Understanding Patterns of Accountability in Tanzania

Final Synthesis Report
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Andrew Lawson and Lise Rakner

Oxford Policy Management
6 St Aldates Courtyard
38 St Aldates
Oxford
OX1 1BN
Tel: 01865 207300
Fax: 01865 250580
admin@opml.co.uk

Chr. Michelsen Institute
Fantoftevegen 38, Fantoft
N-5892 Bergen,
Norway

REPOA
157 Mgombani Street, Regent Estate
P.O. Box 33223
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania
Acknowledgements and Disclaimer

This report has been prepared from work undertaken by a team of researchers provided through a consortium led by Oxford Policy Management (OPM). It has been undertaken on behalf of the Governance Working Group of the Development Partners to Tanzania.

Research has been led by Dr. Lise Rakner of the Christian Michaeelsen Institute, Bergen and by Andrew Lawson of OPM, who has been the overall project director. They are the joint authors of this final synthesis report.

Responsibility for the opinions presented in this Report rests exclusively with the authors and should not be attributed to the Government of Tanzania or to the Governance Working Group of the Development Partners to Tanzania. Any comments on the report would be gratefully appreciated by the authors.
**Acronyms**

- CAG: Controller and Auditor General
- CCM: Chama cha Mapinduzi
- DC: District Commissioner
- DED: District Executive Director
- DFID: Department for International Development
- DMO: District Medical Officer
- DPs: Development Partners
- ELCT: Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania
- GBS: General Budget Support
- GoT: Government of Tanzania
- IFMS: Integrated Financial Management System
- LAAC: Local Authorities Accounts Committee
- LGA: Local Government Authority
- LGRP: Local Government Reform Programme
- MAFS: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- MDA: Ministry, Department and Agency
- Mkukuta: Mkakati wa Kukuza na Kupunguza Umasikini Tanzania
- MoEC: Ministry of Education & Culture
- MoF: Ministry of Finance
- MP: Member of Parliament
- MTEF: Medium Term Expenditure Framework
- NAO: National Audit Office
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
- NSGRP: National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
- PAC: Public Accounts Committee
- PEDP: Primary Education Development Plan
- PER: Public Expenditure Review
- PFM: Public Financial Reform
- PO-RALG: President’s Office – Regional Administration & Local Government
- PO-PP: President’s Office – Planning and Privatisation
- PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- RC: Regional Commissioner
- REPOA: Research on Poverty Alleviation
- SUNY: State University New York
- TAMWA: Tanzania Media Women’s Association
- TAS: Tanzania Assistance Strategy
- TGNP: Tanzania Gender Network Programme
- TNBC: Tanzania National Business Council
- TRA: Tanzania Revenue Authority
- UPE: Universal Primary Education
- URT: United Republic of Tanzania
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- VC: Village Chairman
- VEO: Village Executive Officer
- VPO: Vice President’s Office
- WEO: Ward Executive Officer
Executive Summary

This is the final synthesis report of the “Understanding Patterns of Accountability in Tanzania” study, completed for the Governance Working Group of the Development Partners to Tanzania. The overall objective of the study was to throw light on how structures of accountability operate in Tanzania and how they influence the quality and effectiveness of public policy.

This report synthesises the key conclusions and lessons emerging from the study, drawing out the implications for institutional and policy changes within the Tanzanian polity, as well for the design of supporting projects and programmes by Development Partners. It makes recommendations both for future research and for more immediate administrative and policy actions by the Tanzanian Government, civil society and Development Partners.

Following an initial overview of the study's objectives, structure and methodology, the report summarises the results of the research work undertaken. Chapter 2 covers the “bottom-up” component, based on a local-level micro survey and an ethnographic survey in Arumeru district. Chapter 3 presents the analysis of values, incentives and power relations in the budget allocation process, based on a set of semi-structured interviews with 26 elected Members of Parliament and on an analysis of five ‘landmark’ budget decisions, where significant policy changes were introduced.

Each of these chapters includes detailed analysis and recommendations. Any serious attempts to engage with these issues must be informed by the full detail of the research results, as well as by an understanding of related work.

Six key observations from the local level

Six key observations are highlighted relating to accountability at the local level:

- The dominant mechanism of accountability at the local level is accountability to the electorate. The greatest worry of all local government councillors and Members of Parliament is how to be re-elected.

- This process of re-election is party-based, in that candidates cannot stand if they are not chosen by their parties. Fortunately, the process by which this happens is relatively democratic and there is also evidence that in a broader sense political parties keep ‘in touch’ with their electorate and worry about their concerns.

- Nevertheless, this still leaves the CCM, as the dominant political party, in a highly influential position, even if this influence is moderated by the fact that leading party members tend also to be subject to the influence of the church or mosque and that of the family or clan.

- Within the local government, there is evidence that the structures of local administration do work and that mechanisms of horizontal accountability are in operation.

- They would work a good deal better if there was a higher level of transparency over decision-making processes and better flows of information in relation to resources available and results achieved.

- Concepts of accountability and transparency do appear to have meaning at the local level but the ‘good governance discourse’ co-exists with other cultures of accountability, so its interpretation can be ambiguous.
Six key observations from the national level

Six complementary observations are highlighted relating to national level accountability:

- The Executive, operating through the President and a small group of Ministers is highly dominant in the national policy-making process.

- Parliament has clearly defined powers of scrutiny and these are duly exercised in line with legislation. However, with the CCM holding such a large majority in Parliament and with the exercise of internal party discipline very well established, there is no real sense in which the Legislature can hold the Executive to account. The process in the end becomes rather formalistic and is also compromised by time constraints and lack of user-friendly information.

- There is evidence that the CCM party can change policy where it is seen as likely to be unpopular: the party structures probably represent the most effective form of democratic restraint over the Executive. Its internal structures are also strongly democratic with clear rules for the election of the Presidential candidate, constituency candidates and NEC members.

- There are also important informal rules respected by the Executive – for example in relation to civil service and judicial appointments, which place limits over the way in which Presidential patronage is exercised.

- The influence of Donors is deeply resented by most MPs but in practice it is domestic political factors which exert a dominant influence over policy.

- Civil society is respected (especially faith-based organisations) but rather weak as a source of ‘societal accountability’. Most MPs view non-state actors first and foremost as potential purveyors of development projects for their constituencies. The media is an exception, but is seen as a campaign tool more than as a natural check against state power.

Six overarching recommendations

Overall, the prevailing patterns of accountability add up to a weak structure of checks and balances and a structure of power dominated by the Presidency, the Executive and the CCM Party. This is almost certainly helpful in facilitating coherent and resolute policy-making, without the need for continuous compromise and lengthy consultation. On the other hand, it means that Tanzania has an inherently weak democratic fabric. For example, if the CCM party were to elect an unscrupulous leader as the Presidential candidate, there would be few effective, formal controls to keep the power of such a person in check. Fortunately, there is a powerful set of essentially informal controls militating against such an outcome but this nevertheless presents an inherently vulnerable situation. Addressing this issue, whilst simultaneously deepening the framework of local level accountability must be the immediate priority. Six sets of actions will be needed to achieve this:

- Strengthen and formalise the rules controlling Presidential powers, so as to safeguard the independence of the judiciary and the civil service and clarify the role of District Commissioners in relation to Local Government Authorities.

- Open up space for new voices in Parliament and Local Government and for the strengthening of opposition parties: for example, independent candidates might be permitted to stand (under appropriate rules) initially at local government level and if successful at National Level. Actions to strengthen opposition parties could also be identified and discussed with current opposition parties.
• Continue to strengthen Parliament and its Committees, through improved auditing, better timetabling of budget scrutiny and oversight, improved information flows, training and research support.

• At the local level, continue the drive towards decentralisation, through accelerating the implementation of the Local Government Reform Programme and increasing the level of resource transfers to LGAs, as well as ward and village structures.

• Simultaneously, improve transparency at the local level – by identifying innovative ways of enhancing the availability of information on budgets, expenditures and results as well as improving access to decision-making processes.

• Donors should play a more effective role in information dissemination – particularly to Parliament and to political parties, whilst also developing improved channels for dialogue with MPs and with leaders at the LGA level.
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Patterns of Accountability in Tanzania

1 Introduction - Patterns of accountability in Tanzania

This is the final synthesis report of the “Understanding Patterns of Accountability in Tanzania” study, completed for the Governance Working Group of the Development Partners to Tanzania. The study has been conducted by a consortium led by Oxford Policy Management, UK and comprising the Christian Michaelsen Institute, Bergen (CMI) and REPOA, Tanzania. ¹

This report synthesises the key conclusions and lessons emerging from the study as a whole. It draws out the implications for institutional and policy changes within the Tanzanian polity, as well as for the design of supporting projects and programmes by Development Partners. It makes recommendations both for future research and for more immediate administrative and policy actions by the Tanzanian Government, civil society and Development Partners.

Following an initial overview of the study’s objectives, structure and methodology in this introductory chapter, the report summarises the results of the research work undertaken. Chapter 2 covers the “bottom-up” component, based on a local-level micro survey and an ethnographic survey in Arumeru district. Chapter 3 presents the analysis of values, incentives and power relations in the budget allocation process, based on a set of semi-structured interviews with 26 elected Members of Parliament and on an analysis of five ‘landmark’ budget decisions, where significant policy changes were introduced. Chapter 4 then presents overall conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 Study objectives and structure

It is well recognised that there are limits to narrow technical approaches for bringing about sustainable policy reform and institutional change. Hence, the Governance Working Group decided to undertake a comprehensive study on patterns of accountability in Tanzania to gain more in-depth knowledge about actual accountability processes between government officials, state institutions and ordinary citizens. The overall objective of the study was to assist the GWG in understanding the formal and informal political processes that guide policymaking and priority setting in Tanzania.

The initial target audience for the study was thus relatively restricted but greater knowledge of the operation of accountability processes is clearly of significance to all Tanzanian citizens as well as to the democratic organs, political parties, faith-based organisations and other groups which represent them. This synthesis report has been written with this wider audience in mind. A series of dissemination events has been planned in order to promote debate on the findings and recommendations as a first step in effecting improvements in accountability.

The study was divided into three components. Together they were designed to throw light on how structures of accountability operate in Tanzania and how they influence the quality and effectiveness of decisions on public policy and public spending.

- **Component One**, the Inception Report, comprised a mapping of the principal accountability actors in Tanzania and their place within the institutional context. It presented an analysis of the different dimensions of accountability – vertical and horizontal - and a preliminary assessment of how effectively they operate. It provided the methodology for the study as a whole and laid out hypotheses to be tested and refined through field work.

- **Component Two** provided a “bottom-up” perspective on the question of accountability. It sought to understand the expectations which Tanzanian citizens have with respect to

¹ The team also included Professor Max Mmuya and Dr. Simeon Mesaki of the Department of Political Science & Public Administration of the University of Dar es Salaam and Dr. Tim Kelsall of Newcastle University, who were contracted by OPM.
power-holders and with respect to their own entitlements and the channels they use and responses they typically face from different types of power-holders in trying to protect these entitlements. It examined the local accountability landscape in more depth, emphasising the relation between formal and informal accountability channels, and between elected and appointed officials. It included two elements – a micro-survey and an ethnographic survey:

- The micro-survey covered 90 people in three regions of Tanzania – Lindi, Dar es Salaam and Mwanza. It assembled quantitative and qualitative data on citizens' perceptions with regard to accountability and entitlements, utilising both a formal questionnaire and focus group interviews.
- The ethnographic study complemented the citizens' survey and observed accountability mechanisms in practice. This study was carried out in Arumeru District, a heavily populated district of some 500,000 encircling Arusha Town. It examined the interactions between citizens, government, and civil society representatives. Insights into village government were provided by the case of Mafurinyi village. A team of eight researchers (six Tanzanians and two Europeans) conducted ethnographic observations, focus group discussions and interviews. Aiming to 'show' as much as 'tell' how politics at the local level works, the descriptive and analytical sections of the study were interspersed with selected 'windows' on local accountability.

- Component Three comprised an analysis of values, incentives and power relations in the budget allocation process. It provided a “top-down” perspective, based on a set of semi-structured interviews with elected representatives at the national government level. It sought to understand how Members of Parliament perceive their responsibilities and how they balance out the potentially contradictory allegiances and accountability relationships with which they are faced. In order to reach a deeper understanding of the balance of interests driving political processes, a number of recent landmark political decisions were analysed. These included the elimination of primary school fees, the abolition of the Development Levy for Local Governments, the re-introduction of fertiliser subsidies, the decentralisation of financial and staff management decisions to local governments and the allocation of resources to the PRS1 ‘priority sectors’.

Each of the component outputs of the study has been written up and presented to the Governance Working Group and in other fora for feedback and comment. This report synthesises the conclusions and recommendations and can be read independently of the more detailed summaries of each study component.

1.2 The analytical framework: what do we mean by accountability?

In general terms accountability denotes a relationship between a bearer of a right or a legitimate claim and the agents or agencies responsible for fulfilling or respecting that right. The most basic accountability relationship is that between a person or agency entrusted with a particular task or certain powers or resources, on the one hand, and the ‘principal’ on whose behalf the task is undertaken, on the other. Accountability, simply put, is a two-way relationship of power. It denotes the duty to be accountable in return for the delegation of a task, a power or a resource.²

This duty can be discharged in different ways but the academic literature suggests that accountability mechanisms generally operate according to a logic based around three criteria:

- **“Transparency”** requires that decisions and actions are taken openly and that sufficient information is available so that other agencies and the general public can assess whether the relevant procedures are followed, consonant with the given mandate;

- **“Answerability”** denotes an obligation on the part of the decision-makers to justify their decisions publicly so as to substantiate that they are reasonable, rational and within their mandate;

- **“Controllability”** refers to the existence of mechanisms to sanction actions and decisions that run counter to given mandates and procedures. This is often referred to as a system of checks and balances or enforcement mechanisms. The checks may take many forms, including “shaming” and praise. Impunity is the opposite of controllability: apportioning blame – and a corresponding punishment - for harm done is a crucial component of accountability.

The study applied this framework in order to help analyse the relative strength of the different accountability relationships identified. The ethnographic survey found that the language of accountability was often very different subject to the actors involved and the specific contexts. This necessarily complicated the application of concepts such as ‘transparency’, ‘answerability’ and ‘controllability’ but it has nevertheless proven a useful starting point.

### 1.2.1 Defining the different dimensions of accountability

There is an ongoing debate about what constitutes an accountability relationship\(^3\). Most authors, nevertheless, distinguish between *vertical* forms of accountability, in which citizens and their associations play direct roles in holding the powerful to account, and *horizontal* forms of accountability, in which accountability to citizens is indirect and is delegated within the state apparatus. The study followed this broad distinction, whilst introducing a division of vertical accountability into ‘societal’ and ‘electoral’ accountability and taking the role of external actors as an additional dimension. Thus, the study distinguished four dimensions of accountability, as follows:

- **Vertical accountability** refers to the methods by which the state is (or is not) held to account by non-state agents through the relationship between citizens and their political representatives. Vertical accountability takes two forms:
  - **Electoral accountability** - elections are the classical form of vertical accountability, in which citizens delegate political power to their political representatives and hold them to account through periodic elections.
  - **Societal accountability** denotes the more informal role of non-state agents checking governments’ powers via the media, vocal civil society organisations and popular protest. Societal accountability is expressed through associations lobbying governments, demanding explanations and threatening government with less formal sanctions, like negative publicity\(^4\).

- **Horizontal accountability** refers to the intra-governmental control mechanisms between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary and between different sub-entities of the executive, including Cabinet, line ministries and lower level administrative departments and agencies. In addition to courts and parliamentary oversight functions,

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4 Goetz and Jenkins (2005).
this includes special institutions of restraint such as the auditor general, anti corruption commissions, human rights commissions, and the ombudsman.

- **External accountability** refers to the relationship between governments and international entities, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, bilateral donors and international associations – such as the African Union, NEPAD or the East African Community.

**Figure 1: Four Dimensions of Accountability**

Drawing on these four dimensions of accountability, the study focused on the interconnections between formal and informal institutions and processes to gain a deeper understanding of:

- Who is seeking accountability?
- From whom?
- Where?
- For what?
- How are the powerful held to account?

This approach was first applied through a stakeholder mapping exercise, which considered the different agents of accountability.
1.3 Some initial hypotheses from the Inception Report

The Inception Report presented the mapping of the different agents of accountability, classifying them according to the four dimensions of accountability and making a judgement on their relative strengths and weaknesses. This was based on the existing knowledge of the researchers and on the insights of existing literature on accountability in Tanzania. It led to a set of initial hypotheses which are summarised in the box below. Field work allowed these hypotheses to be tested and refined.

Table 1: Preliminary Study Hypotheses on the strengths and weaknesses of existing Accountability relationships in Tanzania

| Horizontal Accountability across the political and administrative system | • The Executive headed by a directly elected President is the most powerful institution of the Tanzanian State. The President appoints a wide range of key actors who are accountable to him.  
• The institutional framework provides for some checks and balances, but the formal ability of the Legislature and of special institutions of restraint to actually call the Executive to account is in practice rather limited.  
• From a formal perspective the institutional framework of horizontal accountability is weak. The strong presidential Executive can override in important ways the Legislature’s mandate to exercise control and oversight.  
• The political system mixes elements of presidential and parliamentary democracy and thus does not provide the democratic checks and balances that each system would normally require.  
• Control is still exercised in an informal way through consensus building within the Executive or through strategic alliances among majority party MPs. This however undermines transparency and perhaps answerability.  
• Executive powers at the local level are unclear and appear either to be overlapping, or there are executive elements at the district level without meaningful legislative oversight and control.  
• At the district level, horizontal accountability appears to be entangled with informal societal accountability where party structures overlap with the exercise of executive and legislative powers. |
| Vertical Accountability through the electoral channel | • The electorate chooses its representatives for the National Assembly and for District Councils. It also directly elects the President who in turn appoints all key civil servants at both the national and local government level, as well as some members of the Legislature.  
• From a formal perspective, both the Legislature and the head of the Executive are accountable to the Electorate. However, apart from a cumbersome Presidential impeachment procedure, there appear to be few effective constitutional provisions for the Executive to be accountable to the Legislature.  
• Thus, the system concentrates power in the hands of the Executive, which despite having been elected democratically faces virtually no constraints by the Legislature.  
• Thus vertical accountability relationships are weak. Legislative representatives in the National Assembly are limited in their control of the Executive and thus in their answerability for government policy decisions to the Electorate.  
• Answerability and controllability of Executive power holders may be
exercised in an informal manner, through links between politicians, civil servants and economically or otherwise dominant figures in society. This runs counter to transparency. This becomes awkward as the one and only form of vertical accountability through the electoral channel is to vote a bad government out of office – how informal allegiances may hinder this from happening is relevant.

- A myriad of informal relations - particularly at lower levels of government - compromise the transparency of the electoral process (at least for the outside observer).
- At the district level it is also not clear how the legislative body (Councillors) relate to the executive branch of central government (Regional & District Commissioners)
- Controls through party machinery continue to be very important, and have partly been reinstated. But parties must also cater for grassroots interests and needs. There is a lack of knowledge on how this works.

| Vertical accountability through societal associations | Little is known about how informal societal accountability may or may not be exercised.  
| Informal channels of voice of organised interests groups, and mass party organisations are not transparent, at least for the outside observer. Their affiliates may be able to exercise control and demand answerability internally.  
| From the external perspective it is not clear what means of controllability and answerability the constituents of informal social organisation have and to whom these bodies are ultimately accountable. Neither are links to the formal political and administrative system and its resources well understood.  
| If informal organisations receive popular support their social legitimacy could be greater than that of formal institutions or they can rely on formal institutions for access to economic and political power.  
| There may be positive or negative overlaps between formal horizontal and vertical accountability and informal societal accountability. |

| External Accountability | External accountability may support or override domestic accountability.  
| Three important questions emerge:  
| Have those institutional features that have enabled the Tanzanian government to be accountable to its development partners and implement successful economic and structural reforms undermined horizontal and vertical accountability?  
| Have prevailing systems of informal societal accountability helped the Tanzanian government to pursue and sustain its reform efforts?  
| Are the existing formal and informal institutions underlying current accountability relationships sufficient to ensure that the benefits arising from economic reform translate into broad based socio-economic development? |
2 The bottom-up perspective on accountability

Component Two set out to study the local accountability landscape in more depth, in the process shedding light on the relation between formal and informal accountability channels, and between elected and appointed officials. In general, it set out to build from the grassroots a picture of bottom-up accountability. In doing this, it recognised that it was important not only to identify the institutions and channels through which local people sought to secure accountability, but also to understand the language in which they thought and talked about accountability. It accepted that there might be some lack of fit, or problem of translation, between the way donor agencies and central government officials thought about accountability and the way local people did.

It comprised two parts: a micro-survey and an ethnographic survey. The micro-survey came first, being conducted in Dar es Salaam, Magu and Kilwa by Professor Max Mmuya and Dr. Simeon Mesaki in March 2005. Its aim was threefold: First, to provide some data on ordinary people’s experience of accountability at local level that could feed into and inform the focus of the deeper ethnographic survey; second, to provide a point of comparison to the ethnographic survey; finally, to generate a data set that, though not statistically significant, would provide useful insights in its own right, just as an opinion poll might.

Next came an ethnographic survey, conducted in Arumeru District by Tim Kelsall (team leader), and Siri Lange, and six junior researchers: Jehova Roy Kaaya, Zephania Kambele, Glory Minja, Martin Mlele, Siana Ndesaulwa, and Lucy Shule, in late March and April 2005. Its aim was to come to a deeper understanding of local institutions and to observe accountability processes in action. It was to also try and arrive at a better understanding of the culture of accountability in Tanzania, and to see whether that culture had distinct local inflections. In addition, the aim of the ethnographic survey was not just to tell, but to show readers how accountability functioned at the local level.

This chapter first summarises the main findings of both surveys taken together. It then considers in more depth the findings on the cultures and languages of accountability drawn from the ethnographic survey. Finally, it presents the policy implications emerging from this ‘bottom-up view’ of accountability.

2.1 Findings of the ethnographic and micro surveys

2.1.1 Relative importance & performance of different local level institutions

All citizens interviewed regarded both governmental and societal institutions as important. Local government institutions, including the police and courts, were perceived as unavoidable, everywhere. By contrast, the importance of societal organisations was patchier. For example, over half the respondents in Dar es Salaam thought traditional authorities unimportant, and none thought ritual specialists important, whereas 93% of our Mwanza respondents thought they were ‘very important’.

In all cases there was a perceived gap between the importance of institutions and their performance. The gap was particularly wide for ward and village government, with 51% rating them as ‘very important’ but only 28% as ‘very good’. This perhaps reflects resource shortages at sub-district level. Respondents listed their local institutions’ many accomplishments, such as building schools and bringing water, constructing roads and health facilities. At the same time there was much criticism: examples were given of broken promises, failure to provide services, discrimination, selfishness, and lack of accountability. Poor leadership, lack of funds, and corruption were all blamed. Only religious institutions, regarded as universally important, emerged unblemished.

5 To this end, the text of the ethnographic survey was interspersed with more than twenty vignettes from field notes, which the researchers called, ‘windows on accountability’.

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The ethnographic survey largely confirmed these findings. There had been a large amount of school construction in the District for which the government took some credit. The District Hospital had also witnessed improvements. Nevertheless there remained problems of pupils being denied access to school, health care providers failing to provide care, school committees in conflict with village government over use of funds, and so on. Ward and village government seemed chronically under-resourced and a large percentage of sub-district officials’ time was devoted to conflict resolution and problem solving rather than development. In the area surveyed, societal institutions, in particular the clan, were also extremely important, partly compensating for the poor performance of police and courts. The church emerged as an extremely important and well-respected actor both pastorally and developmentally. However, it was not free of problems: it had been the subject of a vicious religious conflict in the 1990s, the wounds from which were yet to fully heal. There was a good deal of overlap and competition between these different institutions, with certain individuals occupying key positions in each of them. In this context, analytical distinctions between vertical and horizontal accountability became in practice rather blurred.

Micro-survey informants believed power in Tanzania to be held by a combination of politicians, government leaders, business and rich people. Many informants believed that this group used their power to provide services and benefits to the community generally. A roughly equivalent number felt that they only used it to help themselves.
Box 2.1 - Key findings: local institutions

- Both governmental and societal institutions are important locally.
- In both cases, there is a small gap between their presumed importance and their perceived performance. This gap widens for ward and village government.
- Governmental institutions were important in all the field sites we studied, though the importance of societal institutions varied geographically.
- Religious organisations were important in all field sites, and their performance was universally praised. In fact, religious organisations might be said to have been the star performers of the study.
- The strong performance of religious organisations must be set against the fact that in certain cases such organisations can be divisive and a source of conflict and misrule.
- There is considerable overlap, conflict and cooperation between governmental and societal institutions. Thus analytical distinctions between vertical and horizontal, formal and informal accountability become quite blurred in practice.
2.1.2 **Entitlements and Services**

The majority of micro-survey respondents thought the government should provide social services. The results were confirmed by the ethnographic survey: when asked what government ought to provide, participants in focus groups said that it should provide services such as education, health and schools; as well as loans to start businesses, training and loans for unemployed youth; roads, hospitals, schools, agricultural equipment, and loans for farmers. Men often suggested that government should provide agricultural inputs: ‘Farmers are the backbone of the economy but they are being neglected by the government’. One farmer likened the problem of getting funds from central government to the villages to that of getting water from the mountain to the lowlands: all along the pipeline people were putting taps and drawing water, until there was nothing left for those at the bottom.

2.1.3 **Mechanisms of Accountability**

Component Two revealed that quite a lot of local governance and service provision in Tanzania is bad. However, it is not all bad: at least some government officials are trying to serve citizens at least some of the time, and with some success. There are two broad explanations: either officials are driven by some internal set of ethical or professional norms; or, they are subjected to extra-personal accountability mechanisms, either from within the bureaucracy, from elected officials, or from society.

The micro-survey found that some respondents would complain in the face of unsatisfactory governance. The ethnographic study found ordinary people attending meetings, writing letters to the administration, visiting local government offices, complaining about local government performance in the presence of leaders, and so on. Researchers also found some of these complaints being picked up by elected officials, who would then challenge and scrutinise appointed officials in the hope of holding them to account. Or elected officials would take complaints about appointed officials to higher authorities, such as the District Executive Director, or the District Commissioner. Indeed, impending elections appeared to be improving the responsiveness of elected politicians.

In a dramatic case in 2003, elected councillors of Arumeru East had secured the removal of a previous District Executive Director and eight council officers on grounds of negligence and suspected corruption. Researchers also observed the Arumeru District Commissioner touring the district and admonishing both elected and appointed officials to perform better. The District Executive Director himself was admonished by the Regional Administrative Secretary to do a better job because the MP was going to raise an issue in parliament. There were also examples of local government staff being disciplined for poor performance.

But these accountability efforts were not always successful. It was difficult for elected representatives to get reliable information on malfeasance, leaders protected each other, dubious politicians remained in office, culpable staff tended to be transferred instead of

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**Box 2.2 – Key Findings: Entitlements And Services**

- Local people expected government to provide them with services.
- In some cases government was indeed providing appreciable levels of service.
- In other cases, service delivery was unsatisfactory, and local people identified resource shortage, and officials’ selfishness, corruption and incompetence as the cause.
- Many people were extremely cynical about the motivations of their leaders.
sacked. We found only two examples of a local official being successfully *prosecuted* for misuse of funds. And when discourses of good governance were put in circulation, it was not always with virtuous intentions: it was sometimes linked to personal ambitions or vendettas. In general, appointed officials resented the influence of elected politicians over their affairs. They criticised them for their unrealistic promises and for their cynical concern for re-election. They seemed to think that the administration should run itself. Opposition parties were subject to scorn and harassment. And even though the district’s higher authorities were currently trying to improve governance from the top-down, it was not humanly possible for them to address every complaint.

The relation between accountability and rules was unclear. Sometimes rules and procedures were rigidly followed and invoked to justify this or that course of action, including disciplinary action. At other times rules were bent, broken or flouted. In addition, because of problems with the justice system, it was difficult to hold people accountable through law. The rule of law was very weakly institutionalised, and holders of legal rights had to maintain a constant political vigilance to ensure their enforcement.

Societal institutions failed to have a big impact in holding governmental institutions to account. In the ethnographic fieldwork we found that a local school committee had been unable to withstand interference by the village chairman, and had failed to hold him to account for misuse of school funds. The clan supplemented the courts, but it did not act to improve their performance. Moreover it accepted in most matters its subservience to local government and police. The church enunciated quasi-political messages and had been known to have an influence in elections; but it did not act to hold government to account day to day. Above all, the considerable overlap between state, non-state and political institutions made societal accountability less probable.

**Table 1: Last Time Authorities Consulted the Citizens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>D'SALAAM</th>
<th></th>
<th>MAGU</th>
<th></th>
<th>KILWA</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years ago</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 years ago</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Micro-survey respondents felt that though there were opportunities for communication with government, government never really consulted them (See tables 1 and 2). A majority felt they had little ability to ensure government fulfilled its obligations; yet when they failed to fulfil theirs, the government was quick to use force. Many ordinary people expressed a lack of faith in their leaders and a great deal of cynicism.

When the government failed to provide social services or law and order, some people turned to community self help. Occasionally people resorted to violence in defence of their interests. Others looked to alternative accountability routes: in Arumeru for example, the occult ritual of pot-breaking was used to identify and punish thieves that eluded the grasp of the police. Some individuals turned to witchcraft when they felt the authorities were against them. Alternatively, when bad leaders remained in power, ordinary people sometimes pointed to witchcraft as the cause.
Table 2: Last Time Citizens Pressed for Space and Explanation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>D'SALAAM Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>MAGU Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>KILWA Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ALL Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>During village and</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years ago</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One month passed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years ago</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Box 2.3 - Key Findings: Mechanisms of accountability

- Faced with unsatisfactory service, local people often complained through official channels, either in meetings, by writing letters, or by visiting relevant officials.
- We found examples of appointed officials being scrutinised and held to account by elected officials, and vice versa.
- It was clear that elections could in some circumstances lead to an increased responsiveness on the part of elected officials.
- In some cases complaints about poor service were satisfactorily addressed but in others nothing was done. In the latter cases, the problem was often resource shortage, lack of information, or officials protecting each other.
- There was an ambivalent attitude to rules. Sometimes they were rigidly followed by the administration; sometimes they were bent or broken and the law bought or sold.
- Some local people did nothing in the face of unsatisfactory service, or they turned to self-help, including religious and community based organisations, and occasionally they even used violent or supernatural means.

2.1.4 Cultures of Accountability

The ethnographic survey deepens the micro-survey data by showing how accountability processes are rooted in local traditions (some of which are quite 'modern'). It finds that though the language and practice of good governance has taken root in Arumeru, it co-exists and competes with an older tradition of governance. The latter is rooted in the authority of elder men controlling household land, providing for their families and bequeathing land to their sons.

Accountability is discussed using a variety of terms relating to family, food, and eating. In particular, the idea that a leader should be seen to provide food (or other benefits described metaphorically as food) has deep roots. A leader who acts as a patriarch, providing material benefits to the community, may enjoy a great deal of legitimacy, even if the benefits he or she distributes are corruptly acquired. Conversely, leaders who struggle to uphold the ideals
of transparency and good governance, but do not materially provide, may be rejected by their community and regarded as unaccountable.

The research found that the same individuals could sometimes be heard speaking different languages of accountability; there was considerable mixing. In addition, other languages, related to traditions such as Christianity, or the market economy, or ujamaa socialism, were also important. There is thus a rich multi-culture of accountability. And while economic change would appear to be eroding the foundations of the patriarchal mode, we would argue that it would be premature to forecast its demise.

The political science literature suggest that all effective accountability mechanisms operate according to a logic based around three criteria: Transparency, Answerability and Controllability.

The findings of the ethnographic data sit uneasily with this schema for understanding accountability. If people draw their ideas of accountability from different traditions, the 'mandate' given to leaders, and the type of transparency required to achieve it, can be unclear. Local people had an idea of transparency, for instance, but it was an imprecise combination of ideas of 'financial transparency' with ideas of 'visibility' or 'tangibility'. Second, a leader who draws legitimacy from a patriarchal tradition, a tradition which views the family as a template for government, need not necessarily justify his decisions on grounds of reasonableness or rationality. While not entirely absent from familial governance, reasonableness and rationality are not at its core. Talk of controllability, checks and balances, and enforcement mechanisms, seems slightly misplaced when there is so much overlap and sharing of personnel between institutions.

Using the above concepts to capture the experience of accountability locally is like trying to nail jelly to the wall; the concepts pin down the reality with great difficulty. Reality at local level is a fluid field of interpenetrating institutions and actors, informed by co-mingling cultures of accountability which place rather loose, and not always consistent, restraints on the actions of leaders.

Impropriety in Arumeru did know some bounds. Though there was much poor governance, there was an ill-defined and probably shifting line of unacceptable behaviour which leaders shouldn’t cross; if they did cross it, reprisals would ensue, whether electoral or otherwise.

**Box 2.4 – Key Findings: Cultures of Accountability**

- When evaluating government performance, local people drew from diverse vocabularies of accountability. Some of this vocabulary matched that of good governance discourse, but some of it stemmed from a local governance tradition based on patriarchal authority in a subsistence economy. These two traditions are potentially, though not necessarily, in conflict.

- People also used religious vocabularies, or vocabulary associated with the market place, to describe and evaluate political behaviour.

- These different vocabularies, the product of Tanzania’s postcolonial history, are not easily subsumed under the study’s ‘transparency’, ‘answerability’ and ‘controllability’ criteria.

- The co-existence of sometimes contradictory accountability vocabularies injects a degree of ambiguity into relations of power, with certain types of behaviour legitimate in one ‘language’ but not in another.
2.2 The different cultures & languages of accountability

The analysis of accountability cultures emerging from the ethnographic survey presents a rich field of competing and at times apparently contradictory discourse. Talk of entitlement and transparency exists alongside practices of corruption and nepotism. There is rigid adherence to rules alongside the flagrant bending or breaking of rules. We find discourses familiar to a good governance agenda enfolded with ideas of family and religion. How can we best understand this plurality?

2.2.1 Understanding the multiple cultures of accountability

We will refer to the first attempt as the 'liberal explanation'. Liberal perspectives can be found in the wider governance literature (Bratton and Hyden 1992; Chazan, Harbeson et al. 1994; Haynes 1997). Essentially, this view would suggest that what we observe in Arumeru is a political old guard profiting from practices of nepotism and corruption and continuing to dominate power, increasingly challenged by a new set of actors driving a good governance agenda. In Arumeru, the Mafurinyi Village Chairman, the Mafurinyi Ward Councillor, the new DMO and the new DED, as well as many ordinary people, were all critical of current practice in government and appeared dedicated to improving accountability. An agency wishing to strengthen accountability, then, might focus on identifying these ‘good apples’ and helping them to drive change. But this is perhaps a little optimistic and naïve. We found that the Village Chairman, for example, had previously been involved in corrupt practices, and had a personal interest in articulating a good governance discourse now. The Ward Councillor fought for improved accountability on the Council but in other circumstances was not averse to bending rules in his favour. Thus any interpretation that hinges on ‘reactionary’ and ‘progressive elements’ or ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’ is simplistic.

An alternative interpretation can be called the ‘patrimonial’ argument. Though there are nuances of approach, examples of authors in the patrimonial school include Richard Joseph, Patrick Chabal and Goran Hyden (Hyden 1983; Joseph 1987; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Hyden 2005). The idea is that public talk of accountability is merely a façade for the pursuit of selfish, private interests. Good governance discourse is wheeled out for the consumption of donors, researchers, even in some circumstances the public, but the people who articulate it have as little respect for the rules as the people they challenge. Behind the façade of good governance the real business of politics is patrimonial. Leaders use public resources as though they were the property of their own households. By creating rules and protocols too rigid to follow, the administration creates opportunities for extracting bribes. The rules exist to be broken, not to be followed. Powerful local actors ‘instrumentalise’, or use to their own advantage, the resulting ‘disorder’.

If the previous interpretation of local politics was naïve, this one is too cynical. It gives the impression that government officials come to work with the sole purpose of stealing or manipulating public resources for the benefit of their own private networks. This was not the impression we gained from our research. Rather, the impression we gained — and it is only an impression — was that most government officials, much of the time, are trying with limited resources to do their jobs and serve the people. They may also be on the look out for their own and their families’ interests, and they may also bend the rules to help friends and family, but we saw little evidence to suggest that patrimonialism is the dominant, or real logic of local administration. Rather, it seemed to us to be one among several logics.

A third, slightly less cynical explanation, can be referred to as the ‘relativist’ argument (Schaffer 1998; Schatzberg 2002). The idea is that when people in Arumeru talk about accountability, they mean something different to when people in Britain, or America, or China talk about it. British talk of accountability calls to mind a set of relations between citizens and officials that we have tried to capture using terms like ‘transparency’, ‘answering’ and ‘controllability’. But in Arumeru, talk of accountability refers to an idealised set of relations between a household head and his extended family; it is a patriarchal discourse. While some of the obligations of a household head to his dependents are similar to those of a British
government to its citizens, they are not exactly the same. In particular, the behaviour of a household head is governed by norms rather than rules, there is no distinction within the household between public and private resources, there is no presumption of equality, and no clear idea of democracy.

The problem with this argument is that though it is easy to find examples of people in Arumeru thinking about accountability in familial terms, it is also easy to find examples of them thinking about it much as people in Britain or another European country do: people have ideas about proper use of public funds, about democracy and about equality, and these do not seem strikingly different to European norms. What is different to Europe is that these ideas do not form the dominant discourse. They exist alongside, and sometimes in competition with, the patriarchal discourse.

The puzzle of plural logics in local government can be explained, we suggest, by reference to local history. We can call this the post-colonial argument. For the past four centuries, a diverse but limited set of historical currents has flowed through Arumeru, superimposing on the pre-existing lineage mode of production influences from Christianity, ujamaa socialism, democracy and the cash economy.

From a post-colonial perspective, these different historical currents continually flow in and out of one another in the behaviour of individuals and groups. This distinguishes it from the previous explanations we have sketched. The liberal perspective, for example, suggests that politics can be divided into an old guard, whose behaviour flows from lineage or ujamaa currents, and a group of young pretenders who have adopted a democratic governance agenda. The patrimonial perspective suggests that whatever the picture on the surface, deep down all the players are pulled along by a strong patrimonial undertow stemming from the lineage mode. Meanwhile the relativist argument also suggests that all currents are somehow dissolved in the lineage mode. The post-colonial perspective, by contrast, argues that everyone who grew up in the local area has been exposed to these historical currents to differing degrees, and that at different moments in time an individual may be pulled along by one current, and at other times by another. While some individuals at the extremes of the spectrum might act according to a consistent patrimonial or liberal logic, the majority of individuals are not so one-dimensional: they exhibit a mixture of behaviours and attitudes that is not necessarily internally consistent.

This seems to us to be the most realistic explanation of what is happening. It can explain a certain inconsistency in attitude and behaviour that the liberal approach cannot address. It explains, which the patrimonial perspective cannot do, the fact that though there is corruption, nepotism and misrule in Arumeru, impropriety knows some limits, and egregious offenders are often removed; and it explains the fact that good governance discourse does appear to have meaning for local people and is not, as the relativist argument implies, simply re-interpreted into local terms.

The presence of simultaneous and competing discourses should be a source both of hope and caution to actors wishing to shape Arumeru from the outside. On the one hand, it is a source of hope, because it suggests that there is no single social current that has become calcified and thus impervious to change. On the other hand, the fluidity of the situation makes it difficult to predict the outcome of external interventions, especially since a ‘betting on good guys’ strategy seems to be overruled. Institutions and actors that might be assumed to be paddling in the direction of desired change can be easily swept away in unstable social currents. The direction of change, one guesses, will be extremely difficult to control.

Finally, some pointers to understanding accountability elsewhere: If our post-colonial perspective on accountability is correct, one needs to identify the key historical currents from which discourses of accountability flow. Though all Tanzania’s people to some extent share a historical experience of German and British colonialism, ujamaa socialism, and post-socialist liberalisation, significant differences can be found in settlement patterns, organisation of household production, and traditional authority structures; in religious practices; and in the
degree of commercial penetration. These differences mean that it may be illegitimate to scale up the findings of this (predominantly Eastern) Arumeru survey for the whole of Tanzania, and that different findings for accountability, implying different possibilities of change, might be found elsewhere.

2.3 Policy implications for improving local level accountability

The first and most important implication for policy is to tread cautiously. Potential change agents wishing to understand accountability need to come to a better appreciation of alternative traditions of accountability, not least the patriarchal mode. Traditions may be inflected differently from place to place depending on their precise economic and historical roots. Thus, the results of this report do not suggest easy solutions, if fundamental change in the accountability landscape is the objective.

It is therefore important to ask whether fundamental change in the accountability landscape is the right policy objective. Clearly, it is risky in that the sort of actions which might generate these changes could also have negative consequences. Is it necessary? Are current structures of accountability actually preventing the success of actions to improve social welfare and remove injustices? Or are they rather slowing them down? If the latter, then perhaps small, incremental changes in the accountability landscape would be sufficient to accelerate such processes.

The surveys do find some grounds for optimism in relation to these questions. The current status quo is not perhaps as unfavourable as commonly portrayed. Moreover, even within the current status quo there appear to be simple things that could be done that would certainly do no harm and would probably help to strengthen the ability of local people to reinforce their entitlements and hold elected leaders and appointed officials to account:

- On the positive side, we had the strong impression that, in Arumeru district at least, government does function. Services are delivered and there is respect for the machinery of government: Most government officials, much of the time, are trying with limited resources to do their jobs and serve the people. They may also be on the look out for their own and their families’ interests but we saw little evidence to suggest that patrimonialism is the dominant, or real logic of local administration.

- Secondly, structures of local accountability do operate, albeit weakly and imperfectly. A certain degree of answerability was evident: council officials were probed in the district council meeting; complaints were made about the health officer in a ward development committee; village councillors harangued the VEO. There was also evidence of controllability: checks of both a top-down and bottom-up nature existed and especially when the two combined, sanctions occurred – the former DED had been transferred; a Village Chairman had been removed; a medical officer had been suspended.

- Taken together, these findings suggest that even with existing structures of accountability, significant improvements could be achieved in the quality of services simply through increased resource allocations. The PEDP programme provided a concrete example of this in the education sector but it would probably also be true of road construction and maintenance and of the basic structures of ward and village administration.

- The health sector presented a more complicated picture, with some rather disturbing attitudes displayed by health staff towards their patients and the community at large; yet even here a combination of greater resources and stronger supervision would probably make a big difference even with no fundamental change to the accountability framework.

- Thus, there would appear to be support for the view that the broad thrust of the Local Government Reform Programme is right and can make a difference to those services
provided by local governments. In other words, it seems reasonable to expect a positive impact from increasing resource transfers to the local level, enhancing managerial autonomy over those resources and introducing simple institutional changes to reinforce local structures of accountability and staff supervision.

- Moreover, one of the biggest weaknesses in relation to local accountability is the lack of transparency. If consistent measures could be introduced to improve the accessibility of information and to increase public understanding of rights and entitlements, then this in itself would be enough to strengthen accountability.

How difficult would it be to raise transparency at the local level? This is not a straightforward task. Yet at least there exists some degree of answerability and controllability, which suggests that improvements in transparency would bring dividends. In part, the lack of transparency reflects the strong oral tradition at the local level – minutes of meetings are not systematically recorded and even more rarely circulated. Providing type-writers and notice-boards and regular supplies of paper to village and ward committees might in itself help to change this. Yet, the lack of transparency also reflects a hierarchical view of authority: members of committees and others in positions of power do not feel an obligation to publicise the information they receive and the deliberations they hold. But they can be made to respond to orders from above so as to reinforce these obligations and to a degree the central government can be a direct agent of transparency at the local level, by itself publishing and disseminating information.

To recommend actions to improve transparency is dangerously unoriginal and there is a major risk of superficial responses to such a recommendation. There needs to be serious attention to the question of how to provide easily accessible, relevant information to ordinary people who would rarely have access to a newspaper and might struggle to understand bureaucratic Kiswahili or lists of budget numbers.

The complexity of the structures and cultures of local accountability revealed through this ethnographic study also give reasons to be modest about what can be achieved in the short term in Tanzania. Yet there is now an increasing body of empirical evidence from around the World (World Bank, 2004; Shah & Schacter, 2004) which demonstrates that access to information and the creation of the political space for citizens to exert accountability can have major benefits even in the absence of more fundamental institutional changes and alterations in power relations. Neither the micro-survey nor the ethnographic work in Arumeru give any reasons to suggest such initiatives would be out of place in the Tanzanian context.

Is there space for being more ambitious? Could new types of organisational structures or coalitions be promoted, perhaps initially on a pilot basis? Clearly such actions must be rooted in a greater understanding of the realistic opportunities for change. But donor agencies and NGOs might begin to think about devising institutions that work in harmony with aspects of local culture revealed by this study, such as patriarchal authority. There may be opportunities, instead of going against the grain of local beliefs, for bringing the patriarchal-patrimonial and liberal-good governance cultures into closer alignment. In Arumeru there is clearly a strong cultural norm in favour of ‘big men’ politicians dispensing patronage resources to their communities. This can encourage corruption. Yet, at the same time there is a strong sense that corruption, especially when associated with selfish behaviour, and ‘eating alone’, is illegitimate. It is not inconceivable that donors could work with local stakeholders to encourage the emergence of political institutions and discourses that combine generosity and patronage with financial responsibility. Constituency development funds, or some other mechanism under which local politicians can take credit for increased resource transfers to their communities – without embezzling resources – are possibilities. By injecting increased financial transparency into ‘traditional’ institutions, the incentives for resource leakage might be curtailed, and the political class might find its popularity enhanced.
3 Values, incentives and power relations in the budget allocation process

The third component of the study examined the accountability relations between political and administrative power holders and the citizens whom they serve. It sought to provide a top-down perspective on how accountability is perceived within the Tanzanian state structure, by asking the question, “What do Tanzania's elected leaders believe they are accountable for and to whom?” It thus complemented the bottom-up view provided by Component 2 on ordinary people’s perceptions of their rights and their experience of trying to obtain accountability.

The focus of component 3 was the budget process. Public finances lie at the heart of the political contest over power and influence. The budget process was therefore used as a "lens" to magnify the underlying power relations and institutional controls that nationally elected leaders deal with on a daily basis. The analysis combined semi-structured interviews with national Members of Parliament and more detailed research on five ‘landmark’ decisions that were made by the Mkapa government.

26 National Parliamentarians were interviewed during the April 2005 Parliamentary session in Dodoma. The interviews included both general questions on accountability within the budget process and questions specific to the specified landmark decisions. This research was complemented by analysis of budgetary and other documentation and interviews with relevant civil servants, researchers and donor officials.

Five ‘landmark’ decisions were selected for analysis:

1. The abolition of school fees;
2. The abolition of the development levy;
3. The (re)introduction of agricultural subsidies;
4. Decentralisation of authority for budget and staff management; and
5. Budget allocations in support of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

These were seen as “landmark” decisions because of their importance to the policy directions the Government has adopted and because of their financial significance. In other words, these were not random or trivial decisions. It seems reasonable to assume that the lessons they illustrate and the balance of interests which they demonstrate are representative of the influences shaping the overall process of budgetary decision-making.

The analysis of these decisions sought to examine the way in which accountability operates around the budget process, the quality of accountability which decision-making embodies and the relative strength of the different interests driving these decisions. Each of these decisions was set against the background of the interviews with the MPs, and the research team deliberately sought to compare and contrast the perceptions expressed by MPs with the lessons emerging from these landmark decisions.

This chapter summarises the research conclusions. We present first the conclusions on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the budgetary process and of Parliament’s role within it. We then summarise MP’s views on the dominant forms of accountability and contrast these with the observations emerging from the study of the landmark decisions. We conclude with an overview of the key conclusions and their policy implications.
3.1 **Strengths & weaknesses of the budgetary process and of Parliament’s role within it**

3.1.1 **Recent assessments of the budget process**

The Tanzanian budget process is often upheld as a strong example for its neighbouring countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. Key reform elements highlighted are the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) and the associated mechanism of expenditure control through a centralised payments system. This has dramatically reduced the opportunities for spending public monies outside of the framework of the approved budget. Assessments of Tanzania’s reform efforts and the quality of its public financial management system have generally been positive and have qualified the country for general budget support from a number of multilateral and bilateral donors.

There are also critical voices. Some observers have been sceptical about the formal mechanisms for participatory dialogue such as those of the PRSP and the PERs. It is argued that established partnerships and coalitions tend to resemble staged performances in public participation, largely bypassing and undermining democratic oversight institutions such as parliament (Gould and Ojanen 2003).

The recent evaluation of general budget support (Daima Associates/ ODI, 2004) emphasised the improvements to the budget system which have been achieved over the past 10 years. At the same time, it pointed to a number of continuing weaknesses:

- The extent to which public expenditure proposals are scrutinised and genuinely questioned continues to be limited. The GBS evaluation referred to the relative weakness of the “budget challenge function” within the planning units of sector ministries, the Budget department of MoF and within Parliament.

- There is a high level of virement and budget re-allocation during budget execution. Although budget changes follow the requirements of the Public Finance Act, they result in a budget out-turn which is significantly different from the originally approved budget, thus diminishing the role of Parliamentary debate and approval in guiding public spending allocations.

- There continue to be weaknesses in procurement processes, which are regularly reported in the reports of the Auditor General. The World bank-led Country Procurement Assessment Review identified a series of procedural changes required to address these weaknesses. These changes are being introduced but progress has been slow.

- Although accounting and financial reporting for central government spending has improved enormously with the introduction of the IFMS, accounting at the local government level remains very weak and only some 50 % of local governments have computerised accounts.

- The processes for following up on the recommendations of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee and the Local Authorities Accounts Committee are not robust, with the result that corrective actions are not systematically pursued.

3.1.2 **MPs’ perceptions of their role in the Budget Process**

Two thirds of the MPs felt that the Tanzanian budget process was weak or less than satisfactory and that it needed strengthening. The MPs interviewed pointed to a number of factors militating against effective scrutiny by standing Parliamentary Committees or indeed by Parliament as a whole.
Despite the general dissatisfaction with the budget process and the desire for change, over half of the MPs interviewed recognised that there has been a marginal improvement in the budget process over the past five years. A further 7 MPs believed that the budget process was significantly better than it was five years ago. These modest improvements were attributed to more information, greater opportunity for involvement by MPs, the change in structure of the committees and improved capacity especially in the work of the PAC and LAAC.

Nevertheless, MPs argued that much more needs to be done at each stage of the budget process to ensure Parliament is an effective accountability mechanism.

- The extent of understanding of budgetary and public expenditure issues amongst Parliamentarians is relatively limited. This is worsened by the weak research support, limited resources and information which is not generally user-friendly.

- There is inadequate transparency over how and why decisions are made, especially with regard to budget reallocations. Information such as the budget guidelines do exist but are not always accessible or easy to follow. This hinders MPs ability to understand the justification behind certain decisions.

- The monitoring of activities, the publication of reports and the implementation of legislation does not easily translate to the real oversight of performance. There is limited evidence of answerability, whereby decision-makers are obliged to justify their decisions publicly so as to substantiate that they are reasonable, rational and within their mandate.
There are considerable delays in receiving audit reports and tabling recommendations based on the audit reports in parliament. These delays prevent the PAC and LAAC from gaining momentum and ensuring that the recommendations are pursued. Furthermore, punishment for non-compliance is not pursued or enforced, and as a result acts as major disincentive to the work of the MP, the NAO and the CAG.

In terms of the third criteria of accountability, controllability, there are mechanisms to sanction actions and decisions that run counter to given mandates and procedures. They are just not adequately used. As a result these mechanisms are largely redundant and Parliament, as a check on the executive, is made ineffective.

In conclusion, Parliament’s role in holding the executive accountable is currently not very effective. The formal measures to enforce accountability may be in place, but often the spirit of their intent is lost to the mechanistic approach with which they are applied. MPs need the right incentives – in terms of encouragement by their political parties, along with the necessary information and resources and a commitment from the party leadership to demonstrate that accountability is important.

### 3.2 Which is the dominant form of accountability?

#### 3.2.1 The views of MPs

Our interviews with Parliamentarians suggest that both formal and informal mechanisms impede the legislatures’ ability to perform its oversight function as an agent of horizontal accountability. The interviews confirm the hypothesis that the Executive, the President and a small number of senior ministers closely control power. This is reinforced by the Presidential powers of appointment and by the party structure. Interviews have also confirmed the hypothesis that CCM Party discipline has a strong influence on voting patterns within Parliament and on the behaviour of MPs.

**Vertical-electoral accountability:** The fear of not being re-elected or of not being selected by the party as a candidate are perhaps the major worries of most MPs. Yet the judgement of voters is often simplistic and materialistic: MPs are largely judged by voters according to their ability to ‘bring the goods home.’ As a result, MPs see themselves as ‘accountable’ for providing tangible benefits to their constituencies. Furthermore, as most MPs view the formal budgetary channels as an ineffective mechanism for bringing development funds to their constituency, they habitually turn to informal mechanisms like lobbying through personal networks and approaching donors and international NGOs. Some of the parliamentarians even resort to distributing money from their own pockets.

At the same time the importance of the Party in the MPs work is irrefutable and the MPs are subject to strong party discipline while in Parliament. The party caucuses are strong to the extent that they can dictate how the MPs vote.

#### A window on informal vertical accountability at the district level:

**Opposition MP:** “I am in big troubles with my District Commissioner. The DC has blocked yet another water project in my district with sponsorship from an overseas donor. This project is to supply water to a local hospital. However, for 12 months now the DC has blocked the money, arguing that I as an MP have intervened in development of district by soliciting funds. According to the DC it is not in my role as MP to carry out development project. Yes, there is clearly a conflict of interest between the role of MP and DC which stems from the fact that the role of the MP is not clearly spelt out in the constitution. With the DC being a ruling party official, he wants to ensure that all credit for development goes to the government”.

Our interviews with MPs on their vertical accountability function suggest a potential conflict of interest between MPs, and various levels of district government. The accountability role of MPs is not clearly defined, and informal practises may come into conflict with formal local government structures. These potential conflicts are linked to the dominance of the CCM
party, and the lack of clear distinctions between the Party and the government structures as well as the poorly defined role of District Commissioners vis-à-vis those of MPs and district councils. Even ruling party MPs refer to the potential conflicts with their DCs and District Executive Directors (DEDs - the chief administrator and accounting officer at district level), particularly if they attempt to address concerns of corruption. In the words of one MP: “Some DCs and DEDs may fight you if you fight bad governance.”

**Vertical-Societal accountability:** Currently the links among MPs and non-state agents are weak. However, some notable changes are taking place. For better or worse, media is a force to be reckoned with and adds reach to some of the lobbying and advocacy work done by the mostly urban based NGOs. NGOs have also started to engage in direct policy lobbying in the capital. Religious organisations have influence as opinion leaders, although they don’t necessarily function as a natural check against government. Business associations seem to be the non-state actor with the most influence on the budget process. Trade Unions appear without much influence at all, with the notable exception of the Tanzania Teacher’s Union.

Perhaps most striking is the recurring tendency of the interviewed MPs to view most, if not all, of the non-state actors listed above first and foremost as potential purveyors of development projects for their constituencies. The media is an exception, but then again, media is seen as a campaign tool (for oneself as well as for one’s potential opponent) more than as a natural check against state power.

**External Accountability:** MPs remain ambivalent with respect to donor agencies. All MPs find them much too influential, some even to the extent that they are perceived to be “ruling the country”. One holds that “donors are not honest”, another alleges that they “don’t address the real needs of the people”. Moreover, some MPs claim that there is “conspiracy between the donors and the government”. All the same, the MPs’ relationship with donors can best be described as one of hate-and-love. At the end of the day most MPs feel that the donors are needed, and that they are vital in keeping the government on the right track, since they are, paradoxically, in a better position to do that than the Parliament.

3.2.2 **The dominant form of accountability – what do the “landmark” decisions show?**

In reference to horizontal accountability the analysis of the landmark decisions supports the findings presented in the previous chapters that the Executive is highly dominant. There were several examples of the Government short-cutting the Parliamentary consultation process – in relation to the abolition of primary school fees, the abolition of the Development Levy and the re-introduction of agricultural subsidies. Ironically, our interviews with MPs suggested that each of these decisions would have been popular with Parliament. So the failure to follow the due process of consultations does not seem to arise out of a desire to hide information or to deceive Parliament, it is a simple reflection of how little attention is given to Parliament in the policy-making process.

The analysis adds nuance, however, as we can distinguish at least two separate parts of the Executive, namely the senior technocracy and the Party. The Cabinet could be seen as being between the two, probably closer to the Party than the technocracy. Whereas the technocracy appears dominant in policy implementation and the formulation of general policies, such as the PRSP and NSGRP, the Party can assert its influence on issues where it identifies a risk of the Government making political mistakes. A senior political analyst interviewed in the preparation of this report, summed up the division of power between the Government and the Party as follows:

‘The Government is by and large left to conduct its affairs without interference, as long as it keeps within the basic boundaries of political acceptability. But if the Government “steps outside”, the Party will “step in.”’

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Properly speaking this is best defined as a form of **vertical-electoral accountability**. The abolition of the development levy and the reintroduction of agricultural subsidies may both be seen as direct responses to concerns expressed by the electorate through the Party. In both these cases, especially the latter, the chosen policies went against advice from the donors.

Without doubt, the role of the majority CCM Party is highly significant and, taking the landmark cases and the MP’s comments together probably emerges as the single most dominant force of accountability in Tanzania.

Although all political parties worry about winning votes, the influence of the electorate on policy making tends to be indirect. In some cases, as in the abolition of school fees and the development levy, the prospect of attracting overwhelming popular support can nudge Government and Party in a certain direction. In other cases, as for example decentralization and the PRS process, less regard is given to popular opinion.

**Societal accountability** appears more limited than that of the electorate. There is circumstantial evidence that the business community might have had some influence in the redirection of the PRS process and the introduction of agricultural subsidies, but the available evidence is not sufficient to draw any firm conclusion. Similarly, one may surmise that the lobbying of the Tanzania Teachers Union may be one of the forces slowing the decentralisation of authority for staff management but we found no firm substantiation of this.

It was observed by a number of MPs that the combination of civil society and media can be influential, as civil society get media coverage when they conduct critical policy analysis and advocacy. Still, by the standards of most neighbouring countries, civil society and media in Tanzania remain weak.

As expected, **external accountability** appears more decisive, although perhaps not to the extent that one might have thought. The landmark cases, notably the introduction of agricultural subsidies and the reorientation of the PRS process, give examples of Government going against the preferences of the donor community. The purchase of the Presidential jet might have been quoted as an example of another decision in this vein. Even the local government reform was initiated at a time when the World Bank was against it; and now when there is broad donor support for faster implementation of the Local Government Act of 1999, there are signs that Government is stalling on implementation in response to domestic political concerns.

In short, the overwhelming perception of MPs that donors have excessive influence, does not appear to be substantiated by an analysis of landmark budgetary decisions.

3.3 **Summary Overview and Policy Implications**

Both the interviews with MPs and the analysis of landmark budgetary decisions confirmed many of our initial hypotheses, most notably that the Executive has a dominant role in setting the budget and is subject only to a rather formalistic scrutiny and oversight by Parliament. The fact that decision-making within the Executive is focused very closely on the President and a small group of senior ministers was also borne out. The dominant role of the CCM party also emerged very clearly. Indeed, it would seem that the advent of multi-party democracy has strengthened the role of the party and tightened party discipline.

Accountability to the electorate emerges as the most powerful check within the Tanzanian system, mediated in particular through the role of the majority party, the CCM. We have seen evidence of significant policy decisions where a concern for the electorate was a driving force. At the same time, it is clear that – as in all countries, the concerns of the electorate tend to be rather simplistic and are, as such, easily manipulated.

Nor should there be any illusions about the ability of NGOs, the media and other domestic interest groups to play a corrective role with regard to the Executive. As expected, their role is modest. Indeed, they are more generally perceived by MPs either as a source of local level
projects (NGOs, faith-based organisations) or as a campaign tool (the media) rather than a democratic check on Executive power.

With regard to the forces of external accountability, MPs made no mention at all of the African Union or the East African Community and it seems clear that these bodies would only become relevant in the event of wars or major trade disputes. The role of donors exercised the minds of MPs much more forcefully: clearly they are highly visible and seen to hold excessive power. On the other hand, a more detailed analysis of budgetary decisions suggests that the role of donors is distinctly subservient to that of domestic political interests. Donors may be able to insist on increased transparency by the Executive but there is no sense in which there is controllability within this accountability relationship.

Overall, this adds up to a weak structure of checks and balances and a structure of power dominated by the Presidency, the Executive and the CCM Party. On the positive side, this is almost certainly helpful in facilitating coherent and resolute policy-making, without the need for continuous compromise and lengthy consultation. On the other hand, it means that Tanzania has an inherently weak democratic fabric. Put simply, if the CCM party were to elect an unscrupulous leader as the Presidential candidate, there would be few effective, formal controls to keep the power of such a person in check.

Fortunately, there is a powerful set of essentially informal controls militating against such an outcome. The CCM is a party with strong traditions, rooted in part in the ideas of Nyerere and ujamaa socialism, in part in the strong religious and social fabric of Tanzania. It is also a disciplined party with strong respect for rules. One powerful example of this is the fact that, in sharp contrast to the situation in Uganda, Malawi and Zambia, there has been no pressure to alter the Constitution so as to permit President Mkapa to run for a third term. The rules are seen to be more important than the person.

Within the Executive, Tanzania also benefits from having a strongly independent Central Bank and a largely independent civil service. Although senior appointments are made by the President, these are generally chosen from within the ranks of the civil service.

Yet these counterbalancing checks may generally be described as traditions rather than formal rules with a legal and constitutional backing. The Tanzanian Government and its people need to consider how far it is wise to continue to rely on these traditions and on the basic good sense of its leaders.

### 3.3.1 Possible measures to improve the balance of powers

This research suggests that consideration ought to be given to introducing legal and constitutional changes designed to improve the balance of power between the Executive, the Legislature and the other organs of democracy. These changes need not necessarily be radical: through a structured set of small changes across a range of areas, it ought to be possible to achieve a better balance of powers. In particular, consideration might be given to the following measures:

- Moderating the powers of Presidential appointment so as to reduce the number of appointments made directly by the President and, in relation to specific sensitive posts – such as the Controller and Auditor General and the high court judges, to introduce a formal structure of committees responsible for presenting the short-list of candidates from which the Presidential appointments should be made.

- Clarifying the roles of District Commissioners in relation to the District Councils.

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6 In this respect, Tanzania is not dissimilar to the UK, where many democratic checks and balances derive from precedent and tradition rather than from legal or constitutional controls – indeed the UK is almost unique in not having a written constitution. Yet, the UK has seen a steady erosion of the power of Parliament during the large majority governments of the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher (1979 – 1991) and Labour under Tony Blair (1997 to date). (Sampson, 2004)
Clarifying the role of the Speaker within Parliament and the rules within which he or she must operate so as to ensure neutrality.

Strengthening the roles of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Local Authorities Accounts Committee, particularly through the provision of legal powers to enforce follow-up actions in response to recommendations.

Lifting the present party monopoly on political elections to allow candidates to contest as independents, perhaps initially for Local Government elections but eventually for national elections too. As has been shown throughout this study, the total dependence of candidates on their parties for their political positions will continue to undermine their potential for imposing accountability whenever it may be seen to go against the interest of the party. Allowing independent candidates could be one of the most effective and simplest ways of bolstering the independence of the legislature.

3.3.2 Measures to strengthen Parliamentary and civil society scrutiny

It would be wrong to focus exclusively on legal and procedural changes as the most effective way of strengthening accountability. There is much that could be done at the technical and administrative levels to remove the factors that constrain effective engagement of Parliamentary committees in the formulation, adoption, oversight and control of the budget. These include:

- Increasing the time available for scrutiny;
- Providing more user-friendly information at an earlier stage of the budget cycle;
- Providing advisory, training and research support so as to improve the technical capacity of MPs.

Such efforts at the Parliamentary level could be usefully re-inforced by deliberate actions to open space for the electorate and other actors to participate in monitoring the budget process. Much of the present participation in processes such as the Public Expenditure Reviews (PERs), commendable as such efforts are, risks becoming tokenistic unless there is more transparency in actual expenditures and how these agree, or don't, with the budgets. The importance of transparency in financial affairs becomes more important still at the district and village level.

Finally, the government and donors should seek to be more transparent in the aid negotiation process. It seems likely that the MPs' apparent overestimation of the donors' influence, to a large part derives from a lack of information on project and other donor funding and on the arguments that are shaping the policy debates between donors and the Executive.
4 Overview of emerging lessons

This report has summarised the main findings appearing from three studies submitted as part of the study ‘Patterns of accountability in Tanzania’. The objective was to throw light on how structures of accountability operate in Tanzania and how they influence the quality and effectiveness of public policy. What are the ‘big picture lessons’, the main conclusions we reach regarding the operation of accountability structures?

There is always a risk of trivialising in attempting to answer such questions. These are neither trivial nor simple matters and if the research has shown anything, it is that one should be cautious in seeking to simplify. There is much richness in the individual studies presented in earlier chapters and several recommendations which we believe should be taken further. Any serious attempts to engage with these issues must be informed by the full detail of our research results, as well as by an understanding of related work. Ours has been only a partial overview of the accountability landscape and there are important related areas – such as the justice system, or the effectiveness of election processes and the systems for registration of political parties, which we have not examined.

Nevertheless, we believe that the most important lessons may be summarised in the form of six key observations from the local level, six key observations at the national level and six overarching recommendations. We will briefly present these before trying to reach a final summary.

4.1 Six key observations from the local level

There are six key observations we would wish to highlight relating to accountability at the local level:

- The dominant mechanism of accountability at the local level is accountability to the electorate. The greatest worry of all local government councillors and Members of Parliament is how to be re-elected.
- This process of re-election is party-based, in that candidates cannot stand if they are not chosen by their parties. Fortunately, the process by which this happens is relatively democratic and there is also evidence that in a broader sense political parties keep ‘in touch’ with their electorate and worry about their concerns.
- Nevertheless, this still leaves the CCM, as the dominant political party, in a highly influential position, even if this influence is moderated by the fact that leading party members tend also to be subject to the influence of the church or mosque and that of the family or clan.
- Within the local government, there is evidence that the structures of local administration do work and that mechanisms of horizontal accountability are in operation.
- They would work a good deal better if there was a higher level of transparency over decision-making processes and better flows of information in relation to resources available and results achieved.
- Concepts of accountability and transparency do appear to have meaning at the local level but the ‘good governance discourse’ co-exists with other cultures of accountability, so its interpretation can be ambiguous.
4.2 Six key observations from the national level

There are six complementary observations we would wish to highlight relating to accountability at the national level:

- The Executive, operating through the President and a small group of Ministers is highly dominant in the national policy-making process.

- Parliament has clearly defined powers of scrutiny and these are duly exercised in line with legislation. However, with the CCM holding such a dominant majority in Parliament and with the exercise of party discipline very well established, there is no real sense in which the Legislature can hold the Executive to account. The process in the end becomes rather formalistic and is also compromised by time constraints and lack of user-friendly information.

- There is evidence that the CCM party can change policy where it is seen as likely to be unpopular; the party structures probably represent the most effective form of democratic restraint over the Executive. Its internal structures are also strongly democratic with clear rules for the election of the Presidential candidate, constituency candidates and NEC members.

- There are also important informal rules respected by the Executive – for example in relation to civil service and judicial appointments, which place limits over the way in which Presidential patronage is exercised.

- The influence of Donors is deeply resented by most MPs but in practice it is domestic political factors which exert a dominant influence over policy.

- Civil society is respected (especially faith-based organisations) but rather weak as a source of ‘societal accountability’. Most MPs view non-state actors first and foremost as potential purveyors of development projects for their constituencies. The media is an exception, but is seen as a campaign tool more than as a natural check against state power.

4.3 Six overarching recommendations

Overall, the prevailing patterns of accountability add up to a weak structure of checks and balances and a structure of power dominated by the Presidency, the Executive and the CCM Party. On the positive side, this is almost certainly helpful in facilitating coherent and resolute policy-making, without the need for continuous compromise and lengthy consultation. On the other hand, it means that Tanzania has an inherently weak democratic fabric. Put simply, if the CCM party were to elect an unscrupulous leader as the Presidential candidate, there would be few effective, formal controls to keep the power of such a person in check. Fortunately, there is a powerful set of essentially informal controls militating against such an outcome but this nevertheless presents an inherently vulnerable situation. Addressing this issue, whilst simultaneously deepening the framework of local level accountability must be the immediate priority. Six sets of actions will be needed to achieve this:

- Strengthen and formalise the rules controlling Presidential powers, so as to safeguard the independence of the judiciary and the civil service and clarify the role of District Commissioners in relation to Local Government Authorities.

- Open up space for new voices in Parliament and Local Government and for the strengthening of opposition parties: for example, independent candidates might be permitted to stand (under appropriate rules) initially at local government level and if

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7 The recommendations presented in sections 2.3 and 3.3 should be read as a complement to this overarching summary of recommendations.
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successful at National Level. Actions to strengthen opposition parties could also be identified and discussed with current opposition parties.

- Continue to strengthen Parliament and its Committees, through improved auditing, better timetabling of budget scrutiny and oversight, improved information flows, training and research support.
- At the local level, continue the drive towards decentralisation, through accelerating the implementation of the Local Government Reform Programme and increasing the level of resource transfers to LGAs, as well as ward and village structures.
- Simultaneously, improve transparency at the local level – by identifying innovative ways of enhancing the availability of information on budgets, expenditures and results as well as improving access to decision-making processes.
- Donors should play a more effective role in information dissemination – particularly to Parliament and to political parties, whilst also developing improved channels for dialogue with MPs and with leaders at the LGA level.

4.4 Summing Up

Notwithstanding the complexity of these issues and the risks of over-simplification, a relatively clear overall picture does emerge and, in general it is a hopeful picture. Yes, there remain many systems which do not work as they should. Some of these, such as the police and justice systems, are of major importance to the development of society as a whole and of special significance in protecting the entitlements of the poor and vulnerable. Yet, many of the institutional building blocks necessary for accountable government are in place and for the most part these are respected. There are well established democratic and parliamentary processes, a Public Finance Act which is adhered to and robust administrative structures at both the national and local levels. Rules mean something in Tanzania, in a way in which they do not in several neighbouring countries. Local governments operate - as entities which manage resources and deliver services under the supervision of nationally and locally elected officials. Again, this is not true of several neighbouring countries.

Yet, at the same time there is a vulnerability.

In chapter 2, we concluded that: ‘Most government officials, much of the time, are trying with limited resources to do their jobs and serve the people. They may also be on the look out for their own and their families’ interests but we saw little evidence to suggest that patrimonialism is the dominant, or real logic of local administration.’

Yet, we also said that: ‘The analysis of accountability cultures emerging from the ethnographic survey presents a rich field of competing and at times apparently contradictory discourse. Talk of entitlement and transparency exists alongside practices of corruption and nepotism. There is rigid adherence to rules alongside the flagrant bending or breaking of rules.’

In short, there is a plurality of cultures of accountability. This clearly opens up opportunities for manipulation and abuse of local power. The good governance agenda is not yet firmly rooted.

At the national level, we concluded: ‘Accountability to the electorate emerges as the most powerful check within the Tanzanian system, mediated in particular through the role of the majority party, the CCM.’

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8 It is especially important that such a recommendation should take account of the particular need to find simple, readily accessible ways of distributing relevant information to ordinary people who might not be very numerate or literate.
Yet we also noted the dominant influence of the CCM party over the behaviour of MPs and pointed out that the most effective checks on this power ‘may generally be described as traditions rather than formal rules with a legal and constitutional backing.’

At the risk of being criticised as sensationalist, we would point out that if an analysis of accountability structures similar to this one had been undertaken in Zimbabwe in 1999 or 2000, it would have produced quite similar findings. It would have identified many positive institutional traditions but would have noted many of the same vulnerabilities. With this rather shocking comparison in mind, we must repeat our earlier advice that: ‘The Tanzanian Government and its people need to consider how far it is wise to continue to rely on these (good governance) traditions and on the basic good sense of its leaders.’ We hope that this will lend some urgency to the consideration of our recommendations and to the need to launch serious national debate on these questions.
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