

21
PN-ABL-967
78754

Briefing Notes

OVERVIEW OF DECENTRALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

by

DENNIS A. RONDINELLI

**Office for International Programs
Research Triangle Institute
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709**

for

**AID Workshop on Decentralization of Education Services
Academy for Educational Development
Washington, D.C.**

1986

DEFINITION OF DECENTRALIZATION

TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, RESOURCE-RAISING AND
-ALLOCATION, AND OTHER FUNCTIONS FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS
AGENCIES TO FIELD UNITS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES,
SUBORDINATE UNITS OR LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, SEMI-AUTONOMOUS PUBLIC
AUTHORITIES OR CORPORATIONS, OR NONGOVERNMENTAL OR VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS.

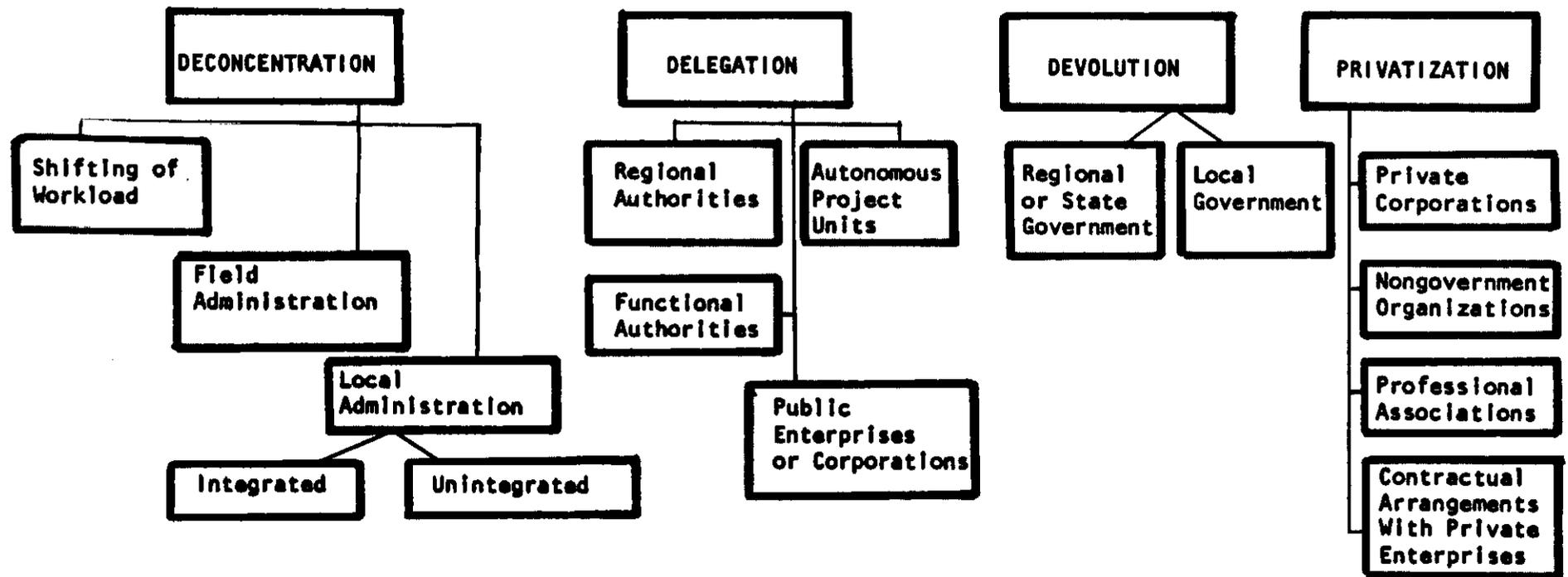
FORMS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION

Amount of power
and authority transferred

Degree of autonomy of
decentralized units in performing functions

LOW

HIGH



ADVANTAGES OF DECENTRALIZATION

1. MEANS OF OVERCOMING LIMITATIONS OF CENTRALIZED PLANNING
2. MEANS OF CUTTING THROUGH RED-TAPE AND HIGHLY BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES
3. MEANS OF INCREASING DECISION-MAKERS KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL CONDITIONS AND NEEDS
4. ALLOWS BETTER "PENETRATION" OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO THE LOCAL LEVEL
5. ALLOWS GREATER REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSE ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL INTERESTS IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS
6. EXPANDS ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY AMONG WIDER VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ALLOWS THEM TO PERFORM FUNCTIONS NOT EFFICIENTLY OR EFFECTIVELY PERFORMED AT THE CENTER
7. INCREASES EFFICIENCY OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BY RELIEVING TOP OFFICIALS OF ROUTINE MANAGEMENT TASKS
8. PROVIDES FOCUS FOR COORDINATING ACTIVITIES OF MINISTRIES ON PROBLEMS AT LOCAL LEVEL
9. MEANS OF OFFSETTING ADVERSE INFLUENCES OF LOCAL ELITES WHO ARE OPPOSED TO CHANGE BY "OPENING UP" DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES
10. CAN REDUCE THE "DISECONOMIES OF SCALE" ASSOCIATED WITH OVER-CONCENTRATION OF RESPONSIBILITY AT THE CENTER
11. INCREASES FLEXIBILITY OF ADMINISTRATION AND ABILITY TO EXPERIMENT WITH INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO UNIQUE LOCAL PROBLEMS
12. INCREASES PEOPLE'S STAKE IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM BY PROVIDING THEM WITH GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

DISADVANTAGES OF DECENTRALIZATION

1. CAN CREATE NUCLEI OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS
2. CAN LEAD TO GREATER INEQUITY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AND SERVICES IF DECENTRALIZED UNITS ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION--CENTER OFTEN HAS MORE FLEXIBILITY TO REDISTRIBUTE
3. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES CAN BE "CAPTURED" BY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ELITE AT LOCAL LEVEL WHO APPROPRIATE BENEFITS TO THEMSELVES
4. FOR SOME FUNCTIONS CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE ADVANTAGES OF EXPERTISE RESOURCES AND ECONOMIES OF SCALE TO DELIVER ROUTINE SERVICES MORE EFFECTIVELY
5. LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AT LOCAL LEVEL MAY LEAD TO INEFFICIENT OR INEFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY
6. LOCAL OFFICIALS OR ORGANIZATIONS MAY BE HESITANT OR RELUCTANT TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN PERFORMING DECENTRALIZED FUNCTIONS
7. LOCAL BENEFICIARIES MAY NOT BE ORGANIZED STRONGLY ENOUGH TO PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY OR PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS IN PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

FACTORS SUPPORTING THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF DECENTRALIZED
SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMS

Favorable Political and Administrative Conditions	Organizational Conditions	Behavioral and Psychological Conditions	Resource Conditions
<p>--Strong political commitment and support from national leaders to the transfer of authority and responsibility to lower levels</p>	<p>--Appropriate allocation of functions between center and decentralized units</p>	<p>--Changes in attitude of central officials away from control-oriented, paternalistic, directive, toward facilitative, supportive, interactive</p>	<p>--Transfer of sufficient authority for decentralized units to carry out functions</p>
<p>--Acceptance by political leaders of participation in planning and management by groups and organizations outside of their direct control</p>	<p>--Concise and definitive decentralization laws, regulations and directives that outline clearly the allocation of functions</p>	<p>--Effective means of overcoming resistance or eliciting support of local elites and traditional leaders for decentralized service delivery</p>	<p>--Transfer of sufficient financial resources or authority to raise revenues to decentralized units</p>
<p>--Strong administrative and technical capacity within central government to provide support and guidance to decentralized service delivery units</p>	<p>--Flexible arrangements, based on performance criteria, for reallocating functions as resources and capabilities of decentralized units change</p>	<p>--Creation of minimum level of trust and respect between government officials and citizens in planning and managing service delivery programs</p>	<p>--Training and other programs for developing human resource capabilities in decentralized units</p>
<p>--Effective channels of political participation or representation for "interested publics," clientele groups, and intended beneficiaries</p>	<p>--Clearly defined and uncomplicated planning and management procedures for decentralized participation in service delivery</p>	<p>--Creation and maintenance of strong leadership in local administrative units and nongovernmental organizations to sustain service delivery</p>	<p>--Adequate physical infrastructure at local level to deliver services effectively</p>
	<p>--Strong communications linkages between center and decentralized units</p>		
	<p>--Diverse supporting institutions at local level for carrying out decentralized activities</p>		

LESSONS FOR DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING DECENTRALIZED PROGRAMS

1. BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY
2. TRANSFER SUFFICIENT RESOURCES--
 - AUTHORITY
 - CONTROL
 - QUALIFIED PERSONNEL
 - TECHNICAL SUPPORT
 - FINANCIAL RESOURCES
3. PLAN ON A LONG TERM BASIS
4. FOCUS INITIALLY ON SMALL SCALE ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH THERE IS RECOGNIZED NEED, POPULAR SUPPORT, AND EFFECTIVE DEMAND
5. INCREMENTALLY EXPAND RESPONSIBILITIES AT PACE WITH INCREASING MANAGERIAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY
6. REORIENT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND MINISTRIES TO SUPPORT, FACILITATION AND GUIDANCE ROLE RATHER THAN TO OPERATIONAL AND CONTROL ROLES
7. CREATE STRONGER LINKAGES BETWEEN CENTRAL MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES AND DECENTRALIZED UNITS
8. TRAIN BOTH LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATORS AS PART OF DECENTRALIZATION EFFORTS
 - A. BUILD OPERATIONAL SKILLS
 - B. CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR
9. ORGANIZE BENEFICIARIES TO PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY IN DECENTRALIZED FUNCTIONS
10. KEEP PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES IN DECENTRALIZED PROGRAMS CLEAR AND SIMPLE

FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING FEASIBILITY OF DECENTRALIZATION

