

Zambia

Ethnicity in Zambia

Group selection

Administered by the British South African Company in 1894 (later absorbed into the British Colonial Office in 1924), Zambia (formerly known as Northern Rhodesia) became independence in 1964, as a result of the collapse of the short-lived Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Presided over by Kenneth Kaunda until 1991, the country did experience multi-party election until 1971, when its system was changed into a one-party state. In 1991, the country returned to a multi-party political system.

Electoral politics has been the predominant form of Ethno-political competition in Zambia since independence. Voters commonly expect politicians elected to office to redistribute private and public goods (development, job, ...) along ethnic lines, even if in fact these perception are not necessarily reflected by actual policies at the central level (³⁶⁶⁰, 104, 95; see also ³⁶⁶¹). In turn, elites being aware of these perceptions are incentivized to "couch their electoral appeal and frame their coalition building strategies in ethnic terms" (³⁶⁶², 104).

³⁶⁶⁰ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁶¹ [Dresang, 1974]

³⁶⁶² [Posner, 2005]

Ethnic identities in Zambia are structured around two principal dimensions: tribal (nominally 73, in practice less) and language (four: Bemba, Nyanja Lozi and Tonga, as well as three minor language in the Northwestern provinces: Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda). The relevance of both identities has emerged as a direct consequence of British policies during the colonial period and labor migration to the Copperbelt and towns along the railways (³⁶⁶³). It is important to understand that ethnic dimensions are not orthogonal to each other, but rather nested, with each language grouping several distinct tribes (³⁶⁶⁴, 116-7). In addition, the fact that each major regional tribe of Zambia has given its name to a regional linguistic group, considerable confusion may emerge when it comes to assess around which dimensions ethnic claims are made. In fact, it is often the cases that members of the same ethno-linguistic group may assess differently the power status of their group, depending on which dimensions of ethnicity they are basing their claims on: tribe or language (I.e. If the Bemba people claims to be sub-represented at the central level, they may either refer to members of the Bemba-speaking people or to the Bemba tribe) (³⁶⁶⁵, 119).

³⁶⁶³ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁶⁴ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁶⁵ [Posner, 2005]

Politically relevant ethnic groups

While ethno-linguistic groups are organized around one of the four regional languages (NB: for historical reasons and low population density, not a single regional language has ever emerged in the Northwestern province), tribal identities are generally linked to family allegiance to traditional authorities (³⁶⁶⁶ 89, 1). Nevertheless, historically, each tribe did possess its own local language (³⁶⁶⁷, 57), however as a consequence of labor migration and colonial education policies, the language of each major regional group became progressively dominant within each province. Generally, ethno-linguistic cleavages are relevant at the national level, while tribal identities take predominance at the regional level, even in national elections. (³⁶⁶⁸, 116). Yet, because of the kinship ties linked to tribal identities and the fact that they are relevant at the regional level primarily, we argue here in favor of considering only language as a source of political relevance in the central political arena.

³⁶⁶⁶ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁶⁷ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁶⁸ [Posner, 2005]

When one considers language as a source of ethnic affiliation, one should keep in mind that these languages are heavily regionalized and in practice regional origins (easterners, southerners, etc.) are used to refer to each ethno-linguistic group. While, the Bemba-speaking population localized in the two North-Eastern provinces (Northern and Luapula), as well as the Copperbelt, the Lozi People are to be found in the Western Province (formerly known as Barotseland), the Tonga in the Southern province and the Nyanga-speaking group in the Eastern provinces (³⁶⁶⁹: 1606). Due to historical reasons and sparse population, the North-Western province never experienced the rise of a single language as the other. Within this province, three main languages co-exist and are often considered ethnic groups: the Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda groups. This is however disputed as for Posner states that the North-Western Province often acts as the fifth ethnic group (³⁶⁷⁰). However, since coding instructions do not refer to regional origin as a basis for ethnic allegiance, the traditional view of listing all three main groups in the Northwestern province has been favored here.

³⁶⁶⁹ [Dresang, 1974]

³⁶⁷⁰ [Posner, 2005]

Power relations

As a consequence of the prevalence of ethnic politics in Zambia, all ethno-linguistic groups are relevant during the entire post-independence period. The main vectors for ethnic politics are parties, which are generally identified with one or a few ethnic groups. Although ethnic interest groups do exist, these are of little importance (e.g. Bemba Ilamfya Council of the Bemba tribe, see ³⁶⁷¹, 122). In addition, Zambia politics is heavily personalized, which has for effect that a party ethnic identity is often affiliated to the ethnic identity party chairman, despite the fact that deputies may be from distinct ethno-linguistic groups. As a corollary, change in the leadership quite often results in a change of perceived ethnic affiliation (³⁶⁷², 109).

³⁶⁷¹ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁷² [Posner, 2005]

As such, ethnicity plays a significant role, even though in a more subtle way than your coding instructions suggest. Although there

have been changes in group power over time, ruling parties have constantly attempted—usually with considerable success—to create oversized if not all-inclusive multiethnic coalitions. In particular, this is reflected by the fact that the leaders of Zambian parties have always attempted to appoint to significant position, members of diverse ethnic group, in the hope of increasing their share of national votes (see Horowitz 1985, 430-1). In addition, it is worth remarking that long-time President Kenneth Kaunda took great care of giving cabinet position to members of each ethno-linguistic groups, in proportion of their demographic (³⁶⁷³, 127). Indeed, those groups supporting opposition parties almost always receive approximately proportional representation in senior government positions, partially in the hope that they will vote for the ruling party in the next election (personal communication with James Scarrit). It should nevertheless be remarked that Bemba-speaking control of top cabinet position has generally been above Bemba demographic share (³⁶⁷⁴, 127). Thus, all three largest groups as senior partners throughout the period and smaller groups as junior partners, although one or more of them sometimes cast the majority of their votes against the ruling party.

³⁶⁷³ [Posner, 2005]

³⁶⁷⁴ [Posner, 2005]

2000-2013: As there was no report of change in the power-sharing arrangement between Zambia's ethnic groups during the last four years, the 1965-2009 coding is expanded to 2013. It should be nonetheless be noted that during this period the question of the Barotseland (Lozi people) did re-emerge, an issue that discussed hereunder in relation to the coding of the regional autonomy variable.

The issue of regional autonomy revolves exclusively around the Western province and the Lozi-speaking people, Zambia being a unitary state. During the colonial era, the western province, known at the time as Barotseland, had the unusual status of a protectorate within the protectorate of Northern Rhodesia. This status gave the Barotse Royal Establishment extensive autonomy in exchange for mineral rights for the British South African Company (³⁶⁷⁵, 239). During the period leading up to the independence of Northern Rhodesia, the status of Barotseland in the soon to become independent Northern Rhodesia was heavily debated with demand for secession from the Lozi people and the Barotse Royal Establishment (³⁶⁷⁶, 240). The United Kingdom rejected the call for secession, but gave reassurances that the current status of Northern Rhodesia will be kept intact in a newly independent Rhodesia. Shortly before the independence, an agreement was found between the nationalist of the UNIP (United National Independence Party) and the Barotseland Royal Establishment, with the United Kingdom as a co-signatory on April 1964. Ratified in London a month later, the 1964 Barotseland Agreement guaranteed significant autonomy to the Barotse Royal Establishment and the Lozi People in areas of local administrations and judicial activity, as well as local spending and

³⁶⁷⁵ [Hall, 1967]

³⁶⁷⁶ [Hall, 1967]

taxation upon Zambia independence on October 24 (³⁶⁷⁷, 241-2). Crucially though despite the fact that mineral rights were not explicitly mentioned, land redistribution autonomy was also guaranteed.

³⁶⁷⁷ [Hall, 1967]

Yet, this autonomy status was quickly rescinded the year after, when the Zambian government under Kenneth Kaunda scraped the Lozi autonomous administrations and court under the Local Government Act. (Zambian Post, 31.01.2012, ³⁶⁷⁸) The Barotseland agreement, despite being of much of its substance remained in force de jure until the constitutional reform of 1969, which completely abrogated it and change the name of the province into Western Province (³⁶⁷⁹, ³⁶⁸⁰).

³⁶⁷⁸ [Kelly, 2014]

³⁶⁷⁹ [The Zambian Post, 2012]

³⁶⁸⁰ [Kelly, 2014]

Subsequently calls for outright secession or reinstating the regional autonomy status were made over time, however without much echoes. The issue did only come to fore again before 1991 with the reintroduction of multi-party politics, which brought the Barotseland issue to the fore again. President Chiluba won the 1991 election with the support of Lozi-speaking people, but refused to negotiate on the issue of autonomy. Later in 2011, future president Sata promised during the election campaign to reintroduce regional autonomy in Barotseland (Zambian Post, 31.01.2012, ³⁶⁸¹). However, short of any effective change to the status of the Barotseland, some Lozi interest groups declared the secession of the Western Province in 2013, with the government reacting by arresting around 70 people under charge of treasons (³⁶⁸²).

³⁶⁸¹ [Kelly, 2014]

³⁶⁸² [Agence France Press, 2013]

In light of this situation, the Lozi are coded as regionally autonomous from 1964 to 1965 and from 1966 as not regionally autonomous.

2006-2009: Since the inclusion of all groups in the executive continues, no new period was introduced. The Bemba still see themselves as targets of discrimination (email James Scarrit).

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Political status of ethnic groups in Zambia

From 1964 until 1965

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Bemba speakers	0.43	SENIOR PARTNER
Tonga-Ila-Lenje (Southerners)	0.19	SENIOR PARTNER
Nianja speakers (Easterners)	0.18	SENIOR PARTNER
Lozi (Barotse)	0.08	JUNIOR PARTNER
Luanda (NW Province)	0.05	JUNIOR PARTNER
Luvale (NW Province)	0.04	JUNIOR PARTNER
Kaonde (NW Province)	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER

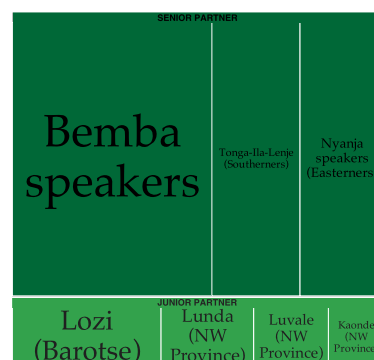


Figure 833: Political status of ethnic groups in Zambia during 1964-1965.

From 1966 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Bemba speakers	0.43	SENIOR PARTNER
Tonga-Ila-Lenje (Southerners)	0.19	SENIOR PARTNER
Nianja speakers (Easterners)	0.18	SENIOR PARTNER
Lozi (Barotse)	0.08	JUNIOR PARTNER
Luanda (NW Province)	0.05	JUNIOR PARTNER
Luvale (NW Province)	0.04	JUNIOR PARTNER
Kaonde (NW Province)	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER

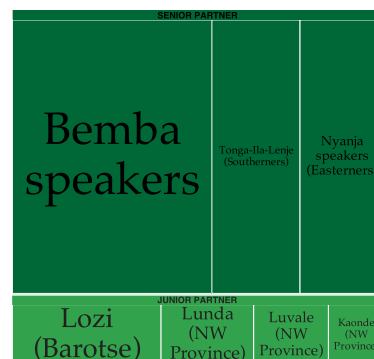


Figure 834: Political status of ethnic groups in Zambia during 1966-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Zambia

From 1964 until 2013

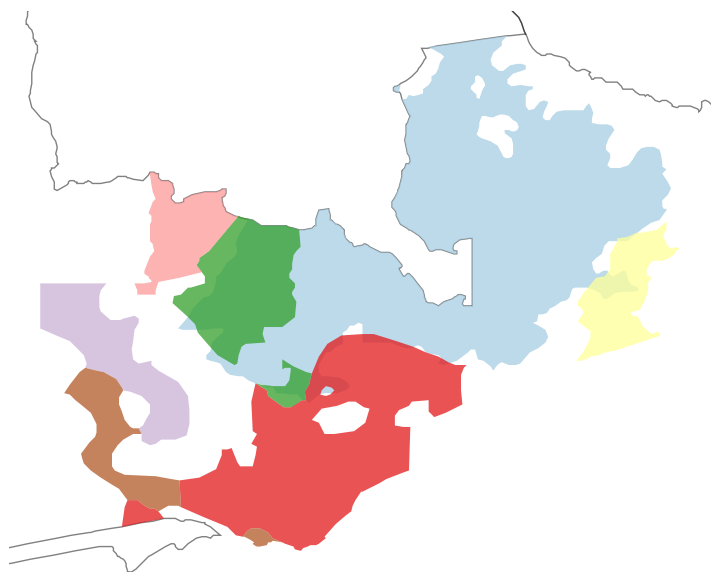


Figure 835: Map of ethnic groups in Zambia during 1966-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Bemba speakers	325 349	Regional & urban
Tonga-Ila-Lenje (Southerners)	121 530	Regionally based
Kaonde (NW Province)	51 415	Regionally based
Luvale (NW Province)	37 971	Regionally based
Nianja speakers (Easterners)	27 890	Regionally based
Luanda (NW Province)	25 830	Regionally based
Lozi (Barotse)	24 322	Regionally based

Table 246: List of ethnic groups in Zambia during 1964-2013.