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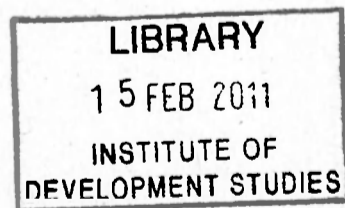
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SOME POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SERVICE PROVISION: ROADS AND  
SCHOOLS AND HEALTH SERVICES

By

H.K. Colebatch

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Abstract

This paper outlines the results of some research into three former county council services - primary education, minor roads and rural health services - taken over by the central government in 1970. It describes the organization of these services under the county councils and examines the financial relationships between the councils and the centre, drawing attention to the way in which the system worked to encourage "crisis financing" on the part of the councils. It then considers the impact of the transfer of functions on each of the three services, and relates this to the general pattern of service provision in rural Kenya, and the interaction between local initiatives ("self-help") and government action.



The aim of this paper\* is to present some of the findings of the research I have been doing into the operation of certain local-level services in Kenya - primary schools, minor roads and rural health services. The main reason for concentrating on these services is that they were initially run by local authorities - in the rural areas, county councils, usually operating at the district level - but in 1970 were transferred to the ministries of the central government. This transfer raises a number of questions for study, some of which I examined in an earlier paper (1972), where I suggested that the transfer should be seen not so much as a complete switch from one organization to another, but rather as a shift in power relationships within a single service structure. The question I posed then was "How do changes in the formal relationships between service personnel, intermediaries and clients affect the operation of the service?" This paper attempts to answer that question.

I would like first to clarify some of the features of service operation under the county councils.

From 1963 to 1969, County Councils were responsible for providing these three services in the rural areas, their main sources of revenue being school fees, Graduated Personal Tax and grants from the central government. (Some councils derived considerable revenue from produce cesses - mainly coffee.) The formal control structure was the relevant committee of the county council, which gave instructions to the chief executive for the service - the District Education Officer, the Medical Officer of Health and the Works Officer. In the first two cases, these were central government officers posted to the council, who acted as the link between the central government (which operated services down to the level of the secondary school and the district hospital) and the county councils (which operated the services below this level). Role conflict was inevitable: were they the servants of the county council, or central government agents keeping council action in conformity with central government policy? The conflict was never officially resolved. Since these officers were not formally seconded to their councils, were paid by their ministries and were subject to transfer to other posts at the whim of their own ministries, they themselves usually had little doubt: they

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\* Partly because of idleness, partly because most of this paper was written out of library range, I have not cited any sources, but simply presented an argument. I would like to acknowledge particularly helpful comments on an earlier draft from David Leonard and Ben Kipkorir, and an interesting paper by Silas Ita on the role of the chiefs in Mberere. (Stencil, Department of Government, University of Nairobi, 1972).

were the central government men on the spot. Some felt the pressures more than others: education officers, receiving a flow of specific directions from their ministry in Nairobi and a flow of equally specific demands from their council education committee, often felt that they were being ground between the two. Medical Officers of Health tended to feel this pressure less than their counterparts in education: their service was more technical, but it was also less important politically, and their high transfer rate tended to reduce their involvement with the council. In both cases, the county council tended to make its influence felt more in service expansion than in day-to-day operation - where the next dispensary should go rather than what the existing ones should be doing. In formal terms, the DEO's power to control education in his district was increased by the 1968 Education Act, but the real effect of this is not clear: if, for instance, the act merely formalized the existing situation, or was even a defensive move to maintain the DEO's powers intact in the face of increasing pressure from clients.

In the field of roads, there were fewer links between the ministry and the local authorities. The ministry maintained roads with an "A" or "B" classification (occasionally, sections of these roads were maintained by local authorities under contract), and the county councils were responsible for the maintenance of "C" classified roads, for which they received grants from MoW. In addition, county councils were empowered to maintain (from their own resources) all unclassified roads in their areas. Some of these might be formally gazetted as minor roads, but most would not. Hence there would be two overlapping road maintenance teams in a district: a ministry roads team, with its own plant and camps, maintaining the major roads, and a county council roads organization maintaining the "C" roads and the unclassified roads. There were some links between the two. Where councils were contractors for the ministry (e.g. for the maintenance of major roads, or for the construction of tea roads), the ministry would supervise performance. The ministry was also responsible for ensuring that councils carried out their obligation to maintain the grant-aided "C" roads. But generally there was a minimum of contact between the two. The ministry did not attempt to prescribe standards for staff or for service performance, the council selected and employed its own Works Officer, and the two organizations led independent lives (of infinite variety).



Since financial questions attracted the most public attention while the counties were responsible for these services, and were the public justification for the central decision to take control of them, it is worth going into the financial arrangements in some detail. Before independence, the Fiscal Commission had outlined an arrangement for matching local authority revenues and responsibilities, but this scheme was substantially altered by the abolition of the regions in 1964, which left the central government responsible for grants to local authorities. It is open to question whether the Fiscal Commission scheme would have worked in any case: it appeared to assume that all the potential G.P.T. would be collected, whereas pre-independence 50% had been a respectable collection figure and after independence the proportion tended to decline. This under-collection was not substantially affected by the transfer (in 1965) of responsibility for G.P.T. collection from the councils to the Provincial Administration, and it has been suggested that chiefs have an interest in under-assessing their constituents, since it enables them to raise a man's assessment as a disciplinary measure.

In any case, the councils tended to be faced with a static tax base which they were powerless to change (they controlled neither the rate of tax nor its collection) and rising service costs (mainly in education as a result of rising enrolments and rising teachers' salaries). (Produce cesses gave some councils more financial stability, but these could not be relied on: they were very unpopular, and the government was always under pressure to abolish them, which it did in the case of the maize cess.) This led to an increasing dependence on central government grants, administered by the Ministry of Local Government. In theory each council would submit its estimates to the ministry at the specified time each year, the ministry would approve them, and the grant would be paid according to a known formula. In practice, councils submitted their estimates late or in a form unacceptable to the ministry, estimates tended to get swallowed up in the ministry and never emerge again, either approved or disapproved (in which case the council concerned had to work from the last approved estimates), and usually the council would get only a part of its grant at the time it was meant to. The consequences of this situation will be discussed further, but first some mention should be made of another public issue in the field of finance, the "diversion of funds" argument.

This argument, which is really a sub-argument of the "gross financial irresponsibility" argument, contends that the counties diverted funds given to them for other purposes (notably roads) and spent them on salaries (especially teachers' salaries). This is said to be the reason for the decline in the quality of the rural roads system 1963-9. (I have also heard the reverse argument: that the poor quality of the primary schools is due to the fact that the county council was diverting money intended for education and spending it on roads.) Grants to county councils came in three forms: the block grant from the Ministry of Local Government, to cover all aspects of council operations; the roads grant from the Ministry of Works for the maintenance of the C classified roads; and various small special-purpose grants from other ministries and parastatal bodies like marketing boards. It was only the latter two types that were capable of being "diverted", since the block grant from Local Government was non-specific. It is difficult to find evidence of the diversion of the Ministry of Works grant (i.e. councils spending less of road maintenance than they had been given), though Ministry of Works staff are convinced that it was an almost universal practice. -One of the difficulties involved here is that the counties did not in fact know how much it was costing them to maintain any particular road, and hence it is difficult to know whether the grant for that road was being "diverted". It appears that county roads organizations made little distinction between classified and unclassified roads, so it is most probable that some of the MoW grant was being spent on unclassified roads, but difficult to prove. But the MoW's system of inspection (and the willingness of the ministry to hold up grants if maintenance was not being done) limited the ability of councils to divert funds from this source. It was probably easier to divert special purpose grants (e.g. for cotton roads from the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board where the machinery of inspection was weaker. The evidence usually adduced - decline in road standards - is not very helpful, because usually the roads concerned are unclassified roads which did not attract a grant in any case.

In fact, the argument is usually not about diversion of special-purpose funds, but about the way that the councils chose to spend their general revenues (including the block grant from the Ministry of Local Government). I.e. given more calls on their funds than they could meet, councils tended to spend money on e.g. primary schools, at the expense of unclassified roads, veterinary scouts, etc. Those inconvenienced by the choice of priorities

(e.g. the Provincial Administration, which suffered from the deterioration of the former Administrative Roads, now unclassified) might claim that the councils were "diverting" money from its "proper" use.

To return to the general question of county council finances - Three main factors seem to have been involved:

(a) the nature of the financial dealings with the Ministry of Local Government, which resulted in monies due not being paid, and immediate attention being given only to those councils on the verge of bankruptcy;

(b) the relatively low calibre of county council staff resulted in poor financial management; this point is not as important as central government spokesmen like to make out, though; much more important is -

(c) the strength and number of the political pressures on the council to provide services, which led to all possible resources (including reserves, Area Council funds, etc) being tapped. Factors (a) and (c) tended to be mutually reinforcing. If a council could not get the grant it had been expecting from Nairobi, it would have to draw on any other funds that it could mobilize - cash reserves, depreciation funds, etc. Conversely, if a council was known in Nairobi to have good financial reserves, it could not expect early attention from the Ministry to its claims. Consequently, it would have every reason for keeping its reserves low.

The end result was a process which might be described as "crisis financing". A Council can only perform the duties expected of it with the aid of a substantial grant from the centre; it will not get this grant unless it appears that the council will expire without it; consequently the only way a council could be financially successful was to appear to be on the verge of bankruptcy, (Of course, some councils were on the verge of bankruptcy, but fewer than met the eye.) A typical council might find itself in financial straits having only received 20% of its grant and having no reserves and no creditworthiness. It would then retrench 100 untrained teachers. The Kenya National Union of Teachers would threaten a strike, and take the matter up with the Ministry of Education. After inter ministerial negotiations in Nairobi, more funds would be released from the Ministry of Local Government (often in the form of a loan rather than as a part of the grant, but the distinction was of little practical consequence), and the council would continue operations for another six or twelve months, when there might be another "crisis". To bureaucrats in Nairobi, this might be evidence of "financial incompetence", but in fact it was the most



effective way for a council to work the system. There may have been financial mismanagement in the councils, but the closure of schools or the dismissal of teachers is unlikely to be evidence of it. It is not only Kenyan county councils that find themselves in this situation: any local authority with financial claims on the next tier of government can gain from crisis financing, and the most spectacular example of it is probably New York City in its relations with New York State and with the Federal Government.

This was the situation that prevailed when the central government decided, in October 1969, to take over from the county councils their education, health and roads tasks, together with the proceeds of G.P.T. The immediate spur for this move was another council financial crisis (non-payment of teachers' salaries), but there were a number of underlying motives. Many bureaucrats, especially in the Provincial Administration, found the local authority style of administration distasteful: it was inefficient, sometimes corrupt, and above all, messy. There was political opposition at the centre to county councils as political arenas and sources of resources not under the direct control of the central political-bureaucratic elite. The centre found the crisis-financing of the county councils an embarrassment and decided to remove the causes of the embarrassment, although it did not abolish the county councils completely, but left them intact with minimal functions. The decision was taken on very short notice, the ministries concerned were not prepared for it, and the actual transfer took much longer than expected.

The implications of the transfer for the actual running of the services varied from one service to another. In education, there was more continuity than change. The primary school teachers had already been placed on the payroll of the Teachers Service Commission (under a complicated arrangement whereby the county councils were meant to pay the TSC the monthly teachers' salaries for their areas), the DEO continued in office and the subordinate staff were transferred to the Ministry of Education. In terms of the formal structure, the DEO gained a good deal of political space: he no longer had to negotiate with the Education Committee of his county council, and although it was announced in 1969 that District Education Boards would be re-instituted, it was three years before they met, and they still have not really established a role for themselves, although DEO's do not expect them to cramp their style in any significant way. But one must also consider the local arena: many of the resources for primary education are locally-derived, and the relationship between a headmaster, his school

committee and the local community is of considerable importance. The DEO's power over any particular school is limited to the extent that he can grant or withhold resources that the school wants, and in most cases, the main resource he controls is the supply of teachers. In fact, ministry policy is to supply teachers to any school where the parents put up the necessary classrooms: minimum class sizes are mentioned from time to time within the Ministry but they have never been imposed on DEOs. Some DEO's, though, are able to impose particular conditions on parents - e.g. stone classrooms rather than earth-walled. As long as the DEO is able to fill up any gaps in his teaching force with untrained Form IV leavers, he is able to meet all the demands that local communities make. Consequently, most of the important decisions about any particular school - notably about expansion - are decided at the local level, between the headmaster and representatives of the local community. If they agree to build a new classroom so that Standard I can be double-streamed, it is unlikely that the DEO will intervene to stop them. Since the transfer of functions, the importance of the headmaster-school committee relationship has probably increased: certainly it is no longer subject to check by the councillor, who formerly provided an independent line of communication with the DEO.

To a certain extent, education is a service which has been captured by its client group. It is a particularly critical service from the point of view of the people, because no many of the economic opportunities in Kenya are determined by level of education. For this reason, the political costs of refusing entry to the bottom of the educational ladder are enormous, (except in the pastoral districts) and primary education expansion is not subject to any real constraints from the centre. The annual rate of increase in the costs of primary education is probably considerably more now than it was under the county Councils, mainly because of increased expenditure on teachers' salaries. The ministry and its field officers are able to define technical norms to a certain extent, and control admission to the next stage of education, but the basic pattern of provision is set by the clients.

As with education, the transfer of functions had little impact on the operation of the rural health services. The Medical Officer of Health (MOH) remained as the head of the service, most of the county council staff were absorbed into the ministry in situ, and the service operates much as

it did before, with the MOH freed of the minor irritant of the county council health committee. Some county council staff were offered substantial salary cuts and chose to resign; there were relatively few people in this position but they tended to be the most senior and experienced men in their grades. Critics of the county councils took this as evidence that the councils were paying high salaries to men unqualified for their jobs, for reasons of nepotism and corruption. Council supporters took it as evidence that the ministry was blinded by paper qualifications and unwilling to recognize the value of experience. One problem that will be faced in the future is the replacement of ex-county council staff as they reach retiring age, as ministry policy is not to recruit any more unqualified staff and even with a vast increase in the output of qualified staff (which is being planned) there is likely to be a shortfall. There have also been some problems with the supply of drugs, where it does appear that most councils were more flexible than the ministry's central stores in Nairobi.

But as far as the expansion of the health services is concerned, as opposed to the operation of existing centres, the MOH is rather less in control. The Ministry does in theory have a plan for the construction of new health centres, but the provision made is so meagre (5 health centres per year for the whole country) that each district has only slightly better than a 50% chance of acquiring a new centre in the course of the entire plan period (1970-74). An MOH who can only offer this sort of expansion would be unlikely to secure the support of the district elite for it. Moreover, MOHs have few resources of their own: there are limited funds in the ministry budget for the building of health centres, and they are held at the provincial level, so that any expansion can only come from self-help health centres being taken over by the government. The consequences of dependence on self-help for service expansion are well-known: priorities are defined by the local communities in terms of their ability to raise the funds needed to erect the centres and to mobilize the political push needed to have them taken over by the government, and the areas which do well at this tend to be the ones already well-endowed with health facilities. In theory projects are meant to be vetted by the MOH, but for a number of reasons, this does not constitute a powerful constraint. For one thing, a self-help health centre takes several years - one A/MOH estimated five years - to complete, and MOHs are prone to let the project begin, and worry about incorporating it into the service structure when it is closer to completion. (The MOH will undoubtedly have been transferred elsewhere by then in any case.) And the self-help health centres which cause the most problems - the ones now

approaching completion - were approved (or not) years ago, so the device of approval will not solve the problem. Even a complete ban on self-help health centre projects would not have any effect for some years - but while the benefits might not be felt for some years, the political costs would be felt immediately. The pressure is therefore on the MOH to approve the project, and it is usual for him to approve. In a way, a completed but unopened harambee health centre can become a form of resource for the MOH, as it tends to back up his case for more staff, even though he is not yet responsible for staffing these units. (He can also tell the backers of these centres that they can only open them if Nairobi give him more staff, in the hope that they will then put pressure on the ministry.)

The MOH, then, is in a situation where he is unable to make any decisions about service expansion, and simply transfers the overload to Nairobi by leaving questions of opening and staffing new centres to the ministry. Consequently, the district level has been eclipsed in importance. (Such bodies as the District Development Committee are of relatively little importance: the real prize is a ministry commitment to meet the running expenses of the centre.) The action tends to take place at the local level, where the local notables raise the money for putting up the building, and in Nairobi, where the pressure has to be exerted on the ministry to take it over. This is, obviously, in marked contrast to the council period, when expansion decisions were made by the council itself: (At this time, local communities would put up buildings for health centres, and the Council and its Health Committee would decide which (if any) would be taken over, in the light of the council's financial position and the pattern of demand from constituents.)

One could have expected the impact of the transfer of functions to be greatest in the field of roads, where there was a massive expansion of the maintenance responsibilities of the Ministry of Works, but very little contact between the ministry and the councils. The Ministry had in fact been gearing up for an expansion of its responsibilities in rural areas, and had appointed a firm of consultants to advise on the reorganization of the ministry, but was taken by surprise by the timing of the transfer of functions, and took several years to incorporate the county council roads into the organizational structure of the ministry.

There were distinct differences in organizational style between the ministry and the councils' road organizations. The ministry sees itself in professional terms, with norms being set by the professional engineers in the Nairobi HQ and in the provincial offices. Client demands should be



mediated through these engineers and not put directly to the operatives in the districts. The county organizations did not have this professional superstructure, and saw themselves as functional organizations established to meet particular demands from their councils, and accepted that some of these demands would be put direct to the grader-driver. In terms of staff and equipment, the ministry is much better-off than the councils were, although this was not so until new equipment had been bought for the ministry from an IBRD loan, and there were great variations among the councils, some of which were possibly better-off before the transfer of functions than they are now. The sort of maintenance done, though, is basically the same: neither organization was able to plan much in advance or to cost maintenance and relate it to benefit gained, and both tended to respond to the most pressing needs. The main difference is in the definition of these needs: under the councils, these were largely defined by the pattern of local political pressures from such people as councillors and chiefs. With the present organization, the pressing needs tend to be defined by the district OIC or the Provincial Engineer, and to reach the engineer one has to be more prestigious (e.g. an MP rather than a councillor) and one also tends to have rather less impact, since the provincial level official is dealing with so many more representations. Hence one effect of the transfer has been to drive up the level at which effective representation can be achieved.

But the main difference between the two organizations has been the handling of unclassified roads. The counties had been entitled to maintain these, though they were not obliged to and received no grants for them. At the transfer of functions, the ministry specified that it was only responsible for the maintenance of the classified roads, and that the county councils were still responsible for those roads not taken over by the ministry. (The ministry even haggled over some of the classified roads, eventually giving them a temporary classification, which means that they will be maintained if funds are available but that the Ministry does not accept permanent responsibility for them.) The county councils' handling of these unclassified roads had varied. Most of them had received no or very little maintenance, but in some cases where a good deal of pressure could be brought to bear (e.g. a road to a coffee factory, or a trading centre, or a councillor's house) work could be done. Now the ministry says that these roads are the responsibility of the county councils, while the county councils say that the ministry has taken over all their equipment and they



are therefore powerless to act. The Ministry of Local Government decreed that in each district there should be a District Works Committee, with representatives from the county council presided over by the D.C., to determine lists of priorities and costings for the maintenance of unclassified roads. These committees met (usually only once or twice) and compiled long lists of unclassified roads, with costings for their maintenance running into six figures, and sent them to the Ministry of Local Government, where they rested. The original idea had been that the Treasury would be approached by Local Government for money for these roads, and Works would then do the maintenance on an agency basis. I am not sure whether the Treasury was asked for this money, but they did not release it if they were.

At the moment, that is where matters rest. - Works are not anxious to investigate the unclassified roads, as the cost of maintenance with current methods would be prohibitive, and possible alternative methods (self-help, low-cost day labour, hourly rental of plant to self-help groups, etc.) are administratively messy. Ministry spokesmen tend to understate the importance of these roads - for instance, by referring to them as "tracks" or "footpaths" - but on their own estimate they constitute nearly three-quarters of the country's road network (125,000 of 168,000 km.). The question is still under discussion in the ministries of Works and Finance & Planning.

In general, the consequence of the transfer for roads has been a general improvement in standards of maintenance (along with a substantial rise in maintenance costs), but with the exclusion of the majority of rural roads from the possibility of maintenance. Self-help maintenance (usually organized by the chief) is sometimes carried out on these roads, but officially the ministry does not take notice of it - until it is asked to match the voluntary contribution of the people. The ministry, because of its highly centralized organization and its professional ethos, is relatively insulated from localized road maintenance demands, thus raising the level at which effective representation can be made. For planning and expansion, it has made itself even more inaccessible, receiving suggestions for new classifications only from Provincial Development Committees and adopting a general policy that new roads will not be added to the Road Inventory except in extraordinary cases.

So far we have been concerned only with details of the operation of the three services: we should now move to a consideration of the structure of service provision as a whole. The main elements of this pattern are (a) the increasing importance of local initiatives in service provision; and (b) the increasing tendency for local service issues to be resolved at the centre; and (c) the relative decline of the district as a decision-making level in service provision.

Local initiatives have always been an important element in service provision in Kenya. (This is quite apart from local contributions instigated from outside, such as the local labour which built a road on the instructions of the DC, or a school at the urging of the missionary.) Local initiatives can provide an alternative to the official service: e.g. when mission schools in Kikuyu land were closed to those who would not forswear female circumcision, local communities set up their own independent schools. Or local initiatives may form a part of the official service, e.g. when the local community is expected to build the classroom required for a new class to be formed. In the same way, a local initiative may become a procedural requirement for access to an official service: a community wanting a new class must build the classroom before their application will be considered. In such cases the administrator of the service is able to limit the number of cases he must consider, but would find it much more difficult to control the number of applicants seeking to meet his initial criteria - those engaged on the local projects.

We can see here some of the main features of "self-help" in Kenya as a means of service provision. First, it is seen by its promoters as a means of access to the official service rather than as an alternative to them. In some cases (e.g. self-help secondary schools), the service will begin operation with local resources in the hope that the government may be persuaded to take over responsibility for it. In others (e.g. self-help health centres), the local community only erects the buildings, and then puts pressure on the government to provide the staff and supplies to run it. Government agencies reinforce this tendency by gearing their expansion programmes (for want of a better word) to the pattern of self-help activity rather than to their own assessment of need. The Ministry of Education, for instance, has declared that it will not build any new secondary schools of its own, but will only take over existing self-help ones. Hence a self-help secondary school becomes an essential prerequisite to the siting of a government secondary school in an area. Secondly, these

local initiatives do relieve some of the immediate pressure on government agencies, which was the main reason for the original government encouragement of local initiatives. But the projects which manage to get through this stage are less easily ignored than are simple requests for more government activity, which is one of the reasons that government agencies tend to respond to self-help pressures rather than any other criteria of need. Thirdly, these initiatives provide an arena for local competitive politics: to promote a self-help project he has promoted. One self-help secondary school, for instance, collapsed for want of pupils when the MP who promoted it was defeated at the election: to parents, it was clear that the hopes of a government take-over of the school depended on the political fortunes of its patron. For this reason, chiefs have become increasingly involved in self-help initiatives, either because they themselves are promoting the project concerned, or because their support (as the local representatives of the central government) is essential if the project is to have any hope of attracting government support. This trend appears to have the support of the chiefs' superiors in the Provincial Administration, and the public exhortations of DCs and PCs to chiefs to "promote development" in their locations seems to be interpreted by both parties to mean "start self-help projects". (The Provincial Administration has of course an interest in establishing the chief as the most effective representative of his area.) When a self-help project is promoted by a chief, it is likely to have many "administrative" aspects: fixed contributions are likely to be demanded from each family and to be collected by subchiefs and the Administration Police, and official sanctions imposed on non-contributors.

At the same time as the importance of local initiatives has increased, there has been a greater tendency for local service issues to be resolved at the centre. There are various reasons for this. In the first place, there is a general tendency towards centralization of critical decisions within the government bureaucracy, especially decisions on service expansion. The transfer of functions from the county councils to the central government has accentuated this trend by bringing formally autonomous service structures under the direct control of the ministries concerned. Consequently, many decisions which under the county councils would have been settled at the district level must now be referred to Nairobi for decision. Finally, the formal organizational boundaries of the various levels and agencies of government do not constitute an effective barrier

to appeals. The fact that a certain decision is the formal responsibility of the departmental head at the district level will not prevent an aggrieved party from pursuing his case in Nairobi, and may not inhibit ministry officials from issuing a directive to the district head.

With the increase in the importance of both the local and the national level, there has been a corresponding decline in the importance of the district level. The transfer of functions has (obviously) reduced the importance of the district level in the fields of primary education, health and roads, but there appear to have been similar pressures in other fields. The pattern of political representation has followed the shift in effective responsibility within the bureaucracy, with representatives in the capital (e.g. MPs, or bureaucrats acting as representatives of their home areas) gaining ground at the expense of district-level figures such as county councillors. For instance, Ministry of Works officials who welcomed their takeover of the county councils' roads functions as leading to greater efficiency, later complained that their time was being 'wasted' by delegations and individual lobbyists seeking action on specific roads. One consequence of this shift is that effective planning is difficult to achieve. If, for instance, the decision to build a self-help health centre is taken at the local level, and the decision to open it as a government service point is taken at the national level, the ability of the Medical Officer of Health to plan the expansion of health services is limited. While the decision-making process at the district level can be circumvented to appeal to the centre, it is difficult to see how there can be effective planning at the district level: it is not yet clear what effect the new vogue for district-level planning will have on this process. After the transfer of functions there were moves to establish district-level consultative bodies for particular services, but they were rather hesitant ones. For instance, it was announced in 1969 that District Education Boards would be established to control primary education, but three years elapsed before any DEB met, and they do not appear to offer any serious check to the power of the District Education Officer and the Ministry. Spokesmen of the centre have urged that "politics" should have no place in these bodies, and both the District Education Board and the District Works Committee (which draws up priorities for the takeover of unclassified roads) are chaired by the DC.



So the effect on the services of the transfer of functions has varied. The transfer has largely eliminated one type of client representation - the county councillor sitting on the council committee - but has not detracted from (and may have enhanced) another type of representation: the self-help group, <sup>Self-help,</sup> which is a type of decision-making as well as a means of political participation, leaves certain critical decision in the hands of clients rather than officials, and where a service is heavily dependent on self-help (e.g. primary education), the real freedom of action of the official is limited. Consequently the effect of the transfer of functions has been limited. Conversely, in roads, where self-help is unimportant, it has been possible for the ministry to substantially change the nature of the service by excluding a wide range of services by definition and by placing restrictions on the flow of client demand.

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Reference: Colebatch, H.K. 1972 on studying local services. (Paper presented to East African Universities Social Science Conference, Nairobi).