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emphasis here on both, African scholars and the role of universities suggests therefore a certain degree of fashionable trend. But less trendy are those, who explore the potential and scope of the African academia, their discourses and their institutions: Thandika Mkandawire, Ebrima Sall and Lennart Wohlgemuth are three long time activists in this particular field, with a longstanding track record of personal involvement in the matters of concern and under investigation. The same can be said for the last author Bawa Yamba, who adds reflections on the HIV/AIDS dimension from a deliberately personal viewpoint. It has been the understanding when conceptualizing this special issue, that empowerment and human resources development in the African context cannot ignore the effects of this pandemic.

The efforts failed, unfortunately, to honor another relevant dimension, which should have earned explicit recognition. The contributors as well as the subject matters reveal a gross gender imbalance despite attempts to avoid this predicament. It is therefore recommended that readers compensate to some extent for the lack of this aspect by taking note of a previous issue of this journal (JEP 3/97), which from a gender perspective managed to draw attention to issues of participation and institutional change so closely related to the topics of this current issue.

Henning Melber

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Stein Sundstøl Eriksen

Councils, Capacity Building and the State: The Context of Local Government Reform in Tanzania

Like most other African countries, Tanzania embarked upon reforms of the public sector in the 1990s. In addition to the standard World Bank/IMF policies of privatisation of public enterprises and retrenchment schemes in what is seen as overstuffed bureaucracies, the Tanzanian reforms have, like those of other countries, included programmes of *capacity building*.

Towards the end of the 1990s, when it became clear for all to see that the African state had to be strengthened rather than weakened, the emphasis on capacity building grew among donors, including the World Bank. An important sign of this was the 1997 World Development Report 'The State in a Changing World', which highlighted the importance of a strong and efficient state apparatus for economic development. The assumption underlying such reforms is that the "capacity" of public institutions is too low, and needs to be enhanced. Thus, the 1997 World Development Report makes it very clear that "for human welfare to be advanced, the capability of the state must be increased" (World Bank 1997: 3). Decentralisation and local government reform have been important elements in the reform programme. It is argued that moving decisions and responsibility to a lower level will lead to more efficient service delivery, more responsive government and more popular participation. In addition, decentralisation could be seen as an element in a political agenda, seeking to reduce the political and economic clout of the central government. This has been an explicit objective of the reforms sponsored by the World Bank.

In order to assess the prospects of such reforms it is necessary to understand the nature of the state whose capacity is to be enhanced and the context within which capacity building is to take place. This article focuses on the development of Tanzanian local governments. Thus, its focus is not on the ongoing programmes of local government reform and capacity building, but on the system, which these programmes seek to reform. It starts by presenting an analytical framework for the study of the state, local governments and administrative capacity. Next, it seeks to trace the development of local governments in Tanzania since independence. Third, in order to illustrate the outcome of these developments "on the ground", it makes an assessment of the capacity of one district council, Kigoma in Eastern Tanzania. Finally, I try to draw some conclusions about the prospects of capacity building.

1. Conceptual clarifications: The state and its capacity

The concept of the state has a dual meaning, which has been described by Anthony Giddens in the following way: "The state" sometimes means an apparatus of government or power, sometimes the overall social system subject to that government or power. (Giddens 1985: 17) This dual meaning of the concept "state" points to a duality of the state itself. On the one hand, the state is a set of institutions, which constitute one part of society, the public sector. On the other hand, it is responsible of promoting the common interests of society as a whole. As argued by Jessop: "the state is but one institutional order among others in a given social formation, and yet it is peculiarly charged with responsibility for maintaining the integration and cohesion of the wider society. (Jessop 1990: 360) Thus, the state is both part of society and "over" society. The state defines the borders of its and other institutions' fields of responsibility. Thus "the market", "the private sphere" and "civil society" are defined and delimited by the state: "civil society is in substantial part created by the state" (Giddens 1985: 20).

A modern state represents society, not only in the sense that it acts on behalf of, or in the interest of society. In the modern state, the actions of the state are seen as identical to the actions of society, in the sense that state action is *society acting through the state*. State action is not something external to society. The state is the institutional expression of society's collective freedom and autonomy. The idea of the state therefore expresses a unity of ruler and ruled, of the subjects and objects of government.

Since the state is responsible for society as a whole, its policies must be justified in public by reference to universal norms and arguments. All policies are legitimised by presenting them as being in the common interest, the national interest etc. Thus, it is not possible for politicians to say, quite simply, that they do this or that because it serves their own private interests, however defined. Through the application of general rules or norms in particular situations, the state shall ensure that the common interest is served (Cohen/Arato 1992). Even policies which give preferential treatment to particular groups, must be justified by reference to general rules and common interests. An important element of politics therefore, is the competition between different notions of what constitutes the common interest.¹

Although the state is responsible for society as a whole, it can only carry out this responsibility through specialised state institutions, i.e. the public sector. Thus, the state can only carry out its "universal" responsibility for society as a whole through "particular" institutions. An ideal typical bureaucracy has the following characteristics (mainly based on Evans 1996, Mann 1993, and Weber 1971):

- operate according to formal rules, with offices divided into departments, each centralised and with a functional division of labour
- bureaucrats employed through contracts and appointed, promoted and dismissed according to impersonal criteria of competence

— be insulated from struggles in society. This means first that the private economic interests of the bureaucrat are separated from those of his position, and second that "administration" should be separated from "politics".

The establishment of a bureaucracy presupposes a separation between state and society, between the domains of the private and the public. Bureaucratization also involves another kind of differentiation, within the state itself. Just as state must be separated from society, the process of bureaucratization involves the establishment of a boundary between politics and administration (Evans/Rueschmeyer/Skopel 1985, and, of course, Weber 1971). Thus, a new boundary problem arises within the state, between the spheres of politics and administration. Like the boundary between state and society, the line separating politics and administration cannot be drawn once and for all, and in practice, the issue of where it should be drawn is likely to be contentious.

Bureaucratization, therefore, means that the sphere of administration is delimited from two sides. On the one hand, administration must be separated from the sphere of politics. This separation is also a kind of subordination, since it is a part of the process of bureaucratization that administration be subject to political control. In formal terms, this separation is defined in terms of means and ends: while the ends of the state's actions and policies is to be defined at the political level, the means by which these ends can be realised are chosen by the administration. On the other hand, administration must be separated from the private sphere (the market, the family, civil society).² It follows from this that depoliticisation can take the form of "administration". This is the case if a certain issue within the realm of state responsibility is defined as "technical", and therefore moved out from the political arena to administrative units, which are not subject to direct political control.³

Finally, some points on the specific issue of capacity building in local government. Local governments have an ambiguous place in the political system of a nation-state. On the one hand, local governments are institutions for local autonomy and self-determination, with separate institutions and their own political priorities, accountable to the local community. On the other hand, local government is a part of the total public sector in the nation state, and as such it is accountable to the central state, which is the locus of political sovereignty.

In a modern state, the last aspect of local government will always be the most fundamental one. This is so for several reasons. First, local government is created by the state. Any state is free to divide its territory as it would like. Second, the responsibilities of local government are defined by the state, thereby establishing whatever amount of local autonomy it sees as desirable. Local autonomy is therefore always a "gift from the state", which the state is always free to withdraw at its convenience. Local authorities can, of course, influence the state and its policies, but the point is that such influence has to take place through the central government, which remains the centre of policy making and political sovereignty.

This does not mean that local government cannot enjoy substantial independence within the limits drawn up by the state. It means however, that this

autonomy remains dependent on central government approval. This asymmetrical relation between central and local government implies that local authorities, when asked, are always obliged to implement central government policies. If local authorities disagree with the policy they are requested to implement they can obey and implement it against their own wishes, or they can undermine it through subversion and half-hearted implementation.

What then is administrative capacity? At a very general level, it is clear that it has something to do with the ability of an administrative unit to carry out its tasks. Usually the tasks are given to it by special decision-making bodies within or outside the institution itself. The capacity of the institution is then a means, or instrument, which makes it possible to carry out tasks and implement policies. The formulation of the tasks themselves is normally not seen as a part of capacity. The formulation of "ends" is a political issue carried out by specialised institutions, while the choice of "means" is a technical, administrative one. "Capacity", therefore, is a property of administrative institutions.

When states seek to improve their capacity, a division emerges within the state, between decision makers who formulate policies and design plans of capacity building on the one hand and the institutions whose capacity these programmes is supposed to improve (Chatterjee 1994). To those who formulate policies, such as capacity building programmes, administrative institutions of the state appear as objects, to be shaped by these policies. Through such programmes, administrative institutions are supposed to improve their ability to implement state policies.

This means that policy makers are seen as representing the rational consciousness of the state, responsible for the well-being and development of society as a whole. In this perspective, the administrative apparatus is the key instrument, through which policy makers can carry out its responsibility for the development of society on behalf of the state. In order to perform this task, the administrative apparatus itself needs 'capacity'. 'Capacity building' is a means of developing such capacity in the administrative apparatus.

There is little agreement on how capacity should be assessed. We may distinguish between three different approaches. These can be termed *the target approach*, *the system approach* and *the organisational approach* (Crook/Manor 1992). The first defines effectiveness as goal achievement, and assesses it by comparing targets to outputs (Batley 1998, Blunt et al. 1989). In the case of councils, this would mean that one would look at the amount and quality of services. The problem with this approach is the difficulty of identifying the goals. This is all the more difficult for a council, whose goals are multiple and often vaguely formulated. Another problem is that there is no common standard by which vastly different services can be compared. "How does one compare the 'quality' of an opera house or a university with a rubbish collection service?" (Crook 1994: 342)

The second approach links capacity to public perceptions, and assesses it by asking the public how they consider the institution's capacity. But if capacity

is defined in terms of perception of output, the institution itself would appear as something like a black box, in which capacity may be produced or not. This implies that the properties of the black box would not be seen as part of capacity, but rather as "independent variables", which would appear as "causes" of capacity. To me, at least, this sounds rather odd. It seems more logical to treat the properties of institutions as capacity itself.

The third approach, which is used here, is to focus on the properties of the institution and the individuals within it. Capacity in this sense is *that which enables the institution to carry out its tasks*. An institution's ability to carry out its tasks depends on the resources available to it, and on its ability to utilise these resources effectively. We may distinguish between two major types of resources – economic and administrative.

I will assess capacity through an analysis the day-to-day activities of the councils. Consequently, this analysis will mainly focus on *an assessment of the councils' economic and administrative resources, and of the councils' ability to utilise them effectively*. This means that capacity is composed of three elements: i) economic resources; ii) administrative resources, and iii) effectiveness in resource utilisation.

For the most part, states obtain their economic resources through taxation. The economic resources of local governments can be divided into two: local taxes and transfers from the centre. Following Crook/Manor (1992), we may use the ratio between recurrent and development expenditure to get a first indication of the councils' economic resources. A high proportion of funds to development are an indication of relatively high capacity. But in addition to development expenditure, one must look at the recurrent budget. Both its size and the way it is used can give indications of the institution's economic resources.

The concept of *administrative resources* refers primarily to an organisation's human resources. This can be achieved by analysing the size and qualifications of council staff in relation to tasks and responsibilities.

Finally, I will assess the councils' ability to utilise their resources effectively. The effectiveness of an institution is a result of the *motivation of individual workers on the one hand, and on the organisation of the institution's tasks on the other*. Staff motivation, in turn, will depend on work conditions and on the structure of incentives/career opportunities. I therefore assess effectiveness by looking the following factors: a) staff motivation; b) work conditions; c) incentives and career opportunities.

This concept of capacity does not directly concern the institution's relations to society. However, it is clear that capacity affects and is affected by the character of state-society relations. State institutions derive their resources from society. Economic resources are mainly collected through taxation. Moreover, administrative resources are generated in educational institutions funded through taxation. And effectiveness in resource use presupposes separation between private and public domains.

2. Local Government in Tanzania

Tanzania, like most African countries, faced a growing economic crisis during the 1980s. One consequence of this was that public finances were badly hit, as a result of both reduced export earnings and a shrinking domestic tax base. Among the consequences were deteriorating standard of government services and sharp declines in civil service salary levels. At the local level, Councils were unable to raise revenue through collection of local taxes, thus becoming even more dependent on grants from the crisis-ridden central government.

Public confidence in government institutions has fallen sharply. Service provision has been low and falling, and corruption thrives. Thus, people have felt that they get nothing in return for paying taxes, and they therefore seek to evade it. This has, in turn, added to the government's financial crisis, leading to further fall in service provision. Related to this is the lack of mechanisms of accountability. The lack of accounting personnel and qualified auditors, combined with a political system with little public insight into political and administrative priorities, has led to rampant corruption and abuse of funds. This, of course, is recognised by the public, whose trust in public institutions has been undermined. The widely reported lack of legitimacy is probably also related to experience during the period of Ujamaa and decentralisation, as discussed above. While government policies during this period were in many ways authoritarian and unpopular, people also became used to the idea that central government should provide services directly. When local councils were reintroduced, they were associated with the reintroduction of local taxation, and seen more as a strategy for levying taxes than as an instrument of local democracy. These were problems faced by the Tanzanian state in general, but they have also affected local governments (Government of Tanzania 1995).

We can distinguish between three phases in the development of local government in Tanzania after independence (Kitula et al. 1990, Max 1991, Naustdalid 1995). At independence, Tanzania introduced universal citizenship, with the same rights and obligations to all citizens whether African, Asian or European. After some debate, a unified system of political representation was introduced shortly after independence, abolishing the separate institutions for Africans and others which had existed during colonialism. But unlike many other African countries, Tanzania did not scrap the basic structure of local government, which had been developed during the colonial period. At independence there were three categories of local government bodies: The native authorities (consisting of members appointed by the district commissioner), district and town councils. The latter were elected bodies. In 1962 the non-elected native authorities were abolished and turned into elected district councils so that the whole local government system became based on local elections (even though they were supplemented by some appointed members).

This system was defended as promoting local participation and involvement, while at the same time integrating local government into the national system of

policy making. Elements in this process were the abolishment of the executive and judicial powers of the traditional chiefs and the replacement of career executive officers with political appointees in the top executive positions at district and regional levels (District and Regional Commissioners). In this way, local councils were given more political autonomy, but at the same time their executive powers were curtailed. TANUs political network was developed down to the village and neighbourhood levels and laid the basis for the stronger political control of all local decision making through CCM.

A hierarchical planning system was established based on development committees which were to plan and carry out development projects at regional, district and village levels. At the same time central government put gradually greater demands on local authorities for the provision of services in areas such as primary education, health and communication (roads). Central government had to take over more of the financing of local government activities as local tax collection gradually declined. Other supportive measures were introduced, such as the establishment of district development corporations to stimulate income generation and to provide credit and technical assistance for local development. To improve administration and strengthen the professional capacity of local authorities a unified local government personnel service was established (the Local Government Service Commission).

This system had a built-in tension between local autonomy and central control, but it gradually became clear that the real autonomy of local authorities was limited (Samoff 1989: 3). Gradually, participation waned, the quality of services deteriorated and the administration established itself as firmly in control (Samoff 1989, Costello 1997). The central government controlled local councils both through budgetary controls and through central government staff at the local level. In addition, there was a gradual transfer of functions from councils to the central government, and by the end of the 60s:

"most local councils responsibilities had been assumed by the central government, the local rate (the main local revenue source) had been abolished and many district councils were effectively bankrupt" (Samoff 1989: 3).

During the second phase (somewhat curiously called the period of decentralisation), which started in 1972, representative institutions at the local levels were abolished, and all local administration was taken over by deconcentrated central government institutions. What was called decentralisation was in actual fact a reform aiming at concentrating power at the centre. Instead of elected local government a system of deconcentrated state administration was put in place, based on posting of central government officials in the regions and further down to the local level to ensure that national policies were efficiently implemented.

This decentralisation should be seen as an attempt at consolidating the power of the central government. To achieve this, it sought to depoliticise the state, by 1) demolishing local councils; 2) make sure that no alternative political powers emerged through local party branches and 3) make sure that the centrally controlled local administration took control over local politics.

In return for central government taking on the full responsibility for the implementation of policies, local people were invited to participate in the formulation of policies through a hierarchy of government controlled planning committees. In this system, popular participation was to be promoted through participation in development committees, officially introduced as instruments of popular control and "development from below". Local taxation was abolished together with the elected councils. In practice, the development committees were instruments of control for the central government. The party came to play a crucial role. The party structure was used as an extension of the state at the local level. At the same time, local branches of the party had to be kept under control to prevent the emergence of local power bases. As time went by, participation waned, the quality of services deteriorated, and the administration established itself as firmly in control (Samoff 1989).⁴

In hindsight, this period of "decentralisation" has been considered by most as a failure when viewed from the perspective of society at large. It was promoted as "a giant step towards development and democracy", and it failed on both terms. Neither economic development nor popular participation had been achieved. Even Nyerere is quoted (in Samoff 1989) to have committed that the abolition of local government (and the disbanding of cooperatives) was a failure: "... We had these two useful instruments of participation, and we got rid of them." In 1982 legislation was passed to the effect of reinstalling elected government at district level.

As shown by Samoff (1989), however, there was a political rationale behind the decentralisation phase; it enabled the bureaucracy, who saw its position threatened by emerging local elites, to strengthen its grip on power. Thus, from the perspective of the state apparatus, decentralisation was a success, and Tanzania has become what Steven Feierman (1990) calls "a nation of peasants and bureaucrats", with bureaucrats firmly in charge of the state.

We see here how the interests of the state on the one hand and the state apparatus on the other diverged, and that those of the state apparatus "won", in the sense that the decentralisation policy turned out to serve the interests of the state apparatus, and not those of the community as a whole. At the same time, however, both the political and the economic foundations of the state were undermined. Accumulation was stagnating or declining, leading to a crisis in state finances. And government legitimacy was eroded, both through the Ujamaa policy and as a result of the policy of decentralisation.

Since 1984, the 82 Rural Districts and 19 Urban councils have been the primary institutions of local government in Tanzania. The reintroduction of local government in 1984 must be seen as an attempt by the state to recreate popular legitimacy and promote economic development (Max 1991, Samoff 1989). The decision to reinstate district councils was made in 1982, and implemented from January 1984, when the first councils assumed office.

In the Local Government Act of 1982, the Districts are given a wide range of responsibilities, including planning and implementation of development projects;

collection of revenue; physical planning and infrastructure development; trade and industrial development; provision of services. The District administration is organised in 10 departments (health, education, water, culture, community development, engineering, cooperatives, lands, trade, natural resources). Most departments have 2 or 3 officers in administrative posts at the council administration, plus secretaries (excluding health workers and teachers). In addition, the District Executive Director (DED) has a staff consisting of a planning section, a treasury and a manpower management section.

Councils have also been granted some – albeit limited – rights to collect their own revenue. They are also able to recruit their own lower ranked personnel, such as secretaries, messengers, drivers and other workers.

However, the system also contains elements, which ensure that the central government is able to control that the policies of local authorities are in accordance with those of the central government. First, the central government establishes the framework, overall policy and guidelines within which local councils must operate. The legal framework of planning is defined by the central government, national development plan sets the overall objectives to which lower level plans are supposed to contribute and national sectoral policies are developed. Second, the central government collects most local level taxes, pays the salaries for a substantial part of council staff and determines the budget ceilings and the size of transfers to each region and district. The control of transfers is particularly important, especially in a system like that in Tanzania, where the vast majority of local government funds are transfers, and all transfers are earmarked for specific sectors.

But despite these formal limits on the councils' autonomy, one must conclude that on paper, the Tanzanian system of local government involves quite substantial devolution of power to the core political institution at the local level, the district council. Although the potential constraints may seem severe, they still leave considerable room for local autonomy in principle. It does not follow from this, however, that councils actually enjoy such autonomy. As we shall see below, local councils' autonomy is far more limited than the formal system indicates.

After their reintroduction, Tanzanian local governments have faced vast and growing problems, and it is clear that Tanzania's local governments are in a state of deep crisis (see World Bank 1992, NORAD 1995). Local tax collection is limited and declining. After an initial increase in revenue collection immediately after the reintroduction of councils (in 1984/85 and 1985/86), there has been a gradual decline, leaving most councils more dependent on central government grants. According to Semboja and Therkildsen, such transfers made up almost 80% of all revenue in 1987/88, and indications are that this percentage has increased further in later years. Thus, in Kigoma District, where we conducted fieldwork in 1996, the percentage of transfers of the council's total expenditure was over 90% (Semboja/Therkildsen).

Councils have been unable to raise local revenues as expected and have become increasingly dependent on central government transfers. Tax evasions

are rampant and the gap between local government responsibilities and their capability to provide resources has been widening over time. This negative trend has continued into the 1990s. Thus, there is little doubt that in terms of performance, Tanzanian local governments have gone from bad to worse since their reintroduction.

Local administration is in an equally bad condition. The existing planning system is inefficient, cumbersome and complicated, in spite of the heavy demands put on it. This is partly because of a lack of trained manpower. The lack of accountants and auditors is particularly important. In addition, there is a shortage of engineers, teachers, medical staff, planners, among others. However, it is also related to the fact that the division of labour between agencies and levels of government is unclear. In addition, there is a mismatch between resources and tasks. This is particularly so at the district level, where local authorities have been given substantial responsibilities, but very little resources.

Second, the existence of the regional administration, operating as watchdogs supervising the activities of the councils seriously weakens their political autonomy. Third, the guidelines issued by the central government are quite detailed, specifying the distribution of funds between sectors. The districts are therefore left with making priorities between projects within each sector, without being able to influence the distribution of resources between sectors.

Thus, as stated by Max (1991: 143):

"since the reestablishment of local government authorities in 1984, little – if anything – is being done by the party and the government to provide these authorities with the necessary financial and moral support they very much need at this time when they are starting afresh."

In a situation like this, the difficulty for any central government is to resolve the twin crises of accumulation and legitimization. In Tanzania, this had to be done without undermining what had been achieved during the so-called decentralisation phase, i.e. increased political control and the governing class' hold on power. The chosen policy can be interpreted as a kind of balancing act, which sought to combine political decentralisation with central control (Samoff 1989). This meant that decentralisation was half hearted. The fear of losing control made the central government retain the administrative system from the decentralisation period, and insert the new district councils into this system.⁵ This gave the central government a powerful instrument for keeping local authorities under surveillance, and therefore represented a severe limitation on the autonomy of the councils. To keep control, the central government

- 1) restricted local authorities' independent sources of income (in order to prevent them from developing an economic basis of their own).
- 2) kept the administrative apparatus developed during the period of decentralisation as "watchdogs"
- 3) issued fairly detailed guidelines on expenditure patterns.

But this policy entailed a contradiction: The very control that the central government sought to retain also made it difficult, if not impossible, for the councils to

serve the purpose for which they were intended! The instruments of control undermined the councils' ability to fulfil the responsibilities given to them. This can be seen in several ways. First, local authorities have not been given sufficient economic resources. Thus, as stated by Semboja and Therkildsen (1991: 15), "district council functions are far greater than their capacity to carry them out".

While the central government has been successful in terms of preventing the emergence of any threats to its political control, they have also made it impossible for local councils to solve the crises identified by the central government as the justification for reintroducing councils in the first place. Without substantive funding, they have not delivered the services that could restore public confidence. Without political autonomy, they have been unable to be responsive to the local community. And with very limited rights and capacity to collect local revenue, they have not been able to improve government finances.

3. Council Capacity in Kigoma

The Kigoma district is located in the extreme west of Tanzania, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and close to the border with Burundi. It has a population of ca 90,000. Though nominally urban, it has many of the characteristics of rural areas. Despite its geographical remoteness and its reputation as something of an outpost, Kigoma is a lively trading town. Its main communication link with the rest of the country is the Tanzanian railway, built by the Germans before the World War I. According to official statistics, the district is roughly on the national average in terms of economic development, although somewhat below the national average for towns.⁶ However, because of the largely unrecorded trade with neighbouring countries, there is reason to believe that these figures may underestimate actual economic activity in the district.

3.1 Economic resources

A first impression of the Kigoma/Ujiji council's capacity can be found by analysing the council's budget. The most interesting aspect of the budget is that related to development expenditure. Following Crook and Manor (1992), we may look at the ratio between recurrent and development expenditure as one indicator of local government capacity. A high proportion of funds to development would then be an indication of relatively high capacity. It is not uncommon in African countries that most of the funds allocated to a district is spent on recurrent expenditure. In recent years, the ratio of development to recurrent expenditure in the Kigoma region has been as follows:

| 1992/93 | 1993/94 | 1994/95 | 1995/96 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14% | 10% | 6% | 3.7% |

Table: Proportion of total district council budget allocated to development

Thus, there has been a steady decline in the proportion of funds allocated to development expenditure of different kinds from 1992/93 to 1994/95. (For the last two of these years, the above figures are advance estimates). By this indicator, Tanzanian local governments, or at least that of Kigoma is extremely weak and declining. In fact, during our fieldwork, we were told that *no funds at all* were actually spent on development projects in the financial year 1994/95, despite a small budget allocation. The entire budget, therefore, was spent on recurrent expenditure, such as salaries, allowances and equipment.

One reason for the lack of funds is that the council's capacity in terms of tax collection is very low. This means that the council is unable to tap the sources of revenue that they do have (see Eriksen 1999). Another reason, obviously, is that the socio-economic structure in the area has severely limited the economic resources available, both to the council and to the government in general. There is very little commercialised agriculture and very little industry. Lastly, large sections of society have remained outside "the tax net" as a result of the council's limited administrative reach. This applies both to the so-called informal urban economy and to large parts of the rural population. The scale of economic activities taking place outside the administrative reach of the state appears to be massive and growing in recent years, both in Kigoma and elsewhere in the country (Tripp 1997).

3.2. Administrative resources

The Kigoma council is an organisation of substantial size. The total staff of the council is 795.⁷ Of the 795, 481 are teachers and 185 are health workers. Of the remaining, there are 46 officers, while the rest constitute supporting staff, such as secretaries, drivers and sweepers. At the sub-district level, there are offices in each of the 13 wards in the district. Each ward has a Ward Executive officer and a varying number (usually 3 or 4) of staff belonging to the different departments of the council, such as community development, health or education.⁸

The administrative staff is divided into 12 departments, identical in all Tanzanian districts, independently of need. Thus, all districts, no matter how far from any fishing shores, are required to have a fisheries department. Likewise, even districts without a single bee must have a beekeeping department. In most cases, each department has two or three administrative officers in addition to the head of department. In addition, most departments have ground level staff of different kinds. The number and type of ground level workers varies between

departments. Some examples: a) the treasury has 13 tax collectors (one for each ward), who actually go around to collect the different taxes. b) The fishery department employs 5 data collectors, who assess the amount of fish caught at the different ports c) the forest department has 3 forest attendants, whose main job is to prevent people from cutting trees.

An assessment of the *adequacy of council staff* requires a standard against which it can be measured. On the one hand, it may be assessed in relation to the tasks it is supposed to perform. Against this standard, my judgement is that the council is not overstaffed. Its formal responsibilities are substantial, and if it were given the resources that would enable it to fulfil them, the council would most likely need at least the staff it currently has. On the other hand, the Kigoma council is obviously overstaffed seen in relation to what it is actually doing. Officials claimed that everyone spends about 60% of their time on "private activities". This is not, they claim, at the expense of their official duties. In fact, the lack of funds for actual service delivery and development purposes has left them without much official work to do. This is clearly related to the decline in economic resources. In spite of dwindling funds, both staff size and council responsibilities have remained more or less the same. These responsibilities were probably too wide-ranging for the council to handle even when the present system was introduced, and with the recent economic decline, the gap between responsibilities and resources has only widened.

In terms of formal qualifications, most staff members are reasonably well qualified. Of the seven departments we conducted interviews, all heads of department had completed post-secondary education (diplomas or certificates, sometimes in administration/management and sometimes in technical disciplines such as forest management, fisheries management or engineering). Also, most other officers had some relevant training. Some were diploma or certificate holders; others had some technical training. In addition, officers were generally very experienced, with an average of ca. 15 years in local government. Thus, it does not seem that low staff qualifications are a major obstacle to improved performance. There might be need for specific types of technical staff, especially accountants/auditors, but on the whole, the council was quite well endowed with human resources. As argued by van Arkadie (1994: 13):

"For some years, it has no longer been the case that a general shortage of professionally trained staff has been a constraint on capacity. ... there is good evidence of over-employment at the professional levels in parts of the public service, with many with higher training doing tasks much below their formal qualifications."

3.3. Effectiveness in resource utilisation

Work conditions in the Kigoma council can only be described as dismal. Most of the time, there is no electricity and the telephones are not working. As a

consequence of the council's financial crisis is that quite frequently, it has been unable to pay its own telephone and electricity bills. Thus, supplies have been turned off, and the council has been left without electricity or telephone connection.⁹ This would last for a few days, until the administration somehow managed to find the funds to pay. There is no running water; no paint on the walls and the roof is leaking. Files are spread all over the floor in small offices shared by four or five employees, who do not have their own desk. But despite housing so many employees, offices are not crowded. In fact, most of the time, there are more people hanging around outside the offices or at the adjoining coffee stall than in the offices. Office equipment is very scarce. Only a few old typewriters can be found, many documents are hand-written and paper and pens are rationed.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the *morale and commitment* of staff is low. This must also be seen in the light of the incentives given to officials. The pay level of council officials is obviously too low for officials to survive on. It seems reasonable to assume that under such conditions, when everyone is forced to focus their attention on finding additional sources of income instead of concentrating on their official duties, motivation and commitment are bound to suffer. In addition, career opportunities for officials at lower levels are almost non-existent, and officers at the ward and the district level expressed frustration over the lack of prospects for promotion.

In a way, it is surprising that work commitment is not worse. A number of the officials expressed genuine concern, and said that they wanted to work for the government in order to help "bring development" to the community.¹⁰ Thus, one official conscientiously prepared detailed project plans and budgets to be included in the district's plan, even though he knew very well that the projects would never be funded. When asked why he bothered with making plans and budgets, he explained that although the project would not be funded this year, it was important to have good records and plans available if more funds became available in the future.

Given the fact that funding for new projects has virtually disappeared, while the number of staff has remained more or less the same,¹¹ a puzzling question arises: What are council officials doing? When asked about this, they invariably identify planning as the most time-consuming activity of the administration. In a sense, this is surprising, both because there is so little to plan for, and because the plans themselves are not very elaborate. They are very brief, and links to broader government policies are weak. Nevertheless, they report that a lot of time is spent going to all the meetings involved in the planning process, and on scrutinising proposals in terms of their compatibility with budget ceilings also takes some time.

Another major time-consuming activity is the visits made at the sites of the proposed projects. This tends to take time, both because they may have to wait for transport, and because the size of their allowances depends on the duration of the project visit. For many civil servants, such allowances add up to much more than the officers' regular salaries. Two of the most popular allowances are

travel allowances and meal allowances. Thus, there is a great incentive for council officials to make project visits in order to qualify for allowances. These visits will be made whether there is an actual need for it or not, and often at a time when they know the person they need to see is not present. This enables them to return later for another visit, to pick up yet one more travel allowance. While out on such visits, the officer may also undertake various kinds of private activities. He may use the council's car to bring home some goods for himself or his relatives, drop by somebody's house on the way, or give somebody a lift (sometimes he may be paid for this, at other times it may be done out of obligation, or in expectation of future reciprocal help from the person being helped). Such allowances and possibilities for finding additional income was a major attraction of government jobs (see Samoff/Wuyts 1989).

There was a general agreement that on the average, around 60% of a civil servant's time was spent on what was described as "private activities". Thus, one council employee told us that, like everybody else, he had a little "shamba" (plot of land) where he grew tomatoes. In addition, he had a part time job supervising some guards who looked after a private beach. This additional work would be done both inside and outside regular working hours. However, he did not see anything wrong in spending parts of his working time doing it. He and others argue – with good reason – that council work does not suffer because of this, since there is no money to spend on government projects anyway, and therefore nothing meaningful for them to do in the office.¹² One officer explained that the only reason he went to the office in the morning was that everyday, they have to report in the morning to get registered. Otherwise, their salary would be deducted. However, very often, there is nothing or very little for them to do there. So, they chat and drink coffee for a while, before they start doing whatever tasks that are pending. Then they start attending their personal affairs, sometimes while in the office and sometimes elsewhere.¹³

This means that the domains of the private and the public have been intertwined. There is no clear separation between working hours and leisure time and between official work and private activities. Most of the activities undertaken by the administration are of a private nature and most council funds end up being used for private purposes. Because public offices are used mainly as sources of private income, the administrative capacity of those offices is seriously weakened.

4. Concluding remarks

In one sense, the most notable feature of the history of local government in Tanzania is the stability and continuity of the problems facing local governments. During all the periods since independence, with all the different local government systems, descriptions of the problems facing them are quite similar: They are inefficient, there is a lack of responsiveness towards the local community and its needs, and there are complaints of corruption.

At the same time, the political circumstances in which local governments operate, and the understanding of its role on the part of the central government has varied according to political developments, such as the Arusha declaration, Ujamaa and structural adjustment and democratisation.

While the central government always justifies its actions and policies in terms of the need for people's participation and local autonomy, the most fundamental goal of the state is to promote "development". The perception of what "development" means, and how it should be promoted may vary, from socialism and state-led industrialisation to privatisation and structural adjustment, but throughout the post-independence period, the state has seen the promotion of development as its main task.

While this is presented as being in the interest of the whole community, it can only be realised by the state taking a leading role, thus strengthening the position of the state apparatus in the process. The interests of the state apparatus and those of the community as a whole are therefore presented as identical. Only the state and its apparatus, it is claimed, can promote the interests of the community, and the objective of state policy is to promote these common interests. In terms of policy towards local governments, this meant that although participation and development from below could be advocated, the state had to make sure that it could control it, and that it did not threaten the political control of the state.

However, the state always operates within the constraints of accumulation and legitimisation. It must neither undermine its own economic basis nor alienate the population so much that its authority is seriously questioned. During the decentralisation policy of the 1970s, this is precisely what happened. The state's policy of development was ambitious and demanding, requiring massive resources. At the same time, it was a failure both economically and politically, leading to a crisis in state finances and as well as widespread popular resentment.

To sum up, we may say that Tanzanian councils have limited administrative resources despite of the staff's size, qualifications and commitment. The problem is not that council staff is too small, or that it lacks qualifications or commitment. The obstacles to effective administration must therefore be located beyond the individual civil servant, at the structural level. The individual civil servant finds himself operating within severe structural constraints. These are partly economic and partly administrative. The lack of funds and the dismal pay levels clearly contribute to weakening the council, both directly since there are no funds to spend, and indirectly by undermining staff motivation. At the same time, bad personnel management, cumbersome procedures, unclear divisions of responsibility and bad working conditions reinforce the problems created by a lack of funds. This means that they are even unable to use the funds that are available properly.

The lack of funds and the lack of efficient administration reinforce each other in a vicious circle. Because there are no funds the administration does not work

efficiently, and because they do not work efficiently, they are unable to spend the funds they have in efficient ways and to collect the funds that they are entitled to collect. At the same time, people's unwillingness to pay reinforces state representatives' view of ordinary citizens as primitive and not understanding their own interests. Government officials react to people's unwillingness to pay by saying: "How can they expect the government to provide this or that service when they are not willing to pay tax" (statement by an official, who I interviewed in February 1996). Thus, people's very understanding of their situation as objects of abuse and harassment by state officials, which makes them avoid paying tax, also perpetuates state officials' image of ordinary people as backward and stupid and in need of being "developed" by the state.

What are the implications of these findings for programmes of capacity building? There can be no doubt that there is a need for improving the capacity of Tanzanian local governments. However, it is also clear that foreign donors cannot establish a well-performing local government in developing countries. No matter how well donor-funded programmes are designed, they will not succeed if internal conditions are unfavourable. Donors should also be aware that by channelling funds directly to the strengthening of state institutions, they inevitably take on a more political role. Projects aiming at institution building will by definition seek to improve the capacity of institutions, which in this case means the capacity of the state. Since the state is never a politically neutral instrument that only provides services in the common interest of all citizens, this means that donors will end up supporting the interests of those that control state power. With donors providing a substantial proportion of government funds in many countries, their support could be decisive in determining the outcome of internal political struggles. If power is held by a regime that shares the priorities of the donors, that's fine, but if it is not, donors have to consider whether supporting state institutions serves their political purposes¹⁴.

This does not mean that programmes of capacity building need to be worthless. In some cases, they might contribute to improving capacity. At one level, the weaknesses in capacity are a result of limitations of a "technical" nature, such as equipment, specific skills (accountants) or forms of organisation (matching responsibilities with capacity). By implication, capacity may be improved to some extent by reforms aimed at addressing such constraints. In Tanzania, however, effectiveness is so low that an increase in resources and improvements at a technical level may not automatically translate into increased capacity. It seems likely that increases in economic resources will disappear into the black hole of "leakages". Better utilisation of resources requires that those inhabiting positions within the state apparatus distinguish between the "public" interest and the interests of officials and their families/ethnic group/communities. This involves seeing the state as representing society as a whole, and recognising it is the legitimate representative of "the people". As long as the separation of private and public domains is unclear, "leakages" will remain, and the effect of capacity building is likely to be limited.

This brings us back to the division between policy makers as representatives of the common interests of society as a whole. If policy makers do not see themselves as representing the rational consciousness of the state, responsible for the well-being and development of society as a whole, efforts at capacity building are likely to have limited impact.

Moreover, it should also be noted that improvements in capacity may not always be unambiguously positive. If the ruling regime is an authoritarian one, or if state leaders are more concerned with other issues, such as personal enrichment or internal factional struggles, increased administrative capacity could even make things worse, by increasing the capacity for repression and exploitation. This authoritarian side of the politics of "development" has been analysed by James Ferguson (1990).

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the political situation in a country may be such that pursuit of policies which are "rational" in a strictly economic and administrative sense may be politically impossible to sustain. One possibility is that the government pursues policies that undermine administrative capacity and are detrimental to economic growth, in order to secure its own position. If, for instance, the power and wealth of the state elite depends on their holding official positions, their interests may be best served by policies that undermine economic development, but enable them to hold on to their positions. The long-term consequence of this policy will, of course, be that state capacity is undermined and that the sources of the state's income are eroded (Boone 1994).

Alternatively, if, as argued by Chabal and Daloz (1999), maintenance of political legitimacy at all levels depends on the distribution of spoils and patronage, increased effectiveness through reduced "corruption" could lead to a crisis of legitimacy, by undermining holders of official positions' ability to promote legitimacy through patronage. In such situations, when the political and economic imperatives facing the state stand in direct contradiction to each other, political considerations are likely to take precedence. After all, preservation of regime power – and ultimately state power itself – is likely to be given the highest priority. This also points to the limits of technocratic change: If technocratic solutions are in conflict with basic political interests, they are unlikely to succeed, no matter how "rational" they are.

This is the conundrum of capacity building: On the one hand, it is difficult to achieve, since the interests of key political actors could be undermined by it. On the other hand, if efforts at capacity building are successful, it could lead to increased repression. Still, it remains a fact that there is no way around it. A reasonably effective state apparatus is a crucial precondition of economic development.

Abstracts

Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der Entwicklung von Lokalverwaltungen in Tanzania. Er legt einen analytischen Rahmen zur Untersuchung des Staates, der örtlichen Verwaltung und administrativer Kapazitäten dar. Danach wird die Entwicklung lokaler Verwaltung seit der Unabhängigkeit Tanzanias beschrieben., Um die Ergebnisse an der Basis zu illustrieren, wird die Kapazität des Verwaltungsbezirks von Kigoma im östlichen Tanzania untersucht. Schliesslich werden einige Schlussfolgerungen zur Perspektive des Aufbaus von Kapazitäten in der Lokalverwaltung Tanzanias gezogen.

This article focuses on the development of Tanzanian local governments. It starts by presenting an analytical framework for the study of the state, local governments and administrative capacity. Next, it seeks to trace the development of local governments in Tanzania since independence. Third, in order to illustrate the outcome of these developments "on the ground", it makes an assessment of the capacity of one district council, Kigoma in Eastern Tanzania. Finally, I try to draw some conclusions about the prospects of capacity building in Tanzanian local governments.

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- 1 Whether a state in practice promotes the common interest is an empirical question. All policies emerge as the outcome of a political process, in which different actors attempt to yield influence. The content of state policies will therefore depend on the relative power of different actors. But whatever the content, policies must always be justified by presenting them as being in the common interest.
- 2 On how the separation between state and society is produced, see Migdal 1994 and Mitchell 1991.
- 3 Independent central banks, which are given the responsibility for monetary policy, are perhaps the clearest example of this. Other examples could be planning commissions, or even routine delegation of tasks from the political to the administrative level within ministries (see Chatterjee 1994 and Wood 1995).
- 4 This period also coincided with the policy of villagisation, during which extensive force was used by the government to move people into new villages. It goes without saying that the political climate during this period was less than conducive for establishing popular participation and development from below (see Hyden 1980, and Havnevik 1993).
- 5 This should not only be considered an attempt by the state-class to protect its own privileges and its access to the state's resources (although this is certainly one important aspect of it). Securing state control does not only serve the self-interest of the state-class; it is also of paramount importance for the community as a whole. The implications of the loss of state control can be seen in other African countries (Uganda in the 80s, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Congo). Although state control can of course be abused, its existence is a precondition for any kind of development, and securing it must be the first and primary goal of any state.
- 6 Given that official statistics are notoriously unreliable, one should not make too much of this. The point of mentioning it here is simply to indicate that in economic terms, there is no reason to believe that Kigoma consist an extreme case in Tanzania.
- 7 Planning department, Kigoma/Ujiji Council, figures from 1994.
- 8 The ward administration has recently been transferred from the central government to the council, and comes on top of the 795. At least, this is so in the case of the ward executive

officer. However, we were unable to verify whether the rest of the ward level staff were included in the 1994 figures on council employees or not.

- 9 Power cuts due to lack of payment of bills come on top of an already unreliable electricity supply, with power cuts up to several times every day. While the regional administration was equipped with an extra generator to be used during power cuts, the district council was not.
- 10 The frequent use of the term "development" is worth noting. Both officials and ordinary citizens saw promotion of "development" as the main task of the state, and the state as the main agent of "development". The other side of this bureaucratic consciousness is its authoritarian tendency, arising from seeing itself as representing "reason" and "development".
- 11 The retrenchment scheme undertaken as a part of the Civil Service Reform Programme did reduce the number of employees somewhat. However, since a number of those who were "retrenched" were ghost workers, it is hard to estimate the reduction of actual employees. Officials estimated the reduction to be in the range of 10–20%.
- 12 Tripp (1997) gives a thorough description of the various forms of informal economic activities in Dar es Salaam, and its implications for state-society relations.
- 13 This assessment concerns council officers. As for lower level personnel (sweepers, drivers, messengers, watchmen, secretaries), indications were that there was a certain overstaying, although its precise extent is difficult to assess. In this, the Kigoma council confirms the picture described by Semboja/Therkildsen (1991).
- 14 This of course, brings up the whole issue of conditionality, as well as the fundamental debate about the purposes of aid more generally. These issues will not be discussed here.

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