Emerging Planning Practices among Urban Grassroots in Zambia: Insurgent Planning or Co-production?

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ABSTRACT


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This thesis seeks to understand collective practices of urban grassroots, rationalities behind the practices and their potential role in urban politics. The study used insurgent planning and co-production frameworks to highlight practices of the studied organization and adopted theories about relationship between the local and the global. The thesis addressed questions about collective practices for building self-reliance, practices that aim to directly engage the state and how being part of an international network of slum dwellers shapes the collective practices of the local organization. The research is based upon a case study of Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation. The empirical data was collected during two months of fieldwork in Zambia using observations and semi-structured interviews. The results indicate that the studied organization uses elements of both insurgent planning and co-production in its practices. The federation starts with self-help and building financial assets to continue with practices aimed at engaging the state. The results suggest that, as an affiliate of an international network, the federation is influenced by the flow of ideas in the network and that the international cooperation has potential implications for the local urban politics.

Key words: co-production, insurgent planning, grassroots organization, Zambia, urban Africa, SDI
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## ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIED</td>
<td>International Institute for Environment and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMD</td>
<td>Movement for Multi-party Democracy</td>
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<td>NAPM</td>
<td>National Alliance of People’s Movements</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWSC</td>
<td>Nkana Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>PF</td>
<td>Patriotic Front</td>
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<td>PPHPZ</td>
<td>People’s Process on Housing and Poverty in Zambia</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Program</td>
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<td>SDI</td>
<td>Shack/Slum Dwellers International</td>
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<td>SHARE</td>
<td>Sanitation and Hygiene Applied Research for Equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPARC</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres</td>
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<td>SWASCO</td>
<td>Southern Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>VIP</td>
<td>Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine</td>
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<td>ZHPPF</td>
<td>Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation</td>
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rapid urbanization in the global South and its implications for urban planning

Urbanization is a source of development, not just an outcome of it. We must build a political commitment to accommodate a rapid increase of the urban population, to prevent the emergence of slums, to face climate change adaptation and to fight against urban poverty and inequality. (UN-Habitat 2013)

Urbanization provides both opportunities and challenges. People move to cities in hope of employment, better education, medical service, entertainment and other attractions of urban lifestyle. In 2008, for the first time in the history of mankind the majority of the world’s populations became urban, while one century ago only around twenty percent lived in urban areas and only five percent in the least developed countries (UN-Habitat 2012). It is important to note that cities grow not only due to rural-urban migration, but also because of natural increases, which suggests that the growth of cities cannot be stopped by simply restricting the freedom of movement. The projections tell that by 2050 almost five billion will live in towns and cities. The growth is most striking in the global South (UNFPA). Sub-Saharan Africa has the fastest growing urban populations in the world. For example, it is estimated that in Zambia more than half of the population will live in cities already by 2030 (Lusaka Voice 2013).

The rates of urban population growth in the global South resemble those of Western cities in the end of 19th century, but the current urbanization in the global South is happening without industrialization and is characterized by unreadiness of the governments to meet these challenges, compounded by the adoption of neoliberal politics (Davis 2004, Watson 2009a). The modernist urban planning approach, which still prevails in most of the global South, has failed to meet the rapid influx of population and led to the growth of informal settlements. The ideas of what a ‘modern’ town should look like were spread from the West to the global South, where they contributed to even greater inequalities and marginalization of those who did not fit into the frameworks of a ‘modern’ city (Watson 2009). The urban poor often cannot afford to follow the formal procedures when they want to provide housing for themselves. As a result, one third of the urban populations live in unplanned settlements called slums, of which more than 90 percent are located in the developing countries, where urban growth basically means slum growth (UN-Habitat 2006:13). The urban planning discipline is required to engage with these challenges. This study is, thus, concentrating on newly rediscovered alternative approaches to urban planning – insurgent planning and co-production – which acknowledge the need to make urban planning more inclusive and to create space for civil society inputs. These approaches are especially relevant to the contexts of the cities in the global South, as they have the potential to respond to the emerging practices and innovative approaches promoted by local urban grassroots.

1.2. Research problem

Urban planning literature about the global South tends to either concentrate on the drama and problems of slums by looking at the slums as, for example, fertile ground for radical religious movements (Davis 2004), or investigating potential innovative housing planning procedures emerging in the slums (Watson 2009). Instead of viewing slums as something that should be immediately demolished, these places can be seen as homes to millions of people for at least several decades into the future. Such a rather positive stance can open the minds of researchers and hopefully lead to more studies on the
alternative planning models emerging in the global South. Thus, Yiftachel (2006) and Watson (2012) call for acknowledgment of the problems with contemporary planning approaches, such as modernist planning which uses a top-down approach and focuses on physical appearance (Taylor 1998). Also, Yiftachel (2006) and Watson (2012) criticize the old incorrect assumptions of those prevailing approaches, which do not take into account the realities of the cities in the South, but are informed by assumptions taken from Western contexts. In order to attempt to address their call this study is tapping into urban planning literature on insurgent planning and into development studies scholarship on co-production concept. Both concepts were defined by Watson (2012) as inspiring ideas useful for the new urban planning.

Both insurgent planning and co-production proponents recognize that the urban planning should not be exclusive for professionals, but should include civil society in the decision making. However, these approaches tend to be viewed as mutually exclusive – while insurgent planning emphasizes oppositional practices, co-production instead highlights collaborative practices towards the state. Only some authors (Bryant 2001; Mitlin 2008; Ibabao 2013) would consider the possible use of both models, as will be further discussed in Chapter 2. Another related theoretical debate is how the civil society can build capacity for the possible confrontations or collaborations with the state or other stakeholders. While Beard (2002) proposes to start with participation in state-led programs to gain skills for future radical action, Bovaird (2007) suggests concentrating on building trust with the state to facilitate future partnerships. Therefore, it is interesting to research the rationalities behind the collective practices of the civil society groups towards engagement with the state.

Besides ranging from oppositional to collaborative, civil society’s actions can also vary from local to global. Some grassroots networks as Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) emerged from local organizations and are spreading ideas across the network internationally (Patel et al. 2001). Such developments are related to debates about geographical scales theories, particularly how the local and the global are mutually constituted (Massey 2004) and also mutually entangled (Lindell 2009) in contrast to the mainstream of scholarship that tends to look at the global as more powerful than the local. This study was conducted in a single country and researching a single national organization, which is a part of a global network. By looking only at the local partner and its practices, this study hopes to explain how such relations influence the network and its local affiliate.

1.3. Research questions

This study focuses on the SDI affiliate Zambian Homeless and Poor People's Federation (ZHPPF), a nationwide network of collective savings groups started by poor families living in informal settlements. The aim of the study is to develop an understanding of grassroots’ collective practices for improving the lives of slum dwellers and their potential role in urban politics. The study is, therefore, seeking to answer three research questions:

1. What are rationalities behind the collective practices of slum dwellers in Zambia?

This question will explore two sets of practices: those that seek to build self-reliance and practices that are aimed at directly engaging the state. The practices of the studied organization will be analyzed through the lens of co-production and insurgent planning in order to unravel their implications for the organization itself and potentially for the
city politics. These two sets of practices will also build the structure of the empirical part of the thesis.

2. How does being part of a transnational network of slum dwellers shape the collective practices of Zambian slum dwellers organizations?

This question will explore the practices of the studied Zambian federation, which are connected to its membership in an international network. It aims to uncover how the network affects the local organization.

1.4. Outline of the study

This study is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction of the topic and research areas, and definitions of the research problem and research questions of the study. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework of the study. It starts with a literature review of the modernist planning paradigm and the recent debates about alternative urban planning approaches – insurgent planning and co-production. These theories are complemented by other relevant theories to situate the case study organization in a broader urban literature context. The last part of the theoretical chapter is about the relationship between the local and the global. Chapter 3 describes the choice of research methods used for the study, introduces the setting, choice of participants and sites for gathering data as well as explains ethical considerations. Chapter 4 provides background information about the study areas. Chapter 5 presents the various practices of the studied organization, the rationalities behind them and the forms of engagement with the state. The empirical data is structured accordingly to the two sets of collective practices identified above. The way in which membership in the transnational network influence the collective practices of the federation are presented in various section of the Chapter 5. Chapter 6 discusses the federation’s collective practices from the perspective of co-production and insurgent planning. It will be argued that the federation’s practices have elements of both frameworks. The chapter also discusses the membership of the federation in the international network in the light of theoretical debates about the global and the local.

1.5. Definitions

While the following terms may have different interpretations, this thesis will use the definition suggested by UN-Habitat (2006:21), which defines a slum household as “a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area and who lack one or more of the following: durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions; sufficient living space which means not more than three people sharing the same room; easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price; access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people; security of tenure that prevents forced evictions”.
CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This chapter first reviews the modernist planning paradigm and its critique in the light of changing urban realities and the need for focus on the global South. The aim of the first section is to present the theoretical background to better understand the reasons behind the present challenges with urban planning, particularly in the global South. The following sections discuss insurgent planning and co-production models in the literature as different alternatives to the modernist planning and in the light of which the practices of the studied organization will later be analyzed. The next part of the chapter aims to point out the complexities of urban politics with its different actors and power relations between them. The final section provides a brief review of theories around the relations between the local and the global to contextualize the international practices of the studied organization. The choice of several theories for this study is motivated by the desire to highlight the breadth and complexity of the topic. They are also relevant to the purpose of the study and data gathered during the fieldwork.

2.2. Critique of the modernist paradigm

Modernist city planning ideas developed in the end of 19th century in Western Europe as a reaction to the challenges brought by the Industrial revolution and its ‘horrors’ – poverty, crime, dirt and diseases (Hall 2002). They then spread to the rest of the world through colonial governments, international urban planning exchanges and conferences, professional journals and even through international development agencies and consultancies (UN-Habitat 2009:51-52). The modernist framework is relevant to the research questions in this thesis, as planners in Zambia, where the studied organization operates, and many other developing countries still use the principles of modernist planning inherited from their colonizers for building contemporary cities (Watson 2009a:2262; Yiftachel 2006). Unfortunately, in these countries the modernist planning was often used as a tool for domination of the ruling elites, discrimination and exclusion of the poor local populations (Hall 1988 cited in Watson 2009).

Many planners and architects from developed countries have criticized modernist planning approaches, particularly master plans. Consequently, there were considerable shifts from it to more flexible and participatory approaches (UN-Habitat 2009:56). However, these shifts have not occurred everywhere. In the cities and towns of the global South, where modernist planning still persists in its old form, it fails to satisfy the needs of poor urban dwellers, which do not fit into its frameworks. Furthermore, it is not capable to meet the new global challenges such as climate change (UN-Habitat 2009). This is also the case in Zambia, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 about the study setting. In order to understand the problems connected with modernist planning the next paragraph will review its main characteristics.

Although the modernist planning has many variations, they share several main similarities. First, urban planning is seen as aesthetic planning and one of the most obvious problems is that it focuses predominantly on physical appearance in cities, whereas the citizens are struggling for food, shelter and basic means for survival (Taylor 1998). This is relevant to Zambia, which is one of the poorest countries in the world with 60.5 percent of the population living in poverty according to national poverty line (World Bank country profile 2012). Second, planning is seen as technical
activity exclusively for trained professionals, architects or engineers (Taylor 1998). In other words, it uses the top-down approach, often ignoring the interests of communities and the values of the present social capital. Third, planning is seen as production of master plans or ‘blueprints’ for an ideal vision of the town’s ‘end-state’, without taking into account that the town is a ‘live functioning thing’ (Taylor 1998). As it often happens, technical experts create plans based on assumptions that an average urban dweller in the South is formally employed, has serviced houses and even owns a car. This is of course far from the realities in Zambia or in other countries in the global South, not to mention other important factors, such as weak and under-resourced governments (UN-Habitat 2009).

Another problem with modernist approaches to urban planning is the aspect of the regulatory system, which imposes high building standards. Devas (2001) argues that the urban regulatory environment is an obstacle for urban dwellers with low income. To support this claim, he points out that most of the cities in his case study inherited the system of planning and building standards, which are unaffordable and unsuited for the urban poor (Devas 2001:404). Kironde (2006) offers additional evidence for the argument of Devas and argues that in the context of the global South, the standards towards an official minimum plot size are way too high. For example, roads according to the standards must be very broad, and the administrative procedures are time-consuming. The effect of these rigid regulations is that the urban poor have no other option than to move to unplanned informal settlements (Kironde 2006). These notions could be relevant for understanding the context in which the studied organization operates.

The critique of modernist urban planning and dominance of the global North in the planning theory defined the basis for Watson’s (2009) idea of ‘clash of rationalities’, which is relevant for the present study. The clash, according to her, is between “techno-managerial and marketised systems of government administration, service provision and planning (in those parts of the world where these apply) and increasingly marginalised urban populations surviving largely under conditions of informality” (Watson 2009:2259). Based on this, Watson proposes the sound argument that to solve the clash we need to stop using outdated assumptions in planning and start “seeing from the South”. The proposal is built on the fact that the global South is the place with the fastest urban growth. Moreover, it is also the part of the world, which is least ready for such growth, according to Watson. Thus, the informality (in housing and employment) becomes the way to survive for the majority of the populations (Watson 2009). She suggests that the governments should support those informal efforts of their people instead of threatening them with state regulations and governing rationalities stemming from the modernistic city ideals, which as argued above are outdated. Watson’s observations are very relevant for this study as she describes the developments in the cities of Sub-Saharan Africa and explains the paradoxes of informal settlements and formal urban planning.

Robinson’s (2002) discussions of global and world cities are related to the Watson's argument of “seeing from the South”. First, Robinson suggests that dividing cities into ‘world cities’ and ‘third world cities’ is irrelevant and can only harm the cities in the global South by exporting ideas of competition and what a ‘world’ city should look like. Second, Robinson agrees with Watson that the urban studies must be ‘decolonized’, because the theories and understanding of cityness, which come from the North, are
limited in their relevance to the global South (Robinson 2002). Zambian cities are to some extent also affected by the ‘world cities’ discourses and this will be further explored in the context and discussion chapters. It is no surprise that in 2006 Yiftachel made a call on planning theorists to develop ideas and concepts useful for the ‘stubborn realities’, which prevail in cities in the global South as presented above. To answer his call Watson (2012) in her recent article identified emerging ideas in planning theory literature that would acknowledge ‘stubborn realities’ and ‘clash of rationalities’ as well as meet the challenge of analyzing and explaining urban contexts ‘seeing from the South’ (Watson 2009). According to Watson (2012), insurgent planning and co-production are some of the examples of these new (or newly recognized old) approaches that take account of these realities. In addition, in contradiction to modernist planning’s focus on professionals, these two approaches recognize the role of civil society in planning.

The following sections will acquaint the reader with the concepts of insurgent planning and co-production, highlighting the main theoretical debates on the subjects. Because of their clear civil society focus, these concepts are particularly relevant when discussing the emerging collective practices of the studied urban grassroots in Zambia.

2.3. Insurgent planning

There are many interpretations of insurgent planning. For example, the activities that can be called insurgent range from demonstrations, book publication and spiritual practices (Sweet and Chakars 2010), to the beating up or killing of criminals (Meth 2010), or to anti-eviction campaigns (Miraftab 2009). Also, insurgent planning practices can be carried out by diverse actors ranging from intellectuals and researchers (Sweet and Chakars 2010), vigilante groups (Meth 2010) to mothers (Miraftab 2009).

The insurgent planning paradigm draws from James Holston’s concept of ‘insurgent citizenship’, developed in his research on Brazilian informal settlements (cited in Watson 2012:86). Here, he criticizes the modernist planning from an anthropological perspective for its lack of recognizing the non-state actor’s role in urban planning. This is an example of an older concept that is worth receiving renewed attention as it stresses the civil society’s potential to transform elements of urban politics. In his more recent work, Holston (2009) writes about Brazilian violent criminal gangs, who engage in illicit activities and justify their own acts by pointing to income inequalities and the state’s failure to protect the poor. Holston describes a gang himself: “It justifies crime and terror with the rationalities of citizenship” (2009:15). Without romanticizing the gangs, he gives them deserved credit for some positive initiatives such as education campaigns about rights in prisons or distribution of food, public services and creation of employment opportunities. It is, thus, reasonable to agree with Holston’s notion that those poorest degrading parts of the city can provide “contemporary metropolitan innovation” and “alternative futures” to urban theory (2009:28). It is important to keep this notion in mind when discussing the work of urban grassroots in Zambia and their innovative collective practices.

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1 Citation from Yiftachel's article (2006:213) to explain ‘stubborn realities’: “where liberalism is not a stable constitutional order, but at best a sectoral and mainly economic agenda; where property systems are fluid; inter-group conflicts over territory inform daily practices and result in the essentialization of ‘deep’ ethnic, caste and racial identities.”
In contrast to Holston, Friedmann’s (1987, 2002) insurgent planning emphasizes the organized and overt grand collective actions that would significantly “change underlying structural causes to injustice” (Friedmann 2002:84). The inequalities are, according to him, generated by the state and the market. Such a definition might capture the realities, particularly in the post-colonial contexts, where neoliberal policies lead to a fatal drop in formal employment and the state’s support for those in need (Watson 2009a). Worth to note, both Holston and Friedmann share the belief that insurgent planning can involve diverse forms of strategies: “non-violent and violent, reforms and revolution, and political and extra-political” (Friedmann, 1987:287). Political protests or starting oppositional political parties are some of the examples of such strategies.

Friedmann defines insurgent citizenship as “a form of active participation in social movements or, as we can call them, communities of political discourse and practice, that aim at either, or both, the defense of existing democratic principles and rights and the claiming of new rights that, if enacted would lead to an expansion of the spaces of democracy, regardless of where these struggles take place” (Friedmann 2002:77). Thus, according to him, insurgent citizenship means being part of a movement with political objectives and involves protecting or claiming rights (most probably including all types of relevant rights as civil, political, economic, social and cultural).

Beard (2003) found gaps in Friedmann’s insurgent planning, namely that it fails to explain how citizens in authoritarian regimes gain skills and experience necessary for significant social transformations. Indeed, the last part of Friedmann’s definition suggests that the place of the struggle does not influence whether the struggles lead to an improvement of rights and expansion of democracy. It is, therefore, worth looking closely at a related concept of ‘covert planning’ proposed by Beard (2002) to fill in the gap. She argues that civil society should start by gathering small successes and experiences, which would help to build confidence and later, when an opportunity opens, to continue with more radical and insurgent actions. The process of insurgent planning for Beard starts with participation in government programs, then community-based planning, shifting to covert planning, and in the end to insurgent planning for the structural and political reform. The main difference between Friedman’s (1987, 2002) idea of radical planning and Beard’s covert planning is that the latter is incremental and does not overtly challenge power relations. Beard's concept of ‘covert planning’ can help to shed additional light on the nature of the practices of the studied grassroots organization.

Besides extending the role of the civil society, insurgent planning can sometimes cause unintended outcomes and contradictions. This can be illustrated by Meth’s (2010) study of vigilantism in slums. Although Meth (2010) recognizes celebrated insurgent planning practices, she proposes to critically examine their paradoxical realities. She argues in a reasonable manner that insurgent planning can be both positively transformative, as the authors above suggested, and repressive. She provides a detailed description of daily insurgent practices of women in informal settlements in Durban including their right claims to housing. However, Meth found that besides such insurgent practices as illegal beer brewing, the women are engaged in so called ‘peace committees’, created to fight crime in their neighborhoods. These committees could often beat up suspects almost to death before handing them in to the police. Similarly to Holston's (2009) study on Brazilian criminal gangs, the activists defended their violent actions by their lack of trust in the police and as result of ‘privatization of crime prevention’ (Meth 2010:256).
For Meth, these vigilant actions are examples of insurgent planning as they, in her words, “parody and perform state-like functions through their material provision of infrastructure and services” (Meth 2010:259). As will be discussed in the empirical chapter, some of the collective practices of the studied organization also resemble state functions. Therefore, it will be interesting to compare rationalities behind the actions of Zambian urban grassroots and the groups studied by Meth.

The insurgent paradigm is useful in understanding the strategies of the studied organization for building internal financial and skills capacities as well as engaging the state. However, it does not capture other practices of the studied organization, which have a more collaborative spirit. To complement the theoretical framework, the co-production concept will be discussed in the following section.

2.4. Co-production

The co-production concept, originally coming from public administration and development studies, offers interesting insights into urban politics. However, it has hardly been discussed in the planning theory yet. Besides complementing the insurgent planning paradigm, the choice of this concept is also motivated by Watson’s (2009) call to make use of other disciplines. She notes that particularly literature on development studies has much to offer on issues in the global South.

The concept of co-production received wide interest among American researchers in public administration in the 1970s and ‘80s and was first developed by the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University (Brandsen and Pestoff 2006:495). The term co-production describes the potential relationship between the ‘regular’ producer, who is often a professional, for example a teacher or police officer, and their ‘clients’, who by receiving the service would benefit from, for example, better education or security (Osborne 2009:161). Although the idea of co-production appeared in the context of fiscal pressures and reducing state expenditures, the cheaper service is not the only rationale behind it. As Mitlin (2008) noted, it is now increasingly recognized that co-production also brings potential for stronger political influence to the civil society involved in it. It would be interesting to discuss whether Mitlin’s argument could be true for the studied organization and its practices. The rest of the section will be devoted to a brief overview of the literature on co-production and finish with literature with particular focus on co-production’s new political dimension.

Whitaker is one of the conceptual fathers of co-production and in his seminal study from 1980 he argues that co-production is particularly relevant when producing services “designed to change people directly rather than to change their physical environment” (Whitaker 1980:240). In other words, he recognizes that citizen involvement is important for the success of the service delivery. Whitaker’s strong argument is based on his analysis of the failures of rigid administrative rules at a police office, which he studied. In that police office requesting help in case of family fights was considered to be out of scope of real police work – fighting crime (Whitaker 1980:242). In the end, the police responded to the requests of the citizens, which led to setting up new standards of procedures for family crime prevention and redefining the scope of responsibilities for the police. Whitaker’s (1980:243) captured the essence of co-production in that particular case when writing: “[T]here is a continual shaping of what an agency does by the kinds of requests made on it by citizens”. This simple example
builds support to the argument about the importance of recognition of the role of citizen input.

Another prominent early review of ideas on co-production by Parks stresses similar points to Whitaker and adds that there is a growing recognition on the part of the public producers about their inability to provide good service on their own (Parks et al. 1981). The review discusses the main prerequisites of co-production, dividing them into three groups: technological, economic, and institutional. Co-production is technically feasible when regular producer inputs and consumer producer inputs are substitutes (then the question is which one is more cost-efficient) and when they are interdependent. Mixture of interdependence with substitution is quite common in real life, where some input from everyone is required (Parks et al. 1981:1003). Economic issues basically decide whether it is efficient to use both a regular producer and consumer for service production, while institutional considerations for citizen participation have a final word in determining whether the above-mentioned combinations are feasible.

Elinor Ostrom has done a lot to promote co-production and her work builds on the assumption that the ‘walls’ between different disciplines do not allow us to see the potential for synergies for the provision of public services (1996: 1073). Ostrom defined co-production as “a process through which inputs from individuals who are not ‘in’ the same organization are transformed into goods and services” (Ostrom 1996). In her article from 1996, she introduces an economic model and uses two case studies to demonstrate co-production: the first one from Brazil, where it contributed in building sanitation facilities in a low-income settlement and another one from Nigeria, where schools suffered from the lack of co-production. The studied organization is involved in a sanitation project in cooperation with a state utility company. Thus, here co-production theory seems to be very relevant when analyzing that project.

Joshi and Moore criticize Ostrom’s definition of co-production for her assumption that the cooperation between different agencies is an exception (2004:39). According to them, it is normal practice when more than one agency is involved in service delivery. For that reason, they propose their own more exact term – institutionalized co-production – which in contrast to Ostrom stresses that the relationship between the state and the civil society is long-term and both sides need to make substantial contributions to the common project (2004:40). Additionally, they propose two kinds of motivating drivers for co-production that stem from the state imperfections: governance – problems of capacity of governance on local and national level – and logistical – challenges of complex environment and problems of interacting with large numbers of poor people in need, for example in rural communities (Joshi and Moore 2004:41). In the context of Zambia both types of drivers seem to be present as the Chapter 4 will discuss.

Brandsen and Pestoff (2006) found that participation of civil society in service production transforms not only the public service delivery, but also the civil society groups themselves. The relationships between the state and civil society is no longer “provider and recipient” as “the concept of co-production emphasizes the shared character of the production process” (Brandsen and Pestoff 2006:496). These findings are slightly suggesting that co-production can have broader political relevance and they are also closely related to Bovaird’s (2007:846) recognition that co-production has implications for democracy, as the users move closer to the center of the decision-making process. Whether it was the case for the studied organization will be discussed.
in Chapter 6. Bovaird (2007) also mentions that as co-production involves risk-taking for both sides – users and professionals. Therefore, it is important to develop mutual trust from the community side “to trust professional advice and support” and – vice versa – “to trust the decisions and behaviors of service users and the communities” (Bovaird 2007:856). This notion of Bovaird would be relevant to keep in mind when discussing the rationalities behind the choices of the collective practices of the studied organization.

While the authors above concentrate mostly on service delivery as co-production contribution, others recognize also its implications in the political sphere and in changing power relations between the state and the participating community. One of them is Marschall (2004) whose argument goes in the same line: the purpose of citizen participation in public service provision is not only for assistance in its implementation and maintenance, but also for communication in policy making. Another researcher who regards co-production not just as public service providing, but also as a political tool for the civil society, is Diana Mitlin (2008). She is writing much about SDI and uses the co-production concept to describe some of SDI’s activities. The main difference from the previous understanding of co-production developed in the North is that co-production, as she argues, is now widely used by the civil society groups of urban poor in the global South-East to strengthen their negotiating capacity with the state. It is important to note that Mitlin recognizes that examples of co-production in her study are “all self-organized co-production, with grassroots organizations engaging the state while at the same time maintaining a degree of autonomy within the delivery process” (Mitlin 2008: 352). According to her, the state did not promote co-production in the same degree as the grassroots and the main motivation of the state was not income generation, as in the traditional view on co-production. The grassroots’ rationalities were not just the development of a new model of delivering service, but changing the way the decisions are made and creating more space for the community inputs (Mitlin 2008).

Mitlin (2008) is referring to countries in the global South-East and argues that it is not possible to meet the housing and poverty challenges if the main roots of the poverty are not addressed, even if the incomes rise. Here co-production is particularly relevant as it provides opportunities for the urban poor to reform state policies and change their situation of exclusion and discrimination (Mitlin 2008). In the context of many countries in the global South-East, where the governments are not providing basic services for different reasons, she argues, the poor communities have no other choice than interacting with the state. Hence, SDI uses co-production instead of ‘protesting’ or ‘lobbying from the outside’ to influence policies and to build long-term relations with the state (Mitlin 2008, p. 349). The studied grassroots organization is a member of SDI and it is expected that their practices will be similar to other members in the network.

2.5. Debates on urban politics

This section will continue the literature review on insurgent planning and co-production, concentrating on the possibility of usage of both approaches. The theoretical framework will be complemented with other closely related concepts in order to extend the perspective beyond insurgent planning and co-production.

Ibabao (2013) argues in her PhD thesis that civil society groups can be engaged in insurgent planning and co-production simultaneously. This means that depending on situation they can use oppositional strategies towards the state or opt for engaging the
state for addressing their needs. This is done to increase chances to find solutions to their problems, she argues. Ibabao proposes to characterize these multiple strategies with the term ‘hybridity’ (2013:39). Ibabao’s proposal is based on her empirical studies in the Philippines and is backed by the some of insurgent planning and co-production scholarship. Beard, a representative of the radical planning scholarship, concluded that if the socio-political situation is ‘healthy’, different planning practices can coexist as people are not restricting themselves to only one mode of planning. If the community gained experience and confidence, it as a “savvy community would continue to move among various modes, depending on the context and the desired outcome” (Beard 2002:30). Similarly, as Mitlin – one of the co-production advocates – argues, depending on situation and context civil society movements are floating “between autonomy and dependency on party politics and/or clientelist relations, and back again” (Mitlin 2008:343). The strategy choice is motivated by the movement’s objectives and while it can in some cases take defensive positions, for instance in case of an eviction threat, it might in others turn to proactive methods for advancing their interests (Mitlin 2008).

Bryant’s (2001) observations support Ibabao’s idea of hybrid planning in that he found that the thinking of NGO-state relations tended to be too simplistic by choosing to either analyze it from partnership or opposition perspectives. Bryant (2001) proposes that those relationships are more complex and both opposition and cooperation take place at the same time. He proposes to use the concept of ‘critical engagement’. However, it applies only to reform-minded NGOs. Bryant defines critical engagement as “a form of interaction between states and NGOs in which both cooperation and conflict prevail in the course of a common effort to pursue social or ecological goals” (2001:17). Another crucial point of the critical engagement is, according to him, that civil society groups should limit the magnitude of conflicts with the state. In that way they can criticize the state over one issue, and at the same time work hand in hand on another. Given the complexities of the environment where civil society groups operate, Bryant’s (2001), Beard’s (2003) and Mitlin’s (2008) notions of possible use of oppositional and collaborative strategies all make sense, even though at first glance they seem to be inconsistent with each other.

To get a better general picture of the urban politics from multiple angles the thesis will use Pieterse’s theoretical framework of five domains of political engagement in the relational city between the state, the private sector and civil society. He argues that if we want to improve the lives of urban slum dwellers, “[w]e have to step back, climb outside our mental cages and completely rethink the ways in which we talk about, imagine and seek to impact on life and desires in slums” (2008:111). He also recognizes the limitations of any framework in capturing “complex and fluid social realities” (Pieterse 2008:103). His framework also presents interfaces, the places where his different domains are inter-connected and complement each other.

The first domain is representative politics and associated participatory mechanisms. Here, Pieterse draws attention to formal political systems on different levels that are most often presented by elections of political parties. The effectiveness of the system depends on the internal democracy of the political parties and rules, systems and structures in the political system. The second domain is neo-corporatist stakeholder forums at city scale. These forums, commonly called multi-stakeholder forums, provide spaces for the meetings and negotiations between all concerned stakeholders in city politics: the state, the private sector and civil society. However, they provide value for
the civil society only if there are mobilized actions outside of the forums. The third domain is direct action, which means mobilization against state policies or for advancing political demands. The direct action is focused on claiming rights and challenging the present situation of inequality; it produces crisis, which in turn can lead to agreements and engagements between the two opposing sides. The next domain is symbolic politics, which like special glasses shapes ones view on every issue in in the city. Pieterse draws attention primarily to discourses about the identity of the city. He turns to Robinson’s (2002) notion about ‘world class’ cities as an example of symbolic politics that is so prevalent in the global South.

The last domain is development practices at neighborhood scale. Here, Pieterse turns special attention to the experiential side of the projects that seek to improve the living conditions of the poor. During development projects grassroots learn about democracy, the different levels of state organization and can bring new creative ideas to the table. All of the above can be of use for their political action at the level of the city beyond their neighborhood. Pieterse uses Shack/Slum Dwellers International, or more specifically its South African affiliate federation, as an example of informal everyday urbanism. Appadural proposed that by doing such projects as housing exhibitions, the Indian Alliance accumulated cultural capital and technical skills (2002:38). Both capitals can later possibly be used for other projects and this is an example of practical use of the principle ‘do first, talk later’. As Appadurai (2002), who describes Indian Alliance’s practices as ‘deep democracy’ and ‘governmentality from below’, Pieterse also celebrates their influence and particularly their “effective interface with the state without giving up entirely the few sources of power available to the urban poor” (Pieterse 2008:115). This process can indeed be effective in the long run. However, Appadurai (2002) would add that it is built on the ‘politics of patience’, which means that a community must understand that there are no adequate short-term solutions; however, the rewards are higher if the community is patient and works towards achieving its long-term goals. The federations within SDI are quite successful, as they build their assets, learn about their problems, experiment with solutions and engage the state to discuss and bring the solutions to life (Pieterse 2008).

When presenting the domain about grassroots development practices Pieterse raised a debate about possible drawbacks of this kind of practice. According to him, the danger here is that the grassroots, in contrast to direct action, can opt to act in an ‘apolitical fashion’ and would choose less radical and overt actions, which do not lead to bigger structural changes. Many organizations engage in a “tame and consensual type of politics” that does not allow accumulation of oppositional mood, which is so useful in direct action, he argues.

Similarly to Pieterse, Roy points out the contradictions of the approaches used by the SDI affiliate in India. In the top of her article, Roy (2009) quoted Sheela Patel, the leader of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC): “We could have stormed the barricades… but we chose otherwise”(Mitlin and Patel 2005, quoted in Roy 2009). Roy points out that in some extreme situations, such as during the mass evictions in Mumbai in 2005 (also called as ‘Indian tsunami’) SPARC’s strategy was limited in what they could do and how they could respond because of their principles of working with the authorities, which are built on pragmatism and negotiations rather than on conflict and protests. However, at that moment many urban poor affected by evictions did not support this strategy and opted for right-based claim making and
methods of ‘rebellious citizenship’ organized by The National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM) (Roy 2009:176). As Roy notes, it is ironic that these methods of NAPM helped to create the World Bank regulations of resettlement, which were later used by SPARC in negotiations with the government during the evictions. To shed more light on this contradiction Roy quotes Sheela Patel again: “there is not much point in pro-poor legal entitlements that cannot be actualised by those for whom it is intended” (Mitlin and Patel 2005, quoted in Roy 2009). Therefore, according to Roy (2009) SPARC has a long-term strategy of community-led resettlement based on an understanding that the city cannot avoid evictions if it is going to be modernized along with improved infrastructure. McFarlane (2004:910) argues that “the Alliance represents a broad development alternative, but not a form of alternative development”; in other words, it is only challenging the conditions on which the relations with authorities are built, but not the authorities’ control over urban planning and development. As the Zambian Alliance is a part of SDI, which inherited many abovementioned principles of the Indian Alliance work, it would be relevant to compare these federations, particularly the practices in relation to Pieterse’s domain direct action and if there are any contradictions in the practices of the Zambian federation.

2.6. Global and local scales of organizing

Additionally to practices of civil society groups that range from oppositional to collaborative, this thesis will analyze the practices on the global and local level and how they constitute themselves. The influence of global on local is regarded as quite apparent, but such views tended to exclude that the other way around is also possible. The relationship between local and global is relevant in discussions about the international practices of the studied organization as well as their mutual relationship with SDI.

The local was usually presented as something passive and easily shaped by global forces, as Gibson-Grahan (2002) argues. It was assumed that “the global is a force, the local is its field of play; the global is penetrating, the local penetrated and transformed” (Gibson-Grahan 2002:27). However, inspired by feminism that started small, she is arguing that the local too has power to transform politics in many ways. The local can offer political creativity in contrast to the views that mobilization and resistance must be on the global scale in order to have an impact (Gibson-Grahan 2002:53). Massey (2004) analyzed Gibson-Grahan and other authors on the topic and argues that although no one considers local being against the global, there is still politics of ‘defense’ of the local place. She argues that the places are “‘criss-crossings’ […] which constitute both themselves and ‘the global’ […] and are ‘agents’ in globalisation” (Massey 2004:11). Thus, she proposes to integrate local and global and not look at them from a hierarchical point of view. This notion forms the basis for the discussion about the influences between the studied Zambian Alliance and its international network of grassroots SDI.

Lindell (2009) connects to the above-discussed debates and points out that they tend to focus either on local struggles or on global movements. Indeed, while some doubt the power and relevance of the local and celebrate struggles on global level (Hardt and Negri 2000), others see political potential in the local (Gibson-Grahan 2002, Massey 2004). Lindell’s study of an association of informal market vendors in Maputo, Mozambique proposed to look at the practices of grassroots as multiscalar and “mutually constituted and entangled” (2009:132). She found that international
engagement plays a role in local politics by helping the locals to be more confident in opposing repressive policies of local authorities (Lindell 2009). This goes in line with what SDI and its affiliates are doing, namely creating a horizontal network of federations facing similar challenges and with similar visions. Lindell (2009) discussed another transnational network, which in a way similar to SDI facilitates information sharing mainly through international exchanges. The network also enhances the feeling of solidarity both on a local and on an international level with similar associations abroad (Lindell 2009). Whether the studied federation is also benefiting from international exchanges will be discussed in the Results chapter.

When comparing SDI to other transnational citizen networks, Edwards argues, the main difference is that the power of SDI is in the hands of the local communities, and not in their supporting NGOs at national or international level (2001:145). Although SDI is becoming increasingly recognized as an important player at global urban forums, the way and the purpose of setting up the federations were not primarily for influencing policies on the global level (Edwards 2001). As Batliwala noted, this international recognition leads to tensions in balancing SDI’s local and global activities as there are different views on what should be prioritized (2002:404). However, according to Edwards those activities on the international level are not the primary concern, but rather just “icing on the cake” over local and national actions (2001:149). It is then highly likely that it is also the case for the studied organization in Zambia; however, it is difficult to come to any conclusions without making a closer analysis of the collective practices of the federation, as will be done in the Chapter 6.

2.7. Conclusions

As the literature above suggests, the urban politics is complex and it is therefore essential to look at it from multiple angles. To cope with the urban poverty and neglect of the state, the civil society uses a number of different strategies that are often considered to be mutually exclusive – either oppositional or collaborative. Therefore, the thesis will use insurgent planning and co-production models to shed light on practices of a chosen grassroots organization. Besides using multiple approaches, the civil society can operate on different scales: local (neighborhood), national and transnational levels and those multiscalar strategies are interlinked and might have political implications on all levels.
CHAPTER 3. METHODS

3.1. Introduction

The data was gathered by a single researcher during field studies in Zambia during six weeks in March–April 2013. The research took the form of a case study of a chosen urban grassroots organization with international contacts, namely Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation together with their supporting NGO People’s Process on Housing and Poverty in Zambia. The federation is represented all over Zambia and to get a better overview of their collective practices the research was conducted in three major cities – Lusaka, Kitwe and Livingstone – with a one-day visit to Choma. By doing so, I attempted to test whether the experiences of the federation differ across different cities and it was also motivated by my research questions that seek to grasp the whole spectra of the federation’s practices. The data was gathered using qualitative methods – semi-structured interviews and observations. This chapter aims to motivate the choice of methods, describe the setting and participants, and explain the flow of data collection and analysis as well as address ethical considerations.

3.2. Choice of the methods

The semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection during the fieldwork. They were constructed based on research questions and comprised several thematic areas. Valentine calls this type of interviews “conversation with a purpose” (2005:111) and one of the main advantages of these interview methods according to Valentine is their “sensitive and people oriented” nature, which allows the interviewees to use their own words, in contrast to a restricted set of answers and categories as in a questionnaire (2005:111). In other words, the interviews “give voice to” those, on whom the research is focused (Cloke et al. 2004). Furthermore, as Valentine points out the loose format of interviews may provoke rising of some unexpected issues. Cloke et al. would call the resulting data “co-constructed” by both interviewer and interviewee, as they put it: “questions […] become co-owned and co-shaped in the unfolding interactivity of questioning, answering, listening and conversing” (Cloke et al. 2004: Chapter 5).

The semi-structured interviews allow some space for flexibility and make it possible to pose the same question in different ways in case the respondent did not understand (Valentine 2005:111). I found this flexibility very useful during the interviews with urban poor with intermediate English language skills. The interview schedule was revised many times to match the interviewee’s language level, their particular role and experiences within the federation. For example, I noticed that some interviewees gave very short half-responses. I then decided that it is better to start conversation from something familiar to the respondent to “warm up interview” and encourage the interviewee to give longer and better-developed answers (Valentine 2005:119). During forums and dialogue sessions between the federation, the city authorities and other stakeholders the methods switched to observations. It is considered good practice to mix methods to verify the information from the interviews, a technique called triangulation (Valentine 2005:112). It was possible to interact and have small talks with some federation members, but the time constraints did not allow for conducting the whole interview during breaks or even in the end of meetings when everyone was hurrying to get home. There were also language barriers as local languages were
preferred to English during the forums or dialogue sessions and interpreters were not always available. However, the NGO and the federation welcomed me to follow them to all courtesy visits to government officials in Choma and Kitwe and federation planning meetings before forums. This provided me with a better overview of how the federation operates in practice. Thus, this can be called participatory observations, because I was allowed to participate in the routines of the federation, pose questions and develop closer relations with the federation (Valentine 2005:167). This method helped to get a better context overview and rich information from an insider’s perspective that could not be obtained by interview methods.

3.3. Collection of data

Three weeks of the fieldwork were spent in Lusaka and the first week was devoted to meetings with the beforehand contacted locals and expatriates to learn about the urban context in Zambia. To name a few, they were Wilma Nchite, a geography lecturer at the University of Zambia, Marja Hinfelaar, Director of Research and Programs at the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research, Joseph Munsanje, National Director of Habitat for Humanity in Zambia and Grace Chikumo Mtonga, Head of the Civic Forum on Housing and Habitat in Zambia (initiated by the People’s Process; works with lobbying). Furthermore, thanks to an invitation from a Swedish expatriate family, I made my first visit ever to a slum settlement, which provided opportunities to meet and chat with locals.

The other two weeks in Lusaka were dedicated to getting acquainted with the federation, conducting interviews with its members and their supporting NGO personnel. The first interview was booked with the NGO leader, who introduced the rest of the office. Already on the following day, two NGO officers proposed that I joined them on a one-day visit to Choma to observe the dialogue session between the federation, local authorities and utility companies. I believe that this demonstrates that both the federation and the NGO welcomed me to the federation, which facilitated a lot the flow of my field studies. I have also received a number of documents in electronic form, such as brochures about the NGO and the federation, documentation of exchanges and other internal documents. When I was back in Lusaka, I interviewed the federation national leader, who also sits in the SDI board. She provided a list with names and telephone numbers of other potential interviewees. The interviews began with those who speak good English, have extensive federation experience and have taken part in exchanges. In the beginning it worked well, sometimes with three scheduled interviews per day, but some were postponed. From these first interviewees more contacts to the federation members were obtained. This is the well-known strategy of snowballing (Valentine 2005:117, Cloke 2004). During the third week in Lusaka, a Zambian student worked several days as both a driver and interpreter to conduct interviews with those who preferred to speak their local language to English.

Later, I spent two weeks in Kitwe, the first of which was dedicated to taking part in visits to the sites, federation meetings, dialogue sessions together with local federation leaders, NGO management as well as international guests. The guest were the South African professional architect Olwethu Jack from the SDI affiliated NGO Community Organisation Resource Center and its closely associated researcher Diana Mitlin from International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Those four days full of events and federation meetings in different compounds provided very interesting data
about the studied organization. The second week in Kitwe was devoted to learn more about the practices of the Kitwe federation by meeting the federation members for individual interviews.

The last week of the fieldwork was spent in Livingstone in connection with the Livingstone urban forum organized by the federation to discuss the further steps in their cooperation with the local authorities and utility companies. Livingstone was important to visit, as it was there the federation created its first saving schemes that then spread to the rest of Zambia. Thus, interviews with some of the oldest members told the history of successes and challenges of the federation right from its inception. After my arrival back in Sweden, I talked by phone twice with one of the PPHPZ workers in Kitwe to clarify some of the issues and track the progress of the federation projects.

3.4. Fieldwork environment

Zambia seemed to be a peaceful and safe country with friendly and helpful people. Most of the fieldwork was carried out in informal settlements and at the PPHPZ office. The office is situated on a quiet street not far from the busy streets of the Central business district. The interviews took place either indoors if there was no one else there or outside in the yard.

As Valentine notes, interviewees feel more comfortable and relaxed when talking in their familiar home territory (2005:118). Therefore, I let the interviewees choose where to conduct the interviews. Most of them preferred the office because they had some other business there, but some invited me to their settlements. I have been to some of the federation members’ homes or a friend’s yard, working places at a market and clinic, a café, at the federation’s community resource center in the George compound in Lusaka and an unfinished resource center building in Livingstone. Indeed, as Cloke et al. (2004) mentions the researcher sometimes cannot control the location and the noise level.

Dialogue sessions and forums took place in rented halls – at big restaurants or hotel conference rooms. The federation meetings often took place in the middle of the compound in a room without windows or under a tent with only a shaky roof. Because of the lack of space in the shadow, some people were forced to sit in the sun.

In general, the interviews were performed in a way to not disturb the normal flow of life of the interviewees or the flow of their meetings. At some places it was possible to use a voice recorder, but I later discovered that even a passing car or strong wind gust made it difficult to hear the recorded voices. Also, it could happen that customers or some other people came by and greeted us, which often interrupted the interviews. Cloke et al. (2004) mentions this as well and notes that this changes the “interpersonal dynamics” of the interview. However, I perceived it as small disturbances and I could easily get the interviewee back on track.

3.5. Interviewees

When choosing participants the main aim was not to produce a representative sample but to make the sample illustrative as Valentine recommends (2005:112). According to Cloke (2004), when targeting to demonstrate differences between respondents, it is easy to face the problem that the respondents will in some way be forced to represent those particular categories. However, it is important to choose people who have the relevant
positions, experiences and information and are also willing to share it (Cloke et al. 2004).

I conducted 17 individual and five group interviews (with two or more members at the same time) with the Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation. Out of the individual interviews, three were with national facilitators, seven with leaders on the regional level and seven with members who do not hold any leader position, but most of whom had some responsibilities at the scheme level. The interviews were not always perceived as formal by the interviewees, so their friends and coworkers could sometimes decide on their own to join our conversation. Although the presence of more participants made the interview process much more complicated and the track of who said what was often lost, they were still welcome.

A bulk of data comes from interviews with the supporting NGO employees. Besides the NGO leader, the interviews were conducted with an employed builder with grassroots background, NGO community officers in Lusaka, Kitwe and Livingstone. Additional data was gathered through short conversations during the dialogue sessions or other events.

In terms of education many of the federation members did not finish school, while most of the NGO employees had university degrees, primarily in urban planning. The age range of the federation women and men was from 30 to 60 years. Most of them were either unemployed and took care of children or worked at local informal markets selling vegetables, second-hand or new clothes. Their incomes were low and sensitive to market fluctuations.

3.6. Data processing and analysis

The interviews lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and were almost always recorded, when the level of the noise allowed it. On the one hand, while recording frees the head and the hands to listen and respond better, it can affect the answers, which as Cloke et al. (2004) suggest would be less “formal” without the recorder. Then I listened to the taped interviews and transcribed word by word only the parts, which were of particular interest for the thesis or where interesting quotes were found. This was combined with notes and other reflections about the setting.

The texts were reread several times to sort and identify themes relevant for discussion. I put the data into a table to get a better overview of what was gathered and to add updates. This table with thematic areas was used to build a basis for answering the research questions.

3.7. Ethical considerations

It is increasingly recognized that conducting research and particularly qualitative research requires reflection on ethical considerations (Cloke et al. 2004). It is particularly relevant when the researcher and the researched come from very different backgrounds, something that can create great power unbalances. This is even more reinforced if the researchers are working with issues of poverty and homelessness (Cloke et al. 2004).

The ethical guidelines proposed by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) were taken into consideration during interviews and data analysis. First, every interviewee acknowledged their so called ‘informed consent’, which means that the topic of the
interview was briefly explained and the respondent agreed verbally to share his or her knowledge and opinions. I have also asked the interviewees if they were not against being recorded. Although none of federation members ever objected to this during the interviews, some of them from time to time looked at the recorder, which could mean that the presence of the recorder affected their answers. Second, anonymity and the usage of data only for the research purposes were guaranteed. Many respondents replied that they do not need to be anonymous and would prefer to make their data public. Such reactions can be explained by implicit expectations from the interviewer to provide some kind of help to the federation or attract potential donors. However, the final decision was to not expose the names when it could be avoided, but only note titles or positions of the respondents in the federation. Third, according to the guidelines by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) it is important not to cause harm to the interviewees or other concerned. The researcher found that it is unlikely that writing about the federation’s practices can bring any negative consequences, because the federation is very open about their work. Fourth, the researchers should avoid exploitation of respondents. The respondents were always treated in a respectful manner and the interview questions were not aimed at extracting “juicy stories” (Cloke et al. 2004), but quite often the respondents themselves decided to provide details of their private lives. These guidelines are complemented by the notion by Cloke et al. of the importance of sensitivity to cultural difference and gender. To bridge this gap I started with a small personal introduction. For example, I noted that although the field studies were done with the support of a Swedish educational institution, I originally come from Ukraine, one of the poorest countries in Europe. I also attempted to make connections between the occupations and backgrounds of the interviewees and my family in Ukraine, where it was relevant. For example, I mentioned that as many federation members my mother is a tailor, my father is a builder (although both of them have university degrees) and my grandparents are farmers, who until recently used shallow wells and pit latrines as the majority of the slum dwellers do. The respondents could not verify it themselves, but what they could see is that the I used regular buses and was walking on dusty roads in compounds, which is very unusual to do for a white person in Zambia, they told me. As most of the federation members are women the gender issues were less relevant – the older ladies called me “daughter” and the younger ones “sister”. Also, as I noticed, the interviewed male federation members were used to respect and treat women well and I was no exception.
CHAPTER 4. THE STUDY SETTING

4.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces Zambia and the cities where the fieldwork was conducted, with particular focus on Lusaka, Kitwe and Livingstone. The place-specific set of relationships created by the urban socio-economic and political structures shapes the way civil society engages in collective actions. It is important to provide information about these structures to assess both the possibilities and constraints faced by the urban grassroots organizations. This chapter is based on secondary data and partly on personal observations. The first section provides a brief introduction to Zambia’s socio-economic situation, followed by a description of the urbanization development in Zambia and its three major cities – Lusaka, Kitwe and Livingstone. The final section describes the development of urban planning in Zambia, particularly in the relation to its colonial past.

4.2. Socio-political and economic characteristics of Zambia

Zambia is a relatively sparsely populated, landlocked country situated in Sub-Saharan Africa. Zambia is generally regarded as a Southern African country due to its strong relations with its neighbors and other countries in the Southern African sub-continent (Mulenga 2003). Zambia’s population is just over 14 million, with approximately two thirds of the country’s population living in poverty according to national poverty line (World Bank country profile 2012).

Shortly after gaining independence from the Great Britain in 1964, Zambia became one of the most industrialized countries in Africa due to its copper ore resources, the export of which boosted the Zambian economy during the 1960s and early 1970s (World Bank report 2002). However, this did not last long due to a dramatic fall in foreign demand on copper – the backbone of the Zambian economy. This was also accompanied by underinvestment and unsuccessful management of the mines after the nationalization (World Bank report 2002). At that time, Zambia became one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world and dependent on help from donors. During those years, Zambia was led by a socialist government with a centrally controlled economy (UN-Habitat 2012).

The one-party system collapsed in 1991 after the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) has won the elections. The new government struggled with finding ways for debt relief and decided, in order to qualify for the Highly indebted poor countries initiative, to follow the pressure from the IMF and the World Bank to adopt the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and to privatize the mining sector (Copper Investing News 2012). The government then abandoned SAP and took its own slightly different economic reform measures (UN-Habitat 2012). The efficiency improved and the production increased, but at the same time this led to a dramatic decrease in employment (Limpitlaw 2011). Also, SAP led to rising inequalities in the society and did not adequately meet urbanization growth (Hansen 2010). Later, since 2005, the economy started to recover and growth rates were around 5–7 percent per year. Even though the country was lifted by the World Bank to the status of middle-income country, the majority of its population could not notice it (World Bank 2012). At the moment, the country is enjoying a high international price of copper (UN-Habitat
2012). In 2011, MMD government was changed and the country is now led by the Patriotic Front under president Michael Sata.

4.3. The urban profile of Zambia and its major cities

At the moment, Zambia is one of the most urbanized countries in Africa with almost 40 percent of the population living in towns. Of these, over 70 percent live in informal settlements and peri-urban areas, which are absorbing most of the urban growth and characterized by poor living conditions and health threats (UN-Habitat 2012). Before the independence, the urbanization rate was only 21 percent, and this number doubled to 43 percent in 1980 and then fell again to 39 percent in 1990 (Mwimba 2002). In general, urbanization rates follow the economic development of the country. The people are attracted to major cities by the perceptions that city life will provide better chances for employment, infrastructure and services compared to rural areas (Cheelo 2011).

The cities are still not ready for such big influxes of population, particularly the housing and infrastructure sectors. The majority of the migrants cannot afford to settle in planned settlements and the procedures for procuring land are complicated. Not receiving any help or real restrictions from the city authorities, this mass of people has built their own houses without legal rights to the land or rents from someone else who built a house in this way (Mwimba 2002). Besides the threat of eviction they are vulnerable to the absence of clean water and adequate sanitation facilities, absence of adequate waste disposal as well as dangers connected with the location of the plot. The present government recognizes the problem: “The previous situation has shown that in Zambia we neglected the water and sanitation sector and in the meantime the population kept rising”, said Local Government and Housing Permanent Secretary Chileshe Mulenga (Ministry of Local Government and Housing website). These kinds of statements might give hope that the situation will change, but the question remains how and who will be involved in planning and decision making.

The population of the Greater Lusaka is estimated at 2.2 million (UN-Habitat 2009d), which is 32 percent of the urban population in Zambia (UN-Habitat 2012). Another feature is that most of the land that is still vacant is owned by three families. Lusaka was built as a ‘garden city’, but this urban concept was found to be unsuitable for Zambians. (UN-Habitat 2012) For example, a piece of land, that according to the ‘garden city’ concept was supposed to be a green belt, is now home to many slum dwellers and is called the Misisi Compound (Mwimba 2002). Also, the ‘garden city’ concept assumed that the neighborhoods would be well connected by efficient and available public transport, which is not the case in contemporary Lusaka (Mwimba 2002). These are just some of many examples of how the colonial urban planning failed to accommodate the influx of the poor.

After the colonial period, the Lusaka city council has been under-resourced and thus the city planning was very weak (UN-Habitat 2012). Lusaka is characterized by a lack of serviced land, high competition and prices for land, political interference in the land market, complicated and bad-kept record for land usage, slow issuing of land titles and occupancy licenses, proliferation of slums (UN-Habitat 2012). At the same time, as I observed, the city is growing not only in slums but also in shopping malls offering a number of South African retail stores to the richer class of Zambians and foreigners with decent income.
The British established Kitwe in 1928 to exploit the copper ore deposits in the surrounding area (UN-Habitat 2009b). The city is estimated to have 700,000 inhabitants, but during daytime it hosts around 1.2 million, which also includes daily migrations from surrounding towns, such as Kalulushi (UN-Habitat 2012). The Copperbelt including Kitwe was the center of economic life in Zambia when the mines did well. Later, it lost its status of commercial center to Lusaka, but is now again increasing in terms of urban population due to foreign investment in the mining sector (Cheelo 2011). In Kitwe, as in other towns on the Copperbelt, some townships were designed with spacious streets; while other parts of the city settled by copper mine workers have completely the opposite structure (Mwimba 2002). During hard years and large workforce cuts, the workers who lost employment chose to stay in the city and moved to informal settlements (UN-Habitat 2009b).

Before the independence Livingstone was the capital of Northern Rhodesia, the territory that is now Zambia. It is now the largest city in Zambia’s Southern Province with an estimated population of 114,600 (UN-Habitat 2009c). The city is famous as the Zambian tourist capital as is situated closely to the Victoria Falls one of the seven natural wonders of the world. Livingstone’s urbanization rate is quite low compared to Lusaka’s and Kitwe’s due to the decline of industries, so the city is less condensed. Thus, it is easier to manage the population growth here. However, informal settlements continue to grow, as housing policies are not adequate to meet influx of poor newcomers. The main challenges of urban development in Livingstone are: illegal land allocation and unequal service distribution due to political influences, underdevelopment of much of the city, degradation of the environment and natural resources (UN-Habitat 2009c).

4.4. Understanding urbanization in Zambia

The development of Zambian cities started under the rule of the British South African Company on the territory of Northern Rhodesia (Mulenga 2003). The colonial legacy in urban planning has remained largely unchanged, which is believed to be one of the premises of its inadequacy to respond to the realities of growing cities (Mwimba 2002). At the same time, the demise of the public sector in housing provision in favor of the private sector led to a view on planning as unneeded interference in private property rights (Rakodi 2003:128).

The colonial urban planners have built spacial towns to ensure order by using typical modernist planning ideas as zoning, preparation of development plans, and garden city. The purpose was to clearly divide the territory between the Europeans and Zambians, giving much more space to the former (Bwalya 2012). However, at the moment new rich Zambians took place of the British in those parts of the cities (UN-Habitat 2012). The locals (mainly male) who worked in the mines or services were regarded as only temporary residents, and were supposed to return to their families and villages after retirement (World Bank 2002). As the aim of this strategy of ‘transitory population’ was to save money on costs of labor, the structures settled by employers, were small and of low quality (Mwimba 2002). In this way the colonial rule controlled and discouraged the growth of permanent urban populations and left the challenge of bad quality housing (Mwimba 2002).

After the independence all restrictions on rural–urban migration were canceled and as a result the cities started to grow in population. Zambia faced several challenges: the need
to change the design of worker’s houses, to build new houses together with all infrastructure as well as to deal with the segregation in towns between the parts of the cities for colonizers and locals (Mwimba 2002). The planning in Zambia is more focused on hindering unplanned development, than on promoting or contributing to the desired one (Rakodi 2003:128).

While the low-cost houses built during the First National Development Plan (1966–1970) did not cover the demand and were unaffordable for the poor, the Second National Development Plan did not take that into consideration and was focused only on upgrading (Mwimba 2002). These years were characterized by central planning, which created problems of top-down service provision and culture of being dependent on the state (World Bank 2002). Moreover, the planning of the compounds was led not by professional urban planners, but by politicians, who became vehicles for their party patronage (Bwalya 2012). Then, after 1980, the housing provision fell on the shoulders of local authorities and almost nothing was done until the Housing Policy was prepared by the Ministry of Local Government and Housing in 1996. Under this policy, the slum settlements were de facto allowed to grow further and the government’s only policy was to upgrade them using donor money (Mwimba 2002).

Although the Lands Acts and other laws related to the urban planning were revised several times, the legislation is still not relevant to contemporary Zambia, but rather reminds of the colonial past. Some laws were simply copied from the old colonial British law. For example, according to the Town and Country Planning Act, Chapter 283, one of the members of the Town and Country Planning Tribunal has to be “a Chartered Planner of the Town Planning Institute of the United Kingdom or hold such similar qualification as the Minister may approve” (Town and Country Planning Act, Chapter 283). At the moment, Zambia has its own Zambia Institute of Planners and the appeal system through the tribunal has never been used (Mwimba 2002). Using the same laws and ignoring the problem in the same way as the previous governments did will not accommodate the growing population of the urban poor. I think that the changes are required and the politicians and professional planners should listen more to their customers to understand their needs and what is affordable for them.
CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the collective practices of the grassroots organization Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation (referred as ZHPPF or the federation). The first section describes the collective practices that help the federation to build its assets in the form of a community organization and mobilizing, financial resources, through savings and income generating activities, technical and soft skills as well as community resource centers. I will argue that the different kinds of assets that the federation accumulates are later used for its further actions, which have more direct political implications. Thus, the second section will discuss collective practices of the federation aimed at engaging the state: enumeration and mapping of the settlements, taking part in and organizing own stakeholder dialogue forums, land negotiations, exhibition of houses and toilet models, housing and sanitation service projects. These practices differ from the self-help practices, as they are not directed inwards, but rather to external stakeholders. Also, as the data suggests, the practices with direct political implications would not be possible for the federation to conduct without previously gained knowledge, skills and financial resources. The federation takes active part in international exchanges across their different components of work. Therefore, this chapter will also explore the flow of ideas between the federation and its international network Shack/Slum Dwellers International.

5.2. General description of the studied organization: Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation

The Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation’s history started in 2001 when Zimbabwean traders, who crossed the border to sell goods in the Zambian town Livingstone, started talking with Zambian slum dwellers about setting up housing saving schemes (Professional builder from Zimbabwe, employed at the supporting NGO office). These traders were members of the Zimbabwean federation in the city of Victoria Falls, an affiliate member of Shack/Slum Dwellers International. After making several exchange visits to Zimbabwe, the Zambian federation in Livingstone got a better understanding of the working principles of their sister federation and with time more people joined the Livingstone federation, as Livingstone regional facilitator (female, member since 2001, Malota compound) explained. She further explained that after the Zambian federation grew and some groups were started in Lusaka, they submitted a request to SDI for setting up a supporting NGO. As the result, in 2005 People’s Process on Housing and Poverty in Zambia (referred in the thesis as the supporting NGO or PPHPZ) was officially registered. Together, the federation and the NGO are called the Zambian Alliance. My observations suggest that the Zambian Alliance has international employees and international connections. Besides taking part in exchanges within the SDI network, the country coordinator of the supporting NGO is originally from Zimbabwe. Also, one of the PPHPZ employees is a professional Zimbabwean builder, who is also from Zimbabwe and worked for the Zimbabwean federation before.

The Federation members are individuals from poor urban and peri-urban communities throughout Zambia. According to the SDI website, the federation has 46,500 members in 395 saving schemes present in 43 towns. As stated in the PPHPZ’s brochures, which I received in electronic form from the supporting NGO employees, the purpose of the People’s Process is to provide technical support to the federation through help with
mobilizing financial resources, facilitating in developing linkages and partnerships with central government, local authorities, other community based organizations, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. The general goal of the federation is to fight poverty and homelessness in Zambia. They emphasize that the voice of the poor is often neglected and even though they lack land, decent shelter, access to clean water and adequate sanitation (PPHPZ brochure “Who are we and what we do”, electronic document). As the national health facilitator argues: “We must make the stakeholders really recognize us. We want to be part of decision-making processes right from the beginning at local, national and international level. This is what we are fighting for as grassroots”.

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Table 1. Structure of the federation (adapted from the PPHPZ brochure “Savings documentation”, received as an electronic document from the NGO employees)

The structure of the federation is presented in Table 1 above. The core of the federation is its saving schemes – groups of individuals living in the same area who come together to save money and do many other things as a group. Each savings group, also called scheme, has eight components: daily savings, Swalisano Urban Poor Fund, health savings, training and skills, land, technical, enumeration and exchange (interview with the national Swasilano facilitator). For each component there is one person responsible, who ensures the function of the component at the scheme level. In addition, each settlement has a ‘network’, at this level there is a person who ensures the smooth running of all activities and programs within a specific settlement with regard to reporting, writing work plans as well as budgeting (brochure “Savings documentation”, electronic document). At the regional level, the federation has eight facilitators, responsible for each area and at the national level there are only five national facilitators so far (interview with the national Swasilano facilitator).

As the national Swasilano facilitator explained, at the SDI level meetings, each country brings two people to council meetings and chooses people to the SDI board, which makes the most important decisions. National facilitators from Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi meet every six months at their regional hub meetings to discuss challenges and submit proposals to the SDI board. At those meetings, among other
things, they come up with ideas for future exchanges, she continued. Exchanges play a vital role in the federation development and without them the Zambian federation would most probably not have started, as argued by one of its oldest members in Livingstone from the Malota compound. However, exchanges are not cheap, as in order to better manage the gained knowledge the federation always sends 3–4 members and at least one person from the People’s Process (interview with the national Swasiliano facilitator). In the beginning, experiential exchanges with Zimbabwe prevailed as the Zambian federation wanted to learn about the general principles of federation and savings. These first basic exchanges were later complemented with exchanges in technical skills and strategic (also referred as political) exchanges.

The federation was one of the founding members of Civic forum on Housing and Habitat in Zambia\(^2\), which is working with lobbying on the national level for decent, affordable and adequate housing for the urban poor. Thanks to this work, the Zambian Alliance has contributed to the formulation of the housing chapter in the 6th National Development Plan and is now a key member of the advisory committee on housing in the ministry of local government (interview with the head of the Civic forum on Housing and Habitat in Zambia).

5.3. Collective practices towards self-reliance and asset building

The federation seems to be very pragmatic and thinking in a long-term perspective about its collective practices. Therefore, every new member starts with improving his or her own life through the local savings and credit groups. As many members mentioned, it is much easier to save in a group, as the access to money is more restricted compared to if the money were saved at home. Then the saved money is used for different consumption purposes in a more sound way, than they would usually do. This happens because by saving and giving each other loans, the federation members learn basic financial skills. The good credit record and accumulated finances allow them to apply for a plot, which the federation acquires from their respective local government. Also, the federation members often organize peer-to-peer learning sessions for each other about such practical skills as bricklaying, carpentry, sewing etc. The federation members can later easier find employment, as many argued, and are in that way able to save more and climb out of poverty. They oppose handouts that are provided for free by many donor organizations, as almost every interviewed federation member mentioned. They would argue that the people, who join the federation, take an active stance in their own well-being, which should not depend on the will of some external stakeholders, but be built on the strong internal capacities of the federation members. As many interviewed members argued, this is the main difference between the poor who want to take care of themselves, and the poor who beg and claim without contributing any effort.

5.3.1. Savings as a tool for addressing limited financial resource of the federation

Savings are the core activity of the federation and having three savings books (daily, health, Swalisano) is an essential part of being a member of the federation. According to the interviewed federation members, save–withdraw schemes showcase what the poor can achieve with simpler and less bureaucratic procedures. The federation hopes that

\(^2\) To learn more visit: [http://civicforum.org.zm/](http://civicforum.org.zm/)
this can give more legitimacy to the changes that the poor want to bring into urban
planning in general or into a specific development project. In the view of federation
respondents, savings work also as a mobilizing tool to encourage people to take
responsibility for their own lives. Three types of savings are presented below:

1. Daily savings and soft loans

Daily savings are done collectively and all members in a particular saving scheme are
expected to participate in door-to-door savings collection. As the federation members
argued, this allows more interaction between members and also enhances sharing of
problems, ideas and support at individual levels. The interviewed members stated that
daily savings (ca. 1 SEK/day) are mainly used for dealing with daily expenses, which
was illustrated by their examples repeated in many interviews with the federation
members: increased quality of the daily diet, ability to pay school fees for their children
and in some cases for their own education or boosting small businesses etc. It seems
that the federation save–withdraw schemes teach the members about personal finance
management in a simple way that the urban poor can easily understand and adapt to.

As one of federation members active in mobilization mentioned, when going to new
settlements to promote federation ideas and mobilize people, they teach people that it is
a long-term tool. However, the federation members mention that it is not easy to
persuade people, who wait for short-term solutions and external help because of the
traditions of donors “to give out things for free” (National Swalisano facilitator, female,
member since 2001, George compound, Lusaka). One member provided an example
from her compound Kalikiliki: when a catholic church stopped to give food, she
explained, more people started to join the federation (Regional Swalisano facilitator,
female, member since 2006, Kalikiliki compound, Lusaka).

The schemes are encouraged to come up with innovative ways for boosting their
savings, which others later can learn from through exchanges and replication. The
federation has recently started to use such methods as ‘savings for a purpose’ and
‘merry-go-round’ (when a group saves for one person and the total collected is recorded
in that person’s book). Federation members in Lusaka learned about ‘savings for a
purpose’ during a visit of a Malawian federation, while the Kitwe federation learned
about this method from Namibians. Later, Zambians spread the knowledge to the South
African federation, as National Swasilano facilitator explained. This is one of many
examples of international learning across the SDI network.

2. Health savings

As federation members explained, health contributions (ca. 5 SEK/week) are used for
emergency needs, for example to assist with transportation to seek medical help or even
at funerals. Because of the living conditions in the slums, the urban poor are particularly
vulnerable to opportunistic diseases. Zambia also has one of the highest prevalence rates
Lusaka regional health facilitator states: “health is the backbone of the group. If
someone is sick the work cannot be done. First health then other work.” The Kitwe
regional facilitator for daily savings supports this notion: “Here we say that you need to
value someone’s life first before other things.”

As the one of federation members, who is now working with health savings,
emotionally explained, the federation members helped her to overcome depression and
fear by providing counseling after she learned that she is HIV-positive and lost her husband. At the scheme level the health leaders go from house to house 3–4 times a week to identify vulnerable people and see how they can be helped. “The main purpose is not all about savings. It is not all about money. But we are going to collect problems also […] We bring problems to the table and think what we do about it as a federation” (National health facilitator, female, member since 2003, George compound, Lusaka). This notion is also related to the ‘family spirit’ in the federation, that many federation members repeatedly mentioned during the interviews.

As the national health facilitator explained, the health component is strong in the Zambian federation. For example, during a regional hub meeting in 2011, Namibians were impressed by the successes of Zambians in health savings. They came to Zambia in 2012 to see for themselves how the local federation takes care of its sick members. In Ndola, they saw how local caregivers bathed, change diapers and fed one bedridden woman. At the same time, as she explained, the Zimbabwean federation is doing much progress in using immune-booster herbs and has even its own federation clinic. The national health facilitator mentioned that she would like to go there for an exchange to learn more.

3. Swalisano Urban Poor Fund savings

Every federation member should invest ca. 12 SEK/month in the Swalisano fund, which is used as a key mechanism to secure tenure, improved housing and services. The money gathered by the federation members is later used for housing loans. As the supporting NGO leader explained, the fund money “allow the informal system meet the formal”. By this he means that most of the slum dwellers cannot simply go to conventional financial institutions and open an account or take a loan, as they lack the required documentation and formal employment. Here, according to him, the Swalisano fund creates an opportunity for the federation members, as it is more probable that they can qualify for the loan from the federation fund than from a bank.

The plan is to gather one million ZMW (ca. 1.2 million SEK) and launch the fund. The federation persuaded one of the biggest mining companies in Zambia to invest in Swalisano and it will be the major shareholder in the fund, as an employee at the supporting NGO explained. The idea is to put all the money from donors and government to one central fund. However, as the most recent telephone interview in June informed, the launch of the fund has been postponed. The fund is also used as the negotiating tool when the federation meets the government and this will be discussed further in the fifth section of this chapter.

5.3.2. Income generation loans

Income generating loans are bigger and usually have a higher interest rate (ten percent or more) in comparison to small soft loans at the saving scheme level. “Those people who were honest and repaid small loans can come together and write proposal to the Urban Poor Fund for a bigger loan” (Regional facilitator in technical component, female, member since 2001, Sekele compound, Lusaka). This became possible after the People’s Process registered and started to source additional funds, she added.

In towns where the federation has a chance to buy plots, the income generation loans are encouraged to boost the federation members’ savings as part of the preparations for housing projects. In areas with scarce land, as in the capital city, it is almost impossible
to buy land for housing at an affordable fee. Therefore, the federation concentrates on investing in business and on accumulating resources for future slum upgrading. For example, the Lusaka regional health facilitator is working in tailoring business, but she complained that because of its seasonal demand, she would like to take a loan for starting another business activity.

The opportunity to receive an income generation loan was one of the main reasons for joining the federation, as many interviewed members mentioned. One of the representatives of the active youth in the federation joined the federation hoping to learn new skills and because of his interest to start his own business. He took part in an entrepreneurship workshop organized by the International Labor Organization for the federation, and started his own small timber business. He said that thanks to this workshop and his gained saving skills, he succeeded with the business and can now pay for his university studies himself. He also provided another success story example of the organized youths’ federation members in the town of Kafue, where one talented young man produces and sells sculptures after getting a loan from the federation’s fund.

Another example is from Livingstone, where one of the founders of the federation shared her experiences. Back then, before joining the federation she sold tomatoes, but after receiving an income generation loan she shifted to selling second hand clothes and charcoal. Charcoal gives more profit, she argues, enough to send her kids to school.

International exchanges provide opportunity for federations from different countries to share their experiences in starting businesses and, as was mentioned in many interviews with the federation members, the exchanges promote and inspire entrepreneurship. For example, one of the regional facilitators in Livingstone is planning to start her own grocery shop. This inspiration, as she noted, grew from an exchange to South Africa, where she saw how some local federation members there succeeded to expand their businesses from shacks to big supermarkets: “If this one did it, I can do it” (Regional facilitator, female, member since 2001, Malota compound, Livingstone).

Kitwe regional facilitator for daily savings said that, during an exchange with Namibia, the major lesson for the Zambian federation was that in Namibia half of their savings is invested in businesses. The Lusaka regional facilitator in the technical component mentioned that during her first trip to Malawi in 2005, she learned, among other things, about mushroom planting.

To sum up, the interview data suggests that income generation loans help the Zambian federation to further strengthen its financial assets. The more federation members earn, the more they can save and lend to others in need. Also, as federation members stated in interviews, they eagerly share business ideas across the cities in Zambia or across the boarders with sister federations in other countries. This goes in line with what the ZHPPF leader called the ‘solidarity spirit’ of the SDI network.

5.3.3. Skills trainings

Many respondents mentioned that gaining skills was one of the major reasons to join the federation and it helps them in finding income opportunities. The Lusaka regional facilitator in the technical component is a trained construction worker and she said: “In [the] federation people can change the way of living – women can build [their] own houses. [Women] can do things that men do. It empowers women. If my neighbor wants to build [a house and hire me] I’ll negotiate my salary”. The federation has quite a large number of trained builders, an asset it can use for its construction projects. During the
interviews it was mentioned many times that people prefer to be taught by their federation friends, who can show them how things work in practice and explain in simple language.

Lusaka regional Swalisano facilitator said that thanks to the federation she learned how to cook and to sew doormats. She pointed out that her savings scheme would like to have a place to meet up for more workshops and they hope to get it soon as their councilor knows that they are looking for it. Already now in her compound Kalikiliki, federation women organize discussion clubs every Saturday and share their knowledge about how to look after their houses, husbands and children. Others were taught carpentry, tailoring, batik, tanda (decorated material) as female federation members in Kitwe explained during a group interview.

Some skills that the federation offers are not technical in nature but useful for personal development. As one interviewed female member from the Matero compound explained, the federation made her a better leader and a confident public speaker:

I’m a very shy person. I could not speak in public. I got a lot of experience through [the] federation and I can speak to local government. I met many councilors, even mayor. When you use [the] federation name, they listen to us. But as individual it is not possible (Female federation member, joined in 2006, active in enumerations, Matero, Lusaka).

With the help of donors the federation has built a resource center in the George compound in Lusaka and is in the process of building a huge resource center in Livingstone. The purpose of the centers is not only to have a secure place for the federation meetings, but also to provide a shelter and support for abused women, children and other vulnerable members of the community. These centers are also planned to be used for hosting different events and celebrations as well as learning centers for trainings and workshops with an open library, as a female federation member from the George compound and a Livingstone-based NGO employee explained.

To sum up, the federations are actively working on exchanging practical skills among each other, which often proves to be very useful. Many federation members could secure employment and support their families. They also put much effort into finding or creating meeting spaces for the federation members, intended to have a much broader use. Those buildings, at least the finished resource center in the George compound, stand there as live and tangible evidence of what the poor can achieve if everyone contributes what he or she can afford and if they work together.

5.4. Collective practices that engage the state

This section will discuss the practices of the federation that are aimed to engage the state and other stakeholders. These practices are not internal in contrast to self-help and building financial assets, which were discussed in the previous chapter. They are directed outwards to showcase what the federation can achieve, such as enumerations and quite complicated technical GIS mapping or pilot housing projects. The federation then uses information from enumerations and skills from building houses to lobby the local government for what they think is needed in their settlements. In other words, they come to the politicians and professionals with requests, which are baked by data and experience.
5.4.1 Enumerations and mapping

Enumeration is a process of collecting social–economic data, planned and implemented by the federation in their settlements. Based on interviews it seems that the federation members understand the value of enumerations and take active part not only in conducting the research but also in analyzing and presenting the information. In the words of one of the federation members in Lusaka, enumerations work in the following way: “We design questionnaires, mobilize women, from federation and non-federation. We come back to the office to compile data and try to map it […] using satellite images.”

The national enumerations facilitator explains, that when they plan enumerations they start to talk to the local authorities right from the beginning – the federation goes to their local Members of Parliament, councilors, Resident Development Committees, local sanitation and water companies to inform them about planned enumerations in the settlement and also to get help with informing the community about the exercise to sensitize more people to volunteer as enumerators. However, once the data is gathered, as he stated, it can actually be used against the council in a form of resistance to development projects that do not meet the most urgent needs of the community: “Then we engage local and central government, also other NGOs, international organizations with richness of information on our fingertips. They will see priority areas if they want to assist or help […] Development can be imposed on you. We don’t want that – we will not be passive” (National enumerations facilitator, male, member since 2004, Lusaka). Another federation member active in the enumerations component in Lusaka had a similar line of reasoning:

We also want people to start engage in planning of the development of [their] own area. Maybe government comes and wants to build a school, but it is not the priority of people. They want a clinic. Once we have it on computer, we give it back to people. And also share it with government, so that everyone will have same information when they engage each other. When it comes to planning – the community will participate. Whatever development comes to the community, [it] will be appreciated. (Male member, joined in 2009, active in youth mobilization, Lusaka)

The federation members often repeated in the interviews that information is power and it can be used in negotiations with the state. According to the NGO coordinator, the federation is the only organization in Zambia trying to push authorities to regularize these informal settlements. As he said, if after the enumerations the local federation group finds that half of the families in the compound lack occupancy certificate, they will turn to the councilors with a request to give appropriate occupancy certificates.

The first enumeration in Zambia was conducted in the Malota compound in Livingstone in 2005, as one of the founding members of the federation, a resident of Malota compound, stated. The enumeration showed that the settlement was overcrowded with poor water provision and sanitation. The information from enumerations, she reported, was used to engage local councilors and as result it helped to negotiate for land, where the federation has built its first houses.

So far the federation did a lot of enumerations, but little mapping as they lack skills, training and computers. Right now, the Zambian federation is in the process of learning about “mapping technologies: “We started mapping in Kalilikiki. Then we will present it
to Lusaka city council […] We expect that they will partner with us and will put more water points and toilets. This is the first time that we will present mapping data” (Female federation member, joined in 2006, active in enumerations, Matero, Lusaka). Therefore, at the moment many local and international exchanges are concentrated particularly on these technical skills. The Lusaka regional enumerations facilitator went both to Ghana and to Zimbabwe to learn about enumerations. What struck her most in Zimbabwe was that the women are very active and even if they are old they can write and read. She compared this to Zambia where “ladies are less interested in school” and the old refuse to take part in enumerations because of their low education. The members of the Zimbabwean federation came to Zambia several times during 2013 to conduct trainings about how to use satellite images, how to interpret the maps on the ground, identify structures, and how to draw the structures on the computer. The last visit was in March 2013, when they stayed for a week to teach how to enter data into the computer through Geographic Information System (GIS). The regional enumerations facilitator in Lusaka was one of the students who went with them to the site and practiced demarcating. She recognizes that she as many others lack computer skills. The national enumerations facilitator is of same opinion, that GIS requires a lot of understanding and technical skills, which is difficult for most urban poor from slums.

5.4.2. Dialogues with stakeholders and “engaging the monster”

The federation organizes, together with PPHPZ, meetings/forums with local, regional and national politicians and officials, companies, donors, community based organizations and other relevant stakeholders depending on the purpose and topic of the meeting. I was present on three such meetings during the fieldwork: A Dialogue session in Choma, a Dialogue session in Kitwe and the Livingstone urban forum. One general observation is that the federation had difficulties in securing that all invited politicians and officials came. I witnessed several times how politicians confirmed and promised to come, but rejected in the last moment because of other commitments. They usually try to send someone who would represent them at the meeting, for example the deputy city mayor of Kitwe instead of mayor. Still, the absence of major politicians makes the dialogue sessions more difficult as those who are present often do not have the right competence. At the same time, the invited guests usually showed positive attitude and respect towards the federation. For example, the Choma city mayor stated during the Dialogue session in Choma:

In light of such framework the Choma municipality affirms its full commitment to create a slum upgrading strategy in partnership with the Zambian Homeless and Poor People’s Federation, which will ensure that the slum settlements are improved. It is for this reason we also call upon all stakeholders in attendance to be part of this important collaboration to come together to fight homelessness and poverty. Through coming together, like what the Zambia Homeless and Poor People’s federation are doing, the scourge of homelessness and poverty will be eradicated from our society. (Choma city mayor, Dialogue session in Choma)

In this public speech the council’s representative expresses interest in working with the federation on the citywide slum upgrading strategy. The purpose of the meeting in Choma was to introduce the federation to new councilors and to negotiate a new Memorandum of Understanding (previous was signed in 2009).
The meetings organized by the federation usually start with traditional local songs and dances, prayer and singing the national anthem. Then the moderator usually presents a guest of honor (the highest ranked official in the room) and the speakers hold presentations according to the program. As some of the guests might have a limited knowledge about the federation, the local leaders of the federation hold short presentations with session of questions afterwards. They try to explain what they do and why, what SDI is and the achievements of local federation groups including the results of recent enumerations, if they have some. The officials from the council or other government authorities give presentations of their programs, for example, explain how to access the Community development fund, the rules and procedures for land applications etc. These presentations are always followed by both prepared and spontaneous questions from the audience. There are usually around 50–100 federation members representing different parts of the city and different schemes. At the meeting in Livingstone, the debates became extremely heated when the federation openly criticized the council and the administration, for example for not replying to applications for land, or problems with the service provision in particular settlements (too far to the nearest water point, no garbage collection, problems with sewerage etc.).

One of the challenges of establishing good relations with officials or politicians, which surfaced during the forum I visited, is the temporary nature of their office service. With every new government the federation will need to present itself from scratch and the same thing happens to officials who rotate between different offices in the country. This constant change gives them more space for excuses as the politicians can always blame their predecessors.

There is usually quite a big number of councilors at the meetings, which is positive for the federation as it is they who make decisions about the city development, for example land allocation. Not all are present during the whole meeting, but during the Dialogue session in Kitwe the deputy mayor stayed till the end (after 6 pm on a Friday evening). On the other hand, according to the coordinator of the supporting NGO, it is very difficult to get to higher level global meetings, where the strategies for urban development and fighting poverty are discussed. He showed a newspaper and pointed to a short article about the 24th session of UN-Habitat’s Governing Council and that the

*Picture 1. Dialogue session in Choma (my own photo)*

*Picture 2. Dialogue session in Choma – a federation member speaking (my own photo)*
Zambian Minister of Local Government and Housing attended it. According to him, this is a typical example of a meeting that will discuss the life of the poor without inviting the poor to the table. However, the federation members are sometimes invited to bigger international events. In December 2012, a female federation member from Lusaka went to represent the federation and the perspectives of slum dwellers in Senegal at the AfriCity Summit. Interestingly, United Cities and Local Governments, the organizers of the forum, later came to Zambia to check if the presentation was accurate.

To describe relations with the government the supporting NGO coordinator used the phrase “engaging the monster”. He explained how the Swalisano fund is also used as a negotiating tool for resource mobilization. For example, it is used for creating partnerships to show the seriousness of the urban poor and enter more equal partnership with the government and other cooperating partners, which are expected to complement the federation’s efforts, the NGO leaders stated. “We feel strongly that [as federation member] you need to bring all your energies together and put your money to the fund”, said the NGO leader, so it is not by chance that ‘Swalisano’ means unity. By putting resources in one basket, according to him, the federation becomes stronger and more respected: “Begging is not a solution. No matter how much we can be sympathetic and give somebody, it will not help that person. It’s alleviating the problem for the next one hour.” His point is that the poor should engage in bargaining, not begging.

The federation is working closely with the wife of the Zambian vice president Charlotte Scott, who agreed to be the patron of the federation. As the national enumerations facilitator explained, the idea behind this is to attract government contributions to the fund. The NGO coordinator argues that it does not mean that the federations is affiliated to any political party as Charlotte Scott is not a politician herself:

The only affiliation she has is her husband. The wife of vice president knows that she it is not PF [the Patriotic Front] thing. If we talk about housing it’s only it. Federation is apolitical. It is a group of people who are tired of living in slums. In so doing it has been very difficult to not recognize that the government has a key role. We want to work with the government. Tomorrow if current government is removed we will still engage with new. We are not associated to any party. Among federation we have opposition members, ruling party members. When we come together we do not talk where you come from. It’s about development in informal settlement for all people, not only those who are affiliated to a party. Those are our principles.

Even though it is difficult to believe, during my fieldwork, observations and communications with the federation members, I had no evidence that statement of the supporting NGO leader about non-affiliation with political parties would be untrue.

As it is stated in the brochure “What we are and what we do”, the Zambian alliance believes that the poor should speak for themselves. The message they send to the government and other stakeholders is about the importance of including them in city planning, as they said during the interviews. This is how the supporting NGO leader described his work:

“Our work involves discussing, negotiating with government ministers, directors, town clerks, politicians who don’t care about poor people […] You constantly have to beg somebody to do their own job. The council is supposed to house people, to provide service delivery to people. But we have to beg them and request to meet with them, to
partner with them […] It’s doing somebody’s job – you negotiate with them to do them a favor […] The mother is trying to feed the child, and the child is busy biting the mother. It’s how painful the process is. So it involves a lot of patience.”

The People’s Process coordinator tried to explain that as an NGO representing the Zambian federation, they face a lot of resistance from the authorities. This resistance is expressed in the careless attitude of the state bureaucrats towards their own duties. While the federation conducts enumerations itself and comes with proposals for improvements, the state representatives do not always take advantage of their efforts, he argues.

The Dialogue sessions and meetings seem to have potential to become accredited meeting points between the state bureaucrats and the urban poor. However, at the moment they are not perceived as important by many high-ranking politicians, who ignore those meeting due to other commitments. Maybe in the future, the situation might change, if the federation will be perceived as an important partner of the state.

5.4.3. Land negotiations and housing provision

The process of land negotiations differs from place to place depending on local supply–demand of land. In most of the cities the federation is looking for unoccupied land and applies to the city councils to buy more land to accommodate federation members. The land is divided in plots, then the federation members decide who among them can afford and has the biggest need for land. In general, the negotiations for land are hard, time-consuming and tiring. According to the national enumerations facilitator, it took much time for the federation to convince the government to work with them and to explain what the federation is about. For example, in the case of Livingstone it took five years to persuade the government to sell a piece of land to the federation. The federation took the Livingstone council officials and councilors to Zimbabwe to understand what the federation means, the Livingstone regional facilitator explains.

As the national enumerations facilitator argues, Zambian federation is reaching positive results due to exposing the politicians and officials to international exchanges and showing other countries, examples where local federations and governments work hand in hand. In 2012, the Zambian Minister of Local Government and Housing Emerine Kabanshi participated in the World Urban Forum by UN-Habitat and it was there she learned about SDI and the Zambian Alliance. As the national Swalisano facilitator said, “When we come back we have good relations with our Minister of Local Government because of that exchange”. After the meeting in Italy, the minister initiated federation movement at her hometown, she added. Another strategic exchange was made to Namibia, according to the national Swalisano facilitator. It was aimed at showing the Zambian local politicians what the ‘sister’-federations are doing and the successful cooperation of the Namibian federation with their respective government.

A closer look at the question and answer session at the Livingstone Urban Forum will shed more light on the complexity of the land problem in that city. During her presentation at the Forum, the Livingstone regional facilitator stated that in 2005 the council provided 54 plots for low income housing and to date 50 houses have been completed, water was connected through the Southern Water and Sewerage Company (SWASCO); some of the houses are now connected to electricity, but there is still no sewerage available. She further added that the federation has continued to pressure the council to provide more plots since the membership is large. Also, the federation has
submitted a land application to the Kazungula district since Livingstone city council is delaying their response to the federation land application. Moreover, according to her presentation one plot was promised to the Livingstone federation for building fee-paying toilets, but the council has built the toilets itself there, leaving the federation without revenue.

The director of planning at the Livingstone city council was present at the Forum and responded that the council has a new management. He is also new in the office and was not aware about the application. He advised the federation to start all over with their negotiations and submit a new application. He also noted that corruption within the council in allocating land has been rampant and councilors allocated land to their relatives. At the moment councilors are suspended, but the new have not been appointed yet after recent re-electons. The director of planning highlighted that the council does not have a separate procedure specifically for poor people but urged the federation to build on the relationship they already have with the council in order for them to continue acquiring land as a group. He also added that changes to the regulations on land allocation are not made by the council but by the Ministry of Lands, which is mandated to change policy. He added that the federation could try to influence the Ministry of Lands as policies are currently being reviewed, hoping that changes will be made in terms of accommodating the poor.

The federation usually starts with a house-model exhibition to show alternative solutions to the conventional construction. The federation argues, that such pilot projects have provided a window through which outsiders can see not only what is workable but what the poor can really do. As the Lusaka regional facilitator in training and skills explained, the federation is reluctant to use only conventional materials such as concrete block in construction because these materials are too expensive. The federation proposes to use burnt bricks or hydraf orm bricks instead. The federation tried to reduce the costs by making the best use of local resources. For example, most of the beneficiaries brought stones and sand to the site and took loan from the Urban Poor Fund for only cement and iron sheets for the roof. Also, the beneficiaries mentioned that it is too expensive to use contractors so every family was involved in the construction and contributed with labor. During a meeting with the Kitwe federation in the Kawama compound, many federation members, who has started building houses, complained than being involved in construction often led to abandoning their businesses, falling incomes and failing to pay back the loan in time. Many federation beneficiaries in Livingstone and in Kalulushi mentioned the same excuses.

The federation is supposed to build houses incrementally and in phases, so the next group of beneficiaries must wait until the first repaid the loan. This is done to not be dependent on donors and be able to sustain the process in the long run by themselves, as the national Swalisan facilitators explained. However, according to the Livingstone regional facilitator from the Malota compound, problems with loan repayments after the first construction project in Livingstone were not taken into account by the latter beneficiaries. The Livingstone federation branch was very excited about housing construction and did not listen to advice from their Zimbabwean colleagues about the importance to start with one-room houses. The bigger houses cost more to build and the beneficiaries later realized that they could not afford the loan. Moreover, as the Livingstone regional facilitator for exchanges explained, during the first project the beneficiaries did not understand how to count interest rates and their high debts were
surprising for them. The accountants from PPHPZ thought that Zimbabweans explained it, but there were quite big misunderstandings. The federation has put much effort into solving the crisis by organizing special meetings with the supporting NGO, national facilitators and exchange visits from the Zimbabwean federation.

Another housing project was started in 2008 in the Kawama compound in Kitwe, which I also visited. There the federation acquired 50 plots for the first phase and 108 plots for the second phase of construction. The Kitwe federation branch received an initial loan of ZMW 260,416 (approximately USD 52,000 at the time) and has only managed to repay ZMW 83,000 (approximately USD 15,000) (the data is from a meeting in Kawama in the end of April, which I visited together with the coordinator of the supporting NGO). 47 houses have been completed, which were built on an incremental basis of a two-roomed structure with a provision to be extended. However, according to the Kitwe regional facilitator for daily savings, who lives in Kawama, 33 beneficiaries of the housing project have put their houses for rent whilst they continue to live in the slums. The beneficiaries present at the meeting explained that they do so because they either have large families, which cannot be accommodated in two-roomed structures or they use tenants as a mechanism to ensure that they repay their loans. Because of these struggles with their loan repayments, the federation was challenged to come up with a solid strategy to ensure that defaulting is brought to a minimum. In the interim, the federation has embarked on enforcing defaulting penalties outlined in the Funding Manual, which entails land repossession and reallocation in order to recover outstanding loan balances. The federation members present at the meeting, however, indicated that they ideally did not want to enforce such harsh measures, but are looking into reinforcing entrepreneurial training for the members so that they can have a relatively steady income to enable them to repay their loans.

According to federation members, now when the beneficiaries have completed at least some houses it becomes easier to win the trust of the local authorities as they can show real results on the ground. As the national Swalisano facilitator explained, besides selling land at discount when possible, the council assists with technical support by sending professional engineers to the site, who together with NGO employees supervise and control the construction process.

5.4.4. Building toilets and changing mindset

The federation is constantly looking for new low-cost models striving to make sanitation affordable for the poor. The federation learned how to build ecosan (ecological sanitation) toilets during their exchange visits to Malawi and Zimbabwe. Now when Zimbabweans came up with a cheaper model the Zambian federation is planning to go there again and learn about the new construction model (People’s process officer in Kitwe). At the moment, sanitation is one of the main areas of the federation’s work. For example, based on enumeration conducted by federation members in the Kamatipa compound in Kitwe in 2010 and newly conducted sanitation mapping the main challenges in Kamatipa are: poorly constructed pit latrines, lack of water points and poor water quality from shallow wells. As many federation members stated during community meetings in Kamatipa, where I was present, their scheme has lost many members as they were hoping that after the enumerations in 2010 the state would respond to their needs. Also, the members had very often unreasonably high expectations about the benefits the federation can bring to them and unmet expectations
were one of the most popular reasons for leaving the federation. However, for the newly conducted sanitation mapping the federation managed to recruit more members. Kamatipa is interesting also because it was chosen as a pilot settlement for two different sanitation projects – one from the grassroots side and another by Nkana Water and Sewerage Company (NWSC, monopoly provider in the Copperbelt region).

The first project is called the SHARE\(^3\) (Sanitation and hygiene applied research for equity) project, which is a collaboration between the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI). It aims to develop and test a community-driven model of tackling sanitation problems in the cities of Kitwe in Zambia, Lilongwe in Malawi, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Chinhoyi in Zimbabwe. The project aims to sensitize and mobilize the residents to collectively come up with solutions, which are tailored to their financial capabilities and build pilot toilets to show different affordable sanitation options for the community with the ambition to scale up.

The Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation Project\(^4\) is part of the National Urban Water and Sanitation Program by the Government of the Republic of Zambia and is financed by a loan from the African Development Fund. The project is run by the Nkana Water and Sewerage Company (NWSC) and it seeks to improve access to water and sanitation in peri-urban areas in Kitwe, Kalulushi and Chambishi. One of the project’s goals is to reduce water borne diseases through the provision of 1,500 toilets in 3 pilot settlements.

Prior to direct dialogues with NWSC, the SHARE project has been in progress for some time. There was, for example, one exchange to Tanzania under the SHARE project and according to a male federation member, who participated in the exchange, the idea was to share experiences about water and sanitation issues in each country. It was there they selected Kamatipa in Kitwe as an area for the pilot project to develop affordable models that would suit many people, particularly the poorest, as he explained. He mentioned that the Ugandan federation has already done such projects and he was interested in learning from them.

The SHARE project discusses mainly the idea of shared communal toilets that were successfully implemented in many countries across the SDI network. However, the idea was not well received by the Zambian federation. For example, as the Kitwe regional facilitator for daily savings explained, her objection to the ideas is based on her perception that there are some people that are naturally unclean and who will not use the toilets properly. She argues that only once you have your own toilet, you can control it. Most of the people in Kamatipa and other compounds have similar opinions, as observed during the federation meeting in Kamatipa. The Kitwe city council is also opposed to the notion of communal toilets due to maintenance issues, which have been experienced in past years especially in mining townships where the mines were providing such facilities. Contrary to the statements and opinions above, a female federation member from the Kawama compound in Kitwe argued: “Kamatipa people are lost”, as they don’t understand that with their own toilet the loan will be unaffordable, but “if they can share one building with separate doors, the loan will be small”. She explains that close to her house in the Kawama compound, she uses an

\(^3\)To learn more visit the website of the SHARE project: [http://www.shareresearch.org](http://www.shareresearch.org)

\(^4\)To learn more visit [http://www.nwsc.com.zm/projects.htm](http://www.nwsc.com.zm/projects.htm)
ecosan toilet, built as one block with different doors and it works very well for her family. This is an example of an active dialogue in the federation on a topic, where federation members have different opinions and cannot easily reach a common ground. When I was there it was still unclear in which way the Kamatipa scheme would proceed with building toilets under the SHARE project.

The NWSC project and the SHARE project intersect on the aspects of demonstrating alternative sanitation models, namely the pour flush, VIP and ecosan. The other point of intersection is that one of the pilot settlements in both projects is the Kamatipa compound. From the observations during meetings between the Kitwe federation branch and NWSC, it was clear that both sides spoke about the same problems and solutions but in different contexts and languages. After rounds of meetings and negotiations the NWSC agreed to use grant money from the government more efficiently and build 800 toilets instead of 500. This became possible, thanks to their newly established partnership with the federation where the beneficiaries will also contribute with money, instead of getting the toilets completely for free as originally planned. Also, as I observed during meetings with Kamatipa almost all federation members said that if NWSC would come and simply build 500 toilets in a community with 4000 households completely for free, it would bring conflicts and divisions between the people.

As the result of dialogue sessions and negotiations, the management of NWSC decided to collaborate with the federation in the public awareness campaigns on best water, sanitation and hygiene practices and joint demonstrations of sanitation models. Departing from project documentation and agreements, NWSC was first looking only at regular contractors. However, the federation objected to use such expensive conventional method. In the end, they agreed that the federation would also take upon itself to find and mobilize artisans for the construction. The artisans will be trained in toilet construction by NWSC engineers and will then be given service contracts to construct toilets in 3 pilot settlement (People’s process officer in Kitwe).

The People’s process officer in Kitwe said that in this project the federation is responsible for tasks that NWSC finds difficult, for example community mobilizing and help with identifying the most vulnerable families in the community. The political structures on the neighborhood level represented by councilors and Resident development committees are not suitable for identifying the potential beneficiaries, as they are prone to make decisions in favor of their political supporters, he explained. It seems that compared to politicians, the federation, as a non-political structure with its local networks, is better equipped for this task. According to my observations, the federation is also regarded as a legitimate representative of the poor people. The federation works with other community organizations/clubs and churches that are supporting the most vulnerable – orphans and elderly. It is important to note here that the beneficiaries of the NWSC project will not necessarily be federation members.

The federation is also mobilizing beneficiaries to start preparations for the construction by bringing sand and stones to the site and also to use their block-making machine as a group. As mentioned above, the beneficiaries do not get the toilets for free, but on the other hand they do not need to pay the full price. During the negotiations with the NWSC, the federation clearly stated that it opposes handouts and proposed to make at least some contribution that would be both valuable and affordable. Thus, the federation and NWSC decided that beneficiaries will be responsible for the superstructure of the
toilet, which means that they can take a loan with ten percent interest to cover the costs of cement, roof sheets and a door (in total approximately 400 USD). However, in case they have some savings or can receive help from elsewhere they do not need to burden themselves with a loan. NWSC covers the rest – the costs for the pit-latrine cement block, salaries for the artisans and the professional supervisors during the construction.

According to another People’s process officer in Kitwe, the projects are not about building toilets, but changing mindset – of the federation, communities and local authority. Thus, the main achievement so far is that the People’s Process and the federation succeeded to persuade NWSC to think outside project mentality. As the interviews and observations suggest, the process of negotiations is very difficult, as for both the state owned utility company and the federation it is the first project of this kind. However, the results of the negotiations and the plan for the implementation of the project sound very positive. The federation has an opportunity to prove its readiness to mobilize people and demonstrate its accumulated resources – financial, technical and social capital. For NWSC it is a chance to show that they are capable to listen and to meet the needs of the poor.

5.5. Conclusions

This chapter discussed the collective practices of the Zambian Homeless and Poor’s People’s Federation. The first block of findings about three types of savings, income generating loans, skills trainings and resource centers builds the basis for the discussion of the first research question about building self-reliance. These practices, which are directed inwards for the development and asset building of the federation members, could be interpreted as preparations for actions, where the federation would start to engage other stakeholders, particularly the state. The second part of this chapter presented the collective practices with direct political implications that will be further discusses in relation to mainly insurgent planning and co-production, but also in relation to critical engagement, covert and hybrid planning as well as Pieterse’s domains of political engagement. These findings cover such practices as enumerations and mapping, housing and sanitation model exhibitions, dialogues sessions and forums with the local authorities and other stakeholders, land negotiations, housing and sanitation construction projects. The results suggest that the Zambian federation is engaged in almost all of the abovementioned practices simultaneously, when looking at groups in many different settlements across the country. They do not seem to conflict with each other. On the contrary, some assets obtained during one practice can be used for the other. As the federation members noted, most of the skills and ideas for their practices were learned through international exchanges. This suggests that membership in SDI plays an important role in formulating the Zambian collective practices.
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction

The results show that the federation is engaged in many different practices, ranging from practices for building self-reliance, such as daily savings and soft loans, to challenging the status quo of the urban poor through enumeration and mapping, and to larger development projects in collaboration with the state, such as housing or sanitation provision. The discussion will start with the argument that building self-reliance is essential for the further actions that are directed at involvement with the state and other stakeholders. The latter actions are grouped as practices with direct political implications and will be reviewed in relation to insurgent planning and co-production concepts. This study argues that the federation is using both models. Thus, their approach can be called hybrid. In order to place the federation practices in a political context the practices are discussed using Pieterse’s theoretical framework of five domains of political engagement. Finally, the implications of the international networking are discussed.

6.2. Building self-reliance through collective practices

The purpose of this section is to answer the first research question about the rationalities behind the collective practices of the federation with the focus on the first set – self-reliance practices. The results will be discussed in relation to insurgent planning and co-production theories. Out of the eight components of the federation, four are aimed at building self-reliance and self-help: daily savings, Swalisano Urban Poor Fund saving, health savings and skills training. The Zambian federation is present all over the country and some of its branches are more developed and mature, while others have just set up their first savings schemes. Due to differences in the phases of federation development across different cities and communities, it is not possible to speak about the federation as a whole and say whether the Zambian federation is in the self-help building phase or already in completing construction projects. However, as data gathered during interviews and observations in four different cities suggest, every branch of the federation goes through similar general patterns of development – mobilization, community-to-community exchanges (most often with neighboring towns), setting up savings schemes, income generating loans, enumerations, house-model exhibitions, dialogue with the local government about tenure certificates, sanitation or other issues relevant for a particular settlement, negotiations about acquiring land etc. Thus, the four self-reliance building activities can probably be regarded as the backbone of the federation and can build a platform for further actions, as discussed below.

Self-help assists the organization in many different ways. First, daily and health savings help to deal with daily struggles and emergency situations in the lives of the poor. Second, the savings mobilize and build the ‘family’ spirit in the community. Gathering of not only money, but also problems helps to build trust and social networks, which enables the federation to join efforts and lead the community in one direction, effectively manage conflicts and individual self-interests. Third, besides community organizing, the federation builds its financial assets and enhances the affordability line for its members. Those assets are also aimed to show the seriousness of the federation’s aspirations and capacities as well as show that the federation has something to offer at the negotiations table. Fourth, through the savings and frequent community meetings,
the poor, and particularly women train their public speaking ability and self-confidence. These are probably useful skills for negotiations with the state or other stakeholders for the development of the settlements.

It is possible to argue that the financial autonomy of the federation and its self-help practices take over the responsibilities of the state or even replace the state. These actions could even be named insurgent according to Meth’s definition as they “parody and perform state-like functions through their material provision of infrastructure and services” (Meth 2010:259). Indeed, daily, Swasilano Urban Fund and health save-withdraw schemes function as an alternative informal bank and remind an insurance company in communities, where the state is de facto absent. It is also possible to claim that in this way the poor point out the inadequate policies of the bureaucratic state and its inability to meet the slum dwellers’ level of income. However, the results suggest that the federation has no intention of challenging the state and its authority through its internal self-help practices. Practically, all four self-help components build the federation’s economic autonomy and create a platform for potential actions that are not internal anymore and have more explicit political implications. The role of self-help is interpreted in a very similar way at other SDI affiliate federations around the world, which indicates that it is the common collective practice promoted by the SDI (Patel et al. 2001).

It is interesting to compare the findings about the federation practices with Beard’s (2002) concept of covert planning, particularly because her concept is an attempt to answer how the civil society can gain skills in restrictive political environments, which could be relevant to the Zambian context. Covert planning according to her bridges the gap between the situation of no-skills and no-experience with structural and political reform. As Beard (2002) proposes, the learning process for future radical action starts with participating in state-sponsored programs, shifts to community-based planning and to covert planning before getting ready for the radical actions for structural and political reform. The Zambian federation started with internal savings practices and mobilizing its members, and only after these preparations and building financial assets it began engaging with the state, as for example the project with Nkana Water and Sewerage Company in Kitwe. Furthermore, the practices of the federation are not as linear as covert planning suggests and can involve re-mobilizing and updating savings practices, as it happened in Kamatipa, when many members left the federation and a new mobilization was conducted.

The interviews suggested that the federation does not start with big projects before it feels confident in its strength, its organization capacity and financial resources. This is supported by Bovaird’s (2007) argument, that co-production involves risks for both sides and it is, therefore, needed to develop mutual trust between users and professionals. This could explain why the federation strives to accumulate finance and skills to be seen as a reliable partner before engaging in relations with the state. It is important to remember that it is applicable to the development of the federation on the local level. As was mentioned above, the Zambia federation can simultaneously work with mobilization in some settlements and engage in co-production in other, which could happen even within the same city.
6.3. Collective practices of the federation that engage the state

The purpose of this section is to continue to answer the first research question and focus on the set of federation’s practices that engage the state. The findings will be discussed in the light of insurgent planning and co-production theories as well as complemented by the concepts of hybrid planning and critical engagement. Furthermore, the federation practices will be reviewed in relation to the political engagement framework to situate the federation in a broader urban planning context.

6.3.1. Discussion of the federation practices in relation to insurgent planning

As the literature review showed, the insurgent planning can take many forms from small daily practices to big protests (Friedmann’s 2002; Holston 2009; Miraftab 2009; Sweet and Chakars 2010; Meth 2010). The findings suggest that some of the federation practices can be viewed as insurgent, but their special feature is that they use negotiations and not protests. This section argues that enumerations as well as sanitation and housing pilot projects create spaces where the federation can advance its view on urban development. It also argues that by challenging some of the politics of the state the federation is not just criticizing and claiming the rights of the urban poor, but comes with proposals and suggestions for alternative visions. Insurgent planning is used here as a theoretical framework to discuss the political implications of these practices of the federation.

Although the enumerations are done with consent and even with help of local authorities, which usually provide logistical support to inform the people in the respective settlement, the results suggest that the enumerations are examples of Holston’s (2009) ‘insurgent citizenship’. In the perception of interviewed federation members, the main goal of enumerations by the Zambian federation is to change the conventional ways of engaging authorities and to make the communities more active in the development of their settlements. The enumerations and mapping may create spaces for political engagement with the authorities, but the federation does not base these engagements on claims of rights to land or housing, as the right-based approach would suggest (see for example Lefebre 1996). The federation’s language is milder but is build on the assertive principle that the solutions for the development of a community should come from the community itself. Such a knowledgeable community challenges its status quo by pushing for what is needed and opposing imposed development. This also goes in line with Holston’s observation that the poorest communities in slums are able to produce ‘alternative futures’ to urban development (2009:28).

The federation’s demonstrations of toilets or houses are sites of what Holston would call ‘contemporary metropolitan innovation’ (2009:27). These models are pragmatic examples, or also called ‘precedent setting’, of what poor people can do once supported with land and financial resources. These house-model or toilet-model exhibitions could fall into the category of insurgent strategies, as it seems that they are build to deal with the uneasiness and reluctance of the state to adopt pro-poor urban development. The exhibitions built by the local groups of the Zambian federation are sites where the poor can claim and showcase their own way of building houses or toilets to the city officials and other stakeholders and persuade them that it is worth supporting such developments. The federation attempts to demonstrate alternative housing construction materials as well as alternative sanitation options that are cost effective and promote sustainability, affordability and changes in conventional practices. As Appadurai
argues, by doing this they “enter a space of public sociality, official recognition and technical legitimation” (2002:38). Indeed, exhibitions of model houses or toilets may attract the attention from politicians and media, which may lead to greater recognition and legitimation of the federation’s practices.

The results suggest that during the process of enumerations and house construction the federation mobilizes the community and gains technical skills, which Appadurai would call ‘cultural’ and ‘technical’ capital (Appadurai 2002:37). Both enumerations and exhibitions often follow the ‘philosophy of do first, talk later’ and are aimed at changing the terms of the power relations with the government (Appadurai 2002:34). However, despite being called ‘insurgent’, the practices are not challenging the role of the state in urban development. The federation is not taking the role of the local authority or utility upon itself, it is rather reminding the state of its mandate, as the coordinator of the supporting NGO People’s Process argued. He used a vivid allegory to describe his and the federation’s work in relation to the state: “The mother is trying to feed the child, and the child is busy biting the mother.” He meant in a way similar to Appadurai that the process of engagement of the state is often slow and painful and can, therefore, be called ‘politics of patience’.

To sum up, the federation’s insurgent practices are based on proposing alternative ways of doing development based on the poor people’s realities and experiences. It is opposing the development ideas that are not suitable for the conditions of the urban poor.

6.3.2. Discussion of the federation practices in relation to co-production

Mitlin (2008) and Marshall (2004) point out that co-production is not simply about delivering services but is now widely used as a political tool by the civil society. This section argues that the federation, through collaboration with the state and other stakeholders, advances its own development agenda. The federation uses the co-production projects as sites of ‘precedent setting’ in urban politics, which are planned to be replicable and scaled up. This is apparent in the analysis of the Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation project, which will be discussed in this section.

The Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation Project broadly fits within the most popular definitions of co-production. In accordance with Ostrom co-production is “a process through which inputs from individuals who are not ‘in’ the same organization are transformed into goods and services”(1996: 1073). The project involves inputs from state utility company NWSC in the form of financing and technical expertise while the beneficiaries contribute parts of the costs, materials, own labor and, most importantly, the social capital of the federation. As Parks et al. (1981) argued, co-production is technically feasible when regular producer inputs and consumer inputs are either substitutes for each other or are interdependent. The results suggest that the studied project involves both conditions. In terms of labor inputs, the community artisans can substitute contractors and are more cost-effective. Moreover, the decision to train and employ local artisans also has broader economic benefits for the community. At the same time, there are also elements of interdependence between the beneficiaries, who lack the technical expertise and finances, and the NWSC, which is much dependent on the federation’s input of community mobilization and organizing. Indeed, the critical role of the citizen participation for service provision is one of the main arguments of the proponents of co-production (Parks et al. 1981; Marshal 2004). This can partly be
explained by the chaotic and complex environment in slums and large populations that live there. Joshi and Moore (2004) would call this complex environment “logistical drivers of co-production”, due to the informal nature of the settlements, which makes it more challenging for the state to communicate with the slum dwellers. At the same time it can be argued that citizen involvement becomes increasingly important due to the decline of the state’s role in Zambia, in the public sector in general and public service delivery in particular. Joshi and Moore (2004) would refer to this decline as “governance drivers of co-production”, because of the declining capacity of governments to meet the needs of their citizens.

Mitlin’s (2008) examples of co-production are ‘self-organized’ and run by the grassroots organizations, which is partly true for the sanitation project in Kitwe. Even though the Zambian government and the African Development Bank initiated the NWSC project, it was the federation that pushed for the modification of the project and brought in the elements of co-production. Additionally, the findings suggest that in the similar way, as in Mitlin’s (2008) examples of co-production, the federation’s logics behind using co-production was not exclusively based on the state’s desire to lower the costs of the service, but rather on the needs of the residents in the Kamatipa settlement. During the meetings between the federation and NWSC, both the federation members and other people living in Kamatipa opposed the initial plan of the project to build 500 toilets, since this would cover only one quarter of the households in Kamatipa and potentially bring conflicts and division among the residents in Kamatipa. The final agreement was to build 300 additional toilets for the same money, even though this was still short of the actual needs. Perhaps more importantly, these negotiations set a significant precedent: the state-owned company has under the pressure from the federation and the residents changed the terms of its project to better meet the needs of the community. These findings can be linked to Mitlin’s point that the co-production has “ambitious goals to change the way in which the state functions towards a more decentralized form of operation, with greater citizen control over state resources” (2008:352).

As Bovaird (2007) notes, co-production may help to put the beneficiaries closer to the center of the decision-making. For the federation, the main goal was to influence the terms of the project and change attitudes at NWSC towards the urban poor. “This project is not about building toilets but about changing mindsets – ours, communities, council, local authority,” – wrote an officer at the supporting NGO People’s Process. This claim is supported by Brandsen and Pestoff (2006), who argue that co-production changes not only service delivery, but also transforms both sides involved in the process. However, the observations and interviews about the NWSC project suggest that much depends on the situation and context. The project by NWSC had many limitations from the beginning and the federation was not capable of changing everything they wanted because of donor requirements, such as the type of toilets and the delivery schedule. It means that there was not enough room for the community to discuss alternative sanitation options and ways to make the toilets more affordable and easy to replicate.

Other projects of the federation that involve the state for producing houses are less vivid examples of co-production. The housing projects differ from pilot projects in their focus on the outcomes and less on the process of political engagement, so the housing projects can be seen as the result of successful housing exhibitions. When the federation
acquires land from the council with a discount or for free it can be regarded as an element of co-production. During the construction the federation receives usually technical advise and support from the council’s engineers – another input from the local authority. From here, the delivery of the house and financing are completely on the shoulders of the beneficiaries, who become so busy with building and loan repayment, so that he or she is not thinking of the political implications of such projects. Practically, the only way the building project may influence politics is perhaps during the future land negotiations when the council might wonder whether previously allocated plots are successfully developed or not.

To sum up, NWSC sanitation project has a potential to be a turning point in the relationship between the state utility company and the Kitwe federation branch, which marks a change in the way both partners can collaborate in order to create more value for the respective community. Also, the fact that NWSC agreed to work with the federation could mean that the state company recognizes the federation as a reliable and suitable partner. This is an important notion in regard to a potential strengthening of the federation’s participation in urban politics, which in modernist planning was under exclusive control of planning professionals and the state (Taylor 1988).

6.3.3. Collective practices of the federation debated in urban politics

Pieterse’s (2008) theoretical framework of political engagement has many interesting discussion points, which are very relevant to the studied organization. It takes up both what is visible, for example forums, and what is less explicit in urban politics, such as assumptions about what a city should look like according to symbolic politics. This section will discuss the federation’s activities in relation to Pieterse’s five domains in the following order: representative politics, neo-corporatist stakeholder forums, symbolic politics, grassroots development practices and direct action. Additionally, the grassroots development practices will connect the above-discussed themes about self-reliance, insurgent planning and co-production with the ideas of hybrid planning (Ibabao 2013) and critical engagement (Bryant 2001).

According to the information I received through my observations and interviews, the federation was not involved in representative politics. The federation members and the supporting NGO employees, whom I interviewed, said that the federation neither supports any political party nor owns any. However, it is important to bear in mind the possible bias in these responses, as the topic of cooperation with politicians could be very sensitive and controversial. According to the leader of the supporting NGO, no party affiliation gives the freedom to work with anyone who is in the government to be able to promote the federation’s approaches to development. The federation’s leader also stressed that it is essential to not become dependent on any external partner, whether it is a party or a donor. Here, Pieterse would warn that acting in this seemingly “apolitical fashion” might hinder the federation from achieving grand structural changes. Pieterse’s critique is related to Friedmann’s interpretation of insurgent planning, as aiming “to change underlying structural causes to injustice” (Friedmann 2002:84). However, as the examples of enumerations and exhibitions suggest, insurgent planning practices do not necessarily need to be grand overt acts as Friedmann (2002) argues. The findings show that the federation’s insurgent planning is different from Friedman’s, as it seems to not engage in the overt actions, but makes its own conscious decision to start with changes within the federation itself and incrementally engage in
city politics. Here, Pieterse (2008) would probably agree that the federation is making progress in manoeuvring between creating partnerships with the state and maintaining its financial and operational autonomy.

In relation to Pieterse’s second domain, neo-corporatist stakeholder forums, the findings suggest that the federation is actively using these meetings to introduce themselves to other stakeholders as well as to propose to work together with them either in its own projects or in state-led and sponsored programs. Pieterse suggests that it is worth being skeptical about such forums, as they not always include the most vulnerable. According to my observations the forums (or otherwise named Dialogue sessions), organized by the federation, which I visited during my field studies, seemed to have relatively good representation of marginalized groups. At least the local federations seem to be open and invite non-federation members as well. However, whether the poorest of the poor were adequately represented at the forums, as the federation claims, was impossible to conclude in this study.

Pieterse warns that the representatives at the stakeholder forums can be too focused on building general consensus. He continues that seeking consensus can exclude any battles of conflicting opinions. However, during the visits to three such forums organized by the federation in different cities I found that the members are not afraid to openly criticize the failures of the local government or officials. Prior to the forums, the federations have planning meetings to discuss what relevant questions to raise and the tactics for the forum in order to act as a group and to show itself in the best light. During the negotiations the federation makes use of its accumulated assets and best practices in the particular city, nationwide and even internationally throughout SDI. Indeed, as Pieterse (2008:94) noted, without being autonomous and being active also outside of the meeting rooms, these stakeholder forum would not be as progressive for the civil society groups.

As for the symbolic discourses in urban planning discussed by Pieterse (2008) and Robinson (2002), the federation appears to be conscious that the towns will be modernized and some evictions of informal settlements are inevitable. For example, Lusaka is constantly being rebuilt and has a number of new shopping malls owned by South Africans companies. During the forums it looks like the federation exposes the local authorities to the realities in the slums and is trying to make the urban development pro-poor. It is also arguing for legalization of the unplanned settlements and providing title certificates. However, it takes time and at the moment there is no real pro-poor policy in urban planning in any town in Zambia.

Basically all collective practices of the Zambian federation could possibly fall under Pieterse’s forth domain grassroots development practices. These are the practices that in this thesis are argued to be performed to build self-reliance oriented towards the federation members – daily, health, Swalisano fund savings, income generating loans and skills trainings. Also, this fourth domain would possibly cover enumerations, mapping and housing and toilet exhibitions, that are argued to have characteristics of insurgent planning, and the sanitation and housing construction projects, that are argued to be examples of co-production.

Ibabao (2013) would call the mixture of insurgent planning and co-production “hybrid planning”. It is important to note that in her paper on SDI affiliated Philippine federation savings practices and skills trainings were regarded as insurgent, but
enumerations done in collaboration with the state were presented as co-production. Even though SDI has a set of basic principles and savings are absolutely the most important, the results suggest that it is up to every national federation how to apply those principles. This indicates that practices are shaped by the context of a particular country and, thus, the results are different.

The possibility of simultaneous usage of insurgent planning and co-production practices, which are often regarded as mutually exclusive, is supported by Beard (2003) and Bryant (2001). According to Beard (2003), it is not smart to limit the practices if the socio-political situation in a country is “healthy”. It is difficult to define how “healthy” the situation in Zambia is, but the results suggest that the federation has probably managed to to some limited extent win support and recognition from the state, for example from the state owned utility company NWSC in the Copperbelt region. Thus, it could be assumed that the federation can ‘afford’ to criticize the state for one issue while not allowing this to impede the development of good long-term relations. Bryant’s (2001) concept of “critical engagement” is found to be related to this notion as it entails such interaction between the state and the NGO, where both conflict and cooperation coexist.

In relation to Pieterse’s (2008) domain direct action, the findings indicate that the federation’s practices are absent in this domain. The results suggest that the federation members are not claiming rights, as presupposed in the domain of direct action. Pieterse (2008:95) states that “direct action is not about consensus”, whereas the federation seems to seek consensus in all its engagements with the state. The practices of the federation that have most elements of opposition are enumerations and model exhibitions and these are quite far from Pieterse’s direct action that “pushes most the blatantly at the boundaries of the possible” (2008:95). When looking at other SDI affiliates, for example the Indian Alliance, the main lesson from their extensive experience is that there is no point in claiming rights to the city, if it is evident that the state has limited or no capacities to realize such claims (Roy 2009). Comparing the Indian federations with the Zambian reveals that the Zambian federation has not even had any confrontations, such as protests towards the state, since its inception. According to the federation members, the Zambian federation opts for using the law when the need arises. Interestingly, direct action is often seen as a prerequisite for just law (Roy 2009). The results suggest that the federation aims to address the urban inequalities but it is not clear how it can lead big structural changes.

6.4. International networks and their implications for the urban politics

The purpose of this paragraph is to answer the second research question - how do transnational networks among federations of informal settlement dwellers shape their collective practices? It will discuss the flows of ideas among the SDI affiliates in relation to the recent debates on relationship between the local and the global.

The results suggest that the federation is in constant exchange of ideas on multiple scales. If an idea emerges in one settlement and proves to bring some benefits to the community it will then be shared with other saving groups, other towns, nationwide and even abroad. As, the interviews suggest, the Zambian federation is very open to learn from other countries and to test the ideas in local contexts. As Massey (2004) argues, the places are “criss-crossings”; they constitute themselves and constitute the global, as the places can produce ideas, which travel elsewhere and have potential to become
For example, the idea of savings schemes emerged in Indian slums and then spread to the other countries in the SDI network (Patel et al. 2001).

The community-to-community exchanges internationally and within the country aim to address various needs of the network members and are conducted across all components and practices of the federation. During the time of its inception, as the interviews suggest, the Zambian federation learned about savings and community mobilization from the Zimbabwean affiliate of SDI. Now when the Zambian federation is mature it can go and teach other emerging federations abroad or continue mobilizing in Zambia. Regarding self-help practices, the federation has recently learned from Malawi and Namibia about the strategy of “saving for purpose” that was later communicated to South Africa. When Namibians came to the Copperbelt, they not only taught about savings, but also learned about the health component, that is successfully implemented by the Zambian federation. During other exchanges to South Africa and Malawi, the Zambian federation members learned about the stories of successful businesses launched by the federation members there, for example supermarkets or mushroom planting. These findings go in line with arguments of Gibson-Grahans’s (2002), who criticized the often restricted analytical focus on the power of the global. She proposed that such ideas as feminism emerge in one place and become global, then are transmitted through a language and a set of practices, and not via a mass organization. This is similar to how the ideas flow in SDI – through a number of common collective practices of savings, enumerations, model houses and common discourses of patience, non-confrontation and consensus. However, it is not possible to say whether the ideas and the principles of the savings would exchange between the communities and countries that easily without the formal structural organization of the SDI network.

Besides the exchanges relevant to the self-reliance practices, the federation is using exchanges for learning specialist skills for building houses, toilets, doing enumerations, mapping etc. The interviews suggest that most of the practical knowledge in the Zambian federation comes from exchanges with Zimbabwe, for example enumerations, GIS or how to build ecosan toilets. Some exchanges can be devoted to visiting ‘sister’ federation on the exhibition opening day or as support during land negotiations. The Zambian federation assumed that foreign visitors give more credibility to the efforts of the federation. These findings are similar to Lindell’s (2009) in Maputo and stress the importance of information sharing for the empowerment of local communities, not only with new knowledge but also with self-confidence.

Strategic exchanges (or also called political exchanges), where key politicians or officials from a particular Zambian city are invited to follow the Zambian federation to another country or city, are aimed to show in practice on the existing examples what their respective local federation wants from them, as the coordinator of the supporting NGO explained. Such exchanges were done from different cities in Zambia to Zimbabwe and Namibia, where the local governments are believed to be supportive towards the respective local federations. As the interviewed federation members said, such exchanges often led to improved relations with the local authorities, which suddenly became persuaded in the capacities of the poor and much more favorable to allocate plots for the federation houses. It is, however, difficult to judge whether the international exchanges really have such a strong impact on politicians or there could be other reasons behind their supportive attitudes towards the Zambian federation.
Nevertheless, the interviews suggest, similarly to Lindell (2009), that the international networks of the federation can influence local politics.

As part of SDI, the federation accesses more opportunities to take part in global forums on poverty, urban development or health, as many of the federation members who traveled to such forums mentioned. They argued that it would be impossible to be able to go to such gatherings if the Zambian federation was small and not connected to the global network, as it becomes more difficult to ignore the large numbers of people. However, the results also suggest that the local practices of communities have priority over global forums and, as Edwards (2001:149) argue, the activities on the global level are just ‘icing on the cake’. Thus, in contrast to Batliwala’s (2002) findings that the success on the transnational level created unbalance between local and global actions, the Zambian federation members, according to their interviews, did not perceive a tension between their local and international practices. Presumably participation of the federation in global gatherings raise the status of the national federations in the eyes of their national governments, for example when meeting with the Zambian Minister of Local Government and Housing at World Urban Forum in Italy.

It is true that the local contexts play a major role and not everything that was learned abroad is possible to copy and adopt in Zambia. For example, as federation members explained, the mushroom planting is not possible in local conditions, neither was the idea of community managed and shared toilets welcomed by everyone. Nevertheless, many ideas that were first met with opposition were successfully adopted after some time when the value was understood. In general, the interviews suggest that the federation encourages international sharing of ideas and is willing to learn and develop.

6.5. Limitations of the study

There were some unavoidable limitations of the research. First, because of the time limit this research was conducted on a small sample of the federation members in only three towns, while the federation is present in 43 towns in Zambia. Therefore, this geographical scope and the number of participants limit generalization of the results about the case study itself. Second, the collective practices of the Zambian federation are to a large extent defined by the local context. Thus, the results might not be applicable to other SDI federations or other urban grassroots organizations in other countries. Third, the data gathering through qualitative interviews, despite its advantages, is affected by the interviewer’s cultural background both when choosing which questions to pose and when interpreting the answers. The interviews could also be affected by misunderstandings or wrong translations. It could be even possible that the interviewees left out interesting facts of opinions because they might think that these are not interesting or relevant for the researcher. Even though the interviews were complemented by observations, here again, misinterpretations are not avoidable because most of the meetings were held in local languages. Furthermore, because it was her first visit to Zambia, the researcher did not always understand how the presence of the researcher affected the flow of the federation meetings.

6.6. Conclusions

This study investigated collective practices of an urban grassroots organization in Zambia and their implications for addressing urban poverty in the post-colonial context. The results were discussed across two theoretical standpoints. First, the collective
practices were analyzed against insurgent planning and co-production concepts. These concepts tend to be regarded as mutually exclusive and only a handful of authors recognize the possibility of using both models by the same civil society group (Bryant 2001; Mitlin 2008; Ibabao 2013). Second, the role of community exchanges via the international grassroots network was discussed in relation to the debates on connections between the local and the global. The findings are related to the debate on alternative planning models that recognize the role of civil society in the urban planning and address the academic neglect of the global South. The basic assumption of this thesis is that the achievements of the Zambian federation to date show that urban planning is not only for professionals, in contrast to modernist planning paradigm prevailing in Zambia.

The first main finding of the study is about how the federation main activities build its self-reliance through collective practices. The argument is that the federation’s primary activities on the savings group level are aimed at accumulations of finance and skills to build self-confidence and construct the image of a reliable partner before engaging in relations with the state and other stakeholders. Mapping the practices of the Zambian federation across the country would show that in some compounds the federation is already capable of conducting enumerations, while in others the new federation members are at the stage of learning about the the savings books. As the results suggest, the aim of these practices is not only helping each other with daily poverty struggles, but getting prepared for more serious projects, where strong mobilization, community organizing and financial contributions are needed. Although daily, health and Swalisano Urban Poor Fund savings imitate the bank or insurance company functions to some extent, and could be regarded as a form of insurgent planning by Meth’s (2010), in the case of the Zambian federation they do not oppose the state in any way. On the contrary, the findings suggest that these practices may help to win the trust of the state, which is regarded by Bovaird (2007) as an important precondition for co-production.

The second group of findings suggests that the collective practices of the federation with direct political implications range from practices with elements of insurgent planning to co-production projects in collaboration with the state or state owned utility companies. Enumerations together with sanitation and housing model exhibitions are argued to be forms of Holston’s (2009) insurgent citizenship, as they transform the traditional passive relations with the state and build the platform for opposing imposed development. As the results suggest, the rationalities behind these practices are to activate communities, improve their knowledge about what is possible and affordable, and display it for the state and other stakeholders. However, contrary to more radical interpretations of insurgent planning, the federation’s practices do not include protests or merely claiming rights, but encourage solving any conflicts through negotiations. As the results suggest, such cautious and pragmatic strategy makes it possible for the federation to be critical towards some of the state’s policies and simultaneously engage in close collaborations with the state. This balancing resembles the concept of ‘critical engagement’ proposed by Bryant (2001) and Ibabao’s (2013) ‘hybrid planning’, which recognizes the possibility of use of both insurgent planning and co-production by the same organization.

With regard to the co-production practices, this study argues that the Nkana Water Supply and Sanitation Project modified by the federation is setting the precedent of the federation’s power in transforming the terms of the state service delivery project. Besides the expected benefits of co-production, the federation makes use of co-
production as a political tool for changing mindsets of the state owned utility company towards the urban poor. This part of the findings supports the arguments in previous research about the role of co-production in strengthening citizen participation in urban politics by Marshall (2004), Bovaird (2007), Mitlin (2008) and Ibabao (2013).

In relation to Pieterse’s (2008) framework, the results suggest that the federation’s practices fit neither into the ‘representative politics domain’ nor into ‘direct action’. The federation has chosen to not be affiliated to any political party in order to save its autonomy and it is reluctant to take part in radical actions that challenge the state’s authority. Instead, the federation is active in politics through its development practices discussed above, organizing and visiting stakeholder forums and in many small ways contesting the symbolic discourses of modern slum-free cities.

The third group of findings lends support to the argument that as a member of the international grassroots network SDI, the federation is both producing its own practices and is affected by the flow of ideas in the network. These findings support the prediction that the local and global are mutually constituted (Massey 2004), as some local ideas have the potential to become global and influence the local elsewhere. The international exchanges strengthen solidarity among slum dwellers in different countries, provide technical skills and innovative solutions as well as support during negotiations. These findings suggest that international networks have implications for the federation’s role in urban politics, which is in agreement with the findings of Lindell (2009).

To sum up, the federation practices range from self-help to actions with direct political implications, from practices with insurgent planning elements to co-production, from small neighborhood practices to participation in global urban forums.
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