

THE IMPACT OF DECENTRALIZATION ON GOOD GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA

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Abstract

Uganda introduced the decentralization policy in 1997 under the Local Government Act of 1997 that has since undergone four amendments. The policy inherently decentralized service delivery institutions and their governance in order to improve access to services for the rural poor. This paper analyzed and assessed the impact of decentralization policy on good governance in Uganda (the case study of Wakiso District) during the past 10 years of democratic transition and focused on accountability and public participation.

The study design was cross sectional and exploratory, employing mixed methods to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Data was obtained from a sample size of 118 individuals. 81 respondents were considered for the self-administered questionnaire while 37 were considered for focused group discussion and interviews. The study involved collection of primary and secondary data. 105 respondents were supplied with questionnaires and 13 were interviewed. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse data and generate tables and figures for diagrammatic illustration.

The findings indicate that decentralization resulted in greater participation by communities in the control and governance of service delivery including prevention and mitigation of corruption and low level of accountability. In light of this, the study recommends increment of local funding sources and creation of mechanisms for accountability among public officials to achieve improved service delivery.

Keywords: *Decentralization, Good governance, Accountability, Service delivery, Participation, Communities.*

Background

Decentralization is the transfer of administrative and political power from central to regional or sub-national governments (**Muriisa, 2008**). Decentralization is a longtime practice in Africa. However, it became more pronounced in the 1980s and 1990s when it featured as one of the World Bank's structural criteria. Decentralization programs in Africa followed the

recommendations of the World Bank for developing countries to devolve political and administrative powers to local and autonomous levels. The rationale for introduction of decentralization was that most of the social services such as health, education, water and sanitation that were centrally controlled by government were systematically failing (World Bank, 2003). The prime pursuit of decentralization was therefore to ensure efficient distribution of goods and services. In addition, decentralization was expected to quicken decision-making processes, increase participation by the local people, reduce corruption, ensure formulation of decisions tailored to people's needs and curtail clientelism associated with centralized government. Proponents of decentralization argue that the ills of centralized government including corruption, clientelism and political alienation would be cured by decentralization of power from central government to sub-national governments (Faguet, 2000).

The motivation for decentralization varies across countries and regions. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it was part of political transformation to extend decision making from the central where few participated to the local governments where many would participate (Rondinelli, 1983).

In Sri Lanka and South Africa it was a response to ethnic and regional conflicts. It is argued that decentralization provides an institutional mechanism for bringing divided groups into a formal rule-bound bargaining process (Treisman, 1998). Decentralization in this case serves as a path to national unity. In Uganda, Chile and Cote D'Ivoire, it aimed at improving service delivery (Shah and Theresa 2004). In Uganda, the Local Government Act (1997), a central part of the decentralization policy stipulates that most central government powers and responsibilities for public services planning and delivery should be devolved to local governments.

Since the late 1980s, governments in sub-Saharan Africa including Uganda have been undertaking various political and socio-economic structural reforms to democratize and achieve sustainable development. Many African countries have undertaken programs linked to decentralization to strengthen the role of regional and local governments in the development process (World Bank, 1996). Decentralization has been considered essential to create a collaborative mechanism between the state

and the people. Uganda, after its recovery from a prolonged internal civil strife, Uganda is now ready to move ahead with democratization and development.

Uganda today is therefore at a critical juncture. The local governance and its Local Council (LC) structure will bear important functions and responsibilities in order to make the current decentralization politically and developmentally successful. While the institutional mechanism is in place, both opportunities and constraints it presents are enormous. Whether the intended collaboration between the state and the people will be realized or not will influence the outcome of the “indigenous” experimentation. This has implications for the polity as well as for improving the living standard of the people in Uganda.

After 1986 Uganda experienced massive reforms including decentralization that “wished to avoid competitive politics that would appeal to the population on grounds of ethnicity, religion, or regional particularism” (Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi & Putzel, 2006). Given the legacy of violence in Uganda, decentralization was largely to; enhance the state’s capacity, limit ethnic fragmentation, and avoid perpetual conflicts. Decentralization thus aimed to reduce the workload of central authorities, improve local control and ownership over services, allow local managers to make independent, context driven decisions and improve accountability and service delivery through a better system of local monitoring (Birungi, *et al.*, 2000). The decentralization process has considerably succeeded and experienced flaws as well. Among the successes are in; improvement of institutional strength, empowerment citizens, encouragement of participatory development, improvement of service delivery and creation of employment opportunities (Okidi & Guloba, 2006). The flaws of Uganda’s

Decentralization process include the excessive demand for and creation of new districts and the associated high levels of administrative fragmentation. Some of the districts are ineffective, leading to incessant demand for more districts from sectors of the population wishing to control their own resources to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. An additional concern about decentralization is a return to ethnically based patronage networks. While the original goal of government was to inhibit ethnically-based patronage,, the government has increasingly

used group identity to allocate districts and this strengthens patronage networks. The state continues to exert strong control over these mechanisms, by presiding over local fiefdoms such as districts, and access to resources and opportunities for patronage (Green, 2008; DENIVA, 2011)

This research studied decentralization policy in Wakiso District focusing on public policy formulation, implementation and monitoring at the National level. .

The study investigated the impact of decentralization policy on good governance in Uganda with a focus on Wakiso District. The research assessed the impact of the policy on two variables which include accountability and public participation. The research also investigated the ideology behind creation of new districts in Uganda in relation to other ideologies like regional tier, federalism and East African integration. The success of new districts to take services closer to the people, the challenges, lessons learnt and the cost of “over decentralisation” were also addressed. The research further identified key stakeholder roles, alternative strategies for strengthening decentralisation policy beyond creation of new districts and recommendations for improvement of decentralisation policy in Uganda.

Problem Statement

Decentralization is one of the policies undertaken by the government of Uganda to overhaul the ineffective systems of governance and public administration that existed during the politically turbulent times before 1986. While the post-1986 Government of Uganda had the vision and resolve to introduce and manage the reform programme, it lacked the financial and human resources to sustain reform operations on such a massive scale.

Decentralization policy was in 1993 introduced as a pilot project in 13 out of 38 districts then. Decentralization was embraced and spread across the 38 districts of Uganda in three years that followed. In 1995 decentralization was integrated in the national constitution and legalized by Parliament of the Republic of Uganda in the Local Government Act, 1997.

The number of new districts overwhelmed the national human and financial resources. Many of the new districts were resultantly managed by

semi-qualified staff and politicians with minimal leadership skills. Even after the 2005 controversial amendment of the constitution limiting number of districts, the government of Uganda continues to create more districts even with growing scepticism among political leaders in some sub-regions like Bushenyi, Masaka and the Acholi Sub-region.

The number of districts has therefore increased from 38 in 1993 to 112 by year 2010. Resistance and demand for more districts depends on the interests of the region. In terms of accountability, 97 of the 112 failed to account for over shillings 8.3 billion advanced to councillors, an act that can result into loss or misappropriation of funds (Auditor General's Report, 2008/09) and a sign that decentralization does not always lead to good governance.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Purpose of the Study/ Main objective

The purpose of this study was to explore and assess the impact of decentralization policy on good governance in Uganda (the case study of Wakiso District) during the past 10 years of democratic transition.

Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the impact of decentralization on political and administrative accountability in Wakiso District.
- ii. To analyse the impact of decentralization policy on public participation in political and administrative management of the district.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis of the study

H₀: There is no impact of decentralization policy on political and administrative accountability.

H_A: There is an impact of decentralization policy on political and administrative accountability.

H₀: There is no impact of decentralization policy on public participation.

H_A: There is an impact of decentralization policy on public participation

Literature Review

A good number of researchers have recently written on the impact of public policy reforms and decentralization initiatives around the world in their relations to administrative reforms. Although decentralization is widely covered, none of these studies has covered its impact on the socio-economic development of both the rural and urban population.

The study specifically focused on the different phenomenon from the rest of the application of the theory of public policy reform on decentralization on the performance of local governments in an effort to bring about (socio-economic development) good governance in Uganda.

Theoretical Framework

The study of “decentralization strategy for good governance” is derived from the controversial debate put forward by the territorial dimension of decentralization theories of the state of the 1940s, 1960s, 1970s and 1990s focusing on decentralization and good governance. It is inherently based on decentralization for empowerment and effectiveness (Smith B.C 1985, Allen and Unirin, 1995), the failure of current decentralization programs in Africa (Dele Olowu, 1999, Oluwu and De Wit, 2000) and the failure of the centralized state-institutions and self-governance in Africa (Wunsch and Elowu,1995). It borrows from “the idea of local government as a third tier of government” (Adam lekun. 1984) and also from “decentralization of development administration in East Africa” (Rondinelli, 1983a). The above among others shall be needed as tools for analysing decentralization policy.

Decentralization and good governance

Decentralization is identified by many as a crucial factor contributing to good governance. The relationship between ‘successful’ decentralization and ‘good’ governance is quite high according to a hypothesis claimed by Vengroff and Salem (Vengroff and Salem, 1992, pp. 473-492). Jerry VanSant also identifies decentralization as an important institutional setting to improve governance in developing nations (VanSant, 1997). The hypothetical positive relationship between decentralization and good governance is supported by observations in Africa, where “nations with the ‘best’ long term records of democratic governance also have for extended periods been involved in serious experimentation with the implementation of various forms of decentralization (Vengroff, 1994)” Robert Charlick explains the

relationship between governance and decentralization as a way of the state providing multiple centres of participation in decision-making that in turn assures better management, responsiveness, and accountability which are basic features of good governance (Charlick, 1992). There seems to be an agreement on the crucial role of decentralization in democracies with almost all authors observing that decentralization only works with support from political decision makers. According to VanSant “decentralization itself is no guarantee of good governance nor of access by citizens, especially the poor, to basic services.” Richard Vengroff and Ben Salem (2010) also point out that “while numerous countries have undertaken so-called decentralization programs few have demonstrated the political will necessary for its successful implementation (Richard Vengroff and Ben Salem, 2010).” The literature on development management indicates that the success of decentralization depends less on the formal rhetoric used by politicians and more on the degree to which decentralized units participate in actual political decision making.

Good governance is a high priority consideration for international aid agencies but remains difficult to define. Foreign aid is more concentrated on the complex issue of governance than ever before. James and Anderson (1975) note that the concept of good governance is “highly complex and surrounded by intense controversy (World Bank, 1992).” Traditionally, “development seemed a more easily surmountable and largely technical challenge (World Bank, 1997)” New projects address the issue of development from a multifaceted point of view, aiming at building good governance rather than improving the technical-physical aspects of state administration.

For the sake of development management, governance can be best defined as: *Impartial, transparent management of public affairs through the generation of a regime (set of rules) accepted as constituting legitimate authority, for the purpose of promoting and enhancing societal values that are sought by individuals and groups* (Charlick, 1992).

Charlick (1992) notes that building good governance is important everywhere but plays an even more substantial role in development management because it is ultimately “the use of political authority and exercise of control for social and economic development.” Governance has a

political and a technical dimension. The two are interrelated. James and Anderson (1975) define certain aspects such as genuine political commitment as the political dimension and efficient public administration as the technical dimensions of governance. None can exist without the other. Richard Vengroff and Ben Salem (2010) suggest four factors upon which the quality of governance depends:

1. Transparency of budgeting;
2. Access to and opportunities for participation;
3. Public initiatives;
4. Government responsiveness to the populace and/or elected representatives;

Muriisa (2008) pointed out efficiency, economy, effectiveness and accountability as the yardsticks for measurement of decentralization.

Efficiency measures the extent to which output is maximized using minimum resource inputs. Two types of efficiency may be considered: *allocative efficiency* which considers a match between public service and local needs, and *productive efficiency* which considers a match between provision of the public service and its costs, improved accountability and reduced levels of red tape.

Economy refers to production using the cheapest means. In competitive tendering, it is assumed that resource inputs are obtained from the cheapest source while services are provided by the lowest bidder.

Effectiveness measures the extent to which the original objectives and policy goals are achieved. It has to be emphasized that the above measures are not isolated but affect and impinge on each other. For example, increased economy may be achieved with loss of effectiveness and efficiency. An increase in school enrolment without a corresponding increase in recruitment of teachers may lead to loss of effectiveness because some children may lack sufficient attention.

Accountability concerns *political accountability* in which the elected representatives account to their electorates, and *administrative accountability* which is the extent to which managers achieve set targets. Usually, the focus is on the extent to which targets are achieved within the limits of the budget.

The concept of public policy

Public policy presupposes that there is a domain of life which is not private or purely individual, but held in common in attaining good governance. The public comprises that domain of human activity which is regarded as requiring governmental intervention or common action (R.K Sapru, 2004). Policies can be defined as “general directives on the main lines of action to be followed”, (Y. Dror P.4, 1968). It is also defined as “changing directives as to how tasks should be interpreted and performed,” (Peter Self, p.67, 1972).

Sir Geoffrey Vickers defines policies as decisions giving direction, coherence and continuity to the courses of action for which the decision-making body is responsible (Sir Geoffrey Vickers, 1965). A policy is also regarded as a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilise to achieve an objective or a purpose (Carl Friedrich, 1963). A policy may also be regarded as “a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern” (James Anderson, 1975). Generally, policy may be defined as a purposive course of action taken or adopted by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives. Public policy is “the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society that abound good governance (David Easton, p.129, 1953).

The other major concept is decentralization, and in this regard, this means reversing the concentration of administration at a single centre and conferring powers of Local government. The idea of decentralization is captured as a political phenomenon involving both administration and government, with the aim of promoting Government responsiveness to populace a tenet of good governance (Smith, 1985).

In the study of politics, decentralization refers to the territorial distribution of power. It is connected with the extent to which power and authority are dispersed through the geographical hierarchy of the state, and the institutions and processes through which such disposal occurs. Decentralization entails the subdivision of the State’s territory into smaller areas and the creation of political and administrative instructions in these areas (B.C Smith, 1985, P.1). Some of the instructions so created may

themselves find it necessary to practice further decentralization (Olowu, 1987).

This study was interested in the process of policy formulation. Another aspect of Public Policy in decentralization is found within national administrative agencies such as government ministries or public corporations which find it expedient to delegate authority to responsible officials at district level.

The decentralization policy involves different kinds of hierarchy combining different institutions and functions. Each level of government within a federal or unitary state may delegate powers to lower-level governments. It is also true that administrative agencies of government at all levels may practice decentralization within their organizations. The study of decentralization therefore, unlike some influential but constructing traditions in Political Science and Public Administration should not borrow questions about concepts like “Local” and “Government” when discussing Local Government. Geographical areas and the state institutions within them are highly variable (Olowu and De wit, 1987).

Decentralization policy is widely regarded as a necessary condition for social, economic and political development as. State must localize its governmental apparatus in order to realize good governance.

In different regions of the world, national governments are using decentralization policy as a strategy for coping with the political instability caused by secessionist movements and demands for regional autonomy. The irony of this situation is that it is often brought about by minority groups that would dearly love to be “integrated” if that meant enjoying equal rights with the majority population. However, it is a sense of discrimination with the larger community that so often forces minority cultural and ethnic groups to feel itself discriminates against them, or allows others to, is hardly likely to concede a right to self-determination. Whether decentralization constitutes an adequate response to demand for autonomy will depend on how extreme those demands have become, which, in turn will depend on the level of repression experienced in the past.

The attraction of decentralization policy is not merely that it is the opposite of centralization and therefore can be assumed to be capable of remedying the latter's effects. Decentralization is associated with a wide range of economic, social and political benefits in developed and less-developed societies including improvement of the efficiency with which demands for locally provided services are expressed and public goods provided (Shepard, 1975). Market Models of local-decision making consider decentralization as a means of expanding the scope of consumer choice. Decentralization is said to reduce costs, improve output and more effectively utilize human resources (Hart, 1992).

Politically, decentralization brings government closer to the people by strengthening accountability, political sensitivity and national integration and promoting liberty, equality and welfare (Maas, 1959; Hill, 1974). Decentralization has been elevated to the role of guardian of basic human values (Steffensen et al, 2000).

Decentralization cannot escape criticism in the context of some theories of the state. Katznelson (1972) notes that decentralization threatens reinforces narrow sectoral interests and is anti-egalitarian through its support for regional variation in provision of public goods. Decentralization in a socialist perspective is likely to be discussed in relation to the nature of the state and economy in which it operates. A romantic, idealistic perception of decentralization, as a kind of absolute good to be valued in its own right should be reviewed. Under decentralization, local institutions are susceptible to manipulation by dominant classes such as national governments that present adult suffrage in local elections as egalitarian. Far from guaranteeing political equality, local institutions under decentralization may perpetuate the misdistribution of influence as in a capitalist society. There is a feeling that the political education obtained from local democracy teaches the importance of social and economic disadvantages that restrict the political power of certain classes and inhibits potential of local government to change the structural constraints on economic and social advancement. In the Third World, where decentralization is given the official objective of mobilizing the poor in development efforts, it may be recognized that local institutions have simply provided yet more resources and power to be commandeered by already powerful elites and propertied interests (Sharpe, 1981).

Critics observe that the decentralization strategy's major role in capitalist societies has been part of liberal reformism. It incorporates what might otherwise be forces antagonistic to the regime into the state apparatus by extending the apparatus down wards (Katznelson, 1972) and creates the form of dispersed power without creating its substance.

So, a flashback to Public Policy generally indicates that "Our democratic values tell us that government should represent all; the poor as well as the rich, and everyone should have an equal chance to influence government. But we know that is not that way" (Welch, Grahl, Corner, Rigdon and Vemeer, 1999:261).

The matter of public policy shall fully be handled by the researcher when tackling the theoretical approaches that attempt to explain the policy process, how influence is exercised and the political forces that mould policy decisions. These include the elite class and group approaches.

Empirical evidence indicates that decentralization policy does not mean the same thing to different people. The opponents and proponents of the policy may agree on the institutions and processes involved but from fundamentally different premises about the nature of power or the meaning of democracy. Critics visualize decentralization operating within very different kinds of political and economic systems. Decentralization under capitalism and liberal political institutions will be judged differently. Critics often fail to specify the kind of political or administrative hierarchy they have in mind when recommending or condemning decentralization. It is often politically expedient to be imprecise. Ambiguities in language, as Rondinelli points out; "public pronouncements in Tanzania and the Sudan implied that local governments would be created; the language of decentralization laws- and even their titles- used the term 'Local Government', whereas in reality, leaders in both countries initially intended only to establish local units of administration that would act as agents of the Central Government "(Rondinelli, 1981a, p.140)". This was a mere administrative delegation

Proponents of decentralization contend that the need for decentralization is universal. Even the smallest states such as the Solomon Islands with a population of 180,000 people spread over a scattered

archipelago of 29,000sq km of land and 803,000 sq. km of ocean and speaking seventy-four different languages (Prendas, 1982). May geographically and ethnically require decentralization with a specified degree of autonomy.

The proponents of decentralization argue that it is a necessary condition for social, economic and political development and that the contemporary state must localize its governmental apparatus regardless of ideological foundation.

More dramatically, many states have to devise a response to localize political demands for greater autonomy. Fewer states can ignore public hostility to centralization and uniformity. In different regions of the world national governments are using decentralization as a strategy for coping with the political instability for regional autonomy. The irony of this situation is that it is often brought about by minority groups that would benefit from "integration" if that meant enjoying equal rights with the majority population. However, discrimination within the larger community that so often forces minority cultural and ethnic groups to seek autonomy (Muriisa, 2001)(Bunyoro Vs Buganda on Lost Counties of Buyaga and Bugangaizi);

Economically, decentralization is said to improve the efficiency with which demands for locally provided services are expressed and public good provided (Shepard, 1975). Politically, decentralization is said to strengthen accountability, political skills and national integration and brings government closer to people. Decentralization provides better services to client groups and, promotes liberty, equality and welfare (Maas, 1959; D.M. Hill, 1974). Decentralization provides a training ground for citizen participation and political leadership and has been elevated to the role of guardian of basic human values (Van Putten, 1971).

On the other hand, the opponents of decentralization consider it parochial and separatist, anti-egalitarian and threatening the general will by reinforcing narrow sectoral interests through its support for regional variation in the provision of public good.

From a socialist perspective, decentralization is likely to be discussed in relation to the nature of the state and economy in which it operates. Above

all, decentralization will be judged by reference to the interests which benefit from and control substantial political institutions. A romantic, idealistic perception of decentralization, as some kind of absolute good to be judged by its own right, is rejected. Local institutions will be seen to be just as susceptible to manipulation by dominant classes as national governments. A different view of power will be adapted to that which sees local democracy as egalitarian in political terms because of universal suffrage in local elections. Power will be seen as residing beyond the institutions of decentralized government and as unequally distributed among classes according to their material position in society. Far from guaranteeing political equality, local institutions may be accused of perpetuating the misdistribution of rewards and influence that characterizes capitalist society generally. There may also be a feeling that local democracy teaches the importance of recognizing the social and economic disadvantages which restrict the political power of certain classes and the lack of opportunity provided by local government to change the structural constraints on economic and social advancement. In the third world, where decentralization is given the official objective of mobilizing the poor in development efforts, it may be recognized that local institutions have simply provided more resources and powers to already powerful elites and propertied interests.

Critics observe that decentralization incorporates what might otherwise be forces antagonistic to the regime into the state apparatus by extending the apparatus downwards (Katzneson, 1972). Decentralization thus creates the form of dispersed power without creating its substance.

Critics continue to warn against assuming that more centralization in British Local Governments is inevitably bad (Broaden, 1970). Not everyone approves of the extent to which the British state in its operational aspects is a male bourgeoisie gerontocracy (Smith and Stanyer, 1976, p.110). The public confidence in their honesty as well as their competence declines as the number of councillors and officers convicted for corruption increases. Evidence from both public opinion polls and sociological investigation suggests that decentralization does not strengthen trust in the fairness of government (Yin and Lucas, 1973). The case of Northern Ireland where devolution was marred by gerrymandering, and by discrimination in the

administration of law and order and municipal housing hardly inspires an automatic faith in decentralization, wherever the blame for all the trouble should lie (Birch, 1977).

The critics of decentralization in the USA, have reacted strongly against what they see as the inefficiencies of political fragmentation leading to urban sprawl, inadequate open spaces, congested schools, mediocre administration, smog, traffic jams and the breakdown of mass transportation systems (R.C, Wood, 1959). The disparities in the quality of life and public services between the central and the sub-urban areas of the fragmented, metropolis have attracted a good deal of criticism from American students of decentralization. Decentralization within urban governments to neighbourhood institutions has been opposed not only as 'a betrayal of integration' but also a view of its anti-professional stances, as a denial of the merit system in urban government (Yates, 1973).

Students of under development, of which the researcher is one, have warned that the proliferation of administrative arrangements at the local level can bring about deterioration in the quality of administration as larger numbers of officials with less education, narrower outlooks and hardly any experience are employed (Mukerji, 1961).

Decentralization and accountability in local governments

The concept of accountability

In conceptualizing accountability these fundamental questions are asked: what is accountability? Who is accountable? To whom? For what? How can we tell one person or group is more accountable than the other? In whose interest do those who wield political authority work? Is it the general public, elected officials, agency heads, clients, special interest groups or the future generation? Figuring answers to these questions will probably lead us to find the impact of decentralization in promoting accountability in local governments. (Romzek and Dubnick, 1987:229).

Definition of accountability

Accountability, like decentralization, is a subtle notion. It means different things to different people. Brinkerhoff (2004:372) notes that despite its popularity, accountability is ill-defined. Mulgan (2000) on the other hand

calls it 'complex and chameleon-like' as Schedler (1999) observes that 'accountability represents an underexploited concept whose meaning remains evasive, whose boundaries are fuzzy and whose internal structure is confusing'.

Despite the disparities in definitions, accountability theories have claimed prominence in public administration literature, encompassing three nucleus aspects. First, accountability is a relational term because parties account to each other. Secondly, it is an obligation because one entity (person or organization) commits to explain their actions to another. Thirdly, accountability is corrective because it penalizes entities with unsatisfactory explanations (Eckardt, 2008:29, Brinkerhoff, 2004).

Bovens (2005) combines the three aspects by defining accountability as "*a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor can be sanctioned*". Accountability therefore is the process by which organizations and individuals are answerable for their performance. It requires a clear statement of the expected outputs and outcomes, the (gklhgl sd)parties responsible for achieving them, to whom they report and who takes the credit or the blame of the end result.

Decentralization and Public participation

Participation entails active engagement of both internal and external stakeholders in the decisions and activities that affect them. As a minimum requirement, participation must include the ability to influence decision making and not just seek approval or acceptance of a decision or activity (Lloyd et al., 2007). Public servants must be held accountable for democratic authority to succeed at the local or national level. Local Government employees must be accountable to elected representatives, and representatives must be accountable to the public. The effective tool used in bureaucratic accountability is supervision. On the other hand elected leaders are checked by the public using elections as the main mode of accountability (Blair, 2000).

In many developing decentralizing democracies accountability faces a number of challenges especially that some functions remain centralized. In Uganda for example, all district workers are recruited at the local level but

receive their salaries and other emoluments through a centralized payment system effected by Ministry of Public Service and Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development. Retention of such important controls at central level weakens local political leaders' capacity to hold local government bureaucrats to account and complicates problem solving at the local level. Government's reluctance to decentralize salary payments may be caused by reluctance of employees to be decentralized. On the other hand, politicians are held accountable by citizens through periodic elections.

The theoretical assumption here is that non performing leaders are removed from the office. However in developing democracies, election processes are stage managed by the influential politicians and the largely poor citizens find difficulty holding them to account. Nevertheless elections reflect public will (Blair, 2000:27). In many systems, opposition *political parties* are a powerful engine for enforcing accountability. The party in power most often has strong incentives to evade accountability, but opposition parties have their own incentives to uncover wrongdoing by the ruling regime and publicly hound incumbents for their misdeeds. They present a constant vision of a viable alternative for doing public business differently and perhaps better. Such a visible alternative helps keep the party in power on a path of political morality (Blair, 2000). The challenge is that although they keep government in check, opposition in many developing democracies is too weak to influence the ruling government. Public meetings in many countries have been instituted to insert civic opinion into local governance.

The central idea of participation is to give citizens a meaningful role in government decisions that affect them at both central and local level

Expounding local participation

The rationale for participative government at local level stems from recognition that involving people in governing processes makes local authorities accountable to citizens (Blair 2000; Sirker and Cosic 2007). An ancillary benefit is that the work of the authorities becomes transparent to local people (Holdar and Zakharchenko 2002; Manowong and Ogunlana 2006).

Scholarly thought and the work of practitioners was reflected in 'Agenda 21', the outcome document of 1992 United Nations 'Earth Summit' in Rio de

Janeiro, Brazil, highlighted stakeholder participation as a major factor in promoting sustainable development (Stone 1989). Since then, Agenda 21 was given political, legal and regulatory force by national governments and by United Nations organisations in every area of human endeavour.

In some jurisdictions, the right to public participation has been enshrined in law, conceived as a human right or as a manifestation of the right to freedom of association and assembly in . countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, the USA and Sweden. Uganda has public participation and freedom of information provisions in her legal system (Zillman et al. 2002).

The argument that decentralization improves resource allocation, accountability, and cost recovery relies heavily on the assumption that sub-national governments have better information than the central government about the needs and preferences of the local population, and that the population is more aware of actions of sub-national governments than of the central government. sheer physical proximity to constituents does not ensure that sub-national governments have the needed information unless they make an effort to elicit it.

Methodology

This chapter presents the type of research, data collection techniques, research strategy, sample of respondents, techniques of data analysis, and finally application of a measure of reliability and validity of observable chosen measures of the researched concepts.

Research design

The study was mainly based on empirical qualitative and quantitative data. The study in question is descriptive, intended to gain in-depth in-sights into the decentralization policy in relation to good governance. The study adopted an exploratory case study and cross sectional research. The qualitative case study put emphasis on a full contextual analysis of events and conditions and their interrelations (Schindler and Cooper, 2003).

In this regard, Ministry of Local Government was the major centre of the study while Wakiso district, Entebbe municipality and Buganda region were the sub-centres. The Ministry of Local Government and the other two sub-

centres were purposively selected based on their rich experience with decentralization. The study relied on Primary and Secondary data. The study combined information from primary and secondary sources of data including unstructured expert interviews, secondary literature, use of questionnaires and observation.

Sample size and selection

Of the total sample size of 118 individuals, 105 were supplied with questionnaires. The sample size was determined using the sample determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Roscoe J. T (1975).

Data Collection instruments

Interview Method

37 consenting participants responded to structured questionnaires and interview guides. The information sheet specified that respondents would not be liable for their individual perceptions and that the information they gave would be confidential.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a form containing a set of printed questions aimed at obtaining statistical information. In this study the researcher formulated and printed the questionnaires. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument contained five sections- A, B, C, D & E. Section A captures demographic data of the respondents; section B examines the administration of decentralization in the governance of Wakiso district; section C assesses the impact of local executive development on promoting good governance and effective empowerment of people in Wakiso district; Section D examines the impact of policy making and empowerment of the people of Wakiso district on oversight and good governance. Section E was designed to establish the contribution of service and infrastructure management on promoting good governance in Wakiso district in order to analyze and assess the effects of decentralization with institutional participation and its influence on good governance in Wakiso. A total of 81 respondents were reached by the use of questionnaire.

Reliability and validity of the Instrument

Reliability is the requirement that the application of a valid measuring instrument to different individuals and groups under different sets of circumstances will result in the same conclusions (Mouton & Marais, 1990: pg 50). The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the test-retest procedure. A reliability coefficient (r) of 0.88 was obtained. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in the data analysis. Fishers statistics was further employed to compare the coefficient value(s) of both variables, to measure the level of significant difference between the general service users and providers. The researcher also examined the content of the interview questions by discussing it with a group of panellist to find out the reliability of the instrument. The researcher excluded irrelevant questions and changed words that were deemed difficult by the respondents, into much simpler terms.

Data Analysis

Data obtained in the field was analyzed and using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The distribution of the frequencies and percentages of the respondents was carried out for their profile while means for the variables were computed. In testing the hypothesis, a one way ANOVA, correlation to establish the relationship between the variables was carried out.

Results and Interpretation

Hypothesis 1 on decentralization and accountability

H₀: There is no impact of decentralization policy in promoting accountability.

H_A: There is an impact of decentralization policy in promoting accountability

The study tested the hypothesis with a linear regression analysis; the model summary under table 1 below shows the R square was 18% of the observed variability in accountability explained by the independent variables that is; Local government departments receive guidance from the CAO on policy implementation, there is adequate liaison between the district councils and the local government functionaries. The activities of the district departments, including all delegated services and local councils are

adequately supervised and coordinated. All lawful decisions taken by the council are implemented as stipulated. The local government councils and their departments. $R=0.133$ is the correlation coefficient between the observed value of the dependent variable and the predicted value based on the regression model. The Adj. R^2 (0.059) is the proportion of the variability in the dependent variable explained by the linear regression. The results show that decentralization policy contributes 5.9% to accountability at Wakiso district. The remaining 94.1% is contributed by other factors outside the scope of the current study.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.133 ^a	.018	.059	1.50103

a. Predictors: (Constant), Local government departments receive guidance from the CAO on policy implementation; there is adequate liaison between the district councils and the local government functionaries. The activities of the district departments, including all delegated services and local councils are adequately supervised and coordinated. All lawful decisions taken by the council are implemented as stipulated, The local government councils and their departments

The analysis-of-variance (ANOVA) table 2 was used to test the equivalent null hypothesis. The $F=0.231$, $p<0.948$, the null hypothesis that there is no impact of decentralization policy in promoting accountability was not rejected, meaning that at least one of the population regression coefficient is not zero. The results indicate that an increase in the independent variables will result in to a slight increase in dependent variables. This shows that there is a weak relationship between the decentralization policy and accountability.

Table 2: Analysis-of-variance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2.603	5	.521	.231	.948 ^b
Residual	144.197	64	2.253		
Total	146.800	69			

a. Dependent Variable: Monthly financial statements in clear and useful formats are provided to the council Committees in accordance with Regulation 8 of the LGFAR 2007 and Budget reviews are made through the council with publication to the public.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Local government departments receive guidance from the CAO on policy implementation, there is adequate liaison between the district councils and the local government functionaries, The activities of the district departments including all delegated services and local councils are adequately supervised and coordinated. All lawful decisions are taken by the council and implemented as stipulated. The local government councils and their departments are well coordinated.

The regression matrix below tests what independent variable is more important to the dependent variable. The results show that adequate liaison between the district councils and the local government functionaries is the most significant independent variable to accountability at Wakiso district because it has a t-statistic = 0.470, $p < 0.640$.

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.232	.903		3.581	.001
Local government departments receive guidance from the CAO on policy implementation	-.012	.256	-.008	-.047	.963
There is adequate liaison between the district councils and the local government functionaries	.143	.304	.078	.470	.640
The activities of the district departments, including all delegated services and local councils are adequately supervised and coordinated	-.148	.163	-.133	-.907	.368
All lawful decisions are taken by the council are implemented as stipulated	.044	.216	.032	.204	.839
The local government councils and their departments are well coordinated	.048	.218	.034	.219	.828

a. Dependent Variable: Monthly financial statements in clear and useful formats are provided to the council Committees in accordance with Regulation 8 of the LGFAR 2007 and Budget reviews are made through the council with publication to the public

The result therefore shows a weak relationship between decentralization policy and accountability indicated by a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.133. This means that there is a slight effect of decentralization policy on accountability at Wakiso district. Decentralization policy has not been effective in promoting accountability in Wakiso district despite the measures provided for in the policy.

Hypothesis 2 on decentralization and public participation

H₀: There is no impact of decentralization policy in promoting public participation.

H_A: There is an impact of decentralization policy in promoting public participation

The study used linear regression analysis to test the hypothesis. The model summary in Table 4 below shows the R square was 30.2% of the observed variability in decentralization policy and public participation in Wakiso District explained by the independent variables that is; the local government council makes decisions in line with the council role on the basis of the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the entire community and allocates resources in a fair socially inclusive, and sustainable way. The LGC committees are functioning with planned and publicized meetings, open discussions, and minutes taken. All members are given the opportunity to speak if they request. Council members understand, appreciate, and are committed to their roles. The public and civil society is encouraged to attend and contribute to council committee meetings. $R=0.55$ is the correlation coefficient between the observed value of the dependent variable and the predicted value based on the regression model. The Adj. R^2 (0.267) is the proportion of the variability in the dependent variable explained by the linear regression. The results show that decentralization policy contributes 26.7% to promoting public participation in Wakiso. The remaining 73.3% is contributed by other factors outside the scope of the current study.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.550 ^a	.302	.267	.65130

a. Predictors: (Constant), The LGC makes decisions in line with the council role on the basis of the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the entire community and allocates resources in a fair socially inclusive, and sustainable way. The LGC committees are functioning with planned and publicized meetings, open discussions, and minutes taken. All members are given the opportunity to speak if they request. Council members understand, appreciate, and are committed to their roles. The public and civil society are encouraged to attend and contribute to council committee meetings.

The analysis-of-variance (ANOVA) Table 5 was also used by the study to test the equivalent null hypothesis. The $F=8.579$, $p<0.000$, the null hypothesis that there is no impact of decentralization policy in promoting public participation was rejected, meaning that at least one of the population regression coefficient is not zero. The results indicate that an increase in the independent variables will result into a corresponding increase in dependent variables.

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	18.195	5	3.639	8.579	.000 ^b
Residual	41.995	99	.424		
Total	60.190	104			

a. Dependent variable: communication and dissemination tools are used to reach citizens in settlements outside the headquarters and the marginalized groups

b. Predictors: (Constant), The LGC makes decisions in line with the council role on the basis of the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the entire community and allocates resources in a fair socially inclusive, and sustainable way, The LGC committees are functioning with planned and publicized meetings, open discussions, and minutes taken, All members are given the opportunity to speak if they request., Council members understand, appreciate, and are committed to their roles., The public and civil society are encouraged to attend and contribute to council committee meetings.

The regression matrix below tests what independent variable is more important to the dependent variable. The results show that council members understand, appreciate, and commitment to their roles is the most significant independent variable to decentralization policy and promoting public participation in Wakiso district because it has a t-statistic = 4.276, $p < 0.000$. Also its Beta is much larger than the corresponding standard error. This indicates that there is a strong correlation with the dependent variable.

Table 6: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	3.504	.709		4.944	.000	2.098	4.910
All members are given the opportunity to speak if they request.	.398	.127	.391	3.137	.002	.146	.649
Council members understand, appreciate, and are committed to their roles.	.626	.146	.560	4.276	.000	.335	.916
The LGC committees are functioning with planned and publicized meetings, open discussions, and minutes taken	-.237	.124	-.276	-1.909	.059	-.484	.009
The public and civil society are encouraged to attend and contribute to council committee meetings.	.119	.106	.165	1.123	.264	-.091	.329
The LGC makes decisions in line with the council role on the basis of the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the entire community and allocates resources in a fair socially inclusive, and sustainable way	-.756	.181	-.460	-4.176	.000	-1.115	-.397

a. Dependent Variable: communication and dissemination tools are used to reach citizens in settlements outside the headquarters and the marginalized groups

Conclusions and recommendations

This thesis assessed the impact of decentralization policy on good governance in Uganda during the past 10 years of democratic transition while identifying democratic local government as a prerequisite to democracy taken as “an act of faith” to decentralization approach to service delivery in Uganda. The thesis reviews different academic and empirical works done in Uganda since decentralization policy was started. The thesis is premised on the fact that for proper evaluation of the impact of decentralization to good governance, one needs to look at accountability and public participation as tools of evaluation. The thesis argues that decentralization has achieved only partial achievements in promotion of good governance in the areas of public participation but has not done well in accountability.

The findings show that despite the good intentions of decentralization, its implementation has faced challenges of financing (Budgeting and Budgetary control), accountability, infrastructure management and resource management at the local government level. The thesis concludes that as a policy for good governance, decentralization falls short of realizing that objective in Uganda despite a few isolated indicators of good governance.

The findings suggest that improving local funding sources and creating mechanisms through which public officials could be held more accountable would lead to improved service delivery. Attaining financial capacity would lead to effective implementation of decentralization and efficient service delivery.

The capacity of both local governments and CSOs needs to be strengthened if they are to be able to engage, in an inclusive manner, in real debate about resource use and service delivery. However, there is also a risk that the emphasis on social accountability impedes the development of public accountability, as local officials and elected representatives devote their attention to meeting external performance conditions and can blame inadequate funding for poor service delivery.

By inference, the findings of this study lend credence to the Mathbor (2008) model of effective community participation which argues that providing adequate and timely information, educating people about proposed development initiatives and outlining a plan of action are the first stages in the process of citizen engagement in decision-making.

Participation in local service delivery is widely recognised as a way of enriching democracy, building trust, increasing transparency and accountability, and advancing fairness and justice in governance at all levels. However, its successful implementation depends on resolving a number of complex issues. Uganda's decentralisation and drive for better governance provide a good case study and an interesting one, but much more is required to be done before it can be said that this drive has achieved its goals.

Recommendations

Therefore in order to improve accountability across local governments, the central government should make a deliberate effort to improve citizens' access to information that benefits them, through subsidizing radio receivers which are a common means of communication. Civil society organizations should be empowered through independent funding, to play an important role in empowering the population through sensitization about their right to information and participation in mass activities to express a collective voice. Civil society organizations in Uganda the citizens. It is therefore important to have CSOs and CBOs whose operations are not regulated by local government leadership if accountability is to be achieved.

Lack of adequate funding renders local governments incapable of delivering services and makes it difficult for the citizens to demand accountability from their leaders. It is more feasible to have larger local governments that can financially sustain themselves with a sustainable local revenue base.

The low human resource capacity especially affects the newly created local governments as they cannot recruit new staff without Public Service Approval. All these take place where decentralization policy is a means of creating new positions for staff, while the government is failing to pay decent salary to the serving staff and depriving the retired civil servants of their retirement benefits. A deeper look at a comprehensive government reform would be very important.

In some of the local governments, there is clearly lack of adequate capacity of the population to hold their leadership accountable. Low literacy levels among local government leaders make it difficult for them to supervise their technical teams as 'educated' civil servants consider their elected 'supervisors' less knowledgeable.

Political history of the local government also plays important role in accountability. Here we find the role played by leadership and historical origins as core in facilitating or failing accountability. An impoverished population cannot stand up and demand for accountability. Self seeking local government officials tend to 'buy off' the citizens in case they are found to be corrupt. This deprives the rest (majority) of the citizens of their benefits. Therefore reform policies aimed at empowering people would be the solution.

For participation and accountability to work effectively, information about government plans and government decisions needs to be shared widely and in a timely manner, and this is not yet the case in many contexts, as in the distinction made on experiences.

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