Responding to Decentralization Acrobatics in Tanzania: Sub-national Actors Examined[1]

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Abstract

The experience of decentralization reforms in Tanzania is dramatic depicting the state of decentralizing but subsequently of recentralizing. Following the adoption of decentralization by devolution policy in 1998 hopes for the end of about four decades history of undermining local governments raised-up. However, the process of decentralization of powers has largely remained on paper characterized by policy reversals and sluggish implementation. This article employs the political approach to explain why the process of decentralization in Tanzania has stalled. It examines the extent to which sub-national actors: the local government councillors, the citizenry and civil society organizations (CSOs) are pressing for decentralization of powers. Based on evidence from in-depth and semi-structured interviews in two districts as well as a documentary analysis of the activities of five national level CSOs, it is revealed that the absence of popular pressure for local government autonomy has created a leeway for the central government to stall the decentralization process.

Introduction

The last quarter of the 20th century witnessed unprecedented initiatives to reform local government systems in many countries in Africa. In quest for efficient, effective and responsive service delivery governments initiated decentralization by devolution reforms proclaiming the transferring of political, administrative and fiscal autonomies to local governments. However, follow-ups on implementation show that the ghost of colonial and post-colonial centralization tendencies is still hunting in many countries (Ribot, 2002; World Bank, 2003). In Tanzania, evidences indicate that instead of decentralizing the Government has been centralizing (Pastory, 2010). For instance since the adoption of decentralisation by devolution (D-by-D policy) in 1998 and the lunching of the local government reform program (LGRP) in

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2000 the government has passed series of legislations or made decisions that contradict the policy. Highlighted below are some of such decisions:

- In 2002, contrary to decentralization policy, the government passed the Public Service Act centralizing appointment and disciplinary powers over the posts of executive directors in the local governments. The Act also entrusted the powers on issues concerning the appointment, promotion, disciplining and registration of teachers to the Teachers Service Department, the central government body under the Public Service Commission;

- Although section 6 of the Public Service Act was amended in 2004 to reinstate some personnel management powers to local government councils (LGCs) by decentralizing authority on recruitment of heads of departments, later, the joint study by the Government and the Development Partners found that council directors were instructed to exclude all heads of departmental posts from the previous merit-based system and decentralized recruitment (URT, 2007a:8);

- Initiatives to harmonize sectoral laws with the D-by-D policy did not get anywhere. The study by two prominent lawyers on legal harmonization concluded that, contrary to the decentralization process, the government has continued to propose and pass new laws which are obviously inconsistent with the D-by-D policy (Rutinwa and Shivji, 2006).

- The joint study by the Government and the Development Partners also revealed that the power of decision making and budgetary allocations at sector level continues to be vested in central government (op.cit.). The study further reveals that, despite the fact that the government commissioned a study on fiscal decentralization which was completed in 2005; its key recommendations including an increased transfer of fiscal power to local governments were yet to be implemented;

- In 2003 the government passed the law that abolished the development levy. The levy was considered to be the major source of local government revenue and its abolition was not replaced by any other source under the control of local government;

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- In 2006 and without prior consultation with LGCs the government decentralized the responsibility of secondary education by directing every LGCs to construct a secondary school in every ward;

- In 2007 the Public Service Act was amended centralizing the process of recruitment of the civil service to the Public Service Secretariat. Following implementation of this Act LGCs lost autonomy to even recruit operational staff.

Initial moves to reform local government system were very encouraging such that anyone would easily commend the commitment of the government to decentralize. For instance, within a period of four years since the convening of a national conference that discussed the system of local government in 1996 to the beginning of the new Millennium, seven major policy decisions were taken. First in 1998, the Policy Paper on Local Government Reforms or the D-by-D policy was adopted and somewhat effected by a subsequent miscellaneous amendment of local government laws by Act, No. 6 of 1999. This was the second major decision.

The decentralization policy envisions among others the transfer of authority to the people through devolution of political, fiscal, and administrative powers. It promises to have LGCs installed as the highest and the most important political body within their area of jurisdictions, devolution of decision making autonomy in planning matters and enactment of by-laws (URT, 1998). The policy also provides for decentralization of fiscal autonomy. In this regard, LGCs are expected to have discretionary powers to levy tax, increase local revenues and obtain adequate unconditional fiscal transfers from central government. In addition, it is stipulated that councils will have discretion powers to pass budgets that reflect their own priorities and mandatory expenditure required for the attainment of national standards (ibid.).

With regard to administrative decentralization, the policy stipulates that LGCs will have autonomous powers over the recruitment, development, promotion and disciplining of all of their personnel, including council executive directors. The councils are also allowed to organize their respective structures in a way they deem appropriate. It is also envisioned that the previous central-local command relations will be abolished and the local administration freed from sector ministries. To facilitate the process of implementation, it is provided in the policy that the national Constitution, the

local government laws, the sectoral legislations and policies as well as circulars, regulations and guidelines will be reviewed and harmonized with the D-by-D policy (ibid.).

Third, in January 2000, the LGRP was launched as the technical and strategic vehicle for effecting the implementation of the decentralization process. Forth, in the same year, the government passed the Local Government Service Regulations, 2000 which provided LGCs with the framework for hiring, managing and disciplining their own staff. Legal Harmonization Task Force was also established in the year 2001 in order to facilitate the process of harmonization of sector laws and policies with the D-by-D policy, this was the fifth decision. Sixth, the government created a semi-autonomous technical team called the Local Government Reform Team to manage the local government reform programme. Lastly, to facilitate compliance with D-by-D process by other governmental institutions, the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) was assigned the responsibility to oversee, operationalize and coordinate the local government reform process (URT, 1999; Mmari, 2005).

Even though the "commitment" of the government to decentralize was evident through the establishment of some institutional structures as revealed above, it hardly translated into actual transfer of power to LGCs. Moreover, contrary to majority opinion for autonomous local governments uncovered by the 1998 Presidential Committee of Collection of (Peoples') Views on the Constitution (the Justice Kissanga Committee), nothing was changed to give effect to the views of the people as Articles 145 and 146 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977 remained intact. These articles are heavily criticized by the prominent lawyers for being too general and silent in stipulating principles governing central-local relations (Rutinwa and Shivji, 2006). Indeed, follow ups on the implementation of D-by-D policy in Tanzania depict the suffering of the government from the same old disease of centralizing (Shivji and Maina, 2003; Chaligha, 2003; URT, 2005; Rutinwa and Shivji, 2006; URT, 2007a).

The decentralization-recentralization acrobatics in Tanzania is not a recent phenomenon and almost every analysis of the country's decentralization experience since independence has uncovered it (Bradley, 1967; Mutahaba, 1989; Max, 1991; Semboja and Therkildsen, 1991; Ngware and Haule, 1992; Mukandala, 2000). Bradley (1967) for instance noted that while in the first decade of independence the government was repeatedly proclaiming its

intentions of decentralizing powers to the people the practice remained different. In 1972 the government reached the peak of centralization by disbanding local governments replacing them with centrally appointed bureaucracy in both district and regional levels. The consequences of that policy decision was however catastrophic and a decade later has to be reversed. Nevertheless, resultant local governments were weakest in both capacity and autonomy. As some commentators put it, the reversal of the 1970s centralisation did not aim at empowering LGCs but helping the central government to avoid onslaught of popular discontent as well as relieving itself from financial and service delivery burdens (Mukandala, 2000; Ngware and Haule, 1992; Max, 1991).

The pre-1990s political context was however unfavourable and in no way could have local governments flourished. The political space was closed with the executive branch of the state and the ruling party monopolizing almost every arena of civil society. This was so until the latest years of 1980s and early 1990s when Tanzania experienced a series of transitions realigning the economic and political systems respectively in a neo-liberal framework. Political and economic liberalization opened up spaces for citizens' participation in economic and governance affairs resulting into increased CSOs, the expansion of the media industry, and the formation of new political parties. These changes were thought to create avenues for the citizens to pressurise for accountability but also autonomous local governments. Mwakusa (1994) for instance viewed multiparty democracy as an opportunity of local governments to resist central government encroachment. Earlier in 1991citizens had expressed their concerns for a more vibrant local government system such that the 1982 local government laws found a place in the famous "forty oppressive laws" which the Nyalali Commission, the Presidential Commission on Single or Multiparty Political System, recommended for repeal or amendment (URT, 1991).

Existing studies and joint-donor local government reform evaluation reports in Tanzania have explained the post-1990 decentralization-centralization acrobatics in terms of lack of political willingness, on the side of the central government, to decentralize (Chaligha, 2003; Rutinwa and Shivji, 2006; URT 2007a; URT 2005). More specifically the sluggish and stalling decentralization of power has been attributed to political resistance and misunderstanding of the concept of D-by-D by central government officials, limited expertise to undertake harmonization of sectoral policies and laws with the D-by-D policy and the doubts of central government on the capacity of local governments to

shoulder devolved responsibilities. Rutinwa and Shivji (2006) revealed reluctance of sectoral ministries in submitting their legislations to the Legal Harmonization Task Force which also suggest the lack of willingness to decentralize. Even though the arguments posed in previous studies shed some light on the challenges facing decentralization process in Tanzania they only focussed on analysing one end of the continuum-the central government and left the other end-the sub-national actors untouched. Consequently they find themselves ignoring the fact that decentralization is a power game and in no way would the central government surrender its power and patronage potential so easily.

Decentralization by devolution policies are one of the most difficult policies to implement due to resistance of national actors to lose control over the benefits they enjoy from centralization. Therefore the thinking on decentralization need to move beyond what Eaton *et al* (2010) call "the voluntarist set of assumptions" that explain successful decentralization in terms of the politicians and bureaucrats "political will" to decentralize. In a D-by-D process it is not expected for the central government to surrender a portion of its power without incentives, constraints or both. This is because effective implementation of D-by-D would result into a diminishing power of central government officials over administrative control, political patronage and reduced budget size of their agencies. For instance, to maintain the level of influence in local governments the President and the Prime Minister would likely seek to maintain control over the appointment of council executive directors. Likewise the minister responsible for finance will likely prefer enlarged tax base for his/her ministry at the expense of local government.

This study therefore asserts that a stalling decentralization process in Tanzania can be well explained by examining the role of sub-national actors: the councillors in local government, the citizenry and CSOs. What role do they play to ensure the government is decentralizing powers to local governments? It therefore focuses on examining whether sub-national actors in Tanzania are pressing for decentralization of power by making demands that would increase the autonomy of local governments and whether the strategies being used in articulating the devolutionary demands could pressurise the government to decentralize power.

Conceptual Framework
The concept of decentralization has attracted sufficient attention in the governance discourse. In its broadest sense decentralization is conceived as

anything seeking to dilute central control and its opposite is centralization (Mukandala, 2000). In operational terms decentralization involves inter or intra-organizational transfer of authority, functions, responsibilities or resources from higher to relatively lower levels of the same or different organization or institution (Rondinelli *et al*, 1984; Mutahaba1989; Adamolekun, 1991; Kiggundu, 2000; Pollit, 2005). For instance the government may decentralize by deregulating previously regulated sectors to open spaces for private sector or civil society participation. This would entail transferring of ownership and management responsibilities to the market or civil society. The government may also decentralize by delegating management responsibilities for specific tasks to other government organizations such as parastatals or by deconcentrating administrative responsibilities to field units of the central government. However, neither of these strategies seeks to devolve political authority from the central government.

Decentralization of power or political authority is effected through devolution strategy. Unlike previous strategies D-by-D aims at transferring of political, administrative and fiscal autonomies from central to local governments. Specifically decentralization by devolution entails altering intergovernmental relationship of power by devolving to democratically elected local governments the autonomy to make local policy decisions, hire and fire staff and impose local taxes (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999; Frizen and Lim, 2006 Manor, 1999; Kauzya, 2005; Eduardo, 2001; World Bank, 2003; Falleti, 2005; Kiggundu, 2000). As it can be seem from Table 1, D-by-D is different from other strategies of decentralization as it covers administrative, fiscal and political decentralization and local governments are recipient of the decentralized authority.

Table 1: Classification of decentralization types by strategy and recipient unit

Decentralization Strategy	Type of Decentralization/powers	Recipient institution
Privatization/ deregulation	Economic/ participation	Market, civil society
Deconcentration	Administrative	Governments bureaucratic units
Delegation	Administrative and Fiscal	public corporations, executive agencies
Devolution	Administrative, Fiscal and Political	Democratically elected Local governments

Source: Adapted from Steiner (2005).

The expected outcome of D-by-D is a changed central-local relationship and as analysts well put it that decentralization is inadequate if the powers on fiscal, administrative and political matters are not devolved to local governments and if the central-local relationship remains to be like that of master and servant (Oyugi, 1997; Rutinwa and Shivji, 2006). Therefore one can boast of effective decentralization of power if LGCs are free from government administrative commands in forms of directives or political decrees, if citizens have the autonomy to elect and sanction elected local leaders including the mayor/council chairperson and if LGCs are enabled to make by-laws without requiring central government approval. This autonomy in political affairs also goes hand in hand with increased fiscal transfers from the central government and discretionary power of LGCs to expend resources according to local priorities and plans and not according to the political preference of central government officials. Local governments also ought to have the powers over the management of decentralized functions and services including the whole function of human resource management. To avoid the possibility of national actors to temper with these powers easily D-by-D has to be supported by a sounding constitutional and legal framework.

The major reason as to why D-by-D is promoted relies on its potential to improve accountability and service delivery performance among others. However, there are as well, good arguments and evidences for opposing it as they are for its rationalization (Triesman, 2007; Mukandala, 2000; Fritzen and Lim, 2006; Manor, 1999). In many cases D-by-D is rationalized along technical lines of promoting efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery responsiveness or political concerns of strengthening local community empowerment through promoting local governance, democracy,

participation, accountability, and even economic concerns of resource mobilization (Kiggundu, 2000; Wunsch and Olowu, 1990; UN-Habitat, 2002, Scholz, 1997). Many of these theoretical justifications are not sufficiently supported with empirical evidences. Organizational paralysis, national disintegration; local patronage, clientilism and resource capture are some of the pitfalls associated with decentralization. Even though decentralization is not always good, Triesman's (2007) analysis found it not generally bad either. In the country like Tanzania where decades of centralization have proven consistent failure it is more safe and justifiable to think of D-by-D than the opposite.

This study was guided by a political approach in analysing the D-by-D process in Tanzania. Unlike organizational approaches that put emphasize on administrative efficiency the political approach puts power at the centre of analysis. Decentralization is therefore viewed as a political process in which actors are struggling for power and influence. The central government and its actors are viewed pulling towards centralization while sub-national actors pulling towards the opposite direction. National actors would prefer centralization to decentralization because they are more likely to benefit from: a centralized government budget, patron-client potential-through determining which person fills posts in the local government service and administrative control by dictating the dos and don'ts to local governments. Sub-national actors would prefer for decentralization because it deters national officials from imposing their will on local affairs by having sub-national actors exercising control over local matters.

A number of studies have revealed evidences which suggest that the quest for power and influence is always at the centre of implementing D-by-D reforms. For instance a sequential analysis of decentralization in Latin America revealed that national actors prefer decentralization of service delivery functions and sometimes finances but they prefer to retain political control which may serve to influence decisions made by sub-national officials (Falleti, 2005). Sub-national actors, on the other hand, prefer decentralization of political authority to finances and service delivery functions in that order (ibid.). Similarly James Wunsch (2001) observed that, once political authority, human resource management and fiscal powers are devolved to local government actors at the centre are persistently trying to recapture them. Comparing decentralization reforms of various countries of the world Shah and Thompson (2004) have concluded that the quest for appropriate division of powers among different levels of government is not always the primary

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reason as to why national government implement decentralization reforms in many countries.

Therefore it can be concluded that the government chooses to decentralize when there is a constraint for it to centralize. Something to appreciate here is that neither fully centralization is possible nor desirable by the government neither would be decentralization. The government will prefer some sort of decentralization because costs of centralizing may be unbearable. For instance organizational theorists have warned of negative effects of organizational complexity as centralization reaches its peak (Donaldson, 2011, Scott, 1992). Elsewhere in this study it has been revealed that unbearable consequences of centralization in the 1970s' forced the government to restructure in favour of decentralization of some sort. However, the government is unlikely to decentralize power unless there is a political pressure to do it. Experiences of Bolivia, Colombia and Uganda reveal decentralization of power to local governments is more likely when national regimes are concerned with reducing local resistance and achieving local legitimacy (Eaton *et al*, 2010). In Tanzania where the incumbent government is relatively enjoying the majority support at local levels as evidenced by its continued dominance in local government elections concerns for legitimacy would rarely push it to decentralize power. This implies government's decentralization of power in Tanzania would require sub-national actors pressing for decentralization by consistently raising devolutionary concerns and resisting centralization motives. Studies from other regions of the world show that in countries where decentralization of power has been effective it is largely attributed to societal pressure for local government autonomy exerted by organized interests of sub-national actors including sub-national political leaders and the civil society fighting for local autonomy and resisting centralization tendencies (Falleti, 2005; Larson, 2005; Magno, 2001). In aid dependent countries including Tanzania the donor community has also been instrumental in promoting and pushing for D-by-D reforms but hardly have their efforts resulted into central governments transferring powers to local government despite notable progress in adopting D-by-D policies. It can therefore be asserted that a stalling D-by-D process in Tanzania has its expression in the extent to which there is a pressure for decentralization of power from below.

The political approach is more pragmatic in explaining the decentralization process because it goes beyond addressing simple questions of why governments choose to decentralize to why they effectively devolve power or resist doing so. While decentralization of some sort is inevitable due to

complexity within the government as highlighted above the push from sub-national actors is necessary in realizing devolution of political, administrative and fiscal powers. In subsequent sections the extent to which sub-national actors in Tanzania are pressing for decentralization of power is examined.

Methodological Issues

In realising its goals, the study used a semi-structured interview schedule and collected the views of 60 councillors and 152 ordinary citizens in both Kinondoni and Muleba districts. Responses from these two categories of respondents were substantiated by key informant interviews with 8 senior leaders of local governments including, from every district, 2 villages/street chairpersons, a council chairperson or mayor and a council director. The field exercise was conducted in May and June 2009. In addition, the national level analysis which involved collection and analysis of documentary information from 5 national level CSOs was conducted. These were selected from a list of CSOs that was available on the NGO-Policy Forum website. CSOs involved were the HakiElimu, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), the Leadership Forum, the Policy Forum and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP).

The study districts were conveniently chosen but based on the ground that Kinondoni is predominantly urban district, with a wider media exposure and vibrant CSOs compared to Muleba. The Kinondoni municipal council is also relatively well resourced in terms of own revenue generation. However, these districts can broadly mirror a general picture of rural and urban LGCs in Tanzania. The 8 senior leaders of local governments were selected based on the virtue of their positions as they are likely to be informed of key events that might have happened in their areas. The councillor respondents were randomly selected from the lists that were obtained from LGCs' directors and citizen respondents were selected from the lists of households that were obtained from hamlet/street chairpersons. The procedure of obtaining citizen respondents involved various random selection stages including in this order, the selection of a single ward in the district; two villages/streets from the ward and drawing a systematic sample of 38 households per each village/street. Only adult citizens aged 18 years or above and in equal number of males and females from every village/street were interviewed.

The sub-national actors' struggle for decentralization of power in Tanzania

The local government councillors, the ordinary citizens (the citizenry) and CSOs are considered to be key sub-national actors in this study. These actors

are expected to pressurise for decentralization of power because unlike national actors they are most likely beneficiaries of decentralization. The local government councillors in Tanzania are the representatives of the local population to LGCs. Most of them are directly elected by the citizenry after every five years and some are appointed on affirmative basis to fill special seats for women. One of the roles of the councillors is to maintain dialogue with citizens concerning their needs and expectations. They are also obliged to maintain a continuous dialogue with Regional Secretariats and Central Government in order to make sure that the interests of local governments are promoted and safeguarded (URT, 2007b). Local government councillors are therefore key sub-national actors in promoting and defending local government autonomy against the encroachment of the central government. The citizenry constitutes another category of sub-national actors as serving them responsibly is the main target of decentralization. In a democracy the citizenry has electoral power and can use it to influence government behaviour. Therefore if they are largely concerned with local autonomy and are pressing for it the government is more likely to decentralize so that to continue enjoying electoral support. CSOs make another important actor in the decentralization process. Magno (2001) insists that CSOs are expected to enhance the performance of coordinated ventures through their advocacy, organizing and capacity building. They can sensitize the public about government encroachment on local autonomy but also can coordinate efforts of other actors to effectively pressurize for decentralization. To what extent are they pressing for decentralization of power? What kind of demands they make and how effective are the strategies they use? In examining the role of sub-national actors these questions addressed in turn.

The views of the councillors were solicited to find out the extent to which LGCs were exerting pressure for decentralization of power. Half of the councillor respondents (50%) claimed their council to have voiced devolutionary concerns and majority of those were able to mention the demands that were raised. However, a considerable 43% said their council had never claimed for decentralization of power while the remaining 7% declined to answer. However, as Table 2 shows, this figure seems to be largely skewed by the responses from Muleba such that it would be inappropriate to generalize this particular finding to both councils. For instance, as it can be seen from the table a combination of the "yes" responses (the number of respondents who claimed their LGC to have pressed for decentralization of power) was 60% in Kinondoni and 40% in Muleba. Similarly the majority, 16 out of 26 respondent councillors, who said their councils had never pressed

for decentralization, were from Muleba. It can therefore be argued that the intensity of exerting pressure for decentralization of power was much higher in Kinondoni municipal council than it was in Muleba district council.

Table 2: Percentage of councillors' responses on whether the LGC ever pressed for decentralization of power

Responses	Kinondoni		Muleba		Both councils
	Frequency	Percent	Total	Percent	Percentage
Yes (mentioning the demands/ action taken)	17	56.7	7	23.3	40
Yes (no demands/mentioned)	1	3.3	5	16.7	10
Never (giving reasons)	8	26.7	11	36.7	31.7
Never (no reasons)	2	6.7	5	16.7	11.7
No Response/Don't know	2	6.7	2	6.7	6.7
Total (N=60)	n=30	100	n=30	100	100

Source: Field data May/June 2009.

The legal bases granting or delimiting the powers of LGCs in Tanzania is largely the same and hardly can one conceive of a substantive differences in the revel of autonomy among the councils. The fact that there seems to be a high intensity of pressing for decentralization in Kinondoni could be a result of many factors including the capacity of councillors to cognize government encroachment and act accordingly. For instance, in terms of education neither of 30 councillors who were interviewed in Muleba had a university education. Only 4 respondents had ordinarily diploma, 12 a secondary education and the remaining 13 had basic education. One councillor had an adult education. The situation in Kinondoni was largely different because 6 of them had a university education, 9 a diploma and the rest, a secondary education. Low level of education among the councillors seem to be a problem in many LGCs in the country and this has been reported (URT and UN-Habitat, 2006; *Tanzania Daima*, 2.10.2012). With weak education capacity the councillors' ability to analyse issues and organize effective advocacy for local government autonomy against government encroachment is largely constrained.

The percentage of councillor respondents whose views indicate LGCs never engaged in pressing for decentralization of power was considerably not small to ignore as it made up a total of 43% of the respondents in this group.

However and as it will be revealed shortly evidences indicating some attempts by councillors to press for decentralization of power especially in Kinondoni are encouraging. Therefore the fact that a section of councillors did not consider their LGCs to have pressed for decentralization largely suggests a lack of deliberate and dedicated agenda to press for decentralization of power than absence of decentralization pressure from the councils. Hardly could the 43% feature if the struggle for local government autonomy was a formal agenda within the council. Therefore, some of devolutionary claims reported to have been voiced by the councils might have been coincidental and some councillors would have seen them insignificant to qualify decentralization struggles. Some respondents even admitted that councillors were not demanding for autonomy but were simply complaining during the council meetings. There were those councillors who thought councillors did not demand for more powers not because their council was autonomous but because were never thought of it. However, there were those who said councils did not press for devolution because there was no need as they were already autonomous entities. Few said that councils' demands to the central government were being taken care by the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT). With these reasons it can be concluded that even though there were some instances of councillors voicing devolutionary demands within the councils, hardly could such attempts be conceived as a deliberate and dedicated struggle against centralization.

The exerting pressure for decentralization of powers among the ordinary citizens in studied districts was almost non-existent. For instance a substantial majority or 66% of all citizen respondents who were interviewed did not report occurrence of any incident that could be associated with citizens in the community pressing for decentralization of power. The next majority, 27% of the respondents did not respond which also suggest they could also not recall any incident of devolutionary struggle. Only a small section, 7% of the respondent reported occurrence of some events that could be slightly associated with citizenry pressuring for decentralization of power but in-depth interviews with the village and street leaders also confirmed the absence of occurring of incidences of devolutionary struggles in their areas. These findings suggest that ordinary citizens in the study district were less concerned with pressurizing for local government autonomy. This implies government moves to centralize power were hardly facing resistance from ordinary citizens. This however does not equal saying Tanzania's citizens are pro-centralization because the majority have, in various occasions, showed up pro-decentralization attitude. For instance back in 1999 the Presidential

Committee that collected peoples' views on the Constitution stated that the majority of Tanzanians wanted the Constitution to provide more powers to the LGCs than it is currently the case (URT, 1999). The study by Pastory (2010) also found about 57.2% of citizen respondents pro-decentralization especially in fiscal matters. Similarly the Afrobarometer (2009) survey also found 75% of citizens in Tanzania trusting their LGCs, despite the widely held opinion of corrupt practices in local government institutions. Pro-decentralization attitudes among ordinary citizens suggest that if mobilized citizens are very likely to press for decentralization of powers.

The dedication of CSOs in pressing the government to decentralize power to LGCs was also not found encouraging. For instance a content analysis of the strategic plans, implementation reports and publications of surveyed CSOs revealed only 6 incidences in which CSOs were engaged in pressurizing for decentralization of power between the year 1993 and 2009. Further analysis revealed that in the period of 11 years from 1992 to 2003 none of the five studied CSOs was engaged in decentralization struggle. This may be partly due to the fact that, with exceptions of TGNP which was formed in 1993 and the LHRC that was established in 1995, the rest of CSOs were founded after 1999. However, as Table 3 indicates there was an average of only one incident of devolutionary struggle per year from 2004 to 2009. These findings provide evidences that Tanzania's CSOs are not that much engaged in pressing for decentralization.

Table 3: Incidences of Devolutionary struggles by CSOs (2004-2009)

Incident of Devolutionary struggle	CSO involved	Year
Lobbying against the Constituency Development Fund Bill	The Policy Forum The Leadership Forum The HakiElimu	2009
Participated in national meeting to discuss a major review of LGR	The Policy Forum	2008
Organization of workshop on the future of LGR	The Policy Forum The Leadership Forum	2007
Lobbying Against the Local Government Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, 2006	The Policy Forum	2006
Monitoring and influencing release of educational	The Hakielimu	2005+

funds to LGCs		
Participated in national meeting to discuss a major review of LGR	The HakiElimu	2004

Source: Compiled by the Author from various documents of CSOs, August 2009.

As it can be seen from the Table above it is only the Policy Forum that stands out to be the most dedicated CSO in pressing for decentralization of power. In 2006 the Policy Forum established the Local Government Working Group (LGWG) whose "activities are geared towards supporting and influencing national level policies on Local Government Reform" (Policy Forum, n.d.). The working group would have enabled the Policy Forum to concentrate more on decentralization struggles than the rest. In October 2006, the Policy Forum attempted to defend local government interests by lobbying the parliamentarians against the Local Government Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, 2006. The argument advanced by the CSO was that the proposed amendment sought to undermine the political autonomy of LGCs as it aimed at authorizing the President and the Minister to appoint some local government councillors (Eyakuze, 2006). In the long run the struggle was successful because even-though the amendment was passed it has never been implemented. It was also found that in 2007, the Policy Forum collaborated with the Leadership Forum to organize a workshop on local government reform inviting participants from the ministry responsible for local government and using the opportunity to voice devolutionary concerns (Leadership Forum, 2007). However, the workshop did not involve participants from the LGCs. Moreover, during its participation in the formulation of the new local government reform programme in 2008 the Policy Forum emphasized on the decentralization of authority and it went further to defend the autonomy of local government by stating that political decrees regardless of how senior the politician making them should not take precedence over local priorities (Policy Forum, 2008a, 2008b). Its contribution is acknowledged in the draft paper for the new Local Government Reform Programme and Decentralization by Devolution, 2008.

The Hakielimu is another CSO which, at least, has attempted to influence and advocate for decentralization of power. It is reported that during its participation in the national meeting to discuss the major review of local government reform in 2004, Hakielimu was able to convince the government to introduce the formula based local government grant system for education and health sectors (HakiElimu, 2005). The documentary review also shows it

has been monitoring and influencing the release of funds for education sector to LGCs (HakiElimu, 2004). Pressing of decentralization of power by the LHRC and TGNP was almost non-existent. While, for instance, LHRC is credited for its commendable efforts in fighting for good governance and human rights in the country, it has been largely silent when it comes to pressing for decentralization. It is only through pressurizing the government to implement the Nyalali Commission's recommendations the LHRC peripherally seem to have voiced devolutionary concerns (LHRC, 2006)[2]. Similarly as for TGNP none of its reviewed documents indicate its involvement in the struggle for the devolution of powers.

CSOs are expected to be in a forefront in pressurizing for decentralization because they are the right actors to sensitise and mobilize the other sub-national actors to take active role in pressing for decentralization. The fact that their involvement in the decentralization process has been largely occasional gives an impression that a consistent pressure for decentralization of power from below is largely lacking.

In summing up this section the evidences revealed above clearly show that generally sub-national actors in Tanzania have not been effectively engaged in pressurizing the government to decentralize power to LGCs. With some exceptions of the councillors in Kinondoni as well as the Policy Forum and Hakielimu the pressure for decentralization from the other actors was rather very low or, to draw a radical conclusion, not existing. It can therefore be argued that whenever the government has chosen to centralize power there has been little to no resistance from sub-national actors. The fact that the citizenry seem to abstain from pressing for decentralization compared to councillors and CSOs probably makes the government even more comfortable with centralization. In the subsequent section the kind decentralization demands voiced by sub-national actors as well as the strategies used to articulate them are analysed.

The demands and strategies in pressing for decentralization
Decentralization demands that were being voiced by sub-national actors need to be examined in the light of ascertaining whether they are challenging systemic issues affecting the autonomy of the local governments in the country. In this regard sub-national actors would be expected to make demands that focus on decentralization of political/decision making, human resource management and fiscal powers to local governments.

Table 4 shows the expected decentralization/devolutionary demands to be voiced by the councillors versus the actual demands which were being made in two LGCs. The findings are based on the views of the councillor respondents who admitted their councils to have had pressed for decentralization of power as it was revealed previously in Table 2 above. The demands have been classified into four categories including the ones relating to decentralization of fiscal, administrative and political powers as well as leadership welfare. Some of the demands that were reported by the councillors in Kinondoni include: the autonomy to make decisions over the control of the municipal land, decentralization of property and land taxes, providing allowances to sub-district chairpersons and tax exemption for councillors. Respondents in Muleba reported to have asked the government to increase subsidy for their council, make timely disbursement of funds, provide allowances for sub-district chairpersons and to give loans to the councillors to purchase motor cycles.

Table 4 Categorization of devolutionary demands voiced by councillors in LGCs

Demand Category	Expected demands	Actual demand	Total incidences
Fiscal autonomy	Increased government subsidy	Increased subsidy	4
	More sources of revenue	Decentralization of land tax Decentralization of property tax	
	Power to expend resources	Timely disbursement of funds	
Administrative autonomy	Appointment and disciplinary powers over senior executives of local governments	None	0
Political autonomy	Powers to make decisions	Autonomy to decide on land matters	1
Leadership welfare		Allowances for sub-district leadership	

		Tax exemption for councillors,	4
		Health insurance for councillors,	
		Motor cycle loans for councillors	

Source: Field Data May/June 2009.

It was alleged by the councillor respondents in Kinondoni that contrary to decentralization policy, the ministry responsible for lands continued to encroach on the powers of the municipal council by surveying, allocating plots and deciding on change of land use in areas under the municipal authority without even the involvement of the latter. Some of the respondents said that the council stood against the ministry's encroachment and was able to regain its autonomy. The views of one of the respondents who reported on the matter deserve a quote and he said:

> We have made demands on various matters. For instance, we held a meeting with the ministry of lands and the ministry's permanent secretary as we wanted the municipal council to have decision-making autonomy over its land and we succeeded! (Interview, June 2009).

Also the respondents from Kinondoni reported to have successfully fought for the decentralization of land tax and during the study some of them said councillors were continuing to press for decentralization of recentralized property tax. The fact that the councillors in Kinondoni were somewhat able to defend some interests of their council against government encroachment demonstrates that sub-national actors are likely to succeed in resisting central government motives of centralizing powers. The councillors in Muleba complained of frequent delays in releasing of funds from the central government despite repeated calls for timely disbursement. This was also confirmed by the senior council leader during the interview as he said:

> We always demand for timely disbursement of funds every year but the situation remains the same. As you can see, this is May and according to MTEF [the Medium Term Expenditure Framework] we are in the last quarter but we are yet to receive the funds for the third quarter from the central government. (Interview, May 2009).

As it can be seen from the table above councillors' demands patterning to fiscal matters were somewhat substantive as they were aiming at increasing fiscal capacity of LGCs. These demands might have been influenced by what Adeyemo (2005) calls the tendency of central governments to devolve many functions disproportionately to the amount of finances being decentralized. In Tanzania this has been also the case as it was evidenced by decision to decentralize the responsibility of secondary education discussed elsewhere in this study. Experiences also show that LGCs in Tanzania are consistently suffering from fiscal deficits therefore many demands on fiscal decentralization would not be a surprise. Astonishingly the councillors did not make any demand aimed at increasing their administrative autonomy especially on matters patterning to the management of human resources. This implies that autonomy over appointment and disciplining of senior staff in the local government service was not a major concern among the councillors. With regards to demands on decentralization of decision making power there was an isolated case involving the councillors in Kinondoni where they pushed for decentralization of decision making autonomy on land matters. These findings suggest that despite many wishes of autonomous local governments among the councillors, they are yet to make substantive demands that would address the lack of autonomy in decision making and administrative affairs. To the contrary, councillors were more preoccupied with voicing concerns related leadership welfare interests. Even though some of the welfare demands such are transport facilitation and allowances for sub-district leadership may be justified, hardly would they make impact on increasing the autonomy of local government. Also, some kind of the welfare-related demands may be motivated by rent-seeking behaviour of individuals and may not easily attract support from the general public.

The nature of devolutionary demands that were being voiced by the councillors in the study districts hardly questioned systemic issues affecting central-local relations such as the laws and the Constitution. Besides, the demands tended to be parochial, concerned more with addressing the needs of a particular council than being focused on changing the local government system as whole. Hardly can the demands of this nature be expected to make significant impact in altering the relationship of power between central and local governments or effectively deter the government from recentralizing.

The majority of respondents who admitted their LGCs to have had demanded for autonomy mentioned the ways that were used to convey the demands when they were asked to do. As it is indicated in Table 5, of the strategies that

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were mentioned, the council meeting was the most frequently cited avenue for communicating devolutionary demands in both councils achieving the highest score (63%). In this regard, it was revealed during the interviews that, when a particular issue arises, councillors use their normal forum (committees and the full council meetings) to discuss and then deliberate in the full-council to forward the concern through the ministry responsible for local governments. This implies that councillors are mostly relying on a formalized procedure of voicing their demands. This mechanism might be most preferred by the councillors because it is safe and easy for them to air concerns due to the immunity guarantee the councillors have during council meetings (URT 2007b).

Table 5: Councillors' strategies for articulating devolutionary Demands: frequencies and percentages in brackets

Strategies	Both councils	Kinondoni	Muleba
Council Meetings	19 (63)	14 (63.6)	5 (62.25)
ALAT	2 (7)	1 (4.6)	1(12.5)
Representation through MPs	2 (7)	2 (9.1)	0
Delegation to government (Consultation)	4 (13)	4 (18.2)	0
Speaking to government officials visiting LGCs	3 (10)	1 (4.6)	2 (25)
Total	30 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)

Source: Field Interviews conducted in May/June 2009.

The findings also reveal that, unlike in Muleba district council, the councillors in Kinondoni were also sending messages through their Members of Parliament and also relied on sending delegation to the government as strategies of advancing the council's interests. During the interviews it was found that sending a delegation to the government was an effective strategy and it was employed after the council realized that channelling demands through council meetings and the ministry responsible for local government was ineffective strategy to get their demands met. For instance the respondent were convinced that their municipal council was able to regain its autonomy on land matters after the councillors organized and sent a delegation to the Minister responsible for lands. Proximity to the headquarters of government ministries would have made it easier for the councillors in Kinondoni to opt for delegation/consultation strategy than would be the case for the councillors in Muleba and probably many other LGCs outside Dar es Salaam

due to cost implications. Apart from relying on council meetings to voice concerns the councillors in Muleba waited until a high level government official visited the council and used the chance to convey their demands, otherwise the Association for Local Authorities in Tanzania (ALAT) was mentioned as the remaining alternative.

These findings show that the councillors in the council districts tended to operate in safe mode when pressing for decentralization than using activism kind of strategies. Strategies such as mass mobilization of citizens, press releases, press conferences, mass media publicity/media advocacy, and public education/campaigns which would generate a wider public sensitization and support were never used by the councillors to pressurise for autonomy. Possibly in anticipation of potential threat, if the councillors would stood strongly to oppose the central power, the government has confined the councillors' role to be only that of representation through consultations, internal meetings and visits (URT, 2007b). This is likely to be hindering the councillors from carrying out an effective advocacy campaign for autonomous local government system as one of the respondents from Kinondoni who also had the view that their council never demanded for more powers revealed.

> We [councillors] are the ones to tell the government to give powers to our council, but how can you as the councillor struggle against the government? We don't even have such a forum to criticize the government. (Interview, June 2009).

By relying on formalized strategies however safe they are councillors are missing the opportunity to appeal to the general public for support in case the government decides not to yield to their demands. Besides, many of formalized strategies tend to be constrained with bureaucratic procedures.

The current political situation in the country could also be pushing councillors to avoid using activism kind of strategies to challenge centralization and call for more local government autonomy. This is because even though Tanzania has been a democratic multiparty state since 1992 it remains a one party dominance and post in LGCs are mostly filled by majority of councillors from the ruling party, CCM. For instance prior the 2010 General Elections when this study was conducted CCM was dominating in both councils with more than 80% of councillors in Muleba and 100% in Kinondoni. The situation country-wide was that with exception of two LGCs namely Karatu and Tarime and partly, Kigoma District Council, CCM won significant majority seats in the

remaining 120 LGCs that participated in the 2005 general elections (National Electoral Commission, 2005). After the 2010 elections the opposition took a lead only in 8 out of 134 councils. CCM dominance of LGCs is likely to have negative implications to the councillors in pressing for decentralization of powers. In Tanzania the state and the ruling party are much fused such that it is difficult to draw a boundary between the two (Makulilo, 2008). This means the party is also the prime beneficiary of the existing local government system. In this regard therefore, serious demands for devolution of powers by the councillors would not only be posing threat to the government officials but also, to the ruling party and the consequence would lie with "the dissident councillors".   There are demonstrable cases where "the dissent councillors" have faced the party whip after attempting to exercise their autonomy (*Habari Leo*, 17.6.2010; *The Citizen* 17.8. 2013).[3]

Compared to decentralization demands that were being raised by the councillors, the demands by CSOs were largely focused in pressing for local government autonomy in political/decision making, human resources management and fiscal decentralization (see Table 6 below). However, in most cases the demands which were articulated by CSOs did not call for institutional reforms such as attempting to press the government to reform the Constitution and the laws governing central-local government relations. Moreover, the devolutionary demands voiced have been few and spontaneous. In many cases CSOs tended to be reactive responding to a certain issue instead of continuous advocacy and struggle for local government autonomy. In most cases the struggle by CSOs tended to exclude the councillors and the citizenry. For instance, with exception of protesting against the CDF Bill where there was a demonstrable level of citizens' mobilization by collecting disapproval signatures, in none of the activities of CSOs were the ordinary citizens or the councillors involved.

In terms of strategy CSOs also relied more on consultative than activism kind of strategies. Table 9 below show that in five incidences in which CSOs were involved in struggling for devolution of powers consultation with government was used three times while legislative lobbying, demonstration, citizen engagement and mass media publicity were employed once. However, in two of the incidences in which consultative strategy was adopted, CSOs did not initiate the process by themselves but were invited by the government to participate and used the opportunity to voice devolutionary concerns. Generally CSOs' activism in Tanzania is relatively weak and this has been confirmed by the study on capacity assessment of the CSO networks which

concluded that the level and instances of engagement of CSOs in policy dialogues is not very encouraging (Foundation for Civil Society, 2008).

Table 6: Decentralization Struggles, the Demands and Strategies of CSOs in Tanzania

Incidences of Devolutionary struggle	Decentralization Demands	Strategies
Lobbying Against the Local Government Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, 2006	Devolution of political/decision making autonomy	Legislative lobbying/ legislative committee testimony
Organization of workshop on the future of LGR	-Decentralization of finances, human resources management and decision making autonomy	Consultation with government (PMO-RALG
Participation in new LGRP	-Devolution of decision making and human resources management autonomy, harmonization of laws with D-by-D	Consultation with the government (the Formulation Team)
Lobbying against Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Bill	-Increase of subsidy to local governments	Demonstration before the house of parliament, Collection of citizens' signatures Mass media publicity,
Participated in national meeting to discuss a major review of LGR	-A call for a formula-based local government grant system	Consultation with government
Monitoring of release of funds	Fiscal decentralization to educational sector	Media publicity

Source: Compiled from various documents of the CSOs, August 2009.

The role of CSOs in ensuring the decentralization of powers is very crucial because they are the ones expected to bring together other sub-national actors

to pressurise for decentralization. Apart from lobbying and advocacy activities CSOs are also expected to sensitise and build the capacity of the citizenry and the councillors to see the need of pressurising for local autonomy and defending local government interests. However, it was only during the struggle against the passing of CDF Bill in 2009 where there was a demonstrative engagement of the citizenry by CSOs. During that period the Policy Forum in collaboration with other CSOs ran a number of Television and Radio adverts and produced brochures and booklets that aimed at sensitizing the public about the dangers of CDF (*Mwananchi*, 4.7. 2009). They also collected disapproval signatures from the citizens and made attempt to demonstrate before the House in Dodoma. One of the arguments that were posed against the bill was that the CDF will interfere with the authority of local governments and CSOs wanted the government to increase subsidy to LGCs and not providing funds to CDF. The main focus of CSOs was however to prevent parliamentarians from engaging in executive functions and arguments for increasing subsidy for local governments were simply consequential.

Conclusion
It was asserted in this study that decentralization is a political process in which actors struggle for power and influence. While national actors are likely to be driven by centralization motives the sub-national actors are concerned with decentralization. Sub-national actors have therefore to exert pressure for the national actors in the government to decentralize power. Sub-national actors have rarely pushed the government to decentralize power to local governments. Even though there have been some cases where the councillors and some CSOs have attempted to press for decentralization, the struggle has tended to be patchy and disjointed with each actor almost taking a unilateral move in pressurising the government. The citizenry whom would have formed the core of the struggle were rather adamant despite their many wishes of autonomous local government system. Generally the popular struggle for decentralization of power is lacking in Tanzania such that in very rare cases the government faces resistance whenever it chooses to centralize. Sub-national actors would need to move beyond the observed state of affairs if they are really wishing for a devolved local government system. This would entail pressing for institutional reforms that would ultimately change the relationship of power between the central and local governments than just concentrating on defending the meagre autonomy local governments are already having. Meaningful demands for decentralization would be the ones

geared towards changing the Constitution and national laws to ensure appropriate safeguards of local government autonomy.

Notes

1. This article is part of my unpublished M.A. Dissertation submitted to the University of Dar es Salaam in 2010. I would like to thank Prof. Bernadeta Killian who was my supervisor.

2. LHRC has been following on and pressuring for the implementation of the recommendations of the Nyalali Commission that wants the government to amend or repeal the oppressive laws.

3. In June 2010 the councillors in Tanga Municipal Council were seriously rebuked by the Regional Party Chairperson for having opposed the Regional Commissioner's decision to terminate the contract, for road construction, between the council and a construction company (*Habari Leo*, 17.6.2010). The Regional Party Chairperson argued that the councillors' action was going against their own government and the party they represent. In the said contract, the contractor was reported to have underperformed and councillors' claim was that the Regional Commissioner had no mandate to terminate the contract and implementing his decision would lead their council into a contractual crisis. Interesting to note the Tanga Municipal council was dominated by CCM councillors by about 90%. Recently (August 2013) in Bukoba Muncipal Council eight CCM councillors were expelled by the CCM regional leadership for deliberating to remove the CCM Mayor from the office on allegations of embezzlement (*The Citizen*, 17.8.2013). They were later reinstated by CCM national leadership probably after smelling possibilities of losing by-elections.

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