



Decentralization without Local Development in Municipalities in Mozambique

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Abstract

Under the decentralization law 2/97, Mozambique created the first 33 municipalities, whose implementation started after the municipal elections in 1998. With the approval of the new decentralization law 6/2018, the Mozambique decentralization process completed 20 years. Decentralization is, generally, believed to be one of the best public administration reforms for a central government to be efficient for service provision and promote local development through enhanced capacity of local government. However, the past 20 years of the municipalization of the first 33 municipalities appear to tell a different story due to two contexts: the post 16 years (1976/7 to 1992) armed conflict and the successive violent electoral conflicts from 1999 to 2018. As contexts differ, from country to country, this article asks to what extent the two contexts influenced the socio-political dynamics and political logic of the central government and the main political parties when adhering to decentralization reforms in Mozambique? What were the limitations and implications and why Mozambique decentralization process did not promote local development? Based on qualitative method and using the case of Municipality of Tete, the article identifies the limitations and analyses the impact of the two inter-related conflict contexts for hindering local development in the municipalities in Mozambique. Two theories are used in this article: the theory of public administration and the theories of development, namely, modernization and neoliberalism. The study findings show that over the last 20 years, the decentralization in Mozambique did not promote local development because it has been centred on the primacy of politics over local development. The article concludes that if decentralization is to promote local development both politics and developmental priorities should inform State reform and government strategy to fulfil their functions, each at its own level whether central or local in line with assigned competencies and resources.

Keywords: *Decentralization; Local Development; Armed Conflict; Violent Electoral Conflicts*

Introduction

Over the past 20 years of Mozambique decentralization process, two interrelated socio-political contexts, namely, the post armed conflict of 16 years and successive electoral violent conflict constitute the determining factors that informed municipalization of the first 33 municipalities. Enshrined in these contexts are the politics and socio-economic dynamics of the central government and political parties leaderships that produced a decentralization process premised on the logic of the primacy of politics over development. Based on the analysis of politics and socio-economic dynamics of the Mozambique decentralization process, the paper identifies limitations, implications and explains how and why decentralization did not promote local development by using the case of the Municipality of Tete City from 1998 to 2018.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the paper is to understand to what extend Mozambique decentralization process contributed to local development in the first 33 municipalities in the last 20 years (from 1988 to 2018). Specifically, to analyse how the post 16 years armed conflict and successive electoral violent conflict were the determining factors for decentralization in Mozambique and why. To address the objective, the paper draws its conclusions from the findings informed by the dynamics of political and socio-economic contexts which are peculiar to Mozambique. This paper posits the view that decentralization process that does not promote local development, it cannot fulfil the promises of decentralization, namely, efficient governance, institutional and procedural equity, participation of citizens in decision-making processes and provision of services and goods. In view of this, decentralization should promote local development as part of a national strategy to consolidate democracy and strengthen State institutions so that they can fulfil their respective functions within their competencies, available resources and fiscal space context.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

For the theoretical and conceptual framework, the paper uses two main theories and four key concepts whose underlying assumptions provide the analytical basis for the relationship between decentralization and local development. For the two theories inform the analysis, the first is the theory of public administration whose premisses are based on the understanding that main objective, of the State reform under decentralization, is to ensure efficient governance and promote socio-economic development of citizens. The second is the theory of development that sustain the premisses that socio-political and economic transformations require the intervention of both, the State and the private (Stiglitz, 2003). These two theories complement to each other, and they are used in this paper to establish the linkage between decentralization, understood as public policy reform with local development at municipality as a positive consequence of decentralization. In addition to the theories, four concepts, namely decentralization, local development, developmental state and development elites are used. However, the later three concepts are not defined because are not the key subject matters of this paper.

Methodology and Material

In terms of methodology, this is a qualitative and case study for the Municipality of Tete and it adopts Interpretive Social Sciences approach (Neuman, 1994, pp. 61-66). This approach is important because it orients the reasoning and helps to triangulate different sources of collected information, process them and make intelligible the discussion on the relationship between decentralization and local development. This approach also permits to make profound analysis of the situation per se and the context (Yin, 1989), in which decentralization is implemented at municipal level, whereby local development is presented as the main effect of decentralization.

This study is part of the PhD research from 2019 to 2022. It is a product of 10 days exploratory field study in 2019, 3 months research field work, interviews and focus group discussion carried out in 2022. The exploratory field study comprised two moments. Firstly, it consisted of site visits, such as water systems, health and school facilities, shop and markets, roads, municipal buildings to access municipal library and documents. Secondly, random and semi-structured interviews were conducted for 15 people, among whom public servants, journalists, women selling in the city markets, businesspeople and student from the Catholic University in Tete. The exploratory study helped to refine the questionnaire for semi-structure interviews to 36 people and three focus group discussion with the youth in 2022. The data collected under this methodology and approach allowed, on one hand, to capture socio-political and economic dynamics about the creation of the first 33 municipalities and the implementation of decentralization at municipal level from 1998 to 2018. And, on the other, it permitted to identify the nature of relationship established between decentralization and local development in the Municipality of Tete in those 20 years of the first cycle of decentralization in Mozambique.

In addition, this paper relies on literature review, official documents and two inter dependent analytical frameworks: the politico-legal and the institutional. For the politico-legal framework the analysis derives from the Mozambique multiparty Constitution of 1990, the revocation of the first decentralization law (law 3/94) before entering into force by the decentralization (Law 2/97) that lasted 20 years until the approval of the new decentralization law (Law 6/2018). For the institutional framework, the analysis covers to what extent, how and why the appropriation of the created decentralized institutions at the municipal level have been articulated with the central government, the parliament, judicial system, private sector and Civil Society Organizations.

This article is divided in six parts. The first is comprised of this introduction where, succinctly, the subject matter and objective of the study, theoretical framework are presented. The second present the methodology, approach, tools and techniques used to collect, process and analysis of the data. While in the third part offers the literature review, the fourth part presents the main findings of the study which leads to the analysis done in the fifth. The sixth part is the conclusion.

Decentralization and Local Development

From early XVIII Century, the relationship between decentralization and local development had been a subject of analysis. Montesquieu (1748) defended that decentralizing political power would promote development of governance institutions and systems of check-balances within the State by devising separation of competencies, roles and resources, thus creating conditions for institutions to work with some degree of independence.

During XX Century, this debate became an issue not only for academia but also, on one hand, it became the development narrative after the II World War whereby developed countries, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Organization (UNO), the Organization for Economic Development (OECD), European Economic Community/ European Union and International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs). On the other, decentralization and local development configured the tenets of democratization, redefinition of the competencies and roles either of the State or private sector as entities that should create the conditions for an efficient delivery of national and local development outcomes. (Polese, 1999; Kisman e Tasar, 2014).

From the vast literature on decentralization and local development three positions are highlighted. The first defend that decentralization promote local development (Montesquieu, 1748; Tiebout, 1956; Treisman, 2007; Oates, 2006). The second affirms that decentralization brings the government closer to the people in the prosecution of objectives designed by the central government (Compans, 1999; Martins,

2002; Lei 8/2003; Weimer, 2009). The third establishes that the main purpose of the proximation between the central government and the people is to promote local development (OECD, 2001; Gebuza, 2005; Governo, 2006; PAP, 2007; Banco Mundial, 2009; 2000; HMG, 2010a;).

From these three positions, two central arguments seek to establish the relationship between decentralization and local development. The first suggests that there is no evidence that decentralization, alone, can promote local development (Madison, 1787; Schneider, 2003; Tomaney, 2011; Romeu, 2015). The second asserts that decentralization can promote local development as long as national and local elites have the vision of a developmental state (Mkandawire, 2001; Fritz e Menocal, 2007; Leftwich, 2005).

This paper acknowledges the academic foundations of the origin of the debate on the relationship between decentralization and local development as well as decentralization strategic projects promoted worldwide by the OECD and IFIs to democratize developing countries in the 80s and 90s. However, the paper does not take for granted none of the highlighted positions for the following reasons: First, the question of the relationship between decentralization and local development, either as a theoretical construct or strategic formulation of government policy, requires an academic scrutiny, because on one side, there is a need to verify to what extend decentralization produces effects in local development produces, and on the other, to confirm or not to what extend decentralization and local development complement to each other drawn from specific political, social and economic context where decentralization policies have been implemented. This scrutiny allows to distinguish a purely intellectual exercise about concepts and processes of decentralization and local development from a particular field of knowledge. For instance, studying these two concepts and processes using economics will lead to different results if geography, sociology or political sciences are applied.

Second, before assuming the proposed positions, limits of analysis should be established because the process of public sector reform under decentralization encompasses the promises of decentralization, namely, effective governance, institutional equity, efficient provision of services and public goods and participation of citizens (Haug e Schou, 2005, 16). These promises can be fulfilled or not depending on the contexts, time and locations. For instance, either a unitary or federal state regardless of the political system or regime, be it authoritarian or democratic, promoting or blocking local development depends on the politics and developmental vision of the elites.

Third, the decentralization context of states that experiend prolonged or intermintents armed conflicts or successive electoral violent conflicts, like Mozambique, do not fit in the three positions afore described. Example, to implement decentralization in countries that enjoys peace or that never had militar conflict or have had no recurrent militar violence to settle power sharing, such Zambia, Malawi, Botswana in the Sun-Saharan Africa, it is different from implementing decentralization in the post 16 years or armed conflict and and successive electoral violent conflicts like Mozambique.

In our days the decentralization process is, fundamentally, promoted to respond to four promises of decentralization, namely, (i) efficient governance, (ii) institutional and procedural equity, (iii) participation and (iv) provision of services and goods (Haug e Schou, 2005, 16). The fulfilment of these promises produce effects in public and private institutions, central and local governments, citizens and in the country as a whole. These promises enshrined the ideal for local development whereby gravited the expectations of the people about decentralization, as we shall see in the following section.

Dynamics of Decentralization and Local Development in Mozambique

Understanding the dynamics of decentralization and local development at municipality level from 1994 to 2018 should consider two inter-related contexts of the history of the Mozambique

decentralization process. The first is the post 16 years of armed conflict (1976/7 to 1992). The second consists of the successive electoral violent conflicts from 1999 to 2014.

Concerning the post armed conflict, the 16 years war between Frelimo government and the former guerrilla movement Resistência Nacional de Moçambique (RENAMO) created disruption of the process of Frelimo power affirmation and consolidation after 1975. The Frelimo government constituted and established in the after match of the proclamation of Mozambique independence from the Portuguese colonial power on 25th June of 1975 adopted a one-state-party under the Constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique up to 1990. It was during the peace negotiations between Frelimo and RENAMO that Frelimo anticipated the approval of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique in 1990 that institutes multiparty democracy. The peace negotiations and the constitutional change from one-state-party to multi-party democracy did not mean that Frelimo political power had been consolidated or that Frelimo was ready to share political power with any opposition party. In politics this is unconceivable even when there is a legal framework to conform with the tenets of the multi-party constitution.

On the successive electoral violent conflicts from 1999 to 2014, the issue of violent electoral conflicts had its root causes, on one hand, from non-acceptance of the electoral results that officially attributed RENAMO electoral defeat in the elections held in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. On the other hand, RENAMO demanded power sharing in the electoral constituencies that claimed to have won the elections. The violent electoral conflicts produced a certain politico-legal orientation of the decentralization process, thus prioritizing many aspects related to power retention, control and power access mechanisms but ignoring local development at municipality. The laws and other regulations approved from 1994 to 2018 are centred, on one hand, on engineering power control and power sharing between Frelimo and Renamo parties, and, on the other, in the limitation and blocking the space for local demand for the exercise of civil and political rights, as it was in the colonial legislation¹ in Mozambique.

By the force of the CRM of 1990 and of the international context for multi-party democracy, the Frelimo government embarked on public reforms, one of which is decentralization. The multi-party democracy instituted by the CRM of 1990 finds its material expression in the regular elections whereby several political parties compete in the elections to access to political power. In Mozambique, the process to access political power through elections, in line with the CRM 1990, has been characterized by successive violent electoral conflicts. These violent electoral conflicts can be understood as part of the dynamics that forged the logic of power preservation and control instinct, either by the government party (Frelimo) and also by the political opposition parties, whereby both sides envisaged decentralization and creation of municipalities as new spaces for power affirmation and consolidation. This logic was a determining factor for the debates and elaboration for the first legal instruments for decentralization, particularly, the Law 3/94 of 13th September. This law approved the institutional framework of district municipalities. As the CRM of 1990 had no reference to question of "local power" and the direction of the results of the general elections in 1994 indicated, the Law 3/94 was revoked even before entering into force and it was replaced by the Law 2/97 of 18th February. This law approved the legal framework to create municipalities as stated in n° 1, article 135 of the Constitution of 1990.

The politico-legal framework for municipality in Mozambique should not be taken as a mere intellectual abstraction that produz results in sequenced logic of causes-effects because the socio-political and economic dynamics of decentralization that enform the creation of municipalities in Mozambique is

¹ Portuguese Constitution of 1933; Decree-Law no. 23,228, of November 15, 1933 (Organic Charter of the Colonial Empire Portuguese); Decree-Law no. 23,229, of November 15, 1933 (Overseas Administrative Reform); Decree-Law no. 2066 of 27 June 1953 (Organic Law of Overseas Portuguese); Decree-Law no. 39,666, of 20 May 1954 (Statute of the Indigenous Provinces of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique) and Decree-Law no. 40,226, of 5 June 1955 (Political-Administrative Statute of the Overseas Province of Mozambique)

unique and different from decentralization processes that occurred in the neighbouring countries, such as post-apartheid South Africa (Mogale and Picard, 2010), Botswana (Siddle, 2019), Malawi post Kamuzu Banda regime (Dulani, 2003), Zâmbia after independence in 1964 (Bbaala, 2016; Chikulo, 2017) and Zimbabwe (Conyers, 2003).

There are also other factors that require scrutiny. If the political-legal acts were in conformity with the promises of decentralization officially uttered, for example, the statement like "... decentralization the central government closer to the people" (World Bank, 2010); or the approximation of the central government to the people is envisaged to create conditions to promote local development (Lei 2/97, of February 18; Law 8/2003, of May 19; Decree 11/2005; Guebuza, 2006; GdM, 2010; 2014). Understanding, *prima facie*, this point is indispensable for a profound analysis about Mozambique decentralization process, because decentralization is not an end but a means to achieve certain objectives, either political or developmental.

Regarding the configuration of power control and sharing, from the approval of the 1990 Constitution during the one-state-party, the issue of power control and limits for power sharing had primacy in the design of the Mozambique decentralization reforms. For instance, the Law 3/94, of 13th September that envisaged the creation of municipalities in all cities, towns and districts, that is the institutionalization of "municipal districts, in line with numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 of article 1, on one side, it did not generate consensus within Frelimo party because some leading party members were afraid that this reform would result in a political error that could have favoured Renamo. On the other, even Renamo party views this law as Frelimo trap as they understood it with suspicion that Frelimo was not ready to share power as suggested in this decentralization law.

In 1996, the Constitution of 1990 was subjected to a revision which allowed the approval of the Law 2/97, of 18th February, which introduced the gradual creation of municipalities as well as gradual transference of functions, competencies and financial resources. This shift of approach, from the Law 3/94 envisaged to municipalize all cities, towns and districts to the Law 2/97 focusing on gradual decentralization, was already indicating that Mozambique decentralization process rather being enshrined in democratic principals for access to power, it was crafted to accommodate political interests of Renamo not attained in the electoral processes from 1994 to 2018. This Frelimo tactic of accommodation of interests of Renamo served strategically well for Frelimo to maintain the discussion of power sharing open and defuse but still controlling the mechanisms to access power through legislation.

Specifically for the limitation of free exercise of civil and political rights is evidenced by the suppression of independent candidates to be mayors. The Law 18/2007, of 18th July, was revoked by the Law 4/2003, of 22nd February and this was revoked by another law (Law 7/2003, also of 22nd February, by introducing in its article 142 the term "uninominal list for candidacy to be mayor", making clear that only party list or group of citizens list candidates would be considered to the potential candidate to be the mayor of the municipality.

With regard to the limitation and closure of the space for the exercise of political and civil rights that derives from the local *demana*, it is evidenced by the legal suppression of independent candidacy to be mayor, as it was in the Law 18/2007, of 18th July, on the Election of the Organs of Local Authorities. That law was revoked by Law 4/2013, of 22nd February and, this was then revoked another Law 7/2013, of 22nd February, on the Election of the Holders of the Organs of Local Authorities, by introducing under article 142 the notion of "uninominal list" for candidacy for the presidency of the municipality. In lines a) and b) of paragraph 1, of Law 7/2013, it establishes the following:

"1. Nominations for the office of mayor of a city or village shall be submitted:

- a) By the organs of political parties or coalitions of statutorily competent political parties, supported by a minimum of one percent of signatures in relation to the universe of citizens registered voters in the respective municipality, duly identified.
- b) By group of citizens voters proponents, registered in the area of the respective local authority, with a minimum of one percent of signatures in relation to the universe of citizens registered voters".

This new legal command shows, on the one hand, the externalization of the fear of losing control of power, both by the central government and by the parties that ascend to power in the municipalities, if the candidacy of independent candidates to the office of mayor were maintained. On the other hand, it inhibits citizens from running as independent candidates because they must be supported by a legally constituted group, although not all groups with the will to advance an independent candidacy for the office of mayor have sufficient resources and power to influence voter dynamics and accommodate supporters' interests. Politically, it is difficult to run for office of mayor when you have doubts or do not have a party base or the ability to obtain enough seats to constitute a bench in the Municipal Assembly with which to count on to approve the municipal governance plan. Therefore, it was decided, under the terms of article 22, of the same law to establish the following: "The legitimacy of presenting candidacies for the municipal elections rests with the competent organs of the political parties, coalition of parties or groups of competing citizens, legally constituted", to confer legitimacy of presentation of candidacies.

What happened during the 20 years of municipalization was an inverse movement to the ideal of decentralization, in the sense not only of reducing the sphere of exercise of local power with some immunity over interference of the central power, but also the creation of conditions for municipal development was ignored or postponed. From independent candidates for the office of mayor under the Law 2/97 and Law 18/2007, from which the mayors were elected as individuals, now the mayors are elected in a uninominal list, known in Mozambique as election via "Head of List" of the candidate of the political party to the office of mayor. This new electoral legislation excludes any possibility of independent candidates for the office of mayor to take part in the process².

Through the system of "Head of List" for the office of mayor the leaderships of political parties can control and limit any will of the local municipality to elect its representatives locally, because *top-down decentralization prevails*. Likewise, since the acts of the mayors elected in this way, in order to fulfill the promises of decentralization require the blessing of the central power and or of the party that made her/him elected, the municipal development cannot be a priority of those elected because they will collide with the central power, as was the case of Carlos Portimão, mayor of Moatize since 2013, when he publicly questioned "why decentralization without developing Moatize? How does a city develop without commercial activity?". He sought to defend himself from the illegal and political interference of the Provincial Prosecutor's Office of Tete in a *dossier* on the local initiative of the City Council to build a Shopping Centre to increase economic activities in a municipality that had just risen to the category of city less than 1 year before the incident. The municipal town of Moatize was elevated to the category of the City of Moatize by Resolution 17/2020, of March 5.

² In specific terms, taking part in the process means forming the government in the municipality. For example, in the event that a candidate does not achieve a majority in the elections, a post-election coalition makes sense, as has happened in many European countries. The winner who does not reach 50%+1 has no option but to negotiate with another competing Political Party to join the coalition. Recently, in the 2018 municipal elections, there was an electoral tie in Matola. The MDM candidate accepted negotiations so that Frelimo could create the municipal government. If the MDM had been interested in the alternation, it would have opted to join Renamo and win some votes in the negotiation.

Another observation refers to gradualism. Or, in the light of the gradualism advocated in Law 2/97, or, in the light of the political consensus and successive legislations³ within the framework of the decentralization packages to make the elections viable, there is a forced creation of autarchies without basic infrastructures for the functioning of the local bodies, fiscal space, human resources and others, as were the cases of the municipalities of Nyamayabwe in the province of Tete, of Moeda in the province of Cabo Delgado and of Sussundenga in the province of Manica, created in 2013 to satisfy political-electoral interests and limit aspirations emanating from the will of the local electorate. Creating autarchies without basic operating conditions makes the City Councils and mayors hostages of the central government.

What is not clear in the process of municipalization in Mozambique is the gradualism approach that has been implemented in the light of Law 2/97. The central question is not whether a given State opts for gradualism or the "*big-bang*" formula of decentralization as was the case in Indonesia (Anwar and Thompson, 2004; Kumar, 2005), but it is the deliberate attempt to re-centralize power through the concealment of political-legal instruments that at first glance suggest decentralization. This logic for the control and sharing of power has implications for the way the holders of local government bodies (mayors) have prioritized their governmental actions throughout the 20 years of municipalization: ignoring or postponing the issue of municipal development as one of the indispensable pillars for the consolidation of reforms within the scope of decentralization and sustainability of municipalization.

The political-legal sphere on maintenance, control and sharing of power influenced the framework of decentralization in Mozambique. Any attempt, as an individual initiative, that a mayor seeks to find local financial solutions, to organize commerce in the city, that is, to promote one of the aspects of municipal development, often tends to face all kinds of barriers in the political-party, financial, legal and administrative sphere. The situation can worsen when a particular mayor is perceived as distancing himself from certain alignments to the circuits of party-political power, whether from Frelimo, Renamo or even MDM. That is, a mayor refusing to comply with orders, illegal or not, of the central or partisan power to fulfill the electoral promises to the citizens at the municipality runs the risk, or of being advised by his political party to abandon the office of mayor as were the cases of the mayor of the City of Quelimane, Pio Matos; Mayor of Cuamba, Arnaldo Maloa; Mayor of the City of Pemba, Sadique Yaqub, all in 2011, and also Mayor of Maputo City, Eneas Comiche in 2008. Or even, to be passed over as were the cases of Daviz Simango when he was passed over by Afonso Dhlakama in 2008, or to be ostracized as were the cases of Mahumud Amurane, mayor of Nampula in 2012, or realignment of alliances as was the case of Manuel de Araujo, mayor of Quelimane in 2018 who found himself ostracized by the MDM party of Daviz Simango. In short, the central political power, both of the government and of the central organs of the parties, expect the mayors to carry out the orders of the political power of those and not to have individual initiatives or initiatives coordinated locally with their peers. To be precise, it was in the period from 1998-2018 that the mayors of Quelimane, Pemba, Cuamba, and Matola were advised, in 2011, by their party⁴ to abandon their mandates as mayors, for reasons more of political than legal nature.

The article finds that the political leaderships of the central government and political parties at the central level and the mayors are confronted with and busy in accommodating party-political issues that fulfill the agenda of municipalization. Therefore, the 20 years of municipalization can be characterized as having been oriented towards survival and political subservience, and the key actors, at the central and local levels, succumbed to these setbacks. As a result, there was no room to think about municipal development. As an example, mayor such as, Carlos Tembe (Municipality of Matola) and Mahamudo Amurane (Municipality of Nampula); Eneas Comiche, in his first term (Municipality of Maputo), Pio

³ Agreement on the Cessation of Military Hostilities, Amnesty Law 2014 (Law 17/2014) and the most recent Maputo Peace Agreement signed in 2019 make up the instruments of political accommodation between the Government of Frelimo and Renamo.

⁴ Frelimo Party. The case of Aeneas Comiche was advised not to reapply in the internal candidacies of the Party for the election of the Candidate for Mayor of Maputo in the municipal elections of 2008.

Matos (Municipality of Quelimane), Daviz Simango (Municipality of Beira), Manuel de Araujo (Municipality of Quelimane from 2011 to 2023), César de Carvalho, first term (Municipality of Tete, from 2003-2013), began to live with such setbacks.

In the analysis of the 20 years, the debate about decentralization that initiated on the control and sharing of power between two political parties (Frelimo and Renamo) moved to also include mechanisms of control and limitation of local demand, disguised as the legal will of the State when in fact it tends to be the will of the leaders of the political parties to confer party legitimacy of the exercise of power to the mayors elected via the "Head of the List". This situation, on one hand, reinforced the idea that a mayor occupies the position in the municipality only because the Party chose him/her and not necessarily because the votes of the citizens approved the governance plan of such mayor. On the other, it confirmed the consent of both sides, central and municipal governments, because the decisions occur within the party, that is, a kind of collusion. The Heads of the List, even if they have been nominated and selected by their respective political parties, are the ones candidates who lead the electoral campaign after approval of the election manifesto and electoral campaign plan within the party. Also, the decisions that are taken throughout the mandate of a mayor, it does not matter if they may have interference or influence from the central organs of the parties, however, even though, the Municipal Assembly consents.

In essence, the resistance of the central organs of government and political parties and also the permissibility that the Municipal Assembly agree to have to do with, on one hand, the fear for losing control of the exercise of power over the mayors and, in turn, these mayors fear losing the base of support for appointments in the following elections. To illustrate, the article presents some examples. In 2008, for reasons publicly unknown, the then leader of Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama decided to get rid of Daviz Simango, then mayor of the Municipality of Beira, by appointing another person of trust to run for the office of mayor in Beira. Because the legislation (Law 2/97) allowed candidacies of independent candidates, Daviz Simango, making use of the legitimacy of performance during his governance in the municipality of Beira decided to break out from party ties⁵ with the Renamo of Afonso Dhlakama and ran as an independent candidate and won the municipal elections of 2008. In 2009, Daviz Simango founded the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) party. Interestingly, after the MDM Congress in Nampula in 2017, progressive MDM members, such as Manuel de Araújo in Quelimane and Venâncio Mondlane in Maputo, challenged "internal democracy" and abandoned the MDM and decided to join in Renamo Party, having later been presented as candidates for the office of mayor Quelimane and Maputo City, respectively. It happens, however, that the MDM leadership took political and legal steps against its former senior members, ignoring the basis of the emergence of the MDM, which was the contestation of the centralized party governance by the Renamo leadership⁶. This means that the MDM Party was created based on the importance of the local demand for democratic space based on local needs and wills and not from the party leadership. A politically motivated legal process filed by the MDM prevented Venâncio Mondlane from running for mayor of Maputo, but it did not prevent Manuel de Araújo from running for the another turn for the office of mayor in Quelimane, in part because of the support received from the leadership of Renamo. That is, the demand of the local will prevailed over the will of the central organs of the MDM Party.

⁵ This episode should not be viewed in isolation. Since running for mayor must have a bench that supports him for approval of the municipal government, there must have been a political party that defended the governance agenda of Daviz Simango in the Municipal Assembly (AM) of Beira. That is why there is always a political agreement with a Party for approval of the plans of the mayor, without this there is dissolution of the AM. It seems that Frelimo is the one who supported Simango to get Simango away from Renamo and later gain some sympathy. Maybe that's why there is competition and negotiation in Beira. It is very evident that the MDM always needs the support of either Frelimo or Renamo to get its plans through. The case of the tie of Frelimo and MDM in the 2018 municipal elections can be seen, too, in this perspective.

⁶ The Renamo party is created from a guerrilla movement. It is necessary to read the centralized leadership during the presidency of Afonso Dhlakama in this perspective. The same can be said of the origins of the Frelimo Party. Amos Frelimo and Renamo are parties of military origin and tradition. This context differs from that of the origins of MDM. Its leadership (Daviz Simango) had neither military origin nor tradition.

What seemed, until then, to be an exception to the rule, to have a public protest stance against partisan practices of control of power and limitation of the democratic manifestation of the local will, coming from the center of Mozambique, began to give indications, from the capital city Maputo, that the process of decentralization initiated in 1994 can take unpredictable directions in the process of internalization of municipalization and consolidation of democracy in Mozambique. For example, in the same period, Samora Machel Júnior, the son of Mozambique first President of the Republic and a senior member of the Frelimo Central Committee, broke the party discipline of the Frelimo Party by being presented as a candidate for the office of mayor for the Maputo City by a youth association. A meandering political-legal process prevented him from being allowed to run. There was speculation that he would win the electoral ballot and results that would confirm this speculation at the polls would have projected a perception of fragility of the governing Frelimo Party that eventually could not control the dynamics of the exercise of power of an unelected mayor by the Frelimo Party in a municipality of the capital city of the country outside its control.

The two contexts did not make Frelimo look at decentralization as a fatality of its political existence only because there was disruption in the consolidation during the 16 years of the armed conflict. But rather, as a means of maintaining and controlling power because it created legal norms and forged dynamics that contributed to logics of maintenance and control of power both at central and municipal levels. Likewise, the opposition political parties, especially Renamo and the MDM, slip into the same tuning fork of maintaining and controlling power internally with their parties, ignoring and delaying the materialization of the ideal of municipal development. Therefore, it follows from these contexts that the socio-political and economic dynamics of decentralization derive, on one hand, from the internal political-legal framework encapsulated by the logic of maintenance and consolidation of political power because of the fear of the central government and of the central organs of the political parties losing control of power over the elected mayor by unpredictable dynamics of the local power leaderships. And, on the other hand, the process of democratization and state reforms via decentralization was strongly promoted at the international level.

The political-legal framework on decentralization in Mozambique produced results that did not lead to municipal development in the 33 pioneer municipalities, including the Municipality of Tete, because the promises of decentralization were not prioritized either by the central government or by the central organs of the political parties, as the article demonstrates in the case of Tete, below.

Study Findings

Decentralization without Local Development in the Municipality of Tete

With an area of 287 km², the Municipality of Tete is characterized as urban, semi-urban as well as rural and it is comprised of nine urban districts, namely: Chingodzi, Degwe, Filipe Samuel Magaia, Francisco Manyanga, Josina Machel, Mateus Sansão Muthemba, Matundo, M'padue e Samora Machel, as per Figure 1.

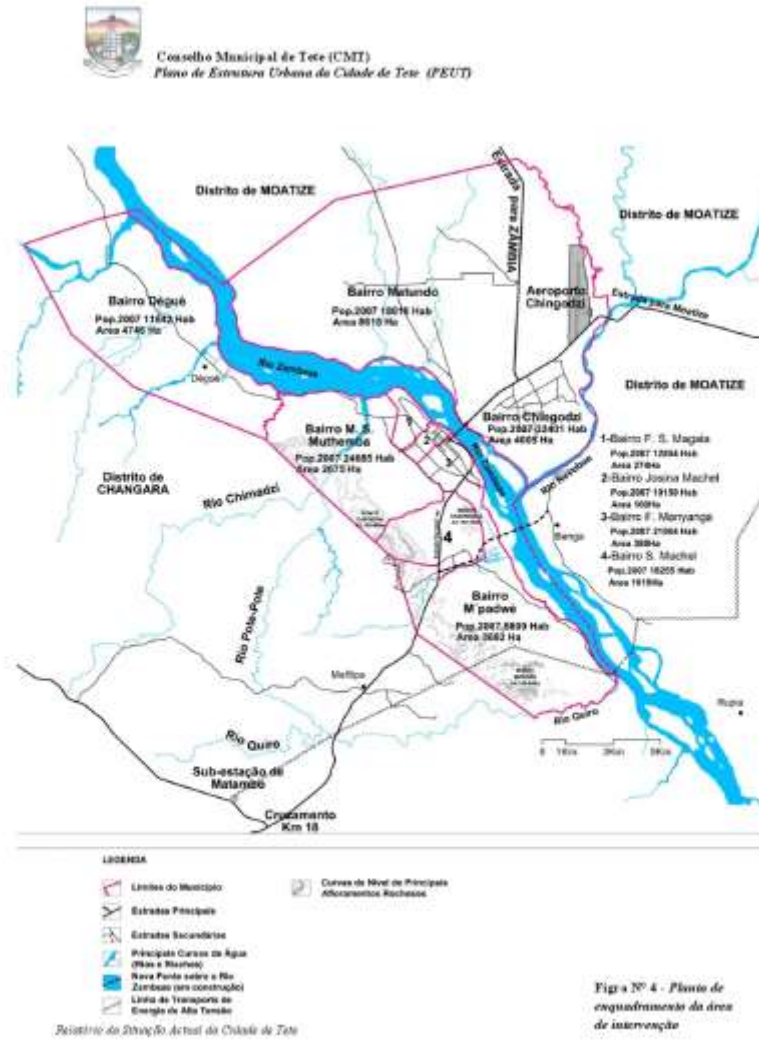


Figure 1: Map of the Municipality of Tete
Source: Municipality of Tete

It is located at 500 meters of altitude and 468 meters above sea level. The municipality of Tete is situated in a geo-strategic place due to its accessibility to international commerce and economic development. It is a transit junction for neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Tanzania. From 1998 to 2008, Tete registered huge investments in the coal mining sector and related services. Also, Tete can be reached via road, railways to Beira and Nacala ports as well as airport.

From 1997 to 2014, the population of the municipality grew from 101.984 to 302.424 in 2013 (Graph 1). The actual population of the municipality is estimated around 217,000 habitants (INE, 2018). From 2009 to 2013 the municipality became the host of megaprojects for the extractive sector engaged in coal mining, timber parks, tobacco factory, transport services and constructions.



Graph 1: CMCM Population Growth 1997-2014
Source: INE, 2013, adapted by the author, 2022

The second reason is that, the municipality has access to two main rivers, namely Zambezi river that divide the city into two parts and Rovubwe river. The second reason, the Municipality of Tete has access to two main water sources. The first source is the Zambezi River which passes through the city dividing it in two and is approximately less than 500 meters from the Municipal Council Headquarters. The second is the Revúbuè River, which separates the Municipality of Tete with the district of Moatize and the Municipality of Moatize. However, these two water and natural sources of water are not part of the water supply system in the Municipality of Tete. The water sources that sustain the water supply system in Tete Municipality are groundwater from the Nhartanda Valley, with a catchment capacity of 39,280 m³/h, production of 38,495 m³/of, storage capacity of 5,390 m³.

In terms of governance, the Municipality of Tete is administered by a Municipal Council of the City of Tete (CMCT). The CMCT is a local government body of the State with administrative, patrimonial and financial autonomy and is constituted under the terms of Law No. 2/97, of 18 February. The governance structure is based on two fundamental bodies: the executive and the legislative. Under Article 16 of Law 2/97, both the President of the Municipal Council (PCM) and the Municipal Assembly (AM) are bodies elected by universal, direct, equal, secret, personal and periodic suffrage of the electors residing in the territorial constituency of the local authority according to the system of proportional representation. AM is composed of 36 elected members and is directed by a table composed of a President, a Vice-President and a Secretary, the AM is a representative body of the municipality endowed with deliberative powers.

The executive of the Municipality of Tete is composed of three basic organs for its organization and functioning, which are, the PCM and its Office of the President and eight (8) councils, namely, 1. Administration and Finance; 2. Sanitation and Environment; 3. Infrastructure; 4. Transportation and Transit; 5. Culture, Youth and Sport; 6. Urban Administration and Construction; 7. Education, Public Health, Women and Social Action; and, 8. Community Development and Gardens, Market and Fairs and Tourism. By the number of councils the City Council was in accordance with paragraph 1 of article 50 which places between 7 and 9 councils. The central government did not transfer competences, functions and financial resources to the areas of primary education, basic health and social action although this council was maintained for the 20 years.

Limitations of Decentralization and Implications in Local Development

From the analysis made of the past 20 years, as findings this article identifies five key limitations, namely: (i) concealing the transfer of roles and competences, (ii) resistance to internalize and ownership of the decentralization process, (iii) informalization of the accountability; (iv) contested participation and legitimatization of municipal decentralization; and, (v) institutional de-coordination for provision of goods and services.

For concealing the transfer of roles and competences, the literature points out that the transfer of functions and competences from the central government to municipalities should also be accompanied with respective financial resources because three-fold transfer (roles-competences-resources) spur up local initiatives, and consequently can promote local development (Robinson e White 1995; Frank 2002; Diamond 2003; Davis 2007; Fritz e Menocal 2007; Romeo, 2012). Though the laws and regulations are indispensable, a decentralization process that promote local development at municipal level should be based on the determination of the central government to comply with the laws it created and regulations that established the transfer of roles and competences to municipalities in order to confer relative autonomy as a fulfilment of national objectives to strengthen state institutions as the municipalities are.

In Mozambique, the central government, to meet the administrative decentralization, as stated in the article 6, Law 2/97, of February 18, approved various regulations. It is highlighted in the Decree 33/2006, of August 30, article 2 that established:

- “1. The decentralization of powers will be done through transfers of functions and competences to municipalities, with the end to ensure strengthening national objectives and promote efficiency and efficacy in public management assuring the rights of citizens”.
- “2. Administrative decentralization assures the materialization of the principle of subsidiarity, as the functions and competences must be exercised by the best administrative organ appointed to implement the principle based on rationality, efficacy and proximity with citizens”.

And, in no 3, article 5, Decree 33/2006, established that:

“The bunch of functions and competences established in the present decree will be transferred progressively to municipalities in three subsequent years after entering in effect and there will be a proration for two years more”.

Equally, as per no 1, of the same article, the transfer of functions and competences under this decree should be “accompanied by the corresponding transfer of financial, human and patrimonial resources”. And in no 2, it says:

“The transfer of functions and competences from central government organs to local municipalities must be operated in gradual manner to permit the creation of conditions and consolidate necessary requirement for technical, human, financial capacities for the organs at municipality level”.

From this reviewed legislation, the municipal political power should be built on solid financial, technical and human basis. It corroborates that municipalization should be grounded on laws that establishes temporal limits and responsibilities from which the central government should not just approve infra-constitutional norms, such as ministerial orders without limits in order do deviate from the fulfilment of constitutional command. It follows that when the temporal limits are not legally established, on one hand, for the central government to transfer functions and competences to municipal government, and on the other, when the municipal authorities have no legal orientation to demand the central government to comply with the law and be accountable for not transferring the functions, competences

and financial resources, it becomes difficult to assess Mozambique municipalization process due to the omission of entry points for an accurate and objective verification of legal compliance by the central government.

The findings show that there are no limits established in the law and ministerial order for the municipal authorities demand and be responded to, officially by the central government about the transfer of functions, competences and financial resources. It follows that the query on withholding the transfer of functions, competences and financial resources from the central government to municipal authorities appears as one of the aspects that hinder local development because decentralization is a means and not an end. Approving laws and orders without creating effective space for implementation can be contra productive to promoting local development.

For Mozambique case study, when analysing socio-political and economic dynamics of decentralization at Municipality of Tete from 1998 to 2018, one of the implications for the central government to conceal the transfer of functions and competences to the municipal authorities is the entrenchment of inefficient governance practices and acts of accountability based on informality. Instead, the municipal authorities being accountable to their respective citizens they have been accountable to the central party leaderships. These practices cannot be dissociated with the inter-related political contexts: the post 16 years armed conflict and the successive violent electoral conflicts which remarkably characterized Mozambique decentralization as continuum process for maintaining, controlling and eventually distributing political power. A mixture of perceptions about how the central government would exert its power in the 33 municipalities after 23 years of uninterrupted government with a socialist central planning, from June of 1975, it would have been inevitable that Frelimo government met, simultaneously, a dilemma and paradox in governance. The dilemma has been, or to devolve power to municipal authorities, as per the decentralization law, or to resist devolving it, as devolving would mean losing some power control. The paradox has been that the central government had sufficient and necessary power to legislate and implement public reforms but decided not to do it. This binomial dilemma-paradox produced resistance to internalization and ownership of the municipal decentralization, which is the limitation that is analysed next.

Concerning resistance to internalize and own the decentralization process, the findings show that over the last 20 years of municipalization, there has been a mixture of perceptions, either on the side of the central government and central political party leaderships with Parliament seats or on the side of the municipal assemblies. This has been influenced by the afore-mentioned dilemma and paradox, particularly at the Municipality of Tete..

On the dilemma, from politico-legal framework, the central government should comply with the decentralization principles which are the devolution of power and the transfer of functions, administrative and fiscal competencies to municipalities. These would confer relative autonomy for the municipality to exert power, manage and provide public goods and services in an efficient manner as part of the local initiatives in response to local demand. However, the central government was confronted with this dilemma to internalize and own the decentralization laws it approved for the reforms it officially pledged to carry out, when it positioned itself between, whether to accept the appropriation of the municipal entities created and create conditions for the effective functioning, or to run into risk of losing the control of power, or even maintain the control of power by approving new laws and infra-constitutional norms in the eve of new elections but never implement them for the municipalization. For instance, the transfer of functions and competences to all 33 municipalities should have taken place, at initial phase, that's from 1998 to 2001, in Maputo, Beira, Quelimane, Nampula and Pemba municipalities, and, three years later, that's from 2002 onwards, to all municipalities as per the Law 2/97, of February 18. This process of transfer did not occur in the 20 years, that's from 1998 to 2018.

On the paradox, given to the majority seats in the Parliament and Municipal Assemblies, the central government had sufficient and more than enough political and legal power to decide, vote and put forward any reform decision without blockage from opposition parties, either through legislative actions at the Parliament or at Municipal Assemblies; either through executive power and create necessary human, technical and financial conditions for the municipalization process to be internalized and owned by local municipal authorities, private sector and the society. For instant the mayors that are trusted party members these processes of internalization and appropriation would have taken shape. As a result of these, Mozambique has produced an alienator municipalization through dissimulated decentralization that does not confer autonomy to the local government and consequently, asphyxiate local initiative to promote local development.

The functioning of the municipalities depends politically and financially on the central government and political party leaderships. In the case of the Municipality of Tete, given to the infra-structures that inherited from the provincial capital city, its geo-strategic position and access to watercourses, housing and business facilities spurred up by the mining companies, economic activities, professional and tertiary education institutions, Tete could have been an example of success among the municipalities if internalization and appropriation of decentralization had been upheld, and, consequently, promote local development. What appeared to be mere withholding of devolution of power, non-transfer of functions and competences from the central government in 20 years reveal “resistance to appropriation of the learning processes from our own experience of decentralized governance (Guebuza, 2022).

The question of resistance to internalize and appropriation of the decentralization process created, firstly, an apparent municipalization because it is not conducive to demand efficient governance to municipal authorities whose functions, competences and resources are being withheld by the central government. Secondly, derived from the dilemma and paradox, emerged a situation of asphyxiated municipalization whose functioning depends heavily on the will of the central government. The asphyxia to the municipalities, apart from creating dependence, it induced the mayor to a letargy, that’s, not to take local initiative because local initiatives are scrutinized by the central government or central party leaders for the mayors to implement their local initiatives. Local initiatives can be ignored as was the case of the 12 municipalities that requested the transfer of competences for management of water systems to be done by municipality and not by the central government that delegated the management of water system to the centrally controlled Investment Fund, Asset and Water Supply (FIPAG).

The dilemma and paradox affected the perception of the government for its appropriation and acceptance to implement decentralization reform. O dilema e o paradoxo afetaram a percepção do governo central na sua apropriação e aceitação para a implementação da descentralização. This situation had a contagious effect at municipal level for the exercise of power, because governance practices of the central government based on mechanisms for power control were projected and assumed for the municipal governance in Tete. As a result of this, for the decentralization in Mozambique, the keep and control political power have had primacy over local development. This local development would have been built from the promises of decentralization, namely, efficient governance, improved provision of goods and basic services, institutional equity, participation of the citizens in the decision-making process with the support, whenever necessary, of the central government to strengthen administrative, financial and governance systems at municipal level.

Concerning the informalization of the practices of accountability and performance of the city council seems to be in line of the decentralization legislation because the municipal executive body is accountable to the Municipal Assembly where the citizens are represented. Considering what the promises of decentralization contain, particularly with regard to the participation of citizens in decision-making on local development, the municipal executive must also be accountable directly to the citizens,

in accordance with the municipal norms or directives that regulate the relationship between the city council and the citizens. The formal mechanism established by the law, for example, participation in elections cannot be considered sufficient mechanism in a State where the functioning of the formal rules is not yet consolidated in the institutions and the citizens are viewed as mere demographic component. Similarly, in terms of financial or administration performance, in general, the City Council reports to the central government, particularly to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Ministry of State Administration and Civil Service (MAEFP). Contrary to the law, it is observed that the practice of accountability of the City Council have been, effectively, much more for their respective political parties that nominated and made them to be elected as mayors than to the citizens, hence the informalization of practice of accountability.

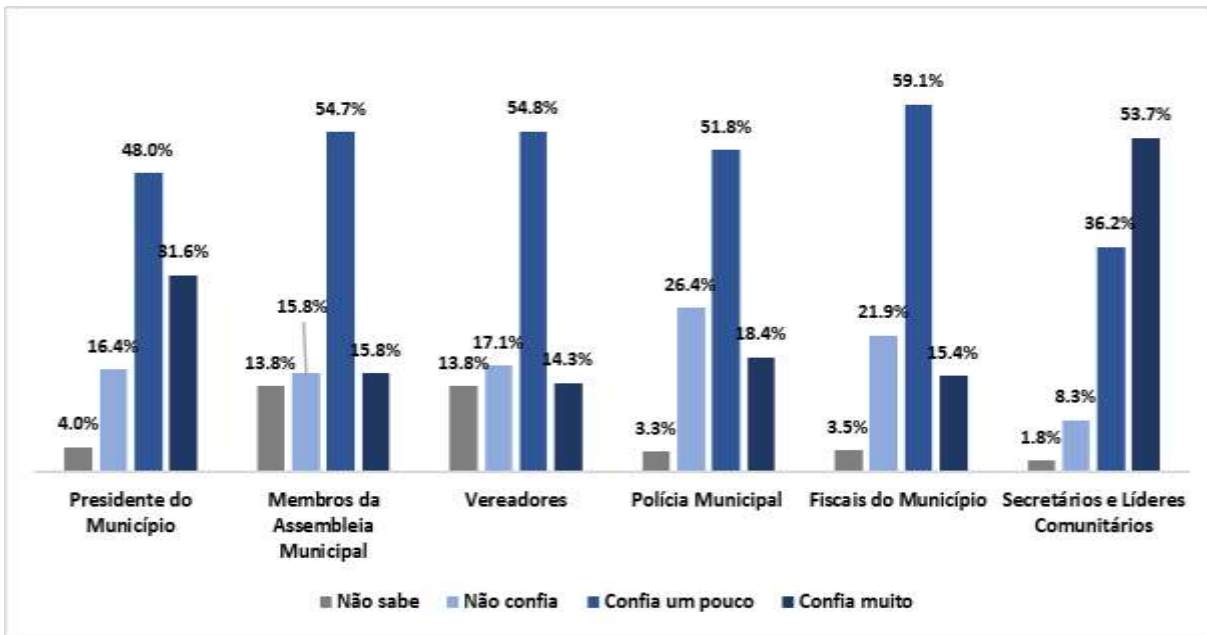
The practice of informalization of accountability in the Municipality of Tete is based on the violation of procedural and institutional equity, which is one of the promises of decentralization. It is from the procedural and institutional equity, both central and municipal governments. The central government towards the municipalities, and of the municipalities towards its citizens, private sector and public institutions in the autarchy, as per the law, to ensure that the practice of accountability of the exercise of power and its performance at municipal level is transparent and owned by all in an autarchy. This meets the ideal of effective participation in decision-making that affects the life of the municipality, using formal rules (legislation) and informal rules, that is, negotiating and accommodating interests to promote local development. This situation of informalization of practice of accountability is not exclusive to municipalities in Mozambique only. A literature review of the experience of decentralization in Africa concludes that there is little evidence that decentralization is establishing solid procedures and institutions for effective representation, accountability, and creating conditions to strengthen the capacity of local governments (Ribot, 2001).

Although the establishment of decentralization procedures and institutions are important, for the case of Mozambique, the absence of internalization of these procedures and institutions constitute one of the greatest limitations that weakened the decentralization process in the municipalities from 1998 to 2018. The absence of internalization of procedures and institutions created as per the law for municipalization led to the informalization of the practices of accountability of the municipalities, whose center of accountability became more for the political parties than for the State institutions. One of the implications of this informalization was the weakening of the constructive and permanent dialogue between the central government and the municipalities; between the Municipal Councils and the citizens and other institutions in the exercise of functions and accountability of municipal performance. That is, open discussions, accountability and municipal management and performance are done and decided in partisan spaces than in state institutions.

Another implication of the informalization of the practice of accountability of the City Council is that the municipal authorities have exempted themselves from being accountable to the citizens about the decisions they make, for example on the installed organizational capacity and the benefits to the citizens for the collected tax (market user fees) to improve the access to water and sanitation in the markets of the city. These are the cases where practices regulated by law have often been ignored because partisan political considerations take precedence over the law. That is, the line of accountability is towards those who appointed the mayor and the members of the Municipal Assembly for them to access and exercise these powers, as well as to ensure that they are preferred by the central party organs of their respective for future municipal elections.

The observance of procedural and institutional equity has an impact on building trust between citizens, city councils and public and private institutions. The Graph 3, the data of the Municipal Barometer of 2017, in the component of trust to municipal institutions and personnel, the perceptions of the citizens indicate a score of 25% either for the Mayor of the Municipality of Tete, members of the

Municipal Assembly, councilors, chiefs and employees, Municipal Police, Municipal Inspectors, Secretaries and Community Leaders and respective performances of the Mayor, Municipal Assembly and Officer. From the analysis made, a score, even if it was, a little above 25% of perception reflects how the issue of procedural and institutional equity has been faced over the 20 years of municipalization by the citizens. Without building trust among citizens, city councils, economic agents and public institutions above 50% of scores, it becomes difficult for decentralization to be a vehicle to promote local development because it influences how various segments of society participate in the life of the municipality.



Graph 3: Level of Trust in Tete City Council
Source: Municipal Barometer (IESE, 2017), adapted by the Author, 2021

In relation to the contested participation and legitimation of municipalization, under the law, specifically paragraph 2, of article 263, of the Constitution of the Republic of 2004, it is established that "... local state bodies ensure the active participation of citizens and encourage local initiative in solving the problems of communities." In turn, the Constitutional Review Law of 2018 (Law 1/2018), in its article 276 maintained the command when determining the participation of the citizen in the resolution of local problems. From this constitutional command it is understood that the organization and functioning of local governance bodies must guarantee and ensure the effective participation of the citizen in the decision-making processes.

This article highlights three forms of participation. First, participation as an exercise of civil and political rights, that is, in elections to be elected or elect.

Second, institutional participation, that is, the participation of the citizen in the collegial bodies of the Public Administration. The citizen can be part of the internal organs of the local governing bodies. This is one of the mechanisms that assures participation established in the Law 7/2012, of 8th February. For example, the National Election Commission (CNE) currently has the participation of CSOs in the CNE's operating structure. This situation was not considered during the first 20 years of municipalization, despite the complaints about lack of technical and human capacity to produce ideas to solve local problems. For the case of the Municipality of Tete, engaging CSOs to participate in discussions on environmental issues, resettlements and transparency and accountability adds value to the decisions of the

City Council and, it also increases the technical and analytical capacity of Municipal Assembly before approving the plans and budgets presented by the City Council.

Third, procedural participation. In addition to going to vote regularly in municipal elections it is necessary to typify the cases, in what circumstances the citizen may have mechanisms for individual or even collective intervention. Meetings have been held in the municipal compounds, but these meetings are from the initiative of the City Council, that is, *top-down* and does not reflect the local demand to participate because there are no procedures for this purpose.

Effective participation, also, promotes balanced territorial development ensuring ownership of the decisions and autonomy of City Council. In a context characterized by economic and cultural globalization, it is the flexibility and dynamism with which municipal governments allow themselves to see their own plans for local development and sustain their respective exercises of political power. Therefore, political power does not dispense a strong economic base to sustain itself as a power in exercise and at the service of the promises of decentralization. And the basis that can sustain the political power of the City Council government must result from participation and consensus building with citizens, local elites, the private sector, CSOs and others. Mere participation of the citizens to legitimize the power of the mayors at the initial phases of the electoral processes limits the ideal of decentralization.

Finally, regarding the absence of institutional coordination in the provision of goods and services, it is postulated that the provision of goods and services, which makes up one of the promises of decentralization, mirrors some governmental efficiency resulting from institutional coordination at various levels that allows a City Council to respond to local demand because the central and distant government cannot do so. Therefore, absence of institutional coordination, in the context of municipalization in Mozambique, can lead to a City Council to not respond to local demand, thus denouncing the absence of creation of conditions by the central government for municipalization, on one hand, to be implemented in the light of the ideal of the promises of decentralization and, on the other, to serve the purposes that the central government officially set out to do. Such creation of conditions embodies one of the basic premises of decentralization, according to which, decentralization brings the central government closer to the population through the local government in the provision of goods and services that the central government cannot do because it legally decided to do so in pursuit of objectives set by the central government (World Bank 1988, 1997, 2000; Manor, 1999; Romeo, 2015; Weimer, 2009, Law 8/2003, of 13 September and Law 2/97, of 18 February).

The approximation of the central government to the citizens via decentralization derives from the argumentative logic that seeks to justify that such an approximation of the central government to the citizens is materialized by goods and services as part of the promotion of local development (Banco World Bank, 1997, Mundial, 2010; 2000; HMG, 2010a; PAPs, 2007; Gebuza, 2006; OECD, 2001). The issue of the provision of goods and services and its driving effects on local development, beyond what is idealized by the defenders of this argumentative logic on decentralization, requires that there be institutional coordination between entities at the central and local governments so that the provision of goods and services is efficient. Without this institutional coordination, as part of the creation of conditions for municipal development, the provision of goods and services can be done without decentralization, as the cases of France, Paul Kagame's Rwanda, Libya during Gaddafi's rule, with strong centralization but efficient provision of goods and services confirm. This is not a comparison of France, Rwanda and Libya in terms of governance systems, but instead to point out that these countries stand out for their economic performance without decentralization. Although France is considered a strong example of centralization and does not use decentralization to provide goods and services, it is considered a democratic State. Also, Libya and Rwanda have been considered as states that best know how to provide goods and services without decentralization, however, these two states are not considered democratic. What these states have in common is the developmentalist vision that many states that have embarked on decentralization lack.

For the case of Mozambique, and the Municipality of Tete in particular, the literature on the subject is scarce and dispersed and, in many cases, the delegation of certain administrative competences and delegated powers to municipal spaces is confounded to strengthen the municipalization process. However, this is not observed in practice because the absence of institutional coordination becomes evident. For example, the Water Supply Investment and Heritage Fund (FIPAG) manages the water supply system in the area of municipal jurisdiction, with delegated powers over the last 20 years, contrary to what is established in the Law 2/97, of 18th February and the Decree 72/98 of 23rd December and, particularly, what is established in paragraph c) of article 3 of Decree 73/98 of 23rd December, which states that FIPAG must:

"Be responsible for the assets in the public domain and manage the operational and operating assets assigned to the water supply systems entrusted to it, on a transitional basis and for the stipulated period, by delegating its operation or management to an entity governed by private law and by monitoring and supervising it".

After 20 years of decentralization, FIPAG has not started any process of preparation to the Municipality of Tete, advising and accompanying it for the transfer of competences in the management of water supply. And one of the implications of the absence of institutional coordination is the asphyxiation of the City Council initiative to embark on alternatives for investment of water system and water provision in an integrated way with another autarchy with which it has territorial contiguity (Municipality of Moatize). And, also, it could be one of the sources of collection of the municipality's own revenues.

As long as the absence of institutional coordination prevails, the paradox will remain: abundance of water versus unavailability of drinking water in the Municipality of Tete. The municipality is bathed by perennial rivers, namely the Zambezi and Rovubwe rivers, but the water supply is not efficient. The citizens blame the Municipality for being unable to provide water when in fact the matter is about the transfer of legal competences that the central government retains in favor of FIPAG. Citizens want to have access to water 24/24 hours and are not interested in making conceptual distinctions about the competences and responsibility of the elected body under the law. Due to the persistent and limited water supply, the responsibilities are imputed to the Mayor because he made electoral promises and not FIPAG.

Conclusions

The article analyzed the socio-political and economic dynamics of decentralization, identify the limitations of decentralization and its implications for municipal development in Mozambique from 1994-2018. The central objective was to debate about the structuring aspects ignored in the policy of decentralization in Mozambique. From the analysis made, the contexts and dynamics discussed in this article shaped the decentralization process and the contours of experience of municipalization in the first 33 municipalities in Mozambique, from 1998-2018. The limitations identified in the Mozambican decentralization process had numerous implications for municipal development, among which, it is noteworthy that during the 20 years, municipalization was based on the primacy of control, distribution and sharing of political power among political parties to the detriment of local development.

The primacy for the control, distribution and sharing of political power in the municipalities responded to the logic of maintenance and control of power, on the part of the Frelimo Party and its government that underwent the vicissitudes of political affirmation for the consolidation of the political power after the end of the armed conflict of 16 years in 1992 and its response to international and national pressures for multiparty democracy. Interestingly to note, the major opposition parties chose to adopt the same logic as the Frelimo Party, for the maintenance and control of power among its members after successive failures in electoral elections from 1994 up to 2019. Successive violent electoral conflicts have, also, allowed the central organs of political parties to delude responses to promises of

decentralization. Consequently, this situation produced a logic of decentralization whereby local development at municipal level was ignored.

This article concludes that in the last 20 years, there has been decentralization but no municipal development in Mozambique because the decentralization process has given primacy to the control, distribution and sharing of political power over developmental vision for the municipalities. In the absence of a developmentalist vision, decentralization does not promote local development because it undermines the realization of the promises of decentralization that consists of efficient governance, institutional and procedural equity, participation and provision of goods and services. Therefore, it is argued that decentralization should promote local development as part of a national strategy for the consolidation of democracy and strengthening of State institutions so that they better perform their functions, each one, at its level and scope of competences, available resources and context of the fiscal space.

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