

Local urban governance and the external (f)actor: Aid funds coming into a local governance arena in Kinshasa

Inge Wagemakers

Institute of Development Policy and Management (IOB), University of Antwerp

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Abstract:

During the last decades Kinshasa has grown rapidly (from 1million citizens in the '70s to about 8 million today). This engendered enormous squatter areas housing millions of people. Despite its large population, urban planning and state services are quasi absent in the new areas. In the DRC one could speak of a weak state already, but in the capital's recent urban spaces state influence is even weaker. In the absence of state services, creative forms of everyday life and local governance emerge, as local actors try to manage goods and services themselves. Local governance is in the recent urban areas certainly not a mere reflection of formal urban governance institutions.

Because these areas are housing millions of people, foreign development programmes start to operate there as well, often taking formal governance structures as departure points for interventions. But given the locally-specific, hybrid, 'new' mechanisms of local governance, development programs are entering a whole new arena that is not just following official urban governance rules.

This paper analyses the interaction between daily local urban governance and an external aid programme in a recent municipality of Kinshasa. It seems extremely difficult for the external project to influence local governance mechanisms, because of the way the programme is set up but also because of the specific way in which local urban governance functions. In Kinshasa's recent urban areas there is a very fragmented local governance in which the state is just one of many actors. Power networks and non-state actors determine local governance of goods and services. In this context the external development project comes in, trying to come to institutional change (aiming at buzzwords like empowerment, participation and democratisation). Yet, within the local context the project seems determined to fail (at least concerning its own goal of changing local governance procedures), as it operates on the one hand completely parallel to existing local political arenas and is on the other hand being inserted into local logics of governance and practical norms. We therefore argue that it is very difficult for an external 'structural' development project to come to institutional change in a context where governance is not determined by formal institutions or formal rules but by local individual actors and everyday practical norms.

1. INTRODUCTION: LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN NEW URBAN AREAS

During the last decades Kinshasa has been growing enormously. According to the national statistical institute of the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), there were 6.062.000 inhabitants in Kinshasa in 2000 (Nzuzi, 2008), compared to 1.198.720 inhabitants in 1973 (Flouriot, 1973). Today the city is estimated to count about 8 million inhabitants. Throughout this urban expansion especially the city's periphery has been expanding, bringing about enormous unplanned squatter areas which are housing millions of people. In fact, we should rather not name these areas 'peripheral' anymore, as nowadays they constitute the main surface and largest population of the city already.

Despite its large population, urban planning and state services are quasi absent in this urban periphery. In the DRC as a country one could speak of a weak state already, but in the capital's recent urban areas (emerged during the last 50 years) state influence is even weaker, in spite of being not that far located from Kinshasa's urban, provincial and national centre of political power.

Consequently, in the absence of state services creative forms of local governance emerge, as local actors try to manage necessary goods and services themselves. Local governance mechanisms in the peripheral urban areas certainly not a mere reflection of formal urban governance institutions or formal urban governance mechanisms. This is to be seen in many recently growing urban areas in developing countries. And as these new urban areas are gaining scope and weight, they are also co-determining to a larger extent the characteristics and appearance of the city.

Also, as these areas are housing millions of people, foreign or external development programmes start to operate there, yet, often taking formal governance structures as departure points for their interventions. But, taking into account the locally-specific and hybrid mechanisms of local governance, development programmes are entering a whole new arena that is not just following official urban governance rules.

To study this question of local governance and aid in an urban area with weak state involvement, I conducted field research in Kimbanseke. In Kimbanseke in Kinshasa, there are on the one hand the local mechanisms of local governance of goods and services, which are not at all in line with official urban state structures or institutions, and on the other hand there is a foreign development programme coming in, exactly trying to strengthen local governance. Through the study of this interaction, I will demonstrate and argue in this paper that it is extremely difficult for a development programme to work in a structural way in a context of very short-term and non-structural local governance as we find it in 'new' African urban contexts.

1.1. Area of research: Kimbanseke

Kimbanseke is the most densely populated peripheral municipality of Kinshasa¹, housing 946,372 inhabitants in 2004 (Nzuzi, 2008) while it did not even exist 50 years ago. In Kimbanseke I conducted a one month field research on the local 'institutional' landscape of Kimbanseke, studying local governance mechanisms around goods and services. And simultaneously I researched its interaction with a foreign development programme coming into Kimbanseke's arena(s) of local governance. Field research was based upon qualitative research, constituting of

¹ The city of Kinshasa counts 24 municipalities.

open interviews and observations. In total 62 interviews and observations were conducted (always a combination of both). I observed during interviews but I also observed gatherings of local actors and meetings of the aid programme. Interviews were conducted with all kinds of actors (state agents, commercial agents, local CBOs², staff of health centres and schools, religious actors, traditional authorities, local population, staff of the aid programme, people involved in local committees or participatory structures). The picture I sketch of the field(s) of actors concerning local governance of goods and services in Kimbanseke is definitely not a complete picture, but the most important aim was to spot logics, interesting processes and mechanisms of local governance rather than to be exhaustive and complete in its description. Therefore, actors of importance for the local governance of goods and services were interpreted very broadly; all sorts of actors that could have an influence on local governance were taken into consideration.

I also used secondary data and grey literature of the municipality and of Paideco (the aid programme of study), to confront them with or to add upon my own research findings. The one month field research was executed in August-September 2007, but additional information and insights have been used from subsequent research phases in Kimbanseke (on local governance of land and education, in 2008-2009-2010, in the framework of my PhD research).

Within this paper I will first describe and analyse the local governance arena in Kimbanseke. Thereafter I will focus on a specific aid programme coming into this arena. We will see how local actors and the aid programme interact and how local governance mechanisms are or are not being changed, or how the external programme is being integrated or not in local governance mechanisms.

2. LOCAL PERI-URBAN GOVERNANCE: A MESSY REALITY?

2.1. Formal structures and data on local governance of goods and services in Kimbanseke

Kimbanseke is one of the youngest and poorest municipalities of Kinshasa. It has been officially recognised and created as a municipality of Kinshasa in 1968³, and is housing today about a million inhabitants.

The majority of Kimbanseke's population, or 60% of all people above the age of 18 who are not studying, are (officially) jobless (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007:52). Half of Kimbanseke's households (51%) eats only one meal a day (47% eats two meals, 2% eats three meals a day) (Ibid., 2007:54). The largest part of the household budget is spent on food (almost about 70% of all expenses, in 2005) (Tshimanga, 2010:171). Income generating activities that are conducted mostly in Kimbanseke's households are (in order of importance) paid labour, trade activities, occasional labour, agricultural activities, and mutual family support (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007:48). Many people or households combine several activities, as paid jobs often constitute very low salaries. Because of the lack of formal employment, ever more women contribute (up to the main part) of the family household budget: in one in 10 families the woman provides 100% of the household budget; in 56,6% of all cases they contribute 50% or more to the household budget (Ibid., 2007:98). Small trade is mostly executed by women and women are also very much involved in agricultural activities (Ibid., 2007:100).

² Community-based organizations

³ Ministerial decree n°68-026 of March 30, 1968.

Access to basic services is problematic in Kimbanseke. Normally in the DRC drinkable water and electricity should be supplied by the national state companies Regideso and Snel. Yet, in practice they do not manage to supply all Congolese. Only 12,16% of Kimbanseke's households has direct access to drinkable water in its own parcel; 32,70% has to get drinkable water at neighbouring parcels and 33,40% has only access (and often at long distance) to non-secure water (from rivers, sources, etc.) (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007: 22). Electricity supply is even worse, as 70% of Kimbanseke's population does not have any connection to the electricity network (Ibid., 2007: 25), in spite of being urban dwellers of the capital city.

Education in the DRC is provided by a public-private partnership between the state and private actors. Three networks of schools exist: state schools run directly by the state, public 'conventionised' schools which are religious schools recognised by the state, and private schools. Amongst the private schools, some are recognised by the state and some are not. All schools run or recognised by the state are under control of the ministry of education and receive (very small) salaries for their personnel. Yet, in Kimbanseke, being a relatively recently emerged urban area, in contrast to other parts of the city, public schools are rather scarce. Kimbanseke counts a high number of private schools, of which many are not even recognised by the state. According to the educational administration's data of 2008 63% of all pupils of Kimbanseke went to private schools. Yet, according to estimations on the basis of data of a survey executed for BTC⁴ (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007:29) roughly 84,5% of all school aged children in Kimbanseke go to school. Nevertheless school drop outs are no exceptions as an estimated 19,1% of pupils drops out of school before the end of the school year (Ibid., 2007: 30). The main cause for pupils dropping out of school (for 80% of them) are the school fees (Ibid., 2007: 31). Both in public and private schools the system of school fees exists and fees are often high.

Although relatively many children go to school or at least try to go to school, attitude towards health services is different. This might be related to the very low quality of many (informal) health centres in Kimbanseke. Only 52% of all people of Kimbanseke say they go to a health centre when they are ill and 45% say they resort to self-treatment (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007: 36). This high percentage of self-treatment is also linked to the risk of being kept in the health centre until you pay your bill. Kimbanseke suffers from a very high child mortality rate; 7,1% of the households lost a child in 2006 (Ibid., 2007: 41). Just like the educational sector also the health sector is mainly organised by private (often religious) actors who have their centres recognised by the state. Yet, again, in Kimbanseke public health centres are very scarce and consequently many private and informal (non-recognised) health facilities arose. Kimbanseke is, like any other municipality, divided into 'health zones' which are controlled by state doctors. Yet, the local staff of the 'health zones' does not get any – or at least very little – support from the ministry of health.

At the level of the municipality not many services are organised, except for some functions like administrative services (registry office), levying taxes on trade, the municipal police, and maintenance of market places. At the political level, people are not elected but appointed. Although the DRC has had national elections in 2006, at the local level people are still waiting for the local elections (in the framework of the decentralisation that has been written in the constitution but not executed yet, now planned for 2013). So the mayor has been appointed, and there is no local council. 'Quarter chiefs' (administrative responsables of the

⁴ Belgian Technical Cooperation.

quarters) and 'street chiefs' exist, but have not been elected either. In our research we found that, in general, people in Kimbanseke tend to avoid administrative or municipal services.

In general the population feels distrust towards the municipal services, as the services are either non-existent or not trustworthy (the rules not being the same for everyone, and outcomes and costs being unpredictable). This is also comparable with what Tschimanga (2010: 282) found in her study on Kimbanseke: almost half of her respondents of the two quarters of Kimbanseke she studied did not have trust in any state institution, and especially not in municipal officers. In our own interviews we also encountered many people who did not have any trust in state institutions and tried to avoid them as much as possible – together with services in general as they are all expensive in their eyes and costs are often not predictable.

According to the survey of BTC the most important services people are expecting from the municipality are: electricity, water supply, and road maintenance (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007: 86). Yet, these are all services who score very badly in Kimbanseke, and which are provided (or not) on a higher provincial or national level. Although local representatives of the water and electricity companies do exist, and the municipality has some responsibility in road maintenance (not in road construction).

Due to a lack of state or public services, local organisations are trying to take care of some service delivery or at least of some problem solving. Many self-help groups exist and people organise small CBOs in the hope to acquire some funding from donor organisations coming in, or to provide certain services for fees. The creation of local associations has also been stimulated by the appearance of Paideco (the aid programme of study), as they work a lot with local associations. Many people are also member of a religious group, as revival churches are very present in Kimbanseke. According to Tschimanga (2010: 272) in 2005 34% of the household heads of her quarters of research were member of a certain group, most of them being in a religious or ethnic group, looking for a kind of social protection or security. The BTC survey (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007: 96) asked similar questions and they found that in general 60% of the men and 40% of the women of the interrogated households were member of an association.

In general we can see that in Kimbanseke state institutions and state agents are in place, and also at higher levels state services are being organised, but at the very local and daily level in Kimbanseke people are experiencing very little service delivery from the state. Yet, many people have some links with the state. Remarkably, of the 30% of household heads in Kimbanseke mentioning to have a paid job, 66,6% works for the state as a civil servant (Kinkela Savy et al., 2007: 52). This number includes teachers and health workers working for public schools or public health centres. Yet, because they earn very little, they all need secondary activities to earn enough revenue. So we see that many people are working in one way or another for the state, whilst at the same time state institutions and state services are very weak. This can be explained by the very fragmented way in which the Congolese state is functioning. We will look at this in more detail in the further analysis of local governance in Kimbanseke.

2.2. Local urban governance in the context of a weak state

To start with, we dig a bit into the conceptualization of the term 'governance'. Studying governance here, we certainly do not only talk about state governance. Governance can be seen as "the formation and stewardship of the formal and

informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions” (Hyden et al. as cited in Baud and de Wit, 2008, 6). Thus, governance is not a question of one actor or one particular group of actors (e.g. governmental ones), nor is it based upon a fixed or predictable format. It is about the formation of (both formal and informal) rules, which are formed through daily interactions between many actors. It is thus the interactions amongst many different actors that determine the ways goods or services are being governed and what are final outcomes for the people involved. As governance is always governance of something; governance without a good, service or action concerned is a hollow concept.

Also, governance is a continuous process (Lund, 2006). Governance is not static and is never-ending. We never come to a ‘final’ result. As long as there is a need for the concerned good or service it will be governed, meaning: interactions will occur around the good or service in order to organize the access and control over it. Consequently, governance is inextricably linked to power. Those actors or groups who manage to get control over certain goods or services and determine access to it, will be the most powerful. And mostly the other way around counts as well. The most powerful will very often get control easier. So, studying governance teaches us a lot about the organization of and the power relations within a certain society or ‘community’.

Therefore local governance of goods and services is also extremely important for the daily reality and living circumstances of people of a certain area or community. And, unavoidably, external actors coming into a community, whatever their plans are, get into interaction with the existing local governance mechanisms. And here it is very important to make a distinction between official (local) governance and real local governance.

Very often local governance is not (only) determined by official structures or governmental actors, but by many other non-governmental actors and non-official processes and mechanisms that ‘emerge’ out of the daily interactions between local actors around certain goods or services. In this context practical norms are an interesting concept. Practical norms being the norms created and followed by actors during the process of daily local governance (Olivier de Sardan, 2008). During daily negotiations between actors determining local daily governance processes, norms are being created, followed, reinforced and contested. Those norms, whether official or (often) unofficial (or a combination of both), which are being taken into account by different actors, have a huge impact upon final governance outcomes and local power relations.

Practical norms, non-official governance and non-governmental actors play important roles in (local) governance everywhere. But the weaker state structures and state rules are, the more they prevail and the more they determine final outcomes of access to goods and services for the people. In every society there is a competition for public authority, yet, very visibly in African states where governments are often rather weak (Lund, 2006).

In new urban areas of rapidly growing African cities very often state influence or state presence is even weaker than in other parts of the city. In such areas with many newcomers and weak state support for the supply of goods and services, local governance of goods and services is organized in very different ways, involving many non-state actors. Yet, this does not mean that – in a weak state context – no order exists or that no goods or services are being delivered or organized (Milliken and Krause, 2002). Rather, local governance is organized in different and locally determined ways. This is also what we see in Kinshasa, and more specifically in Kimbanseke, the urban area of our research.

2.3. Real daily local governance mechanisms in Kimbanseke

In Kimbanseke, our peripheral municipality of study, state services are scarce and the influence of official state institutions is weak. Yet, this does not mean that state agents are absent. They are rather 'one of the many actors'. If we would think in terms of classical institutional divisions like state, private and collective action sectors (Picciotto, 1995; Bastiaensen et al., 2002), in Kimbanseke governance of public goods and services is mainly situated in the border zones between these different sectors. Goods and services are not only governed by the state but also (and even mainly) by non state actors, sometimes in interaction with state actors.

As such the local institutional landscape of service delivery in Kimbanseke is rather formed through negotiations over power and continuous interactions between many (both state and non-state) actors, than through official rules or institutions. This means that local governance of public goods and services is fragmented and determined by many different actors and their strategies. In Kimbanseke there are many arenas of action around different public goods and services (e.g. health care, education road maintenance, etc.). Like Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (1997: 240) describe it, "an arena (...) is a place of concrete confrontation between social actors interacting on common issues". Of course, in any context arenas of action exist around goods and services, yet, if few official rules or institutions are in place or are respected the interaction or struggle within these arenas becomes much clearer.

2.3.1. A fragmented state

Yet, not only the local governance of public goods and services is fragmented in Kimbanseke, also the state is. First of all a generally enforced and respected state policy is in most domains lacking. But more fundamentally even the state is fragmented in the sense that local state actors act and interact, but with very little support from other or higher level state institutions. For example state doctors (of the *zone de santé*) and school inspectors write reports for their superiors, but without very little reaction. Also state salaries are extremely low and paid too late. Consequently, local state agents have their own functioning mechanisms: trying to find funding elsewhere, get money from the parents and clients, etc. State actors are very creative in finding their own strategies to try to execute their state functions and to earn a living for themselves, partly through their state function partly through other jobs or resources. State agents are following individual strategies, are not led by a certain policy and sometimes they are even completely working against each other (for example in the case of land conflicts in the municipality) (see Wagemakers and Makangu Diki, 2011).

This means also that actions of local state actors and institutions (e.g. the *zone de santé*) are driven rather by personal relations of the local state actors (e.g. the supervising doctor and nurse of the *zone de santé*) than by professional criteria. State actors base their (re)actions rather on personal connections and relations than on an embeddedness in institutions.

Thus, local state actors are present and operating, but most often in a self-organised way as they don't get many directions nor a policy framework from the central state. Moreover, rules or decisions are often not clear for themselves either. They finally try to fulfil their functions in the context of very weak and sporadic funding. As such, 'the state' or rather state actors, are operating in a

very fragmented way and collaboration with non-state actors is rather a necessity than a choice for them.

2.3.2 New actors and new ways of governing

Because of a lack of state services and scarce and temporal external development actions, at the end there is a high need for extra service delivery in Kimbanseke. Religious congregations fill up some gaps but are not able to provide services to all. Consequently, many small private and local associational initiatives emerged for the organisation of public goods and services in Kimbanseke.

Through organising themselves in local groupings or associations, people in Kimbanseke are very much relying on self-help to fulfil their need for services. A whole range of organisations and activities are continuously being formed and reformed to provide services, such as small private schools, informal pharmacies and health centres of individuals or associations, local associations repairing roads and taking anti-erosion measures, etc.

Except for filling up a gap in necessary public goods and services for the local community, the many local associations and groupings are also a kind of business through which people try to earn a living (see also Giovannoni et al., 2004). It is an important part of the many survival strategies people are setting up (like small trade, vegetable gardening and so forth). As such, they are also continuously looking for funding. As we interviewed many people of so-called self-help groups, associations, 'NGOs' or 'CBOs', only very few of them managed to auto-finance themselves, and the ones that were doing so were only auto-financing part of their activities. Many associations are once in a while (materially) supported by external or foreign organisations, but only few of them get financial support or real funding. Very few organisations succeed to get regular or permanent external funding. Consequently, the continuous search for funding (at all levels) is one of the important activities of those associations.

In order to get one's association or one's services settled relations are of extreme importance. Some of them seem to be very experienced in knowing where to get external funding or support, even when their 'professional' knowledge is not that big, whilst others do not have this specific knowledge at all. In Kimbanseke we could see there is a group or a certain 'elite' of civil society or 'associational' people who are sometimes taking part in different organisations at the same time. Yet, also a lot of split-ups in and between local associations exist. Social networks are constantly at play. Also, strategic relations are of importance, and here state agents often come in. Strategic relations with policemen, school inspector officers, military agents, agents of the national electricity company, teachers, nurses, etc. can be of great help for a private actor or association.

In any case, this whole of many non-state actors and activities gets institutionalised; meaning it is accepted and normal for people to go through these organisations to achieve their goals or get services provided. For the people of Kimbanseke it is normal to go to small private schools or health centres led by individuals or local groupings. Moreover, non-state actors that are really executing services visibly and directly to the people might have more institutionalised public authority in the eyes of the people than the state, as 'they do something'. Those 'informal' actors and services are recognised by the population, as they are seen as accepted ways of service delivery. Yet, in general a lot of uncertainty and distrust exists, towards all actors.

Within the local governance of service delivery in Kimbanseke uncertainty prevails as service providers emerge and disappear and 'rules' are unclear and continuously being adapted (e.g. whether health centres can conduct surgery or not, what are the prices for which treatment, etc.). In this way also clients can and have to negotiate, which makes using services quite complicated and very suitable for corruption and nepotism. Therefore people tend to avoid services as much as possible, whether they are delivered by state or non-state actors. Also, in general trust seems to be quite low within the population of Kimbanseke (see also Tschimanga, 2010). People do not have a lot of trust in state actors but they do not have much trust in local civil society organisations either. Local groupings and associations exist abundantly, but many people we met also consciously choose not to engage in local groupings or associations. In fact, everyone tries to engage in some strategies in order to gain something and especially in order not to lose any scarce resources (such as money, work, food, connections, and access to certain services).

2.3.3. Actors demarcating borders (social networks & mechanisms of exclusion)

Arenas are formed around certain organisations, projects, schools, health centres, donor initiatives,... and especially many different actors try to take their position within these arenas and maintain it. There is always a struggle going on for the very scarce resources, and control over them. There are continuous negotiations between actors over responsibilities, access to resources, marking their own 'domains' of action or generating revenues. When new opportunities come in (e.g. for external funding) the many local actors all try to get their part of it. This struggle also implies many processes of inclusion and exclusion. A local elite of 'civil society active' people we have been talking about, knows certain actors and has knowledge of how to get access to funding and support from external actors coming in. They form a kind of in-group, in contrast to the big out-group of people not being active in these civil society networks (cf. Vranken et.al, 2003).

Little local associations or self-help groups are also trying to form with some people a kind of in-group to provide some advantages and/or services to themselves, whereas at the level of the city of Kinshasa Kimbanseke's population is clearly in the out-group. They do not have good access to resources or services, so they have to try to arrange and organise some services on their own. As such social networks are very important both for individuals and associations or private initiatives in order to survive. However, collaboration also has to be useful for each party, in order to fit in their coping strategies.

Yet, a lot of local associations or groupings do not have that much to offer to others to make cooperation to the benefit of both parties. Consequently, a lot of local actors in Kimbanseke were much more looking for foreign or external partners than to try to collaborate amongst each other. Especially for the small associations their strategy was mostly to hold and try to ameliorate their position, even at the level of the individual, only collaborating for well-defined purposes on the very short term. People are busier with their own survival than with cooperation. So, on the one hand relations with other people are indispensable to survive and to have access to services; on the other hand relations have to be useful, if not, people do not want to waste their energy on them.

Logically, in this situation arenas of struggle around foreign development programmes coming in, are quickly formed. In order to analyse this better and to gain knowledge on the interaction between local governance mechanisms and external aid programmes in new urban areas, we will take a closer look at an interesting case: a large foreign development programme entering Kimbanseke.

3. THE CASE OF PAIDECO IN KIMBANSEKE: AN AID PROGRAMME COMING INTO LOCAL GOVERNANCE ARENAS

In this section we will study how local governance arenas in Kimbanseke interact with a foreign development programme coming in. First I will give a short description of the development programme of study. Next, I will analyse the interaction between the incoming programme and local governance actors and mechanisms.

3.1. Paideco, a participatory development programme

Paideco is a participatory development programme of BTC, the Belgian Technical Cooperation. Paideco is a programme spread over different regions in the DRC. Paideco stands for '*Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Développement Communautaire*', meaning 'Support programme for local community development initiatives'. Paideco-Kin or Paideco-Kinshasa is active in the municipalities Kimbanseke and Kisenso. As mentioned before, in this paper we only study Kimbanseke.

Paideco-Kin (further Paideco) is a participatory development programme aiming to strengthen local governance, participation and democracy. According to its own policy documents the global objective of the Paideco programme is "to contribute to the institutional, economical and social reconstruction of the city of Kinshasa" (translated from BTC, 2005: 26), with the specific objective "to durably ameliorate living conditions of the people through the promotion of good local governance within the municipalities of Kisenso and Kimbanseke" (translated from BTC, 2005: 27).

More specifically Paideco intends to enforce "the capacity of local actors to act together in order to generate a development dynamic in line with respect for democratic principles of participation, respect and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms, the constitutional state, equitable governance and transparency of resources, separation of powers and of pluralism" (translated from BTC, 2005: 27). All this should take place in the context of the decentralisation process that has been written down in the DRC's renewed constitution of 2005, and which should be led by elected actors and organs who would as such bring democratic principles to the local level (BTC, 2005: 27). As such, Paideco actually intended to create a kind of preparatory phase for the population to prepare themselves for the ongoing democratisation and upcoming decentralisation process. They tried this through their concrete set up of the programme.

Paideco works with local actors involved in local governance of public goods or services or 'development initiatives'. They try to strengthen local governance through supporting and financing local development initiatives, and they intend to empower local actors by giving them trainings and stimulating a democratic and participatory way of working. Paideco's philosophy embraces participation, responsibility and ownership. Through 'local development committees' they try to form a bridge between the local state administration and the population.

The *Comité Communal de Développement* (CCD) and the *Comités Locaux de Développement* (CLDs) are both community structures created by Paideco. CCD is the municipal development committee which is grouping all chiefs of the CLDs and which is led by the mayor. Paideco installed one CLD in every quarter of

Kimbanseke, with all its members –including its leader- being elected by the population of the quarter. At the time of the CLD elections, this was also seen by Paideco as a preparation or a ‘rehearsal’ for the upcoming national elections (in July & October 2006). The CLDs have about 20 members each. After elections of the CLD members, meetings were held to identify the priority problems that should be tackled in each quarter. In every quarter a report of the identified problems was made and at the level of the municipality a ‘municipal development plan’ was formulated. Next, local organisations could make proposals for projects to tackle these problems. The CLDs decide which projects should be executed and those selected projects have to be defended by the selected organisations in front of the CCD, as they have to keep an eye on the whole (e.g. an anti-erosion project in one quarter could have negative effects on a neighbouring quarter). Subsequently, Paideco finances the execution of the selected projects whilst local organisations execute all the work. At the side of the ‘hardware’, as Paideco calls it, for example the following activities were executed (at the time of the research): fight against erosion, construction of offices for the municipal and quarter state administrations, actions to avoid flooding in the quarters, cleansing of roads, electricity supply, rehabilitation of schools and health centres, construction of (covered) markets. At the ‘software’ side Paideco gives trainings to empower local actors. At the time of the research trainings were given on how to elaborate projects, good governance, planning, how to manage an NGO, book keeping of an NGO, justice and rights, communication. For the CLDs and the CCD trainings were given on how to hold a meeting, conflict management, problem identification, and planning of actions. Yet, these trainings were not on specific demand of the population but were initiatives of Paideco. Proposals for projects by the population were all projects on the ‘hardware’ side.

Through the way of working with the CLDs and the CCD Paideco tries to promote ‘good governance’. They want to show state actors how to govern in a transparent way and how to take into account population’s grievances and wishes. At the same time they want the population to interact with the state to let them know their grievances, wishes and proposals for action. Paideco intends to (help to) (re-)establish the state and strengthen communication between the local population and the state. Moreover, they hope for the CLDs and the CCD to stay when Paideco would leave, in order to become a kind of local parliaments to consult on development issues. With their trainings they also intend to make a kind of ‘local development experts’ of the CLD/CCD members. They hope when Paideco would leave, the population would make use of the decentralisation to co-determine what is happening in their community. To reach ‘the population’ in Kimbanseke Paideco is very much focusing on the many local associations, in the selection and execution of projects and by their trainings. In fact, through its way of working – especially with the CLD’s and the CCD – Paideco tries to link the state and the collective action sector.

We can say that Paideco is a well-thought programme trying to work in an interactive manner and trying to influence local governance mechanisms. We will take a closer look now at how Paideco was received by the local actors it intended to reach and how interaction took place between them and Paideco.

Paideco-Kin ran from January 1st 2006 until November 30th 2009. Our research was conducted in August-September 2007, thus we cover only a snapshot of its actions. Therefore, this research certainly does not pretend to make an evaluation of the Paideco programme. It just uses the interaction between the programme and local governance mechanisms in order to come to some ideas and understandings concerning aid and local governance in (Kinshasa’s) recent urban areas.

3.2. Interaction between local governance mechanisms and Paideco

As soon as an external project enters a certain local 'community', it enters into interaction with local actors and comes into the local arenas of action, including the local problems, habits, particularities and power relations. As such, also Paideco encountered unexpected issues and difficulties, related to the way local governance is functioning in Kimbanseke.

3.2.1. Struggle for resources, uncertainty and participation

By entering the local governance arenas in Kimbanseke, Paideco also entered the local 'play' of demarcating borders by the many local actors, and became clearly a part of their living (livelihood) strategies.

Through their programme and the possibility to have projects elected and financed, Paideco brings in a big amount of resources. Consequently, the competition between local actors to get hold of these financed projects is fierce. Local actors see Paideco as a set of new opportunities. They try to integrate these opportunities within their existing coping strategies, which are in Kimbanseke mostly strategies of preserving what one has, collaboration only if useful and acting on the (very) short term. Mechanisms of opportunity hoarding (see Tilly, 1999) come into being, as people are all gathering around the Paideco-resources, following the rules (and in that way pretending to be part of their ideology) to confirm the presence of the programme and to get access to their resources. The programme gives new opportunities to local actors to strengthen their position (for a while). There also immediately emerged some kind of local 'elite' of popular local associations, all struggling for resources and activities, who know better than others how to get hold of the projects financed by Paideco. One association for example managed to get appointed 12 projects of Paideco to work for, which is quite impressive, not only concerning their enthusiasm to work but also for their ability to capture these projects.

One would think local enthusiasm for the programme would exactly enhance participation, yet, what we observed was rather the opposite. People clearly wanted to be part of the programme in order to get access to the resources, and therefore they followed the rules, but they indeed just 'followed the rules' for the short term purpose of getting a certain project approved. They did not engage in debates, they did not use the local CLDs for other purposes than getting hold of a financed project, they did not collaborate with state institutions voluntarily, they did not feel responsible afterwards for executed projects (e.g. constructed schools or health centres),.... In fact they just preferred the easiest and shortest way to the resources. And as for Paideco they had to participate and pass through the CLDs, they did so. But they did not seem to be convinced of the value of doing so. Illustrative for this is the fact that all projects proposed by local actors were very concrete 'hardware' projects like building schools and health centres, rehabilitating roads, etc. No local actor asked for a training or a workshop or for assistance in networking or setting up a collaboration.

Of course this has something to do with the high needs of the local population in peri-urban Kimbanseke. Uncertainty determines how people react upon external development funds coming in. In order to manage their own needs and scarce resources local actors engage in very short-term strategies. And this is exactly what contrasts with the long-term objectives of Paideco.

People are living their own logic of mostly trying to survive. Consequently, local actors in Kimbanseke are rather opportunistic, also for their collaborations. Most

cooperation between actors is very temporally, and will mostly stop when it is not useful anymore to one of the actors. Also for small associations cooperation is not always that evident as all of them are trying to survive themselves as an organisation (with little resources). They merely try to strengthen their own position and to attract all opportunities and resources they can get. This also counts for the collaboration with Paideco. As such, Paideco just forms a new extra arena in which actors temporarily interact, in order to get access to Paideco's resources. Therefore it is very difficult to come to long-term or structural changes in the domains of 'participation', 'democracy' or 'empowerment' (Paideco's aims).

Paideco would like local actors to become independent. But what we see is that local actors position themselves exactly in a dependent position vis-à-vis Paideco in order to get hold of the incoming resources for their short-term purposes. In that sense, they are actually acting very independently (or stubbornly?), using the incoming resources for their own purposes and not for the durable and long-term development initiatives Paideco had hoped for.⁵

3.2.2. New arenas of action created, parallel to existing ones

Paideco is not only the centre of a new arena of action created around its resources, but Paideco did also create new arenas of action next to existing ones. Through the establishment of the CLDs and the CCD Paideco explicitly decided to add a new actor, with quite some influence, to the local field of actors. Although they have been thinking about it, Paideco decided not to base the CLDs on similar existing committees of a local NGO. With the CLDs they placed their own structures in the quarters. They could also be seen as their own arranged interface between Paideco and the local actors (cf. Long, 2001), in order not to be dependent upon non-elected intermediaries. Of course it is also more democratic as people have chosen their intermediaries themselves now.⁶ Within the quarters of Kimbanseke new arenas have been created now around the CLDs and 'their' projects. As mentioned earlier local organisations have a lot of difficulties to find funding, therefore when Paideco came in and the CLDs were installed, all organisations started to gather around them to obtain some funding (for example associations paying someone to help them develop good projects to propose to CLD). A whole arena of action formed itself around the CLDs. There is a lot of competition between the many local organisations and private schools and health centres for the execution of projects of Paideco. When a local organisation is selected, they get an amount of money to execute the works. They themselves have to divide this money amongst the different members co-working in it. According to Paideco-staff consequently sometimes conflicts emerged within the local organisations. Also new organisations have been created in order to get funding; or CLD members tried to favour organisations they knew.

Many similar initiatives or services existed already parallel to one another in Kimbanseke, and with Paideco extra parallel services have been created. There are for example similar initiatives on awareness raising concerning the elections, democracy and decentralisation of a Congolese NGO (*Oeilat/DH*) and Paideco. The Congolese NGO gives trainings on elections, the functioning of democratic institutions, population's participation in a democracy, the role of the opposition, the role of civil society, decentralisation and how the population can co-determine policy, and democratic norms and values. They are supported for these actions by several external national and foreign organisations. Paideco is working on the same issues and conducts trainings on similar topics. With the CLDs they

⁵ See also Mosse 2004 on local actors seeming or pretending to comply with the philosophy of the external development project but actually reinterpreting the project to their own needs.

⁶ Yet, certainly not everybody went to vote as many 'ordinary' people didn't even know Paideco.

contributed to the preparation of the elections, and subsequently they tried to prepare and strengthen the population for the upcoming decentralisation. The Congolese NGO and Paideco know each other (the coordinator of the NGO even being an elected member of a CLD), but they are working with very different structures which could be actually (partly) compatible for the similar aims they want to reach.

Finally there are also the many community committees in Kimbanseke. Community committees exist of Paideco (the CLDs), the Congolese NGO Oeilat/DH, the local NGOs CNEM and UACDK, Safe the children, and the *zones de santé*. Thus, CLD-like systems had been set up already by many different actors in Kimbanseke. All these committees exist next to each other. Paideco has thought about collaboration with the committees of one local NGO but decided in the end to set up its own parallel structures. Whatever valid reasons they may have had, consequence is that many parallel structures exist next to each other.

In general cooperation does not seem to be easy in Kimbanseke. All actors have their own views and objectives. As a consequence many community systems and committees exist. They are surely different to a certain extent, but very often they are quite similar and have similar democratic and participatory aims – and the clear wish to subsist in the long term. Still they are all functioning next to each other, as if it were a kind of race with the future which ones will survive and which ones will disappear.

3.2.3. Focusing on the state, versus arenas of civil society

Another very important aspect of the Paideco programme, which is crucial for the way it interacts with local governance mechanisms, is the clear intention to try to link the local state and the collective action sector. This is not an easy task as in Kimbanseke there are very few (official) links between them. Some private schools and health centres set up by local associations have a link with respectively the ministries of education and health, and some health centres with the administrative *zone de santé* but much less with the local political state actors such as the mayor or the *chefs de quartier* (with whom Paideco is mainly working). In fact the local state in Kimbanseke does not have that much power as they have no resources. Through the CLDs and the CCD they are getting some more power concerning the selection of projects for Paideco. Paideco is in this way trying to make them more accountable to the local population or at least to their 'elected quarter parliaments' (the CLDs). As such Paideco tries to bring in decentralisation already a bit in Kimbanseke, as they want to be a bridge between the state and the population. Like a Paideco staff member phrased it, 'there is a wall now between both'; people are paying taxes but not getting anything in return. Paideco wants to strengthen both civil society and the local state. Yet, this turned out to be extremely difficult as the local state is very fragmented and decentralisation is still a mere fantasy.

In the context of Kimbanseke's local governance it is in fact very hard to speak about 'the state'. Many state actors exist and are active but they are operating in a very fragmented way. There is no such thing as an overall policy or even coordinated actions. As local state agents do not have resources, they are acting on behalf of their own connections, needs and felt responsibilities. Moreover state actors are not the most important actors for local governance in Kimbanseke. As the state in the DRC in general is weak, local state actors do not have significant resources and do not act in a coordinated way, many goods and services are (co-)governed by non-state actors. The state – or rather state actors – is just one of the many local actors and not necessarily the most important one.

Additionally, many distrust exists towards the state. As state actors have to manage their functions on their own without many resources, they have their own strategies and are consequently not very reliable or stable in their interactions with the population. Also, for the people of Kimbanseke the state is not really present in public service delivery. They almost only experience the state through the municipal administration, which they see more as a burden than as a service.

Furthermore, the decentralisation process Paideco is trying to support, is up to now still a pipe dream. Whereas urban and municipal elections should have taken place already according to the DRC's constitution, people are still waiting for them to be organised. First, local elections were planned for 2008 and now they are postponed already to January 2013. This means that the state actors Paideco tried to mobilize for democratic behaviour, do not all feel accountable towards the population of Kimbanseke. As they are put in place by the central state – some even against their will – they do only feel accountable towards their superior political levels. This is also seen in their responses vis-à-vis Paideco. For example the mayor in place during the research did not really follow the participatory ideal Paideco was working with. He rather emphasized the fact he was just receiving resources from Paideco (whilst he did not receive anything directly). He did not feel he or 'the poor' had the right to intervene; as they cannot give anything, they are only there to get things. As such, they collaborate to get resources. He does not really look at it as a real cooperation. This is of course quite contrasting with the participatory and democratic ideals Paideco is working with.

3.2.4. At the end Paideco acting quite separate from local governance arenas

At the end Paideco is – just like many other actors in the local governance arenas of Kimbanseke – also a quite autonomous and individually operating actor in the field, in spite of their participatory way of working. By coming in with big resources, by creating separate structures, and through their attempt to link state and civil society Paideco is actually kept quite separate from the local existing arenas of local governance of public services.

Because Paideco is coming in with big resources local associations and other local actors are continuously 'opportunity hoarding', which makes it very difficult to come to real participation in the Paideco project or to come to real collaboration with local state actors. Local actors collaborate with the project to get access to the resources but they are not necessarily adopting their views and policies. Local actors act very much on the short term, integrating all new opportunities in their daily coping strategies.

Additionally, Paideco chose to almost constantly set up its own configurations and structures, apart from already existing structures or initiatives in Kimbanseke. In these new structures they try to be participatory and empowering. They think and plan very much from the starting point that their structures will keep on existing when they leave. But because of the short term acting of the local actors, this doesn't seem to be sure at all.

Furthermore, Paideco is creating a whole new arena or domain that had not been exploited very much before in Kimbanseke, by trying to link state and civil society. Paideco is focusing on the local state, to make them interact more with other non-state actors in the execution of their state functions. But because local governance arenas are very often playing at other levels and around other actors (with state actors sometimes being involved but rather on an individual than on an institutional basis), Paideco is actually setting itself a bit aside. They create a

whole new kind of arena where state and collective action sector can interact with each other for getting at the resources of Paideco (thus temporally). Through the CLDs and the CCD and the way of selecting projects they try to make civil society and state cooperate with each other. They hope this interaction between state and civil society will stay in the long term. But as we see how local arenas are (opportunistically) functioning for the moment, this seems to be unsure. Ideally Paideco would like to see the CLDs and the CCD keep on existing as a kind of local parliaments on development issues. They hope other projects – other than the Paideco projects – will also start to pass through the CLDs. But at the time of the research even other BTC programmes operating in Kimbanseke were not consulting or passing through the CLDs.

Crucial is that Paideco – throughout the whole set-up of its programme – very much takes as a departure point the official urban governance structures (such as the municipality, quarter chiefs etc.) and the idea that the state is or should be the main and primary actor for local governance. Yet, this is not at all the case in the local governance arenas of Kimbanseke. Local governance of goods and services is dominated by non-state actors and very much determined by local power relations and struggles between both state and non-state actors (with the emphasis for the first on individual actors and not on state institutions). This is also the reason why separate arenas were quickly created around Paideco, to comply with Paideco's (participatory and democratic) demands in order to have access to their resources, and why Paideco became an 'outsider' of the 'normal' local governance mechanisms.

4. CONCLUSIONS: LOCAL URBAN GOVERNANCE ARENAS AND THE CHALLENGE TO INTERVENE

Through the research of local governance in Kimbanseke and an external development programme coming in, it turned out to be very difficult for the development programme – despite its participatory and democratic way of working – to influence the local institutional landscape or mechanisms of local governance and local interaction in Kimbanseke. This because of the way the Paideco programme was organised on the one hand, and because of the way local governance is functioning on the other.

Local governance in Kimbanseke is very fragmented and steered by many different actors of which the state is certainly not the most important one. As resources are scarce in Kimbanseke a continuous struggle for resources is going on, in which the influence of official institutions is weak. Public goods and services are organised by many local actors, because state services are scarce. As such, control over and access to services is very much determined by local power relations, as all actors are demarcating borders in order to preserve what they have. Collaboration only takes place when useful for both parties and short-term thinking is one of the coping strategies. We could compare the local governance situation in Kimbanseke with the idea of 'governance networks', in which "urban policy-making processes are changing from processes in which governments are the dominant locus of power to those in which networks of different actors participate in governance networks" (Baud et al., 2011: 3). Kimbanseke, being a relatively new urban area of Kinshasa is being governed through locally created networks, and not through state institutions. Different governance networks are formed around different resources, goods or services. Yet, very often, when talking about multi-actor governance authors are still assuming the state is an important or enabling actor, or at least one of the main actors of the governance networks (Baud & de Wit, 2008). Yet, in Kimbanseke this is in general not the

case. Most local governance arenas are dominated by non-state actors, with the state not even being the 'enabler'. This has much to do with the fragmented character of the state, as local state actors are certainly present but are not very much supported by higher rank institutions and act on a very individual basis. We could say that in the new urban area of our research governance networks and main actors differ strongly according to the resources being governed. As such, we could maybe rather speak of a 'centreless society' (cf. Rhodes, 1996), characterized by multiple centres of governance according to the issues at stake.

This is the context where Paideco entered with the idea to reinforce local governance, through strengthening local state and civil society in their democratic interactions. What we saw is that many different local governance arenas exist parallel to one another in Kimbanseke, and now Paideco created an extra one. Paideco – unwillingly – has put itself apart through coming in with big resources (and the opportunity hoarding mechanisms emerging around them), through setting up parallel structures next to already existing ones (the CLDs), and – more structurally – through their attempt to link the state and collective action sector and to work through formal official governance structures (instead of real daily local governance processes).

Very often external interventions are based upon official government structures in order to plan and organize their actions; so was Paideco. Whilst Paideco departed from the state as the central actor to define its strategies, in real daily local governance official institutions hardly seemed to matter. Being a so-called structural development project Paideco tried to induce structural and institutional change; but this turned out very difficult in a context where local governance is determined by many local actors (acting in a very fragmented and ad hoc way and by very short term thinking) and day-to-day practical norms rather than by fixed rules or institutions.

But is it in such a context possible to come to structural changes (induced from the outside)? People and especially a kind of 'civil society-elite' use incoming development programmes to get access to new resources and local actors are very much thinking and acting on the short term. In agreement with Mosse (2004) the research showed how the policy of a development programme is interpreted and adapted by local actors. People clearly govern their own activities and have their own logic of governance and institutional environment in which the project has to fit instead of the other way around. They develop tactics to make use as much as possible – within the framework of their livelihoods – of the opportunities incoming development projects make available (see also Rossi, 2006). People in Kimbanseke were integrating the new opportunities within their coping strategies, in the way they are used to organise their lives and governance of goods and services in the peri-urban area they live in. As such, the way local actors reacted upon the incoming development programme taught us a lot about the functioning of their local governance arenas.

Local arenas in Kimbanseke turned out to be extremely flexible and adaptive to new opportunities coming in. And it might be exactly this flexibility that will impede them to change in a more structural way (in conformity with the upcoming decentralisation), as their flexibility is so much a strategy for day to day living – on the short term. What we see is that uncertainty creates uncertainty. Like Englebert also found in his research on the DRC individual strategies to overcome situations of uncertainty create even more uncertainty on the macro- or communal level (Englebert, 2011). And this makes it of course very hard for any incoming actor or intervention to predict governance or to base oneself upon certain (real or official) governance structures or mechanisms.

Whilst some suggest that new forms of urban governance – like governance networks and multi-actor governance – might open up opportunities for more participatory governance in Third World cities (Baud and de Wit, 2008), in Kimbanseke in Kinshasa this does not seem to be evident at all. Here the question arises whether a certain minimum organisation of local governance or a sort of minimal state should be present. Should an enabling state be present in order to come to a minimal structure for long-term participatory governance mechanisms? In accordance to this question more research should be done on new forms of urban governance in weak states, as up to now most research on multi-actor governance and new urban governance structures in developing countries has been conducted in strong states.

Finally, we should ask the question what all this means for external interventions coming into new urban areas of weak states. Should we try to come to other types of interventions, which are more open-minded, or which at least do not try to orient local actors towards a pre-set idea(l)? Or should we have no interventions at all? In this research we observed that in Kimbanseke even an intervention trying to work in a democratic inclusive and participatory manner seemed to be captured and adapted in unwanted ways. Maybe the question that should be asked when thinking of participatory and democratic programmes, especially in uncertain governance contexts, is whether one can 'want' something. If truly working participatory one should maybe not want anything beforehand. As for sure, this research showed it is of high value –for any results to be reached – to base external interventions in new urban areas upon urban reality and real local governance mechanisms, and not upon the 'ideal' of official urban governance structures.

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