

# RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DECENTRALIZATION (READ)

## WORKING PAPER 2

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# DECENTRALISATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: PREVALENCE, SCOPE AND CHALLENGES

Authors S Batchelor, J Smith, J Fleming

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**READ** Renewable Energy and Decentralization



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## 1 PURPOSE

This working paper is an output of the **Renewable Energy And Decentralization (READ)** project, a research project (EP/L002469/1, 2013-2015) funded by the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the UK Department of International Development (DFID) and the UK Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), and executed by Loughborough University, Gamos Ltd and Practical Action East Africa.

Over the last ten years African governments have moved increasingly toward decentralised budgets, giving local authorities increased powers and budgets to govern areas that include both rural and urban population. Yet while cities have a municipal authority to consider new ways of supplying energy to its urban citizens, those governing Africa's rural poor in small and medium towns in the surrounding rural hinterlands have rarely considered energy infrastructure.

The project stems from a shared frustration with the general lack of attention being paid to the role of local government within the current explosion of interest within clean energy transitions across lower income and lower middle income economies, particularly within a context where the theme of political decentralization is once again firmly rising up the political agenda.

The primary objective for this project is, therefore, to scope the implications for energy governance caused by the political process of decentralisation occurring across African states. As such, our objectives are to (i) assess the roles and responsibilities of local authorities in relation to energy issues across Rural Africa, (ii) to examine how the roles and responsibilities of local authorities in relation to energy issues have already been affected by the transfer of powers and budgets under decentralization initiatives and (iii) to analyse the implications for local authorities in relation to energy issues of further, more profound, transformations that would see the transfer of more powers and budgets under current decentralization impulses. Central to all of this is the question of what kind of capacity local authorities need in order to play the potentially crucial role of integrating clean energy transitions into local development planning and how those capacities might be enhanced. As such, the fourth objective of the project is to carry out an exploration of capacity relating to energy literacy amongst local authorities in two particular African states (Kenya and Rwanda) that have experienced very different experiences of local governance and decentralization.

More broadly, by scoping the implications of the decentralising process for clean energy development, our intention is to extend ongoing work in evidence literacy for policy actors thereby contributing to more effective local action to expand clean energy access within the region. Local authorities are increasingly budget holders, and are likely to have little experience of thinking about and planning for energy as part of their relatively new governance duties. The intention is to scope the problem through participatory processes involving the actors themselves, and on this basis to preposition findings to inform future action for clean energy governance. Our key research outcomes will be to validate the severity of the issues which we face in this area and to develop a proposed plan of action that will need to be undertaken through a larger programme of intervention.

In this working paper we focus on Decentralisation of Government in Africa. In order to understand the influence of local governments on clean energy transitions, we provide an overview of the literature on decentralisation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper reviews definitions of decentralisation; traces the extent of decentralisation worldwide and in sub-Saharan Africa, including trends in its development, summarises the achievements, challenges, lessons learned in the past two decades; includes case studies of the process of decentralisation in six

African countries; provides an inventory of typical responsibilities of local governments; and concludes with relevance to the wider decentralised energy project.

In the first section this paper focuses on the *'what'* of decentralisation, what has been/is being decentralised. This is largely a measuring of whether decentralised structures exist, and such mechanics such as the percentage of total government expenditure spent at subnational levels etc. In the second half of the paper, we include narratives on the gap between rhetoric and reality e.g. whether what is actually purported to be decentralised is actually decentralised in practice or constrained (not least by the central state, but other factors too). This brings in the questions of the *'how'* and *'why'* of decentralisation. In this opening working paper we can only briefly touch on the answers. As the project continues, particularly with the input from the field work, these *'how'* and *'why'* questions can be fleshed out by answering these questions - Who are the key actors involved in decentralisation; What are the motivations/interests of the key actors involved; What tactics/strategies do they employ to enable/defend certain essential interests; Which voices are being heard most clearly/loudly and which are being marginalised? These will be the real *'political economy'* that potentially influence transitions to clean energy.

## 2 DEFINING DECENTRALISATION

### 2.1 LITERATURE ON DECENTRALISATION

In its most general sense, decentralisation refers to the transfer of powers and responsibilities from a national to a sub-national level of governance. A comprehensive definition is given by UNDP (1999) in its review of decentralisation: *'Decentralisation, or decentralising governance, refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity.'*

Decentralisation is commonly associated with four other terms. These are sometimes used interchangeably with decentralisation, but are more accurately described as types or forms of decentralisation. (Steiner, 2005; UNDP, 1999; Yulani, 2004). **Delegation** is the transfer of responsibility of government duties (such as service delivery) from national to local, with the ultimate responsibility resting on central government. **Deconcentration** is the expanding of administrative authority from national to regional, usually involving the expansion of public officials and national departments. **Devolution** is the transfer of power from national to sub-national autonomous structures, often with limited direction from and accountability to the central government (Evans and Manning, 2004). **Deregulation** (or privatisation) is the transfer of public powers to the private sector, though some point out that deregulation is not actually a type of decentralisation but its absence as powers are no longer held by government at all (Rondinelli, 1981; Ribot, 2002).

Decentralisation is often divided into sub-areas corresponding to functions of government: political, administrative, fiscal and institutional (Crawford, 2004; UNDP, 1999; Schneider, 2003; Steiner, 2005). Political decentralisation involves the decision-making powers of local government and people, and may also include constitutional change. Administrative decentralisation is about the executive authority of local governments. Smoke (2003) adds the element of institutional decentralisation to this definition, which looks at how local and intergovernmental institutions are managed. Fiscal decentralisation is the transfer of financial resources and fiscal authority and administration to local governments. These areas allow for some degree of quantitative measurement of decentralisation and are used by the major measurement studies (Ndegwa, 2002; Treiman, 2002; Steiner, 2005).

In a useful summary of the definitions of decentralisation, Steiner (2005) attempts to relate the four terms and three areas of decentralisation together by placing the four terms on a scale of decentralisation from least to most: privatisation, delegation, deconcentration and devolution; and links delegation and deconcentration to administrative decentralisation. Steiner posits that devolution can refer to all three areas of decentralisation as it involves autonomous regions.

Treisman (2002) expands on dimensions of decentralisation by dividing it into six quantifiable scales which incorporate the types listed above. 'Vertical' represents the number of tiers of government. 'Decision-making' is the *'extent to which political actors have the right to make political decisions'*, divided into weak autonomy, regional authority, and subnational veto. 'Appointment' measures whether executive appointments are made by regional or central authorities. 'Electoral' is whether subnational government officials are locally elected or appointed. 'Fiscal' is subnational government expenditure as a share of total government expenditure. 'Personnel' measures the number of employees in subnational government compared to national government.

Other writers have broken down decentralisation into components in two other key ways: 1) the **form of its implementation** (Rondinelli, 1981), where it may be functional (shifting of power of specific activities) or areal (distributing a range of powers from one level of government to another); and 2) its **purpose**, whether political (focusing on local democratisation) or developmental (a function of economic development policy in a region) (Manor, 1999).

It is important to note that decentralisation involves a range of competing interests and actors. Rodriguez-Pose and Gill (2003) provide a useful overview of the interest conflicts between different levels of government revealed in these relationships and how it affects what can be achieved through decentralisation in the following quote, graphically represented by Figure 2-1:

"The complexity of the devolution process derives from the interest conflicts of the actors involved and the differences in legitimacy that they share. Most importantly, the interests of subnational and national governments tend to be at odds across the component factors of devolution. Although national governments would prefer, *ceteris paribus*, to devolve responsibilities (authority) to their regional or state governments with as few accompanying resources as possible, the subnational governments would prefer the opposite case. The balance between these extremes will depend upon the relative strength, or, in political terms, legitimacy, of the two tiers of government." (Rodriguez-Pose and Gill, 2003: 334).

Although direction of decentralisation tends to be top-down as central governments cede authority to subnational levels, an important level of analysis is the bottom-up approach that focused on accountability and governance rising up from the grassroots level. Ribot (2002) views accountability as a key indicator of decentralisation, defined as *'the set of mechanisms and sanctions that can be used to assure policy outcomes are as consistent with local needs, aspirations and the best public interest as policymakers can make them'* (Ribot, 2002). Participation and representation also become important measures of decentralisation (Conyers, 2007).

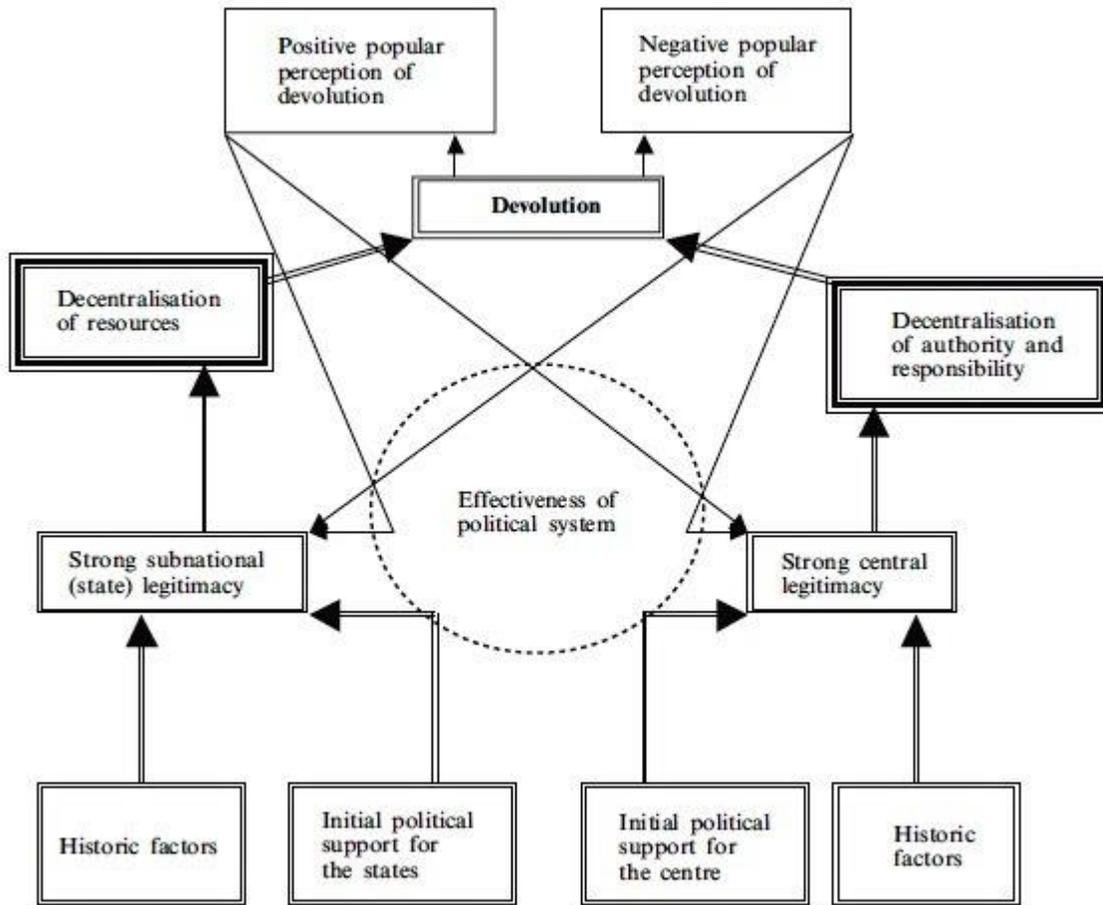


Figure 2-1 Factors Affecting the Legitimacy of Decentralised Political Systems, Rodriguez-Pose and Gill (2003)

The complexity of devolution. **Note:** Double lined boxes and arrows indicate initial factors and processes, respectively; single lined boxes and arrows indicate subsequent factors and processes, respectively.

The development of a bottom-up approach in the past decade has increased the literature on measuring local governance. The World Bank publishes annual World Governance Indicators, which ‘captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies’ (WGI, 2012). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, n.d.) analyses decentralisation through the frame of local governance, divided into four areas: 1) political participation and decision-making, 2) powers and responsibilities of local authorities, 3) administrative relations between local authorities and other spheres of government, and 4) financial resources and capacities of local authorities. Nickson (2011) divides local governance into two types: 1) the managerial type, where ‘the primary purpose of local government is the efficient delivery of services’, and 2) the governmental types, where ‘service delivery is important, but there is a wider role for local government both as the mouthpiece of shared community interests of a locality and also in making policy choices in its name within the wider body politic.’ Summarising trends in governance literature, there are six recurring principles of an effective governance regime: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, coherency and ‘civic peace’ (Batterbury and Fernando, 2006:1853; Doornbos, 2003; Benz & Papadopoulos, 2012;

Fukuyama, 2013). A more detailed discussion on governance can be found in Working Paper 1 on *Governance, Decentralisation and Energy: A Critical Review of the Key Issues* (Brown et al, 2014).

Much of the literature on decentralisation now focuses on the perceived outcomes of decentralisation as opposed to its qualities. In its reflection on the development outcomes of decentralisation, LDI (2013) depicted the relationship between decentralisation areas and outcomes as well as the role of contextual factors in determining the effectiveness of decentralisation in producing positive outcomes (see Figure 2-2). However, Sharma (2006) notes that the emphasis on outcomes has limitations:

‘Outcome varies not only because decentralization can appear in various forms and combinations across countries but also because different instruments may have very different effects in different circumstances. Thus arriving at the precise definition of decentralization and associating it with particular outcomes is neither possible nor desirable for the simple reason that **generalization of any kind can create pitfalls that can obscure rather than clarify the facts**. What is more important is the need for a strictly contextual yet comprehensive approach while going beyond the blunt measures like expenditure decentralization and taking politics and institutional arrangements of the specific case under investigation also into account.’ (Sharma, 2006).

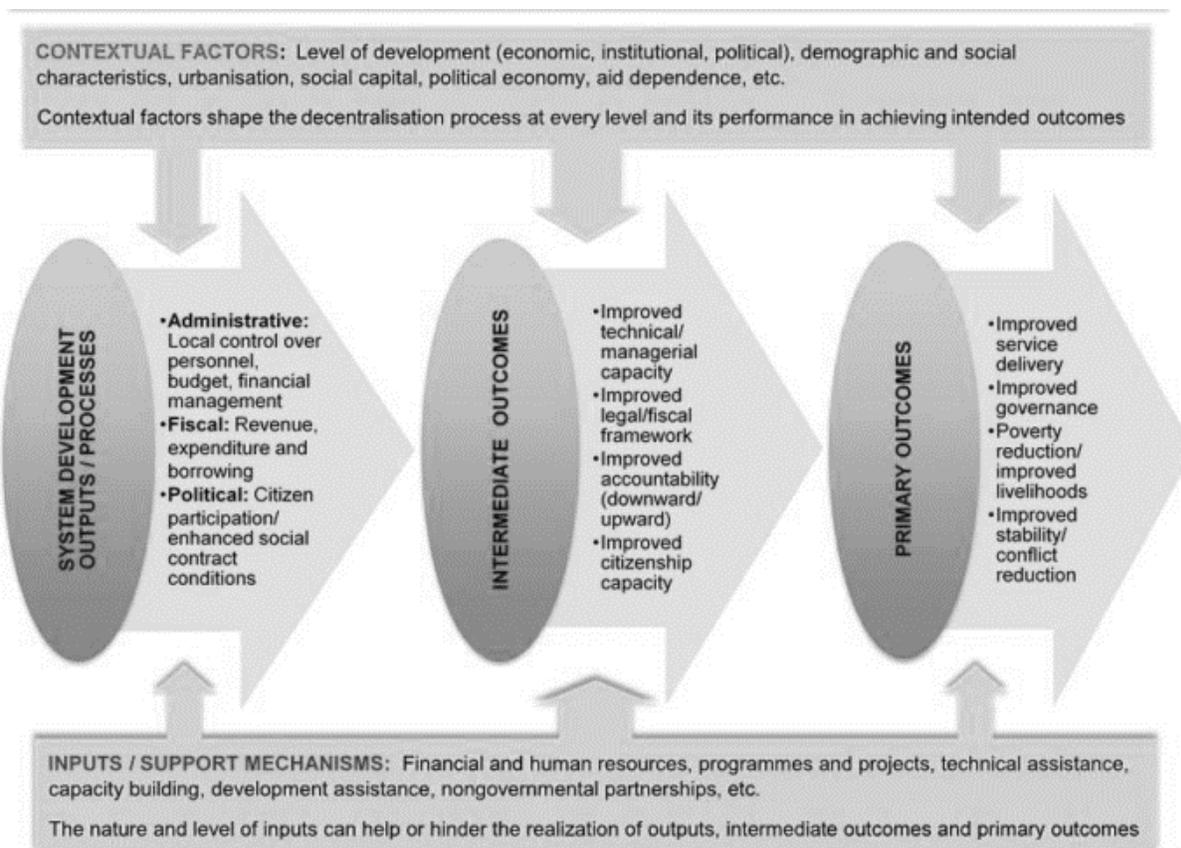


Figure 2-2 The landscape of decentralisation LDI (2013)

## 2.2 DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS

Drawing on the definitions of decentralisation and local governance above, an assessment of decentralised government in rural areas (the focus of the project) would ideally include the following elements:

- Tiers (levels) of government and relationship between them
- Level of participation (of citizens in local governance)
- Autonomy and decision-making powers (central and local)
- Accountability (downward and upward)
- Capacity
- Resources (financial and networks)
- Contextual factors

## 3 SCOPING DECENTRALISATION

### 3.1 EXTENT OF DECENTRALISATION WORLDWIDE

The United Cities and Local Governments 2007 report on decentralisation gives an assessment of the climate of decentralisation that still rings true:

‘In the last twenty years decentralisation has established itself as a political and institutional phenomenon in most countries around the world. These countries have local authorities, consisting of local assemblies elected by universal suffrage and an executive, both of which are expected, to different degrees, to respond to their citizens. As is shown by widespread legislative or constitutional reform, the global process has resulted in wider recognition of the role and position of local authorities as well as a significant increase in their powers and financing, notwithstanding the many differences between countries. The emergence of new political leadership at the local level is reflected almost everywhere in the creation of associations of elected members or local authorities in more than 130 countries (virtually all members of UCLG). However, the picture that emerges from the research contains sharp contrasts. In many countries, these reforms are either very recent or are facing difficulties in their implementation. Two issues come into view of particular concern for local authorities, especially in countries of the south: financing and staff.’

A useful approach to measuring the extent of decentralisation is presented by Hooghe et al (2010) in the form of a **Regional Authority Index**, which measures ‘the authority of regional governments in 42 democracies or quasi-democracies on an annual basis over the period 1950–2006’. Indicators used are institutional depth, policy scope, fiscal autonomy, representation, law making, executive control, fiscal control, and constitutional reform. Data is not currently collected for African countries, but this approach provides a more nuanced view of decentralisation than many of the standard measures used previously.

Turning to global studies including Africa, Treisman (2002) presents a global survey of decentralisation across six regions of the world. Although the dataset is from the 1990s and clearly out of date, it demonstrates the type of quantitative measures of decentralisation that are not much replicated today. Table 3-1 depicts the amount of vertical decentralisation by the number of tiers of government.

	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	Latin America	Middle East and North Africa	E. Europe and Former USSR	W. Europe and North America
<b>Mean</b>	4.1	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.6

Table 3-1 Tiers of government by region Treisman (2002)

Figure 3-1 depicts a measurement of regional autonomy of subnational governments. Treisman (2002) classifies subnational legislatures as displaying ‘weak autonomy’ if the constitution assigns an exclusive right to legislate on at least one topic, or ‘residual authority’ if the constitution assigns powers to legislate on matters not explicitly assigned. The Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa have the lowest number of subnational governments with either weak autonomy or regional autonomy.

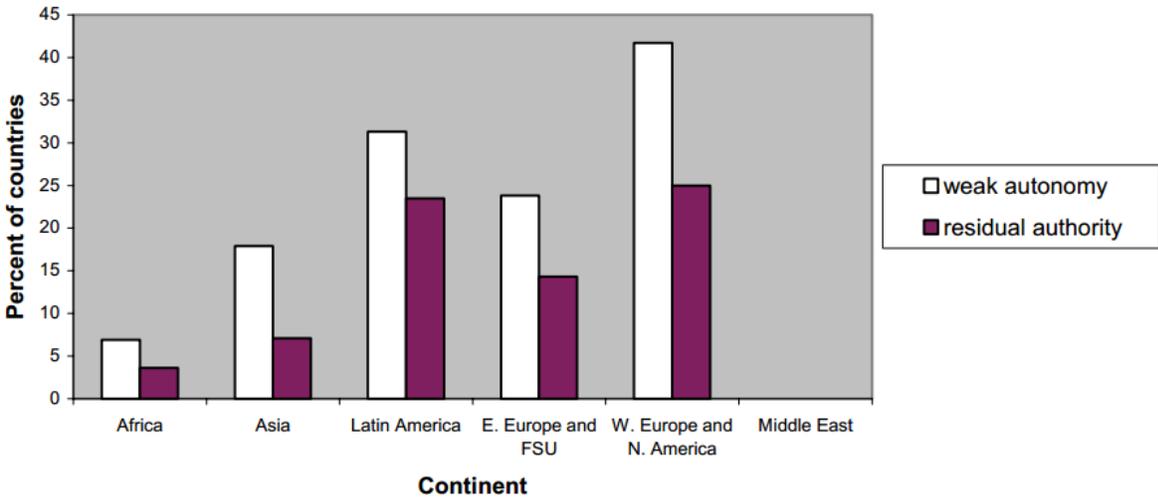


Figure 3-1 Percentage of countries in which subnational legislatures have ‘weak autonomy’ and ‘residual authority’ Treisman (2002)

Tables 3-2 and 3-3 show an assessment of the extent of centralisation of the appointment of local authority officials, and the percentage of executive members elected rather than appointed. Table 3-2 lists a mean index, with one point for each level of government appointed by a higher level divided by the number of tiers.

	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	Latin America	Middle East and North Africa	E. Europe and Former USSR	W. Europe and North America
<b>Mean</b>	.47	.52	.20	.69	.31	.30

Table 3-2 Mean index of appointment centralisation, mid-1990s Treisman (2002)

	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	Latin America	Middle East and North Africa	E. Europe and Former USSR	W. Europe and North America
<b>Mean</b>	29.3%	49.7%	70.4%	8.3%	70.2%	72.0%

**Table 3-3 Average proportion of subnational tiers and which executive elected, mid-1990s (%) Treisman (2002)**

The results show a striking difference between the Western Europe/North America and the developing world.

Table 3-4 depicts a measure of fiscal decentralisation as a proportion of expenditures of subnational governments to central governments.

	<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>Asia</b>	<b>Latin America</b>	<b>Middle East and North Africa</b>	<b>E. Europe and Former USSR</b>	<b>W. Europe and North America</b>
<b>Subnational expenditure share: mean</b>	11.0%	21.6%	14.9%	8.4%	21.9%	29.7%
<b>Subnational share of public employment: mean</b>	24.4%	44.4%	28.9%	33.7%	37.1%	51.8%

*Table 3-4 Average share of subnational governments in total state expenditures and personnel, early 1990s (%) Treisman (2002)*

Unsurprisingly, these figures show that the extent of decentralisation in the developed world in the 1990s was more advanced than in the developing world, with the Middle East and Africa displaying the most centralisation.

### 3.2 EXTENT OF DECENTRALISATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Although some data exists on decentralisation in Sub-Saharan Africa, Cabral (2011) notes important gaps: ‘few studies review decentralisation experiences across the region in a comprehensive and comparative way. Much of the available evidence is anecdotal or focused on a very specific set of issues, such as participation, empowerment or fiscal autonomy.’

The development of decentralisation in each country has been heavily influenced by its historical background. Dickovick and Reidl (2010) report:

‘Several variables affect the goals and extent of decentralization, including colonial heritage, federalism, and political party systems. Governance is likeliest to be centralized in countries with a Francophone heritage, that are unitary in structure, and that have a single dominant political party. Decentralization certainly correlates with federalism. Countries are not always highly decentralized if they are former British colonies, but the experiences are at least more variable. Other forms of party systems (including fragmented systems and competitive two-party systems) are relatively rare in Africa, but also seem to contribute to more decentralization than is seen where a single party dominates.’

In the most comprehensive review of decentralisation worldwide, the United Cities and Local Governments GOLD Report (2007) provide an assessment of the extent of decentralisation in Africa:

The ‘overall picture of decentralization and local democracy in African countries shows significant progress at the strictly institutional level. No country now publicly opposes the implementation of decentralization policies. Local governments exist in all countries, and elections are held to elect local authorities. Not only are there more local

governments covering ever-increasing areas, but the qualitative development of decentralization can also be observed in the form of more self-government and progress toward local democracy in more African nations. This trend is accompanied by an unprecedented increase in the responsibilities of local governments throughout most of the continent.’ (UCLG, 2007)

This assessment is shared by the other largest assessment of decentralisation in 30 African countries by Ndegwa (2002). He studied the extent of political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation, finding that political decentralisation was the most developed.

**Political Decentralisation**

Ndegwa (2002) created an index of political decentralisation from ‘the mean of the following: the number of elected sub- national tiers, the score for the existence of direct elections for local governments, and the score for turnout and fairness of such elections. These were South Africa, Uganda, and Namibia (all above 3.0) and Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia and Cote d’Ivoire. A second set of countries indicated a moderate level of political decentralization, with scores ranging from 2.0 to 2.9; these included 7 countries (i.e. Nigeria, Rwanda, Madagascar, Zambia, Tanzania, Mali and Malawi). The rest of the countries (15) indicated very low levels of political decentralization, although four of these at least held elections in part of the territory.’ Figure 3-2 depicts the extent of this political decentralisation.

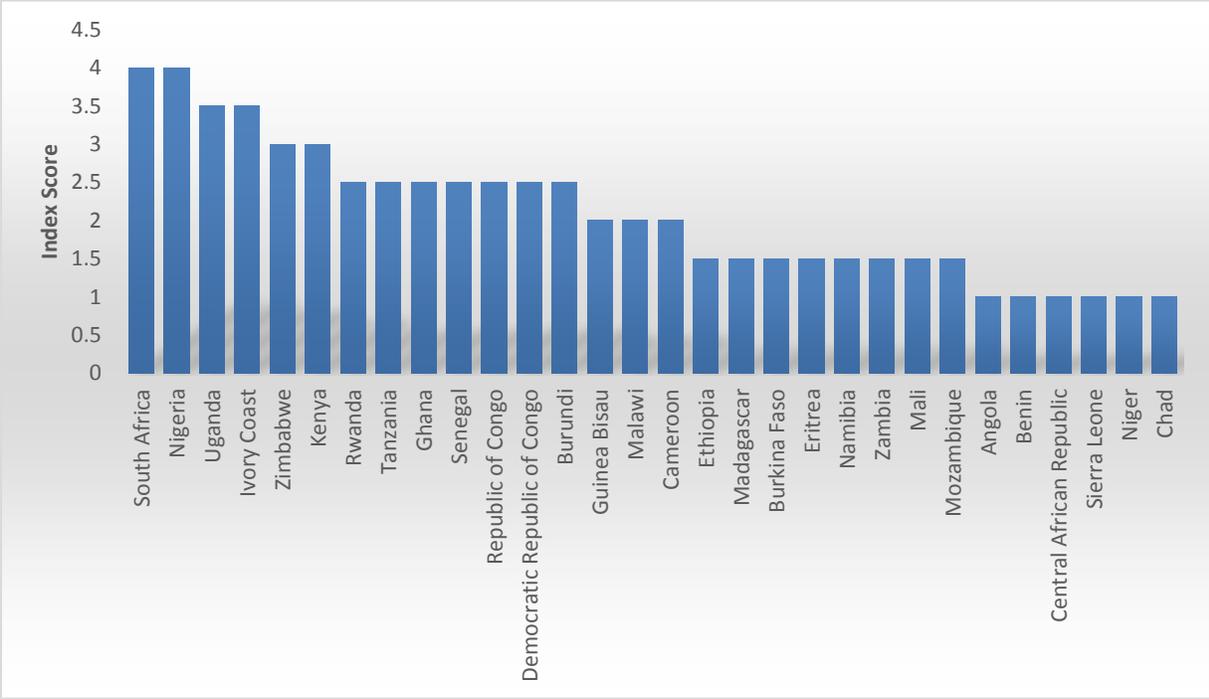


Figure 3-2 Extent of political decentralisation Ndegwa (2002)

Another measure is given by Kundishora (2009), looking at the level of territorial structures in African countries. The data revealed that ‘There exist variations in the number of levels of government and their constitutionally and legislatively mandated relationship in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. Most of the potentialities and problems of a decentralized system derive from the specific territorial structures of government.’ Table 3-4 details these levels of government.

COUNTRY	Territorial Structure						
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
<b>Kenya</b>	State	Province	Local authority (City, Municipal, County and town councils)				
<b>Rwanda</b>	Province	District / City of Kigali	Sectors / Umurenge	Cell / Akagari	Village / Umudugudu		
<b>South Africa</b>	National	Provincial	Local				
<b>Tanzania</b>	Cities	Municipalities / Districts	Town Councils	Township Authorities	Wards	Village Councils	Urban sub-wards (Mitaa) and Rural hamlets (Vitongoji)
<b>Uganda</b>	District Council / Kampala City Council (LC V)	County Council (LC IV)	Sub-County Council (LC III)	Parish Council (LC II)	Village Council (LC I)		
<b>Zimbabwe<sup>2</sup></b>	Cities	Municipalities	Town Councils	Local Boards			

Table 3-4 Territorial structure of government in selected African countries Kundishora (2009)

### Administrative Decentralisation

Ndegwa (2002) uses a measure of administrative decentralisation by using three indicators and taking a mean of the three to create an index: *'the clarity of roles for national and local governments provided by the law, where the actual responsibility for service delivery resided, and where the responsibility for (hiring and firing) civil servants resided'*. Figure 3-3 depicts the results of the measure by country. The highest amount is found in South Africa and Uganda, with ten others at a moderate degree, and 16 with little or none.

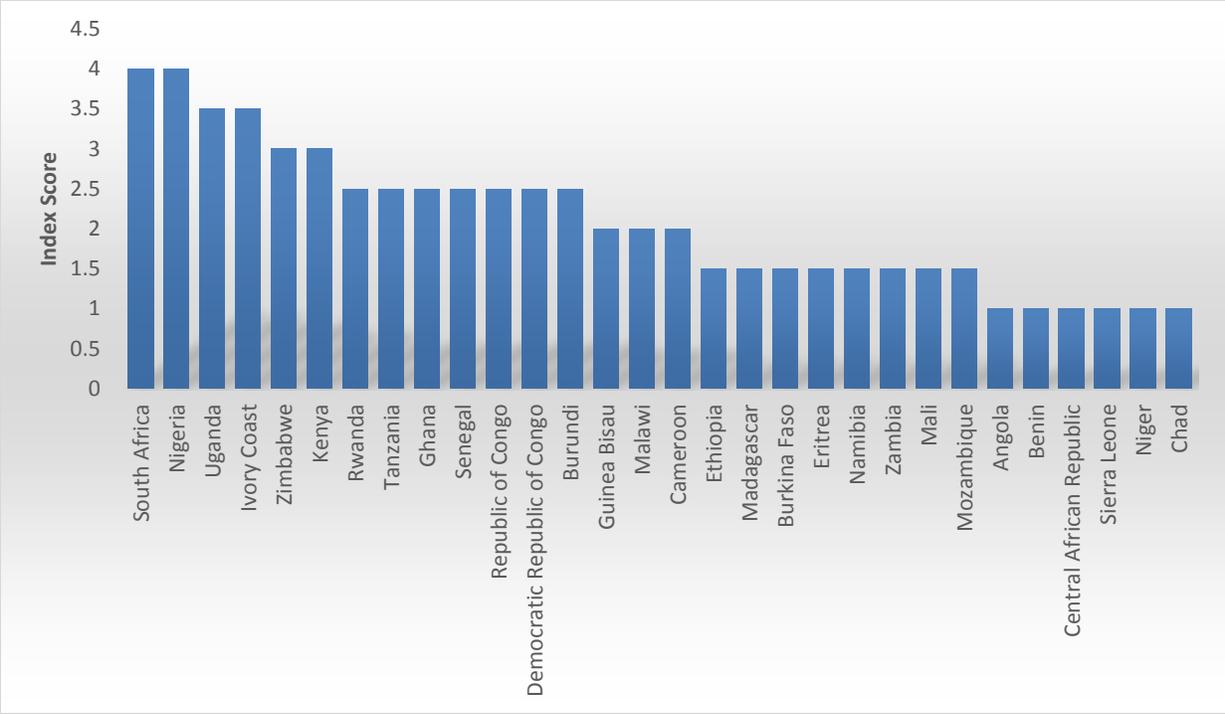


Figure 3-3 Extent of administrative decentralisation Ndegwa (2002)

Another measure of administrative decentralisation is proposed by Grossman (2013), who reports on the level of administrative unit proliferation in African countries (*‘a political process resulting in a large number of local governments splitting into two or more units over a relatively short period...[which] often occurs following the initiation of decentralisation reforms’*). Table 7 shows the increase by depicting every five years since 1990. The majority of African countries have increased their administrative units by 20% since 1990.

Country	Admin Unit	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Benin	Department	6	6	12	12	12
Burkina Faso	Provinces	30	30	45	45	45
Cape Verde	County	15	17	17	22	22
CAR	Sub-prefecture	51	51	71	71	71
Chad	Prefecture	14	14	28	18	22
Congo	Region	10	11	11	12	12
Congo	District	79	99	99	101	101
Cote d'Ivoire	Region	10	10	16	19	19
DRC	Territory	132	132	216	216	216
Equatorial Guinea	District	17	30	30	30	30
Ethiopia	District	556	736	736	736	736
Gabon	Department	37	37	48	48	50
Ghana	District	65	65	110	138	170
Guinea	Sub-Prefecture	14	341	341	341	341
Kenya	District	47	54	70	70	70
Malawi	District	24	24	27	28	28
Mali	Cercle	40	42	42	49	49
Nigeria	States	22	31	37	37	37
Niger	Municipality	35	35	35	256	256
Senegal	Region	10	10	10	11	14
Senegal	Department	30	30	30	34	45
Sudan	States	9	26	26	25	25
South Africa	Province	4	9	9	9	9
South Africa	Municipality	53	284	284	284	284
Togo	Prefecture	21	31	31	31	35
Tanzania	Region	25	25	25	26	30*
Tanzania	District	119	119	127	130	149*
Uganda	District	34	39	56	70	112
Zimbabwe	Province	8	8	10	10	10

**Note:** List of Sub-Saharan African countries that increased their number of administrative units by at least 20% since 1990. \* denotes 2012.

*Table 3-5 Increase of local government units since 1990 Grossman (2013)*

### **Fiscal Decentralisation**

Fiscal decentralisation is often measured by the ratio of local government expenditures to central government, although Cabral (2011) notes that this measure does not reveal much about the policy or implementation of decentralisation.

Ndegwa (2002) calculated fiscal decentralisation by using two indicators: 'the score given for the arrangements for fiscal transfers from the central government to localities and the score corresponding to the proportion (offered as a range) of public expenditure controlled by the localities. The index was simply the mean of these two scores.' He found that in '19 of the 30 countries analysed local governments control less than 5% of the national public

expenditure’. Figure 3-4 depicts the results. The countries with the highest degree of fiscal decentralisation are South Africa and Nigeria.

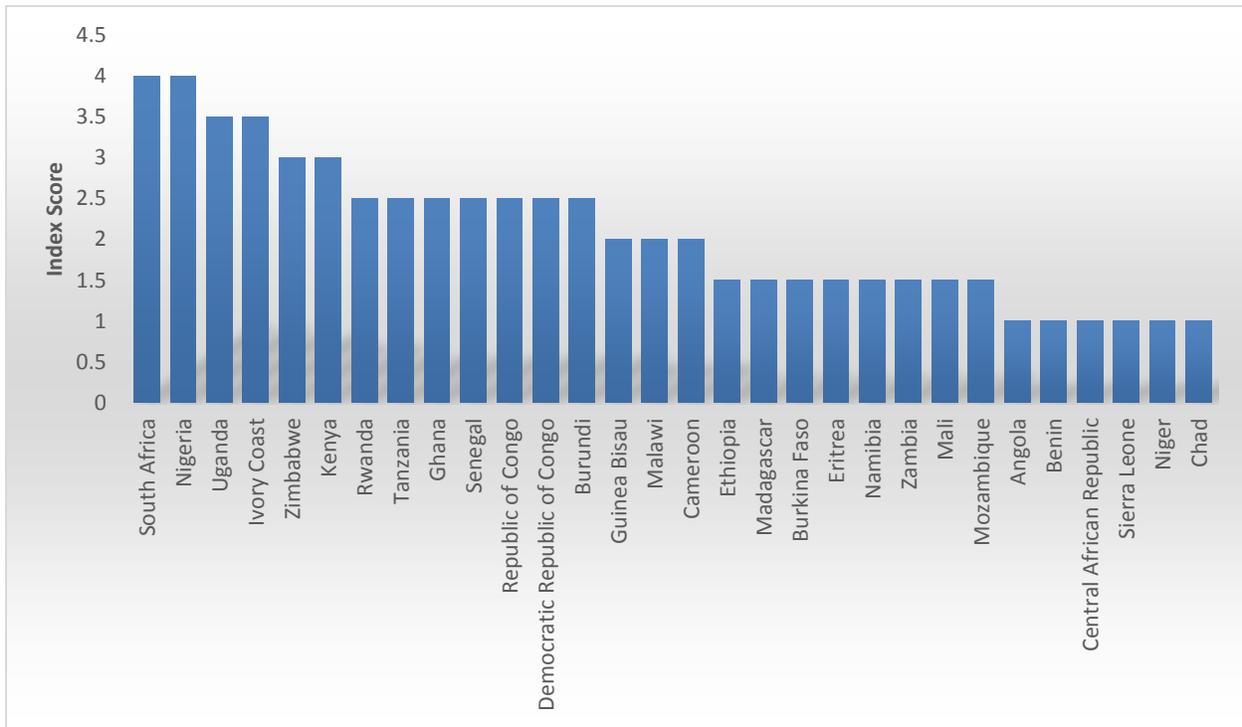


Figure 3-4 Extent of fiscal decentralisation Ndegwa (2002)

**Summary: Extent of decentralisation**

Although the data on decentralisation in Africa is out of date, it does paint a helpful picture of the low extent of decentralisation at the millennium. Since 2000 sub-Saharan African countries have implemented many decentralisation policies. However, measuring the extent of decentralisation is different to determining how well these decentralisation policies have translated into a better quality of local governance. Cabral (2011) notes that *‘although all countries were found to have structures of sub-national governance in place, analysis revealed the continued dominance by central government. Decentralisation in Africa has been widespread but not deep.’* This assertion seems to be backed up by the data of other studies (Ndegwa, 2002; Conyers, 2007; Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). There are regular suggestions that central governments still hold much more power in reality than would be evident from decentralised structures of government (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010; Conyers, 2007), so even the measures of decentralisation may not reveal an accurate picture of the extent of actual decentralisation.

### 3.3 TRENDS IN DECENTRALISATION LITERATURE

#### From prescriptive to assumed

While many of the 1990s articles on decentralisation were touting its benefits, already by Ndegwe's 2002 study we find that 'in no country was the claim to centralisation as a preferred organizational model made or implied, nor was decentralisation considered undesirable, only difficult to effect and sustain' (Ndegwe, 2002). In the decade since that time decentralisation has become more entrenched as not only a good idea but an expected part of governance (UCLG, 2008; Grossman, 2013).

#### From why to how

The 1990s were characterised by a focus on decentralisation as a policy solution to improve government efficiency and effectiveness. Two decades later the focus is on how decentralisation is carried out. The LDI (2013) review of decentralisation in Africa captures this idea well:

'Whatever current or future empirical evidence may find, **some form of decentralisation seems likely to persist in many countries**. Its fundamental drivers are political, even if normative objectives embodied in theory and development partner frameworks are valued or emerge as priorities over time. Equally important, although decentralisation is not universally desirable, there can generally be advantages to some form of it (broadly defined) in most contexts. The pressing challenge for analysts and policy makers is **how to help shape decentralisation** so as to meet both political and more conventional development objectives as well as to establish an evolutionary balance between the roles of central and local actors in pursuing sustainable development outcomes. Much can be done to improve the body of evidence on decentralisation in general and in specific cases, but it is essential to frame future research well and to ensure that **focusing on the assessment of outcomes does not neglect analysis of the processes and procedures needed for decentralisation reforms to be durably effective.**'

#### From decentralisation to governance

The amount of data on decentralisation and studies about the extent of decentralisation seem to be on the wane. What has replaced these are datasets and studies on the extent and quality of governance, both central and local. UNDP (n.d.) *'has a holistic approach to defining the field of local governance and decentralisation by using the concept of decentralized governance for development. Decentralized governance for development is considered to be a key area of democratic governance which in turn is crucial to attaining human development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).'* There does not seem to be a regularly-updated database about decentralisation (the closest is the GOLD report from 2008 (UCLG, 2008)). The World Bank (2014) includes some areas related to decentralisation in its data under government effectiveness. The focus seems to have shifted toward assessing the quality of local governance rather than amount of decentralisation.

#### From extent to outcomes

There is a shift from measuring the extent of decentralisation to measuring the effectiveness of decentralisation by outcomes. In 2002 Ribot critiques the literature on decentralisation as *'focused more on expectations and discourse than on practice and outcomes.'* In the ten years since then, the large majority of articles have assessed decentralisation through its supposed outcomes. One of the major outcomes is economic development. Rodriguez-Pose and Ezcurra (2009) describe this shift as moving from *'an emphasis on cultural, linguistic, or*

*religious factors, to one of achieving economic and social change*, describing this as decentralization as *'an instrument to avoid homogenisation and economic change to that of a vehicle to achieve it'*. This instrumentalisation of decentralisation is often assessed as to how decentralisation affects democratisation (Alvergne and Latouche, 2010; Dickovick and Reidl, 2013; Ribot, 2011), development outcomes (Ssokno, 2013; LDI, 2013), poverty reduction (Steiner, 2005; Sakyi, 2013), conflict resolution (Diprose and Ukiwo, 2008; Gaynor, 2013), and service delivery (Conyers, 2007; Cabral, 2011).

## 4 EVALUATING DECENTRALISATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

This section brings together the literature evaluating the achievements, challenges and lessons learned from decentralisation processes in Sub-Saharan Africa. For a broader discussion on political decentralisation from other contexts, please refer to Working Paper 1 on *Governance, Decentralisation and Energy: A Critical Review of the Key Issues* (Brown et al, 2014).

### 4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

There are few unqualified successes that can be linked to decentralisation, but some are notable. In a review of decentralisation in ten African countries, Dickovick and Reidl (2010) conclude that there has been *'little damage to governance as a result of decentralisation'*. This modest praise is taken as an encouraging sign that considering the novel aspects of reforms and capacity issues, decentralisation may be an important element for producing better governance as it becomes more embedded.

**Increasing democratisation:** One specific achievement is in furthering democratisation. In 10 African countries, decentralisation accompanied greater democratisation and helped to deepen and consolidate democracy in second-phase reforms (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). This is because *'decentralization can support democracy by improving transparency, or by enhancing government responsiveness to civil society in a broadly representative fashion; this can include giving voice to groups such as women, youth, and minority populations that are traditionally underrepresented in formal government'* (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010).

**Enhancing stability:** In the ten African countries studied by Dickovick and Reidl (2010), *'decentralization has served to defuse or localize certain conflicts...it is striking that Africa has witnessed considerable decentralization and has not suffered significant consequences for stability, despite major fears about ethnic violence and conflict'*. Regardless of the amount of decentralisation, the fact that so much decentralisation has taken place without an increased level of conflict is notable.

**Improving public service delivery:** Decentralisation has resulted in some improvement in public service delivery. Although some sources debate this premise noting that it is difficult to create a causal link between decentralisation reforms and improved services (Cabral, 2011; Sharma, 2006), others have noted examples where decentralisation seems to have improved the delivery of localised public services (Bashaasha et al, 2009; Dege Consult, 2007). Each of the country studies in ten African countries noted a slight improvement in service delivery (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010), a notable result.

## 4.2 CHALLENGES

**Unequal distribution** of resources and reforms to regions and local areas are a common challenge, particularly in low and medium-income countries. The differing levels of development between regions, the drawn-out process of implementing decentralisation reforms, and the perception of limited resources to distribute can lead to a zero-sum game approach as local authorities compete for resources from the central government (Olouwu, 2001). Another contributing factor is that subnational governments often have preferences for expenditures in some areas (education and social services) to the detriment of others. (Rodríguez-Pose and Ezcurra, 2009).

**The lack of local capacity** is regularly cited as one of the largest challenges to effective decentralisation. In their assessment of decentralization in 10 African countries, Dickovick and Reidl (2010) found that *'limitations on local capacity are one of the more consistent observations in reports from the sample countries'*. Cabral (2011) highlights in particular low *'technical and managerial capacity,'* which includes ability for planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring.' Dickovick and Reidl (2010) add *'inability to prepare documentation or respond to citizen requests, or failure to comply with directives and standards'*. In a study of two West African countries, Brockhaus et al (2012) add the challenge of what is termed *'adaptive capacity,'* meaning the institutional flexibility and the understanding of individuals and organisations to adapt to rapidly changing needs, issues and resources. A key element is *'deeper understanding of actors, institutions and networks is needed to overcome barriers in socio-ecological systems to adaptation.'* (Brockhaus et al 2012). It should also be noted that *'We find there have been no major declines in public services after decentralization, which suggests that subnational governments capacity for service provision is not significantly poorer than central capacity'* (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010).

**Corruption** is noted as a barrier at both regional and national levels to effective decentralisation, as it limits the ability for decentralised resources and projects to benefit local people, particularly those below the poverty line (Cabral, 2011; Conyers, 2007; Crawford, 2009). Lessmann and Markwardt (2010) conduct a cross-country study analysing the relationship between decentralisation and corruption, and found that *'decentralisation counteracts corruption in countries with high degrees of freedom of the press, whereas countries without effective monitoring suffer from decentralization'*. Levels of local accountability are therefore an important factor in providing a check on corruption at the local level.

**Fiscal imbalance** occurs when the resources provided are not adequate for implementing decentralisation reforms. Such imbalance can be result of funds not matching responsibilities, a frequent issue in Africa (Ribot, 2002), limits on raising revenue locally which can fund development programmes to match needs of local people (Cabral 2011), and central government earmarks for funds to specific projects (Cabral, 2011). This can lead to a situation where local authorities actually function more as deconcentrated agents of central government rather than autonomous bodies with accountability both to central government and to local citizens (UCLG, 2007).

**Political barriers** are often overlooked but essential in understanding why decentralisation is often ineffective. Ribot and Poteete (2009) argue that when decentralisation reforms affect the interests and resources of politically powerful actors, they have the ability to maintain power through a range of actions called *'repertoires of domination'*. In their study of public sector reforms in developing countries, Bunse and Fritz (2012) find that in places where political costs outweigh political gains, reforms are not implemented. Lefwich and Hogg (2007) make a strong case for an understanding of *'political processes which involve diverse leaders and elites, representing different groups, interests and organizations, tackling a series of collective action problems in locally appropriate and feasible ways'*.

**Recentralisation** is a risk posed when decentralisation reforms are not successful or when external circumstances such as war, political or economic instability or environmental challenges force central government to retake control of local resources and authority. Grossman (2013) also notes that the rapid growth of administrative units often results in recentralization, as the proliferation of smaller units of government result in limited administrative capacity and bargaining power with central government. Dickovick (2012) conducts a study of the relationship between decentralisation and recentralisation in the developing world, finding that the process was not largely affected by the structure of government, but was mostly influenced by the level of external factors, especially economic crises.

**Lack of accountability** is regularly cited as a challenge to ensuring decentralisation programmes are implemented. Ribot (2011) notes that this process often takes place in two different ways: 1) the local government is given powers but not a system of accountability either through local elections or monitoring, or 2) accountability is established but the powers of the local authority to meet the needs of its citizens are limited. Key factors to pay attention to include *'level of legal reform involved; the scale and number of layers of "local" government; the kinds of local authorities being engaged and developed; the mix of powers and obligations devolved; the sectors involved; the nature of the enabling environment; and the motives of governments for launching the reforms in the first place'* (Ribot, 2002). In their review of decentralisation policies in Africa in 2010, Alvergne and Latouche draw on lessons learned from decentralisation in Latin America to propose that viable sub-national units and local partisan systems will enable local actors to make reforms possible. This downward accountability to local actors is often limited by strength of upward accountability to central government institutions (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010).

**Internal conflict** plays a mixed role in challenging decentralised reforms. In their study of decentralisation and conflict management in Nigeria and Indonesia, Dirprose and Ukiwo (2008) found that decentralisation at times renewed cleavages along ethnic and religious identities, and at other times reduced conflict by providing a framework for local dispute resolution and self-autonomy of previously disempowered group. The decentralised resources and power structures at times sparked power struggles between local leaders as they mobilised along community lines.

Decentralisation is often promoted because of its **link to improved development outcomes**, but **this link is not clearly supported by evidence**. Smoke (2003) cites a number of studies showing that central government tended to supply better facilities of public services, whilst decentralised service provision was more cost-effective and efficient but not necessarily of the same quality. Conyers (2007) found that decentralisation in a group of Anglophone Sub-Saharan African countries did not lead to clear improvements in service delivery, but did positively affect intermediate outcomes: *'access to local information, locus of decision-making power, resource availability, and administrative performance'*. The impact of decentralisation on service delivery to the poor is also inconclusive. Cabral (2011) notes a trend where decentralisation tends to benefit elites who are able to ally themselves with central government, and thus do not tend to benefit the poor who have limited access to the centres of power.

### 4.3 LESSONS LEARNED

**Importance of context:** It is probably the most obvious of insights, but knowledge of context is often the reason why it can be so difficult to understand, plan and assess decentralisation programmes. LDI (2013) in its review of decentralisation and development, notes that context is crucial in the design and implementation of decentralised development programmes. This requires a deeper level of analysis of the interdependencies between technical and political aspects of specific contexts (LDI, 2013), as well as an awareness that issues faced by local authorities in sub-Saharan Africa are related to governance challenges of central and regional authorities (Conyers, 2007).

**Capacity of local governance initiatives:** The capacity of local government officials and institutions plays a major role in the success of decentralisation (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). Wunsch (2013) provides an analysis of two successful local governance initiatives, noting that smaller population size, the ability to focus on a few services and flexibly redesign institutions, as well as effective negotiation with formal governance institutions.

**Motivations for decentralisation:** Recognising that decentralisation is taken up unevenly, awareness of and building upon the specific motivations that central and local governments have is key to implementing reforms (Conyers, 2007). If those motivations (e.g. for greater political or economic power) can be met without improving services or meeting needs of local citizens, it is likely that decentralisation will not meet goals (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010).

**Input does not equal output:** There does not seem to be a correlation between the amount of resources available to local authorities and output in provision of good and services to citizens (LDI, 2013). Because there are many factors that influence how resources are used at the local level, an increase in the amount of money spent on education or health does not equal a higher quality of service of education or health. This is the major reason why empirical and quantitative assessments of decentralisation are on the wane because such data does not aid much clarity to an assessment of whether decentralisation is taking root or is effective (Sharma, 2006).

**Political incentives rather than political will:** 'The most propitious environments for decentralisation programming will be where the political incentives of leading actors align with the interests of donors and other actors promoting decentralization' (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). An increased awareness of political economy is also needed, as barriers to reform can often be political rather than technical and can be better dealt with by using political negotiations and trade-offs rather than improved technical policy (LDI, 2013).

**Focus on implementation as well as design:** There has often been an emphasis on the design of decentralisation programmes to the exclusion of implementation. Successful implementation of policy requires what Smoke (2003) describes as a '*pragmatic strategy bringing the system into existence and to adjust and support its evolution over time*', which is the most important element of decentralisation. LDI (2013) note that implementation strategies are often mechanical, not implemented or fragmented between agencies.

**Coordination of actors:** A number of sources mention the importance of coordinating key actors. These include local authorities and donors (LDI, 2013), local officials and central authorities (Conyers, 2007) and local authorities with each other through networks (Wunsch, 2013). Formal coordination can be useful, but informal coordination is essential to avoid unproductive competition.

**Outcomes and processes:** Recognising that positive outcomes are not a direct result of processes of decentralisation (Conyers, 2007), and that blunt measures such as expenditures at the local and national levels do not reveal much about the effectiveness of decentralisation programmes (Sharma, 2006), it is important to study how both outcomes and process work together (LDI, 2013). Creating a set of intermediate, process-oriented outcomes -- such as access to information (Conyers, 2007) -- can aid in understanding what processes need to be put in place to achieve wider outcomes.

**Participatory governance:** Accountability and participation are key indicators of the effectiveness of decentralised governance. UNECA (n.d.) identifies two key features: 1) receptivity, defined as the procedures and political will of local governments *'to hear expressed concerns and welcome voices'*, and 2) responsiveness, defined as the political will and technical capacity to *'respond to concerns and demands'*. Strong civil society, including participation from citizens from different classes, genders, ethnicities, religions, ages, and so on, and democratic processes such as voting play a crucial role in improving participation and local accountability (UNECA, n.d.). In contexts where structures for accountability and participation are weak, it is important for decentralised initiatives to address this.

**Caution about sector-wide approaches:** In a review of sector-wide approaches to improve health and education in developing countries, Lucas (2013) notes that there is a lack of evidence that these approaches are effective in achieving development outcomes, particularly in fragile contexts. It is important to focus on initiatives that can respond to rapid changes.

**Devolution is not necessarily better than deconcentration:** Devolution is better for democratisation, but deconcentration might be better for stability and development in some cases (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010; Sharma, 2006; LDI, 2013). Rather than insisting on the greatest autonomy possible, it might be more useful to focus on improving capacity and accountability within current frameworks.

#### 4.4 CASE STUDIES

In order to ground the above into the practical realities of everyday governance, we explored six specific country case studies. These were chosen either for their relevance to our project, or were indicated by the literature to hold particulars of interest.

### Ethiopia

Ethiopia has become a prominent example of ethnic federalism. As the second largest country in Africa, and with a highly diverse population, Ethiopia came out of civil conflict with the military regime removed in 1991. At that time the nation was divided into 11 autonomous regions (nine regions and two city administrations -- Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa) largely along ethnic lines. Ten years later a second phase of decentralisation distributed powers from the regional to the district level, purportedly to improve the delivery of basic services and economic development. Today the government is highly decentralised, with most functions of government carried out at the regional and district level, with a smaller village level representing about 5,000 people. Regional and district council members are elected, and administrative functions are carried out by regions and districts (LDI, 2013). To some extent

expenditure for health, water, sanitation and education have been devolved to the district level, and while regions can collect taxes, the regions receive most of their funds from central government grants.

Rather than creating ethnic tensions, fragmentation of national identity and unequal distribution of resources, the process of political decentralisation has contributed to stability of the government and mostly stopped ethnic conflicts (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). Political federalism also made it difficult for smaller political parties to remain viable, and the dominant party was able to increase its dominance of the political sphere, to the extent that it has become increasingly autocratic (Green, 2011). There have been some improvements in services, particularly education, with the greatest improvements in more remote areas. However, in other areas of service provision some regions have lagged behind, which is attributed to weak capacity. The lack of political parties has limited the amount of accountability, and studies have shown that local people often do not know how to engage with district and regional government to address their concerns (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010).

## **Ghana**

Ghana is a notable example of fiscal decentralisation, particularly in the area of political decentralisation and revenue generation. Ghana's decentralisation began in the 1988, when the Local Government Law created 110 districts within the 10 regions of the country. Each region has a non-partisan District Assembly (DA), with elections held every four years. The 1992 Constitution created 'Regional Co-ordinating Councils (10), District Assemblies (110) and urban, zonal, town and area councils (1,300), plus unit committees (16,000) (Crawford, 2004). The District Assembly system includes grievance and complaints procedures where members of the public can hold individual DA members and officers to account and theoretically have the officer recalled. Crawford (2009) assesses the decentralised system as having high levels of citizen participation, but finds a number of barriers to making the decentralised system accountable. The main barrier is that central government still controls much of the decision-making power, thus rendering citizens' attempts to hold local government accountable limited by their capacity to respond to needs.

Another notable characteristic of decentralisation in Ghana is the system for local revenue generation. The District Assemblies are also tasked with raising taxes. As this system has not resulted in adequate collection of taxes, the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) was setup to ensure funding from the central government to each district based on a revenue-sharing formula approved by Parliament. While providing only 37% of district income, this system ensures that local government receives a guaranteed amount of income which can be used at its discretion, providing some amount of financial independence. It is likely if this system were expanded that some of the problems of accountability and effectiveness could be addressed, as a guaranteed amount of funding to be spent locally could enable more attention to local problems and greater accountability to local actors (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010).

## **Kenya**

Since independence in 1963, Kenya has experimented with various types of decentralisation. A regional system was briefly established but replaced with a Provincial Administration which centralised power. In 1983, the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) was initiated with the goal of institutionalising participatory bottom-up development. District Development Committees determined their populations' priority projects and forwarded

them for inclusion in the Ministry of Development Planning's budgets. This early approach to decentralisation of development activities was not sector-specific; it included energy-related projects as well as other types of projects (Havet et al, 2009). The DFRD was administered by the Provincial Administration and had a largely top-down implementation which limited its effectiveness. The 2010 Constitution implemented sweeping reforms in decentralised governance, including setting up 47 county governments, each with an elected County Assembly and a County Executive Committee. County governments are responsible for a number of functions, including agriculture, health services, control of pollution, transport, trade development and regulation, some aspects of education, and county public works. Funds are devolved through grants specific to areas (education, local authority transfers), which county governments must apply to central government to receive (IEA, 2011), and intergovernmental authorities have been setup to help county governments manage funds (Boex and Kelly, 2011).

There is little evidence available about the quality of the implementation process of decentralisation in Kenya. Boex and Kelly (2011) suggest challenges likely to be faced. It is unclear what level of autonomy county governments will have over budgets, as the Constitution is vague on the level of control that central government could have: *“the Constitution protects counties from “arbitrary interference” by central government, but also gives the central government “broad leeway to introduce national policies and impose norms and standards on the county level”*. Counties are larger areas than the previous local authorities, which means that representation of local concerns might not improve. With the relatively poor level of service delivery provided by the past system, it is hoped that the county system will allow for more responsiveness and accountability to local needs (IEA, 2011).

## Rwanda

The current government of Rwanda has been a firm supporter of decentralisation since coming into power in 1994. It recognised that the social and political marginalisation of local groups contributed to the genocide, and began implementing decentralisation of political power and basic services such as education right from the beginning. This process was formalised in 2001, and Rwanda has now undergone three phases of formalised decentralisation: 1) The first phase (2001 to 2005) focused on legal and institutional reforms at the district level, 2) the second phase (2006 to 2010) focused on service delivery and capacity within a new restructuring, where the number of the administrative areas was greatly reduced (from 11 to 4 provinces, 106 to 30 districts, 1,545 to 416 sectors, and 9,165 to 2,148 cells); 3) the third phase (2011-2015) aimed at consolidating progress in the second phase with a renewed focus on capacity building for local authorities and regional coordination (Republic of Rwanda, 2011).

The outcomes of decentralisation have been mixed. There is some evidence of improved delivery on education, particularly in engagement with parents and teacher recruitment once it was delivered at a district level (UNECA, n.d.). There has also been increased engagement between civil society organisations and local governments, and some evidence of increased public participation and accountability (Gaynor, 2013; Mukumunana and Brynard, 2005). Major issues remain in the level of central government control of decision-making and budgets and staff capacity, especially high staff turnover (Republic of Rwanda, 2011), and in the accountability of local governments to citizens when much of the power is still held by central government ministries (Gaynor, 2013). With continuing commitment to decentralisation by the central government, it is likely that these qualities may improve in the coming years.

## South Africa

The South African Constitution in 1996 established three levels of government: a national government, nine provincial governments and 284 local governments (Elhiraika, 2007). South Africa is a notable example of a complex decentralised fiscal system of governance. It has one of the most *'highly functioning system of intergovernmental fiscal relations'*, with 40% of all government expenditure at the local level (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). Regional governments' authority to spend is limited by institutions that provide guidance and regular monitoring of expenditures. This leads to complaints about the lack of fiscal autonomy, but compared to other African governments the amount of money accounted for at the provincial and local government level is high. Provincial governments may also raise their own revenues, which had led to some regional disparities because richer provinces are able to raise more revenue than their poorer neighbours (Elhiraika, 2007).

The continuing issues of inequality and unequal service delivery have led some to claim that decentralisation has failed in South Africa. Koelble and Siddle (2013) point to lack of technical capacity of municipality officials which limit their ability to relate well to the highly complex intergovernmental bodies that oversee them, as well as a lack of accountability for municipality officials who are political appointees rather than trained civil servants. Others point out that there is some level of political accountability for local officials, and even with a dominant political party like the African National Congress, opposition parties aid accountability (Dickovick and Reidl, 2010). Setting South African in its historical context and the Southern African region, a more accurate assessment might be that decentralisation is limited by the capacity of local authority figures and more tweaking is needed to make the system more responsive to the needs of local citizens.

## Uganda

After a long period of conflict, Uganda embraced decentralisation as part of a peaceful transition in the 1990s. Existing local structures setup by The National Resistance Army (NRA) were changed into elected regional councils when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came into power. A raft of national acts in the 1990s and policy initiatives in the 2000s supported the functioning of local authority at the district and four other lower levels of governance, each with limited powers. The provision of basic services was devolved to the district level, as was the control of raising tax revenues, budgets and hiring and firing of staff. Although district representatives are elected, they are accountable to a range of national authorities, which hold the purse strings and much of the power for what local authorities are able to do (LDI, 2013).

Although decentralisation structures appear effective in the policy arena, the past decade has seen the **gradual recentralisation of powers** from the districts to the centre. This is partially caused by the lack of capacity of district governance, particularly in attracting and retaining effective staff (Bashaasha et al, 2011), but is clearly also related to central government control. Central government grants are conditional (Kiwanuka, n.d.) and do not respond well to local needs. New districts have been created by central government without accompanying funding (Dege Consult, 2007), and some note that the pattern seems to be toward rewarding political figures in line with central government policies (Ojambo, 2012). In a striking example of recentralisation, Gore and Muwanga (2013) detail how the national government has retaken control of the capital city Kampala's municipality in order to aid the political agenda of the NRM.

## 5 TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Local governments in sub-Saharan Africa are endowed with a range of powers and responsibilities which vary from country to country. A list of these responsibilities follows based on the authorities granted to local governments in South Africa (CPS, 2010; ETU, 2013), Kenya (IEA, 2011), Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda, 2011), and Tanzania (IIC, 2008). They are divided into political, fiscal and administrative powers.

### **Political decentralisation**

The range of local authority political powers extend to the following areas:

- Local elections: publishing details of candidates, ensuring voting registration and legal implementation of elections.
- Public participation: Ensuring and coordinating the participation of communities and locations in governance at the local level and assisting communities and locations to develop the administrative capacity for the effective exercise of the functions and powers and participation in governance at the local level.
- Pass by-laws – local laws and regulations about any of the functions they are responsible for. By-laws may not contradict or over-rule any national laws
- Appoint council and sub-committee members as determined by legal framework

### **Fiscal decentralisation**

The level of fiscal autonomy varies by country, but all the countries in this review have powers in these areas:

- Approve budgets and development plans: these plans are often developed and monitored at a central level, but they usually must be approved at the local level, with input and feedback from local governments.
- Impose rates and other taxes: including property tax, income tax, sales tax, and others
- Charge service fees – for use of municipal services like water, electricity, libraries, etc.
- Impose fines: traffic fines, littering or library fines.
- Borrow money: take a loan for a development or other project and to use the municipal assets as surety.

### **Administrative powers**

Local governments have the largest set of devolved powers in areas of administration, including the provision of services, government employment, and regulatory powers.

#### **Provision of services**

- Health Services: health facilities and pharmacies; ambulance services; promotion of primary health care; licensing and control of undertakings that sell food to the public; (e) veterinary services (excluding regulation of the profession); (f) cemeteries, funeral parlours and crematoria; and (g) refuse removal, refuse dumps and solid waste disposal.
- Education: Pre-primary, polytechnics, home craft and childcare centres
- Facilities: parks; libraries; beaches and recreation facilities.

- Water, sewage and sanitation: public works storm water management systems in built-up areas; and water and sanitation services.
- Transport: county roads; street lighting; traffic and parking; public road transport; some ferries and harbours.
- Fire Fighting Services
- Local tourism

### **Employment**

- Hiring and firing of local authority officials

### **Administrative powers and regulation**

- Activities: betting, casinos and other forms of gambling; racing; liquor licensing; cinemas; libraries; museums;
- Animal Control and Welfare: licensing of dogs; and facilities for the accommodation, care and burial of animals.
- Agriculture Industries: crop and animal husbandry; livestock sale yards; abattoirs; plant and animal disease control; and fisheries.
- Trade Development and Regulation markets; trade licences; fair trading practices; local tourism; and street traders.
- Planning and development: statistics; land survey and mapping; boundaries and fencing; housing
- Electricity delivery: electricity and gas reticulation and energy regulation; decisions around land use
- Conservation: Implementation of specific national government policies on natural resources and environmental conservation, including soil and water conservation and forestry.
- Control of Pollution: air pollution, noise pollution, other public nuisances and outdoor advertising

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

We have seen in this review that in the past two decades decentralisation has become an assumed governmental structure rather than a policy prescription. The focus of the literature has largely shifted toward assessing 'local governance'. A helpful frame for the relevance of local governance to providing decentralised energy is developed by Nickson (2011), who divides local governance into two types: 1) the managerial type, where *'the primary purpose of local government is the efficient delivery of services'*, and 2) the governmental types, where *'service delivery is important, but there is a wider role for local government both as the mouthpiece of shared community interests of a locality and also in making policy choices in its name within the wider body politic.'* This is key to our interests.

Managerial type governance includes decision making on the delivery of services. Local governance often has input into civic amenities, and can in the case of truly decentralised budgets, be responsible for commissioning the building of local infrastructure such as clinics or schools. Where this is the case, this creates an opportunity for clean energy investment. Service delivery at a health clinic is mostly dependent on quality of staff and the flow of consumables such as drugs. However, as we know from the energy literature, energy consumption can be a considerable expense, and where lighting and machines are fed by an expensive diesel generator, the fuel consumption can become a key part of the overall budget. When the fuel runs out due to budget overspend or lack of logistics, the overall service delivery of the health clinic declines significantly.

Similarly, managerial type governance is often responsible for providing services such as street lighting and waste disposal. In the case of street lighting, local authorities can end up spending a large proportion of their budget on their energy bill, and the simple use of low energy lighting can make significant differences. Municipal authorities also often organise the collection and disposal of waste. Waste is a particular opportunity to examine the use of a physical waste resource for production of energy, or to minimise the use of energy in its collection and disposal. Local governance that has fiscal control of budgets can play a key role in determining the energy 'cleanliness' of local infrastructure and service deliveries.

Beyond managerial control local governments may also act in a *governmental capacity*, '*as the mouthpiece of shared community interests of a locality and also in making policy choices in its name within the wider body politic*'. This is a different role for local authorities in the changing energy landscape. Here they might use their political convening power not to spend government funds on clean energy, but by strategic use of the planning processes, or by consultation, they might influence the use of clean energy within their locality.

For instance if a factory is about to be created, and the proposal suggests that it will use diesel generators or create unused waste, the local authority might tie planning approval to the factory adopting a cleaner energy source or a reuse of its waste. Similarly, local authorities have consultations and awareness-raising activities for their constituency. The inclusion of a clean energy message and an encouragement to use clean energy can be embedded in the ongoing process of discussing shared community interests. We have seen this happen in the economies of the developed world, where 'feed in tariffs' have enabled a transition to renewable energy, and local authorities have undertaken awareness campaigns to encourage uptake of the nationally available tariffs. Most African countries are introducing feed in tariffs, and this might be an area of specific interest for local authorities, both in terms of shared community interests and in managerial type governance.

This paper has demonstrated from the literature that Sub-Saharan Africa has indeed experienced a significant move towards local governance. Local governments increasingly hold both managerial control and represent shared community interests. In other working papers in this project we will explore specifically the potential barriers to strengthening the role of local government in the transition to clean energy.

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