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The Depoliticisation of Development and the Democratisation of Politics in Tanzania: Parallel Structures as Obstacles to Delivering Services to the Poor

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The Depoliticisation of Development and the Democratisation of Politics in Tanzania: Parallel Structures as Obstacles to Delivering Services to the Poor

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ABSTRACT *Local democracy and the involvement of local communities in the provision of social services are central issues in the local government reforms that are presently being implemented in many developing countries. At the same time, institutions that run parallel to local authorities, such as social funds and various user-committees, are established to improve accountability and participation. By focusing on actual political processes rather than administrative, legal and fiscal aspects of decentralisation, this article traces the breakdown of two development projects in Tanzania to the existence of parallel structures. It suggests that user-committees and social funds should be integrated in local authority structures to avoid fragmentation of participation and to enhance local democracy.*

I. Introduction

A number of policies, aimed at achieving 'good governance' and improved social service delivery are presently being implemented in developing countries. On the one hand local government reforms are introduced to improve local democracy and increase political participation. On the other hand, the involvement of local people is encouraged through 'participatory development', social funds and a range of user-committees. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that the two approaches, although aiming for the same goal, are potentially contradictory to each other, causing conflicts that may indeed hinder the successful implementation of development projects.

The emphasis on decentralisation is closely connected to the democratisation trend. The most important move in the reforms is to devolve power to elected councils at the lower levels. More than 60 countries in the developing world and in

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East and Central Europe have gone through some form of decentralisation since the late 1980s, and most donors have support to local government reforms as a central part of their portfolio (Blair, 2000: 22; Manor, 2004: 192).

In countries that decentralised after 2000 the new emphasis on decentralisation came at the same time as donors grew increasingly sceptical about their reliance on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civil society actors as central development actors and as a way to reach the grassroots. The state is now back as the main development partner but, in contrast to the early years of development cooperation, when optimism prevailed and one believed that the central state could plan and implement development, there is now widespread agreement among donors that democratisation and people's involvement in the development process can only take place if power is devolved to the lower levels of government authority. However, despite widespread donor support to decentralisation, a large number of donor-funded projects are implemented with weak, or even non-existent, ties to local governance structures. Often, structures running parallel to local government are established to increase the chance of smooth implementation, and to ensure maximum participation from 'the people' or 'grassroots'. In short, there is an overlap between two trends in development work: outsourcing development work to NGOs/community-based organisations (CBOs)/user committees on the one hand, and strengthening local government on the other.

Recent policy debates on decentralisation and good governance have mainly been concerned with the administrative, legal and fiscal aspects of decentralisation, while too little attention has been given to actual political processes (Bergh, 2004: 780; Kelsall, 2004: 70). There has not been enough attention to the fact that parallel institutions often are a direct hindrance to many of the processes and positive changes that local governance reforms are meant to entail (Manor, 2004). This article is an attempt to get 'under the skin' of the political processes that have slowed down, and in one case completely halted, two development projects in Tanzania. Tanzania is particularly interesting for a study of how decentralisation and participation as development tools function together because the country is presently going through a local government reform, at the same time as a number of donor funded development projects are carried out using parallel structures. The two case studies; a squatter upgrading project in Mwanza city, sponsored by DANIDA, and the construction of a dispensary in Bagamoyo district, sponsored by the World Bank through the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), demonstrate how easily the organisation of such projects come into conflict with local authorities.

The next section of the article discusses participation as a development tool before and now, and the gap between *normative ideas* about participation and the reality on the ground. The third section provides a brief background to the ongoing local government reform in Tanzania. Section IV presents the research project that this study is part of: the multidisciplinary Formative Research on the Local Government Reform in Tanzania, and the methodologies that were used. Sections V and VI present the two case studies. Sections VII and VIII discuss accountability and the legitimacy of local authorities on the basis of, among other things, a citizen survey that was arranged as part of the research project. Finally, the conclusion argues that if local government reforms are to fulfil their envisaged roles, one will have to locate the responsibility for local development projects with local authorities and with

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elected representatives in particular, and let subcommittees of village governments play the role in planning and implementation that donor supported CBOs and user committees today do (see also Manor, 2004).

II. Participation and Decentralisation

Ideas about decentralisation and participation first emerged among radicals in the late 1970s but were adopted by more mainstream political actors and development agencies in the mid 1980s, when there was increasing agreement that the high failure rates of development projects could be blamed on the lack of participation by local communities (McNeish, 2001: 259; Brett, 2003: 4; Ferguson and Gupta, 2005: 113). Participatory approaches were first adopted by NGOs, and later the World Bank, which defined participation as 'a process by which people, especially disadvantaged people, influence decisions that affect them' (World Bank, 1992 cited in Brett, 2003: 5). Participation has also been defined as 'power-sharing in decision-making' (Ribot, 1999: 27). In actual usage, however, the concept 'participation' has been used to describe practises as distinct as spontaneous self-organisation, 'consulting local people', actual partnership with local control and compulsory labour (Green, 2000: 69; Brett, 2003: 5; Chambers, 2004: 28). There is no fixed or agreed meaning about the concept and, in contrast to the early years, participation is now supported by both left and right (McNeish, 2001: 262). Unfortunately, the notion of empowerment, once central to participation, is seldom emphasised (Blair, 2000: 25). Some critics see the World Bank's enthusiasm for decentralisation and participation as closely connected to the structural adjustment programmes – people are no longer to rely on the state but are expected to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and social services (Shore and Wright, 1997; McNeish, 2001: 260).

Participatory approaches have much in common with the 'self-help' movement in East Africa after independence (Chambers, 1974). Many of the problems that were pointed out more than 30 years ago, like elite appropriation and gender imbalance, resurface in recent work on participatory approaches. There are stories of 'participatory processes undertaken ritualistically, which had turned out to be manipulative, or which had in fact harmed those who were supposed to be empowered' (Cooke and Kothari, 2001: 1). Co-option of projects that are targeted at youth, women or other disadvantaged groups by political elites or traditional male authorities is common, since 'the relative bargaining power' of the people involved is seldom taken into account (Cooke and Kothari, 2001: 5; Platteau and Abraham, 2002). It is also common for aspiring politicians to use development projects as springboards and vehicles for patronage in their relationship with the poor. Brett argues that participation may work under some circumstances but, is unsuitable for many projects and programmes – particularly in situations where 'local conditions make co-operative and collective action very difficult' (Brett, 2003: 1). Participation, he concludes, generally works better in wealthy countries than in poor ones (Brett, 2003: 1). This finding is indeed worrying, as it is exactly in poor countries that participation has been launched as a solution. On the basis of a study of local government reform, participation and accountability in six countries, Harry Blair argues that although there are some promising signs, 'there seem to be important limitations on how much participation can actually deliver' (Blair, 2000: 21).

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Blair finds positive results regarding representation – particularly for ethnic minorities (Bolivia and the Philippines), and for women where they are mandated. However, there are few signs that the reforms and emphasis on participation will reduce poverty, since elites, even under the new system, find ways to direct wealth to themselves (Blair, 2000: 25).

The World Development Report, *Making Services Work for Poor People* emphasises the problem of 'elite capture' in development work and suggests various ways to tackle this problem (World Bank, 2003). One problem that is not adequately addressed in the report, however, is that participatory development and community involvement, while often being effective channels for donors and NGOs, have a tendency to undermine local democracy since they are essentially 'depoliticised' (Green, 2000: 72; Ribot, 2002: 1; Bergh, 2004: 788). In the African context, participatory approaches are depoliticised in the sense that they are naïve about power and power relations, and tend to view rural Africans as 'communities' (Ribot, 1999: 23; Cooke and Kothari, 2001: 14). Participation has brought little change, writes Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, 'largely due to a failure to engage with issues of power and politics' (Hickey and Mohan, 2005: 237, 241). There is a tendency in participatory approaches to work through non-elected bodies which operate either in insulation from local authority structures or with a weak linkage to them. For example, CBOs active within service provision are usually formed to address a specific development issue, like urban upgrading, road improvement etc. They tend to be ad hoc bodies with a self-appointed leadership, they are often dominated by one sex, and they are usually short lived (see also Ribot, 2004: 3).

Various forms of committees are perhaps the most salient sign of the way in which participation has been institutionalised in the developing world. In some Indian states, one can find as many as 10,000 committees (Manor, 2004: 192). In Tanzania, the most common forms of committees are school committees, water committees, HIV/AIDS committees, and TASAF committees. Both school committees and TASAF committees handle much bigger budgets than the local village government. This situation is found in other parts of the world as well, and often cause serious conflicts at the local level (Manor, 2004: 194). The leadership of user committees may appear to be 'elected democratically' at community meetings, but the ballot is seldom held in secret. Rather, someone's name is mentioned, and 'consensus' is achieved. It is invariably elite members of the local communities who are nominated for such leadership positions. The fact that these institutions are organised outside of the official political system does not mean that they operate in insulation from it. On the contrary, individuals may move between the different spheres in their leadership career, and intense rivalry between different categories of leaders may have devastating effects on local development efforts.

Possibly the most critical problem with participatory development approaches is that the methodology claims to be 'bottom-up' but is as a rule imposed from outside. Participation is sometimes more of an event than a process (McNeish, 2001: 266). User committees are often established at the initiative of development actors from outside the community, such as national or international donors, or central government and they tend to be unsustainable in the long run (Brett, 2003; Ribot, 2004). In some countries, the central government is in fact not very enthusiastic about the committees, but give in to ideas of powerful donors (Manor, 2004: 193).

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The rhetoric of participation says that through this methodology, people take responsibility for their own development. At the same time, the methodology most often entails external facilitators – as in the Tanzania Social Action Fund. The use of external facilitators reveals that, despite the rhetoric, people are not judged to be fully capable of leading their own development after all (Green, 2000). Moreover, local understandings of 'development' may be quite different from the version propagated by development agencies. For example, despite the ideas of policy makers about the 'collective' nature of local communities, villagers may emphasise individual achievement, while participatory development is based on an idea of group action that denies such aspirations (Green, 2000: 67; Kelsall, 2004: 72).

In Tanzania, the liberalisation of the economy after the mid-1980s led to the growth of a middle class in the rural areas, and patronage became increasingly important in politics at the local level (Gibbon, 1994; Kiondo, 1994, 1995). Elected political positions such as village chairman and councillor are time consuming and unpaid. They tend to be occupied by retired civil servants or successful businessmen (very seldom women) who aspire for higher political positions, notably, a member of parliament, a position that is seen as very lucrative. The success of a political leader is often measured by his or her ability to attract donor and/or district funding to local development projects. Parallel institutions active within service provision such as CBOs and user committees are then seen as rivals, rather than partners, in a system where patronage is at the core of politics (see also Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Manor, 2004: 207).

Despite the fact that participation has been subject to critical debate for a decade, parallel structures using participatory approaches continue to be employed in development projects in many countries (Ribot, 2004: 3). In the case of Tanzania, the continued use of parallel structures is particularly problematic since the country is implementing a local government reform emphasising increased power to local elected leadership. Before we take a closer look at processes of leadership rivalries in Mwanza and Bagamoyo and their effect on development initiatives, we will look briefly at the administrative structures in Tanzania and the local government reform.

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III. The Local Government Reform in Tanzania

Tanzania falls well into the international picture – the local government reform is closely connected to the democratisation process. Multiparty rule was re-introduced to Tanzania in 1992, after almost 30 years of one-party rule under Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). Four years after multipartyism was re-instated, in 1996, the government officially launched the local government reform. The goal of the reform was to 'strengthen the local government authorities with the overall objective of improving the quality and access to public services provided through or facilitated by the local government authorities' (Ngwilizi, 2002: 3). The implementation of the reform is donor funded, and there appears to be considerable ambivalence at different levels of the Tanzanian state apparatus towards the reform.

In terms of administration, the country is divided into 21 regions and 114 districts. Each district is divided into administrative wards, which again are divided into villages (more than 10,000 altogether). Villages are divided into *vitongoji* (hamlets) in rural areas and *mitaa* (streets) in urban areas. Each hamlet/street elects a chairman

who becomes a member of the village council. The village government is led by an elected chairman and an appointed, salaried Village Executive Officer (VEO).[1] In contrast to the decentralisation models in, among others, Mozambique and Cameroon, customary authorities have no place in the official governance system.

Councillors for the district council are elected at ward level. Each party nominates a candidate for each ward, as well as candidates for the special 'women seats' (one quarter of all council seats). The councillors meet for the full council meeting four times a year, and for this occasion the district's Member of Parliament is also supposed to attend. None of the opposition parties have managed to challenge CCM's popularity. In the local elections of 2004, CCM won 96.6 per cent of all the seats.

The literature on decentralisation has identified three different forms of reform: deconcentration, delegation and devolution (Rondinelli, 1999; Bergh, 2004: 781). The local government reform in Tanzania falls into the 'devolution' category, a process whereby the central government 'transfers authority for decision making, financial allocations, and management to quasi-autonomous units in local government' (Bergh, 2004: 781). Compared to the two other forms of decentralisation, Bergh argues, devolution represents 'the most direct link with democracy, popular participation and empowerment' (Bergh, 2004: 781).

The idea and vision of the local government reform in Tanzania have much in common with local government reforms in other countries. In the vision of the Tanzanian government, local government will derive legitimacy from the services it delivers to the people, and the people will participate in the planning and execution of development programmes. The intention is to make local governments more transparent and democratic, and the staff 'responsible and accountable to their councils'. Local governments will not only gain increased funding from central government and greater autonomy over their financial affairs; they will also have greater responsibility for the mobilisation of resources from within their own constituencies, be it through various forms of taxation or self-help in development projects (URT, 1996: 2–3).

The mobilisation of local resources for development projects has a long history in Tanzania and there are many pre-colonial institutions of communal labour. The self-help spirit of the early years after independence is said to have been high in many areas (Baker and Wallevik, 2002: 38; Kawa, 2003: 11). As Robert Chambers has pointed out for East Africa in general, these non-coordinated local initiatives often resulted in duplication, compulsory labour and force (Chambers, 2005: 86). In Tanzania, the government was unable to keep its promise of cost-sharing and people soon became disillusioned (Jennings, 2003: 167–168). Self-help projects continued through the 1970s and 1980s but local government officials, at various levels, are said to have colluded to embezzle development funds, while at the same time asking villagers to contribute more labour and cash (Swantz, 1997: 54; Kawa, 2003: 40). One of the most salient problems in the 1980s and 1990s was the immense power that was exercised by appointed civil servants at the various levels of local authority compared to democratically elected representatives.

One of the main ideas behind the local government reform is to transfer power from state and council employees to elected representatives. This democratic move, it is envisaged, will improve the services in local communities, since the representatives

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will 'know the priorities of their constituencies' and work for the best of their community. In the Mwanza case presented in this article, however, the councillors actively worked *against* a development project that would have greatly benefited parts of their constituencies. The role of councillors, village governments and other local government structures, is still far from the ideas presented above. The main reason, as my case studies demonstrate, is that the actual influence and resources for local service delivery lie elsewhere, with donor funded committees as well as CBOs, and NGOs.

IV. Methodology

This study was conducted within the framework of the Formative Research on Local Government Reform in Tanzania. This multidisciplinary research project, funded by The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and directed by Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, is a collaboration between three institutions: Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI).[2] The main purpose of the project is to document the processes of change and impacts of the local government reform, and to provide managers and key stakeholders with operationally relevant data and analyses of lessons learned during implementation of the reform (for details see Fjeldstad et al., 2003). Four rural and two urban councils have been selected for indepth studies.[3] All in all, 10 researchers took part in the first phase of the project, six senior and four junior. The researchers were divided into two teams, each visiting three councils over a period of two and a half years (2002–2004). Within each team, individual researchers concentrated on one of the three core themes: governance, social services and finances. The teams interviewed local government staff, elected representatives, committee members and service providers (teachers and health staff at public and private outlets) at all levels (hamlet/street, village, ward, council/municipality), on the basis of a fieldwork manual. Interviews were typed, systemised and made available to the research group as a whole. In 2003, a citizen survey covering 1260 randomly selected respondents from the six councils was conducted, using experienced enumerators from REPOA. Survey questions concentrated on the three main themes of the research, as well as knowledge about the reform.

Individual researches planned and conducted 'special studies'. This article is the result of the author's focus on potentials and limitations to service delivery at the local level. In two of the councils visited, Bagamoyo DC and Mwanza CC, there were uncompleted development projects which were, at first glance, hard to understand why they had come to a stop. The interviews mentioned above were supplemented with more indepth interviews with stakeholders. In the case of Mwanza, home based interviews in Swahili with the leaders of two community-based organisations were held and the author was shown around the squatter area. There were also lengthy interviews with the staff of the urban upgrading project, including the expatriate who had led it. In Bagamoyo town, the general interviews were supplemented with interviews with the District Project Coordinator for Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) and the Taliban branch of the CUF party. At the village level, focus group discussions in two villages were arranged.[4] The author supplemented information from the focus groups with individual interviews in

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Swahili with members of the village government, the school committee and 'ordinary' villagers (recruited by a project contact person).

V. Squatter Upgrading in Mwanza

Mwanza city, situated on the southern shores of Lake Victoria, is the second largest city in Tanzania with a population of around 620,000 (Mwanza Community, 2005). Around 75 per cent of the residents of Mwanza City Council lived in unplanned and un-serviced settlements in 2002. According to the Council's guidelines for urban upgrading, the main objective was to reduce this rate to 65 per cent by the end of 2005. One of the main strategies recommended to reach this goal was 'to raise community awareness and participation in cost sharing of land surveying and compensation of properties' (Mwanza City Council, 2002). Our case study, the DANIDA-sponsored Sustainable Mwanza Project, revealed that, although the local population have been favourably disposed to making such contributions, rivalry among different categories of leaders was a major factor behind the collapse of the foreign-funded urban upgrading project.

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Planning and Implementation

Mwanza city centre is surrounded by picturesque hills. On 14 of these hills, informal settlements or squatter camps have been established, varying from simple shacks to houses built to high standards. All the settlements share a general lack of basic services including tap water, waste management, passable roads, schools and health facilities. During the 1990s, the inhabitants of several squatter settlements in Mwanza formed community-based organisations (CBOs) to improve services in their respective communities by way of self-help activities and by lobbying for service provision by the council and central government. The Mwanza CBOs were inspired by similar organisations in Dar es Salaam, some of which have had great success in mobilising both local and external resources for urban upgrading.

In 1998, and with the assistance of DANIDA, the Government of Tanzania launched the Capacity Building and Environmental Management Project in Mwanza. According to the project document, the project 'focussed on capacity building of Mwanza City Council (MCC) staff and Councillors, members of Mwanza community and the Mwanza business community' (Sustainable Mwanza Programme, 2003: 6). In April 2001, the project was continued and expanded under the label Sustainable Mwanza Programme. The purpose of the project was threefold: (i) to improve the environment of the squatter settlements in line with guidelines from UN-Habitat; (ii) to support capacity building of NGOs and CBOs; and (iii) to support the legal rights of people living in squatter areas. During the planning and implementation of the project DANIDA worked closely with the Ministry of Lands. The project was meant to be a pilot project, providing input to a national standard for the upgrading of unplanned urban settlements, and to provide input for and to influence national policies on squatter upgrading and related issues. The project would be the first attempt to put into practice the National Human Settlements Development Policy of 2000 which states that unplanned settlements shall be upgraded by the inhabitants themselves, organised in NGOs and CBOs (URT, 2000: 53; Cadstedt, 2005: 3).

Two hill-top settlements, Ibungilo and Isamilo, with altogether around 2500 households, were selected to be the focus of the first phase of the Sustainable Mwanza Project. In both settlements, CBOs were active and had prepared the ground for upgrading by suggesting designated areas for the construction of roads, schools, health facilities and so forth. As part of its goal to facilitate capacity building, the project worked closely with the CBOs in detailing the upgrading plans.

The two settlements, Ibungilo and Isamilo, cut across three different wards. The CBO leaders claim that there was a lack of interest and support from the ward level of local authorities since none of the staff lived in the targeted areas, and that councillors were against the project because they were 'jelaous' of the CBOs. Ward staff who were interviewed for this study claim that they were not invited to participate in the project. This claim is countered by the completion report of the project, which states that four meetings were held 'with all ward and mtaa leaders' (Sustainable Mwanza Programme, 2003: 54). Councillors were invited to a number of meetings but did not show up.

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While DANIDA sponsored the surveying of plots and collaborated with the University College of Land and Architecture (UCLAS) in Dar es Salaam to prepare detailed maps of the selected areas, the CBOs were asked to come up with solutions as how to compensate the people whose houses would have to be removed or demolished in order to make way for the building of roads. The money to be paid in compensation was to come from the community itself – estimated at TSh 20 million (approximately US$23,000). The CBOs decided that each household was to contribute TSh 20,000 (US$23) and the task of collection was delegated to *mtaa*/street leaders, the lowest level of elected leaders in the urban local authority system. Considering the relatively high amount asked for, and despite some reported conflicts between the street leaders and the CBOs, the compliance rate was high. The CBOs were able to collect around TSh 10 million (approximately US$11,400) from around 500 households. However, after councillors told people not to contribute, contributions dried up. The amount collected would have been enough to compensate those whose houses would be demolished or who would lose plots of land, but the project never reached the stage of implementation.

A number of factors were at play. One of the major problems was that the two settlements, Ibungilo and Isamilo, cut across three different wards, and that the ward level of local authorities never got engaged in the upgrading project. From the viewpoint of the expatriate technical adviser, the main problem was a lack of commitment on the part of the City Council. For example, although the policy of the local government reform as announced by the Tanzanian government was supposed to involve the private sector in service delivery, Mwanza City Council was unwilling to contract private construction firms in the first phase of the project.

The technical adviser also pointed out that the managerial skills within the CBOs were insufficient. The CBO leaders started collecting and spending money before they had opened a designated project account. However, the factor that most seriously hampered the project, according to City Council staff, CBO leaders and project management, was resistance on the part of the councillors. The completion report concludes that the implementation of the project proved difficult 'mainly due

to that two major stakeholders did not have/or lost the interest namely the Heads of Departments and most of the Councillors' (Sustainable Mwanza Programme, 2003: 8).[5] The councillors were invited to many meetings but did not show up. The report does not attempt to explain *why* the councillors representing two of the wards were uninterested. In these two wards, we learned, the councillors had stood against CBO leaders during the last election. With the large-scale upgrading project being under CBO control, the councillors feared that they would be sidelined by the CBO leaders if they were to contest elections in the future. One of the informants interpreted the councillors fear of their CBO rivals in this way: 'He will get more fame than me. He will get money' ('*Atatangaswa kuliko mimi. Atapata pesa!*'). The councillors discouraged local people from contributing to the project, claiming that leaders of the CBOs were misusing and mismanaging the funds. Consequently, the flow of contributions from people dried up. In an attempt to mediate, city council town planners designed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on how the funds and accounts were to be administered. The councillors refused to sign the MoU and the project came to a halt. In August 2002, DANIDA pulled out of the project and withdrew the remaining funding, approximately US$1.2 million (Sustainable Mwanza Programme, 2003: 5).

The Ministry of Lands has formally approved the project's urban upgrading plan for the Isamilo and Ibungilo informal settlements. However, since the Tanzanian government's part of the planned project costs were less than 3 per cent, there were not enough resources to follow up the project after DANIDA withdrew. Moreover, since the CBOs have lost some of their legitimacy as a result of the conflict, open areas that had been assigned for various communal purposes are now being appropriated by individuals, making the future implementation of the plan a much more difficult task. In December 2002, four of the City Council town planners were suspended after they were charged with corruption in their handling of building permits. Corruption may therefore explain why buildings were erected on plots designated for communal purposes.

Ultimately, the core problem facing the Sustainable Mwanza Project was the issue of representation. Who was representing the people? The donor looked for community representatives to plan and organise the project in line with the 'bottom-up approach' and the newly adopted National Human Settlements Development Policy. In retrospect, however, both the expatriate and local project staff admit that they made a big mistake by overlooking the political context. The paradoxical outcome is that the councillors worked against a project that would have benefited parts of their constituencies greatly. Apparently, concerns about being re-elected was more important to them than the success of the project. One could argue that the councillors prevented people from paying for something they should not have to pay for. However, with the current Tanzanian policies of cost sharing and limited government resources, upgrading outside of the DANIDA project framework, and without 'community contribution', was not foreseeable. Had the project been successful, the squatters would not only have gotten improved social services but, also, protection against eviction at a cost that was affordable to most of the house owners.

In the case study we now turn to, it was a village government employee who was identified by local informants as the main obstacle to project implementation.

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VI. Tanzania Social Action Fund in Bagamoyo

Bagamoyo district is situated in the Coast Region of Tanzania. Due to low rainfall, most of the district is covered by bush and savannah, and the district scores low on all social indicators. The population was approximately 230,000 in 2000. Around 70 per cent of the population are Muslims. Compared to districts where Christian influence has been greater, the educational level in Bagamoyo is low, partly because its Muslim population was sceptical of Western education during colonial rule (Jerman, 1997: 253). As one of the poorer districts of the country, Bagamoyo was among the districts selected to receive Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) projects during the first round of distributions.

Tanzania Social Action Fund

Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) is a World Bank-funded programme initiated in Tanzania in 2000. Although the programme targeted the poorest areas in the poorest districts to start with, it was later expanded to cover all districts. Community participation is a core issue. Local communities are supposed to plan and implement the project, and to contribute 20 per cent of the project costs through cash contributions or labour. Projects are of two kinds: the Community Development Initiative (CDI) and Public Works Programme (PWP). Community participation in both types of projects is organised through the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology, in which a PRA team consisting of three to four extension officers visits the village for five days. During this period, community meetings are held in which villagers discuss their development problems. As of November 2004, 28 Community Development Initiatives and six Public Work Initiative projects had been sponsored by TASAF in Bagamoyo. The dispensary in Makurunge village was one of the first TASAF projects in the district.

TASAF-sponsored Dispensary in Makurunge

Makurunge village is situated inland and only 15 km from Bagamoyo town on the coast but due to poor roads, even motorised transport takes almost an hour between the two. In Tanzania, a village (*kijiji*) is an administrative unit, not necessarily a cluster of homesteads. In the case of Makurunge, villagers live up to three hours walk from the village centre. The population is a little above 1300, of which half are under 18 years old. For a period of 15 years, not one single student from the village has passed the Std. 7 exams (Teggo et al., 2002). Unfortunately, the village has a history of several unsuccessful development initiatives (Teggo et al., 2002: 8). Water is a great problem and was identified as one of the priority areas for action by the focus group participants in the TASAF process (Teggo et al., 2002: 8).

In February 2002, the TASAF PRA team arrived in Makurunge and had a meeting with the village government. A little more than half of the members were present, nine out of fifteen. In the days that followed, focus groups with male elders, women and young men were organised to identify the priorities of the community.

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On March 3, a village assembly was held to select a TASAF committee but only 27 per cent of the adults attended, against the TASAF requirement of 70 per cent. The meeting was postponed. A week later, a new village assembly was held, with 83 per cent attendance. The villagers endorsed a plan to build a dispensary and agreed to contribute 20 per cent of the costs in the form of labour and cash. A TASAF committee was selected with two members (one male, one female) from each hamlet.

By late 2004, almost three years later, the dispensary was still not completed. According to the TASAF coordinator, members of the village government had convinced people not to participate in project activities by contributing money and labour. Apparently, they felt sidelined since the TASAF regulations forbid any member of the village government to be part of the local TASAF committee.[6] The rationale behind this policy is that the village government should oversee the TASAF committee, and that the TASAF committee should be accountable to the local government. However, in the case of Makurunge, the village government, and the appointed Village Executive Officer (VEO) in particular, actively worked against the TASAF committee, telling people that they should not contribute money or labour. There were also conflicts within the committee itself. These internal conflicts culminated in some of the committee members contacting the TASAF district office to report an alleged embezzlement of funds. As a result, the VEO and the committee chair fired the accountant and nominated a new man to the post. However, when the TASAF district office examined the accounts, it could find no evidence of malpractice, and it decided not to charge the former accountant. Some time later, the village government decided to fire the VEO, the member of village government who had most actively worked against the TASAF committee.[7] In Makurunge, the former TASAF committee accountant applied successfully for the post.[8] The fact that he was nominated VEO by the village government may lend support to the TASAF district office's judgement that the charges made against him by some of the other committee members and the former VEO were unfounded. There is also the chance, however, that the former TASAF accountant was indeed guilty of fraud, but that the village government decided to forgive him.

The slow progress of the project worried the TASAF district office, the council and certainly many of the villagers. To inspire the villagers to increased self-help, a CCM cadre from Bagamoyo invited the CCM Kinondoni Youth Brigade from Dar es Salaam to participate in the project in March 2003. The group consisted of 20–30 youths wearing CCM uniforms. The Brigade constructed the foundation of the dispensary in two days, singing CCM songs as they worked. According to the TASAF committee, 'people felt ashamed' by seeing young people from Dar es Salaam doing the work that they were supposed to, and they started to participate. It still took more than one and a half years before the dispensary was completed, however.

Rivalry A Recurrent Problem in TASAF Projects

The problems in Makurunge are not unique. TASAF's national office noted a number of conflicts between TASAF committees and local authorities (McLean et al., 2006: 52). We discussed the Makurunge case with the District Planning Officer

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(DPLO) of Bagamoyo and asked if there had been any similar conflicts in other villages in the district. He replied:

> Yes, there are problems, which are normal and are based on jealousy. In principle, the TASAF committee at the village level is supposed to operate under the village government. However, the village government thinks that the committee benefits – that they enjoy some privileges. (Karim Hoza, Bagamoyo, 2. November 2004)

In the same vein, the TASAF district coordinator, Mr Simba, argued that 'all projects face similar problems'. The complicating issue, he said, is that it is the committee that 'owns' the resources of the project. Like the DPLO, he used the word 'jealousy' to describe the problems. There appears to be two aspects of this 'jealousy' or rivalry. First, the notion that the committee 'enjoys some privileges' indicates that other stakeholders believe that there is some material gain from committee work, perhaps through embezzlement. While Tanzania comes out better on Transparency International's corruption perceptions index than Uganda, Malawi and Mozambique, the country's rank (88) still gives reason for concern (Transparency International, 2006). Access to money or other resources is certainly among the motivations that drive some people to seek leadership positions at various levels of government or in development committees. A recent study of accountability in Tanzania found that many people are 'extremely cynical about the motivations of their leaders' and take for granted that leaders will 'eat' if they get the opportunity (Kelsall et al., 2005). Embezzlement of money collected for TASAF projects has been a problem in at least two of the villages in Bagamoyo. In both cases, the Internal Auditor found irregularities in the accounts and the committees were sacked.

In the urban upgrading case in Mwanza, on the other hand, the councillors' main concern appear to be that by becoming the key providers of new services, committee members would become more popular with the community than themselves.

In contrast to the Mwanza case, the person discouraging villagers to contribute to the project in Makurunge was not a political rival, but a civil servant. Moreover, all the members of the village government were either CCM members or sympathisers, and so were the committee members. The rivalry appears to have been on a personal level, not partisan. In other TASAF projects in Bagamoyo, partisan rivalry has been central, however. Bagamoyo district council is politically dominated by CCM, and all the councillors are affiliated to this party. There are, however, many CUF (Civic United Front) supporters in the district, and at the *kitongoji* (hamlet) level almost five per cent of the elected leaders belong to this party (Chaligha, 2005). Participants in focus group discussions claimed that CUF politicians had told them not to participate in self-help projects on the grounds that services should be supplied by the government. To take the edge of such agitation from the opposition, councillors from the ruling party have been sceptical against raising taxes in election years (Fjeldstad, 2001: 297).

Villagers were poorly informed about the new national policies which expect local communities to contribute labour and/or cash to community projects. In the case of building new classrooms, for example, the opposition politicians allegedly argued that the government provides enough money to pay for the labour, but that 'the

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money is taken by the school committee members who then ask us to do that work' (self-employed man, 24, in focus group discussion). When questioned, CUF members of the Taliban Branch in Bagamoyo denied that they had discouraged people from contributing to development projects. Their words stand against the words of the TASAF district coordinator who claims that in Matimbwa village, this problem hindered the project for a long time. When we asked villagers in Makurunge if similar problems had occurred there, they said no but at the same time added: 'TASAF is not a project for the opposition parties. It is the project of the CCM government.' By having the CCM Youth Brigade do much of the communal labour on the dispensary, the CCM party took ownership and credit for a World Bank-funded project. Members of the opposition party CUF, who were interviewed for this study, argued that CCM uses TASAF projects as an 'investment' towards its success in the next election. They also argued that TASAF projects were invariably located in areas where CCM is strong, while poor areas that are CUF strongholds were not offered TASAF projects.

A comparative international study of social funds found that the funds are excellent vehicles for patronage, and that they are often used 'by elected leaders to selectively court groups of voters, whether among the poorest or not' (Tendler, 2000: 121). In the case of TASAF, villages are selected by a District Steering Committee. The committee consists of 12 members, of which half are politicians. The committee's members include three district executives, two MPs, four councillors (of which two are women special seats) and two representatives of NGOs. The committee is chaired by the District Commissioner. According to the TASAF coordinator in Bagamoyo, the poorest areas are to be identified on the basis of 'village profiles'. When we asked the District Planning Officer (DPLO) if we could see the village profiles, they were not available and we were therefore unable to check to what degree this TASAF requirement is followed in Bagamoyo. A comparison between the list of TASAF projects and a list of CUF strongholds (provided by a CUF party secretary), however, did not substantiate the claim made by CUF that the TASAF system discriminates against CUF strongholds. A study of TASAF projects in Kilosa and Iringa, on the other hand, revealed that the projects are used for patronage by the local politicians. In one case, the home ward of the district council chairman had received more projects than other wards, and there was a clear tendency for projects to be located in the villages where the councillors came from (Braathen, 2003).

Acknowledging that there has been a number of conflicts between TASAF committees and local authorities, 'TASAF II intends to provide a greater role for both local governments and CBOs than did the first TASAF' (McLean et al., 2006: 52). The goal is to 'align with the existing decentralization framework and to give these bodies practical opportunities for developing better working relationships' (McLean, 2006: 52). Despite these improvements, TASAF continues to be a parallel structure, and one can expect rivalries between village governments and TASAF committees to continue.

VII. Contradictory Policies and Parallel Structures

Two different and inherently contradictory trends dominate development policies and initiatives in Tanzania today: democratisation of politics and a local government

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reform on the one hand, and *depoliticisation* of development with an increasing use of committees and social funds on the other. The two trends are both born from a realisation that centralised development policies have had poor results, and an idea that *participation* from local communities is necessary for positive results and sustainable development.

The local government reform is part of the democratisation process that has taken place in Tanzania since multipartism was reintroduced in 1992. A specific goal of the reform has been to give elected representatives more influence and make councils more responsible for their own development. Improved social services are the expected outcomes of the reform and the reform calls for increased community involvement to reach this goal. In the citizen survey conducted for the formative research, three out of four respondents claim to be willing to contribute to self-help projects. At the same time, it is a fact that it is often very hard to mobilise people for voluntary work or monetary contributions. Earlier contributions to this debate in the Tanzanian context have emphasised the following factors as contributing to the negative trend.

First, when the CCM government centralised development planning and the organisation of self-help in 1969, they at the same time put a stop to the spontaneous self-help efforts that had characterised many areas in the early years after independence (Jennings, 2003; Kawa, 2003: 11). Second, it is now hard to mobilise people for voluntary work because they have seen many donor projects being implemented without input from the local communities. People now expect to be paid for communal work (Mwanjala, 2003). Third, people are sceptical about contributing to development projects because they have experienced massive fraud in the past (Swantz, 1997: 53; Kawa, 2003: 40; Kelsall et al., 2005). 'Elite capture', in Tanzania as elsewhere in the world, has also been identified as a major obstacle to the ability of development resources to reach the poor (Ribot, 2002: 10; World Bank, 2003; Chambers, 2005: 93). Indeed, due to their structural positions, elites may be the last ones to empower the poor (Ferguson, 1994: 181).

This article has focused on a related yet different obstacle to popular participation: rivalry between different categories of leaders and the problem of parallel structures. Parallel structures have been introduced as a result of donors and NGOs need to circumvent inefficient bureaucracies. Governments in developing countries tend to accept this 'outsourcing' of their own functions since social funds and so forth generally come as part of aid packages (Ferguson, 2005). At the moment, donors to Tanzania support the implementation of the local government reform in the name of democratisation on the one hand, while at the same time they contribute to a depoliticisation of development by their extensive support to parallel structures on the other.

Tanzania Social Action Fund is a good example of this depoliticisation of development. As in the majority of other countries where social funds have been introduced (Tendler, 2000), TASAF operates outside of, and parallel to, local government. In the case of Bagamoyo, the TASAF district office is physically located at the district council premises but the district coordinator is hired and paid by TASAF centrally. He has to his availability much better technical equipment (computer, fax, copy machine, a new vehicle) than the district council itself. The DANIDA-financed Sustainable Mwanza Programme was meant to strengthen the

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capacity of the city council, but its offices were located in another part of town and the main problem of the project was that neither heads of departments within the council administration nor councillors were particularly interested in it (Sustainable Mwanza Programme, 2003: 8), despite the fact that it would improve the lives of many people.

The two case studies presented in this article demonstrate that parallel structures easily come in to conflict with local government structures. The conflicts and rivalries that hindered development efforts in Bagamoyo and Mwanza are complex. In both cases, however, persons of authority were able to convince many citizens not to contribute cash or labour by suggesting that their money and efforts would be misused. Previous mismanagement of funds provides a fertile ground for such accusations. We will come back to the question of accountability below. Let us first consider the legitimacy of elected and non-elected leaders at different levels in Tanzania

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Legitimacy of Local Authorities

Both the TASAF project design and the Sustainable Mwanza project can be said to be based upon an assumption that local authorities are not really representative of 'the people'. While the literature confirms that local authorities historically have had poor legitimacy (Jerman, 1997; Kombe, 2001; Kawa, 2003: 46), our citizen survey indicates that this may have improved in recent years, at least in some areas. Respondents were asked to evaluate the performance of a number of elected and non-elected leaders (see Figure 1).

Taken as a whole, elected leaders come out slightly better than non-elected. Sixty five per cent of the respondents agree that their elected leaders do 'as best as they can' (*-jitahidi*), while 58 per cent say the same about hired local government staff. It is important to note that the popularity of elected leaders decreases with their distance to the people who elect them. While as many as 77 per cent approve of their village chair, only 56 per cent think that their member of parliament does well. One reason may be that some of the higher-level politicians are perceived as opportunists

Percentage who thinks a given category of leaders do 'as best as they can'	Non-elected			Elected		
	VEO	WEO	Council staff	Village chairperson/ street leader	Councillor	Members of Parliament
Bagamoyo	77	72	58	83	64	63
Iringa rural	72	68	74	79	67	71
Kilosa	55	64	64	80	52	44
Moshi rural	65	55	40	61	56	48
Ilala city council	36	61	50	72	59	42
Mwanza city council	24	70	42	82	73	70
Average of all councils	55	65	55	77	62	56
Average	58			65		

Figure 1. Approval rating for elected and unelected leaders. *Source:* Citizens survey 2003 (REPOA, CMI, NIBR).

who are looking for personal advancement rather than the development of their constituency.

The contrast between citizens' evaluation of elected and appointed leadership at the village level is particularly high in urban areas. In Mwanza, for example, 82 per cent think that village chairmen do as best as they can, while only 24 per cent agree that this statement fits well with appointed village executive officers. A 1995 Participatory Poverty Assessment covering 6000 people in 87 villages, had similar findings. Measuring the level of trust in various persons and officials, the study showed that the level of trust in all groups except own family was low, but that village chairmen and cell leaders enjoyed around twice as much trust as district-level and central government officials (Nayaran, 1997: 52).

Compared to the frustration that most people in Tanzania air about their leaders in informal settings, the above approval rates are surprisingly high. Dan Brockington, for example, found in a recent study in Southern Tanzania that there was a 'complete agreement on the failure of local government' (Brockington, 2005: 108). One reason for the high satisfaction rate in our survey may be methodological. It is hard for enumerators to secure privacy during interviews, and informants may have feared that what they say may reach the ears of local leaders. When asked about their satisfaction with services, respondents appeared to speak freely. Apart from primary education, which a large majority were satisfied with due to the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP), other services had a satisfaction rate of 7–38 per cent only, which is only slightly better than the late 1990s (Fjeldstad, 2001: 2069).

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VIII. Accountability, Depoliticisation of Development, and Consequences for Local Democracy

Although the findings above may show higher acceptance rates than what is actually the case, the preference that respondents have for elected grassroot leaders, compared to non-elected leaders, indicate that the local government reform is in line with what people on the ground want. The reform is meant to give local leaders more autonomy from higher-level administrative bodies, and to empower elected representatives relative to appointed staff.

For the local government reform to be successful, a number of factors need to be considered. First, people need to know about the reform. Two years after the reform had begun, the author still met lower level elected political leaders (*vitongoji* chairmen) who claimed not to have heard about the reform. Among ordinary people, and especially women, knowledge of the reform is poor even in councils where the reform started several years back. The aforementioned survey revealed that less than half of the respondents, 47 per cent, had heard about the reform. In contrast, 88 per cent had heard about the anti-corruption policy, and 94 per cent had heard about the HIV/AIDS control policy (Fjeldstad and Nygaard, 2004: 2). The fact that not even half of the population has heard about the reform indicates that few or no changes are felt at the 'ground', and creates opportunities for elite capture. The low level of knowledge about the reform can partly be found in the limited resources that are available for awareness campaigns. Another underlying factor may be that bureaucrats and central level politicians are opposed to the reform – exactly because it is meant to devolve power from themselves to lower levels (see also Ribot, 2002: 2).

The majority of bureaucrats in Tanzania have traditionally supported the ruling party, and many of them see increased influence by politicians as a threat, particularly in districts where opposition parties are strong (see also Blair, 2000: 27).

A second factor that is of paramount importance for the reform to succeed is improved accountability. A study in Arumeru revealed that the lowest level of elected leaders, *vitongoji* (hamlet) leaders, were powerless when it came to hold the village leadership to account, despite the fact that they were members of the village government. In this particular village, the chairman and the village executive officer had refused to provide financial reports for a period of five years (Kelsall et al., 2005: 101).

Together with parallel structures, poor accountability structures may indeed prove to be destructive for a positive outcome of the reform. A study across several countries found that the most important factor for good local government performance was a strong public culture of accountability, 'fostered by a strong central political force' (Crook and Manor, 1998; Bergh, 2004: 788). A much quoted study of the decentralisation of public services in Brazil showed that its success owed much to the central government which was able to take on a new and strong role (Platteau and Abraham, 2002: 124), and the same is true for African countries (Ribot, 2002: 16, 2004: 84). Unfortunately, the 'public culture of accountability' in Tanzania cannot be characterised as strong:

> We are now fully aware that the difficulty of getting the existing power holders to part with their much cherished powers and prestige and give it to the people as the constitution already provides and the difficulty of getting the ordinary citizen to accept that he or she as a member of society is the source and fountain of all power and authority which has in most cases been exercised by the government on his or her behalf. (Ngwilizi, 2002: 21)

Villagers claim that, although they may have voted their leaders into power, they find it extremely difficult to hold them to account (Shivji and Peter, 2000: 59). One reason is local traditions and etiquette, which in many areas of Tanzania keep lower status people from criticising higher status people in public. The fact that councillors are entitled to be addressed as 'Honourable' (*Mheshimwa*) reveals the kind of authority and status that elected councillors are entitled to and expect, disregarding their social background.[9] 'Grassroot' women, in particular, often find it hard to take the floor in public meetings. When they do, they risk being ignored or even ridiculed.

In an ideal world, people choose representatives or leaders who altruistically take on responsibilities to help the community as a whole. However, communities are seldom united entities with a common voice, and individual agency and interest have proved to be the driving force for many of those who take on leadership roles. One cannot take for granted that elected representatives act in the interest of their constituencies. There are numerous examples of the opposite, of councillors who let themselves be bribed and so forth (Ribot, 2004: 28).

Poor people's voting patterns are often guided by clientelism and patronage (Bayart, 1993; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; World Bank, 2003: 7). Even in cases where the voter does not expect to get any direct benefit from the person he/she votes for, the wealthiest candidate is often a favourite. Poor informants in Tanzania say that

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they prefer to vote for someone rich rather than someone from their own ranks, since a poor person will be even more liable to take bribes and steal public property (Lange, 2002).

In Africa, there appears to be a lack of fit between the way local people think about accountability and the way that donor agencies and central government officials think about it. Local ideas of accountability are rooted in a patriarchal family mode of thinking where an accountable leader/father provides for his constituency/family. This means, as Chabal and Daloz have argued, that a leader who provides well, even if the resources he redistributes are acquired in a corrupt way, may be seen as more accountable than a non-corrupt leader who does not provide (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Platteau and Abraham, 2002: 123; Kelsall et al., 2005). This mode of thinking puts considerable pressure on elected leaders (interestingly, appointed leaders are not subject to the same kind of expectations).

IX. Conclusion

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Local government reforms in the developing world are meant to enhance democratisation and to make citizens engage in the development of their local communities. In Tanzania, the government's policy paper on the reform states that one of its main principles is 'bringing public services under the control of the people *through their local councils'* (Ngwilizi, 2002, my emphasis). This article has demonstrated that despite the reform, Tanzanian development projects are to a large degree 'outsourced' to non-state actors such as NGOs, user committees and TASAF.

When non-political bodies such as CBOs and user committees are made responsible for initiating and implementing service delivery, including collecting compulsory contributions, these bodies tend to take the form of 'quasi local government' (Chambers, 2005: 91).

This may have a very negative effect on people's interest in politics, increase cynicism about government and, in return, weaken the democratic process (Ribot, 2002: 1; Manor, 2004: 201). There is also the risk that people's willingness to pay taxes to local authorities will be seriously eroded if they are regularly contributing in cash or kind to self-help schemes organised by other institutions. The legitimacy of local taxation, which already tends to be weak, is further undermined (Bergh, 2004: 786).[10]

The local government reform in Tanzania is still in its early stages. The way things work now, elected leaders have little service provision to show for, and little influence. The same is true in a number of other African countries (Ribot, 2004: 30). There is little doubt that the local government reform in Tanzania can only live up to its expectations if elected representatives are given real responsibility and influence. At the moment, a person with leadership ambitions may be right in thinking that he/she will have a far greater chance of fulfilling the role of 'provider' for his/her community by becoming the leader of the local school committee, the TASAF committee, or a donor-supported CSO, than to run for village chairpersonship.

The principal idea behind the establishment of both TASAF committees and school committees is that they are to be in charge of the organisation of the service provision and its resources, and accountable to the village government. If proper accountability measures were established, however, there would be less need for

parallel institutions, one could let local authorities play a greater role in the management of service provision and, thereby win legitimacy – which in turn would strengthen the democratic process. Only when there are meaningful decisions to influence, will people have a reason to engage as citizens (Ribot, 2002: 6). In the Tanzanian system, each hamlet (or 'street' in urban areas) elects a representative to the village council. These hamlet leaders are members of various committees, but the village council sub-committees tend to have little or no practical influence, since the village government has extremely limited resources. To avoid the present fragmentation, the various committees and their resources (TASAF committees, school committees for example) should be integrated with village government (see also Manor, 2004: 200). Similarly, donors should strive to organise projects that involve service delivery through local authorities rather than NGOs or CBOs.

There is, certainly, a danger in letting 'grassroot' elected representatives get increased influence, particularly since in many developing countries they have little formal education. A study of decentralisation in forest management in Cameroon revealed that communities would sometimes prefer short time profit to sustainable use of forests (Oyono, 2004: 186). The challenge is to find ways in which representative participation 'can be reconciled with expertise, low cost decision making, and discipline in organisational systems' (Brett, 2003: 3). Moreover, when local authorities are granted increased power and autonomy, one also needs to improve the organisation of local elections (Steffesen et al., 2004).

The problems described in the Mwanza and Makurunge cases in this article stem from a profound structural disjuncture between two policies in governance and development: the depoliticisation of development, on the one hand, and the democratisation of politics, on the other hand. The development of parallel structures aimed at encouraging community participation is based on an assumption that local authorities are not really representative of 'the people' (see also Ribot, 1999). This article has questioned this assumption with evidence of more positive perceptions of local authority legitimacy, and the argument that such an assumption ultimately weakens the democratic process. The greatest challenge is to institutionalise real representative democracy with downward accountability, and to facilitate a working relationship between local communities and expertise/bureaucrats.

If governments in developing countries and their development partners are serious about enhancement of democratic structures and decentralisation, they should reconsider the present administration of social funds and various user committees and renegotiate aid packages that create depoliticised parallel structures. At the same time, they need to be more serious about the problems of inefficiency and corruption in public administration at all levels – which is what created the need for parallel structures in the first place.

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Notes

1. VEOs are nominated by the village government, but appointed by the District Council which is also their employer (Fjeldstad, 2001: 296).
2. Reports and research briefs from the project can be downloaded from www.repoa.or.tz The first phase of the project ran from 2002–05, while the second phase of the project involving (Research on Poverty Alleviation) REPOA and CMI, runs from 2005–2009.
3. Rural councils: Bagamoyo District Council, Moshi District Council rural, Iringa District Council and Kilosa District Council. Urban councils: Mwanza City Council, Ilala Municipal Council.
4. The focus group discussions were conducted by Geoffrey Mwambe, junior researcher, REPOA.
5. Head of Departments lead the various departments within the city council (there are eight departments in all, including the Department of Lands, Natural Resources and Environment).
6. This arrangement has later been changed, probably as a result of the kind of conflicts described in this article. As of 2006, TASAF committees include representatives from the village government.
7. Historically, it has been hard for village governments to fire a VEO but, it has happened (Fjeldstad, 2001: 297), and the procedure is now easier than before the local government reform was implemented.
8. VEOs are nominated by the village council, and then appointed and employed by the District Council.
9. The Swahili term for councillor, *diwani*, is a pre-colonial coastal title for ruler adopted by the German colonial administration (Jerman, 1997).
10. The relationship between taxation and democratisation has been subject for much interest and debate, and will not be elaborated here. See Fjeldstad and Semboja, 2000, 2001: 295; Ross, 2004: 247; Chambers, 2005: 91.

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