.

Chinsinga's analysis of the institutional arrangements revealed that membership to the various committees was limited to the ruling party, UDF and many beneficiaries of the PAP were from the ruling political circles. This left questions as to the accountability for and efficient use of PAP

resources. He alludes to these resources were being used to facilitate and expand patronage networks and that politically the PAP was seen as an arena of economic struggle for political dominance. There was no participative consultation process of the poor and many interventions were based on outdated research analysis. Although several participatory mechanisms were later on factored into the PAP process, there was substantial doubt that they fed into the implementation of the PAP. Although the institutional arrangements were clearly laid out on paper, Chinsinga argues that it was not clear who had the overall responsibility of ensuring that the PAP developmental policies were translated into practice. Hence, at national level, much was planned and known, but at local level impact was at best 'accidental'. It was argued that lessons needed to be learnt in the crafting of the PRSP to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

In May 2002, the Government launched the MPRS which presented as a first attempt to translate the long-term strategy of Malawi Vision 2020 into medium term focused action plans. The MPRS became the overarching medium term strategy of the Government for reducing poverty in the country. The goal of the MPRS was to achieve "sustainable poverty reduction through empowerment of the poor." The MPRS was built around four strategic pillars namely: sustainable pro-poor growth; human capital development; improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable; and governance. In addition, it had four key cross cutting issues namely: HIV and AIDS, gender, environment, science and technology. The implementation period for the MPRS was for a period of three years and it came to an end in the fiscal year 2004/05. In the second half of 2005, the MPRS was reviewed to draw lessons from its implementation. The notable achievement of the MPRS was the decline in poverty levels from 54.1 percent to 52.4 percent. However, there were some short falls that hampered the implementation process. These included failure by Ministries and Departments to translate the activities into the budget and MTEF, slow implementation of the devolution process, and that funding was not based on pillars.⁵⁶

In 2004, a new president, Bingu wa Mutharika was ushered into power and subsequently led the Government into the development of a new development strategy known as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). The MGDS incorporates lessons learnt from the previous MPRS while taking into consideration the current political, economic and social developments in the country. Its overriding philosophy of the MGDS is poverty reduction through sustainable

⁵⁶Government of Malawi, MPRS Comprehensive Review, 2006

economic growth and infrastructure development, and in turn, to reduce poverty levels of the country by 8 percent during the implementation period by creating necessary opportunities for development. The MGDS is the overarching strategy for Malawi for the next five years, from 2006/07 to 2010/2011 fiscal years.

The MGDS' implementation framework is addressed from two dimensions. Firstly, it outlines the roles of all institutional actors. At Cabinet level, the MGDS will be chaired by the President. The Cabinet will review the annual progress in the implementation of the MGDS. It is expected that various ministers will brief the Cabinet based on reports on the actual outputs and outcomes of the implementation of the strategy. The Minister of Economic Planning and Development will have a detailed report on the progress of the implementation that will act as a back up to sectoral presentations. Prior to the budget session of Parliament, all parliamentarians will comment on the progress of the implementation of the strategy. The Parliament will base their debates from the mid-year development reports as well as annual development reports produced by Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. The development report will articulate all issues outlined in the budget that are in line with the MGDS. The Secretary for Economic Planning will present the progress report of the implementation to the entire meeting of the Principal Secretaries chaired by Chief Secretary. The Principal Secretaries as Controlling Officers are supposed to take necessary measures as regards to issues raised in the mid-year and annual development reports. The technical committee will consist of development partners, senior civil servants, Civil Society and private sector. The technical committee will be chaired by Director of Monitoring and Evaluation. The Chairman will prepare documentation for the Principal Secretaries' meetings. The Secretary for Economic Planning and Development is expected to give an overview of the status of the MGDS during the Principal Secretaries' meetings. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development will be secretariat for the implementation of the MGDS.⁵⁷

Secondly, the government will develop a vibrant monitoring and evaluation system; and recognizes that that the relationship between the MGDS and the budget becomes pivotal to the successful implementation of this strategic document. To that, an operational table has been developed to

⁵⁷ Malawi Government, MGDS, 2007

guide the implementation of the MGDS. Government will spearhead the implementation of the MGDS, but acknowledges the roles of all stakeholders in the implementation process.⁵⁸

2.3 Cabinet decision making and development policy implementation

At the heart of the Public Policy and Administration discourse lies the discussion with regards the relationship between elected leaders and the Public Sector bureaucrats in formulating and implementing policy.

Agere argues that the interface or working relationship between the politician and civil servant is critical to the success of administrative reforms. This relationship is crucial to the capability of the Executive arm of the Public Sector to drive radical improvements in the delivery of service to the people (i.e. in policy implementation). This interface is manifested within the context of functional behavior, attitudes, mindset, power relations and competencies of the elected and appointed officials in the performance of their official duties and in the management of the reform agenda.⁵⁹ He also concludes that what makes this relationship complex is its paradoxical nature. On one hand, it appears to be made to be deliberately conflicting and ambiguous, and on the other cooperative and meaningful. Cabinet and its Ministers on one hand, seem to be accountable to Parliament without authority, and the Public Service (through its Permanent Secretaries) on the other hand, seems to have authority without accountability to the appointing authority.

Garnett et al states that the apex of policy processes lies within Cabinet. He also observes that in many developing states, developmental strategies make a weak reference on the role of Cabinet in the policy making processes of Government. However, he notes that making arguments for such causality is not simplistic. Garnett acknowledges that it is difficult to attribute policy implementation success solely to cabinet involvement, and understanding the root causes of poor policy implementation is a complex process. Garnett also argues that the development policy implementation process is manifested by the budget implementation and monitoring and evaluation process; and if cabinet is involved at key strategic points of the these processes, the execution of

⁵⁸ Malawi Government, MGDS, 2007

⁵⁹ S. Agere, Political and Administrative Interface: The functional relationship between Ministers and Permanent Secretaries

the budget is more predictable, and policy is more likely to be implemented. If Cabinet is active in reviewing budget outturns, this in itself is a function of policy implementation. Knowing that political leadership will review budgetary performance might improve the predictability of the budget and policy on the part of state bureaucrats.⁶⁰

Fozzard attributes Uganda's success with its developmental strategy, the PEAP, and its ability to link it with the three year rolling budgetary process, the MTEF to the active role of cabinet, and its capability to make choices amongst competing priorities, which included allocations to the Poverty Action Fund. Holmes⁶¹ also cites Uganda as a success story, and attributes this success to the role of Cabinet. He argues that where cabinet sets the priorities within a realistic resource envelope, this is a key ingredient to successful outcomes. Shah's critique of development strategies has been that they have been 'politically naïve', as they failed to involve political leadership, which in turn reduced the realism of the Strategies and consequently, their implementability.⁶²

An incoherent centre of government disincentivizes bureaucrats from implementing set developmental targets, especially where public sector officials see no connection between stated government policy and policy implementation. Gockcekus and Mukherjee's research findings in Eastern Europe demonstrate that the return on improving the perceptions of public officials concerning the credibility of policy is very high. For every additional 100 public officials who do not consider that ministerial or government policies are contradictory and likely to be arbitrarily overturned, 118 more will share their managers view and goals, and 37 will adhere to the basic rules as they will be convinced that personnel and financial management regulations are enforced in the organization.⁶³ Collier argues that this is an area where external incentives are unlikely to succeed. Either government has institutions to discipline policies at second level (erratic reversals and arbitrary decisions), or policies are undisciplined.

⁶⁰ Garnett, *Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction*, 2003

⁶¹ Holmes, *MTEF processes*, 2003

⁶² Fozzard, *How, When and How the Budget gets a priority*, 2002

⁶³ Gockcekus et al, 1999

Manning⁶⁴ says that effective cabinets provide the institutional mechanism through which the government prioritizes its policies, guards against sudden and avoidable policy reversals, and places pressure on the sector to deliver value for money. Cabinets are at the centre of strong institutional mechanisms that offer protection against erratic policy reversals and arbitrary allocations among sector.

Manning⁶⁵ says that understanding cabinet decision making provides an entry point to bridging the gap between institutional arrangements for government as the employer and those concerned with public expenditure management and budgetary institutions. Government has two core tasks in its pursuit of sound implementation of development policy: firstly, to pursue a development agenda that carries sufficient domestic credibility; secondly, to refrain from policy reversals and from arbitrary decisions about allocation between key sectors. In turn, the public sector requires a credible leadership to be able to deliver on the developmental agenda.

Manning argues that understanding the root causes of consistent policy implementation requires a close examination of the risks facing the government. Cabinet provides an institutional solution to a set of certain risks regarding policy implementation.⁶⁶

On the other hand, Jones reports that a review of sector investment programs revealed that leadership for such programs had been focused on a small group of individuals from the sector ministry, and that leadership of a committed core of government staff is necessary but not sufficient for political sustainability. A supplementary review of sector investment programs also revealed that they did not include any references to the role of cabinet or council of Ministers in negotiations or discussions of the choice of priorities or emphasize ownership of the program at this level.

Draper provides a summary of some of the key challenges facing the institution of Cabinet. Firstly, Cabinet decisions often are inconsistent with its own strategic framework of priorities. Secondly, decisions and actions by individual ministers are usually inconsistent with agreed Cabinet Strategy.

⁶⁴ N. Manning, *Strategic Decision making in Cabinet Governments*, 1999

⁶⁵ N. Manning, *Strategic Decision making in Cabinet Governments*, 1999

⁶⁶ N. Manning, *Strategic Decision making in Cabinet Governments*, 1999

Thirdly, there is inadequate consensus building and dialogue within Cabinet, as evidenced by weak implementation of decisions, which in many cases do not reflect stakeholder preferences.⁶⁷

So, what precisely, is this Cabinet structure?

Manning says that modern cabinet government emerged in Europe in the 19th Century from an attempt to reconcile the continuing wish of the monarch to govern alongside an emerging popular sovereignty. He adopts the definition of Cabinets and councils of Ministers as being a series of interlinked forums rather than the single body that meets formally every week. He sees Cabinets as a series of overlapping arenas that provide Ministers with an opportunity to compete for political gain and public expenditure. The style and membership varies enormously, internationally.

A survey by Manning and Burma in 1999 revealed that cabinet is a popular form of government and pressures for collective decision making are growing. 80 countries of 182 are strongly cabinet-like. 44 countries were somewhat cabinet-like, and the remaining 58 were not cabinet like. In Africa, over 70% showed cabinet-like characteristics. There was also strong evidence that heads of government were increasingly heading their ministerial colleagues. Although Cabinets tend to exist in Parliamentary systems, the existence of cabinet government is an empirical point and does not flow automatically from the Constitution.

Garnett opts for a simpler definition of cabinet. That is, a group of ministers appointed by the president or prime minister who work together to make major decisions and coordinate policy.

Wright⁶⁸ identifies four types of cabinets. Firstly, a spectator cabinet, where major decisions being taken elsewhere in central executive authority, either by the chief executive in the bilateral negotiations with relevant ministers, cabinet committees, interdepartmental committees of high ranking civil servants, ad hoc commissioners etc. Secondly, a clearing house cabinet that rubberstamps decision made elsewhere for formal reporting. Third, cabinets that are arena's for

⁶⁷ G. Harper, Political and Administrative Interface, UCT, 2006

⁶⁸ Wright, 1998 in Garnett, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction, 2003

reviewing, debating ministerial initiatives, and for legitimizing decision making, and finally, Cabinet that is an actor with the power to initiate, filter, coordinate, and as final court of appeal, to impose restraint and even veto's. These roles are not mutually exclusive and most cabinets find themselves locked in these roles, and emphasis varies from country to country.

Manning says that the rules that cabinet creates determine how it is able to apply its priorities. Agreeing on these priorities is tough in itself, but this is made even more challenging by the efforts to adhere to priorities from other pressure groups. To make such decisions effective, all Ministers must be associated with the decisions and these must anticipate a number of different scenarios. These decisions should therefore reflect a cabinet process rather than mere rubber stamp. This means negotiation and flexibility. The Annual budget represents the most tangible entry point of the Cabinet in setting its strategic priorities. Furthermore, making choices between competing priorities requires robust incentives for maintaining collective discipline.

Manning and Garnett constantly make a case for a renewed approach to understanding cabinet decision making. Manning says that traditionally, analyses of cabinet government have largely focused on the constitution and formal accountability of the government to the legislature. What is critical is to examine the *incentives* that motivate Cabinet to implement development policy, and that the constitution is not a perfect predictor for the existence and decision making capabilities of Cabinet. Garnett says that besides common prescriptions of the roles of cabinet, no studies have so far delved into *how cabinet should and does become involved* in the policy implementation process, and they are unspecific about who should do what, when and how; and what constraints and problems prevent the systems from working as intended.⁶⁹

Cabinets can also be either collegiate or hierarchical. This refers to the degree to which the head of government considers the views of other Ministers. Collegial cabinets are manifestations of high levels of interface between the head of Government and his ministers. Their governments comprise of a compact group of between five to forty senior decision makers; all major policy matters go to this group for ratification, and members of this group publicly support all decisions

⁶⁹ Garnett, *Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction*, 2003

that have been collectively ratified. In a hierarchical situation, the leader usually takes final decisions alone, and senior policy makers are accountable for the performance of their agencies alone. In hierarchical cabinets, ministers are noticeably dependent on cabinet government.⁷⁰ Manning and Garnett argue that Cabinet is usually more capable of implementing policy if the government is collegial, as opposed to hierarchical.

The actual composition of cabinet can affect its purpose and effectiveness. Some are composed of politicians (UK) and others permit technocrats as members (Spain). Some are restricted to elected politicians and others prohibit members of parliament (France). These choices affect their chances of being collegial and active political instruments.

Size can affect the role of formal meetings. Most Cabinets of the OECD have around twenty Ministers. However, there are no straightforward answers to common dilemmas of size and representation. On one hand, small size ensures quick decision making, but could cause representative spread; excluded ministers can and do call into the question the legitimacy of the decisions made. On the other had, a representative Cabinet may be unwieldy and merely mirrors the divisions that emerge in national level politics. Campbell⁷¹ argues that the incentives to reduce cabinet size are usually minimal. Large Cabinets allow for powerful stakeholders to influence policy making, and a large broadly representative cabinet least gives dissenters a sense that their stances have received consideration in the secrecy of cabinet deliberations.

In many cases, Cabinets take decisions by consensus, and they rarely vote. If there is dissent, the discussion continues in order to take account of the dissatisfied member. At times, a decision may be postponed to another meeting, but at times, it is not clear what the decision is. Many Cabinets are said to waste hours at beginning of meetings approving minutes of last meeting. Garnett argues that it is important to identify who are the members of cabinet who jointly take key policy decisions. A decision is usually communicated to those responsible for the policy implementation, usually through a Memo from the SPC to PS's. Few Cabinets publish decisions routinely.

⁷⁰ N. Manning, *Strategic Decision making in Cabinet Governments*, 1999

⁷¹ Campbell, 1996 in Garnett, *Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction*, 2003

Mozambique is an exception as it publishes all decisions in the newspapers immediately after the meeting. Most treat Cabinet affairs as a secret. Although Ministers can take notes in meetings, they are not allowed to take them out. Cabinet Papers are usually stamped as secret as are deliberations of cabinet. To reinforce the principle of collective responsibility, ministers are not allowed to reveal anything of the discussion in cabinet, or publicly dissent from the decision.⁷²

Cabinets may also undertake pre-cooked decision making, through a powerful Minister of Finance or Cabinet Committees. There are also informal institutionalized meetings (e.g. in Austria); informal discussions between ministers and head of cabinet government e.g. in Norway, institutionalized meetings of party bosses e.g. in Belgium and party caucuses e.g. in Germany. Although the rules outline what gets discussed in Cabinet, they are often imprecise. Manning concludes that frequency and duration of cabinet meetings demonstrate that cabinets choose policy, but they do not make it. Therefore, the role of cabinet is to select from the options presented to it, whilst policy development inevitably takes place in the public sector.

Garnett states that many governments do not have systematic processes for preparing policies and bringing them to cabinet. Often, there is not even a standard format for cabinet memoranda. Proposals may take different shapes and forms: a phone call to the president (Mozambique); a scrap of paper handed to the SPC, a five hundred page report etc. Policies are at time poorly formulated, that it is sometimes hard to discern as to what exactly is being asked of the Cabinet. He also observes that 'collective decision making' in four African Cabinets is complex (Uganda/South Africa; Mozambique/Zambia).

Importantly for this study, Garnett suggests that, in all cases, Cabinet as a collective body tends to lose interest in the policy once it has taken its decisions. Individual ministers may remain interested, but generally as whole, it does not. Almost no Cabinet studied routinely reviewed the implementation of the decisions it has taken. Its interest usually returned if there was a public outcry against the implementation or failure to implement policies.

⁷² Garnett, *Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction*, 2003

Manning also looks at individual incentives of Cabinet Ministers, because they are core to the collective decision making process. He argues that cabinets act as binding mechanisms because of two factors: the cost to ministers for leaving cabinet is greater than the gain they will experience as a result of no longer being in government; and the threat that they may indeed have to leave is credible. However, the head of government also loses credibility in the face of the body with which it is to hold it accountable if he resorts to frequent dismissals.

He also makes some interesting assertions. There are countervailing forces that can counteract frequent turnover of cabinets. The threat of ministerial dismissal is reduced in electoral years, as the head of government is conscious of risking to be seen as uncertain about the government team. Secondly, the head of Government is willing to take the risk if the Ministers have powerful support outside the head of government (parliament, party, the country). He argues that Ministers with strong and independent powerbases usually last longer.

De Swann argues that what motivates politicians besides the office-seeking view states that parties formulate policies to win elections; others see the office as merely a step towards getting policy implemented. However, Laver and Shepsle argue that this ultimately results the same thing, since. Cabinet members may appear to be different on the face of things. However, the indefinite sequence of elections and government formation implore them to be part of a big political game. This blurs the line between the behaviors of office-seeking and policy-seeking politicians.⁷³

Manning argues that Ministerial power is multi dimensional. Although Ministers compete for budgets, and are prone to corruption and distorted salary scales, there are other incentives for performance. These include: prestige; the power to change policy; public visibility and public acclaim; greater prospects of further and more senior political office. However, ensuring a lot of these 'good' factors is highly dependant on the size of the cabinet. Smaller cabinets reduce the number of contestants for these important portfolios. The rewards for ministerial office are also lessened by the constant political maneuverings and haggling with other Ministers. The portfolio size also determines the extent to which Ministers have the room to make credible policy

⁷³ De Swann, Laver & Shepsle in Garnett, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction, 2003

proposals, and reduces their squabbling but it shouldn't be as limited as this may also mean very little to anyone outside the sector. This means that Cabinet Ministers, to avoid haggling, may concentrate on the affairs of their particular department, and avoid addressing the wider policy questions. This is problematic for development policy implementation, as it cross cuts by nature. The power to change policy requires also requires that the cabinet has comprehensive responsibility for the major policy questions of government. Public visibility and acclaim require that the cabinet be perceived as authoritative.

Manning and Garnett constantly make a case for a renewed approach to understanding cabinet decision making. Manning says that traditionally, analyses of cabinet government have largely focused on the constitution and formal accountability of the government to the legislature. What is critical is to examine the *incentives* that motivate Cabinet to implement development policy, and that the constitution is not a perfect predictor for the existence and decision making capabilities of Cabinet. Garnett says that besides common prescriptions of the roles of cabinet, no studies have so far delved into *how cabinet should and does become involved* in the policy implementation process, and they are unspecific about who should do what, when and how; and what constraints and problems prevent the systems from working as intended.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Garnett, *Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction*, 2003

University of Cape Town

Chapter Three: Cabinet Decision Making

This Chapter responds to key questions that have been set out to determine the nature of cabinet decision making in Zambia and Malawi. They are designed to assess the position of Cabinet in the structure of government and the extent to which it has the systems to exercise such authority as it has. The questions look for clues to the actual roles of the Cabinets in terms of the appointments made and the experience of Cabinet members. A more objective test on policy implementation is the Cabinets' roles in the budget process and public service reform – two key processes. Finally, the overall record of implementation of Cabinet decisions is assessed.

3.1. How is the Cabinet structured and how is it serviced?

Both the Malawian and Zambian Constitutions provide for the existence of cabinets. These frameworks are currently undergoing a slow process of review, which is unlikely to come to fruition before their next term of elections. Zambia's Constitution states that the role of cabinet is that of *formulating* policy, and *advising* the President in matters of policy. Cabinet and Deputy Ministers are accountable collectively to the National Assembly, and are to conduct themselves in accordance with a code of conduct promulgated by Parliament.⁷⁵ The Malawi Constitution states that Cabinet's role is to *advise* the President on matters of Policy and these functions are to be guided by the Constitution and other related Acts of Parliament. However, Section 96 also describes duties and functions of Cabinet that span beyond the advisory role.⁷⁶

In both the countries, Ministers may or may not be members of Parliament. However, the practice in both these countries is to appoint Ministers that are members of Parliament.⁷⁷ Both Constitutions provide for the existence of the Secretary to President and Cabinet, with specific duties centered on maintaining the minutes of cabinet and conveying decisions to the affected authorities in government.

⁷⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Zambia

⁷⁶ Constitution of the Republic of Malawi

⁷⁷ Media Briefs

In both countries, Cabinets meet regularly, and these meetings are at times recorded by members. The President may convene a meeting for a short period to communicate specific decisions/policy stance. In both countries, the President chairs Cabinet Committee meetings. The style of chairing meetings also differs. In Malawi, the former President is said to have been more liberal towards opinions and views of cabinet ministers in comparison with the current President.⁷⁸ Cabinet meetings are usually attended by senior Ministers. In Malawi, Deputy Ministers attend only when their senior Minister is absent. Principal Secretaries only attend by invitation.

Both Cabinets are serviced by the Cabinet Office that provides policy and administrative support to the Committees and to Cabinet as a whole.⁷⁹ Each Cabinet Office has a manual that provides for the 'rules of engagement' for the institution of Cabinet. These manuals outline the *organizational nature* of the Cabinet Office. In both countries, Cabinet Committees are not mandated by the Constitution. However, Malawi has 9 Cabinet Committees, and Zambia has 8. These provide for inter-ministerial consultation and for decision making below cabinet level in a bid to reduce the number of issues which Cabinet has to consider and the time needed to discuss each one of them. In practice, most of the Cabinet Committees hardly meet. In Malawi: the most active committees are Legal Affairs and Local Government.

Zambia's Cabinet Office, has a Policy Analysis and Coordination Division, PAC. It was created in 1993 and was designed to provide the Cabinet with high quality advice and assistance in implementing and coordinating policy. It is headed by a Principal Secretary, who reports to SPC. PAC was established through the merger of two existing divisions in the Cabinet Office (Economics and Finance and Cabinet Affairs). These two divisions had been responsible for reviewing papers submitted to Cabinet and organizing Cabinet meetings, respectively. The resulting new division in the Cabinet Office, PAC, consisted of a permanent secretary, three chief policy change specialists, six principal policy change specialists, and administrative staff.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Interview with Cabinet Minister, 2007

⁷⁹ Cabinet Manuals for Zambia and Malawi

⁸⁰ J. K. Grant, H. Garnett, *Improving Policy Formulation and Implementation in Zambia*, 1996

Malawi's policy functions of the Cabinet Office were traditionally serviced by the Administrative Unit. In 2005, the Cabinet Office was restructured to create two divisions: Policy Research, Monitoring and Evaluation and Cabinet Services. The Policy Research Monitoring and Evaluation Division is responsible for research, monitoring and evaluation of government policies to ensure consistency and coherence of public policy. Its functions include coordinating the formulation of policies and programs of Ministries; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of cabinet decisions; facilitation of timely and effective implementation of cabinet decisions; liaising with agencies on progress regarding implementation of cabinet decisions and reporting to cabinet on implementation of cabinet decisions. The Unit has positions of Director; Deputy and Assistant Director and three posts for Policy Specialist. The Cabinet Services Division is responsible for managing the logistical arrangements for the efficient and effective running of the Cabinet Office. It is responsible for coordinating the welfare of the members of Cabinet. It also responsible for organizing and managing information within and outside Cabinet, and includes organizing Press releases and announcements on the Presidential calendar. These two Divisions are headed by the Clerk to Cabinet, who reports to the SPC.⁸¹

These important 'engine rooms' have faced common challenges since their inception. The highly centralized nature of the Government machinery and significant powers placed within the Presidency means that the Cabinet Offices are seen as having authority from their close proximity to the President. In both countries, the SPC has direct access to the President. However, they have been faced with suspicions that their creation would bring about another layer of bureaucracy between Cabinet and line Ministries reducing the authority of the latter. Cabinet offices have also had weak capacity, having difficulty attracting and retaining high caliber staff amongst other problems. Staffs working in the Cabinet Office are part of the wider Public Service system and are not subject to special conditions of service. The practice has developed of appointing Advisers outside the public service to attract better quality people.

In the face of these problems, Cabinet Offices have opted for a 'facilitating/brokering' role, trying to demonstrate effectiveness, whilst not being seen to impinge on ministries' new-found responsibility to formulate and implement policy. These roles can span beyond facilitation to include policy

⁸¹ OPC, Cabinet Memo on restructuring of the Cabinet Division, 2005

analysis and systems development. Publicly, Cabinet Officials argued that the Units are mere vehicles for delivering Cabinet's intentions and interests. Cabinet itself wields the power and interest to push the policy process a level higher by demanding higher quality policy proposals and implementation from the ministries. However, this remains heavily dependent on the support and commitment of each Ministry's Permanent Secretary to bring policy decisions to fruition.

Malawi also has Cabinet Liaison Officers operating from line Ministries. Although the manual stipulates that they are to be appointed by the Secretary to the Cabinet after close consultation with line Ministries, in most cases, they are merely Ministry appointed staff acting as focal points within the Ministry's Planning Unit. The Liaison Officers are responsible for coordinating all Cabinet business affecting their Ministries in consultation with its management.

An assessment of the types of Government⁸² within these two countries shows that both are distinctly towards the hierarchical end of the hierarchical/ collegial continuum, The Presidents retained substantial personal authority. Malawi is especially known for many key decisions being taken by the President alone although personal style seems to be a factor in their openness to advice from Cabinet. Democracy has also led Presidents to use Cabinet appointments to attract and retain political support from within their own parties and from opposition parties because they are often dominant in parliament. Frequent reshuffles of ministers owe less to concerns about the competence of the Cabinet than rapidly shifting political allegiances. There is a small pool of politicians, and the fluid nature of the political system means that non-one is completely out of power.⁸³

The Cabinets are supported by the necessary structures of Cabinet services to make them effective, but in practice the power of the Cabinet Office is not exercised systematically over Government Departments nor have they been effective in organizing Cabinet business efficiently.

3.2 Who determines Cabinet appointments and reshuffles? Are they coalitions?

⁸² N. Manning, *Helping Governments Keep Their Promises*, 2003

⁸³ *Drivers of Change Studies*, 2003 and 2004

Both Zambian and Malawian Constitutions empower the President to determine Cabinet appointments and re-shuffles. Neither has provisions controlling the number of Cabinet Ministers. The Malawi constitution states that Cabinet Ministers may change from time to time as appointed by the President. The Presidents' choices are often made on short term, political grounds. For example, Mwanawasa kept many familiar faces from Chiluba's Cabinet, even though several were suspected of corruption and the President had made public announcements that he would not tolerate any corruption or signs of advancement of personal interest by the Ministers and warned that people who expected Ministerial appointments in his Government should know the honey moon was over.⁸⁴ Muluzi increased the first cabinet after multi-party elections from 17 members to 46. This was largely seen as a means to secure political appointments to consolidate his power base.

In Malawi, the first Bingu Cabinet was largely seen as a compromise Cabinet as it included senior party officials from his predecessor, Muluzi, from whom he had distanced himself in his inaugural speech. The Cabinet was also bloated to 32 members, despite Bingu's statements in favor of a lean cabinet.⁸⁵

Cabinet reshuffles and dismissals are a common occurrence in both countries. Mwanawasa recently dismissed the Health Minister, and appointed former health minister Brian Chituwo, who had been minister of science and technology, to the health ministry. He also promoted two junior ministers to full cabinet positions and shuffled five other ministers.⁸⁶ In 2005, the Malawi President dismissed 3 members of cabinet, including the Vice President.

Both countries have also sought to form coalitions within their Cabinets. Coalitions are never permanent, but by the same token no-one is permanently out of power. For both countries, the pattern has been for Government not to secure an outright majority in Parliament. The President has therefore sought to create alliances to enable the Executive to advance its agenda. In recent years, coalition formation has entailed the appointment of opposition MPs into Cabinet. This was a

⁸⁴ BBC, Familiar Look into Zambia's Cabinet, 2002

⁸⁵ DFID Malawi, Cabinet Analysis, 2004

⁸⁶ Reuters Alert Net, April, 2007

common occurrence in the first term of Mwanawasa's Cabinet, but has not persisted in the second term Cabinet, as the Government secured more seats in Parliament. By co-opting key members of the opposition into government, Mwanawasa avoided entering into a formal coalition with other parties and consolidated his position with an alliance with UNIP in May 2003.⁸⁷

In Malawi, the Muluzi era saw the existence of formal coalitions with other political parties, who were guaranteed Cabinet positions. However, Bingu has demonstrated a sharp break by consistently poaching prominent individual members of the opposition into his Cabinet. Recent appointments include junior (but key) ministerial positions-Finance and Agriculture to two outspoken senior members of the powerful Malawi Congress Party, which has the largest number of lawmakers in Parliament. Other senior appointments have been made to members of the United Democratic Front, the party that ushered him into power.⁸⁸

In conclusion, both the size of the Cabinet and individual appointments are seen in both countries as politically motivated rather than determined by technocratic requirements, personal capability or sound ideological orientation.⁸⁹ Cabinet appointments and changes are an important instrument of Presidential power.

3.3 What is Cabinet's role in decision-making and monitoring of policy implementation? How does Cabinet communicate and defend its Policy priorities to other veto players e.g. Legislature and 'legitimate' civil society groups?

3.3.1 Cabinet's role in decision making and monitoring of policy implementation

This section examines Cabinet's role in the budget. The Annual Budget remains the single and most important document for determining and communicating the policy priorities of Government, because it is the necessary authority and means for Government to implement its priorities.

Key budget decisions are on the total level of expenditures and their division among individual spending Ministries. Allen Schick also states that it is the highest level of Government that should

⁸⁷ Erdmann and Simutanyi, 2003

⁸⁸ IRIN News, 2007

⁸⁹ Drivers of Change Studies, Malawi and Zambia

make decisions on intersectoral allocations. In other words, the budget can be a test of where such authority is.⁹⁰

Both countries have historically unreliable budgets, especially at the implementation stages. Budgets are consistently structurally overcommitted and lacked resources to meet the obligations of government. In year deviations are high and no sanctions have been taken to remedy this situation. There have been huge variations in terms of planned and actual expenditures. In both countries, the MTEF remains a weak framework for identifying medium term priorities, because of the problems of yearly budgeting.⁹¹

In Zambia, there is no involvement of Cabinet at the early stages of the budget process. There is little connection between what Ministers say or promise and the content of the budget. The budget tends to ignore data on where the expenditure has actually been incurred in the past. Parliament has in recent years requested that an additional column be added to the estimates to reflect how much was actually spent last year. It is impossible to have a discussion within Cabinet on a political level discussion on the tension between historic costs and policy priorities in the absence of an MTEF.⁹² As with Malawi, supplementary appropriations are not submitted to Cabinet for approval. They are merely reported to Parliament for retrospective approval. Ministers also do not need to seek external approval for the virement between programs within their own portfolio as they had to do in the past from the National Commission for Development Planning.⁹³

The situation in Malawi is similar. The President and Minister of Finance have the power to determine the economic policies and allocate resources. The Cabinet Committee on the economy rarely meets. Ministers perceive that their role in the budget process is to defend their specific Vote within Parliament.⁹⁴ Supplementary budgets are presented, but for information purposes only. MTEF was a technical exercise that got little engagement with Cabinet. There was reluctance among Ministries to move to a multi year program and the focus was on detail as opposed to Strategy. There is considerable budget variance. Much of additional funding goes to administrative

⁹⁰ Garnet, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Malawi and Zambia Case Study, 2003

⁹¹ IMF Reviews

⁹² Garnet, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Malawi and Zambia Case Study, 2003

⁹³ CMI, Budget as Theater, 2004

⁹⁴ Interview with Cabinet Minister, 2007

overheads as opposed to direct costs and inputs.⁹⁵ Some departments regularly overspend and get more resources including state residences and the police.⁹⁶

There has been a lack of budget discipline that Ministers can exploit. Once the budget was approved, they were able to introduce new plans, e.g. to travel, or to provide services under the right line item but for different kinds of goods or in a different place than planned. Funds are moved from operational expenses to administrative functions.⁹⁷

IMF studies of both these countries highlight significant weaknesses in the budget systems. A state of 'partial reform equilibrium' that exists: that is there is evidence that remedial actions are at times reversed and not adequately maintained. There is no internal system for expenditure control, and although progress was made in implementing recommendations from audits, there was limited evidence of more transparent, consistent and effective sanctions from Cabinet. Budget implementation, auditing and evaluation are constrained by the cash accounting system and a lack of transparency in the disbursement of funds. Internal control systems do not provide adequate early warning of over, under and unauthorized spending. The systems used for procurement and the management of debts and liabilities are weak. The audit system suffers from lack of capacity and poor co-operation from departments, resulting in late and incomplete audit reports, as well as poor follow-up action. While the Auditor General is supposed to submit his report within 12 months, the lag currently stretches to up to 24 months. A former Minister from Malawi's Cabinet stated that, during her term in Cabinet, no Auditor General Reports were tabled or discussed within Cabinet. The Public Accounts Committee in Parliament reports to the house on the report, but neither Parliament nor the Auditor General has any power to hand cases over for prosecution or ensures that corrective action is taken.

However, there is widespread appreciation by Ministers, MP's and senior civil servants that the situation must change with greater earlier political involvement in the budget process, without which poverty reduction objectives will be meaningless aspirations. Ministers are reported to be dissatisfied with the budget process, and former ministers complain particularly strongly about their

⁹⁵ Garnet, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Malawi and Zambia Case Study, 2003

⁹⁶ CMI, Budget as Theater, 2004

⁹⁷ CMI, Budget as Theater, 2004

experience under earlier government.⁹⁸ *Most significantly, they also complain at having no real feel for Government priorities and no means of discussing and influencing these, or considering the major trade offs between programs.*⁹⁹

Latterly, both Malawi and Zambia have pursued improvements in the budget processes in terms of seeking greater discipline. These have been particularly successful in Malawi. They have been driven by the Minister of Finance with support from the President. The Cabinet is the object rather than the initiator of this reform. .

3.3.2 Communication and defense of Policy priorities

In both countries, the President's State of the Nation speech and the Annual Budget provide Parliament with a review of policies of the previous year, policy plans and expenditure proposals for the coming year. The subsequent debates provide MPs with an opportunity to quiz government ministers and state their own opinions.¹⁰⁰ The Annual Budget approval is a key power of Parliament as the Government cannot spend without Parliament's approval although the ability of Parliament to alter the budget is limited. The extent of Cabinet's involvement in the preparation of the speech is less clear.

In addition, the President and Cabinet ministers make speeches at political party rallies, which are widely reported especially in the state controlled media, which typically does not distinguish party political from Government messages.

At the informal level, there is also a lot of interaction between Cabinet and the veto actors. In both countries, the Minister of Finance informally consults with key leaders of opposition parties to lobby and make trade offs that ensure that the Opposition will pass the budget. This has been common where the Government has a minority of seats within Parliament. For Malawi, critical issues have included negotiations of fertilizer subsidies, development budgets and increased allowances for Parliamentarians, among others.

⁹⁸ Interviews with Ministers, 2007

⁹⁹ Interview with Cabinet Minister, 2007

¹⁰⁰ Development Strategy Reviews, 2005, 2006

In short, Parliament remains a critical arena because this where political competition takes place and provides potential for consolidation of the power base in a volatile political system. Constitutionally, Parliament has been granted significant powers to provide checks and balances over the powerful Executives, and evidence suggests that it is increasingly taking up on this role. This is a critical dimension, because it has reinforced the tendency of public policy to pursue shorter term interests.

A potential counter influence to these tendencies is civil society. Civil Society is emerging in terms of influence, supporting the consolidation of democratic gains, such as the barring of the former Presidents from standing for a third term.

In Malawi, civil society organizations are quite nascent, as they were banned before 1994. Faith organizations are the only civil society organizations that had an institutional history to build on. The churches are the most powerful membership associations in Malawi and the only organizations within civil society that have grassroots support. Other membership based associations, such as professional associations (e.g. economists and accountants) and business associations have recently become engaged in the budget process but remain weak largely due to capacity problems and are urban-based and elitist status. Many civil society organizations are said to be unable and sometimes unwilling to engage on issues such as the budget and economic governance. Emerging ones include ECAMA and MEJ who provide a commentary on the budget, which parliamentarians draw on in their debates. There remains a level of distrust between Government and advocacy organizations. Service oriented NGOs are perceived to be less antagonistic by government, but are limited in their capacity; remain reactive, and have limited access to government information and dialogue.¹⁰¹

In Zambia, a number of civil society organizations facilitate or produce commentaries following the tabling of the budget in Parliament. These include the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ), the Department of Economics of the University of Zambia, and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP). Civil Society engagement in Zambia is said to demonstrate the robustness of Zambia's democracy. However, the perception is that more could be done to institutionalize in-

¹⁰¹ CMI, Budget as Theatre, 2004

depth and reflective debates on resource allocation, which lies at the very core of the challenge to address Zambia's developmental needs.¹⁰² In Malawi, the Ministry of Finance holds pre-budget and post budget consultations with civil society and the private sector. Consultations were introduced in the 2000/2001-budget year. However, the consultations are regarded by some stakeholders as public relations of Ministry of Finance; they are too unstructured and lack the formal process ensuring that outputs are taken into the budget. Often, they degenerate into 'government bashing sessions' and stakeholders are losing interests in participating.¹⁰³

In both countries, there is the presence of extremely small elite that simultaneously controls both the political and economic spheres. While the business elites in these countries are not homogenous, they have a number of connected interests with political elites. Evidence suggests that it is difficult for the business sector to articulate a different economic agenda from the incumbent party. The political elite often are the major business owners and taxation is often used to sanction business people who are not favoured by the political elites.¹⁰⁴ The limited space for an autonomous 'business voice' in these countries is in part related to the weakness of business associations.

In Malawi, the constitution prohibits Parliament from amending the budget, and thus leaves it with the option of either adopting or rejecting it in totality. However, in recent years, the Budget and Finance Committee of Parliament has become more pro-active in engaging with budget process. For example, in the July 2003 budget session of parliament, MPs were able to shift some spending priorities. However, MPs continue to approve a budget that protects particularistic benefits, and vote along party lines.¹⁰⁵ In Zambia, Parliament by 'convention' is restricted from amending the budget although the constitutional provisions say it could revise the votes downwards. Recent changes to the committee structure have signaled a reorientation towards a greater emphasis on the legislature's accountability and oversight mandate with regard to the executive. Parliament has instituted a Committee on Estimates, which is headed by a dynamic and dedicated chairperson. This is the first time ever that the legislature has a specialized committee to investigate budgetary

¹⁰² IDASA, Budget Study, 2001

¹⁰³ CMI, Budget as Theatre, 2004

¹⁰⁴ Drivers of Change Studies

¹⁰⁵ CMI, Budget as Theatre, 2004

matters. One of the first initiatives of the committee was to compile a wide-ranging report on budget reform, which also contains recommendations to strengthen the involvement of Parliament.¹⁰⁶

In both countries, the new leaders Mwanawasa and Mutharika have pursued some new strategies. This has entailed a mix of pursuing short term development policies to consolidate their weak political power base and attempts to institutionalize a longer term view of growth, which demands a focus on longer term development strategies.

University of Cape Town

¹⁰⁶ IDASA, Zambia Budget Review, 2005

3.4 How does Cabinet communicate its decisions to the various Departments? What is Cabinet's role in overseeing public sector reforms?

3.4.1: Communicating Cabinet decisions to Departments

Both Cabinets usually take decisions by consensus and hardly vote, and in some cases, there is a process for brokering and negotiation and in many cases, the President intervenes to make a decision. In both Malawi and Zambia, the President presides over the meetings. Both countries at times, permit permanent secretaries or experts into Cabinet Meetings. In many instances, cabinet decisions are not very clear, despite or, perhaps, because much time is spent on reflecting on the minutes of previous meetings and approving them.

Decisions are usually routed as 'Conveyances' (Zambia) and 'Cabinet Directives (Malawi) from SPC to PS's of Departments. In some instances, this may entail the drafting of legislation or the decision to publish a paper on a certain policy. Both Malawi and Zambia do not publish their Cabinet decisions routinely and cabinet discussions are treated as secret. In Malawi, this is governed by the Official Secrets Act. Malawi's Cabinet Manual goes further to state that: a) Cabinet Ministers have access to Cabinet directives that are applicable to their ministries; b) Authorities outside Government including NGOs have access if they are involved in the process of making decisions or are required to take action arising from the decision, subject to the nature of the issue; c) Some Ministries may not have access to some very sensitive directives; and; d) Access by departments and other organisations will be on a strict "need to know" basis.

3.4.2 Cabinet Oversight over Public Sector Reforms

For both these countries, an efficient and effective public sector is critical to ensuring the delivery of cabinet decisions and policy priorities. Public Service reforms would thus be central to better public policy management and expenditure control.

Malawi and Zambia have implemented a set of first and second-generation public sector reforms, between 1980's and 1990s. Second-generation reforms have involved a more differentiated approach to pay, a renewed effort to focus government on its core functions, the reassessment of

the government functions which go beyond policy and an attempt to reverse centralization. They also focus increasingly on performance and the need for complementary action on other fronts. The literature on public sector reform argues that the single most important success factor for such reforms is a favorable political environment that provides the power base, incentives and commitment to implement difficult reforms.¹⁰⁷

However, in both these countries, there has been little progress. The agenda was largely driven by development partners, who have undertaken technocratic approaches that remain divorced from political realities. As a result, partial reform equilibrium has existed, which mainly points to the need for a political process that could generate the required momentum.¹⁰⁸

Malawi has a Cabinet Committee on public and civil service reform. It also had a full time Advisory Group that was established to coordinate, monitor and secure the coherence of Government policies. Malawi's most comprehensive reform program, the Civil Service Action Plan (CSAP), yielded very little success in terms of its implementation and outcomes. The plan had very little or no political consultation during its initiation. It was designed by a small number of civil servants and saw insufficient interaction with Cabinet. As a result, the Cabinet Committee did not own the program. In recent months, Cabinet Office has established a Reforms Unit tasked to oversee the implementation of public sector reforms across Government. It is headed by a principal secretary who reports to the SPC.¹⁰⁹ This Unit is to be housed outside of the Office of President and Cabinet to assure its independence. However, the reasons underpinning this rationale are not clear.

Zambia's much-lauded Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) was launched in 1993 and coordinated by the Management Development Division within the Cabinet Office. It also had instituted a Cabinet Committee for the Rationalization of the Public Service. In recent years, the President has delegated full authority to the Public Service Commission and the Office of the Secretary to the Cabinet to effectively and efficiently manage the Civil Service. This is a means of empowering the Secretary to the Cabinet to hold Permanent Secretaries accountable in terms of meeting government targets and objectives as opposed to the previous scenario wherein certain

¹⁰⁷ Review of PSR,

¹⁰⁸ T. Addison, *Do donors matter for institutional reform in Africa?*, 2003

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Malawi's senior Cabinet Office Official, 2007

controlling officers with connections to the Presidential Palace felt they were not answerable to the Secretary to the Cabinet. The SPC has set out to institute three management committees: Public Financial Management; Decentralization and Public Sector Management. These are chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Cabinet, Administration and Secretary to Treasury respectively. The Committees report to the Steering Committee which is chaired by the SPC and has the membership of 9 Ministries from the major Ministries. However, the extent of their reporting to Cabinet committees and the President is not clear.¹¹⁰ The role of the Public Service Commission (PSC) in effecting promotions, demotions and other movements in the civil service was further strengthened.

In conclusion, the character of public service reform in both countries has been marked by a lack of Cabinet level engagement. Indeed, Ministers would have resisted a reduction in their patronage opportunities to make or influence appointments. One of the changes with the shift to democracy was a reduction in the authority of the civil service networks at principal secretary level that reported through the Cabinet Secretary to the President. Recent public service initiatives mentioned above suggest an attempt in Zambia to revive the Cabinet Secretary's authority and, in Malawi, an attempt to promote reform by not confronting Minister's authority in departments.

3.6 What are a) the implementation rates of Cabinet Decisions within Departments and b) the rate of success in meeting performance targets in priority areas?¹¹¹

The responsibility to track progress of implementation for Cabinet decisions rests within the Cabinet Office in well-functioning countries. Currently, there are no routine institutionalized systems to track the progress in compliance and performance of Departments in implementing Cabinet decisions in Malawi and Zambia.¹¹² Therefore, the extent to which Cabinet tracks progress of decisions communicated to the Departments is less clear. Its interest is reported to have been reactive when the Cabinet or President is vexed by public outcry or political implications of failure to implement policy.

¹¹⁰ Interview with DFID Zambia Governance Adviser, 2007

¹¹¹ G. Evans, N. Manning, *Helping Governments Meet their Promises*, World Bank 2003

¹¹² Interviews with Senior Cabinet Office Officials from both Cabinets, 2007

In Zambia, the Policy Analysis and Coordination Unit commissioned a consultancy to develop a computerized Cabinet documentation system that could automate, track and monitor decisions undertaken by Cabinet. However, the system is yet to be implemented in full steam.¹¹³ However, an initial tracking study revealed that 75% of Cabinet decisions were not implemented.

In Malawi, the Policy Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit has also instituted a system of documenting directives and updates from Line Ministries. An initial tracking study undertaken in 2006 revealed that over 60% of cabinet decisions were not implemented. Reasons included that Line Ministries stated that they did not have sufficient resources to implement the directives; and many directives on development policy required a cross-sector support and Ministries were unable to coordinate. In other cases, Ministries did not understand what Cabinet was asking them to do, but did not go back to Cabinet to seek clarification.¹¹⁴

This Study also extrapolated from secondary sources, on the assumption that Cabinet decisions are manifested within the Annual Budget and that success in meeting performance targets can be deduced from Annual Progress reports and Comprehensive Reviews of the development Strategies. Annual Progress Reports and Comprehensive reviews of development strategies in both countries report dismal progress and poor implementation performance of Ministries, which confirms that the implementation rate of major annual cabinet decisions is low.

There is also a poor flow of critical information that would enable Cabinet to annually assess performance of Ministries. This is evidenced by weak and nascent Monitoring and Evaluation systems. Internal Audit (IA) Offices are poorly staffed and resourced to perform the expected roles. Furthermore, Internal Audit is not a statutory obligation. Any sanctions for ignoring them would be expected to centre on managerial disciplinary action from the Secretary to President and Cabinet. Controlling officers conveniently ignore the IA reports in the absence of sanctions. In Malawi, according, all IA reports since 2000 have been ignored. Treasury is limited to providing advice which the controlling officer is not obliged to take.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Interview with Zambia Cabinet Senior Official, 2007

¹¹⁴ Interview with Malawi Cabinet Senior Official, 2007

¹¹⁵ CMI, Budget as Theater, 2004

There is no evidence of disciplinary actions taken on PS's following NAO reports. Parliament is also inhibited from exercising even a retrospective influence. The Public Accounts Committee only has the power to ask questions. Conversely, there are no clear incentives to reward successful achievement of priority performance targets. Rewards, such as expenditures for Ministerial trips and other informal political expenditures that fall outside the formal priorities articulated in the budget. In times of electoral years, are weighed heavily in favour of activities that further the interests of the ruling party including small projects and relief services.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Sound development policy implementation is imperative to unlocking the growth potential for Malawi and Zambia. Potential investors are usually deterred by poor macro-economic and development policies, and unpredictable governments that are bound to policy reversals. Both these countries require a good public sector that can translate policy into operational results.

The study establishes that the nature of decision making within the Zambia and Malawi cabinets is weak in the 'developmental' sense, and that this in turn, severely affects the capability of the public sector to consistently implement development policy. Cabinet does not perform the role of an institutional mechanism that prioritizes policy and guards against sudden/avoidable policy reversals, whilst placing pressure on the Ministries to deliver value for money. This is not to say that Cabinet is not the rightful forum for such strategic decision making; Cabinets remain the most critical fora at the centre of Government responsible for making tough decisions on policy priorities, capacitating the public sector to deliver on these, within an existing limited resource envelope (the budget). Policy implementation is a product of political process and decisions taken by Cabinets. Contrary, the problem in both countries is in the *nature* of Cabinet's informal involvement in policy implementation.

The study reveals that Cabinets in these countries are consistently involved in development policy implementation, but in a 'subverted' manner. Cabinets preferred decisions on the budget and engagement on Public Sector Reforms suggests a preference for short term political and individual interests as opposed to the longer term public good. This means that cabinet as an institutional mechanism is governed by very weak institutional incentives that condone poor policy prioritization, and renders policy to sudden/avoidable reversals. Therefore, Public officials and Ministries responsible for implementation are less likely to comply if they know that Cabinet will not sanction them, and where they operate in a weak and unreliable budget system that encourages arbitrary rules, and largely informal policy implementation.

Cabinets provide the incentives for public officials to implement policy. Strategic public sector reforms in Malawi and Zambia require critical political choices that should ideally be made within

Cabinet. However, poor public sector policy implementation capacity justifies weak budgets, which are in turn left open to political interference and patronage benefits. Cabinets rationally avoid making political choices of necessary reforms required to improve the efficiency of the Public Sector, in favor of the status quo which makes the public sector subject to elite capture, and provides opportunities to secure a political base within a patrimonial political system.

Cabinet Ministers understand development policy as short term, which should translate into tangible quick wins that appeal to their key supporters. They adopt a very short termist view of expenditure. This approach is logical in a patrimonial political system, where short term gains take precedence over longer term benefits.¹¹⁶ This compromises the ability to prioritize because short termist approaches require a lot of room for flexibility. Therefore, the incentives are to ensure that the current system guarantees the flexibility to make short term decisions, and the control mechanism is seen as a nuisance. This has been further evidenced by Cabinet's lack of involvement in the MTEF process, which has been left to technocrats to manage. The lack of prioritization underpins weak budget systems, because budgets become overcommitted and unreliable. Ministers prefer budget ceilings to be declared by the Ministry of Finance as it spares them from making painful choices about priorities within a narrow resource envelope.¹¹⁷ The nature of the budgeting systems also incentivises the focus on inputs as opposed to outputs.¹¹⁸ There are no clear procedures and structures that are made available to Cabinet to engage in meaningful debates on policy trade offs.

There are no clear mechanisms for tracking measures that have been instituted by Cabinet to track the implementation of development strategies. The Conveyances and Cabinet Directives are framed in a manner that allows no feed back of discussion. Given that many cabinet decisions are kept secret, the public cannot play a countervailing force to help track the stipulated priorities. The weak linkages between policy and budget performance¹¹⁹ (and inability of Cabinet to receive reports on this) suggest the impossibility of tracking measures that have been agreed. How can Cabinets be expected to track measures when it is aware of the disjoint between formal priorities

¹¹⁶ Drivers of Change Studies, Malawi and Zambia, 2003, 2004

¹¹⁷ Garnet, Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Malawi and Zambia Case Study, 2003

¹¹⁸ Drivers of Change Studies, Malawi and Zambia, 2003, 2004

¹¹⁹ CMI, Budget as Theater, 2004

and informal practices that subvert the budget? Conversely, control systems within Cabinet Offices are viewed with suspicion by Government Departments, given the history and culture of suspicion and secrecy. Cabinet Units are also not able to monitor implementation at high level (priority areas versus inputs) given the flawed policy and budget system.

High turnovers of Ministers from their portfolio's means that the ability to follow through on Cabinet decisions is severely compromised, and the absence of collective interest in following through progress means that even if Ministers are merely reshuffled, they are not incentivised to maintain interest on decisions made within their previous portfolio's. Weak monitoring, reporting and accountability systems across Government mean that there are no systems that periodically check action taken to implement Cabinet decisions, and these failures are thus not drawn to the attention of Cabinet. Although there is an increased emphasis on strengthening the formal monitoring systems, evidence suggests that the most important (political) decisions are made informally, and are also followed through in this manner.

Two critical factors that underpin the nature of cabinet decision making in these two countries are the hierarchical structure of authority of Government and secondly the need to reward supporters typically by abuse of authority and corruption. These in turn, affect motivation and weaken systems of coordination which reduces the scope for public sector effectiveness. However, both countries, there have experienced changes in the nature of hierarchy (from authority based on force), to democracy (building authority from power base).

A political system that values short term political benefits means that Cabinet ministers and politicians will seek to pursue development policies that are short termist in nature, and unhelpful in the long term. Weak majorities mean that politicians spend more time managing the political process than overseeing the implementation of development policy. The flimsy political and administrative divide within Cabinet means that Cabinet Office equally spends a significant amount of time on planning for political activities. Reshuffling of Cabinet Ministers and unclear appointments for selection means that Ministers do not perceive the rules of decision making as credible, especially if the political environment is unstable.

Prospects for changes in decision making are thus closely intertwined with wider changes within the political system. There have been some changes within the current Cabinets that suggest possible and emerging different styles of patronage that are being used to construct a power base.

But, what is critical is that the future evolution and improvements in Cabinets will only be spurred by electorate and business interests to demands for more complex public and semi public goods. This may mean a shift from focus on food and fertilizers, to developmental benefits such as quality access to education, health and sustainable incomes, which require longer term investments and public service improvements. This will in turn force improved Government coordination and make politicians capitalize on performance. In personalized presidential political systems such as those in Malawi and Zambia, these changes can only be initiated through the personal convictions of the President. In the long term, these will be supported by catalysts such as economic growth and urbanization, which will lead to institutionalization of new structures, networks and demands.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Cabinets are critical institutional arrangements that oversee development policy implementation. Therefore, they should be accorded their appropriate importance and role in the dialogue for improving development policy implementation in these countries. In a similar vein, strategies to strengthen the capability of the Public Sector to implement policy must be designed with Cabinet at the centre.
2. Whilst over the years, there has been an emerging focus on strengthening Cabinets and their Policy Units, the findings suggest that there is less scope for remedying weak Cabinet decision making in both countries, because the nature of the problem lies in the wider Governance arrangements, which can only be remedied through evolution in societal values and demands.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Instruments

Questionnaire for Cabinet Officials and Ministers

1. How is the Cabinet structured and how is it serviced?
2. Who determines Cabinet appointments and reshuffles? Are they coalitions?
3. What are the actual roles of Cabinet in Budget Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation? Two key areas being explored here: a) extent of in year deviations; and b) budgetary volatility.
4. How does Cabinet communicate and defend its Policy priorities to other veto players e.g. Legislature and 'legitimate' civil society groups? What is Cabinet's understanding of development policy?
5. How does Cabinet communicate its decisions and how are these implemented by the various Departments? What is Cabinet's role in overseeing public sector reforms?
6. What is the implementation rate of Cabinet Decisions within Departments and what is the rate of success in meeting performance targets in priority areas?¹²⁰

¹²⁰ G. Evans, N. Manning, Helping Governments Meet their Promises, World Bank 2003

Bibliography

Adamolekun, L. 1999. *Public Administration in Africa*. Main Issues and Selected country studies, Boulder, Co: Westview Press

Adamolekun, L. 2002. *Africa's evolving career civil service systems: three challenges-state continuity, efficient service delivery and accountability*, in *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 68. No. 3, 2002, pp 373-388

Adamolekun, L. 2004. *How Administrative competence contributes to better development performance*. The World Bank.

Agere, S. 1999. *Political and Administrative Interface: The functional relationship between Ministers and Permanent Secretaries* Managing the Public Service Strategies for Improvement Series No. 10. Commonwealth Secretariat.

Ake, Claude. 1996. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institute

Alesina, A. et al. 1994. *The Political economy of Budget deficits*. IMF Staff Papers. International Monetary Fund, Washington DC

Anyang Nyong'o, P. 1988a: *Political Instability and the Prospects for Democracy in Africa*, in: *Africa Development*, Vol. 13, No. 1

Ayeni, V. 2002. *Public Sector Reform in developing countries: Handbook of Commonwealth Experiences*,

Africa Peer Review Mechanism. 2007. *Self Assessment and State of readiness reports*, NEPAD/African Union

Afro Barometer Network, 2007. *Afro-Barometer Working Papers*, MSU, IDASA, CDD

Anders, G. 2001. *Freedom and Insecurity: Civil Servants between Support Networks, the free market and the Civil Service Reform*. In H. Englund (ed) *A democracy of Chameleons: Politics and Culture in the New Malawi*

Barwood, K. Undated. *Improving Allocative efficiency in Malawi through introducing a Medium Term expenditure framework*. World Bank.

Bigstein, A. 2000. *The Political economy of Policy Failure in Zambia*. Working Paper in Economic No. 23, Goteborg University

Bayart, Jean Francoise. 1993. *The State in Africa, Politics of the Belly*. London: Longman Publishing

Blinder, A. 1997. *Is Government too political?* Foreign Affairs. 76 (6). 115-26

Blondel, J. 1993. *Decision making processes, conflicts, and the extent of autonomy of national Cabinets*. Prentice Hall

Blondel, J. 1993. *Individual Ministers and their role in cabinet decision making*. In Jean Blondel et al eds. *Governing together: the extent and limit of joint decision making in Western European Cabinets*. McMillan

Blondel, J. 1993. *Decision making processes, conflicts and the Extent of Autonomy of national cabinets*. McMillan

Blondel, J. 1993. *Individual Ministers and their role in Cabinet decision making*. McMillan

- Blondel, J. 1995, *Comparative Government*. Harlow, Essex: Prentice Hall
- Blondel, J, N. Manning 1999. 'Why should Ministers do what they say: full and partial cabinet decision making structures in Government'. World Bank Public Sector Management Division, Washington DC
- Blondel, J. 1969. *An introduction to comparative Government*. New York. Praeger Publishers.
- Blondel, J, Manning, N. 2002. *Why do members of Government do what they say they are going to do: Does collegiality improve reliability?* Political studies. 50 (3)
- Bratton, M, H. Garnett, J. Grant, C. Reilly. 1997. *Executive Offices in Policy Managements in Africa's new democracies*'. Implementing Policy Change Project, USAID
- Bratton, M. Van De Waal N. 1992. *Popular demands and state responses in governance and politics in Africa*. London
- Bratton, M. et al. 1999. *Policy Management in Africa's Democracies*. Journal of African Policy Studies. 5 (1)
- Bratton, M, N. Van De Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transition in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press
- Bratton, M, Mattes R and Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2005. *Public Opinion democracy and Markets in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Brinkerhoff, d, Crosby. L. 2002. *Managing Policy Reform*. Bloomfield, Kumarian
- Brusis, M. J. Rammel. 2006. *Concept for a new Index of Reform Capacity*. Centre for Applied Research

Burnell, Peter 2001: *The Party System and Party Politics in Zambia: Continuities, Past, Present and Future*, in: African Affairs, No. 100, pp. 239-263

Burnell, Peter 2002: *Zambia's 2001 elections: the tyranny of small decisions, 'non-decisions' and 'not decisions'*, in: Third World Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 6, pp. 1103-1120

Bwalya, E. et al. 2004. *Poverty Reduction Strategy processes in Malawi and Zambia*. Chr. Michelson Institute

Cabinet Office. 1996. *Cabinet Hand Book*. Lusaka, Zambia: Cabinet Office

Callaghy, Thomas M. 1990: *Lost Between State and Market: The Politics of Economic Adjustment in Ghana, Zambia, and Nigeria*, in: Nelson, Joan M. (ed.):

Cammack. D. 2001. *Malawi at the Threshold: Resources, Conflict and Ingenuity in a Newly Democratic States*. Cambridge

Campbell, C. 1997. *Bringing Strategic decision making into planning and budgeting*. World Bank, Public Sector Management Unit, Washington DC

Chabal P. and J. Daloz. 1999. *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*. McMillan, London

Chikulo, Bornwell, C. 1996. *Presidential and Parliamentary elections in the third republic: 1991-1994*. In Democracy in Zambia: Challenges for the Third Republic. SAPES books.

Chimango, L.J. 2002. *The role of Parliament in the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy*. ECAMA. Lilongwe

CMI 2004. *The Budget at Theater: Institutional underpinnings of the Budget process in Malawi*, Unpublished

Corkery J. et al. undated. *Management of Public Service Reform: A comparative Review of Experiences in the Management of Programs of Reform of the Administrative arm of central Government*. IOS Press, ECDPM, International Institute of Administrative Sciences.

Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) 2002: *The Path away from Poverty. An East Look at Zambia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2002-2004*. Lusaka: CSPR, n.d. (2002)

Englund H. 2001. *A democracy of chameleons: Politics and culture in the new Malawi*. Scandinavian African Institute.

Evans, G. 2001. *Survey to assess the unreliability of the Centre of Government: Symptoms and cures*. University of Düsseldorf, November 23-26, 2000

Evans, G., N. Manning. 2003. *Helping Governments keep their promises: Making Ministers and Governments more reliable through improved policy management*. World Bank

Evans, G., N. Manning, *Helping Governments Meet their Promises*, World Bank 2003

Erdmann, Gero/Simutanyi, Neo 2003: *Transition in Zambia: The Hybridisation of the Third Republic*. Lilongwe: Konrad Adenauer Foundation

Evans, P.B./Rueschemeyer, D./Skocpol, T. (eds.) 1985: *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Draper, G. Undated. *Political/Administration interface*. Public Sector Reform Reader, University of Cape Town

Davidson, B. 1992. *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the curse of the Nation State*, Random House,

De Swaan, Abram, 1973. *Coalition theories and Cabinet formations: A study of formal theories of coalition formation Applied to nine European Parliaments after 1918*. Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company.

Doornbos, M. 1990. *The African State in Academic Debate: Retrospect and Prospect*, in: Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 179-198

Dureval. D. 2003. *Reform of the Malawian Public Sector: Incentives, governance and accountability*. In *Reforming Africa's Institutions: Ownership, incentives and Capabilities*. 2003. United Nations University

Freedom House, 1994-2004. Freedom of the Press. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005>.

Garnett, H. 1991. *Managing Policy Formulation and implementation in Zambia's democratic transition*. Public Administration and Development. 17 (1) 77-91

Garnet, H. 2003. *Cabinets, budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to poverty reduction*, World Bank Institute

Grindle, M. 1991. *Public Choices and Policy Change. The Political economy of reform in developing countries* Harvard,

Government of Malawi. 2006. *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy*. Government Printing

Hagen, J et al. 1995. *Budget processes and commitment to fiscal discipline*. European Economic Review. 39. (3-4) 771-9

Haggard, S. et al. 2001. *Presidents, Parliaments and Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press