

Decentralisation as a Rural Development Strategy in Zimbabwe: Good Policy but Bad Practise

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ABSTRACT: There is no doubt that decentralisation has acquired a prominent place in the development policy debates but unfortunately it cannot be a panacea for all development ills. To many, decentralisation of governments and planning is a self-evidently good thing. It will avoid the ills of over-centralization such as insensitivity to local conditions and will also bring fuller organization and participation at sub national level. Decentralisation is viewed as providing an outline which enables lower level units of governance to execute duties and get benefits from natural resources in line with the subsidiary principle. The subsidiary principle posits that duties which can be performed at the local level should be devolved to the local level. Decentralisation seems to combine appeals for planning and democracy. Can it live to these hopes in reality? The limits to government decentralisation include its need for manpower, finance and technical demands. Functional and territorial decentralisation has been blanketed into conflict between objectives of equity, growth, coordination, participation and national integration. The study used participant observation and literature review. One of the conclusions of the study is that there is a need to strengthen a more democratic and accountable local government in order to be able to implement the decentralized responsibilities. The apparent consequence of devolution is that the central government would be left with core responsibilities such as foreign affairs. Devolution would enable the people of Mashonaland East Province in Zimbabwe to report their needs to Marondera, the provincial capital rather than Harare. The assumption is that authorities at those administrative seats would respond much faster and with greater sympathy and empathy than those in Harare. The Government would be closer to the people and it would be the people themselves in both fact and effect. However, one major risk with decentralisation technique is that many private organisations are profit-oriented and may rip off the state.

KEYWORDS: decentralisation, delegation, devolution, privatisation, rural development.

1 INTRODUCTION

The main reason for decentralization in Zimbabwe in the 1980s was born as a reaction to the disfunctioning of national government which was bureaucratic and the need for a growing commitment to more socially just and equitable local government at independence. This paper discusses initiatives that have been taken to strength decentralisation (by putting theory into practise) and the main problems that have been faced to date. Decentralisation involves the transfer of power from the central government to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political – administrative territorial hierarchy [1]. It involves the transfer of bundles of entrustments (power, responsibility and authority) from one level of organisation down to another [2]. It is about creating local democracy that can build legitimate states and governments. Decentralisation is not a singular process but is often a partial response to a plethora of internally and externally induced processes [3]. Reference [4] states that decentralisation takes many different forms from depending on:

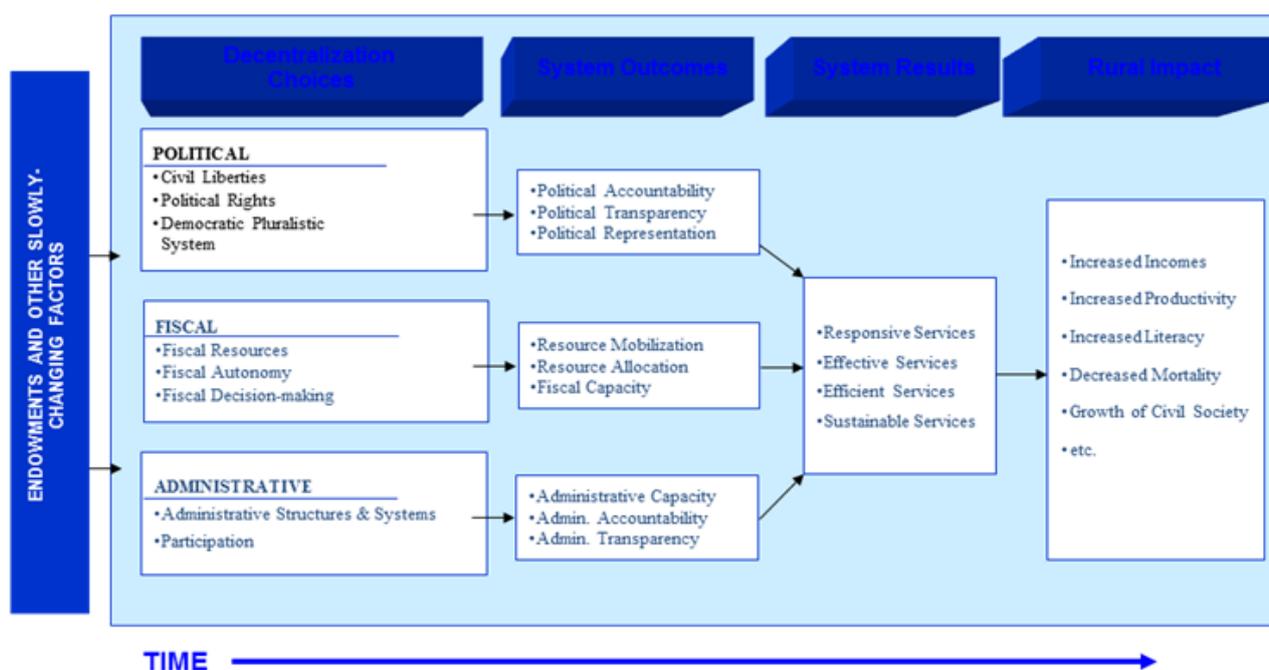
- Activities being shifted
- Powers being decentralized
- Levels to which these are being transferred
- Individuals to which powers are given and means of transfer.

Rural development entails raising the living standards of rural communities. It focuses on the provision of basic services such as health, sanitation education, infrastructure development, enhancing agricultural productivity – all intended at welfare / livelihood enhancement. It involves various levels of capacity building and empowerment of marginalised rural folks. Decentralisation manifests itself in three forms namely; de-concentration, delegation and devolution and privatisation can also be another form of decentralisation.

2 CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR ANALYSING DECENTRALISATION

In analysing decentralisation, The Soufflé theory of decentralisation attempts to bring together the dimensions of decentralisation and relates them to a set intermediate outcomes that are likely to have an important impact on the overall rural development outputs and outcomes. The simplified model as shown in Figure 1, provides a useful framework for analysing the separate dimensions of decentralisation and their linkages, and permits the investigation of patterns of decentralisation across countries.

The Soufflé Theory of Decentralization



Source: Adapted from Parker, Andrew N. 1995, *Decentralization: The Way Forward for Rural Development?* Policy Research Working Paper 1475. The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

3 FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION

- ❖ Deconcentration / decongestion or administrative decentralisation, viewed as the weakest form of decentralisation is when central ministries retain power over key tasks at the centre whilst transferring the implementation roles related to such tasks to staff located in field offices. Deconcentrated activities are those that the centre, for political reasons, believes only it can supervise or should control or closely supervise but that require field level implementation in order to be effectively carried out. Reference [5] views this as temporary devolution of authority in a bureaucracy to lower levels with enhanced citizen participation. Shift in responsibility is top-down i.e. from central government officials (ministries) in the capital to provinces then districts, wards and finally villages in the case of Zimbabwe. An example in Zimbabwe is the Agricultural and Rural Extension (AGRITEX) branch of the Ministry of Agriculture which has its head office in the capital and provincial and district officers and administrators around the country.
- ❖ Delegation viewed as an extensive form of decentralisation is the transfer of government decision making and administrative authority for clearly defined tasks to organisations or firms that are either under the indirect control of the

transferring authority, or are functionally independent, e.g., Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), National Railways OF Zimbabwe (NRZ) and other delivery services which stand in their own legal right and not in the name of the government. These firms are referred to as parastatals in Zimbabwe.

- ❖ Devolution / democratic decentralization is the transfer of power and authority by central government to legally established locally elected political authorities. Entrustments are transferred more or less completely to local authorities or users. Within the community based natural resources management (CBNRM) discourse, devolution is referred to as a democratic decentralisation [6]. Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE philosophy bears testimony to this concept – whereby appropriate authority was given to Rural District Councils (RDCs) by the department of National Parks and Wildlife Management through an amendment to the Parks and Wildlife Act (1975) for the protection of natural resources.
- ❖ Reference [7] defines privatization as an advanced level of delegation which implies government efforts to privatise or disinvest from certain functions. These are normally joint venture companies where government has shares or those companies which were sold to the private sector, for example Cotton Company of Zimbabwe (COTTCO). Privatization may include the following: 1) private enterprises performing functions that had earlier been the preserve government 2) contracting out the provision or administration of government services / facilities to commercial enterprises 3) financing public sector programs through the capital market 4) transferring responsibility for services provision from the public to the private sector through the divestiture of parastatals
- ❖ Apart from the four models explained above, [8] identifies mixed authority as another model of decentralisation whereby people elected at the local level and central government appointees form one institution of governance at the local level. It is a system that gives government the benefits of local participation in decision making without having to bear the costs that may come with it. Locally elected officials represent the people whilst technical expertise is availed through government appointees.

4 THE LINK BETWEEN DECENTRALISATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Collective action generally refers to people working together in pursuit of common interest; it is about power and politics [9]. Below formal, decentralized local governments, there are instances where communities have been able to manage themselves and execute what are generally considered key governmental functions. such as raising and disbursing funds, sanctioning and rewarding behaviors, providing goods, delivering services, making capital investments, managing and enhancing common pool resources, managing and resolving conflict, providing local security, and the like. Zimbabweans at the grassroots have frequently come together to take collective action. Zimbabweans at the grassroots been able to take self-organized actions, while decentralized and formal local governments-embedded in formal legal status, trained professionals, far greater fiscal resources, and links to the state – usually have been unable to perform these functions or provide these goods. Collection has the four main ingredients which are organisation, mobilization interest and opportunity which are important for successful implementation of social development projects. Collective action is common in engagements by the community as being beneficial to them.

5 THE PRIME MINISTER'S DIRECTIVE 1984

Zimbabwe has dual structures socially, economically and politically, relicts of the colonial past. At independence in April 1980 there was a declared commitment to decentralization and participation. It then became necessary to restructure local government through:

- Creation of new Ministries and deconcentration of other e.g. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD)
- Legislative changes and directives to democratise and strengthen local government
- Participatory organisational structures to permit local participation in development planning.

In 1984 The Prime Minister gave a directive on decentralization. It stated how villages through the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and headed by the village head are supposed to define local needs, wards through the Ward Development Committees (WADCOS) headed by a district councillor and covering six villages. The District Development Committees (DDC) is a planning and co-ordination committee and works with the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) which then liaises with central government.

6 WEAKNESSES OF ZIMBABWE'S CURRENT DECENTRALIZATION REFORMS

- Decentralized governments as currently designed have no precedent or authority to work at the constitutional level of choice to revise their collective choice arrangements to fit better local conditions, needs and experience.
- Localities are currently unable to incorporate themselves to provide goods or services, make capital investments, raise monies or regulate behaviors in the pursuit of common purposes (limited or no social capital).
- Local government structures are designed in a top-down manner that does not take into consideration local conditions, institutional capacities, experiences or wishes, thus preventing creative adaptation to local needs.
- Local government areas are usually too large to correspond to working social capital or to fit communities of interest of varying size that may exist around various goods or services the community might desire.
- Local government jurisdictions are frequently so large that they create substantial diseconomies of scale in providing and supervising many goods and services that local residents wish.
- Jurisdictions are frequently so large that there is neither familiarity nor personal ties between political leaders and the public, thus reducing their accountability and the effectiveness and legitimacy of collective activities they initiate.

7 KEYS TO SUCCESS OF SELF-ORGANIZED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- Fairly small communities, probably no more than several hundred persons, who live in relatively close proximity to one another mainly facilitated collective choice (Agrawal and Goyal 2001).
- Selection of own leadership locally through more customary criteria and the other through formal elections for legitimacy.
- Production of a fairly narrow, easily observed, and technologically relatively simple service with community-wide consensus.
- adequate "political space" and leadership legitimacy to allow organizational innovation

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 DECENTRALISATION IN ZIMBABWE AND ACTIVITIES TO INITIATE AND STRENGTHEN IT

Decentralization has three major elements; accountability, discretionary power, and security [1]. In the same vein there are four different types of decentralization 1) Political decentralization, where there are groups at different levels of central, meso and local government who are empowered to make decisions related to what affects them. 2) Administrative decentralization, different levels of government administer resources and matters that have been delegated to them through a constitution. 3) Fiscal decentralization, this is where previously concerted powers to tax and create revenues are given to other levels of government, e.g., local governments are given the power to raise and retain financial resources to fulfill their responsibilities and 4) Market decentralization whereby government privatises or deregulates private functions. Governments have tended to decentralize to enhance popular participation, relevant planning and coordination, speed and flexibility as well as augmenting resources. Popular participation raises the number of people involved in planning implementation and evaluation of projects [11]. In participation the sense of empowerment and proprietorship are developed. Decentralisation facilitates the tailoring of plans to meet local need and conditions as the community knows the work involved as well as cost [12] Planning on the site by local people enhances project relevance and efficiency. Where decentralisation is well coordinated ecological, institutional, economic and cultural components are synchronized. As opposed to central planning, decentralisation allows flexibility, reduces delays and enhances adaptive management [14] Decentralisation brings with it a lot of multiplier effects in terms of manpower, financial resources, and technical experience and also reduces transaction costs.

Devolution is considered the most effective form of decentralisation in that appropriate authority is given to institutional levels that are best placed to deal with specific issues. It provides for better problem solving capacity which takes into account local knowledge and conditions. It generates greater incentives for economic development and improved provision of public services. Devolution engenders local participation, good governance and democratization. It also addresses the reality of cutback in central government expenditure. Reference [15] indicates that the forms of decentralisation can occur simultaneously and complement each other. Marginalised groups are likely to have greater influence in local policies due to the open nature of the decision making, thus increasing equity

In Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the tendency has been to go for deconcentration rather than devolution. On one hand local bodies may be accorded with power but remain upwardly accountable thus strengthening central control. On the other hand local bodies may be downwardly accountable but seldom receive significant power as in the case of WADCOs and VIDCOs in CAMPFIRE who have divided loyalty (community versus state). Even in these successful development projects, local actors come to gain subsistence benefits smaller in comparison to the potential revenues. The major challenge to decentralisation in Africa is political. In some countries there is a legacy of authoritarianism that is difficult to change. In some cases where traditional rulers were autocratic and colonial rule centralised and repressive, post independence despots have found it expedient to perpetuate the status quo [15].

A strong, active and effective civil society is also a sine qua non for effective implementation of decentralisation. The need to raise the levels of social capital has led to massive / rapid emergence of NGOs and lobby groups in the sub-region. NGOs such as Plan International and CARE International and others have upped sanitation infrastructure in rural Zimbabwe, other lobby groups have been very active in advocating for the plight of orphans, HIV/AIDS affected and women or the disadvantaged groups. However, the concept of social capital has its limitation as traditional rural social relations in most societies have a repressive nature which often results in local elites being able to exert a significant degree of dominance and prevent more substantial participation [16]

There is also need for a clearly established legal framework defining the decentralized institution, how they are constituted and how they relate to each other. Pre-existing institutional arrangements can be appropriately modified to suit the decentralisation needs than in the case where new institutions have to be created. The institutions that are receiving the decentralized powers need to have the capacity to carry out the powers and responsibilities devolved to them. In the context of rural development, the capacity means being able to do the job and improve service delivery. The lack of capacity may be reflected in more than one of the following:

- Inadequate funding to meet minimum standards of service provision
- Inability to mobilise fully all resources available from tax bases
- Revenue sharing arrangement and / or matching grant programmes
- Failure to deliver goods and services cost effectively and an inappropriate mix of services in relation to local preferences

The centralised institutions should have a proper system of accountability to each of their different constituents and some system of sanctions that penalized institutions that fail to carry out their functions appropriately. Where accountability is absent, the legitimacy of a decentralisation initiative can be lost.

There is also need to take care of combination of forms of decentralisation that is to be used especially in rural development. In Kenya the District Focus for Rural Development was implemented almost through deconcentrated line agencies of central government. The exclusive focus on government institutions enabled the central bureaucracy to retain effective power and served to alienate rural people rather than to bring them into the development process. In that case study, rural people refused to participate in family planning clinic in some areas, they refused to allow land to be used for agricultural demonstrations fearing government takeover of the improved property whilst road construction was disrupted by some villagers thinking that new roads would allow government patrols to catch stocks raiders more easily [16].

Reference [17] gives another case study of rural development through training and visit extension programmes targeting rural farmers. There was overall success but the strategy on its own was incomplete as farmers had no overall decision making power. This was a form of deconcentrating power to local administrative offices as a way of improving extension services; however, real response to farmer needs was limited.

Under the political form of decentralisation, participation of communities whether through elected authorities, co-management, and committee-based management or traditional authorities usually looks like a modern reproduction of indirect rule where they are seen as a form of deconcentration where local authorities are used by central government and donors as local administrators to implement outside agendas [18]. On the other hand, development and non-government organisations also appear to be choosing to transfer power to less than democratic traditional authorities, committees and local NGOs, may be due to populism naivety among other reasons. This is causing a potentially destructive proliferation of local institutions which in turn is creating competition with fledging local democratic institutions and undermining their powers and legitimacy.

In some cases, decentralisation was in the form of development of grass roots through a system of locally elected councils. There is a possibility of the elected councilors slowly transforming into locally based elites and may end up working against the central state of the community. In this case politics of patronage can be employed by the state to take care of

such occurrences but it is basically the councilor's locally perceived legitimacy that may or may not unseat them even with central intervention.

As a rural development tool decentralisation can be misused to fit development agency or donor employee needs. Agency employees may work to the satisfaction of their employers with little or no regard to the ecology and well-being of the community. Even where systems are established for elected committees with local leaders to receive important decision-making powers, the result may not benefit either local population or their environment. Electoral systems in most parts of Africa have many flaws. Electoral candidates may purport to be decentralizing whilst promoting self-aggrandizement at the expense of community relevant projects. In Zimbabwe, projects such as rural electrification have targeted rural elites and bureaucrats such as Chiefs, Businesspeople or Members of Parliament. To some elected officials, opportunity is created to line their pockets, thus creating "opportunities for opportunists" [19]. In some cases, the transfer of responsibilities to local governments constitutes the withdrawal of the state rather than decentralisation. Without the devolution of fiscal resources and means of holding local authorities accountable, successful decentralisation remains a pipe dream. The case of Forestry Resources Co-management in Mapfungautsi in Gokwe where fiscal capacity has not been devolved to Rural District Councils (RDCs) demonstrates the inadequacy of some decentralisation initiatives. In this case the Forest Company of Zimbabwe maintains the fiscal responsibility. It is often difficult for central governments to fully decentralize because of the need to maintain control. In Botswana, however, the Land Boards for devolved land distribution have done a good job according to [20] in streamlining land administration, avoiding top-down control of customary land by central government and settling disputes fairly well. However, further analysis of the functioning of the Land Boards; they are regular instructions from the centre to local government levels and frequent central interference in local decision making. The domination by central government is compounded by the weak development of civil society organisation and poor representation within local communities [21]. Privatisation as form of decentralisation has its short comings. In the Mkambati case study, rural development in the form of community based eco-tourism development in one of the poorest regions of South Africa failed. Instead of working through democratic local authorities, decision making powers remained centralised or were to elite sectors mainly local entrepreneurs and private sector investors, who were not accountable to local people. This privatisation as part of outsourcing facilitated elite capture. Prospects for local democratic institutions to contribute to development were further undermined as political and business elites harnessed the benefits.

In most African states decentralisation has been undertaken as a reaction to constraining conditions such as reduced central funding, efforts to downsize the public sector, declining revenues and loss of manpower. Some of the decentralisation efforts are half hearted and piecemeal, for example in Zimbabwe forest management remains a preserve of the RDCs and the Forest Company whilst local communities are restricted to the use of non-timber products for revenue generation. Projects like road and dam construction have been tendered to private players since the successful completion of projects, for example, the construction of Tokwe Mukosi Dam in Masvingo Province which was left to date. In some devolved institutions such as VIDCOs and WADCOs popular in Zimbabwe, meaningful participation has remained theoretical since the institutions only serve to shape policy of the top-down approach emphasised by the government in power. Within decentralized institutions conflicts do arise especially between traditional and elected authorities, civil service technocrats and government officials. Such set-ups hamper development due to conflicting interests. Consultation and decision making are lengthy within decongested and delegated decentralisations. This builds to bureaucratic practices and corruption. Such conditions results in slow delivery of projects.

Decentralisation may be imposed by international organisations such as the IMF and World Bank, whose agendas are not comparative with local interests. Decentralisation without thoroughly understanding the local, social, economic, physical and institutional conditions often generate opposition among local groups – distant administrators cannot know the complex variety of factors that affect the success of project in local communities throughout the country.

The outputs of rural development are tangible goods and services provided by the range of decentralized institutions. Ultimately this will involve the task of assigning power and responsibilities to the different institutions in the government sectors at the different levels such that at the end of the day each sector has a range of sub-functions associated with it, some similar across sectors, others differing due to the nature of the good being provided e.g. primary health care is mostly a private good which can be excluded from the poor by the local elites who have little interest in the availability or equality of the publicly financed service. Use of the service is not easily monitored so transparency is a problem. Also the technology required is relatively complex and requires skilled manpower that is likely to be available locally. On the other hand specific development projects serve the interest of different interest groups such that community participation is large, as in the case of rural development projects. Given this, decentralisation should be done in a sector-specific pattern, therefore, there is need to undertake detailed investigations into how each sector should be organised and identify appropriate fiscal and institutional frameworks for delivering rural development programmes effectively.

In Zimbabwe, the CAMPIRE illustrates how devolution may handsomely pay off. This follows experiences in several districts such as Chipinge (Mahenye) and Guruve (Kanyurira) where benefit sharing from wildlife management revenues came down to household levels. It is however evident that some CAMPIRE projects failed to incentivize natural resources management at the local level due to RDCs reluctance to devolve decision making and financial benefits to lower levels of the community. The other reason for failure is linked to the lack of status by local institutions such as wards and households. Other successful decentralisation schemes include the postal services, telecommunications by such service providers (Econet, Netone and Telecel) who have created base stations across the country's rural areas. These have allowed some link with remote rural areas.

The devolution of ZESA Holdings into different subunits has seen greater coverage of the rural electrification programme. This however is against a backdrop of a static electricity generating capacity. Resultantly rural electrification has been used in some cases for political gains at the expense of other economic activities. The agrarian reform in Zimbabwe has also brought with it an element of decentralisation by unpacking agricultural institution such as AGRITRX, Land Allocation Committees and marketing boards. These reforms could potentially contribute to rural development but were constrained by lack of supporting infrastructure that is input production, roads, irrigation, institutional conflicts, insecure tenure and corruption.

Several parastatals and organisations have been devolved to community levels but have failed to deliver since they owe their accountability largely to the politicians. The Grain Marketing Board (GMB) over the years has failed to guarantee food security regardless of low maize purchasing prices they offer and the geographical spread of its depots. Directors of most parastatals are political appointees who lack skills and transparency. As for Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) decentralisation has not guaranteed more water access for most rural farmers or otherwise. This is rooted in the lack of resources. The conflict between institutions, that is WADCOs and VIDCOs and traditional institutions has dealt rural development a severe blow. The two have conflicting mandates and jurisdictions resulting in power wrangles at the expense of developmental targets.

9 WAY FORWARD

A model on how to implement power should involve identifying the appropriate powers of transfer and opening dialogue with governments, development institutions, NGOs and local communities on which powers to be made public or private and which central or local. Also strong grass-roots organisation is imperative to overcome central government resistance to democratic decentralisation. For decentralisation effectively work, a strong central state is a pre-requisite. Central government must be downwardly accountable to local level authorities and it has the responsibility of clarifying laws, mediating major disputes and providing guidelines and means to assure the inclusion of marginal groups. There must also be mechanisms for local representatives to hold level bureaucrats accountable to them if decentralisation is to occur the government should increase public participation through active engagement in public institutions and show a commitment and will by initiating the proper political environment. In rural development, decentralisation should address the political, fiscal and institutional dimensions. The historical context of a nation is also important in understanding the response of local government and citizens to new opportunities such as those affected by decentralisation.

10 CONCLUSION

Governments decentralize for multiple political, economic, social and ideological reasons and often with the support and pressure from donor agencies (Ribot 2002). Decentralisation cannot only influence development by assigning expenditure responsibility to lower levels of government but also by assigning tax-raising power, an area where there is dearth in literature. Some advantages are that it brings about democratization and people's participation, rural development, improved public service performance, poverty alleviation, relief of fiscal crisis, political and macro-economic stability, national unity and state building and increased legitimacy to government. Decentralisation is presented as a solution to a rather large number of problems. It promotes geographical equity, increases popular capacity to ensure responsibility and accountability, enables easier access to decision points, reduces conflict and is more democratic. It improves delivery of services. It even eases national planning through the provision of more reliable information base. In Zimbabwe decentralisation has however not been effective in some cases due to the following reasons:

10.1 DISADVANTAGES OF DECENTRALISATION IN ZIMBABWE

- Lack of political commitment, the dominance of a single political party, ZANU PF which has been in power since 1980 to date also weakens devolution, because the party is subject to central control leading to disillusion in local government

structures, and the utility of local participation, especially in planning. Real devolution of decision-making powers to local people requires financial decentralization premised on independent, local decision-makers.

- Bureaucratic resistance
- Poor project design, inadequate resources and constraints in the immediate project management, functions have been decentralised without adequate resources.
- Incomplete legal reforms, a persistent emphasis on control by the centre,
- Weak local councils, weak professional, technical, managerial and administrative capacities support from the centre
- Dominance by local executives and administrative personnel,
- Inadequate fiscal and managerial resources, as well as misuse of funds
- Failure of local officials to honestly and effectively supervise local service-delivery personnel
- Limited revenue authority, some sectoral decentralisation has occurred, but on a patchy and under-funded basis.
- Institutions are compromised as there are too many thus causing confusion among the public. They also lack capacity to apply reforms efficiently.
- Development is hampered by macro-economic and political problems, insufficient local control over natural resources, a lack of entrepreneurial and technical skills, inadequate infrastructure and services, and HIV/AIDS.
- Limited authority to manage key services e.g. health
- Limited authority to pass regulatory by laws to regulate or enhance natural resources management ,
- Little ability by institutions/organisations to reach beyond their jurisdictions to deal with broader problems,
- Constituencies are frequently highly socially heterogeneous and dispersed across large areas,
- Very weak transportation and communication networks

10.2 TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISATION

- Better design and planning of initiatives to ensure that they reflect at least some of the substantial existing knowledge about decentralisation.
- Ensuring that projects are introduced to achieve 'desirable' goals, not dubious ends. An improvement in the country's macro-economic and political situation, which is currently overriding the potential benefits of decentralisation.
- A focus on the 'human factor', involving greater efforts to build capacity at local institutions and to avoid political in-fighting and power struggles.
- Avoiding a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and attempting to design the most appropriate type of decentralisation for different sectors.
- More consistent and efficiently co-ordinated funding sources. External funding agencies should try to avoid untimely withdrawal from programmes.

Most development agencies existed before the concept of decentralisation became part of development paradigm. Many were developed from more centralised control oriented needs of colonial powers. As a result the structure, systems and norms of these agencies pose important barriers to decentralisation. Powerful line ministries that are unsympathetic, if not openly opposed to these initiatives have also constrained decentralisation with negative downstream reactions. Commitment from the top alone does not suffice to ensure effective decentralisation. In Tanzania it took a decade for Nyerere's Ujamaa concept to be put into policy and yet another decade for its implementation [16]. Reference [22] fittingly put when she said decentralization is a term that covers a "multitude of sins!"

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