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Local Organisation, Democracy and Urban Youth – A Case Study in Zambia

Introduction

In Lusaka, areas like George compound are called compounds by their inhabitants, while in the official language they are called peri-urban areas. Whatever labelled, all over the world, the areas poor people live in are inadequately maintained and serviced. At the UN conference in Istanbul in June 1996, "The City Summit", it became clear that local governments generally are weak and poor. The dominating strategies as defined in the Habitat Agenda put a heavy responsibility on the civil society and on local self-organisation to meet the shortcomings of local governments in handling social and environmental problems.

With the transition from a one-party system of the second republic to the multi-party system of the third republic of Zambia, the local organisation of low-income peri-urban areas in Lusaka was deeply affected. This paper focuses on the experience of young women and men in George compound during the political transition, and their views on the transition and the organisation of their community. The paper outlines how, in the one party system, the local party organisation was seen as the lowest level of local government. With multi-party democracy this system of community management disappeared while the work of local committees or of international NGOs in the compound was surrounded by uncertainty.

The paper explores how the young men and women in different positions have different experiences and draw different conclusions. Educated youths saw the change to democracy as a positive change of system, boys who made business in the streets appreciated economic freedom, but there were dissidents within the new system arguing for the one-party system, and then there were the great majority who were indifferent and did not care much about politics. The youths were not active participants in the transition. Still, their experiences are crucial for the development of democratic values and the future of the city.

Democratisation and gender

The process of political reform and democracy has most often been analysed with a focus on central government or civil organisations, seldom on local government. Independent and active civic organisations are not only seen as an

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indication of a democratic society, but also, as in the Habitat Agenda, as important actors in democratic processes.

In an ongoing long-term study of political culture and democratisation Bratton and Liatto-Katundu (1994) intend to assess the prospects of consolidation of the multi-party democracy in Zambia. They are conducting a comprehensive survey of the knowledge and attitudes held by people towards democratic values such as political tolerance, trust and efficiency. In this study questions are raised on the issues of political knowledge and political tolerance among the youth in George compound.

The definition of democracy used by Bratton and Liatto-Katundu focuses on elections and multi-partyism. A collective of African researchers within the Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust has adopted a broader definition. They use "the concept of democracy to refer to conditions at three levels; i.e. the family, the state and interstate levels; which either promote or frustrate the following three elements, namely; participation in decision-making, a fair sharing of responsibility and resources, and a recognition of individual autonomy" (WLSA 1995, p. 27).

Such a definition differs from conventional definitions of democracy in that it goes beyond the division between public and private and includes the family. While I agree that such a holistic approach is necessary in an analysis of power relations between men and women, in this paper the scope is more limited. Still, the WLSA definition is useful as it establishes a link between democracy, local organisation and everyday life in the compound. A series of questions can be derived from it: What is the face of democracy the youth in George compound have seen? Is it a democracy that has promoted participation in decision-making by young women and men? To what degree is there a public sphere which youth can engage in? Has democracy promoted a fair sharing of responsibility and resources between women and men and among various groups?

Methodology

With focus on the young generation, born in George compound, a study was conducted on how gender inequalities are reproduced or contested. In interviews and in essay writing young people gave their views on gender and power in national and local politics, in the family and between individuals. Changes in gender relations at one level are assumed to influence relations at other levels. This paper concentrates on the political level.

Fieldwork was carried out in three periods, in 1993, 1994 and 1995. More than forty young women and men were interviewed individually or in unisex groups. In previous studies with focus on urban development and housing I have followed a number of families in George compound over a period of almost thirty years (Schlyter 1991). About ten of the interviewed teenagers were children of these families and they were interviewed several times.

Interviews with key persons within Zambian local government and political organisations have been part of the collection of information. Essay writing was organised in the secondary schools close to George compound. For quantitative information figures from the 1990 census have been elaborated specifically for this study, using the enumeration areas of George.

The texts provided by the interviews and the essays have been read and re-read carefully in order to identify patterns of thinking and different views, the common ones as well as the extremes. The size of my sample, and the way it is made, only allow for assumptions regarding the frequency of these views but together they give a good picture of the varying face of political reform and democracy.

George compound and the one-party system

George compound grew rapidly after independence in 1964. It was situated close to the heavy industrial area, and many young men obtained jobs in industry and brought their wives and settled in the George. Small, young working class families characterised the area. They built their own houses in mud bricks. Most did so because no other option was open to them. In the planned housing areas, the houses were tied to employment, but construction workers and unskilled labourers in the expanding industry were not offered a house by their employers. There were also those who preferred a mud house of their own in George to a rented room in a Council area, as no rent was charged. Further more, they were free to extend the house with the growth of the family (Schlyter and Schlyter 1980).

George began as an illegal squatter area but in the seventies the area was legalised and upgraded. With the legalisation of urban services George became the responsibility of the Peri-urban Section at the City Council. However, the urban management was poor. The roads were very bad after a few rainy periods, and the water supply of the city was not enough to keep water in the standpipes other than occasionally. In such a situation the system was vandalised. The taps were stolen for their metal value. The willingness to pay the fee was always low and declined in pace with the quality of the service itself.

In contrast to the communal decline many individual houses continued to be improved and extended in a bit by bit manner but there were also houses which deteriorated before being completed. Few houses in George compound were sold. The first generation of house owners in George stuck to their houses. With the ageing of the settlement the average family size increased. Unemployment and a deteriorating economic situation turned a house into an important asset for all house-owning families but especially so for the women headed ones. The house provided shelter and at the same time an income from renters of rooms (Schlyter 1988).

According to the 1990 census there are more than 40,000 inhabitants in the old part of George, an area covering about one square kilometre (CSO 1994).

In the following text, when giving figures on the situation in George, I refer to the old part only. In adjacent areas that used to be included in what was called George complex, there are an additional 20,000 people. Altogether that makes 76,000 inhabitants.

The people that came to George in the sixties were young and optimistic. They faced hardship but they believed in steady improvements. Their country was de-colonised, the economy made progress and soon every child was in school. They had plans for their children and themselves.

Today the future is not that bright. According to the 1990 census there were more than 5,000 teenagers in old George. Less than half of the boys and less than a third of the girls were attending school. There are a large number of young men and women on the threshold of adult life but without the optimism of their parents. These are the informants in this study.

Once a UNIP stronghold

George compound was, already during the first period of growth, a stronghold of the United National Independence Party, UNIP. George was a working class area and the trade union and the party had close connections.

At an early stage local UNIP party leaders gained control over the settlement. People had no notion of their settlement as an illegal squatter area. They had been allocated a plot by one of the party leaders, in a similar way as a village headman could allocate land.

The party was organised in wards, branches and sections with local elections of chairmen and chairladies and youth leaders at all levels in the party hierarchy. The size of a section was twenty-five houses, and one may argue that the party was over-organised, in that more leaders were elected than there were political activities and work. The party people on ward and branch levels were pressing within the party for recognition and improvement of their settlement. At the section level the work was more of a social nature. Many of the women leaders especially worked hard as unpaid social workers.

In the seventies and early eighties, the leaders had a central role in an upgrading project thanks to its participatory approach. They explained the project to the inhabitants and they could influence the actual physical planning through road planning committees. The people and the party leaders themselves saw this as if the party was delivering the goods it had promised.

The party history in Mtendere, another peri-urban area of Lusaka, is quite different as told by Hansen (1996). She describes the party as consisting of one strong man who was re-elected again and again. This difference may partly be explained by different class composition and by the fact that in Mtendere people had individual plots distributed by the City Council. It could also be argued that the George inhabitants had to come together and fight for recognition and services. However, this argument is weakened by the fact that Mtendere site

and service scheme was regarded for a period as too like a shanty town to be seen from the road to the international airport and so the inhabitants had to fight to regain its legal status.

In the late eighties the party influence in George slowly declined. Some leaders were highly respected and maintained leadership more or less on a personal capacity while others became inactive. The leaders maintained authority over land use. In spite of legalisation no formal allocation of plots had been done. With increasing overcrowding conflicts over the informal plot borders arose, for example, when a new latrine had to be built. The women leaders continued to work as unpaid social workers and to organise the community in support of members in need, especially in connection with funerals.

The Youth League as community guards

In the one party system a Youth League was organised with the election of youth leaders in each section. My impression in the seventies was that the youth leaders were not very young, that they were all male, and that their main task was to maintain order in the area. In other compounds there were clashes between sympathisers of different parties, and surely the youth organisation played a role in the local implementation of the one-party state. I have no documented cases of abuse from the side of the Youth League in George compound though, and only very vague indications in interviews that dissidents of the one-party saw the youth organisation as a repressive force.

In the Zambia poverty assessment (World Bank 1994, p. 139) a note says "The youth league of UNIP used to use violence to discourage 'illegal' trading beating up vendors and destroying their stalls and stocks." There is no source given and in the text references are made to the Copperbelt as well as to Lusaka. I never saw or heard about violent acts in George. But it is true that the party discouraged certain types of small-scale business outside the market-places, if not licensed.

The Youth League worked as a kind of informal police and, in fact, that was praised by many inhabitants, especially so in retrospect after the election when they felt that they had no protection against burglars and violence. The fact that there is no police station in George has always been a source of discontent. Over the years I have asked what improvements people in George would like to see, and a police station has always been high on the priority list, and it still was so in 1994. Bratton and Liatto-Katundu (1994) found that the police in urban areas were at the bottom end of a trust scale for governmental institutions. Such a distrustful attitude to the police had not developed in George where the police were never present. This can change rather rapidly. In 1995 I was told by several informants that, as an alternative to party leaders for solving conflicts between neighbours, the police were not good.

In the interviews none of the young people admitted ever having had contact with the local Youth League. It can be questioned whether it existed in the late

eighties and early nineties. If it did, it recruited members older than those I interviewed who were in their early teens at that time.

Towards democracy

During the eighties, increasing poverty and the inability of the ruling party to deliver any goods weakened the authority of the local party leaders in George compound. This was a reflection of economic and political development at a national level. The economic progress of the seventies came to a stop due to the collapse of copper prices, to the increase of oil prices, and to economic mismanagement.

The national context

Zambia steadily increased its borrowing matched by more and more stringent conditions. In the mid eighties a more comprehensive structural adjustment package was agreed upon (Rakner 1993). The reforms imposed by the World Bank and IMF focused on the abolition of food subsidies to the urban population. Urban dwellers answered with riots, the most serious one resulting in fifteen people dead on the Copperbelt. In Lusaka the riots were more limited, and none of my informants in George admitted participation although they were desperate over food prices and directed their anger towards the party.

In assessing the role of the students in the political transition from a one-party system, Nordlund (1996) found that students had initiated protests against the raising of mealie-meal prices in June 1990 but they did not organise the ensuing riots and their agitation in the peri-urban areas was limited. The UNIP regime closed the university in April 1991 and bussed the students back to their villages. Nordlund notes that it thereby, as an unintended consequence, provided the opposition, the Multi-party Democracy Movement, MMD, with 4,000 campaign workers. Few students originated from the poor peri-urban areas like George. There is no student I have heard about in the families I know, and as far as my interviews tell the opposition against the UNIP did not need fuel from outside.

The trade union movement had gradually distanced itself from the one-party government, and it was within the unions that the national leadership of the opposition was formed. The landslide victory won in 1991 by the Movement for Multi-party Democracy, MMD, was based on a coalition between the trade union movement, business and farming interests, and with support from churches, students and UNIP dissidents (Rakner 1993).

At the national level MMD achieved a strong position with 126 out of 150 seats in the parliament. The support was not solid, though. In local elections few voters came to the ballot boxes. Although democratically elected, and with a name of multi-partyism, the MMD government has not shown strong commitment

to democratic values and to the consolidation of a multi-party system. On the contrary, student opposition has been brutally silenced and opposition leaders have been jailed. A state of emergency was declared in 1993 on allegations of an attempted coup.

A study of political knowledge and values conducted during short periods of fieldwork will inevitably be coloured by issues that are hot news debated during these periods. In 1995, the public debate was dominated by the issue of citizenship of Kenneth Kaunda and other political leaders. Some of them were declared non-citizens of Zambia and deported to Malawi. In response to this the nationality and the identity of the president were challenged. Zambian politics as it came out in the mass media resembled a soap opera, and discussions of the issue were vivid among people of all social classes and all ages. Is the president a Zambian? This question was not posed by me but raised by the teenagers themselves in my interviews in George in 1995. This was the single political issue that engaged most. Often it was the only political question on which the teenagers expressed a view of their own.

A vote for a change

In the election in 1991 MMD gained a strong support in George. During my visit to the area a week after the election most of my informants were very good at arguing for votes for Chiluba. Children were still practising the slogan: "UNIP cholera". At that time no one in the area defended UNIP in public. Sympathisers held a very low profile and kept silent. Two years later, sympathies for UNIP were again declared openly.

I was never directly threatened by violence but during the election campaign I was afraid to admit my sympathies for UNIP, said one of my informants who once had been chairlady of UNIP (Schlyter 1995).

During the two first years of the new government the price of the staple food, mealie-meal, increased by five hundred per cent. This was not the change people had voted for; for most of my informants the situation had become worse than before the election. This time there were no food riots. The people of George had voted for MMD. It could be argued that they felt that there was no point in rioting if there was no target for the anger and no alternatives. The opposition was disorganised and the UNIP government too close in memory to be re-considered.

The people in George had voted for a change. As a result of the election the UNIP party structure including the Youth League in the township just vanished. The women's organisation that had until the end of the UNIP era maintained responsibility for much unpaid social work in the area was also disbanded. Most people expected MMD to fill the empty posts of section and branch leaders. They were disappointed when it became clear that MMD had no intention of doing so. For them the local party organisation was, quite adequately in a one-party state,

seen as the lowest level of local government, and a means for their own self-organisation. In the study part of George the councillor representing this area lived in a middle-class area on the other side of Lusaka. He was the only formal connection to the new ruling party and the state.

Observers of Zambian politics have concluded that in spite of a democratically elected government, there is really no change in political order (Rakner 1993). This observation might be correct for the national level. At the township level, there was a dramatic change in political order, in that the party organisation disappeared and was not replaced in its role as township management and as the link to the political system of the city and the country.

Instead of a party structure engaging hundreds of people in the management of their township, there were five councillors representing various parts of George complex in the City Council. This was a strongly felt loss. Like Bratton and Liatto-Katundu (1994) I have found that people in George compound find the local community level to be more relevant to their lives than elite politics in national arenas.

Youth and the meaning of democracy

Four different views on the democratisation process, rooted in differences in knowledge and experiences, could be identified among the youths. There was the "educated view" held by those who were attending or had attended secondary school. These were the five most "educated" among my informants. They were from families more prosperous than the average. There was the "business view" held by five young "business men". Their school background varied. One disabled boy had never been to school, while one of them was still in secondary school, doing business during holidays. There was the "dissident view". This was only held by one girl. She argued against the new multi-party system in favour of UNIP and the one-party system. Finally, there were the "indifferent and cynical views" of the majority.

The educated view: the system has changed

The educated youths had learned their school lessons. They explained the definitions of democracy as freedom to choose leaders, and they had an opinion about how fair elections should be conducted.

The three boys in secondary school knew quite a lot about the personages at the national political level, and they could name several of the ministers. They stressed that the Zambian political system had changed, now it was democracy. They were disappointed regarding the changes it had brought about for themselves, still they defended democracy as a system:

— The fault is the economy not the political system, said one of them.

An other one put the blame on the ruling party:

— MMD is not painting the picture they have promised.

Two girls, interviewed both individually and together, expressed a more ambivalent attitude to the democracy. Initially, they made cynical comments about all politicians, and they claimed not to be interested in all the dull things about politics. At a later stage in the interview they claimed to read everything about certain political questions and they expressed strong opinions about women in politics. In their home, newspapers were bought about twice a week. They also enjoyed listening to the teacher, who read a selection of news in the class. In their opinion the teacher managed to do so in a way which was neutral to party politics.

One of the girls who was eighteen years old had worked very hard to get an identity card in order to register for election. She had failed and had planned to go to the town of Chipata because she had heard that it was easier in the small towns. Her parents did not allow her to go, though. Obviously voting was important to her but when asked about her party sympathies she said that she had no praise for any party, and added proudly:

— I have the right to keep my vote secret.

The business view: now there is freedom

Most positive to the political changes were the male street vendors. They, like a few of the others interviewed, defined democracy as the freedom to do business. In the second republic unlicensed street vending was restricted but the local leaders allowed women to sell vegetables, cooking oil, charcoal and other basic items in small quantities from their door step. The licence was a kind of income tax and the women were not seen to make a real income. Women were also tolerated in bars and at bus stops at pay day.

In the streets there were also always boys selling cigarettes, so called *michanga* boys. In a study of *michanga* boys in central Lusaka, they are described as highly organised and acting on the border of illegality (Chan 1989). Today, the male street vendors like to call themselves business men and they claim that previously they were chased by the UNIP Youth League or by other party officials. Nevertheless, the control was not effective enough to send them out of business. Their activity was seen as criminal not only because it was unlicensed but also because they often not only sold cigarettes but *dagga* (marihuana) as well.

The *michanga* boys identified with the small business men who in the political rhetoric of the MMD were depicted as the heroes and the carriers of development. Although there was some so-called clean up action by the government against street vendors in central Lusaka, in George they were free to carry on. Many young men had established semi-permanent stalls along the roads. They introduced new combinations of goods and had a more active way of selling.

According to a number of other informants their main income was from selling *dagga* but this I can not confirm. They themselves denied it.

The business boys' factual knowledge about how their country and their compound was governed was not comprehensive. They did not have the systematic knowledge of school lessons but they were very well informed about the political debates of the day and the national political personages. They also had a feel of where real power was situated. They knew which persons in the compound were influential.

On the question of the meaning of democracy, all of them said that it was freedom to do business. Only if asked specifically they agreed to a statement that democracy had to do with elections and multi-party systems. Any discussion of multi-partyism tended to be confused by the name of the ruling party. In their experience multi-partyism was the same as the government of MMD, and they saw no special quality in the existence of an opposition party.

Regardless of huge gaps in knowledge even the illiterate vendors, who did not read newspapers themselves, were well informed. They discussed politics with each other and their customers. They all praised the liberal economic policy that made them heroes instead of criminals.

The dissident view: many parties only fight

Two girls, uneducated but daughters of former UNIP leaders, could directly present a definition of democracy related to free elections and multi-party systems. One of them did not express an opinion of her own regarding the political reform, but the other one held strong views. She listed all the things that had become too expensive and she was worried about the disorganisation of the compound. According to her it was all due to the political reform, since competing parties could not join together and work for the best of the community. She was basically critical of multi-partyism. She was not uncritical of UNIP.

She was going to vote in the next election. She laughed and said:

- Of course I will vote for UNIP. I am brought up with the party, it is part of my life. But I cannot say that I am impressed by our leaders.

The "indifferent and cynical views": no change for the better

On my open questions to the young men and women about their general impression of the changes after the election the most common answers were that:

- not much had changed;
- everything has become more expensive;
- there are more goods available, but we have no money;
- drinking and smoking *dagga* are more common;

- vote or no vote - it is just the same.

Among the holders of this most common view there were also some differences. For example, factual knowledge and ability to express opinions about political issues varied with age and sex. Uneducated girls were less likely than boys to express themselves on these issues, and a nineteen year old more likely than a fifteen years old. What they all had in common were disappointment and indifference about political reforms.

The youth in this group could not explain what democracy meant. A few informants guessed for "freedom". What kind of freedom they could not tell. Two male informants returned to this question later in the interview as a response to a question on local leaders. They specified that democracy was freedom from local leaders. In another group interview four young women agreed among each other after a lengthy discussion that it had to do with elections but that they did not care for elections.

From boys I often got cynical answers, which might have hidden that they, in fact, had knowledge about democracy on an abstract level but found it more important to tell me what the transition had meant to them. Democracy means according to these informants that:

- you have to pay water bills without getting water;
- you have to go hungry although there is food at the market;
- you are excluded from school because you cannot pay extra fees to corrupt school teachers.

It was my strong impression that an open cynical attitude towards politics was held by many more in 1995 than in 1994. They were not going to vote in the next election. The reason was either that elections make no difference, or that they had no registration card. Asked if they had tried to get registration cards, they answered in the negative. They referred to friends who had failed and to the costs for going to town and taking photographs. They did not have the money or they did not find the efforts worthwhile.

Need of local leaders?

In 1995, the initial disappointment of the lack of MMD local leadership had faded, and among the youth there was at least an embryo of an understanding that in a multi-party system parties have to learn to live side by side also at the level of the compounds.

For the great majority of the youth the parties' activities in the area were completely unknown, but they were vaguely aware that the parties had started to organise and elect leaders. Discussions of local organisation tended to centre around previous experiences of local leaders. There were still rather strong feelings around this issue, and the opinions ranged between total opposites.

The business boys appreciated that there were no leaders in the area making their business difficult any longer. To the question of whether they saw problems

with a township without leaders, they answered negatively. Some informants reflected over their experiences of having been unfairly treated by UNIP party leaders. I asked them for details to see if they gave evidence on severe misuse of power, but I could only find out that they had been involved in conflicts not settled in their own favour.

The land in George is not surveyed but neighbours have to agree on boundaries, which can be changed according to need. These informants said:

- We can solve the conflicts over land boundaries or latrine locations ourselves without party leaders.

However, according to the clerk at the local courts in Matero many people could not. Since the election the courts had a long waiting list because of new cases of a type that had been solved by the local leaders before. Some other informants said:

- Today quarrels between neighbours can go on for ever. The police are no good, the court is no good. Some people go to the market chairman and pay him for helping to solve their conflicts.

There was a marked gender difference in attitudes towards local leaders and a working community organisation. The young women were missing the social work carried out by the chairladies, and the community way of solving conflicts which was practised by them. While men solved conflicts over land, the chairladies had intervened in social conflicts, for example in case of accusation of witchcraft. In a group interview the young women argued that there was a desperate need for good chairmen and chairladies. One woman said:

- The leaders worked hard and did many good things; since they disappeared everything has gone worse.

In contrast to the educated boy who doubted the possibility of non-party politics, the educated girls, who had not heard about the Residential Development Committees, welcomed the idea of non-party elections for local leaders:

- They are really needed, we would vote for a woman.

A strong leader is a man

Ferguson and Ludwig (1995) conclude in their study of women in politics that the "multi-party state has not yet conclusively improved women's access to political office", and that "the powerful gate-keeping role of women's wings of political parties had declined, at least temporarily." Women in politics seemed to be an issue few persons in George compound had thought about until I posed the questions. Many comments from women and men alike were similar to this one:

- If we elect an elder to represent our interests in the national or local government we want to have a strong leader and that has to be a man. A woman is not listened to.

In a group interview the young women concluded: "We want a strong man as a leader. Zambian women can not be strong." The need for women's interests to

be represented was not pushed by the uneducated women in George compound. Only at my suggestion they agreed to the idea, but without enthusiasm. They expected nothing from the government anyway.

It was on the question of women politicians that boys differed mostly from girls. The boys knew that there were some women ministers in national government. The reason to why there were so few women leaders in top positions was by one of them identified as women's lack of leadership capacity, that he saw as inherited.

Another of the boys expressed the view that one or two women should be member of the government and other decision-making bodies:

- They should act as watch-dogs of women's interest.
- Why only one or two women? Why not half of the decision-makers? I provoked him.
- No, if women were many in government the men would just fight to destroy them to take their posts.

The views of the educated girls were quite different. They aggressively argued for women leaders, and they called stupid those women who wanted men as their leaders. They had seen that at local levels in co-operatives as well as on national level. They themselves would certainly vote for a woman, and they believed that politics would be better if there were more women engaged.

Regardless of gender the educated youth in George compound held the view that men were the main obstacle for women in politics, either because they wanted their posts themselves, or because they wanted their wife at home. Milimo and Njobvu (1993) found that women but not men gave these same reasons as to why women did not participate in development projects. Similarly, Bergqvist and Nyman (1996) found that men's attitudes was the factor most often ranked as hindering women's access to the political arena.

Further more, both men and women in the study of Milimo and Njobvu explained men's dominance with a belief that men were more knowledgeable. Most of the uneducated young people in George would also subscribe to that view, but in their own explanation strength and toughness were more important.

A non-party community management?

During a visit in December 1995 to the Peri-urban section of the City Council I was told that the City Council had no funds for maintaining an urban communal service in the peri-urban areas where a majority of the city's inhabitants lived. The strategy was to rely on NGOs. The City Council saw as its role that of co-ordinating the various NGOs and helping them to approach the communities.

- Community development is impossible if there is no organisation representing the whole community, said one of the town clerks.

In the multi-party democracy of the third republic there was no party acting as lowest level of local government. Therefore the City Council intended to create

an alternative, Residential Development Committees. The RDCs should be elected in the community but not according to party-affiliation. The RDC model was tried and found workable in upgrading small squatter areas.

However, there was confusion about the role of the RDCs. The councillors wanted the committees to be closer to their own activities, and thus more integrated in party politics. Because of this, the election for RDCs had been delayed but was said to be ongoing in George. George compound was so big that it was to be divided into eight zones with elected zone committees to be represented in the RDC.

With the exception of one boy and one girl, the youth in George had not heard about zones and RDCs, or they mixed them up with water committees that were in the process of being set up.

Water committees and Neighbourhood Watch

The standpipes provided in the seventies had been out of order for about five years. With Japanese aid new standpipes were provided. People had to pay a monthly fee of K 1000 (about US\$ 1) a month for the use of water from the taps. Committees were elected among people who had paid and who volunteered to control the standpipes and the payment. Also around this there was confusion, because the committees of five to seven persons claimed that they had been promised, not a wage, but an allowance. Still after some months they had not received anything and, according to my informants at the city council, they were not going to receive anything.

In the water committees elected so far more than half the members were women, most of mature age. From their arguments of the importance of women being active in development work it seems as if a gender balance had been issued as an instruction.

Few if any youths were engaged in these committees. Of my informants only one young woman had gone for election of a water committee. The standpipe was situated just outside her front door. She said that they were presented with a list of persons, and the persons on the list were elected. However she did not know who had prepared the list.

After the elections there were attempts to organise Neighbourhood Watch Associations in order to fill the gap from the Youth League. Some said it was a MMD initiative, others that it was an initiative of worried residents who may, or may not, have been MMD sympathisers. In 1994 no Neighbourhood Watch Association was active in the old parts of George compound. A former member, an owner of a rather big grocery, said that they had to stop because they were too few people who accepted to miss a night's good sleep, risking their life to protect other people's property without any remuneration.

Conclusions

Regarding the democratic values of political tolerance, trust and efficiency it can be concluded that the youth in George did not trust the politicians, neither did they think much of their efficiency. They had seen too much of corruption, and most important, the politicians had not delivered the wealth that they had promised.

Political tolerance, in the meaning of respect for the party you do not sympathise with, can possibly be said to be growing. Directly after the election, many inhabitants in George believed that MMD was just to take over after UNIP, and with the intolerance of the one-party system an organised opposition UNIP was not accepted. Four years later, among the youth there is an acceptance of a system including competing parties. Unfortunately, there is a disinterest in politics that might be confused with tolerance.

The absolute resistance against politicisation of ethnic differences can be interpreted as an aspect of tolerance. George is a multi-ethnic township and the young inhabitants did not see any role of ethnicity in politics. Not one of my informants agreed when I asked if they would prefer a councillor or other political leader of their own tribe. No, they wanted to vote for a strong and honest man, and these qualities did not follow tribal lines.

The study showed that variations in views were closely related to the variations of living conditions. The minority groups of educated youths and business boys had outstanding views. Both these groups had knowledge about politics, and they were also more positive to the transition than the majority of poor young men and women. Regardless of education, there was a strong belief in witchcraft as an important force in politics. There was, for example, a widespread belief that the first councillor of George had died because of witchcraft.

Participation in politics among the youth was low or rather non-existent. The political reform has not increased the participation in decision-making for any part of the George population. In a formal way the distance from decision-making has increased, as there are no local leaders to approach, and the election of a councillor is the only means of influence. Participation in elections is the crucial point in a multi-party system. Most of my informants will be of voting age at the next election, but very few will be voting. Many of them did not care about elections, others were hindered by the fact that they had no national identity cards, and that such a card was almost impossible to get.

Participation in civic organisations was low among the youth; apart from churches there was not much to attend, and nothing permanent, specifically for youths. None of my informants participated in local party organisation and only those with political activists in their families knew much about it. The study revealed a marked difference between men and women in their attitudes to the governance of the compound. Women missed the dismantled system of local leaders and wanted something similar back. Some of them were positive to ideas

of non-party-political alternatives. The multi-party system has not meant democratisation in the sense of promoting participation in decision-making in community issues for any category of inhabitants in George.

Gender relations are not rapidly and directly changed with a political transition. But they are affected. Women in George compound felt deprived of their organisation and influence at the most local neighbourhood level. The political reform did not strengthen women's influence in the political parties or in the government at any level. At the national level however, the political liberalisation opened the way for women's organisations and NGOs to promote women's issues. Although these bodies are not organising people in George, their activities are known. The dominant view that women's place is not in public was strongly contested by young women with secondary school education.

The youth in George compound have lived through a period of democratisation and impoverishment. The change of government was tied to expectations of better times. Instead there has been a continuing deterioration affecting all aspects of life. The majority of the young women and men are living in poverty where a daily meal is under threat. This is illustrated by the most common answer to my open question:

- What is most important in life?
- To eat.

If the face of the political reform that has been called democratisation is hunger, it is not surprising that the dominant attitude among the youth is disappointment, disinterest in politics, and cynicism. Nevertheless, there are also signs of a growing understanding of the new system of multi-partyism, and of an engagement with ideas about local organisation.

Abstract

Der Übergang vom Einparteiensystem der zweiten Republik zum Mehrparteiensystem der dritten Republik Zambias hatte auf die einkommensschwachen Randbezirke Lusakas schwerwiegende Auswirkungen. Auf der Grundlage mehrerer Studien, die im Bezirk George Compound in den letzten Jahrzehnten durchgeführt wurden, beginnt der Beitrag mit einem Überblick über lokale Organisation und politische Veränderungen. Im weiteren steht die Erfahrung junger Frauen und Männer mit dem politischem Wechsel, sowie deren Sichtweise der Organisation der Gemeinschaft im Mittelpunkt. Die Jugendlichen waren am Veränderungsprozess nicht aktiv beteiligt. Dennoch sind ihre Erfahrungen für die Entwicklung demokratischer Werte und Zukunft der Stadt entscheidend.

With the transition from a one-party system of the second republic to the multi-party system of the third republic of Zambia, the local organisation of low-income peri-urban areas in Lusaka was deeply affected. On the basis of a series of studies in George compound during the last decades, this article begins by summarizing findings about local organization and political transition, and it

continues by focusing on young women and men with the aim of exploring their experience of the political transition, and their views on the organization of their community. The youth have not been the actors in the transition. Still, their experiences are crucial for the development of democratic values and the future of the city.

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