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The politics of urban governance and management in Gaborone

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Abstract

The paper argues for urban governance by the city council over urban management of Gaborone by central government. Since 1965 the city has been one of the fastest growing in the world. In the first phase of nation building and modernization, central government needed to centralize power and control the management of its capital city. Since then deconcentration of management and decentralization of political power have become necessary—to improve the delivery and productivity of urban services, and to promote community participation and local democracy. However, Gaborone city council has become an arena for national party politics, and its bureaucracy has not become responsible to local needs and aspirations.

Introduction

This article analyzes the nature and impact of urban governance and management in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. Many developing countries are undertaking extensive state reforms which create the environment and potential for new ways of governing cities. In Botswana the central government has been engaged in a decentralization exercise, aided by assistance from donor agencies.

The decentralization process in Botswana raises questions not simply of urban management but in the wider sense of urban governance. Decentralization, as an aspect of urban governance and management, helps to shift thinking away from state-centred perspectives to include elements often considered outside the public policy process. They include privatization and cost recovery. Decentralization allows for the reconsideration of cities as more than just a technical or administrative arm of the central government or a bureaucratic structure with new autonomous powers and functions (McCarney, 1996).

The notion of urban governance is an attempt to come to grips with the limitations of state-centred urban management. It moves away from statist perspectives which concentrate on administration, management, and local government in bureaucratic form (McCarney, Halfani, and Rodriguez, 1995). It encompasses the private sector, civil society, and social systems such as education and health. In other words, urban governance not only includes the activities of governments but also the many other channels through which "commands" flow—in the form of goals framed, directives issued, and policies pursued (Rosenau, 1995).

Within the framework of urban governance, the primary concerns of management, such as resource mobilization and allocation, are addressed from the perspectives of efficiency and societal dynamics (McCarney, Halfani, and Rodriguez, 1995). Urban management still has a major role to play in the

sustainability of cities. That role, however, is taking on a new character within the context of the urban governance perspective. The urban governance perspective puts an emphasis on sustainable urban development, to produce a city that is resourceful and efficient in its function as a place for living.

Profile of the city of Gaborone

Gaborone is the national capital city of Botswana, the country which has the longest common border with South Africa. The city covers an area of 137 square kilometres. More popularly referred to as "Gabs", Gaborone was once a sleepy village at a place originally called Moshaweng. During the 1890s a small section of the Batlokwa tribe moved westwards into the wilderness and settled at Moshaweng. The Chief and leader of the Batlokwa was named Gaborone.

Chief Gaborone died in 1932. Moshaweng continued to be called Gaborone or Gaborone's town in his honour. In 1969 the spelling was changed to Gaborone. Under the British Protectorate administration, Gaborone functioned as the southern headquarters of one of two provincial divisions in the country. In 1965, during the run-up to eventual independence in 1966, Gaborone became the national capital of Botswana replacing the old administrative capital, Mafikeng, outside the country's borders. It was selected as the capital because of its location near water in south-east Botswana and the rail line to South Africa and Zimbabwe.

During the past three decades, Gaborone has been transformed into a modern capital with an ever-improving infrastructure, international hotels, handsome office buildings, and shopping malls. As the seat of government, Gaborone is an important administration centre and the location of most industries in the country.

The growth and development of Gaborone has been spectacular, and the city has been adjudged by the prestigious British monthly business periodical, *Corporate Location*, as one of the 'cities of the future'. In terms of population growth, Gaborone had 133,468 residents in 1991 compared to 3,855 in 1964. According to the 1991 Census, Gaborone had 10.1 percent of the total population of Botswana and this is projected to increase to 18 percent by the next Census in 2001. During 1971-91 the population of Gaborone grew by 653 percent.

The urban population growth in Botswana is thus one of the highest in the world. During the period 1960-93, the average annual growth rate of the urban population in Botswana was 12.3 percent (UNDP, 1996). The primary contributor to this growth in Gaborone is migration from the rest of Botswana. The Census of 1991 indicates that for that year alone migrants accounted for approximately 12 percent of the total population of Gaborone with an almost even split between male and female migrants.

The rapid growth of the urban population in Botswana has severely increased the demand for urban public services. In Gaborone, this has meant increased expenditures for housing, roads, and schools, for example. Fortunately, due to prudent economic management and sound public policy,

the city of Gaborone and the country as a whole have been able to meet the primary obligations related to the provision of public services (Hope, 1995a; 1995b).

Gaborone's place in the context of a globalized economy is an evolving one. During the past two decades the development of the city has been spectacularly aided by Botswana's rapid growth—due primarily to the country's impressive earnings from the export of diamonds, prudent economic management, and a stable political environment. Those factors have gained Botswana an international reputation as a country with a healthy investment climate. That, in turn, has led to investment flows from a number of global companies including Hyundai, IBM, Daewoo, Volvo, Owens-Corning, Siemens, and DeBeers. Almost all of that investment activity is located in Gaborone where the necessary infrastructural facilities are.

Gaborone, as a city, has therefore been able to benefit from the process of globalization by maintaining an environment that is conducive to that process and also through the externality derived from national policies to promote foreign trade and investment. Those policies include financial and other fiscal incentives to encourage foreign direct investment inflows into Botswana (Hope, 1997a).

The rationale for decentralization

The conceptual framework. On attaining independence, many African countries, including Botswana, were preoccupied with building a nation-state. That had a centralizing effect and ultimately negative impact on the delivery of public services. It was believed that a strong central government was essential to national unity and modernization of African societies. Many African leaders at the time, such as Nyerere of Tanzania, Kenyatta of Kenya and Nkrumah of Ghana, were committed to this statist approach to development. Their strategy however failed to bear fruit. The movement towards decentralization has been an attempt to improve the delivery of public services to the people and to increase the productivity of the public sector (Hope, 1997b).

Decentralization is a concept which has acquired many meanings, and is used by different people to mean different things. Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1983) define it as the transfer of authority or responsibility for decision-making, planning, management, or resource allocation from the central government to its field units, district administrative units, local governments, regional or functional authorities, semi-autonomous public authorities, parastatal organizations, private entities, and nongovernmental private or voluntary .

In its strictly political sense, decentralization refers to the transfer of powers and responsibilities to elected local governments, to exercise a significant measure of local autonomy. The main emphasis that flows from this definition is responsiveness and accountability. In this sense decentralized governments are closer to the people as consumers of services. They are therefore better able to make choices that reflect the needs and

priorities of the people. It is also easier and more convenient to hold locally elected representatives and officials accountable than those at the centre.

Some scholars, however, for example Curtis (1991), argue that decentralization of local government may not go far enough. Local government may become too large and bureaucratic, and as such not be responsive to the needs and aspirations of its community. Decentralization beyond local government becomes necessary, and it may best be to non-governmental and community based organizations. A properly decentralized form of government would display the following characteristics:

- The local authority should be institutionally separate from the centre and assume responsibility for a significant range of local services such as primary education, primary health, community development and secondary roads.
- The local authority should also be in a position to employ their own qualified personnel, who sometimes may be temporarily seconded from the state civil service, especially when local government is still in its infant stages.
- The authority should have their own funds and budgets which are totally separate from the central government. They should also be in a position to raise a substantial part of their revenue through direct local taxation.
- The decentralized government would be governed internally by the councils. These are composed of popularly elected representatives from amongst the population.
- Government administrators would then withdraw from an executive to an advisory role and let local government carry on with their business (Mawhood and Davey, 1980:405).

This can be regarded as decentralized government in its classical form, and the use of the term in this article bears in mind the above mentioned characteristics with limitations.

The primary objective of decentralization is to promote citizen participation in the political process. Thus decentralization is a training ground for democracy. It can be further maintained that the only path to genuine development is through the ability of people to be self-governing. Development cannot take place when people follow orders from above; they have to understand and feel they are a part of the development process. This empowers citizens through their enhanced participation in decision-making and development planning (Silverman, 1992).

Another objective of decentralization is that it assists in promoting governmental accountability—especially when institutions which are supposed to enforce accountable governance are either non-existent or seriously weakened (Laleye, 1993). Periodic elections of executives are not a sufficient indicator of accountability to the public. There is often rampant apathy about local politics, and also a tendency for national issues to dominate and overshadow local elections. It is also through decentralization that people are able to practice self-help and produce goods and services for themselves rather than depend on the centre (dependency syndrome). The combination of participation and accountability of the leaders will lead to a

responsive administration at the local level, in other words this would enhance better governance.

It is also argued that because the demand for some services may vary from one community to the other, the decentralized provision of such services will be able to adjust to these differential demand patterns. This would improve economic and managerial efficiency because of close proximity between the producer, consumer and the critical information required (Smith, 1985). It is in this respect that a decentralized government is regarded as having better knowledge of local preferences because of access to information which may be denied central government (Cremer, Estache and Seabright, 1994). Other terms have been used to describe the same phenomenon. In this article, however, the term decentralization will be used interchangeably with devolution. This means the term is used in its political sense and it excludes other forms such as deconcentration, delegation and privatization.

Deconcentration is the passing down of selective administrative functions to lower levels or subnational units within central government ministries. Deconcentration is the least extensive form of decentralization. Although it does result in some dispersal of power, few decisions can be taken without reference to the center.

Delegation is the transfer of specific authority and decision-making powers to organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government, such as parastatals and semiautonomous agencies. In this type of decentralization the central government retains the right to overturn local decisions and can, at any time, take powers back.

Privatization refers to the transfer of control and responsibility for government functions and services to the private sector—private voluntary organizations or private enterprises. From a broader perspective, privatization encompasses a wide range of policies to encourage private sector participation in public service provision and that eliminate or modify the monopoly status of public enterprises.

The process of decentralization in Botswana

Botswana adopted a liberal democratic system of government since independence in 1966. Since that time decentralization has been an officially declared. Government White Paper no 21/ 1984 states:

It is essential that constitutional development at the Centre should be balanced by the growth of democratic institutions throughout the country. Freedom and responsibility in thought and action must be stimulated at every level if they are to be fully understood and given effective expression. One of the best checks to any tendency to authoritarianism is a widespread cultivation of these habits of mind and the readiness of people at every level of society to play part in the conduct of local affairs,

These policies have been supported by successive state development plans including the current NDP 8. Decentralization in Botswana has been the subject of substantial governmental review and some academic review also. More than two decades ago Tordoff (1974) noted that 'The growth of strong district councils is being encouraged [by the Botswana government] and it is

intended that they will increasingly become the focal point... responsible for promoting the general well-being and economic development.'

The government of Botswana has been consistent in its support for decentralization. Donor assistance, particularly through SIDA (the Swedish International Development Authority), has also been provided since 1979 with the following objectives:

- (1) To promote further decentralization of responsibilities from central to local government, and in particular, to the District Councils;
- (2) To contribute to a more even distribution of economic and social resources among the people;
- (3) To facilitate and enhance the implementation capacity of the District Councils and other local authorities at district level with regard to the provision of services and the execution of development projects (SIDA, 1993).

It was however realised that decentralization in earnest would not start if local authorities lack skilled and trained human resources to execute their plans. That gap led to the preparation of a policy paper and action plan on decentralization by the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing in October 1993.

Reference to local authorities in Botswana is usually understood in the context of four major institutions of devolution and deconcentration; namely District and Town/ City councils, Land Boards, Tribal Administration and District Administration. Consistent with the definition of a decentralised government given above the discussion will refer mainly to District/ Town/ City councils in general and Gaborone in particular.

There exists two City Councils (Gaborone and Francistown), three Town Councils, one Township Authority and nine District Councils, twelve Land Boards, and twelve Tribal Administrations. In addition, there are twelve District Administrations. .

All local authorities in Botswana exist by virtue of ordinary Acts of Parliament and, at least in theory, any of them could be abolished at any time by Parliament. Local authorities are not included in the Constitution and, consequently, they have no inherent competence derived from the Constitution. That makes Botswana a unitary state with Parliament having sovereign power with full competence in all areas of jurisdiction (du Toit, 1995). Legislative authority is vested in Parliament, which consists of the National Assembly, the House of Chiefs, and the President. Local government evolved out tribal administration which performed limited government functions before independence. The tribal Chief allocated land, raised revenue, held court, hired the teachers, ran the schools, and repaired roads in his area (Egner, 1978).

District councils were established in Botswana through the Local Government (District Councils) Act of 1965. Parallel legislation, namely the Townships Act of 1965, created urban councils. District councils are responsible for five major functions—the provision of primary education, primary health care, rural village water supply, social and community development, and construction and maintenance of tertiary roads. Councils are in charge of overall district development, initiating and implementing

programmes for local infrastructure and services, preparing district development plans and budgets, and coordinating the activities of some Ministries at the local level. There are some other permitted functions which councils can undertake if they have the resources. They include development of markets, administration of stray cattle, provision of street lighting, and building of recreational facilities. They have both legislative and executive authority.

Most district councillors are democratically elected for five year terms. However, some councillors may be nominated by the Minister of Local Government, Lands and Housing.

Urban governance and management in Gaborone

One of the greatest challenges facing governments in the developing world is how to manage their growing cities efficiently. In some cases, particularly in Africa, colonial policies contributed significantly to this kind of rapid growth. The situation is worsened by the fact that even if attempts are made to reduce the urban bias in terms of development strategies, urban populations will grow more than rural ones (Hope, 1997b). A plausible solution is therefore to involve the lowest levels of government in solving these problems. This means bringing local government back into the development process. There are many reasons for bringing local government back which are beyond the scope of this study. However, following reasons appear to be central:

- Urban problems tend to demand local solutions, and it is hoped that urban authorities can provide the necessary local knowledge to develop policies which suit their own local conditions
- Addressing urban problems requires an integrated approach from a number of actors and interests. Urban councils are better placed to provide an effective network among these different actors
- The development of appropriate policies requires vision and strategic leadership. Urban authorities through an electoral mandate can provide the leadership to balance the concerns of these different interests
- Any decision concerning how urban problems can be tackled has to be seen to be both legitimate and accountable. Urban authorities are more visible to the public (Stoker and Young, 1993).

It should, however, be added that taking on these tasks is a mammoth project. No single local authority could claim to possess the full capacity to perform them. Notwithstanding this, urban authorities are favoured to take on these roles, as they offer the greater potential for genuine community government.

The next part of the paper has two objectives. First, it provides brief background on Gaborone city council politics and administrative arrangements. Second, it surveys city governance and management.

The political character of the Gaborone City Council

Gaborone was up to the end of 1982 made up of one parliamentary constituency. The delimitation commission which was constituted that year divided the town into two constituencies—that is Gaborone North which had a population of 29,682, and Gaborone South which had a population of 31,384. These two constituencies returned one member each to Parliament. However, under the then existing system there was also a third member of Parliament for the whole of Gaborone who was specially elected under the provision of Section 58 of the Constitution.

At the local level the two constituencies were divided into 13 wards for the purpose of electing city councillors. The Gaborone City Council was composed of 13 elected councillors and 7 nominated ones, thus making for a total of 20 councillors. However, due to the continued increase in population, primarily from rural-urban migration, the delimitation commission, which reported in January 1993, recommended an increase in Gaborone constituencies from two to four. Thus, two new constituencies were created—Gaborone Central and Gaborone West. So the city is currently made up of four constituencies which are Gaborone West with a population of 32,528, Gaborone North with a population of 33,799, Gaborone South with a population of 33,160, and Gaborone Central with a population of 33,981. As a result of this change the number of elected councillors increased from 13 to 25 whilst there are now only 4 nominated councillors increasing the total number of councillors in the city council from 20 to 29. The Gaborone West and Gaborone North constituencies have 7 wards each while the Gaborone Central and Gaborone South constituencies have 6 and 5 wards, respectively.

All Gaborone city councillors belong to one of two political parties. The two political parties which are represented in the council are the Botswana National Front (BNF) and the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). From its inception as a council in 1966 the Gaborone city council was controlled by the Botswana Democratic Party until the 1984 elections. In 1966 the city was divided into eight wards, thus returning eight elected councillors. All of the candidates, except one who stood as an independent, were fielded by political parties.

In the elections of 1969, both the BDP and BNF won four wards each but the BDP formed the city administration due to the special nominating powers of the Minister of Local Government, Lands and Housing who appointed additional BDP Councillors. In 1979, a third party, the Botswana Peoples Party (BPP), contested the elections but did not win any of the wards. The results of the election were 7 seats and 1 seat to the BDP and BNF, respectively.

An interesting development took place in Botswana politics in the mid-1980s when the opposition parties (BNF, BPP) began to appeal to urban residents. In the urban areas many people face various types of hardships such as unemployment, lack of adequate housing, and little or no educational attainment. Opposition political parties therefore intensify their campaigns in the urban areas, promising the electorate many things while telling them that the problems they are facing were created by the national ruling party

(BDP) and offering them their alternative solutions. Thus, the credible opposition, the BNF in particular, derives most of its support from the urban areas. Secondly, the BNF concentrates on the urbanized generation which has grown up since independence. Consequently, the BDP is gradually losing control of the urban councils in Botswana (Picard, 1985, 1987; Molomo, 1991).

Prior to the 1984 elections the council wards in Gaborone were increased from 8 to 13 due to the growth in population. New wards were created while others were divided and yet others renamed. The 1984 elections were a three party contest, and for the first time in the history of the city the BNF triumphed. Of the 13 wards, the BNF won 10, and the BDP won the other 3. This trend continued with the BNF increasing its majority in the 1989 elections, by winning 12 of the 13 wards and the BDP winning the other. The Minister of Local Government, Lands and Housing again used his special nominating powers, which were originally intended to ensure stability with the inclusion of people with specialized skills in the various councils. This has been severely criticized by opposition parties because it has become a way of rewarding loyal political activists of the national ruling BDP—especially those who have lost out in national or local elections.

It is interesting to note that in Gaborone's 1994 elections there was only one out of 25 elected seats held by the national ruling party—the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). This indicates total rejection of ruling party policies by a large majority residing in the city. One would therefore expect this rejection to be reflected in the subsequent proceedings and policies of the city council.

The Gaborone city council has had eleven mayors from 1966 to the present time. Of those, only two have been women. As in many other institutions in Botswana, women are also under-represented in leadership positions in the city council. However, the role of women in politics in Botswana is an issue which is gaining currency. Women activists are at present busy conducting seminars and workshops to prepare women to contest in large numbers in future elections.

Gaborone is now the major BNF stronghold in Botswana. The opposition BNF took control of the city for the third term in 1994, without the central government interfering. This was a situation unique in newly independent Africa until 1992-93 when the Nairobi city council elections were won by the national opposition party. Experience elsewhere in the world has shown that this can create political problems for the ruling party in central government, as it can be the key to the gaining of political control of an entire country by an opposition party (Robson and Regan, 1972).

Internal operations of the Gaborone City Council

The Townships Act lays down uniform administration structures and procedures for all urban councils, but these vary in practice. They are influenced by the political complexion of the council and by the people who staff the administration. Here we will deal with how such structures operate in the Gaborone City Council.

The Gaborone City Council executes its duties through committees as established by the Townships Act. For example, it is mandatory for every council to appoint a finance committee and an education committee. In the Gaborone city council there are six committees comprising:

- the finance and general purposes committee
- the public health, social welfare and housing committee
- the Self-Help Housing Agency (SHAA) management committee
- the town planning committee
- the trade licensing committee
- the education committee.

Of these six committees, the finance and general purposes committee is the most important. This importance is reflected in the fact that it is chaired by the most important person in the council, the mayor, with his deputy as the vice-chairperson. Its significance is further reflected by the fact that, unlike other committees, it is not allowed to coopt persons from outside its membership.

Almost all committees of the council correspond to respective administrative departments in the council. In addition to these committees there is an ad-hoc committee known as the 'motions committee' which is comprised of the chairmen of all committees. The purpose of this committee is to follow up on motions which have been passed by the BNF-controlled council assembly, going back to its first city council victory in 1984.

The Gaborone City Council is headed by a mayor who has a deputy. The mayor, his deputy, and the committee members are elected every year in the first council meeting of the year, which is called specifically for that purpose.

The BNF took all the committee chairs after its 1984 election victory, so that it can exercise decisive influence over all council affairs. But it soon had to revise its strategy, as it became apparent that some of its members were not skilful enough in running committee meetings. It therefore elected one of the BDP-nominated councillors to the chair of the trade licensing committee in 1988. The councillor in question was more knowledgeable and more experienced in the field than any other councillor about the workings of the committee. Besides having served on the committee previously, he was a businessman who understood the many issues pertaining to this committee.

BDP councillors have complained about disproportionate BNF membership of council committees. Since 1984 some BNF councillors have sat on up to four committees each, while no BDP councillor has sat on more than two committees. This is partly a reflection of BNF distaste for nominated councillors. In answering such complaints from BDP councillors, the then mayor said that "the outcome of the elections cannot be debated". The BNF argument is that BDP councillors' involvement in the council should be minimized since they had been so soundly rejected by the electorate.

This war of revenge has gone as far as deliberate exclusion of some nominated councillors from serving on any committee. In 1992-93, for example, two BDP-nominated councillors did not belong to any committee at all. As a result, such marginalized councillors became ill-informed about

council issues. The BNF justified their action by referring to the precedent set in another urban council, where the majority BDP party excluded opposition councillors from committees.

The administrative framework

The administration of the Gaborone City Council is headed by the city clerk, who has a deputy. The city clerk is assisted by administrative heads of departments—the secretariat, the treasury, the Self-Help Housing Agency, and the departments of engineering, health, fire, education, social and community development, and building and architecture. The Gaborone City Council currently employs approximately 960 permanent and pensionable staff and 1,555 industrial-class employees.

For the purposes of running the council on a corporate basis, there is a Chief Officers Management Team (COMT) which is comprised of administrative heads. The purpose of COMT is to deliberate on policy issues and to make recommendations to the council and its various committees before their final adoption. This committee is chaired by the city clerk.

City governance and management

While it is accepted that many city governments fail to deliver services efficiently due to resource constraints, this is not the only adequate explanation. There are problems of governance and management as well. These two terms are used here to reflect the shift in thinking from state-centred perspectives to community-centred ones. (The emphasis of governance, as stated before, is on the roles played on the institution from outside by interest groups, unions, private organizations, individuals, and also central government itself.) This part of my paper provides an analysis based on responses from a survey instrument.

The quality of local political and bureaucratic leadership are important variables for managing a city such as Gaborone. This study has found divergent views between political and bureaucratic leaders with respect to the governance and management of the city. Bureaucrats, in particular those working for central government, too often express a dismissive and domineering attitude.

The question was posed as to whether the city is managed efficiently or not. Many respondents thought that within the limited resources at their disposal, they are satisfied that the city is managed efficiently. They believe that the city is clean and most of the services such as street lighting and collection of refuse are being properly taken care of. They point out that there are few complaints from city residents. The city is also highly rated in terms of completing development projects on time. It works out sound project memorandums and has increased its implementation capacity. These people often see political leaders (national and well as city) as having contributed to efficient management.

However, others see the city as constrained from achieving its objectives because of lack of autonomy from central government. The city has to refer too many matters to the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing. for guidance. Two crucial areas are human resources management and finance.

It is difficult to plan ahead because the Gaborone City Council is not responsible for employing the kind of people it needs. This often creates problems of administrative consistency and continuity.

Certain posts go unfilled for a long time because of central government, even when city managers know perfectly well what kind of qualified personnel is wanted. So it is not uncommon to find junior officers in charge, who may be inadequately equipped to appreciate what the city requires. The same argument is advanced with respect to finance. The city depends too much on central government for its financing.

On the other hand, there is the view of political and bureaucratic leaders in central government that the city of Gaborone is not efficiently managed. The main problem is not regarded as one of resources but of management and governance. One particular issue of concern is that of consultation. Efficient city management should involve all residents in the running of the city. There are certain matters which cannot be decided or acted upon unilaterally by the city council, without involving the wider public. To do so leads to people obstructing these developments because they neither understand nor support them.

A good example is the commercial zoning of an area next to the main city mall. Although the Town and Country Planning Act requires that residents have to be consulted before any major developments can take place, the city council engaged a consulting firm before consultations were held with the affected parties. Central government officials cite this case as evidence that lack of autonomy and resource constraints from central government are not sufficient to explain inefficient management of the city.

Responses to the survey on the role of party politics in city governance were very interesting. There was consensus in both central and local government that party politics has a very limited role in the way the city is governed. Party politics has no role to play in matters of general administration. This was further explained by the Townships Act constraining the autonomy of the city. Irrespective of politics at the local level, bureaucrats have to implement what is contained in National Development Plans.

One official put it bluntly when he said, "Local Authorities have to agree with government policies because they have to implement them". This kind of attitude has serious implications for city autonomy and urban governance in general.

There have been instances when councillors attempted to implement their own policies. For example, in 1984 when the BNF controlled the Gaborone city council elections for the first time, they tried to diverge from central government policies. However, they were not successful. Officials, both in central and local government, having internalized central government policy guidelines, could not or would not adapt to what they considered alien policies.

Some city councillors believe that party politics plays such a limited role in city governance because the provision of urban services is an apolitical matter. The view commonly expressed is that party politics has a role to

plays only during local government elections and elections of councillors to committees. These views show how many officials (both elected and unelected) refuse to acknowledge the significance of party politics in local government.

Asked further on what should be the main tasks and responsibilities of city governance, almost everyone involved with the city council mentioned the provision of services. That is, the emphasis was on the kind of functions that the city council is performing. A different view was expressed by some in the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, who saw city governance as being the responsibility of more than those who occupy positions in the city council. City governance, according to this school of thought, means providing an enabling environment in which services will be provided to city residents.

According to this view, city governance involves almost all residents of the city. This includes stakeholders ranging from ward development committees, the parastatal sector, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. These stakeholders should be coordinated through the city council. The main responsibilities of city governance should therefore be of interest and mediation rather than that of control.

All respondents—councillors as well as staff—agreed that decentralization is a good thing and it is a prerequisite for good urban governance. However, it would seem that those at the centre have a different conception of what they mean by decentralization from those at the city level. This became apparent in discussion.

Central government officials seem to be talking much more of *deconcentration* rather than *devolution*, even though they clearly understand the difference between the two. City officials seem to be talking about things presently at the centre needing to be hived off to them. They support decentralization as a way of breaking away from the powerful centre. However, they seem not to be prepared to accept further decentralization by way of empowering city communities. The main issue, therefore, is focused primarily on the calculus of power.

Experience has shown that structural solutions alone cannot solve problems of urban management. Urban governance and management are processes which require political leadership which has authority, vision, and a commitment to challenges facing the city (Davey, 1993). In this context, the role of education and training among city leaders is important.

Two alternative opinions stand out in contrast when dealing with the educational attainment of city councillors. One view says that formal academic qualifications are not necessary for one to be a councillor. All that is required, according to the proponents of this view, is for a councillor to be able to appreciate the issues coming before council. The second view holds that, while formal academic qualifications may not be a necessity, one requires a certain level of education to begin to appreciate the complex issues of management and governance. It is generally agreed that a good percentage of Gaborone city councillors have low educational qualifications and, as a result, find it difficult to cope. Out of the councillors elected in the 1994

elections, 50 percent have had only a primary school education, 23 percent have a junior certificate, and 27 percent have a senior certificate and above.

Holders of the former view justify their position by saying that there is a good mix of between educated and uneducated councillors, selected by their political parties. The concern of those holding the latter view is that the uneducated ones are in the majority, and this dilutes the quality of representation.

Although the possession of academic qualifications does not necessarily make one an effective representative, it is generally accepted that such qualifications enhance one's effectiveness—especially under the prevailing circumstances of globalization. Hence the education and training of councillors is crucial.

Local self-governance should be the foundation of national democracy. If democracy does not work well at the local level, it is doubtful whether it will work at other levels. The role of city councillors is so important that it cannot be ignored, as they have such power on issues of great importance to city residents.

Conclusion

Gaborone is well placed to reap significant benefits from globalization and decentralization in Botswana.

Decentralization has already contributed to better governance and management in the city of Gaborone. However, there are constraints primarily related to the management and use of human resources and finances. There needs to be much greater networking between the Gaborone city council and other urban stakeholders.

One area where transformation is needed is in the internal management structure of the city council. There should be the introduction of direct election of the mayor by the people—a mayor with chief executive powers. The responsibilities of such a person could include the power to place resolutions and recommendations before the city council, the preparation and submission of budgets to the council, and responsibility for executive operations of the council such as the appointment and dismissal of heads of departments.

This new style of local government would necessarily imply a different type of relationship among and between the chief executive, the heads of departments, councillors, urban stakeholders, and the central government. It would, undoubtedly, lead to even better urban governance.

Editorial Note

Since the acceptance of this paper, a new political party called the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) has been founded, in mid-1998. It has recruited many councillors who were formerly members of the Botswana National Front (BNF)

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