


Recentralization of Kampala City Administration in Uganda: Implications for Top and Bottom Accountability

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Nabukeera Madinah¹, Ali Boerhannoeddin²,
Raja Noriza Binti Raja Ariffin², and Bwengye Michael³

Abstract

The government disseminated a new constitution in 1995 with the provision on decentralization of Article 176 2 (b) that acted shortly before the rebirth of the local government act in 1997. Devolution as a form of decentralization transferred both political and administrative powers from the center to lower local councils specially to handle the responsibility of service delivery. Following the approval of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Act 2010, the city's administration reverted to the central government. Detractors of decentralization allege that the conveyance in the policy and legislation for change of Kampala city administration was timely because decentralization failed to deliver desired services to residents. This article contends that recentralization of Kampala city administration was a necessary evil, it decreased the autonomy of sub-national governments in civil service administration, eroded accountability to the electorates, and transferred the allegiance of the accounting officer from local governments with and for which they work to the central government that designates and positions. To inflame accountability in local governments, the article champions for the reexamining of the KCCA Act 2010 to allow power sharing between the mayor and executive director to enhance bottom-up accountability, checks and balances, and for participation of central government in appointing of executive director to allow financial and security support. It additionally requests for a reconsideration of the 9th Parliament to lobby for the amendments owing to challenges in its implementation and impact on accountability.

Keywords

recentralization, service delivery, KCCA, accountability, local government

Introduction

The concept of centralization was shared among the post-colonial countries in the 1960s, and the reasons for it were the need for central development planning and an appeal for contemporary ways of handling development plans, which emerged as a result of the growth occurrences because the society had not become more complex. The alteration from central to local authority was noticed in Latin America, Africa, and Asia in the 1970s as a result of the disenchantment with the centralized system of governance (Brillantes & Cuachon, 2002; Burns, Hambleton, & Hoggett, 1994; Smoke, 2003). Over the past several decades, many countries have implemented decentralization as an all-embracing strategy for government transformation (Smith, 1985).

In developed countries, decentralization was stimulated as a way of rationalizing government administration and addressing the frustration of red tape and service provision (Burns et al., 1994). Although decentralization was motivated to expand service delivery and check on the central

government failures in East Asia (White & Smoke, 2005), the rationale was different in sub-Saharan Africa due to increased demand for people participation in decision making as a result of multi-party politics (Smoke, 2003), whereas the desire for the democratization process influenced decentralization in Latin America (Burns et al., 1994).

Many countries that had earlier undertaken decentralization are now recentralizing and increasing their number of administrative units (Malesky, Nguyen, & Tran, 2012). This trend is not unique to Uganda but Africa in general and other countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Brazil, Morocco,

¹Islamic University in Uganda, Mbale, Uganda

²University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

³Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Kampala, Uganda

Corresponding Author:

Nabukeera Madinah, Lecturer, Faculty of Management, Islamic University in Uganda, Mbale, Uganda.

Email: nabmadinah@gmail.com



Indonesia, and Vietnam (Lewis, 2014; Malesky, 2009). Although this transformation has significant implications in the way it alters the comprehensive assortment of power relations specifically the electorates', the topography, economic, and community closeness to local representatives and administrators' contact points for services provision, as well as local authorities' relationships with the central state, have been widely ignored by researchers. The emphasis of this article is that the decentralization led to recentralization of Kampala city, which later weakened bottom accountability to the electorate.

This was supported by Grossman and Lewis (2014), that the creation of districts leads to "change in the intergovernmental balance of power that favors the central government since the units have low bargaining power and tend to be highly dependent on the center for resources, planning, and service delivery" (p. 215), which also facilitates "dependency in terms of administrative centralization" (Lewis, 2014, p. 576) and increasing the number of units has many implications to nations (Malesky, 2009).

Uganda dispersed a new constitution in 1995 (Government of Uganda [GOU], 1995) with the provision on decentralization of Article 176 2 (b) that acted shortly before the rebirth of the Local Government Act (GOU, 1997). Devolution as a form of decentralization transferred both political and administrative powers from the center to lower local councils specially to handle the responsibility of service delivery. The elected mayors, chair persons, and councils of sub-counties in Kampala were locally accountable to the electorate, and public service was therefore considered to be the mast of highly decentralized local governance.

The failure for local governments in Kampala to deliver services resulted into a new Kampala City Council (KCC) Act where we witnessed partnership arrangements and inter-governmental relationships (city-sub-county merger) under the current administration of KCC (herein after referred to as Kampala Capital City Authority—KCCA¹), which was set up after the approval of the KCC Act (GOU, 2010) and the appointment of the current executive director as the chief executive of the authority, the accounting officer, and headship of the central government in the authority. This would help to restructure, transform, and reposition the authority to deliver quality services to the people of Kampala.

When President Yoweri Kagutta Museveni took state power after a protracted war (1980-1986), drastic changes in local government were witnessed. The president's guiding principle of participatory democracy through decentralization was to delegate tasks, duties, and accountabilities from the center to the local units (Okumu-Wengi, 1994; Villadsen & Lubanga, 1996). The policy intention was to enhance the transfer of scale and scope responsibilities at the lowest possible administration unit, which has been described as a form of alteration that is remarkable among developing nations (Steiner, 2006). From one standpoint, the policy has been described by Francis and James (2003) as the greatest

wholesale local revolution reorganization program among all developing countries. Another point of view by Mitchinson (2003) maintains that Uganda's localization agenda is a unique, comprehensive delegation inventiveness of any state in the time release.

After the central government conceding its inability to provide services because of its big debts and obligations, the resistance statute was put in place. This was accompanied by the Local Government Act, which empowered local government to deliver services through contracting out (GOU, 1997). The central government adopted the decentralization policy to empower district governments and lower government units with a view of taking services nearer to the people. It was the way of involving people in their affairs so as to give them the best in terms of quality and quantity.

Local government under decentralization embraced contracting out selected public services to private firms. Tenders were awarded to successful firms to deliver particular services to the people, and in the late 1990s and late 2000s, it had become a fashion for all the districts in Uganda. Contracting out had proved to be an important method of prioritizing community social services, which is in the 1997 Local Government Act.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCT; 1995) addressed privatization as a national strategy of giving mandate to the local people to determine their priorities and also is in line with Article One of the Uganda's Constitution (GOU, 1995) which states that power belongs to the people. However, there are some misgivings about the whole concept of contracting out in the delivery of services under the decentralization program. Some of the contracts have been taken over by "Mafias' Who Hijack Tenders and Deliver 'Air'" (2002; Monitor Newspaper, 2002). These are accusations and counter accusations of corruption and substandard work by firms (Monitor Newspaper, 2002). Two decades later, public services were not desirable. According to a local newspaper in Uganda (Semujju, 2013), the majority of Ugandans decry of poor service delivery.

The disappointment of private-public partnership and the accumulation of districts to 117 by 2012 coupled with scarce resources found many new districts unfortunate. Because the expansion has not been proportional to the growth of the resource envelope, infrastructure, and human resources, services delivery in many districts has stagnated.

It was envisioned that the authority would become an institution that would transform the past challenges of inadequate and poor quality service, lack of operational guidelines and standards, inadequate professionalism, poor inspection to confirm compliance to approved specifications, corruption, among many other service delivery issues, into operations with clearly defined administrative and technical structures that would enable the government to deliver much needed services to the residents of Kampala City.

The authority was established with a strong legal framework as detailed in the KCC Act (GOU, 2010) with the

mandate of providing a territorial boundary for Kampala and with a view of providing the following: developmental services; providing the structure and voting of representatives of the authority as well as their removal; voting and elimination of the lord mayor and deputy mayor; the arrangement, controls, and roles of the executive director and deputy executive director; to provide for the lower urban councils; the devolution of tasks and amenities, delivery of services for a city physical planning authority for Kampala and neighboring regions, among many other issues. This legal framework was intended to guide the operations and conduct of the authority, the administrative staff as well as the political arm of the authority.

With the onset of the said Act, it became critical to start a process of reviewing the authority-specific policies and organizational, structural, and governance issues pertaining to the effective and efficient operations of this very important body in the creation and establishment of effective systems, processes, and controls in its operations. It became imperative to evaluate the realignments and best practices in their operations and wider civil service to ascertain the implication of district creation and later recentralization of Kampala on top-bottom accountability to the electorate.

The article proceeds as follows: First, we explore the introduction of the decentralization reform; second, discuss the theories underpinning recentralization; and third, methodology. We then discuss the recentralization of Kampala City; fourth, we provide the post-recentralization scenario, and offer the underpinnings of how recentralization of Kampala city undermined bottom accountability, as well as the change in power and control, and also provide the restricted power for the political wing in KCCA and then conclude with discussion of our findings in the section "Conclusion."

Theories Underpinning Recentralization

Basing on the depiction from various initial theories of combined dynamic action, institutional approach, collective action, democratic representation, intergovernmental relations, and state building, this article argues that with the option of decentralization reforms, district unit creation makes states vulnerable to recentralization of intergovernmental authority, which then affects accountability to the electorate due to "over dependence at the centre" (Lewis, 2014, p. 576). We propose five means through which this can happen and each suggests a separate domain of intergovernmental relations, institution, democratic, change in power and control, and restricted power for political representatives that is influenced by the creation of several new district units.

First, there are extras beyond the design of the decentralized system than allocation of revenue and expenditure responsibilities to various ranks of the state. The argument by Azfar, Kähkönen, Lanyi, Meagher, and Rutheford (1999) and Litvack, Ahmad, and Bird (1998) is that, institutions

determine the accomplishment of any program, this may imply the game rules of the society and limitations that affect the organization, human behavior, and other means that support the guidelines. Chanie (2007) and Bahl (1999) argued that decentralization will capture accountability upwards, improve transparency, and increase local voice if local leadership is elected rather than appointed by higher level of government, and if this is adhered to, it can improve the relationship between the center and region.

Second, intergovernmental relationship determines the complex relationship between different levels of governments due to mixing power with accountability tasks. This relationship is regarded as reciprocal, where one relies on the other to perform certain tasks components (Chanie, 2007). The relationship is multifaceted due to the variations in the corresponding roles of both higher and lower local governments confirmed by cumulative alterations in number and responsibilities in delivering most of the communal services appropriate for local demands through over-reliance on the center through the joining capacity to act collectively.

Third, the partition of units upholds not only transfer of resources and decision-making power to lower levels of government, but also lowers representatives with authority to be accountable to the citizens, requests for accountability, and improves public involvement in the lower local political practice. The advocates of this argue that, there is nothing less than total involvement in the process of policy formulation and they insist on full participation of individual inhabitants rather than pseudo-participation (Hart, 1972), which reduces accountability to the voters.

Fourth is the change in power and control through creating various channels of reporting. This lessens the span of control and leads to over-supervision of lower representatives, hence becoming accountable to the center rather than the electorate because their positions have been made ceremonial. Finally the restricted power for political reform of creation of many units has deprived elected politicians and remarkably weakened mechanism of democracy in favor of center. This leads to different collusion and contestation among local representatives because the reforms have underprivileged their controls and influence.

Although bottom accountability issues are frequently ignored in prevailing studies on decentralization, it plays a significant part in center-lower dealings and country structure in many modern African countries due to weak institutions inherited from the past colonial masters and an associated susceptibility to sideline revolutions.

To validate these opinions, the article explores chronological disparity in the scope of recentralization and decentralization in Uganda. Uganda is an appropriate example for this study because, similar to many African nations, in the 1980s it diverted from a post-independence period branded by centralized system of governance.

In the initial 1990s, it embraced and commenced extremely aspiring decentralization transformations and

other national development program efforts, although in the same period undergoing frequent rural rebellions. In present years, under the governance of President Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM), that has controlled the country for almost three decades, the country has converted gradually to a centralized system of governance including the units within the capital city Kampala (CCK).

Using original evidence from field interviews, and academic and policy studies on Uganda, we explored the associations between district unit multiplication as a result of Uganda's ambitious decentralization policy and the center succeeding, reducing of delegated control of political power through the use of Act 2010 (GOU, 2010), restricted power for politicians, and administrative and intergovernmental control that undermined accountability to the electorate.

Finally, as we contend below, the creation of districts as administrative units expected to have impacts on intergovernmental stability of authority thus support the developments of recentralization.

We explore the reduction of delegated control of political power through use of the Act (GOU, 2010) which restricted power for politicians, administrative workforce using intergovernmental control of division unit creation and this has undermined bottom accountability. Notwithstanding the occurrence of district creation in emerging nations and its prospects to significantly form the economic, political, and social consequences, the prevailing academic works on the causes of these occurrences are not sufficient that we pursue to address.

The current literature addresses top-down strategy, political incentives, importance, agency of local actors, ethnic patronage network, fading powers of provincial opposition powers, and effects of how proliferation shapes the intergovernmental balance of power (Green, 2010; Grossman & Lewis, 2014; Kasara, 2006; Kraxberger, 2004; Lewis, 2014). We speculate that the employed justification of district creation leading to recentralization reform is significant for the political survival of the NRM regime.

This article makes two significant contributions to the promising district proliferation literature. One contribution is the premeditated, planned, and protected efforts by the state to negate some of the elements for smooth managing of the policy, and second, the negative impact of recentralization of Kampala city on bottom accountability and the findings in this article have implications for several diverse literatures.

Overall, this article participates in building the literature on decentralization, arguing that even when decentralization reforms are characterized by creating more districts through dividing big districts into small ones, it can have far-reaching effects hence contributing to recentralization of power. The linkage between district unit creation and intergovernmental authority is forthright because it is through the relationships that accountability to the electorates is undermined and this article builds on Grossman and Lewis (2014), Lewis (2014), and Ziblatt (2004), who argue that the creation of a large

number of new local governments fragments existing ones into smaller units with lower intergovernmental power and weak administrative capacity. Such a situation contributes to an augment of dependence of local governments on the resources and technical expertise of the central government (Lewis, 2014).

In the last part of our study, we offer evidence from interviews with mayors, deputy mayors, councilors, senior administrative staff in KCCA, ministry of public service, ministry of local government, and ministry of health in the five sub-counties that settles with our argument that recentralization of districts that shadowed Uganda's decentralization transformations backed up the recent recentralization of power hence undermining bottom accountability. To the best of our knowledge, no previous study reflects the possibility that the assumed to be just an indicator of decentralization program can indeed lessen bottom accountability and affect the intergovernmental authority.

Method

This qualitative study investigates the consequences of recentralization of Kampala city administration on top-bottom accountability in a highly devolved country. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 15 codes and 35 interviews purposively selected from mayor, deputy mayors, councilors, senior administrative staff in KCCA, ministry of public service, ministry of local government, and ministry of health in the five sub-counties of KCCA in Uganda. The information was analyzed using thematic and content analysis. Although the findings are not generalizable globally, they nuance our understanding of perverse effects of recentralization of city administration on accountability to electorates in local governments. This article is an extension of a few works done as a by-product of recentralization in Uganda (Lewis, 2014) and the uniqueness of the article is in recent recentralization and the impact on the electorate in terms of accountability. Table 1 shows the codes of interviewees, their organizations, and the total number of interviewees interviewed.

Recentralization of Kampala City Administration

The new Act provided that the authority will be constituted by technical and the political arm. The technical arm will constitute the executive director's office and 10 directorates as provided for by the KCC Act (GOU, 2010) whereas the political arm will constitute the lord mayor and the divisional mayors.

In terms of organization structure, KCC was organized under eight divisions and two units, which included the mayor's office as indicated in the following functions: administration, internal audit, education and sports, engineering and urban planning, finance/treasury, health, legal services, welfare and

Table I. List of Interviewees.

Code	Organization	Number
C001	Mayor KCCA	1
C002	Duty mayors from five divisions	2
C003	Councilors NRM party central division	4
C004	Councilors FDC party	2
C005	Councilors JEEMA party	2
C006	Councilors DP Lubaga division	2
C007	Senior administrative officers KCCA	3
C008	Ministry of public service staff	2
C009	Ministry of local government staff	3
C0010	Ministry of health staff	4
C0011	Councilors NRM party Makindye division	3
C0012	Councilors NRM party Nakawa division	1
C0012	Councilors NRM party Lubaga division	2
C0012	Councilors NRM party Kawempe division	1
C006	Councilors DP Kawempe division	3
Total		35

Source. Researcher.

Note. KCCA = Kampala Capital City Authority; NRM = National Resistance Movement; FDC = Forum for Democratic Change; JEEMA = Justice Forum; DP = Democratic Party.

community services, projects unit and mayor's office, and in terms of human resource deployment and development, as on 31 March, 2011, the authority was operating with 1,055 staff, excluding casual workers.

The major considerations for recentralization of KCCA were to revamp the former KCC to turn it into an authority that revolves around the following:

- i. Provide much needed services to the capital city.
- ii. Promote the culture of effective customer service and responsiveness to change.
- iii. Develop institutional infrastructure for better governance in terms of systems and controls.
- iv. Promote democratic principles and good governance in the operations of KCCA.
- v. Empower people through a system of governance that is characterized by transparency, accountability, and equitable resource allocation and usage, among others.

It is against this background that we contextually think that the above concerns can be implicit. Certainly, there was an urgent need to protect the city's image in terms of sanitation and beautification, there was double-dealing and incompetence in the prior management of KCC but this is not enough justification for central government to defend their absenteeism for robust support for the sub-national governments, which usually results into recentralization and chaos (Mawhood, 1993).

Throughout the geographical disparity, Uganda government decided to recentralize only the capital city and not all

municipalities in the country by forming an authority, which is over and above the city in the illusion of renovating service delivery.

The intensive attempt to recover potential ways through the legal instrument reiterates the factual contention that decentralization as a system of governance can only be effective and operational if local upper class approves of the deal with central government (Mawhood, 1993). Similarly, the reinforcement that central government has given to the new administrative system is a comprehensible manifestation of its lack of interest to respond to the cries from the prior administrators of the city. Central government's decision to recentralize the city is like, "*change horses in the mid-stream*"; a perfect signal that Uganda could not stand the assessment of time as a comprehensive and role model of wholesale decentralization system in the developing world.

The scenery started in 1997 through the city development strategy (CDS) that later proposed the innovative forms of service delivery and acknowledgment of continuous infrastructure neglect in the city, this coupled with outstanding disapproval of the city administration by the central government. As a result of heterogeneous election results in the past which gave the ruling party, NRM, a leveled opportunity and argument for a straight and muscular intrusion in the administration of Kampala took stride. KCCA–NRM councilors argued that

we have been waiting for right time for them (opposition politicians) to go and we manage the city, in no time the relevant ministry will allocate funds required to revamp the roads in Kampala; it was not our responsibility to do their work but now it is ours (NRM) and we will live up to the challenge.

This declaration highlights the penetrating political pressure that politicians were nursing under the ruling party to take over the administration of the city. Other councilors from Democratic Party (DP) in KCCA argued that

we have been reviewing the performance of this regime critically; it is coming to three decades of NRM rule but Kampala street roads have rivers and lakes (pot holes); we know as much as they do (NRM politicians) that reconstruction can be done if central government has the willingness but of course not, since we have been defeating them democratically and city administration is in our hands. Now they are forcing themselves back into the administration after passing the new Act to recentralize within the decentralization reign.

This assertion emphasizes the strong rivalry between the ruling party and opposition politicians' pressure and resources spent in competing for the management of the city. However, there are admissible uncertainties within the opposition and ruling party camps that the recentralization of city administration may respectively alter political pressure from bottom (local level) to top (central government), which is indeed the case.

Third, the justification for the flexible combined effort on safeguarding democratic principles and good governance in the operations of KCCA is a local government mandate that existed since the inception of the first draft of Local Government Act of 1997, as the mayor asserted that

. . . An Act to alter, merge and rationalize the current law on devolution in line with the Constitution to provide outcome to the decentralisation and delegation of roles, controls and amenities; and to deliver for regionalization at all stages of local governments to safeguard good supremacy and self-governing involvement, and regulate resolutions by the voters; and to arrange for income and the party-political and managerial arrangements at the local level; and to position for voting of Indigenous Councils . . .

These assertions climaxed the searching of already existing wins and used them as a justification for central government under the ruling party to take over the management of the city. One can argue that government is exercising its powers under delegation of function by the minister to undertake charge of roles and amenities allocated to the region assembly and as such, the central government recalls any contributions relating to any assignment returning to the state (GOU, 1997).

In terms of empowering people through the system of governance, that is, transparency, according to the constitution of Uganda 1995, the political objectives specifically outline the democratic principles, fundamental rights and freedoms, and above all the independence of the electorate; authority has its place among the public and the populace can show their feelings and agreement on who is capable of administering them, how, and via systematic, unrestricted, and fair-minded voting. People empowerment is a right that should be upheld and not used as a validation for the city administration.

All interviewees in spite of the political party (councilors from NRM and other political parties like DP, Forum for Democratic Change [FDC]) were in agreement that central government is pocketing people's rights given to them by the constitution of Uganda in one common fight to retain their power at the local level. They continued to argue that

all their roles have been hijacked by the executive director, she does not account to them, yet they are accountable to the electorate. They have been shelved and condensed to sign passport forms other than budgets, supervise and evaluate programs, projects and works in their divisions which they think is unfair. No wonder some division mayors were behind the lord mayor during the court sessions in which the executive director accused the mayor for failure to execute his duties.

This is labeled as "*a house divided among itself cannot stand.*"

The 1995 constitution of Uganda, the movement political system conforms to principles, that is, transparency, accountability and democracy, participatory democracy, and creation

of organs for equitable resource allocation and usage, among others. Chapter 11 especially lays the principles of local governments as opposed to recentralization and upholds that

. . . devolution will be the norm relating to all stages of local government and, precisely, from upper to lower local governments divisions to guarantee peoples' involvement and representative regulation in resolution production. The structure will be in a way that guarantees the total realization of representative supremacy at all indigenous supervision points; suitable procedures intend to be followed to allow local governments entities to strategize, begin and implement guidelines in admiration of all aspects upsetting the populace within their authorities . . .

According to Manyak and Katono (2010), the ruling party is assassinating their own child. The processes put in place as reasons for decentralization are being used by the same regime as arguments against it but in favor of recentralization, hence district creation leads to recentralization. One can argue that such outlined considerations cannot apply to justify a reform or for both systems to prevail. Nevertheless, the camp in support of recentralization finally accomplished the mission, and Parliament passed the KCC Act (GOU, 2010), and the responsibility for city administration lies in the hands of government notwithstanding the fact that opposition parties, that is, FDC, JEEMA (Justice Forum), and DP repeatedly retained the places in Kampala during nationwide and resident voting.

The factions against recentralization argue that power has been hijacked from the electorate yet the mandate is constitutional. It rather makes sense for government to argue that "bigger is better" for Kampala city, a familiar argument developed by Australian merger supporters because of considerable economies of scale in divisions' service delivery as a result of fundamental compulsory amalgamation. The concept has substituted organizational alteration and suggestions in Australian local council management (Dollery, Byrnes, & Crase, 2008).

Promoting the culture of effective customer service and responsiveness to change as a justification for recentralization will take shape if government funds the customer relationship management tools and designs service level agreements and call centers which are not only expensive but need expert knowledge and skills. Thus, this argument is not only farfetched but it is far from being optimal.

Argument in Favor of Recentralization and Decentralization a Global View

Nationwide supervisions frequently trust that efficiency can be better by combining current indigenous divisions into bigger native establishments such as, Sørensen (2006) contends that, bigger divisions can adventure financial prudence; they have an extra vigorous fiscal foundation and considerable

supremacy capability, so they can deliver extra challenging functions, whereas minor indigenous divisions are unable to take on numerous significant productions due to absence of supremacy capability to deliver a sum of dedicated community amenities.

Cost effectiveness demands for the lowest amount of production, and delivery of indigenous communal goods entails a definite number of residents to realize. In his support, Dollery et al. (2008) and Dollery and Crase (2004) acknowledged economies of scale and emphasized the necessity to the amalgamation of minor and fiscally “not capable” countryside and local committees into bigger combined metropolitan establishments. Warner and Hebdon (2001) claimed that the public–public partnership model permits countries to attain economies of scale when governments retain provision possession of services in the public sector.

A foundation of public choice theory in favor of smaller units of government to deliver services effectively enhances competition, people’s preference, and local voice. Tiebout (1956) argued that greater fragmentation of government into smaller units increases competitive pressure. Instead, it makes sense to propose that competitively contracting out of corporate services directly to a private sector provider will yield a progressive effect on performance, as competitive setting energies mean greater efficiency (Savas, 2000). The ruling party NRM has always argued in line with public choice theory to multiply districts in Uganda, and Green (2010) argued that the multiplication of districts is for patronage other than service delivery improvement.

Practice contradicted theory when the new system of administration was implemented. Precisely, when national governments think of efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, they tend to forget local preference, representation, local voice, and social equity (Norman-Major, 2011). The contradiction will wash away the wins of decentralization system achieved over time, that is, local ideas, community mobilization, sustainable community evolution, team work, extended autonomy, center expansion, and sense of belonging. Forced recentralization always leaves behind sentiments of bad feelings among communities. The best approach was no-cost-power sharing that would end up in a win–win situation between central government and the local elites (Mawhood, 1993)—but leaders have always forgotten the mistakes of their predecessors.

Within the developing world, devolution of official power to municipal councils has become a key success factor in states such as Chile, Letelier and Sáez (2006); South Africa, Heymans (2006); Indonesia, Eckardt and Shah (2006). For Uganda’s neighbors, the city of Dar es Salam in Tanzania is still operating a decentralized system with three operating metropolises under Dar es Salam city council with elected representatives, and on the contrary, Nairobi in Kenya is still following an inherited centralized system from the British though doing better than Uganda and Tanzania—Kenyan

government in 2008 was named as an African world class metropolitan area (Government of Kenya, 2008).

Post-Recentralization

Following the enactment of the KCC Act (GOU, 2010), it became clear that management needed to develop a new organizational structure that seeks to reposition the authority and deliver quality services to the people of Kampala.

The serious questions among scholars are what is to be fixed in Kampala and how it can be done? There was need to fix garbage, potholes, sewer services, construction, traffic management, corruption, health services, environment, stray livestock, and management of markets. The KCCA Act was passed in parliament where NRM has the majority members, which was the first step toward loss of objectivity.

The final decision to recentralize can be described in three traditions: consolidation of power, the deteriorating party’s political self-governance, and nervousness of the magnitude of independence in the decentralized system. Academicians continue to challenge explanations put forward by central government as arguments for reform. Section 16 subsection 3(f) of the KCCA Act, offers for appointed standing committees whose responsibility among many is to make reports to the authority. To date, a lot of issues are pending following the mayor’s removal from office after rejection of court order, as Muhumuza (2008) argued that NRM always uses corruption tendencies as a stooge to accomplish its political intentions.

Academicians continue to argue that NRM is no longer popular like it was in the 1980s and 1990s. Devolution as a system of government was identified as remarkable among developing nations (Steiner, 2006) for two reasons: first, people were very royal to the one party system at that time (Makara, Rakner, & Svåsand, 2009) and second, local elites were willing to negotiate with central government (Mawhood, 1993), which is not the case today after NRM opened the political space for other political parties. It can be recalled that the former minister Jabeli Bidandi Ssali lost his ministerial job for requesting President Museveni to open up the political planetary. It is due to the ongoing competition in the political market that that ruling party has realized that the democratic means through decentralized approach has turned out to be unfair to them, hence the justification for reform to consolidate power. One of the councilors from JEEMA party was quoted having said that

The city was recentralized because undoubtedly it is associated to uncertainties around the elections results in Kampala, numerous influential NRM bureaucrats condemning residential district commissioners, chief administrative officers NRM chair persons at the sub counties for being multiparty sympathizers and do not deserve those positions.

In the comprehensive jeopardy to reduce election mislays, the president is quoted to have urged the electorates to vote

only those candidates who subscribe to NRM party (Awortwi, 2011). The NRM philosophy does not mainly look at the person and their contribution but just a mere subscription and loyalty to the party. The staff from ministry of public service in favor of centralization argued,

Indeed recentralization has separated power (administration) from politics. It is not good to give elected positions a lot of power because many things will not work. Voters tend to make elected persons “vote slaves” through making decisions that favor them [majority voters] because of a mere vote.

The staff from ministry of local government debated that

in the previous Local Government Act, laws were intended to give elected persons a lot of powers while in the new KCCA Act, the intention is to reduce political power of those elected in order to improve service delivery. After all the past mayors failed to perform, they did not have capacity and therefore they were not qualifying for the position. He continued to justify why there was need for change in the laws which can be termed as; “*the jealous mistress law.*”

The staff from ministry of health discussed that

the elected leaders always compromise especially for the majority so that they can be re-elected given that majority of people in Kampala are poor, they tend to trade along road reserves which are not right places hence promoting trade disorder that the opposition tried to take advantage of like the Kampala mayor.

The health ministry staff continued to argue that

the decentralization system of government is still good but it was inevitable for government to recentralize for only the capital city since it proved a failure in terms of changing the face of Kampala and it was done for the electorate in terms of value for money.

The senior members in KCCA said that

even the blind can see that there is tremendous improvement in the city in terms of garbage collection, clean roads, street lights, and infrastructure development [road construction], trade order and corruption has reduced in the authority because of reduction in powers of the mayor and appointing a strong leader (executive director).

From the above testimonials, one would not be wrong to assume that, although central government management bargains openly to fund and support a decentralization policy, they do not have the desire to realize local institutional evolution as it is said that “*absolute power corrupts absolutely.*” The decentralized system will only be effective if government has a stake to bargain for what is good for them (Mawhood, 1993).

How Recentralization of Kampala City Undermined Bottom Accountability?

Accountability basically means upholding truthfulness and it grips assured anticipations on what the individual or institution must be capable and appreciative to clarify, substantiate, and own change for what they are assigned to do (Cooper & Owen, 2007). Entitlement to the answerableness element, this is where the designate draws much from the principal–agent theory between correspondence among the principal and the agent (Laffont & Martimort, 2009). The agent is mandated to implement some services in the interests of the other party—the principal, who assumes delegation of some distinct and decision-making power.

The difficulties painted by the agency model are that, there will repeatedly be a discrepancy between the genuine resolutions made by go-betweens (agents) and the resolutions that would exploit the principal’s paybacks. This deviation arises because when making a decision, agents too pursue to exploit their individual self-seeking.

This usually rises among procurement bureaucrats and elected representatives Ross (1973). This happened in former KCC and cannot be ruled out in the current KCCA as it is said “*every rose has its thorn.*” Recentralization of the Kampala city has seemingly slammed on accountability in local governments in four major ways: change in power and control, dual reporting lines, style and loyalty of top management in KCCA, and incapacitated politically elected mayors and councilors. Rendering to the KCC Act that President Yoweri Museveni endorsed on December 28, 2010, the authority substituted the council and willpower contained parallel elected councilors as provided for in the prior structure.

Change in Power and Control

This is usually represented by flow chart. The office of the executive director is different from that of the mayor and the mayor reports to both the minister of local government and the executive director KCCA, whereas the executive director reports to the minister for Kampala and president. This has lessened the span of control and led to over-supervision of the mayor. Yet, he represents the electorate and is accountable to them, but his position has been made ceremonial, hence tying the hands of the headship of the council in Kampala. Devolution is left in suspense after shifting overall management of the authority to the executive director. This deeply explains that the local voice in Kampala is no more because the resolutions that are passed are not implemented.

Indeed, the table above clearly indicates that the political wing has been sidelined, eroded, destroyed and the mayor has no powers to provide political guidance, oversight to the authority, and monitor the conveyance of amenities to the populace. Neither does his office seek to champion collaborative engagement, advocacy, and accountability, and promote

the welfare and quality services to the people of Kampala nor can he implement his manifesto.

The core functions have been considered directly as provided for in the KCCA Act (GOU, 2010), but there is need to re-define the roles and provide a better position to enable him become accountable to the electorate through verifiable outputs. Deputy mayors from JEEMA, FDC, DP, and some senior administrative staff in KCCA against the recentralization of Kampala city continued to argue that

we are in a tricky situation since all the political powers that belonged to mayors and councilors have been given to one person but such circumstances have their own consequences. A lot of money has been disseminated to implement various projects. How is that money being spent, what happens to councilors' and mayors' oversight roles? There is need to amend the Act to enable elected mayors and councilors advise on the focus priorities. It is very hard for us to assess such projects since everything is in the hands of one person.

Similarly, the new law puts parallel lines of responsibility which leads to conflicts such as, who heads the authority? What are the roles, of both the executive director and mayor ahead of the authority in evolving policies and plans for the growth of the city (see Table 2). Unclear roles have however affected the relationship between the two managers hence hindering service delivery.

The bickering in KCCA is a clear indication of difficulties in conflicting roles and different channels of reporting for the same institution to both managers, which has left loyalty of the mayor in balance. It is unclear on whether to bend on the side of the electorate or central government while stabilizing the loyalty of the executive director to central government or the electorate. The mayor and deputy mayors in spite of the political party on the aspect of conflicting roles and presentation of KCCA reasoned that

the confusion and conflict results from lack of involvement of all stake holders in decision making. Kampala budget is passed without the input of mayors and councilors. There is a problem in monitoring, implementation and projections. By letting this confusion continue, they are bringing the political role down.

The deputy mayor in one of the divisions under NRM party claimed that

infrastructure development in Kampala started in areas like Nakasero where the rich people stay, of course 5% elite are happy but man does not live on bread alone. People need involvement and their views should be represented for the effectiveness of the new Act.

He continued with the dispute that

KCCA is busy organizing carnivals which are not a priority for the city, who are they doing it for? Schools are still in a sorry state, drainage in slums is still horrible and there is no medicine

in health centers. Mobilizing people for one day to eat and dance and the next day they go on empty stomachs does not fix the problems of Kampala.

There is uniform service delivery in Kampala where each division is a mirror of the other in terms of services and budget allocations. Because there is need for a two-way process, which allows feedback and feed forward to take place in all lines of authority, transparency should be emphasized in its reporting style or else the KCCA administrators run the possibility of being unsociable to the electorate, ambiguous or broad, and getting out of trace with those for whom they are responsible.

The senior members in KCCA maintained that

the proposed amendments of the KCCA Act according to the Minister for Kampala at the National Leadership Institute, Kyankwanzi on 15th February 2014 where it is proposed there be separation of politics and administration, governance restructuring and review of Kampala boundaries, reduce powers of councils.

Policy amendments should be done carefully and for the benefit of social equity if we have not forgotten that "*man proposes but God disposes.*" Policy suggestions in the findings of this study are on unpremeditated confusion and conflicts in the authority for allegiance can be a starting point in the future debate for the amendments of the KCCA Act that should be done carefully after investigation, evaluation, and involvement of all stake holders to enable clarity of roles to avoid, "*missing the wood for the trees.*"

Recentralization of the city became inevitable because all circumstances had caused public outcry in terms of service for which the government planned through knockback to support prior administrators. Decentralization policy in the country has been too ambitious and creating many districts results into over-dependency, hence making the policy vague because two systems are being run concurrently in KCCA and one would be right to believe that indeed decentralization is dead.

Restricted Power for Political Wing in KCCA

The reform through centralization has deprived elected politicians, noticeably the diminished mechanism of democracy in favor of top management in KCCA. Mayors and councilors are conflicting with current top management of KCCA because they have observed that the reforms have underprivileged them of their controls and influences, elected leaders confirmed this. Although the mayor is answerable to the executive director, he is not involved in day-to-day administering of the authority and he cannot question.

Some division councilors are excited because the resource envelope increased due to increased revenue collection and under such circumstances, a group of councilors are excited, that is, 20% of revenue collection determines how much

Table 2. Core Functions of Director and Mayor in KCCA Act 2010.

Executive director	Mayor
To provide leadership to the authority	To be the political headship of KCCA
To account for the authority's business and resources	Preside over all the meetings of the authority
To manage public funds of the authority	Accomplish traditional roles and municipal roles
Coordinate the execution of committee rules, decrees, guidelines, statutes programs, and plans	Host overseas and indigenous notables
Prepare and present the authority annual budget	Headship of the KCCA in evolving plans and projects for the growth of KCCA
Provide technical advisory service to the mayor and the authority on the state rules and management of the authority	Monitor the administration of the capital city
Review and monitor and supervise the provision of excellence amenities to the people in Kampala	Provide guidance to the divisions' administration
Plan and monitor the physical preparation and improvement mechanisms in the city committees	Represent the capital city on the metropolitan authority
Act as the chief custodian of the authority's assets and information	—
Promote trade and order in the city	—
Mobilize the community for development and sustainability	—
Take responsibility for the prosecution of decrees and statutes completed by the subordinate councils	—
To provide leadership to the authority	—

Source. Researcher.

Note. KCCA = Kampala Capital City Authority.

councilors will take home, hence splitting in ideology. In divergence, prior to recentralization period, the mayor was the top administrator of KCC whereas division councils had versed powers although take home was less because revenue collection was a challenge in the city at that time.

In the present legal framework, the mayors and councilors are not fully involved in the operational administration of the city. It is on this basis that the political wing of KCCA currently feels that the top administration has suspended them because their roles have been transferred rendering them destroyed in their political career as the DP, FDC, and JEEMA councilors continued to say that, "All bodies like city physical planning authority (CPPA) and public accounts committee (PAC) are not in place to date, which makes divisions non-serviceable."

The opposition councilors continued to defend their positions by saying that

as divisions political heads, chance has not been given to us to budget and assess the performance of the financial plan since the top administration in KCCA decided to keep us [mayors and councilors] jobless. The town clerk, who is hypothetically a sub accounting officer at the division, is jobless, she cannot report quarterly reviews. All roles are done by the executive director.

The councilors of the opposing political parties, that is, DP, FDC, and JEEMA, continued to say that "there is a 'quasi-town clerk'. Who (town clerks) knows nothing concerning how much income tax is collected and spent at the sub-county. There is lack of 'rationalized process of operation.'" In the

same view, one of the deputy mayors from NRM party continued to support the argument that

presently, the Local Government Financial Regulations Act 1997 is operational, a similar sequence where the sub-counties are obliged to subscribe to the authority grant development before it is deliberated at the authority level, then sent to the centre for execution. The corresponding division committees need to deliberate the budget proposals. Regrettably, this has certainly not occurred. Our (Councils) participation in the budget [production development] is negligible.

The deputy mayors in spite of the political party maintained that

at the start of 2011/2012 financial year, we were in harmony with the executive director, as divisions we were working in peace with the authority but the last two years (she) has been implementing her personal plans with her mechanical team and she has had these plans executed by them . . . councils cannot even explain.

The deputy mayors continued to argue that

for council meetings, occasionally she attends but if she is not interested, she delegates and from time to time she does not even send a representative. This may imply that whatever councils are discussing is not important since it is never implemented. The money that was on division accounts was removed with no report on how it was spent, we now operate a central account as KCCA with no supervision.

Conclusion

Evidence indicates that recentralization reform is significant for the political survival of the NRM regime in power. Yet, it should go further than the national party leadership and embrace the involvement of local players as Grossman and Lewis (2014) put it that, the president receives a significant electoral boost for allowing the creation of new districts. From the late 1990s, through the CDS, there have been premeditated, planned, and protected efforts by the state to negate some of the elements from the decentralization policy.

This research has revealed the negative impact of recentralization of Kampala city on accountability to the electorate, yet this is among the major considerations for recentralization of KCCA. The panacea for reinforcing accountability should start by returning the supervisory role to the elected politicians as a means of ensuring checks and balances so that the top management can be questioned and is answerable to the electorate's representatives. However, central government's reinforcement should be noticeable including appointment of top management of the authority as public service representative.

Similarly, accountability in all public service institutions should be enhanced through power sharing, bargaining with local elites, consultative amendments of the KCCA Act to safeguard unfair treatments, that is, removal from office and enforce balanced policies in favor of social equity. Decentralized political process needs to provide accountability to the local populace, and open political participation is stimulated combined with steady established rules to manage local affairs.

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1. Kampala City Council is the previous administrative body of Kampala city and was mandated by the local government act 1997 whereas Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) is the current administrative body of Kampala under a centralized system of government mandated by the KCCA Act 2010.

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Author Biographies

Nabukeera Madinah is a lecturer at the Faculty of management, Islamic University in Uganda. She received her Master of Public Administration from Islamic University in Uganda, and her Doctor of Philosophy from the, Malaya University of Malaysia. She teaches local government administration, and public policy planning and management and rural development at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. Among the many researches that she is involved in are local government, and urban governance.

Ali Boerhannoeddin is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya. He gained his Master of Public Administration from University of Southern California, Los Angeles and his Doctor of Philosophy from University of Malaya. He has been teaching local government, management, human resource management and organizational behavior both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Raja Noriza Binti Raja Ariffin is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University Malaya. She received her Master of City and Regional Planning from the California State University Fresno, USA and her Doctor of Philosophy from the

Institute of Planning, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. She teaches urban management, and planning administration and community development at the postgraduate level. Among the many researches that she is involved in are transport and housing, and urban governance. She is currently the head of department for the Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya.

Bwengye Michael is a senior lecturer in the Department of Management at Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Kampala Uganda. He holds a Masters degree in Management Studies and a Postgraduate diploma in Management both of Uganda Management Institute, Postgraduate diploma in Management & Training at Higher Education of Islamic University in Uganda. He specialized in general management and research.