Devolution in Zimbabwe: Gestation, Contestations, Experiences and Future Direction

Background and Problem Statement

Ever since the advent of devolution discourse in Zimbabwe, during the constitution-making process in the country from 2009, the notion has come various phases – suggestion, silence, and execution. When the notion was suggested, it came as a surprise to some circles because the implications of adopting such a model of decentralisation meant a lot in terms of challenging the status quo. The notion cast out a shadow of doubt to the proponents whether it could take root. The next thing was adoption on paper, in the Constitution (Amendment Number 20) of 2013 that, however, came along with it with some moment of immense silence (and silencing). Then, in 2018, with the coming of the Second Republic on board, devolution was adopted for implementation with both haste and no hesitance both in terms of speaking about it and doing it. When, implementation started, some circles began to doubt the way implementation was being done. Others even felt that the devolution variant was not even devolution but rather just the opposite of it. This perspective, can only help us ask the proverbial statement of 'what is in a name'? One can consider devolution as a label and another as a practice. Yet, another could just look at it as a matter and another way of programming. The central government in Zimbabwe, doubtful, especially in urban areas of the capabilities by opposition councils, has channelled devolution funds through the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution. Zimbabwe has 10 provinces, of which two are metropolitan. Devolution funds have come through provincial governments and not councils (rural and urban local authorities). A significant number of projects have started and even finished under this programming since 2018. Missing now in a nuanced and scholarly evaluation and assessment of how, where, when and by what motifs has devolution taken the direction that it has taken in Zimbabwe. In this light, papers, theoretical, philosophical, empirical, and experiential are being invited for towards creating knowledge products in the form of *a special issue journal product and a book*. Topics covered may include but not limited to:

The politics of devolution and localised power,

- Devolution as a democratic process,
- Devolution as project planning and design,
- Devolution: provincialism or localism?
- Funding devolution,
- Devolution as panacea to local and global challenges – urbanisation, climate change and terrorism,
- Devolution and the constitution,
- Devolution and urban and regional (spatial) planning,
- Public health promotion and devolution,
- Transport, mobility, and devolution,
- Delivery of education (primary, secondary, and higher) and devolution
- Peace building and devolution,
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene

- Managing crime, vandalism, and policing
- Neighbourhood development
- Sport, recreation, and leisure
- Prevention of slums,
- Devolution and Agenda 2030
- Devolution and service delivery
- Devolution and governance
- Devolution and capacity development
- Devolution and citizen participation

In submitting your abstract be guided by following this template:

Title: e.g., '***Top down or bottom up? Putting The Fundamental Question To Devolution Implementation In Zimbabwe'***
Name of author, affiliation, and email of corresponding author,
Abstract of 250 words
Keywords (that are not in the title)

Abstract should be submitted to the following address: ichirisa@zegu.ac.zw, innocent.chirisa@gmail.com, cmchavunduka@yahoo.com

Anatomy of a Good Abstract

The Abstract

The abstract is a short **summary** an article with a maximum length of 200-250 words. Most readers first scan the abstract to decide whether reading the rest of the article would be worthwhile. The abstract, therefore, serves as an important "window display" or "advertisement" for your work and provides the opportunity to impress the reader

The main problem with abstracts is that they are often so vaguely written that they do not grab the reader's attention. One should always try to give the reader enough concrete information in an abstract to get them interested in your work

An abstract should include the following 7 elements:

Element 1: The abstract must start with a brief theme sentence to orientate the reader about the overall issue addressed in the article. This sentence should grab the reader's attention.
Element 2: The abstract should then indicate the main aim or purpose of the study
Element 3: Next, the academic and/or practical importance of the study should be explained
Element 4: The methodology used in the study should also be briefly described
Element 5: The main findings of the study should be summarised
Element 6: A statement of conclusions should indicate the contribution made by the study in filling gaps in the literature
Element 7: Finally, the practical or managerial implications of the study's findings should be highlighted where appropriate

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Timeline:
Call for Abstracts open - 10 October 2022
Deadline for Abstract submission: 25 October 2022
Notification of abstracts accepted - 30 October 2022
Deadline of full paper (6000 words) – 25 November 2022
Review of articles - up to 30 November
Expected date of publication – 10 December 2022