Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Negotiating on a Seesaw

The Decentralisation of Education and Health Services in Uganda and Tanzania from a Local Perspective and in a Historical Context

A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies
at Massey University
New Zealand

Gerard Prinsen

2011

Abstract

Since the 1990s, development policies have favoured the decentralisation of education and health services in Africa. Between 1997 and 2001, central governments of Uganda and Tanzania overhauled the formal frameworks and expanded the managerial and financial responsibilities of the local management committees of schools and dispensaries. This thesis examines how these changes affect the way in which these management committees engage with central government and with the local polity in which they operate.

Field research in 2004 with 64 management committees in Uganda and Tanzania suggests that while central governments may appear to initiate decentralisation policies, they are essentially responding to developments in local polities. Similarly, central government may set regulations for management committees, but the diversity in local practices suggests that local circumstances and local agency are more likely determinants of how schools or dispensaries are actually managed.

An analysis of the personal profiles of committee members reveals they mostly belong to the same segment of the population in the local polity; government's (s)election criteria or sector-specific factors play no role. Committee members do not 'capture' committees as their personal fiefdom, but within a local polity it is likely that most functions in boards or committees are occupied on a rotational basis by a small group of individuals because more than half of the committee members simultaneously hold three or four positions.

When taking a historical perspective, dominance in the institutional framework between local management committees and central government seesaws over periods of 15-30 years. If the wider institutional framework between local polities and central government since the late 19th century is studied, it becomes clear that the local resources flowing to government have varied in time – ivory, coffee, votes – but typically had limited local value, while commanding high prices on the international market. This secured cash income for central government, but also a negotiating lever for local polities. Throughout time, local polities have thus actively negotiated – from engagement to evasion – their institutional framework with central governments. The contemporary dynamic around school and dispensary committees is exemplary of that historical seesaw.

For Gerry and the places we take each other.

The places where
the earth undresses,
the time lies down,
and the gods come to pray.

Mia Couto

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are not a formal requirement when presenting a doctoral thesis. And yet, virtually all students acknowledge the contribution that particular persons have made to the realisation of a thesis. Arguably, these informal personal networks make a critical contribution in developing a thesis that meets the formal requirements. One important aspect of this thesis is exploring the relationship between society's formal frameworks and people's direct and indirect personal networks – and I would like to use these acknowledgements as a first illustration of that aspect.

My thesis would never have materialised without the personal assistance of quite a number of people. I would like to begin by thanking Patrick Chabal at King's College in London. Patrick wrote *Africa Works. Disorder as Political Instrument,* which I picked up in 2000 when I was working in Mozambique as director for SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. I almost did not buy Patrick's book, because it opened by saying it was the outcome of "a particularly auspicious collaboration between two scholars". At the time, I thought that did not augur well for me as a practitioner. However, headings like "the informalisation of politics" seemed to address some of the questions I was struggling with when working with programmes for capacity building for local government. Patrick's book opened new windows for me. I contacted him. Three years later I had quit my job and started the journey that produced this thesis and led me from being a practitioner to a scholar, with Patrick as one of my supervisors. Patrick – from his side – eventually signed up to be a member of SNV's International Advisory Board, alongside Angélique Kidjo, John Kufuor, Jeffrey Sachs, Amartya Sen and Muhammad Yunus. This Board assists SNV, "to achieve poverty reduction through local capacity building and the promotion of good governance". Personal networks must help too. And in this respect SNV and school committees in Tanzania have something in common – as I will show.

I would also like to thank a number of people living in various district capitals in Uganda and Tanzania who assisted me as translators and co-facilitators during my field research: Catherine Lwanga, Josephine Chandiru, Jane Mania, Boniface Mariki and Suzan Boon. Each of them made an important contribution to the research. The resulting thesis is my responsibility, but part of the credit should go to each of them for trusting me and

introducing me to 64 local management committees for schools and dispensaries in such a way that most of the members of these committees – in turn – trusted me.

Subsequently, I owe thanks to the 420 men and women in these management committees who freely shared a few hours of their time with me. Without their willingness to talk with me about their work, I would not have been able to give this thesis the 'local perspective' that – as I discovered – is critical for an understanding of some of the informal dynamics of decentralisation policies. I am also grateful to the 43 local government and aid officials who were willing to have an open conversation with me – some short, some extending into the night, some sobering, some inebriating. They provided me with insights and documents about the formal institutional framework between central government and local polities. Sometimes they explained what or who moves behind the scenes. Each of these people can expect an open door when they contact me. And I am thankful some have already contacted me.

After the field research, I returned to New Zealand and soon found myself teaching Development Studies on a part-time basis at Massey and Victoria Universities. I thank my colleagues for being flexible when classes needed to be swapped to accommodate my research, occasional other jobs, or my political activities. I thank my students for bearing with me when I was using the classes to try out ideas emanating from my research. If you read these words of thanks you may have picked up this thesis because you think it might address some of the questions you face as scholars or practitioners. Let's talk some more and expand the personal networks that connect formal institutions and communities of people across the globe.

Finally, I want to thank John Overton, Donovan Storey and Regina Scheyvens for being my patient New Zealand supervisors, supportive colleagues and ever-willing signatories to yet another retrospective suspension of my formal enrolment as a PhD student. Your reading of this vote of thanks means I eventually got to the end. I look forward to repaying everything that you have given me so generously.

Gerard Prinsen

Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgements v
Table of Contents vii
List of Tables ix
List of Pictures x
List of Anecdotal Evidence Boxes x
Appendices xi

1. INTRODUCTION 1

Purpose 1
Perspective 1
Focus 2
Research questions 3
Methodology 4
Structure 6

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 9

2.1 Introduction 9
2.2 Decentralisation as a global trend 9
A wave of decentralisation in the 1990s 9
A typology of decentralisation 10
2.3 Motives to decentralise… and the doubts 12
Decentralisation for market and efficiency 13
Decentralisation for democracy and empowerment 16
Africa's neopatrimonial governance practices 24

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND CORE CONCEPTS 29

3.1 Introduction 29
3.2 Methodological considerations 29
Positionality and contested realities 29
Ethics 38
Translators and co-facilitators 43
Sampling and samples 44
3.3 Research methods 49
Semi-structured group interviews 51
Closed individual questionnaires 57
Open individual interviews 58
Primary and secondary archival research 59
Reading and re-reading primary and secondary sources 60
3.4 Core concepts 63
Institutional framework 63
Local polity 65
Personal networks 67

4. FIELD RESEARCH: CONTEMPORARY LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES 71

4.1 Introduction 71

4.2 History and formal framework of local management committees 72

School committees in Uganda 72
Dispensary committees in Uganda 81
School committees in Tanzania 87
Dispensary committees in Tanzania 98
Conclusions 105

4.3 Responsibilities and activities of management committees 106

Formal responsibilities of management committees 106
Meeting frequency 108
Agenda items 109
Explaining successes and problems 113
Conclusions 115

4.4 Control over and accountability for the resource flows 116

Formal accountabilities of management committees 116
Selection and election of management committee members 118
Ex officio members of management committees 127
Acts of downward and upward accountability 129
Financial accountability 132
Conclusions 136

4.5 People, personal networks and elites in management committees 138

Gender and age profiles 138
Educational and professional profiles 142
Density of institutional and personal networks 146
Patrons: are Tanzania's school committees networked with higher elites? 148
Are committee members the local elite and have they captured the committee? 150
Conclusions 158

4.6 Conclusions 159

4.7 Anecdotal evidence from the field research 162

5. UGANDA'S INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF CENTRAL-LOCAL RELATIONS 181

5.1 Introduction 181

5.2 Pre-colonial relations between local polities and outside actors 182

First local polities emerge 182
First institutional framework for exchanging resources with outsiders 184
The first personal networks with outsiders 186
Conclusions 187

5.3 Early colonial central-local relations (1890-1920) 188

An aspiring central government introduces itself 188
Central government and some polities negotiate a new institutional framework 192
One local polity out-negotiates the others and central government 197
Conclusions 202

5.4 Central-local relations during the colonial apogee (1920-1945) 203

Baganda elite are removed and local elites regain control 204

Central government bureaucratises the institutional framework *208*
Conclusions *216*
5.5 Central-local relations around independence (1945-1971) **217**
Late colonial central government increases local polities' autonomy *218*
Early independent central government decreases local polities' autonomy *224*
Conclusions *228*
5.6 Central-local relations during civil war (1971-1986) **229**
The next central government demolishes local polities *230*
And the next central government ignores local polities *235*
Conclusions *241*
5.7 Contemporary central-local relations (1986-2005) **242**
Central government and local polities reconnect *243*
Central government and local polities negotiate *254*
Conclusions *266*
5.8 Conclusions **268**

6. CONCLUSIONS **271**
6.1 Literature review, concepts and methods **271**
6.2 Contemporary central government and local management committees **273**
Institutional framework of central government and local management committees *273*
Control and accountability over the flow of resources *276*
Personal networks and elite capture *278*
Moving from specific and contemporary to context and history *280*
6.3 Historical context of central government and local polities in Uganda **281**
Institutional framework of central government and local polities *281*
Control over the flow of resources *283*
Personal networks *285*
Moving from history to the contemporary *287*
6.4 Three opportunities for aid agencies **288**
References **297**

List of Tables

Table 1: Number of semi-structured group interviews 52
Table 2: Number of closed individual questionnaires 57
Table 3: Number of open individual interviews 58
Table 4: Meeting frequency of management committees in last year 109
Table 5: Agenda items and biggest successes and biggest problems 111
Table 6: Selection and election of committee members. Who proposed you? 127
Table 7: Directionality of acts of accountability 131
Table 8: Gender representation in local management committees 140
Table 9: Age group representation in local management committees 141

Table 10: Educational background of members of management committees 144
Table 11: Professional background of members of management committees 145
Table 12: Density of the institutional and personal network of management committees 147
Table 13: How do committee members compare themselves with other villagers?.....151
Table 14: Mobility: how often did members travel to the district capital in last two years?..153
Table 15: How are committee members' households now, compared with two years ago? ..154
Table 16: Duration of members' office tenure 155
Table 17: Do committee members also hold positions in other local bodies?.....156
Table 18: How many other positions do committee members hold?.....157
Table 19: Density of institutional network of management committees in Uganda.....178
Table 20: Density of institutional network of management committees in Tanzania 179
Table 21: Administrative central government staff at district level in Uganda.....214
Table 22: Colonial central government staff at district level in Uganda (1947-1957) 222

List of Pictures

Picture 1: Uganda and Tanzania in East Africa 45
Picture 2: Map of Uganda and Uganda's districts in 2004 46
Picture 3: Map of Tanzania and Tanzania's districts in 2004.....47
Picture 4: A four-step Venn diagram of a management committee's network.....54
Picture 5: The standardised four layers of Venn diagram.....55
Picture 6: Pairwise ranking of successes and problems in three steps.....56
Picture 7: Primary archival research 60
Picture 8. Tooro palace and headquarters of Kabarole District Council 255
Picture 9: Making decentralisation visible at local level 258

List of Anecdotal Evidence Boxes

Anecdotal Evidence Box 1: Activities of dispensary committees 162
Anecdotal Evidence Box 2: Activities of school committees.....163
Anecdotal Evidence Box 3: (S)election process of School Management Committees 164
Anecdotal Evidence Box 4: Election and selection in local management committees 166
Anecdotal Evidence Box 5: Representing the 'foundation bodies' 167
Anecdotal Evidence Box 6: *Ex officio* members 168
Anecdotal Evidence Box 7: Acts of accountability – requesting a transfer of staff 169
Anecdotal Evidence Box 8: Acts of accountability – theft and elopement 170
Anecdotal Evidence Box 9: Financial accountability – accounting for expenditure.....171
Anecdotal Evidence Box 10: Financial accountability – budgeting for expenditure 172
Anecdotal Evidence Box 11: Sitting allowances and lunch fees.....173
Anecdotal Evidence Box 12: Public display of financial information in schools 174
Anecdotal Evidence Box 13: Financial information displayed at District Council offices 175

Anecdotal Evidence Box 14: Public display of results of financial resources 176
Anecdotal Evidence Box 15: Profiles of members of local management committees 177

Appendices

Appendix 1: Model of the Individual Questionnaire 295