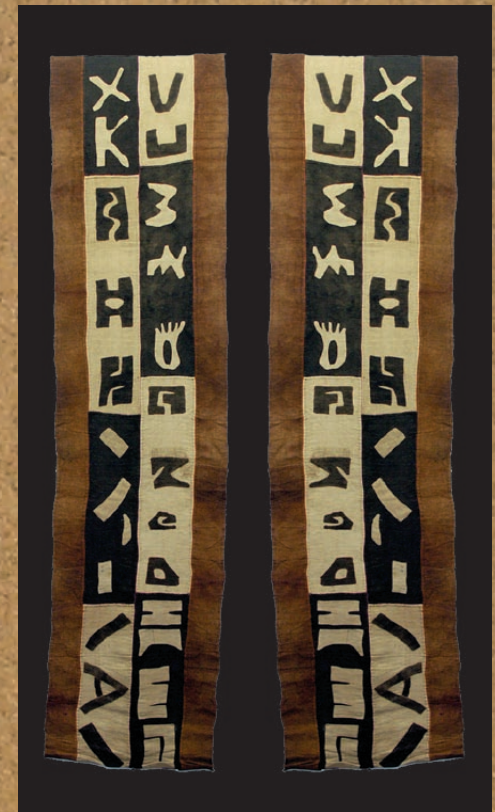


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ARTICLES BY

Peter Vale

Albert Domson-Lindsay

Sulaiman Kura

Victor Shale

Mohamed Salih & Abdalla Hamdok

Norbert Kersting

Maxi Schoeman & Charles Puttergill

Ernest T Mallya

Lesley Blaauw

Patrick Vander Weyden

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Auckland Park
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South Africa
Tel: +27 011 482 5495
Fax: +27 011 482 6163
e-mail: publications@eisa.org.za

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The Editor, Journal of African Elections
EISA: P O Box 740
Auckland Park 2006, South Africa

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Auckland Park 2006 South Africa

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WHAT FUTURE FOR ELECTORAL STUDIES?:

A critique

Peter Vale

Peter Vale is Nelson Mandela Professor of Politics at Rhodes University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa and a Member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf).

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PO Box 94 □ Grahamstown

Tel: +27 046 603 8354; Fax: +27 046 622 4345

email: p.vale@ru.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Using approaches drawn from critical theory this paper explores the idea of electoral studies from historical and contemporary perspectives. It argues that the techniques used in electoral studies – in Southern African and elsewhere – have been corroded by neo-liberal economics and therefore by the rote and routine of management studies. Electoral studies might secure individual security and so promote governance by becoming more relevant to the lives and everyday struggles of the region's citizens.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to provoke. Provocation seems necessary because, for some, 'electoral studies' resembles 'diplomatic studies', even to the extent that the staged smiles of the latter seem more and more to hang around elections and their monitoring. Both diplomatic studies and electoral studies are applied social sciences and, like many of this genre, they are micro in the scope of their interest. They are, therefore, creatures of a particular conceptual genus; seemingly far removed from macro-theory, they hide, virus-like, within larger discourses and, when called upon to justify themselves, they do so in strictly utilitarian terms. As a result, their deliberations seem to be almost entirely devoid of any wider preoccupation, theoretical or other.

* This paper was presented at a conference, 'Challenges for Democratic Governance and Human Development in Africa', celebrating EISA's tenth anniversary, 8 – 10 November 2006.

Of course, 'electoral studies' is not new in the discipline of 'political science' – indeed, the original purpose of the systematic study of politics, especially in the United States, was to develop a 'new man' who could be called 'the democratic citizen'. And it was unlikely that the project of building and sustaining this democratic citizenry was possible without understanding how individual citizens operate within institutionalised politics – particularly at the high point of the process, the election itself. Because this argument partially relies on the philosophy of science, for a few further paragraphs the paper considers the practice of 'electoral studies' within its generic setting. The adjective generic is not a good one; particularistic is better. This is because electoral studies has been dominated by American scholarship and therefore it is possible to show that all studies of elections – including those in Southern Africa – have been deeply influenced by a particular form of scholarship on, and understanding of, elections, both within democracies and elsewhere. Inevitably, then, 'electoral studies' as it is understood in Southern Africa, and especially within EISA, is tied to an American conceptual template, which has major implication for an understanding of social relations through the aperture offered by electoral studies.

Most applied social science is linked not to the study of political science but to that of its near cousin, sociology. And it was in this form that the narrative of electoral studies follows from the work done in two centres of American sociological scholarship, Columbia University and the University of Chicago. This story begins with the mid-1940s work of Paul Lazarfield (then of the Bureau for Applied Social Research at Columbia), which was the first study to focus on an election – namely, the 1940s presidential campaign – and fieldwork on it, which was done in Elmira, New York. Its success shaped the intellectual paradigm for the study of electoral behaviour and helped to transform understanding of both citizenship and democracy.

This study, which was located in a tradition we now call 'political sociology', was not the only area of work that was influencing democratic theory: two further strains of enquiry were also involved. One was associated with a more distant cousin of politics, psychology – today, this branch is called 'political psychology'. The other looked backwards, drawing electoral studies towards the roots of political enquiry, which was in the field of political economy. To do this, this strain of electoral studies drew the study of elections (and citizen behaviour) towards the powerful explanatory force of self-interest that dominates much economic thinking.¹

Although the United States pioneered the idea of 'electoral studies' it was taken up elsewhere. In Britain, for instance, the study of elections was guided by

1 This background is drawn from Carmines & Huckfield (1996), p 223.

'the accumulation of facts and statistics normally associated with the Nuffield electoral studies on party organisation, party finances, the candidates, the press and interest groups' (Blewett 1973, p 647). Far more interesting was the contribution made by the French sociologist and lawyer, Maurice Duverger,² whose 1952 book, *Les Partis Politiques*, opened up an insightful, though limited, way to theorise electoral politics.³

Not surprisingly, those, like myself, who are more interested in values are either disdainful of applied social sciences, or are interested in the regimes of power – to borrow a famous phrase from Michel Foucault – that run through all forms of knowledge, applied or other. But I am also interested in the role played by institutions that both catch and carry social 'knowing'; especially revealing is the potential of this knowledge to drive the project of emancipation. This is why my interest in the issue of elections, and their monitoring, is heightened on the occasion of this conference, which celebrates the first decade of EISA's work.

The above explains why this paper explores our understanding of the social world – what it is, what it tries to do. Understanding the social world of democracy and elections is highly paradoxical, as the following illustration suggests.

Until the US invasion of Iraq four years ago, it seemed obvious that 'promoting democracy' was better than supporting either authoritarianism or totalitarianism. Now, however, things do not seem as simple as all that in Iraq, and, indeed, elsewhere. As this paper was being drafted American options in Iraq were said to be under review: under discussion was one particular option that suggested that perhaps an 'authoritarian government [in Iraq] could help to restore order' in that country (BBC World 22 October 2006). To anyone interested in promoting the values of democracy and creating good citizens, this option sounds bizarre: evidence, surely, of a certain confusion and contrariness that dogs ways in which we try to understand the social world, especially in politics.

The drift towards this fuzzy logic is exacerbated by the 'fact' that this option was under consideration in a country that purports to have given the world the modern form of democracy. Indeed, the very place that was once famously hailed by two Frenchmen, Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, as the epitome of democracy. The former, in particular, believed that America's democracy was a great social experiment which was an inspiring and instructive example to liberals everywhere. His message was repeated by successive generations of French writers: Brogan, Aron, Revel, Servan-Schreiber.

So what is going on?

To understand this paradox we must look beyond the notion that American

2 For a discussion of Duverger's career see Hoffmann-Martinot 2005, pp 304-9.

3 On the enduring influence of this book see Schlesinger & Schlesinger 2006, pp 58-68.

(or British, for that matter) democracy itself is in crisis – this, of course, is the parallel conversation that nowadays fills the daily analysis of the unfolding tragedy in Iraq. More particularly, attention needs to be turned to a series of questions that reach beyond the empty words about democracy generated by the policy-community. Good political sense (not an oxymoron but invariably ideological, as we will see), not to mention intellectual responsibility, requires critical scholarship to raise questions not only in uncomfortable times – as presently in Iraq – but all the time.

This calls for a particular kind of thinking – the kind that ‘dissolves all stable convictions and creeds’, which is what Hannah Arendt (the centenary of whose birth we celebrated this year) called ‘dangerous thinking’. For teachers this is the kind of thinking that requires us to encourage the questioning of everything, including the frameworks we use to say things. As the Dutch Nobel Laureate (in Physics), Gerard t’Hooft, argues, we should teach students to doubt everything we say. Or, as Arendt’s fellow émigré, Albert Einstein, famously said: ‘The important thing is not to stop questioning.’ This is plainly rather different from the kind of facts-*über-alles* that marked the pioneering work on elections carried out by Paul Lazarfield and his colleagues referred to above.

The direction of the above suggests that this paper asks questions about the project of democracy which is EISA’s calling. This is certainly so, but more importantly it raises questions about the way in which we have come to understand things within the study of elections – the philosophy of science promised in the opening paragraphs. However, critique for its own sake is not only dull – notwithstanding its often effervescent (or impenetrable⁴) language – it is often pointless. The task of critical scholarship is not simply to moralise about values but to help steer humanity onto the path that will achieve the emancipatory values embedded in the Enlightenment (Mandle 2006, p 145). So, this paper is an exercise not only in theoretical rumination but also in practical politics.

Regrettably, writing on Southern Africa continues to be theoretically ‘lite’. Indeed, since the appearance nearly five years ago of my burdensome book *Politics and Security in South Africa: The Regional Dimension* (Vale 2003), nothing has appeared which tries to draw forward the conceptual discussion presented in that work. Put differently, and within the spirit of this paper, no new abstract questions have been asked about the region.⁵

4 I have intentionally included this phrase in parentheses because one of the reviewers of this piece raised issues about the inaccessibility of this discourse to lay readers. It seems important, however, to stress that readers of this journal are not ‘lay readers’ in the sense of readers of the daily press. And because they are mainly specialists in the field are we seriously to believe that they should not be stretched. As countless explanations in science have pointed out, paradigms can only be shifted by challenging accepted explanations – such challenges are most often carried by language and its use.

A very recent book, for example, Gabriël H. Oosthuizen's *The Southern African Development Community: The Organisation, its Policies and Prospects* (2006), provides a factual account of the state of regional play and offers a conventional analysis of its history. These accounts certainly have their place – and recognising this place is important – however, they are embedded in a particular narrative and mostly shy, as Oosthuizen does, away from any theoretical rumination.

And yet, even a thin deconstruction indicates that accounts which are embedded within the 'common sense' discourses which mark understandings and explanations of social relationships begin where they end, with renditions of the social derived from the disciplining power of economics. These, too, have their value. So, it is certainly true that economic-centred understandings of the region and its social ways have promoted a shift away from either arms or national politics as the determinants of the tide of Southern Africa affairs. But, and this is the point of the paper, these provide only a partial vision, which is far removed from the avowed purpose of liberal democracy.

Instead of full vision these debates have re-conceptualised 'civilization through the prism of economics', as John Ralston Saul (2004, p 37) has suggested. A deeper deconstruction reveals that politics-qua-politics has been substituted by endless and often directionless details of management which have been 'blended with sparkling waves of new technology and with masses of microeconomic data, all presented as...[regional] facts' (Saul 2004, p 35). This presents an account of the region which is 'monological, totalising and linear' (Brown 2006, p 691). This is the very stuff of the two regional organisations that matter most in the region – the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Southern African Economic Community (SACU).

If anything, the shift of organisational focus from politics to economics has changed the tone and direction of the debate in the region. Early resistance to this change in discourse – which included a defence of state-centred administrative structures and economic self-sufficiency, two important goals of the African nationalist project – now seems out of date when set against the purported power of 'freedom' offered by an agile and modern market-centred regional system. Here, once again, are echoes of Hannah Arendt's work. In her 1958 book, *The Human Condition*, Arendt was concerned about the tendency to make politics subservient to economics. She suggested that economics was once a secondary, private or household realm, but it now dominated the lives of ordinary citizens and of political leaders – through this, the 'economic sphere ... [has-subsumed] all others...' (Villa 2000, p 6).

5 Naison Ngoma's 2005 book, *Prospects for a Security Community in Southern Africa*, is a possible exception.

A little conceptual reflection suggests that by promoting the idea that economic relations matter more than all others primarily means that all social relations can only be secondary to those dominated by money and resources. In Southern Africa this has isolated politics, making it exceptional in the determination of any social relationship – and through this, as we shall come to see, the high purpose of electoral studies has been corroded.

But first we must reconsider the dearth of theoretical writing on the affairs of the Southern African region. The ontology of mainstream international relations, from which all policy interventions in the region derive, positions states (and their behaviour) at the very centre of understanding and explanation. '[T]his ... [is a] ... technique ...[of knowledge that] ... looks to the power of sovereign organization, and the rationality of capital in erasing any uncertainties from the affairs of the region ...' (Vale 2003, p 31). This idea is not uncontentious or even new. Indeed, Justin Rosenberg calls it the 'same old melodrama' of international relations and, following Martin Wight, describes it as 'impoverished'. To end this impoverishment, which only the foolhardy would support, critical scholarship must follow Rosenberg's goal of 'fundamentally reorient [ing] international theory' (Rosenberg 1996, p 6) – especially in Southern Africa. I return to this below.

Pre-conceptions of the region – the ontology that has already caught our attention – are wholly distorting. One reason for this is that the region's 'states' are cast in a timelessness which denies their recent vintage. Yes, social life in the region is ancient time-wise, as the archaeologists show, but political life – especially in its modern form – is ridiculously recent. As conferences like this seek out the anchors that can secure the 'governance' and 'security' the region desperately seeks, there is a singular failure to recognise that politics-qua-politics is just beginning. Therefore, there is no lasting evidence that the very vehicles chosen to carry the region's politics, its states, are at all suitable for the burdens foisted upon them.

Here, attention turns towards the state; the institution which has been charged with making the region's future, accounting for its present, and explaining its past.

Ideas of state formation and state building have proliferated in recent years and, for sake of brevity, these can be distilled into two strains – states formed from the power of irrigation agriculture and states that result from the place and position of worship (J Hall 2001, p 802). Plainly, the states of Southern Africa fit into neither of these categories. Nor are Southern African states readily explained by Benedict Anderson's now famous 'Imagined Communities' metaphor (Anderson 1991). Essentially then, the states of Southern Africa are not primary creations they are derivative of other social formations. But, like their progenitors, they are the result of a confluence of historical and material conditions and have

been shaped by the ever-determining influence of analysis and power. Unlike many other social fashions, however, the power and licence offered to states to organise – Max Weber's 'monopoly of the means of violence' – meant that it was unlikely that an institution thus shaped could quickly fade. As John A Hall (2001, p 803) remarks wryly, '[o]nce the state was invented, it could not be forgotten'.

As states took shape in Southern Africa the power of example was important. Especially influential was the role played by the South African state, particularly the commanding position of the forced homogeneity of the state *manqué* which was once called the 'Cape Colony'. This created particular form of politics, among whose many features was obsession with race and the influence of the power of wealth.

But there was a paradox at work in the formation of the region's states, and this has had a lasting impact on the region. The 'states' which were created in Southern Africa

developed within a space of contaminations and conceptual transitions which ... [were] ... profoundly marked by the continuous work of the translation of Western paradigms (first of all, certainly, Marxist) into contexts that were radically different from those in which these paradigms and concepts had originally been formulated.

Mezzadra 2006, p 537

Simply put, the institutional arrangements – not to mention the competing ideologies – of the region's states were wholly unsuited to local conditions.

Because the region is so poorly theorised, the issue of state formation in Southern Africa remains, like its politics, in its infancy. This lack of conceptual clarity prevents efforts to counter the controlling ideology which views social relations through the prism of economics. This, of course, is a problem of both method and analysis. Simply put, the orthodoxy views the states of the region as stable entities but, as we have seen, they are only partially so. As a result, Southern African states are continuously evolving and so often defy the rules and expectations that are held out for – and to – them. So, as the 'rules' of social control are applied, they are not wholly compliant because they are still in the very process of formation.

An understanding of this should have profound implications for 'Electoral Studies' – the question is, does it?

The problem posed by states in the region has been complicated by the triumph of rational choice theory and the regime of policy rationality which marks social analysis in Southern Africa and elsewhere. This approach conceives a world of stable and predictable interactions turning, as it insists, on (and to) the goal of

problem solving. In order to do this, it limits social relationships to fixed ratios; it objectifies human agency by restricting flexibility and replaces interactional causality with mechanistic causality. Its purpose, after all, is to produce predictable social behaviour (Young & Arrigo 1999, p 275). These are the very characteristics of the scenario-building fad, which has had, and continues to have, such a powerful influence throughout Southern Africa.

As the forced rationality has caught hold following the free-market revolution, the 'normative social fabric of self-interest' (Brown 2006, p 692) has increasingly come to dominate all forms of social analysis – electoral studies, as will become evident below, have not been exempted. This means, as stated above, extending the 'rationality of self-interest' to all areas of social life (see Hindess 1993, p 542).

Notwithstanding protests to the contrary, there is a dense ideological thicket here, primarily because the idea of 'self-interest' is presented as 'common sense'. As writers in cultural studies, in particular, insist, 'common sense' is not neutral, rather it is a place where ideology is most effectively concealed (See S Hall 1977). Blind to this, protagonists of the 'common sense' approach to the region claim they have no need for theory, under the guise that the facts will speak for themselves. But, as Jon Elster (1995, p 121) has argued, 'rational choice theory is first and foremost normative. It tells us what we ought to do in order to achieve our aims as closely as possible. It does not tell us ... what our aims ought to be ... the central *explananda* of rational choice theory are *actions*.' This brings the argument four square back to the place of economics in determining social relationships in the region.

While the rise of free-market economics was associated with the names of Thatcher and Reagan it was the generative work of a group of thinkers associated with the Austrian economist, Friedrich von Hayek, which was decisive. So, Hayek's 1944 book, *The Road to Serfdom*, was very influential because it was almost immediately positioned in the Cold War ideological setting by the conservative magazine, *The Reader's Digest*, which published the book in its Condensed Series a year later.

So, the spread of free-market economic theory was speeded by the Cold War but it was the post-Second World War desire to make the study of social relations 'value-free' that changed the project of the Enlightenment. As Richard Bourne described the post-war protagonists of social 'science', 'The war ... [has] ... revealed a younger intelligentsia ... who have been sucked into the councils of Washington. They have absorbed the secret of scientific method as applied to public administration' (quoted in Wolin 2004, p 518). As a result, all other approaches to social issues, outside the field of market economics, were said to be 'politically motivated' in their purpose or 'unscientific' in their method.

The policy triumph of 'free' market economics, however, came in the 1970s after a series of catastrophic events – these included rampaging inflation, crumbling exchange rates, and the oil crisis of 1973. (Indeed, the 40th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's victory as Governor of California occurred a week before this paper was delivered.)

In response to the purported failure of economics which were associated with the name of John Maynard Keynes, the idea that the market offered solutions to social issues – that is, viewing 'civilisation through the prism of economics' – were drawn to the fore. This occurred at the very moment that society, especially in the US, was increasingly attracted by conservative social values. A growing consensus (aka a new social fashion) implanted a management mantra at the intersection between state-based politics and economics: 'privatise, down-size, rationalise, and outsource'. This theory was aimed at positioning citizens as self-interested actors with a moral autonomy to be 'measured by their capacity for "self-care"' (Brown 2006, p 694). As countless writers have shown, this approach spread to the Global South through the influence of the international financial institutions, The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.⁶ Wendy Brown (2006, p 693) describes it as 'making a wreckage of efforts at democratic sovereignty or economic self-direction in the South'.

As this happened a kind of theology was at work. Consider this statement from Larry Summers, one-time Chief Economist at the World Bank. 'What can the West can do ... [in Russia]', he asked,

to drive this process of reform forward? Number one: it can spread the truth. The laws of economics, it's often forgotten that they are like the laws of engineering. There is only one set of laws and they work everywhere. One of the things I've learned in my short time at the World Bank is that whenever anybody says, 'But economics works differently here', they're about to say something dumb.

D Kennedy 2006, p 26

This was a compression of intense political and social relationships into a simple-minded rationality – a kind of slash-and-burn mentality. It has had a profound effect on contemporary social relationships and the way in which we know and describe them. This includes the micro-discipline of electoral studies, which is why it affects the work of EISA.

In order to illustrate these effects, we must ask how it is that policy-making has become first and foremost a 'declaratory process'. Take as an example the

⁶ Much of the above discussion has been culled from David Kennedy's impressive PhD thesis.

2005 drive to 'Make Poverty History', which was linked, first, to the 'Star appeal' of the rock icons, Bob Geldof and U2, and secondly to the so-called 'Gleneagles Agreement'. Apart from the glamour side of politics – Bono's famous description of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, as the 'Lennon and McCartney of the global development stage' – the purpose of the exercise was to avoid the hard politics of global income distribution rather than confront the difficulties associated with correcting it.⁷ In other words, the 'Making Poverty History' exercise was an exercise in managing – through the manipulation of tropes – the existing patterns of global poverty and so of reinforcing the global status quo. Effectively, it aimed to de-democratise the issue of poverty.

This is an approach far removed from confronting the structural problems – either security or economic – which are faced by developing countries; in effect it is the substitution of policy by political rhetoric. Put differently, the power of rhetoric has supplanted the need to adopt policies which aim at redress, let alone equality. In significant ways the power of the discourse about issues like 'Global Terror' and the 'War on Terror', with its powerful and theological distinction between the forces of 'Good' and the forces of 'Evil', has only reinforced such policy non-outcomes.

Understanding the emergence of 'non-policy', as we might call this, raises three questions that have largely been hidden by the argument thus far. What is the role in this of electoral studies? Is electoral studies complicit in this triumph of political rhetoric over lived reality? And what should be the role of electoral studies?

To answer these questions we must again turn to the theorist Sheldon Wolin (1977, pp 91-105), who writes:

[t]he version of theory which political scientists borrowed from their colleagues in the more 'advanced' social sciences was remarkable not only for its tendency to associate theory with 'methodology' but for its distinct hostility towards history and philosophy. As a consequence, this new form of theory had nothing significant to say about the issues which dominated the politics of the twentieth century: war, totalitarianism, democracy, imperialism, racial oppression, ecological policy and corporate power.

This suggests that social enquiry is largely ahistorical and devoid of any form of social engagement. Its purpose, it seems, is to manage social relations rather than understand them; to exercise social surveillance rather than promote

7 For a recent discussion of this see Payne 2006, pp 917-35.

emancipation; to narrow rather than expand the range of human experience. It does so, as we have noted, by reifying social relationships; by objectifying human agency; and by relying on the power of mechanistic causality.

The impact of this approach on the technique of electoral studies is plain. Although interested in developing a 'democratic citizenry', 'electoral studies' has largely eschewed the region's rich historical sociology. Instead, it seems preoccupied with the tropes of 'accountability', 'transparency' and 'governance', which have limited the subject in the region essentially to a state-based enterprise. This has made much of the writing on Southern African elections like a re-run of the mid- and late-1960s discourse about African nationalism – indeed, is 'electoral studies' not simply another debate about African nationalism, in the guise of democracy, rather than, as it once was, state-building?

Can electoral studies reverse this direction? To do so, it must understand, rather than manage, social relationships; it must encourage emancipation rather than promote surveillance; and it will have to expand, rather than narrow, the range of human experience in the region. To achieve this, the study of elections – or what we know as electoral studies – in Southern Africa needs to make two moves.

- It must follow Justin Rosenberg backwards, directly into the nexus between political theory and practice, which it has avoided. Only this journey will enable electoral studies to recover Leon Trotsky's 'remarkable idea of "uneven and combined development"' (Rosenberg 2006, p 309). Together with the derived doctrine of 'permanent revolution', the theory of 'uneven and combined development' was Trotsky's 'major contribution' to Marxist thought (Bottomore et al (eds) 1991, p 546). At its base is a very modern, even perhaps, post-modern current – namely, 'that people from different centuries co-exist'. Put differently, human existence and experience is uneven or, less prosaically, human society (and history) always involves a 'multiplicity of temporally co-existing instances, levels and forms of society' (Rosenberg 2006, p 314). So, variety, not hegemony or monotony, which are carried by both the mantra and the cliché, are the defining features of the world – diversity reveals itself not only among civilisations (and states) but within them too. Each cultural and geographical area comprises an array of political entities; each of these, in turn, displays individual characteristics and ever further shades of unevenness (Rosenberg 2006, p 315). The unevenness of the social world is 'overlain by ... asynchronous simultaneity' (Rosenberg 2006, p 315). So, all societies are at particular

and different points in their historical lives at the same moment. As a result, Southern Africa lives in different centuries simultaneously. Even the development of capitalism in the region has been irregular, contrary to what Marx predicated. The challenge of democracy in Southern Africa is not a problem of space but of political organisation. So, to expect, as electoral studies does, uniformity of progress and prosperity even in the process of election monitoring is unrealistic. But understanding this, and what it means for an applied social study like electoral studies, will require unlearning an increasingly loaded and self-referential technical language which is embedded in what Foucault called 'capillaries of power'.

- Electoral studies must accept that economics, for all its claim to exceptionalism, cannot be divorced from its subservience to everyday social practice. Economics-directed policy cannot, therefore, be implemented without an intense and ongoing reference to the society in which it takes place – and, in this sense, 'society' refers to human interests understood in terms of human development and freedom. The latter, of course, are very real-world goals that the creation of the micro-discipline of electoral studies set out to achieve. It will be difficult to overcome this gap because the corpus of the micro-discipline is so bound up with a version of 'management studies', with its strong emphasis on description and the control of all social relationships. The language of electoral studies is imbued with the same expert tongue that aims primarily to discipline all the social affairs of the region. This code of behaviour is carried forward by the now familiar mantra 'accountability', 'governance' and 'transparency': it reinforces the idea that ideology has ended, as Francis Fukayama famously declared. The impact of this on the everyday world of policy is devastating, as can be seen in relation to the issue of regional migration. More recently came the gormless declaration by South Africa's finance ministry that it will seek to review the distribution of revenues in the Southern African Customs Union (*Business Times* 29 October 2006). Devoid of an historical appreciation of the role the region played in the making of modern South Africa, this 'outcomes-based' form of politics is highly extractive. It is inspired by technocratic language and deeply influenced by the intrusive role in the social world played by think tanks which seek to advance the common sense politics boldly set out in Larry Summers's analogy with engineering. In driving and, yes, securing this outcome 'the

language and metaphors of work – rules, designs, means and ends – have assumed a dominant place with the conceptions of Hannah Arendt's *vita activa*

Baehr 2000, p xxxi

There will certainly be fierce resistance both to these moves and to the overall thrust of this paper. And yet, the contamination of the high ideals of democracy and elections is everywhere to be seen.

Richard Calland warned of this in his recent book, *The Anatomy of South Africa* (2006, pp 266-7), in which he describes his experience with corporate sponsorship of South Africa's 'Independent Electoral Commission'.

So why was Mr Coca-Cola the ham in this illustrious sandwich? ...When I approached Mr Tisani (Director of Public Affairs at Coca-Cola), he jovially replied that Coca-Cola were the sponsors of the banquet as part of their overall support for the IEC. I asked how much they had donated, and Mr Tisani replied, 'We support democracy in the region by supporting electoral institutions, including the IEC, because we don't want to get into partisan funding' ... [Then the following exchange on the same night with another businessman] ... I asked how business was, 'Hey man,' the black dude said, 'this democracy is just *great* for making money.'

Surely what Calland is suggesting is that corporate support for the elections in South Africa, in the guise of common sense, indicates the danger of compromise in the acceptability of the process? Can elections that are supported by corporations be judged to be free and fair? These are the kinds of questions that face those engaged in electoral studies.

In Southern Africa this market-driven interest in the policy process has, if anything, become more brazen since apartheid ended. A year ago, the famous South African family, the Oppenheims, who control the giant diamond monopoly, De Beers, embarked on a campaign to re-position themselves and their interests in the politics of South (and Southern) Africa. Integral to this process was the founding of a 'think tank' called 'The Brenthurst Foundation', which aims to promote 'more public advocacy of open markets and good governance'. Asked by a reporter, Nic Dawes, whether they were not 'concerned that ... [the foundation would be] ... accused of being an instrument for policy capture in countries where they have commercial interests' Jonathan Oppenheimer, son of the current De Beers Chairman, and heir to the empire, Nicholas Oppenheimer, replied, 'What's wrong with policy capture ... if it's good policy?' (*Mail & Guardian*

9-14 December 2005). Building democracy, as we have recently learnt in Iraq, can be a fickle business easily manipulated by special interests.

Historian Paul Kennedy (2006, p 23) recently reminded readers of *The New York Review of Books* of Charles de Gaulle's remark that the 20th century had 'not been kind to Africa'. This is one explanation of the hype around what democracy can deliver to the continent in these, the first years of the 21st century. Studying elections, as the undoubted success of EISA has shown, has been a force in promoting the idea that democracy represents progress. Certainly, this has played a role in making the states of the region kinder to their people, but is it enough to meet social and cultural needs in an authentic fashion?

Only by accepting the veracity of Walter Benjamin's famous statement that every document of civilisation is also a document of barbarism can electoral studies encourage the idea that its command of knowledge is little more than another acquiescent intellectual fad.

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DEMOCRACY AND SECURITY IN WEST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Albert Domson-Lindsay

Dr Domson-Lindsay is a critical social theorist/free-lance researcher in Swaziland and a former doctoral scholar and occasional lecturer in the Politics and International Studies Dept, Rhodes University, South Africa
P O Box 1140, Nhlangano, Swaziland
Tel: +268 207 7152
e-mail: albertdomsonlindsay@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

This paper offers a comparative analysis of security and democracy in West and Southern Africa. It examines the popular notion that political liberalism leads to security, maintaining that it is too elitist, statist and exclusive to offer socio-economic security to all the regions' peoples. The paper shows that state-driven regional institutions stifle public participation in their decision-making and implementation processes. So, to attain a harmonious balance between democracy and security, this paper proposes an institutionalised democratic ethos anchored in a discursive or deliberative culture. This will ensure the interests of all: people, state and capital.

The prospects for peace arguably have less to do with democracy in its liberal sense, and more to do with questions of socio-economic distribution, or a deepened understanding of democratic questions.

Tandeka Nkiwane 2001, p 286

The principle of political life should be agreed, as far as possible, by all.

Andrew Linklater 1993, p 9

INTRODUCTION

States in Africa have been variously described as 'weak' (Clapham 1996; Rothchild 1987), 'lame' (Sandbrook 1985), 'soft' (Herbst 1996), 'collapsing', 'failing', 'failed' (Swatuk 2001), 'retreating' (Strange 1996), 'fictive' (Callaghy 1984) and 'quasi' (Migdal 1988). In one sense this suggests that the state faces a series of crises, including internal legitimacy problems and armed conflicts.

Most people feel alienated or marginalised from the political and economic processes. This alienation can take the form of mass protests or public boycotts: civil society groups protest against excessive commercialisation of social services and, in some instances, boycott payment of basic services. In Swaziland and Zimbabwe the monopoly of political space and the brutal suppression of dissenting voices by the regimes create social tensions which periodically break out into social unrest. The legitimacy crisis can also take on violent dimensions. Consider these examples in West Africa:

- Liberia experienced a period of civil conflict that lasted from 1990-2003.
- Sierra Leone was next, and Côte d'Ivoire, since 2002, has descended into civil chaos.
- The Senegalese government has not successfully contained the secessionist movement in the Casamance province (Essuman-Johnson 2005, p 46).
- The governments of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have, since the 1980s, been battling against their minority Tuareg populations, who feel marginalised (Olukoshi 2001; Abramovici 2004).
- Nigeria, the economic powerhouse of the region, has its own internal instability. Militant groups like the Oduduwa Peoples Congress (a Yoruba group), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force and the Ijaw Youth Council – the last four are all in the oil-producing region of Nigeria – have sprung up to challenge the government. Their objectives include greater autonomy and control of resources in their respective regions (*Mail & Guardian* 23-29 September 2005, p 15; Ikelegbe 2001; Watts 2001). The goal of these militant groups conflicts with the monopolistic tendency of the Nigerian state and this conflict sometimes culminates in violent clashes between the state and armed groups. In fact, a low-intensive civil conflict simmers in the Niger Delta between the Nigerian military and the militant groups.

Similarly, in Southern Africa, legitimacy crises have led to armed conflicts in some states. We take two examples:

- Lesotho descended into civil chaos in 1998 and South Africa, with Zimbabwe and Botswana, intervened to restore order (Vale 2003). But, as Rok Ajulu (2002) has pointed out, the Lesotho crisis is cyclical because each election year rekindles the civil strife as the political elites and the military jostle for power and wealth.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains a conflict zone. The hope that liberal democratic elections in the DRC will lead to stability is tenuous, especially because rebel forces continue to fight against government troops in the eastern Congo and an elite struggle for the state continues (*Mail & Guardian* 11-17 June 2004, p15).

This domestic instability invariably assumes a regional dimension. Armed conflict in one state spills over into neighbouring states and engulfs a region (Clapham 2001). So, the civil war in Liberia spilled into Sierra Leone; the latter conflict, in turn, 'precipitated instability in Guinea'; and now Côte d'Ivoire, which has been an oasis of peace and stability, has succumbed to the civil war contagion in West Africa (Wannenburg 2005, p 9). In fact the Liberian civil war assumed a regional dimension from the 1990s. The Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Group (Ecomog) initially intervened on behalf of the government in Monrovia while Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso tacitly backed Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) (Clapham 2001, p12; see also Magyar & Conteh-Morgan 1998).

The same is true of Southern Africa. In the past, the apartheid state supported rebel movements in Mozambique (Renamo) and Angola (Unita). The conflict in South Africa affected the region. States like Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe supported the liberation movements, providing bases for them, while the apartheid regime carried out a destabilisation campaign against neighbouring states. More recently, the armies of Southern African states such as Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia supported the DRC government, while Rwanda and Uganda backed the rebel factions (Bischoff 2006, p160).

An unstable environment is seldom conducive to meaningful regional co-operation, integration or development. The reason for this is clear. Any viable regionalist project depends on the flows of capital, goods and people; interrupting these signals a reversal. Moreover, instability and legitimacy crises can compel governments to focus disproportionately on consolidating their authority rather than on regional issues. Even when attention is drawn to the region, the regional governments focus more on state and regional security than on developmental issues.

This brings us to this question: how can the legitimacy crisis be resolved? In a post-Cold War world political liberalism has been advanced as a credible model

for reordering the state, and liberal interventionism is the standard operating procedure for putting the state back together after it has been ravaged by civil conflict. The next section examines these views and practices.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE: A PANACEA FOR THE CRISIS OF THE STATE?

After the end of the Cold War most states in West and Southern Africa adopted liberal democratic constitutions, as a result of pressures from popular movements, donor nations, and the international financial institutions. The United States, in particular, has exerted pressure on regimes in the regions to adopt liberal democracy (Abrahamsen 1997; Ake 2000). For instance, it threatened to impose sanctions on the Nigerian government when President Ibrahim Babangida attempted to renege on his pledge to conduct presidential elections on 12 June 1993; in the event, he changed his mind. In Malawi, the suspension of an aid package of \$174-m by donor nations compelled Kamuzu Banda, the late Malawian President, to hold a referendum on a multiparty system and to accept the outcome (Ake 2000, p129). Similar external influences contributed to the adoption of liberal democracy by governments in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Zambia, Tanzania, Togo and Cameroon (Ake 2000, p 129).

Initially, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank seemed reluctant to impose democratic conditions on client states. The rationale was that to do so would violate the principle of non-interference in the affairs of clients. Publicly, certainly, the interest of the IMF and the World Bank was limited to the promotion of sound macro-economic policies. However, they revised their policy of non-interference and embraced the prevailing orthodoxy of a link between democracy and economic development. The belief is that liberal democracy makes the rulers accountable to the ruled. The former pursue policies that reflect collective interests rather than selfish ones. They do this in order to continue staying in power (Ake 2000, pp 77-8; see also Abrahamsen & Williams 2002, p 317). In addition, political liberalism protects private property, which – for liberals – helps to facilitate accumulation, which is essential for economic growth and development.

Western interest in the African democratic project is ironic, especially when set against the Cold War. Then, democracy was not a valued currency in the West's interaction with Africa, notwithstanding the lip service paid to it. Essentially, Cold War relationships rested on strategic calculations. The former United States Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, alluded to these interests:

During the long Cold War period policies toward Africa were often determined not by how they affected Africa but whether they brought

advantage or disadvantage to Washington or Moscow. Thankfully we have moved beyond the point of adopting policies based on how they might affect shipping lanes next to Africa rather than the people in Africa

Cited in Ake 2000, p 139

So, the superpowers supported authoritarian regimes in Africa. For instance, in the 1980s, the United States gave military and financial assistance to leaders like Samuel Doe of Liberia, Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and Mobutu Sese Sekou of Zaire (Clapham 1996; Ake 2000). In South Africa the undemocratic apartheid regime was supported by Western powers under the pretext that the country was a bulwark against communism. Why then were African states pressurised to adopt liberal democracy after the Cold War? What was the motive behind it? The answer lies in the democratic peace theory, to which we now turn.

THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY¹

Theoretical interest in liberal democracy in the post Cold War world is anchored in the work of Kant, Rousseau, Schumpeter, Cobden and other classical liberals who argued that liberal democratic states are peaceful while authoritarian ones endanger international stability (Burchill 1996). Immanuel Kant asserted that democratic or republican states do not like wars because the rulers are constrained by a constitution according to which the consent of the people must be secured before the state can go to war. The people, however, do not desire war because they bear its human and financial costs. Both Kant and Schumpeter believed that autocratic states have a propensity for war, which contrasts with the pacifism of liberal states. Schumpeter argued that authoritarian rulers in the 19th century delighted in waging war for personal gain. War expanded the national coffers because citizens were taxed in order to secure adequate funds for military campaigns (Burchill 1996).

Both Kant and Rousseau maintained that republican states promote domestic harmony because they are based on self-government and self-legislation – the constitution is the expressed will of the citizens and the civil liberties enshrined in it give people the right to participate in affairs of state (Kant 1970; Burchill 1996; Devetak 2002). So, for Kant and other classical liberals, the republican state

¹ This theory rests on a central proposition that democratic governments, free trade, and international law promote global peace and order. These assumptions were first made by classical liberals and there is now a growing literature of democratic peace theory which tests their empirical validity (see McGrew 2002, p 276).

'was an essential building block of peaceful international order' (McGrew 2002, p 270). Richard Cobden, for his part, claimed that free trade creates interdependence between people and states. This promotes peace because citizens and governments come to realise that war will impose on them more economic costs than benefits (McGrew 2002, p 270).

At international level Kant recommended the formation of a confederation of republican states founded on shared commitment to interdependence, democracy, peace and prosperity. He argued that the success of this 'select club' of liberal states can induce others to join by embracing its rules and norms (see McGrew 2002). Kant further argued that the spread of liberalism and the deepening of global economic interdependence can culminate in the expansion of the liberal zone of peace.

Michael Doyle (1983), through empirical analysis, claimed to have discovered what Kant had proposed – a pacific union of liberal democratic states. Doyle (1983, p 213) discovered that 'there is a predisposition against warfare between liberal states ... [that] a liberal zone of peace, a pacific union, has been maintained and has expanded despite numerous particular conflicts of economic and strategic interests'. Echoing Kant and other classical liberals he suggests that this peace is the result of the restraining influence of a liberal constitution, the international respect for individual rights, and shared commercial interests.

Conversely, Doyle and other democratic peace theorists, following Kant, argue that non-liberal states are predisposed to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, especially the liberal ones. These states are, in a sense, 'at war with their people' because they 'lack internal legitimacy' (see Griffiths 1999, p 66). Given these conditions, liberal governments have the right to wage war against non-liberal states. In fact, liberals or democratic peace theorists see this mission as an opportunity to expand the zone of peace.

This also explains why modern liberals like Michael Doyle and Francis Fukuyama have suggested that the end of communism presents an opportunity for liberal governments to extend the democratic zone of peace beyond its Western core. For Fukuyama (1989) the demise of communism is a vindication of the universalistic claims and eternal values of liberalism. According to him and other modern liberals exporting liberal democratic values will ensure domestic and international peace and prosperity. This background explains why African states were urged to adopt, or coerced into adopting liberal democracy after the Cold War.

The liberal democratic peace discourse is, however, contentious. To begin with, the Kantian Republic is not the same as the 'real existing liberal state' (Brown 1996, p 31); the former comprises 'civil associations' in which there is collective participation in decision-taking process. So, the probability for peace will be

greater in such a polity than in a real existing liberal state. Decision-making in liberal democratic states is often monopolised by bureaucrats and by ruling and interest group elites. These groups make cost-benefit calculations on a different basis: they may desire war because it furthers their interests (Brown 1996).

The assumption that liberal democratic states do not go to war against each other can be challenged. Michael Doyle argued that despite the colonial rivalries between France and Great Britain the two nations formed an 'entente' against illiberal Germany in 1914, and the US renounced its isolationist policy to join the allied powers in 1917. But it is not certain that the peace between these liberal democratic states could have been sustained if there had been no common enemy – Germany. Similarly, the threat to the capitalist system posed by the then Soviet Union in the post-1945 period compelled the liberal democratic states to 'rally behind the leadership of the other' (Brown 1996, p 41). This explanation invariably leads to the question: would they have remained pacifist towards each other in the absence of an external common enemy? Certainly, there cannot be an easy answer, essentially because there has never been a self-contained world of liberal states. So, the assumption that liberal states are generally peaceful and do not engage in war against each other remains a conceptual one.

In fact, for Chris Brown (1996), the possibility of perpetual peace is anchored in rationality. This argument echoes a Kantian view that human beings become 'amenable to reason' when they calculate the costs and benefits of war. Kant (1977, p 189) believed that human beings will be 'compelled to ensure that war, the greatest obstacle to morality and the invariable enemy of progress, first becomes gradually more humane then more infrequent and finally disappears completely as a mode of aggression. Although Kant and Doyle see this rationalism as a peculiar quality of liberal democratic states the ability to engage in cost-benefit analysis of war cannot be an exclusive characteristic of these states. Rather, all states are capable of 'working out the consequences of action and are not in the grip of some kind of death wish' (Brown 1996, p 43). We turn now to consider the state of liberal democracy in the two regions.

While most states in Southern Africa have embraced liberal democracy it has not opened up space for viable forms of opposition to develop and, more importantly, for people to participate directly in the affairs of the state. Although states like South Africa, Namibia and Botswana are nominally liberal democratic states, they are *de facto* one-party states, and too much power is concentrated in the hands of the president (Southall 2003, p 268). Furthermore, the ruling regimes are often less accountable to the public. For example:

- The structure of the South African electoral system effectively takes away the monitoring function and power of the electorate.

Parliamentarians are not directly elected by the people, rather they are appointed by the political parties (Southall 2003, p 267).

- Zimbabwe represents a classic case of the futility of liberal democracy in Southern Africa – authoritarianism co-exists with political liberalism. Elections are rigged, opponents are intimidated and harassed, and the regime is noted for its ‘contempt for the people’ (Southall 2003, p 268).
- In Namibia, as in South Africa, political parties select representatives to Parliament.

Many writers have pointed out that liberal democracy is elitist, exclusionary and hegemonic (Zezeza 1997; Mkandawire 1999; Ake 2000; Laakso & Olukoshi 2001; Nkiwane 2001; Good 2002; Southall 2003). At the continental level, the late Claude Ake (2000) showed that when the democratic wave broke on the shores of Africa in the 1980s the political elites used the idea for their own benefit. In countries like Zambia, Malawi, and Nigeria, elites who were out of power used the ballot box to get back into power. In Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire and Cameroon incumbent elites exploited the democratic process to legitimise their rule and to further themselves: they established and controlled the electoral bodies, subverted the electoral rules and regulations, and abused the election process (Adejumobi 1998, pp 41-42; Saxena 2002, p 80).

Liberal democracy is largely restricted to periodic elections. Roger Southall (2003, p 269), following Kenneth Good, wrote:

Democracy in southern Africa is centred around electoralism, is otherwise fairly hollow, and does not, on the whole, make a lot of difference to ordinary people’s lives.

The only visible role for the citizens, for the most part, is electing the political elites. Political liberalism, then, is a convenient framework in which the national elites compete with each other for political power and resources. It is a mechanism, therefore, that seeks the acquiescence of citizens to the social order.

The advent of liberal democracy has not resolved the problem of the disempowerment and marginalisation of minority groups. To consolidate their power ruling elites withdraw the citizenship of subaltern groups and other formidable political opponents to deny them the right to vote. This accentuates internal social conflict as excluded groups contest their exclusion from the political process. For instance, the ongoing civil crisis in Côte d’Ivoire was sparked by the denial of Ivorian citizenship and the right to vote to northern minority groups, largely because they were perceived as migrant communities (Herbst 2000; Zezeza 1997; Bassett 2003).

Southall (2003, p 268), echoing Good, shows the similarities between the intent of contemporary political liberalism and its 19th-century counterpart:

Liberal democracy ... [in the 19th century] ... arose ... as a means of incorporating the masses into politics in an orderly way, not through 'irrational', participatory interventions such as strike action, but in voting for competing elites at periodic elections. The old democratic ideals of justice and equality were shorn-off as dangerously ideological, while Lockean beliefs in the rights of individual property ownership remained. Elitism accompanied by popular passivity came to characterize the main tendencies within the liberal form of democracy.

In effect, it perpetuates the systematic exclusion of the majority of people from the political process. Does it have the potential to bring order or stability to the states in West and Southern Africa? Tandeka Nkiwane (2001, p 286) provides an answer:

The spread of liberal democracy and consumer capitalism has not resolved many of the contradictions in Africa, but has rather in many cases exacerbated internal socio-political struggles, externalized in a variety of forms ... On the African continent, the prospects for peace, arguably, have less to do with democracy in its liberal sense, and more to do with questions of socio-economic distribution, or a deepened understanding of the democratic question.

For Chris Brown the liberal democratic project is rather a 'fragile plant' (1996, p 43) because it intrinsically concentrates power in a few hands, which undermines its ability to promote lasting peace (1996, p 42).

Attempts to democratise the regional processes remain frozen at the rhetorical level. Both SADC and the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) have, in principle, enshrined in their constitutions the right of civil organisations to participate in the regional process. In practice, however, there is little commitment by regional governments to allow civil society involvement in the policy-formulation process. In fact, the democratisation project seems to be limited to formal institutions such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the Ecowas Parliament which comprise representatives from national parliaments – members of the ruling class, who do not necessarily represent the interests of all the regions' peoples. The parliamentary bodies perform only advisory functions. The regional

2 At the turn of the century SADC moved away from a functional approach to co-operation and embraced free-trade regionalism.

development project turns on neo-liberalism,² which often favours a transnational capital class and its local agents (see Söderbaum 2001). We turn now to liberal interventionism.

LIBERAL INTERVENTIONISM

Many analysts argue that the polarisation of the Cold War days has been replaced by a globalist mode of thinking: states are more willing now than in the past to co-operate with each other for political and economic stability (Brown 2002; Devetak 2002; Lawson 2002). The *Agenda for Peace* by Boutros Boutros Ghali, former United Nations Secretary General, which appeared in the last decade of the 20th century, called for the renewal of partnership between the UN and states in order to promote international security (Henrikson 1995). The appeal was timely: it came just as the Cold War ended. George H W Bush, the 41st President of the US, in the same period, sensed the dawn of a *New World Order* – a world in which liberal democratic states come together to fight against the forces that threaten global security. This optimism sprang from the international solidarity against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, when the US and her allies, with the backing of the UN Security Council, restored sovereignty to Kuwait (Falk 2005, p 197).

The new order does not only mean – to retrieve the expression of E H Carr (1945, p 54) – ‘coming to the aid of an attacked country against its attacker’, it also means that the UN and the international society can intervene in civil conflicts, and especially in contexts where the state is on the verge of disintegration. They intervene to reconstruct the state on liberal democratic lines, to restore ‘democracy by force’ (cited in Vale 2003, p 131; see also Von Hippel 2000). This process follows a standard operating procedure: once a truce has been secured the UN-mandated force intervenes to perform peace-keeping or peace-making functions; a brokered settlement is followed by a transitional government of national unity; the intervention force demobilises ex-combatants, who are re-integrated into the society; finally, the transitional government (assisted by the UN) conducts multiparty elections, after which a new government is installed. This leads us to the question how altruistic is this form of liberal interventionism?

Notwithstanding the humanitarian undertones of Boutros Boutros Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace*, its primary point of reference is the sovereign state – the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state (Henrikson 1995; Devetak 2002; Lawson 2002). This is why David Campbell debunks the popular view that the sovereign state is undermined by liberal interventionism (Lawson 2002, p 213). For David Campbell liberal or other intervention revitalises sovereignty. Put differently, the purpose of intervention is to restore state sovereignty that has been displaced by conflict or the collapse of the state. In addition, when states

come together to intervene in civil conflicts they reaffirm the sovereign basis of the inter-state system (Campbell 1995; Lawson 2002, p 213). James Rosenau (2002, p 26) fingers the sovereign and statist motive of intervention:

When an internal war ravages a society and leads to a collapse of the state, the unquestioned impulse in the halls of government everywhere is to rebuild the state.

An examination of the motives of Ecomog and extra-regional actors in the Liberian Civil War reveals concerns about the stability and sovereignty of the Liberian state and the viability of the inter-state system in the region.

This explains why regional leaders such as President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, Sir Dawda Jawara of the Gambia and President Lansana Kouyate of Guinea perceived the Liberian civil conflict in 1989 as a recipe for regional instability. Charles Taylor's insurrection in Liberia set a precedent in the region because it was the first civilian attempt to overthrow a military government in West Africa. The thoughts of two presidents captured the mood of the regional leaders. Sir Dawda Jawara warned:

If Charles Taylor with the support of what I may call mercenaries from other countries of the sub-region were to come to power by force, one can imagine the implication it will have for sub-regional security.

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President Kouyate deplored the precedent being set by Taylor: 'Charles Taylor is a bad example. Civilians should not be encouraged to overthrow military regimes' (*New Africa* October 1992, p 16).

In the end, military force was deployed to reconstruct the sovereign state of Liberia and to affirm the sovereignty of the regional inter-state system. The intervention followed a regular liberal interventionist path: peacekeeping and peacemaking exercises, the establishment of a transitional government of national unity, demobilisation and rehabilitation of combatants and the organisation of democratic elections. At the end of the process Charles Taylor, a warlord, emerged as President of Liberia in 1997. However, barely two years later, Liberia relapsed into civil war.

In late 2003 the regional actors and extra-regional actors like the United States, in partnership with the UN, again began the ritualised response to the Liberian question. Ecomog and US soldiers were deployed to keep the peace; a transitional government was installed; the process of disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and re-integration was initiated, and democratic elections were held

in October 2005 (*The News* (Monrovia) 7 April 2004; *UN News Service* 10 April 2004). Similar statist-oriented responses were employed in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau in West Africa and in the DRC and Lesotho in Southern Africa. Despite these efforts, the regions are not stable. Côte d'Ivoire, as we have noted, is embroiled in civil conflict. Similarly, the DRC remains unstable: there is renewed fighting in eastern Congo (*SAFM News Bulletin* 5 December 2006; see also *Mail & Guardian* 11-17 June 2004, p 15). There are growing fears in Sierra Leone that the state may revert to anarchy once the UN forces leave (*Africa Today* October 2005, p 35). The stability in Lesotho is tentative: elite struggles for the state resurface in every election year (Ajulu 2002). The contestation by the opposition of the recent election results makes this point clear. This brings us to this question: Why has the liberal order failed to bring social cohesion and lasting security to the regions?

Liberals like Schumpeter (1950) believe that the role of people in the democratic process must be limited to renewing, in elections, the mandate of political elites to govern. Schumpeter and other liberals believe that most ordinary members of society are uninterested in public affairs and, more importantly, do not have the relevant technical or intellectual abilities to understand the complexities of modern issues (this contention is, however, contestable). As a result, it is the task of bureaucrats and elected representatives to act and take decisions on behalf of the public. However, in practice, these governing elites often do not decide and act for the 'social good'; rather they administer society for the 'market good', which furthers their own interests (Chachage 2004, p 251).

This neglect of the public interest is at variance with the fundamental (liberal) idea of elections: citizens choose their representatives to champion their common interest – for instance, to address issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Therefore, the subversion of the public mandate by ruling elites leads to continuous social-political tensions and other forms of insecurity. As we have seen, elections in a liberal democratic setting are opportunities for elites to compete for state power; but this rivalry can also take a violent turn in a 'zero-sum game': political elites mobilise disenchanted social groups to challenge electoral outcomes and to counter their marginalisation from the political process. This explains why 'electoral engineering' is offered up as a strategy to accommodate the interests of political opposition while ordinary citizens remain disempowered and alienated.

However, the prospects for universal security and development in the regions depend on 'deliberative', 'participatory', 'discursive' or 'popular' democracy.³

³ This form of democracy originated with the Greeks. There was popular participation in the political affairs of the society. Political practice was an inter-subjective communicative process which made possible unconstrained 'reciprocal speech'. In this political community the individual, in interacting with other members, learned to harmonize his or her interests with that of the group – it was, therefore, a meeting point between ego and alter ego (Bernstein 1995, p 35).

This form of political practice reflects an innate human desire for self-determination and equality. Its basic requirement is that the individual must have an equal opportunity to 'shape the social conditions that affect his/her life' (Held 2003, p 471). This will ensure the realisation of 'generalisability' of interest through 'reasoning from the point of view of others' (Held 2003, p 472; see also Habermas 1987). This rational, social point of view is manifested in Habermas's 'ideal speech situation' or discourse ethics,⁴ Rawls's original position, and Barry's formulation of impartialist reasoning (Held 2003, p 472; see also Rawls 1971).

The discursive form of democracy requires the restoration of civil society to the public sphere, as was the case in 18th-century Europe. In that era social groups like craftsmen, landed gentry, nobles and commoners, who had been 'excluded from the then dominant institutions of government' (Bernstein 1995, p 38), met in salons and parliaments to discuss affairs of state (Calhoun 1996, p 453). Their goal was to make the state 'more open, accountable, and responsive to interests beyond those of the traditional elites' (Bernstein 1995, p 38).

They assembled as autonomous individuals and participated in debates based on 'rational argument and criticism' (Calhoun 1996, p 453). Opinions formed by consensus invariably influenced public decisions (Calhoun 1996, p 453). So, this opinion-generating space, which is now the 'province ... of bureaucrats, credentialed experts and interest group elites' (Calhoun 1996, p 454), is the domain of cultural, economic, domestic and significantly political interactions between private individuals and associations outside the direct control of the state (Held 1996, p 315; Habermas 1992; Calhoun 1996). In a sense, this political practice entails an interactive process between the state and 'the communications of the public sphere'. For Habermas, this relationship is vital because the public sphere, which is made up of civic movements, is an opinion-forming space, while the formal institutions make decisions. So, rationally formed public opinions ought to 'point the use of administrative power in specific directions' (Habermas 1992, p 300). This procedure ensures that the interests of forces of social solidarity which are formed in 'widely differentiated autonomous public spheres' are realised 'against the two other mechanisms of social integration: money and administrative power' (Habermas 1992, p 363).⁵

4 Discourse ethics fundamentally promotes dialogue among all those significantly affected by particular social arrangements. It creates a communicative community in which partners engage in a rational interchange of ideas, views or opinions: in this community all relevant voices are heard; the best of all available arguments, given the present state of our knowledge, are accepted, and only the non-coercive coercion of the better argument determines the affirmations and negations of the participants (Dews 1992, p 260). This community thus rests on foundations of rationality, consensus, self-determination and equality. It also promotes fairness and justice.

5 Habermas uses 'money' as a reference to powerful economic forces and 'administration' as a reference to the state.

We now come to a central question. Can the state and other institutions of authority in the regions be compelled to institutionalise discursive political practice?

Most states in West and Southern Africa have liberal constitutions containing a raft of individual rights and obligations – legal, economic, social and political. These rights allow individuals or groups to take legal action against institutions such as the state and corporate entities on grounds of violation of rights.

Social groups in the two regions have taken advantage of these rights to initiate, for example, legal litigation against their governments and transnational corporations. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) – an AIDS activist group in South Africa – took the government to the Constitutional Court over its refusal to make anti-retroviral drugs available to HIV sufferers. The court ruled in favour of the TAC, instructing the government to provide the drugs.

Similarly, social movements in West Africa have exercised their fundamental human rights by seeking compensation for transnational corporate activities which impact negatively on their social and environmental rights. Several communities in the Niger Delta – the oil-producing region of Nigeria – sued petroleum companies like Chevron and Shell in Nigerian, British and US courts. Their grievances centred on the adverse effects of oil exploration on the environment, their livelihood and their health. The courts, in most cases, awarded financial compensation to the claimants.

So, a space exists, in a liberal climate, 'for the extension and radicalisation of existing rights'. Social forces can use these individual rights to demand institutionalisation of discursive practices bound by law and the provision of relevant social and material conditions which could help produce rational, objective, and universal outcomes (Habermas 1992, p 370). We now examine briefly some of these conditions.

People can participate constructively in a discursive process if they have access to relevant information, expert advice, and adequate understanding of issues. This is important because only an enlightened public can form a rational opinion (Coleman & Nathanson 2003). So, the various institutions of authority are obliged to provide the relevant information, the material incentives and other forms of assistance to enable the public to come to an enlightened decision on issues.

The opinions generated should, by law, permeate decisions of formal institutions. We now examine some avenues for public participation in the affairs of the two regions.⁶

6 Although the focus is largely on the regions the suggestions are equally relevant to the individual states.

THE INTERNET AS A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

Coleman & Nathanson (2003) suggest that the internet can help bring Europe's people into the decision-making processes of the European Union. These scholars believe the internet could be used as a 'virtual public sphere' to facilitate dialogue between ordinary European citizens and regional policy-makers. The citizens would ask questions and express their views in this social space. The policy-makers would be obliged to respond to citizens' questions by, for example, explaining their actions, providing relevant information, and embodying people's interests in policies.

This virtual community can be nurtured in both Southern and West Africa. This would address the problem of distance and scale and help sustain the interest of the public in the affairs of the regions. Furthermore, civil society groups could create independent virtual social spaces and pass on their recommendations – reached through consensus – to the relevant institutions. Sangonet, for instance, which is a coalition of civil groups in South Africa, uses the internet to disseminate information to other civil society organisations in the region. This could be expanded into a regional public sphere. The opinions generated should be transmitted by a civil society unit established at the regional secretariat to the relevant formal institutions.

Special occasions like holidays provide platforms for public discourse on regional affairs. Indeed, they present an opportunity for an interchange of ideas between representatives of formal institutions and the public. Ecowas has a public holiday which is usually spent on speeches on the work of the organisation (Lavergne 1997). However, it could also serve as an occasion for dialogue.

CONVENTIONS

A convention or summit is a formal or informal gathering which brings together people from diverse social backgrounds to discuss pertinent issues affecting their lives. The subject is either a single issue or a combination of issues like unemployment, the constitution, the environment and development. It therefore constitutes an appropriate public forum for discussing both national and regional affairs.

David Runciman (2003) offers useful insights into how a regional convention of civil society could be constituted. He suggests that the various parliamentary constituencies in the states that make up the European Union could choose delegates outside the formal party system to deliberate on issues in a regional convention. Runciman believes these representatives should be ordinary citizens rather than politicians. With access to the relevant information and a good

understanding of issues, it is likely that these individuals, who represent no particular interest, could initiate a discourse. Each participant would express his/her views freely, listen to others, and be prepared to defend his/her own opinion against those of others. The consensual opinions reached at such conventions should then be embodied in policies.

In addition, civil society organisations in the two regions could hold a summit before the annual inter-ministerial conferences which precede the summits of heads of state in the two regions. The suggestions emanating from the civil society meeting, like those of the inter-ministerial conferences, should form the basis of the decisions of the heads of state.

PARTNERSHIP

Both SADC and Ecowas have technical or specialised commissions that deal with specific regional issues like security, energy, environment, trade, natural resources, communication and tourism (Page & Bilal 2001, p 5; Bischoff 2002, p 290; Rene 2004). Civil society representatives involved in these issues could be invited to collaborate with the specialised bodies. Such partnerships would ensure that the interests and needs of the relevant public are articulated and catered for.

REFERENDUM

The word referendum dates back to the middle of the 19th century. It is usually described as the 'referring back of a decision to the people' (Runciman 2003, p 11). There are two categories of referendum: 'initiative' and 'plebiscitary' (Runciman 2003, p 11). The former gives citizens an opportunity to 'frame policy' and to veto or 'repeal an already existing law which they don't like' (Held 1996, p 322; Runciman 2003, p 11). It represents an effective means of popular participation in the policy-making process. 'Plebiscitary' referenda (Runciman 2003, p 11) are so called because they are 'consultative' (Held 1996, p 323). This is the form used by most states and is normally related to 'matters of constitutional change' (Runciman 2003, p 11). This type of referendum represents an attempt to inject a participatory moment into politics. There have been instances when the popular will expressed through such a referendum has been at variance with the expectations of the politicians and ruling elites. For example, the people of Zimbabwe, in a referendum in 2000, rejected the government's wish to 'expand the presidential powers' of Robert Mugabe to confiscate land from white farmers, rather than abiding by the 'willing buyer willing seller' policy (Moore 2001, p 255).

The European Union uses plebiscitary referenda to seek approval for its policies, recommendations and treaties – they are a way of involving the European

public in the affairs of the organisation. This opportunity, however, does not exist in either West or Southern Africa where regional protocols and treaties are ratified by national parliaments. The European example could be adopted in the two regions, which would give the regions' peoples the opportunity to participate in the regional process.

CITIZEN JURY/JURIES

Held (1992, 1996) and Barber (2003) suggest that popular participation in the political process can be promoted by institutionalising 'citizen jury/juries, especially at local and national levels. The concept of citizen jury/juries is borrowed from the judicial system in countries like the United States. A brief description of this process will help illustrate its importance.

In this legal procedure the jurors selected to adjudicate cases are members of society who do not have a technical knowledge of the law. However, their verdicts are regarded as rational and legitimate because they are based on informed knowledge, relevant information and discursivity. How? Briefly, once the members of the jury have been selected they are secluded from the rest of society. This is done to remove all possible forms of external influences and pressures. The jurors have access to relevant information about the case, which includes evidence of witnesses, arguments, and counter-arguments from both the defence and the prosecution teams. They deliberate at the end of the court proceedings and come out with a consensual opinion which is read out by the presiding judge as the verdict.

In the political process the citizen jury would be selected on class, gender, ethnic, professional or age lines to assess the strengths and weaknesses of controversial policies and express opinions on issues like the environment, transport, social welfare and development. The citizen jury – like its 'judicial' counterparts – would comprise ordinary members of society with no expert knowledge. To ensure a high quality of discourse the jury must have expert advice and adequate information about and understanding of the agenda. This must be provided by the state and other institutions of authority. The opinions and recommendations of the jury should filter into decisions. This brings us to a pertinent question: What available resources could social forces use to legitimise their involvement in regional affairs?

INSTITUTIONALISING DISCURSIVE PRACTICE

Both Ecowas and SADC recognise, in their treaties, the right of civil society to participate in their respective affairs (Rene 2004, p 29). But, as we have seen, this

right is more rhetorical than real. However, the provision legally entitles civil society organisations to participate in regional affairs. They can also use this entitlement to demand institutions which reflect the interests of the people. This would necessitate the restructuring of the existing legislative and judicial structures, which are presently subordinated to the wishes of governments.

Both the Ecowas Parliament – inaugurated in 2001 in Abuja, Nigeria – and the SADC Parliamentary Forum – constituted in 1996, with its Secretariat in Windhoek, Namibia, have only advisory functions (Rene 2004, p 14; Bischoff 2002). In the absence of substantive legislative authority the SADC Parliamentary Forum performs tasks like popularising the work of SADC and dispatching electoral observers to monitor elections in member states (Bischoff 2002, p 295). The Ecowas Parliament only makes recommendations to the ‘appropriate community institutions’ on issues like ‘human rights [and]... social affairs’ (Rene 2004, p 14). Put simply, these bodies reflect the interests of states.

Ecowas has a Court of Justice (Lavergne 1997; Rene 2004, p 14) and the SADC Draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons provides for a regional tribunal (Lavergne 1997; SAFM News Bulletin August 2005). The heads of state – the authority – appoint the judges, who only adjudicate in disputes relating to treaty violations between states. The court’s decision is not binding on states and citizens from member states have no legal standing before the court (Rene 2004, p 13).

The court only accepts cases brought by the state on behalf of its citizens. Indeed, the court is superfluous, because the states do not use it: they prefer to use diplomatic means to resolve disputes. The grievances of citizens, which are usually against the state, never get to the court. The role of the Ecowas Court contrasts markedly with that of the European Court. European citizens can take legal action against their governments and the court’s decisions are binding on states. To reiterate, how can civil society organisations legitimise their involvement in regional affairs?

First, civil society groups in the two regions must call for parliaments with legislative powers over regional issues. These institutions should, in turn, incorporate in their constitutions the right of public participation in the legislative process. This has to be an interactive process in which the rational communications of the diverse public spheres (such as environment, security and development) are represented in formal legislation. Second, civil organisations should press for strong and independent regional judiciary institutions like human rights courts. These courts or tribunals would have the power to adjudicate cases between the formal institutions of authority and civil society and the authority to enforce their decisions. They should also defend the right of civil society to participate in the regional process.

CONCLUSION

What are the implications of institutionalised discourse in the two regions? To begin with, it would imply the end of state sovereignty. The state's monopoly over decision-making processes would be broken because popular forces would acquire the right to participate in these processes. However, this would not lead to a withering away of the state and other formal institutions of authority. Civil society would not have the power to govern itself or bring the entire society under its control.

We have seen that in the procedural interaction between civil society and formal institutions the former only generates opinions for the latter to act on. Yet civil society organisations in both regions would have sufficient legal power to make the political system act responsibly and democratically. This would help release the public persona of the state and would act for the general good of society. The state would be compelled to institute measures to reduce the capacity of private forces to distort the economic and political processes (Held 1996; Baker 2000). It would be obliged to be responsive to both individual and communal interests.

Citizens in both regions would come to have significant leverage over the organisations and institutions which affect their lives. This would help correct the democratic deficit that overlays them. The regional institutions will be compelled to enact laws and promote programmes which cater for both private and collective interests.

It is clear that an institutionalised discursive process facilitating mutual interaction between state and people has the potential to bring about security in the two regions. This is so because it establishes a legitimate order based on rationality, consensus, justice, fairness and democracy; it seeks to foster common interests, common aspirations and common goals. This is in marked contrast to the existing liberal democratic order, which is rooted in elitism, systematic exclusion, inequality and injustice. These invariably lead to insecurity.

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CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Institutionalisation for the Sustainability of Democracy

Sulaiman Balarabe Kura

International Development Department
Priorsfield, University of Birmingham
46 Edgbaston Park Road Birmingham, B15 2RT, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 121 414 2674
Fax: +44 (0) 121 414 5032
email: sulaimankura@yahoo.co.in
syk408@bham.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

Political parties are the custodians of democracy. Following the return of democracy to Africa during the 'third' and 'fourth' waves, political parties are undergoing structural changes (from military and one-party authoritarianism to liberal multiparty systems) for the development of sustainable democracy. This paper is not about institutionalised political parties or party systems, it is about understanding the historical development of political parties and their transformational nature in relation to the development of democracy in Africa. The paper therefore identifies some critical challenges that are threatening the institutionalisation process of the parties. These include party funding and finance, party ideology, the dominant-party syndrome, ineffective civil society opposition and problems of fragile electoral institutions. The paper argues that though these problems are part of the wider socio-political and economic dilemmas inherent in Africa they are more pervasive and have a devastating affect on political parties as instruments of modern representative democracy. The paper thus contends that, given the main concerns and attributes of good governance, it is the only panacea that can wholly address the institutional problems of political parties as well as other structural and institutional obstacles to the development of sustainable democracy in Africa. Good governance is presumed here to be the ideal and pragmatic solution to such institutional obstacles.

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of command political and economic socialist and communist regimes in Eastern and Southern Europe (former members of the Soviet Union) in the last decades of the 20th century caused great turmoil in the political and social histories of many countries. Globally, it led to the end of the East-West rivalry popularly known as the Cold War. Most importantly, it led to the proliferation of democracy and democratic governance in several countries hitherto under military dictatorships and one-party regimes. In Africa many countries haphazardly embraced the new project of re-democratisation and, where democracy was already the norm, reforms were introduced.

Political parties, as the custodian of modern representative liberal democracy, were at the forefront of these shifts from authoritarianism to liberal democracy. All over the continent there were complete overhauls of dictatorial regimes or one-party systems forcibly gave way to multipartyism. In countries where dictatorships continued to hold sway, such as Zaire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and even Zimbabwe, civil wars and instability became the order of the day.

The centrality of political parties to democracy has been well documented in the literature of political science. Democratic systems cannot do without them and even non-democratic regimes used them in disguise. For example, Cuba, North Korea, China, Saddam's Iraq, Hitler's Germany, other totalitarian regimes, and some monarchical states in the Middle East had or have political parties. The proliferation of democracy at the turn of the last century has also been coloured by the upsurge of political parties in Africa. From South Africa to Egypt; Nigeria to Ethiopia, it is accepted that political parties are at the centre stage of democratic reforms. However, despite their centrality, political parties are today being attacked from all sides. Other social and political institutions are robbing them of their most serious and important functions.

Against this gloomy background, are political parties in Africa late in making a meaningful impact in their role as custodians of democracy or are they in the process of institutionalisation in order to embrace the norms and ideals of democratisation and contain the challenges posed by domestic and external factors? This paper attempts to explore the contemporary state of political parties with a view to highlighting the crisis facing them in Africa today and identifying the potential for institutionalisation in the development of sustainable democracy. Institutionalisation is the process by which democratic values and norms become deeply embedded in the organisation of political parties. It is the process of creating credible and stable political parties.

The paper is divided into five parts and subsections: part one is this introduction; part two contains theoretical and conceptual framework issues

relating to political parties, their traditional role and the changing nature of this role in the development of democracy; part three concentrates on the historical development of African political parties and their classification within the universal discourse of party politics; part four is devoted to identifying some fundamental issues that could obstruct the rapid institutionalisation of political parties vis-à-vis the development of sustainable democracy in Africa, and also recommends a good governance framework for overcoming these challenges and nurturing institutionalised parties. The last part sums up and concludes the paper.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: POLITICAL PARTIES AND INSTITUTIONALISATION

Political parties are organisations whose members have values, ideals and aspirations in common and which participate in the organised contest/struggles for political power. Coleman and Roseberg (cited in Smith 1996, p 96) defined political parties as associations formally organised with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring, and to some extent maintaining, either singly or in coalition or electoral competition with other associations, legal control over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective sovereign state.

This definition is similar to that of Henig and Pinder (1969, p 11), who defined political parties as groups of people acting together to achieve some political goals, including appropriate control of government. Parties are simply organised or loosely organised group under a recognised label with the sole intention of controlling power through elections (Epstein 1967). Janda (1980, p 5) stresses that a party is an organisation that simply pursues a goal of placing its avowed representatives in government positions.

Sartori (1976, p 63) provides one of the most widely quoted definitions of political parties. He stresses that a political party is 'any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or non-free), candidates for public office'. While this definition is a step forward from those above because it includes 'free and non-free' elections, it cannot be used to define contemporary parties in developing countries because of the vulnerability of the parties to manipulation and the extensive role played by the state in their activities.

Accordingly, some scholars define parties in accordance with their functions in governance and administration. Thus, there is party government or *partocracy*. From this perspective, Katz (1986, pp 31-71) suggests some ways of identifying party government vis-à-vis defining a political party. According to Katz party government involves:

- the making of governmental decisions by elected party officials or by those directly or indirectly under their control;
- government policy decided within political parties;
- parties acting cohesively to enact and implement this policy;
- public officials being recruited through political parties;
- public officials being held accountable through political parties.

Defining political parties on these lines is not only ambiguous but also narrows down their functions solely to the formation of government. Parties have also been conceptualised in terms of the scope of their activities. Catto (2000, pp 59-74) conceives parties in terms of their place in the legislature, as organisations in the electorate, in government, in bureaucracy, and as systems. This has further complicated the idea of having a working definition(s) for the study of political parties, especially in emerging democracies in Africa. For example, party is also defined as a membership organisation. Thus, it constitutes a 'focal and rallying point for citizens actively interested in politics' and 'also a community taking care of many needs ranging from social protection to education, to leisure activities and even to personal relationships' (Catto 2000, p 63). Parties have also been defined as a set of individuals with common political interests, values, aspirations, ideals, strategies and programmes (Ware 1996; Sartori 1976). Parties are more than sets of individuals. No matter how organised sets of individuals are, they can not be labelled political parties except when their overall objective is to acquire political power and when they are recognised at least by the relevant institutions of the state.

Certain trajectories run through most of the definitions of political parties:

- Political parties are formal political organisations.
- Their major goal is to win control of state power.
- They run candidates in elections.
- Contesting elections is the underlying framework through which they form government.
- They operate in both democratic and non-democratic regimes.
- They have an 'avowedly public purpose as broad coalitions that facilitate compromise and governance in society as a whole' (Thomas, 2001, p 5).
- They have a label that is institutionally recognised.

The greatest problem in defining parties centres on the narrow and broad views and the extent to which such definitions influence whether the general theory is limited only to explaining and discussing the manner and political behaviour of

purely competitive parties (as is the case in stable advanced democracies) or whether it aims at a broader concept, embracing even single-party systems and anti-systems or subversive parties in autocratic-democratic regimes (Janda 1993, p166). This is an important theoretical debate but the scope and limitation of this paper does not allow the issue to be probed. Nevertheless, trying to minimise the problems of conceptualisation Lawson (1976, pp 3-4) argues that 'a political party is an organisation of individuals that seeks continuing electoral and nonelectoral authorisation from the public (or a portion thereof) for specified representatives of that organisation to exercise the political power of particular government offices, claiming that such power would be exercised on behalf of that public.'

The definitions above did not recognise the *officialness* of parties as organisations before apparently qualifying as political parties, especially in some African countries. On this note political parties are formally recognised organisations whose members share certain common values, ideals and aspirations about how society should be politically, socio-culturally and economically organised for the common good and aspire to put into practice these ideals and values through the control of government. This is done by placing their representatives in competitive, free and fairly conducted elections without or with minimal harassment, intimidation and threats of violence.

The concept of parties in this context captures the broad understanding of their role and could be applied to the study of developing democracies. In this respect the definition also identifies the nature of parties in both new and old democracies. Although this definition of a political party seems too ambitious it captures clearly the basic requirements of a party that is capable of impacting on democratic governance. The definition includes African political parties but, importantly, it exposes the questionable nature and characteristics of these parties. This is why most African political parties are part of the problem of democratisation on the continent. At any rate the definition is only a working guide for understanding how African political parties negate the avowed principles of democratic competition and politicking.

In the new democracies parties are still in their infancy and many were formed along ethnic, tribal, even, in some cases, religious lines. In short, parties reflect the apparent socio-cultural and political cleavages and divisions in a society. Thus, parties in developing democracies cannot be compared to those in advanced democracies, though some might argue that it is imperative to compare African political parties with Western parties, particularly because the dominant approach to party research is heavily influenced by Western authors drawing on their historical experiences.

Parties as political associations are officially recognised as participants in the political process in their respective countries, hence they are, to a very

significant degree, identified as political parties. Non-party-recognised organisations, no matter the extent of their objective and administrative articulation, are not termed political parties until they are officially and formally recognised as such. That is, perhaps, why parties are required to be constitutionally registered before they can fully participate in the contest for power.

The above arguments make it both theoretically and empirically clear that democratisation and political parties are two sides of the same coin. Democracy can only be practised in terms of political parties. Despite the widespread arguments against the continued relevance or decline of political parties (Schmitter 2001) parties are the most important organisations in modern politics and only a few non-democratic states do without them, though even non-democratic states use them in disguise to advance their authoritarian rule. For example, the Nazi Party in Hitler's Germany, the Communist Party of China, the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) or the Workers' Party of Korea, the Korean Social Democratic Party, the Chondoist Chongu Party and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Korea in North Korea.

In other words, even non-democratic regimes cannot do without political parties, because they remain the rallying point for 'support' and/or 'opposition'. The reason why they are 'well-nigh ubiquitous is that they perform functions that are valuable to many political actors' (Strøm & Miller 1999, p 1). Moreover, accepting the centrality of parties, David (1976, p 1) argues that to talk of democracy is to talk about competitive parties that underscore the representative model of liberal democracy since the French Revolution. More fundamentally, a political party is the most essential factor in the consolidation of democracy, even though other factors such as civil society, rule of law, free and fair elections or transparency and accountability are also important (Van Biezen 2003, p 4). This is simply because of the enormous role played by political parties (see Diamond 1997, p xxiii).

Invariably, from whichever angle one looks at the issue of democratisation, political parties still matter. They remain the primary representative and legitimising links between citizens and the state. They are the principal legitimate means through which citizens can hold their leaders accountable for policy and performance. Furthermore, Katz (1992, p 1) stresses that to date no political institution is assigned the particular principal responsibility of formation and maintenance of government. Even in countries which have had long military dictatorship or other forms of autocratic leadership the formation of political parties is the first identifiable step towards democratisation, in whichever form it starts, be it elite consensus or otherwise.

Since the massive 'waves' of democratisation across Africa, political parties have been conditioned formally and/or informally to undertake reforms and

other essential changes in order to adapt to the demands of multiparty democracy. This is against hitherto underlying norms of one-party and military dictatorships. It is in this context, and in the context of the history of the African democratic struggle, that parties are perceived to be in crises of transformation for institutionalisation vis-à-vis democratic consolidation.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY

Today, the centrality of political parties in democracy is acknowledged everywhere in the world, even where 'ideal' parties are conspicuously absent or their functions are thwarted by extra-legal and extra-democratic measures. In fact, because of their centrality, political party literature continues to be the best source of research for political scientists (see Reiter 2007). Apart from the period during the two world wars, there have been consistent studies of and research into political parties since the 1800s. Strøm & Miller (1999, p 1) observe that:

Political parties are the most important organisations in modern politics. In the contemporary world, only a few states do without them. The reason that political parties are well nigh ubiquitous is that they perform functions that are valuable to many political actors ... Democracy may be conceived as a process by which voters delegate policy-making authority to a set of representatives and political parties are the main organisational vehicle by which such delegation takes place.

The position occupied by political parties in modern representative democracy has not only made political scientists conceptualise democracy itself along party political lines but also stress that 'to talk, today, about democracy, is to talk about a system of competitive political parties' (Robertson 1976, p 1). It is perhaps because of the essential role of parties in all aspects of the political and economic life of political beings and because to date no institution has replaced those functions that, despite the debate about the decaying and 'withering' away of the 'golden' age of political parties, parties continue to be the cornerstone of re-democratisation in developed democracies and, especially, in the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.

At this point, at least, for convenience of analysis, policy-makers and democratic stakeholders should concentrate on the 'consolidation' and 'institutionalisation' of political parties in developing countries with a view to finding viable ways of making them responsive and responsible to practical democratic governance networks.

There are pragmatic reasons for making a genuine case for political parties and the thinking that they are indispensable to the establishment and development of democracy and democratic governance.

- They serve as bridge between the government and the governed.
- They serve as the machinery for political mobilisation and political education. They reinforce the activities of formal educational institutions and national and local orientation and mobilisation agencies, thus serving as instruments of civic education. They perform this function by the use of mass media, political rallies, campaigns and local organisations.
- They are agents of political integration and national unity. All societies face problems of integration and unity but the problem is more pervasive and severe in Third World societies. Thus, national parties serve as instruments through which people of different ethnic groups, social norms and political values and orientations come together to advance the course of national and local political societies.¹
- They are a means of political (leadership) recruitment. They prepare, groom and, consequently, recruit political officers by means of the nomination, selection and election of party candidates to various levels of political office.
- They serve as instruments of accountability. Through political parties the electorate holds its leaders accountable for policies and other governance issues.
- They are mechanisms of representation, representing various groups and sections of the population. They are instruments through which citizens express their opinions and feel represented in governance. In this way, they serve as avenues of political participation. This is the central attribute of representative and participatory democracy.
- They are agencies of governance. The winning party(ies) form and establish the government. They formulate and implement public policies that are supposedly derived from popular demands. They govern and regulate the economic, political and social affairs of the state. As parties engage in the domestic governance of the state they are also involved in formulation of foreign policy. Because of this they are instruments of both national and foreign policy administration and governance. That is why, in order to provide the public

¹ The return of democracy through the activities of political parties in Liberia, Rwanda, Congo (Kinshasa and Brazzaville) and several other countries in Africa and elsewhere after many years of civil unrest is testimony to the integrative role of parties. However, their integrative function has been cited as one of the important reasons for the development of one-party regimes in Africa (see Huntington 1968).

with real options, political parties must be differentiated and distinguished by their philosophies and ideologies.

These are the conventional functions of political parties as indispensable pillars of modern representative democracy. However, not all parties actually perform these functions. Hence, today, there are democracies and quasi-democracies, the latter defined in terms of the problematic nature of the activities of political parties. The intensity with which parties in different political systems perform these functions is explained by economic, political and social factors defined by both historical and contemporary circumstances. In the case of Africa, Tordoff (1988) and Salih (2003) have examined how at various times African political parties have performed these functions in terms of the historical and socio-economic circumstances of the continent.

Despite the important role political parties play in institutionalising modern representative democracies, there is today an emerging debate about the apparent decline of these roles; what some call a crisis of parties (Ignazi 1996, pp 549-66). However, in the following section, it is argued that though parties face serious challenges from old and new political stakeholders their roles are only changing to contend with the enormous challenges and contemporary realities of deepening democracy and democratisation.

CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF PARTIES IN CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRACY

Although African third-and fourth-wave democracies² are gearing up to develop political parties for electoral competition and democratic consolidation it seems this aspiration coincides with the prediction of some political analysts of the 'downfall' of political parties. Are parties really in crisis? Do other associations

2 According to Huntington (1996, p 199) democracy developed historically in a succession of long waves. The first began in the 19th century with the extension of suffrage to a large number of people, including women, in the US and Western Europe and lasted until the 1920s. In the course of this period, about 29 democratic countries emerged. The rise of totalitarianism in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany in 1922 reversed this development and the number of democracies dropped to just 12 states. The second wave started in 1962, when the number of democracies increased to 36 states. This period, according to Huntington, lasted until the mid-1970s, when the number was reduced to 30. However, from 1974, especially with democracy taking over in Portugal, the number doubled. Following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of many military and one-party systems, democracy scholars perceived this transformation as the 'third wave' and those following it as a 'fourth wave', during which many African countries become 'democracies'. However, it is important to note that Huntington did not forecast the possibility of an ebbing of third-wave or even fourth-wave democracies in the 21st century. What is clear, though, is that economic development and political leadership are decisive factors for democracy.

exist that could replace their functions? Is the role of political parties being transformed by political and economic globalisation? What, then, will be the fate of African parties, and what challenges are they facing in institutionalising and/or consolidating democracy?

This paper will not explore these questions but will, instead, highlight some key points that are relevant here. Schmitter (2001, pp 67-89), contributing to the debate on party crisis/decline, remarks that 'parties are not what they once were'. Though he acknowledges the central role they play in the consolidation of democracies, he warns that students of contemporary political parties tend to ignore the changes taking place in their nature and role in established democracies, or expect contemporary parties to play the same roles as those in the 19th century.

Despite a failure to acknowledge the diversity found within the study of parties today, Schmitter (2001, p 71) has succeeded in contributing to the debate, perhaps in order to strengthen further the role of parties and improve the nature of governance in democracies. He emphasises that the emergence of intermediary agents, which are more organised, specialised and professional than party organisations, and the effects of the international environment, are providing political parties with competition from diverse interest, associations and social movements, which are struggling to perform similar political functions in the consolidation of *neodemocracies* (emphasis in the original). But he also states (2001, p 71) that 'I am *not* claiming that political parties do not make some contributions to the consolidation of democracy and I am certainly *not* predicting that they will somehow fade away in neodemocracies.'

However, the relevance for this paper is that, while acknowledging these challenges, we can also see that political parties are undergoing transformation and embracing the new challenges posed by the rapidly changing local and international environment in which they operate. In established democracies parties face the changing demands of citizens, a wide spectrum of public policies, and the shifting role of the state in economic development. They are facing a vibrant civil society, an independent press, and a global network, with its attendant challenges.

In new democracies, especially in Africa, parties are facing the challenges of formulating and implementing policies that address the issues of deprivation, environmental alienation, poverty, disease (HIV/AIDS, maternal death, etc) and social exclusion and, most importantly, crises of legitimacy in states where elections were not free and fair and not seen as such; where the press is not free; and where freedom of information and speech are undermined. Internally, parties are facing challenges of discipline, ideology, inter- and intra-party conflict and lack of adequate resources, all of which affect their functioning. Montero & Gunther (2002, p 1) eloquently capture the debate when they maintain that scholars have been:

led to dismiss further empirical study of parties on the grounds that parties are becoming increasingly irrelevant, since they are failing to respond successfully to a series of challenges, and many of their functions are performed better by less formally organised social movements, by direct contact between politicians and citizens through the broadcast media or the internet, or by innovations in direct democracy. In the view of this group of scholars, parties may be seen as in an inexorable process of 'decline'. Finally, there may be some who have concluded scholarly research on parties has failed to advance the task of developing rigorous and persuasive theory, and that further efforts along these lines are doomed to fail.

Three factors can be deduced from the above observation, through which scholars argue against further research and/or the decline of political parties. The first is the failure of parties to respond to and/or contain contemporary challenges in the areas of communication, funding, and so on. Secondly, other informal groups are performing many of the functions of political parties such as political education and mobilisation, linkage, integration, and so on. Thirdly, there is no rigorous theory of political parties despite more than a century of research. Thus, from a broader perspective, the study of political parties is even more justified than it has been hitherto, especially under the banner of representative democracy. Montero & Gunther (2002, pp 1-2) conclude that the continuing importance of parties in all representative democratic systems and the contemporary global challenges confronting parties call for more rigorous and intensive empirical research. This, therefore, makes it dramatically important to thrust 'towards the formulation and systematic testing of more sophisticated and empirically grounded hypotheses with the ultimate objective of developing a more compelling set of middle-range theories' (Montero & Gunther 2002, p 2).

Mair (2006, p 2) stresses that as a result of changes in the character of democracy, changes in the society under which parties operate, and changes within the parties themselves, parties are finding it difficult to perform their representational functions and still remain firm on procedural functions. He concludes that perhaps the only way parties can assure themselves of a future is by facing up to the new challenges forced by structural changes and by accepting the real circumstances (ie, that there is little prospect of building strong party roots within society and no prospect of maintaining a distinct and powerful organisational identity based on ideology), and by concentrating on institutionalising their legitimacy as catalysts of a form of democracy that is inclusive, transparent, and accountable, that is, democratic good governance.

This projection of the changing nature of political parties might be a source of

relief to scholars and students of African political parties who are waiting anxiously to see parties in new democracies resemble their counterparts in developed democracies, especially those of 19th-century Western Europe and America. This also means that the criteria for measuring party institutionalisation, as suggested by Randall & Svåsand (2001), and party system institutionalisation by Mainwaring & Scully (1995) need to be re-evaluated at least to reflect the inevitable changes introduced in the world of political parties.

It can also be argued that the idea of the crisis and the critical era of political parties (Aldrich 1997, pp 2-25) is one of the three theoretical myths about parties and democracy. Mainwaring (2001) stresses that changes to parties as a result of the communication revolution do not necessarily signify their downfall. In fact, political parties remain even stronger today in industrial democracies than in new democracies. Based on experiences in Latin America, he reasons that strong parties are not essential for democracy, but a well-institutionalised party system is a *sine qua non* for lasting democracy. One can add that for a reasonably institutionalised party system to flourish individual party institutionalisation is a prerequisite as it eliminates those parties that have no realistic chance of winning any elections and therefore are associations or movement in disguise, or forces them to merge or collaborate with major parties (Schmitter 2001, p 71).

As pointed out above, the changing circumstances of political parties in the developed world is sending a signal to emerging democracies, and this has implications for the life and functions of parties in this region. Be that as it may, a serious rethink is necessary about the future of political parties vis-à-vis democracy in Africa. In particular, it raises questions for existing theories about the role of political parties in complex pluralistic states in Africa, the importance of party systems and party institutionalisation, the question of public and private funding of political parties, the question of decentralisation, the structural organisation and the relationships between political parties and rapidly growing civil society organisations.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN AFRICA

An understanding of the historical trajectories of the development of African political parties is crucial to appreciating and analysing the current nature of the parties and the variety of problems that besieged them in the democratisation project. This section sets out to provide that. The political history of Africa in the 19th century is one of colonial rule and imperialism, followed, in the 1950s and 1960s, by struggles for liberation and independence. Different kinds of decolonisation movements and nationalist organisations were formed as catalysts for the struggles. Immediately after independence, parties were formed, based

on ethnic and regional lines. This had severe and lasting effects on the development of political parties and party politics in Africa. Sklar (1967, p 6) stresses that:

Each party secured its power in a region of the country by appealing to ethnic sensibilities, among other means. Under a federal system of government, each party was able to consolidate its power by exploiting regional government resources. Privileged class interests, entrenched in the regions, have been opposed to any fundamental transformation of the regional power system. Time and again, they have been willing to perpetrate electoral fraud at the risk of violence and secession in order to prevent radical political changes. Tribalism has been their trustworthy weapon against change.

According to Mboya (1957) many national trade unions metamorphosed into nationalist organisations and eventually became political parties. And in other countries peasant farmers organised against colonial agricultural policies. *Syndicat Africain Agricole* in Côte d'Ivoire was one such organisation (Morgenthau 1964). These nationalist organisations, characterised to some extent by primordial and sectional interests 'lacking both ideology and organisational capacity that could bind conflicting interests together in the post-independence period', metamorphosed into political parties (Nyong'o 1997, p 7). The succeeding political parties exploited state political and administrative powers as instruments for political mobilisation and control, hence the emergence of one-party dictatorships. Thus, parties became instruments for political control for selfish ends rather than mass movements for the mobilisation of citizens for popular participation in and institutionalisation of democratic governance (Nyong'o 1987). People from the leaders' ethnic group usually fill the parties' administrative offices.

The Benin People's Revolutionary Party (PRPB) and the Dehomeyan Democratic Party (PDD) in Benin, the Kenya African Democratic party (Kanu), the Tanganyika African National Union (Tanu), the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia, the Democratic Party of Guinea (PDGuinea), the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR) in former Zaire, the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Party (PDCI-RDA), Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF), the Voltaic Democratic Union-African Democratic Rally (UDV-RDA) in Burkina Faso, the Cameroonian National Union-Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (UNC/RPDC), the Chadian Progressive Party (PPT), the Convention People's Party (CCP) in Ghana, the Committee of Togolese Unity (CUT), the Ugandan People's Congress (UPC), the Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally (US-RDA), the Mali People's Democratic Union (UDPM), the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS), and so on, have represented both *de jure* and *de facto* one-party systems in Africa.

One-party systems, military dictatorships and military coups have characterised political party development in Africa, with economic development, unity, and integration overcoming instability and corruption advanced as reasons for such developments. Malawi, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe were examples of *de jure* one-party dictatorships; Kenya and Lesotho, among others, had *de facto* one-party systems and Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger Republic and Benin were examples of countries where military dictatorships obstructed the development of multi-party democracy. In Kenya, until the repeal of the Constitution (Section 2A) in 1991, the country had been under the dictatorial dominance of Kanu, exhibiting all the basic traits of authoritarianism (CDG Policy Brief 2005). It was only after 1991 that Kanu permitted the creation of opposition parties. However, given the long period of political dominance of Kanu and the absence of any viable opposition, the new parties could not challenge the organisational authority of the party.

Three different scenarios could be discerned from the development of political parties in Africa: parties established before independence; parties that emerged from liberation movements; and parties established by military regimes (Salih 2003).

Many political parties in Africa were founded during colonial rule and used as instruments of struggle for political independence. This was most apparent in countries that achieved their independence through constitutional engineering, albeit by peaceful means. Examples of these include Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and other British colonial states. While in some countries military coups and civil wars terminated the 'life' of most of these 'colonial parties', in others many have survived and persist. In the latter, the colonial parties, especially the ruling parties, metamorphosed into one-party systems either through systematic but illegal elimination of opposition parties or through smaller parties going into electoral alliances with the ruling parties as the only means of survival. It is important to note here that some political parties still 'managed to maintain some measure of continuity' (Salih 2003, p 9).

Political parties were established by the military in countries which experienced a series of military takeovers and where the original colonial parties were dismantled. It is a tradition of the military that whenever they intervene in political affairs they first suspend the constitution, and then ban all political activities and all existing political parties and organisations and rule by decree. By implication, democratisation is abruptly obstructed and suspended. Whenever, the temporary political euphoria, support, and popularity enjoyed by the leaders of a coup wane, domestic civil society and the international community combine to pressurise the military to return the country to democracy. Accordingly, military regimes 'become unpopular as a result of their failure to deliver on their promise,

indulgence in corruption capitalising on the lack of checks and balances of their authority' (Salih 2003, p. 19).

When returning their countries to a democratic path military regimes in Africa, and perhaps elsewhere, embark on a programme of transition to civilian rule through which a new constitution is promulgated, electoral organisation are established and politicians are mandated to create political parties strictly in accordance with military decrees guiding their formation and activities. By means of this process, military regimes become the architects of political party formation. New political parties are established and old ones thrown into the dustbins of history. This situation has critically affected the continued existence of political parties in Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Sudan, and a host of others. However, of all the African states that have experienced military regimes Nigeria provides the most awful example.

In Nigeria the first military coup was staged in January 1966 after just five years of independence. From 1967 to 1970 the country was enveloped in a bloody civil war. The military regime lasted until 1979 when the country returned to democratic rule. Four years later, in December 1983, the military struck again and continued to rule until 1999. In both 1979 and 1999 political party formation and activities were anchored by military decrees. Political associations had to fulfil stringent and cumbersome criteria before they were officially allowed to participate in the democratisation process. What was even more politically awkward was the attempt, in 1993, by the Babangida regime not only to sanction the formation and activities of political parties but to impose two state-sponsored political parties: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC).

The state created the parties, provided their respective constitutions and manifestoes, built their national, state and local government secretariats, appointed their principal officers and, above all, 'ordered' politicians to join the parties. The state also paid all the expenses of the parties, including financing their members attending congresses and conventions. What the Nigerian example, like those in Sudan and elsewhere, indicated, was that parties established by the military are not people's parties. It is politicians, as custodian of party politics, who should be allowed to create and sustain political parties.

The third major element in the development of African political parties is liberation movements which metamorphosed into political parties. Many colonial entities achieved independence through the establishment of formidable movements that forcibly conditioned colonial masters to grant independence and which, either in the course of or after the formal declaration of independence, transformed into political parties. Examples include the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola

(FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita); the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) and the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo); the South West Africa People's Organisation (Swapo) in Namibia, the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, and Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail the development of these liberation organisations and the process of their metamorphosis into political parties. What should be emphasised, though, is that many, if not all these parties have continued to rule their respective countries since independence. Thus, the liberation political parties exhibit all the traits of one-party systems. They are populist parties that have tried to show that they are democratic, but, in reality, it is difficult to distinguish them from the governments they established (Salih 2003). Like other African political parties they are often beset by sectionalism and ethnicity and advance themselves through neo-patrimonialism (a modern form of patrimonialism, characterised by rational-legal procedures clouded by personalistic ties and patronage), clientalism and violence.

Despite intermittent terminations of political parties, especially by military regimes, civil wars and through the co-option of smaller parties by dominant ones, many political parties were able to withstand these problems and persist today. Table 1 highlights some of the longest-surviving parties in Africa. These parties, apart from those in a few 'free' or liberal democracies, have not acquired the democratic features necessary for institutionalisation. The fact that they have survived does not in any way mean that they have satisfied the criteria for institutionalisation.

Beyond these political legacies the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in Africa during the third and fourth waves (ie, after the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War) was a good omen for interaction and democratic development. However, the slapdash nature of such transformation, without credible constitutional, legal, political and administrative reforms has largely caused the enormous problems that today besiege the development of multiparty democracy.

Stakeholders in the democratic project, particularly civil society, the legal system, the legislature and the political parties, entered the new political atmosphere ill prepared and ill organised. Coupled with this were fresh political, administrative and organisational quagmires. Some parties have, therefore, remained avenues for advancing individual and selfish group interests and organisations in which political elites continue to dominate economic and political systems in various countries. Most significantly, the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in Africa has led to the erosion of single-party systems. These have been replaced by dominant-party and two-party coalition systems (Salih 2003, p 7). This scenario has affected the development of competitive political parties.

Table 1
Longest-Serving Political Parties in Africa

Party	Duration
MPLA, Angola	1975 to date and adopted multiparty democracy in 1992
Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)	From independence in 1966 to date
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM)	From 1960 and returned to multiparty democracy in 1992
People's Rally for Progress (RPP), Djibouti	1977 to date and adopted multiparty democracy in 1992
Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE)	1974 to 1991
Kanu, Kenya	1963 to date and adopted multiparty democracy in 1992
Malawi Congress Party (MCP)	1964 to 1994
UDPM, Mali	1960-1991. Military coup brought about democracy in 1992
Frelimo, Mozambique	1975 to date and adopted multiparty democracy in 1994
Swapo, Namibia	1990 to date
National Movement for a Developing Society (MNSD), Niger	1960-1993. Military regime returned democracy in 1996
SP, Senegal	1964-98. Introduced controlled competitive democracy in 1974
Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF)	1976 to date and adopted multiparty democracy 1996
Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP)	1961 to date. Interrupted by series of military coups
Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU)	1971-1985
Tanu, Tanzania	1961-1990 Succeeded by CCM
RPT, Togo	1970 to date
UNIP, Zambia	Since 1964 and returned to multiparty democracy in 1991
ZANU-PF	1980 to date and returned to multiparty democracy in 1992

Source: Salih (2003)

In Africa political parties did not emerge as a rational choice for resolving societal, political and economic policy issues, nor were they established for proper state coordination (see Aldrich 1995; Cox & McCubbins 1993). Parties emerged to create the political system instead of the reverse, which is the case in more established democracies. In advanced democracies 'the development of parties seems bound up with that of democracy that is to say with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives' (Duverger 1954 pp xxiii-iv).

The high degree of economic underdevelopment and social decay in Africa has also affected the development of political parties on the continent. Parties were created at a time when Africa was struggling with fundamental economic problems. States continue to face economic crises with increasing social hardship for citizens, a factor which contracts the political space with parties finding it increasingly difficult to participate. The economic situation has also bred enmity among political elites and social groups, culminating in a series of civil wars. From Liberia to Algeria, from Ethiopia via Somalia to Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire to Nigeria, the story is the same. Virtually all African countries have at one time or another experienced protracted civil strife and/or political instability. Political crises and economic underdevelopment have had devastating consequences for party development and for the institutionalisation of parties and party systems.

Given the nature of the emergence of political parties and the way they were used by African elites to institutionalise authoritarian rule, Mozaffar & Scarrit (2005, p 400) stress that the roles of parties in Africa were either proscribed or limited. The structure of African political systems is characterised by 'dominant party systems with low levels of electoral and legislative competitiveness, low levels of fragmentation and high degrees of disproportionality'.

The African party system therefore, according to Mozaffar et al (2003), reflects a combination of low fragmentation and high volatility. This is related largely to the character of electoral institutions and the salience of ethno-religious groups. Mozaffar & Scarrit (2005, pp 416-17) further contend that the 'puzzling combination of low party system fragmentation and high volatility' is explained by the significance of strategic calculation in the formation and development of political parties and the institutional legacies of colonial rule of authoritarian regimes established after independence. The result, they conclude, is that in analytical terms the individual political party is less important in the consolidation of 'third-wave' democracies. But they agreed that an effective party system is crucial to democratic consolidation.

Furthermore, they note that the puzzling character of the African party system is conducive to democratic consolidation, a finding that contradicts the popular view that ethnicity and sectional interests are the bane of African political parties. Mozaffar & Scarrit (2005, p 416) contend that:

Because of the political salience of ethnicity [religion, sectional and primordial values] as ... important source[s] of strategic coordination, and because no African-political group is numerically large enough to form either a political party or a government on its own, multi-ethnic [and religious] coalitions tend to be the norm in the formation of political parties as well as in the formation of governing [and/or electoral] coalitions.

It is important in any analysis of African political parties to appreciate the role of economic development, the effectiveness of the electoral system, the nature of civic culture, the continued existence of previously dominant parties, and the degree of social cohesion of individual countries. It is unfortunate that many studies of African political parties are silent about the civic culture and social cohesion of the societies. African political parties must therefore be distinguished by their context: colonial heritage, economic dependence and underdevelopment; the salience of ethnicity and primordial values; the weakness of civil society, patrimonialism, and the structure of the state and other institutions (Randall 1988; Randall & Svåsand 2001; Carey 2001; Mozaffar et al 2003; Mozaffar & Scarrit 2005).

Another feature of the development of political parties in Africa is the military interregnums. Military elites hold the key to the 'life and death' of political parties. They create political parties and disband them at will. Randall (1988, p 3) emphasises that 'while party regimes have regularly been overturned by military coups, these same military regimes almost as regularly, and sometimes after quite a short interval, have either reinstated some form of party politics or actually returned government to party politicians'.

In this kind of situation even an uncritical observer would accept that military rule has contributed to thwarting political party development and especially party and party system institutionalisation in Third World countries such as Pakistan, Sudan, Brazil, Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, Niger, Turkey, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville and Kinshasa), Rwanda, Somali, Ethiopia, and so on.

Interestingly, despite the apparent institutional, organisational, and situational problems that obstructed the development and institutionalisation of party and party systems in Africa, in some states political parties have endured since their inception. In these countries the development of parties has been 'both more complex and more fluid: parties wax and wane, disappear and return but [still remain fundamentally] an enduring element in the political formulae of Third World states [perhaps because democracy can't do without them]' (Randall 1988, p 175). Such countries include Botswana, Mauritius, the Gambia, Ghana and São Tome (see Table 2). These examples perhaps prove that political parties

and democratic governance can be successfully 'transplanted' and institutionalised in the whole of Africa.

It is also important to stress that the transformation of the political system has seen political parties proliferate in a manner never recorded in the history of Africa. The number of parties capable of participating in general elections ranges from four to sixty (see Table 2).

Table 2
Number of Parties Participating in Legislative Elections*, Freedom Ratings and Regime Type in Africa

Country	Date of last election	No of parties	2006 Freedom ratings	Regime type
Angola	1992	18	Not free	Electoral autocracy
Benin	2003	35	Free	Oscillating democracy
Botswana	2004	7	Free	Liberal democracy
Burkina Faso	2002	30	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Burundi	2005	6	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Cameroon	2002	42	Free	Electoral autocracy
Cape Verde	2006	05	Free	Liberal democracy
Central African Republic	2005	29	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Chad	2002	42	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Comoros	2004	10	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Republic of Congo	2002	100	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Côte d'Ivoire	2000	10	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Djibouti	2003	08	Partly Free	Electoral autocracy
Equatorial Guinea	2004	13	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Ethiopia	2005	50	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Gabon	2001	36	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Gambia	2002	06	Partly free	Electoral democracy
Ghana	2005	07	Free	Electoral democracy
Guinea	2002	18	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Guinea Bissau	2004	11	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Kenya	2002	40	Partly free	Electoral autocracy

Lesotho	2002	19	Free	Electoral democracy
Liberia	2005	17	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Madagascar	2002	41	Partly free	Electoral democracy
Malawi	2004	11	Partly free	Electoral democracy
Mali	2002	12	Free	Electoral democracy
Mauritania	2001	16	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Mauritius	2005	20	Free	Liberal democracy
Mozambique	2004	15	Partly free	Electoral democracy
Namibia	2004	08	Free	Electoral democracy
Niger	2004	19	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Nigeria	2003	30	Partly Free	Electoral autocracy
São Tome & Principe	2006	09	Free	Liberal democracy
Senegal	2001	61	Free	Electoral democracy
Seychelles	2002	04	Partly free	Electoral democracy
Sierra Leone	2002	10	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
South Africa	2004	16	Free	Liberal democracy
Sudan	2000	08	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Swaziland	1998	***	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Tanzania	2005	13	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Togo	2002	25	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Uganda	2006	10	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Zambia	2001	15	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Zimbabwe	2005	07	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Rwanda	2003	08	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Eritrea	1993**	01	Not Free	Electoral autocracy
Congo-Brazzaville	2002	05	Partly free	Electoral autocracy
Burundi	2005	21	Partly free	Electoral autocracy

Source: Compiled from Lindberg (2006); Freedom House Survey (2006) and 'African Election Data: A Database for Election Results in Sub-Saharan Africa', <<http://africanelections.tripod.com/index.html>>, July 2006

* This does not include small parties that are not capable of participating in parliamentary elections

** Since independence the country has not held national elections and has only one political party, the PFDJ

*** Non-party National Assembly election was conducted in 1998 – 55 members elected and 10 nominated by the King.

Table 2 shows that the proliferation of political parties and the expansion of the political space have not deepened democratisation in Africa or improved the quality of governance, nor does it ensure peaceful political participation and alternation of power, critical components of democratic consolidation. The table further indicates that the proliferation of political parties, especially during the third and fourth waves of democratisation, did not guarantee the expansion of political rights and civil liberties.

Democracy is still in its infancy in many African countries. The table further depicts the contradictory nature of African democratisation. While the post-Cold War period has seen burgeoning numbers of political parties and civil society organisations and the widening of political space, this development has not led to a greater spread of political rights and civil liberties. At most, therefore, only a few countries in Africa qualify as liberal democracies with a Freedom House 2006 score of 2.0 on political rights and civil liberties and elections judged to be free and fair by domestic and international standards. Only nine states were judged to be electoral democracies which hold relatively free and fair elections but do not meet the standard of provision of political rights and civil liberties.

In other words, electoral democracies scored below average on Freedom House's scale of political rights and civil liberties and the majority of African states fall into the category of what Lindberg (2006) describes as 'electoral autocracies'. These are countries that conduct elections only as a basic requirement and a mere formality (ie, elections are largely flawed), but do not meet the criteria for either electoral or liberal democracies (see Lindberg 2006, pp123-38). What is even more revealing is that of all the African countries included in the Freedom House survey only 11 were considered 'free' by global standards. This means that more than two-thirds are either 'partly free' or 'not free' at all. Countries falling into these categories are likely to degenerate into dictatorships or be liable for military takeover. In the 'free' countries, democracy has not only come to stay but is accepted as the 'only game in town' (Linz & Stepan 1996, p 1) and as 'a settled way of life' (Pickles 1970, p 57).

From the above it is clear that there are many dimensions to the transformations being experienced by political parties in Africa. However, one of the challenging scenarios is the perpetuation and entrenchment of a 'dominant-party system'. Bogaards (2004, pp 173-97), applying Giovanni Sartori's classic counting formulae, party system typology and definition of a dominant party, argues that in African democracies 'one party has an absolute majority of seats in the legislature and can govern alone' or two parties enter into an electoral coalition (see Table 3). Indeed, this phenomenon seems to be widespread, an indication, perhaps, that Africa may be returning, albeit with some differences, to the political dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s.

More than 20 emerging African democracies are exhibiting this tendency. Ironically, even some models of stable democracy in Africa, such as Botswana, are caught in this dilemma. This is certainly part of the crisis of transformation that is besieging political parties in Africa. This trend 'suggests an urgent need for systematic research into the nature, sources, conditions and consequences of dominant party systems in Africa' (Bogaards 2004, p 192). The plain truth is that the one-party dominance scenario in Africa is a dangerous trend that can certainly spell doom for domestic and international efforts at re-democratisation. It is even more dangerous as the domestic civil societies are, as a result of both commission and omission, being emasculated and silenced. Currently ruling parties are employing all necessary extra-democratic measure to curtail opposition.³

CLASSIFYING AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

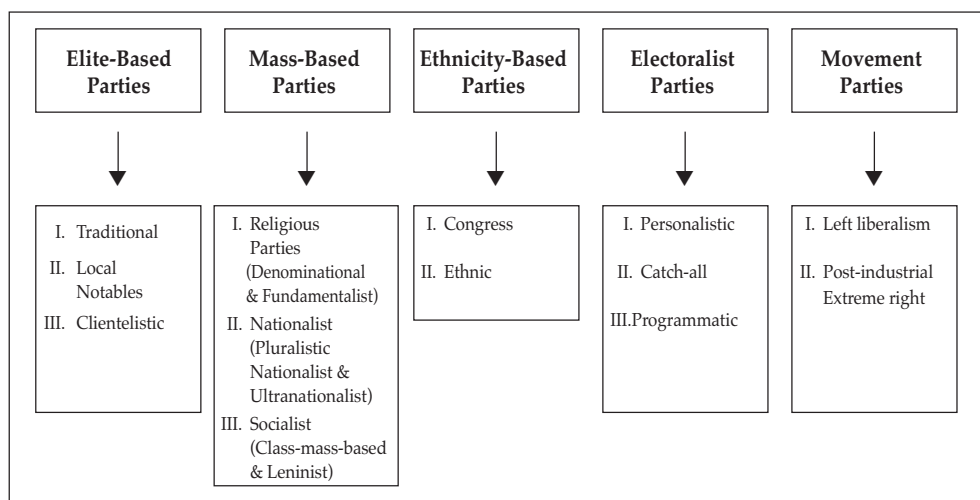
Within the universal typologies of political parties African parties, by the nature of their activities, the exclusive pattern of the way they function, and the character of the socio-political and economic context in which they operate, are unique. Literature on the classification of political parties worldwide is rich (Kirchheimer 1966; Neumann 1956; Duverger 1954; Katz & Mair 1995; Puhle 2002; Kitschelt 1989 and 1994; Wolinetz 2002; Panebianco 1988 and many others too numerous to mention). It is also a fact that categorisations of political parties in early studies have become outdated, as most of the studies did not involve parties that emerged during the third and fourth waves of democratisation. The impact of social and technological revolutions on the activities of parties, on one hand, and the need to re-evaluate the current party models, concepts, and terminologies, on the other, have led Diamond & Gunther (2001 & 2003) to create the 'species' or 'typologies' of modern political parties. The party typologies offered by Diamond & Gunther provide the most comprehensive and scientific classification of contemporary worldwide political parties. They not only capture the socio-political and economic circumstances of countries but may also be used for 'hypothesis-testing and theory building'.

The three criteria of (i) the nature of the formal organisation of parties (ii) the nature of the parties' programmatic commitments, and (iii) the strategy and behavioural norms of parties and the sociological and internal dynamics of party decision-making were employed in constructing *ideal* new models of political parties. Accordingly, 15 classifications of parties around the world, cutting across

³ The arrest and trial of Dr Kizza Besigye in Uganda, the leader and presidential candidate of the main opposition party (FDC) for alleged terrorism and rape, is a testimony to how opposition parties are denied free participation in the political process in Africa.

space and time, were identified. These 15 were categorised in five broad groups and reflect the real world of political parties (see Diamond & Gunther 2001 and 2003). See Figure 1.

Figure 1
Classification of Political Parties



Source: Diamond & Gunther 2001

The classification in Figure 1 is based on the organisation and nature of parties in previous centuries and modern political parties in operation today. They are classified into organisationally thin (elite, electoralist, movement and ethnically-based parties) and organisationally thick (mass-based) parties. The broad and elaborate classification of political parties by Diamond & Gunther, although explicit enough to capture the varieties of parties that are currently operating creates difficulties when some parties display characteristics of more than one party type.

Most of these parties, especially those formed haphazardly to get rid of authoritarian or military regimes, are found in the African democracies. There are today dozens of political parties in Africa, many of which are new, some of which are new embodiments of old parties, and others which have a long history (Burnell & Randall 2004). These parties tend to exhibit weak party institutionalisation, a complex and/or poor organisational framework, and the tendency to serve the interest of the elite for personal aggrandisement. Diamond & Gunther (see Figure 1) have presented five broad categories of political parties based on distinguishing organisational features and in each there are further sub-categories based on the ideology and strategic orientation of the parties.

They suggest that the 'genus' of elite and mass-based parties and their 'species' typifies the kind of parties that existed in the course of the development of democracy in the early 19th through the 20th centuries in Europe and America, with few elsewhere. However, according to this typology, African political parties were classified as ethnic, electoralist and movement parties. These generally emerged from the middle to the end of the 20th century, and beyond (see the discussion above of the three scenarios of the development of political parties in Africa). What these typologies indicate is that despite quantitative transformation African political parties are most weakly institutionalised and will perhaps take much longer to transform than political parties elsewhere, especially in Latin America. Many are permeated by ethnic cleavages, serving the primordial and clientelistic aspirations of the political elites that established them and, more often, are used as instruments of criminalising social and political order. The nature of African political parties not only affected their democratic activities but, importantly, affected the quality of democratic governance and development of sustainable democracy which they aspire to engender.

Party Institutionalisation and the Sustainability of Democracy

Conceptually, institutionalisation is about institutions, processes and outcomes. It is about establishing functional institutions within the boundaries of the law and working, also within the limits of the law, for efficiency and effectiveness. Amundsen (2001, p 52) argues that institutionalisation means building institutions and making them work efficiently in a rational-bureaucratic manner. Indeed, building institutions and ensuring that they work effectively and efficiently and produce the desired outcomes involves serious 'ups' and 'downs'. Institutionalisation is thus an endless process. Perhaps this is why it is a matter of degree. Political party institutionalisation, therefore, connotes the degree to which parties as an institutional component of democracy conduct their activities and discharge their functions, efficiently and effectively, in accordance with the overall constitution of the society, the constitution and informal rule of the parties, the rules governing elections, and international norms and conventions governing the game of politicking and contest for power.

Political parties, functioning within these parameters, would presumably attain what Huntington (1968, p 12) called 'value and stability', as defining characteristics of institutionalisation. Democratic values and stability are important elements for understanding the nature and character of a political party and how that influences the 'rational-bureaucratic' activities of the party. Panebianco (1988, p 53), using a rational choice model, stresses that 'institutionalisation is the process by which an organisation incorporates its founders'

values and aims. The organisation slowly loses its character as a tool: it becomes valuable in and of itself, and its goals become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. In this way, its preservation and survival become a “goal” for a great number of its supporters.’

From these theoretical concepts, it is clear that party institutionalisation is a process by which the party acquires stable values, norms, procedures, and routines by encapsulating its members’ interests in the overall interests of the society within which it operates and which it aspires to develop and sustain. Achieving institutionalisation is a question of the nature and character of the economic system and the socio-political and cultural terrain in which the political party(ies) operate. In other words, the nature of the political economy and socio-political landscape of the state influence the process of the party’s institutionalisation.

Using these concepts of institutionalisation and, especially, adopting Randall & Svåsand’s (2001) external-internal and structural-attitudinal model of party institutionalisation, and Mainwaring & Scully’s (1995) criteria for party-system institutionalisation, contemporary African political parties are *not* institutionalised. Meanwhile, according to Mainwaring & Scully (1995, p 1):

an institutionalised party system implies stability in inter-party competition, the existence of parties that have somewhat stable roots in society, acceptance of parties and elections as the legitimate institutions that determine who governs, and party organisations with reasonably stable rules and structures.

African political parties are not institutionalised, perhaps because neither individual parties nor party systems has met these criteria. But it is also important to emphasise that despite this there are marked variations in the extent to which each party and party system is in the process of institutionalisation. The variations further reveal why dominant-party systems are emerging on the continent.

Given the critical functions of political parties in a democratic project, democracy can be inaugurated without institutionalised parties and party systems. In other words, the inauguration of democracy does not require institutionalised parties or party systems. But the development of sustainable and stable democratisation is certainly and absolutely a function of such institutionalisation. The evidence from and experiences of both underdeveloped and developed democracies clearly support this assumption.

With the return of democracy in Africa and the establishment and re-establishment of political parties, the ultimate goal of individual countries is to sustain the democratic project for political stability and economic development. Democratic sustainability is a function of many institutions of democracy itself,

such as electoral institutions, the legislature, the executive, civil society, civil society organisations and, to a very great extent, the international community. Amundsen (2001, p 52) argues that democratic sustainability simply implies that the core democratic institutions, political parties, media, and civil society organisations are 'well organised and operating efficiently in a rational-bureaucratic sense'. He also maintains that the concept implies that all major players accept the democratic rules of the political game, so that political competition takes place within, but is not about, the institutions of democratic government.

Indeed, democratic sustainability suggests that these institutions must be stable, acquire values, and play the game according to the stipulated rules, be they constitution, statutes or informal regulations. In this political parties play a central and pivotal role. This is, perhaps, why Gentili (2005, p 2) contends 'no democracy no party, no parties no democracy' and democracy, according to Schattschneider (1942), is simply 'unthinkable save in terms of political parties'. In sum, political party institutionalisation is the most critical factor in the consolidation and development of sustainable democracy, although other factors such as free and fair elections, a credible judicial system that ensures the rule of law, and accountability and transparency are also vital.

This argument is premised on the consideration that political parties are 'essential instruments for representing political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting and socialising new candidates for office, organising the electoral competition for power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy-making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process' (Diamond 1997, p xxiii). Furthermore, political parties craft and re-craft constitutions and major laws and procedures of the state, manage the state apparatuses, and provide the general framework for political and economic society and the establishment of the rule of law; they interact with civil society and act as a link between it and the state (Van Biezen 2003, p 5).

To say that parties in African states are facing serious challenges in ensuring sustainable democracy is stating the obvious. However, institutionalisation of the parties is the first step towards achieving this goal. It is now clear that African political parties are going through a critical period of transformation clouded by situational problems and dilemmas. The above discussion assumes that the parties, however long they have existed, are not institutionalised.

By definition, transformation means marked positive changes in form and character. Political transformation, therefore, denotes political orientation and changes in values, norms, strategies and modes of acquiring power and governance networks. Broadly, transformation is a 'process that shapes the changing nature of political competition and cooperation through new

combinations of concepts, capabilities, people and organisation (US Department of Defence 2003, p 3).

Transformation, therefore, is positive change accentuated by both internal and external forces. The re-democratisation of Africa, especially during its third and fourth waves, was made possible by internal pressure for liberty, freedom, participation, prosperous economic well-being, and international forces of globalisation, especially following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe.⁴

This combination of forces led to a paradigm shift in the activities, nature and character of contemporary African political parties. As the parties are grappling with 'forced' changes, especially from within the political system itself, the nature of the socio-political and economic African states within which individual parties operate and function is not helping. Globalisation is further complicating the transformation process.

Today, citizens have direct access to information and need greater responsiveness, accountability, justice, equity and rule of law as well as more political space for participation and economic empowerment. This means that political party institutionalisation must be pursued simultaneously with the provision of these political and economic features.

In this context the challenges are enormous and the process increasingly difficult. This is perhaps why, in the process of institutionalisation, some parties may wane, some completely disappear, and there are mergers and political alliances. The political space might turn into a Darwinian environment, characterised by 'survival of the fittest'. The 'fittest' would be the strong, stable parties that would emerge at the end of the transformation period, and these are the institutionalised parties that will presumably sustain the democratisation process.

The duration of the period of institutionalisation differs from society to society, but is generally determined by the formation of the party, the strength of its organisational base and, above all, how it responds to major challenges. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the gravity and intensity of these challenges differs from one state to another as do the responses and policy initiatives to resolve them. The major challenges are highlighted below.

⁴ Following the collapse of communist ideology and the ascendancy of liberal capitalism the relevance of ideology in political discourse seemed to wane. But in a society where, for several decades, dictatorship and economic underdevelopment (largely caused by lacked of visionary and patriotic leadership) held sway, the relevance of ideological and philosophical debate, especially in the struggle for power, remained important. Indeed, power contenders may profess the same capitalist liberalist ideology but the strategies and modus operandi of political consultations, public policy-making, service delivery and social redistribution may differ from party to party and it is through these and in several other ways that ideological differences would surface and thus the electorates would have a variety of choices.

Ideology

Ideology is the systematic study of ideas. However, in view of the often loose usage of the term, it has been 'conceptualised in a number of ways, giving rise to a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations' (Dutt & Mitra 2005, p 59). Adopting the views of Kau & Rubin (1979) they argue that ideology connotes self-defined issues of public interest and the altruistic interests of politicians and political parties. Ideology, therefore, is an expression of the public interest and systematic ways of addressing that interest but it can also mislead or fool people, masquerade as public interest, and be used to serve narrow and unpopular interests.

It can, therefore, be both destructive and constructive depending on how it is employed in advancing popular aspirations. Political ideology, which is one of the defining differences between political parties, is conceived here to mean a body of ideas that epitomises the social and economic needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class or society. Broadly, it is a set of doctrines, a coherent system of ideas, beliefs and values that inform the political, economic and even social method(s) of societal organisation and governance.

Defined in this way ideology is one of the key factors differentiating political parties and political parties and other political groups. This is especially so because of the strategic role played by political parties in policy-making and implementation (ie, governance). The differences between the ideological orientation and persuasions of parties provide voters with a choice of how their interests should be provided for and protected. Underscoring the role of ideology in the process of institutional change and governance, North (1990, p 76) contends that:

Ideas and ideology matter, and institutions play a major role in determining just how much they matter. Ideas and ideologies shape the subjective mental constructs that individuals use to interpret the world around them and make choices ... people's perceptions that the structures of rules of the system is fair and just reduces costs; equally, their perception that the system is unjust raises the costs ...

Ideology is the instrument the public uses to assess and evaluate the programmes of the government they elected. It is also used to understand the 'justness' or otherwise of any political regime and can be used to differentiate between political and economic systems such as dictatorship, totalitarianism, monarchy, and liberal / representative democracy. It is within this framework that 'ideology comes into its own as a way of interpreting and reacting to the world [regime] when it is uncertain ... [Hence it serves as bridge for] unifying models of electoral competition and government formation within an overall theory of democratic decision processes' (Budge 1994, p 448).

Several studies have argued that there is a lack of ideological inclination among political parties in Africa, resulting in their remaining personal enterprises, dominated and identified by popular and even populist names. Because of this lack of ideological commitment African parties frequently resort to ethnic and tribal appeals so party politics is defined by a triangle of evil: personalisation (control by individuals who treat the party as their personal property), clientelism and corruption (Sandbrook 1996, p 76).

This is a challenge to all political parties, irrespective of whether they were formed at independence or are newly created. Parties should define and distinguish their stand in the political process by constructing ideologically appealing and enticing manifestos.⁵ Budge (1994, p 448) stresses the importance of ideology to the development and institutionalisation of political parties when he avers that because ideologies distinguish themselves by opposing each other they play an important role in decisions about party policy positions. He maintains that

... ideologies encourage multi-partyism [especially] under conditions of limited information and uncertainty. This is because the ideology typically identifies some existing or potential group of supporters for its policy prescriptions. Such supporters could consist of electors currently voting for existing parties ... or electors currently not voting at all because existing ideologies offer no 'real' alternatives.

Typically, the major focus of a party ideology is in the areas of provision of welfare (education, social security, health), total spending, revenue and public employment, foreign and defence policy, and economic policy. These aspects of political governance determine whether a party inclines, ideologically and traditionally, to the left or the right. Indeed, parties in Africa, both ruling and opposition, can be differentiated in terms of these major issues. However, although, it can be argued that following the demise of communism, and the subsequent ascendancy of liberal capitalism, coupled with the impact of globalisation, the ideological debate is declining, the fact is that despite these global changes the debate is and will continue for some time to be relevant to political discourse.

⁵ Though ideological crisis is one of the problems that confront African political parties it is not the immediate problem because it will be several years before parties internalise the vitality of politics and achieve ideological differentiation. Historically, even in Western Europe, it was not until the 'systemic crises of the inter-war period' that 'highly ideological political parties' emerged (Luther and Müller-Rommel 2002, p 2).

Ideology will continue to inform policy direction and implementation and to influence the provision of welfare and participation in politics. In fact, the apparent resurgence of socialism in many Latin American countries, especially Bolivia and Venezuela, is rekindling the ideological debate. Of course, debate about ideology will change from traditional capitalist v communist to more contemporary issues of globalisation, international trade, poverty eradication, security and terrorism, millennium development goals, democracy and reforming international organisations,

DOMINANT-PARTY SYSTEMS

According to Bogaards (2004, pp 174-9) dominant parties are identified and defined by four major criteria: the urge for dominance, the inclusion/exclusion of opposition features, the presence or absence of divided government, and the duration of time. Simply put, party dominance is calculated by the percentage of votes or share of seats in the legislature. However, broadly understood, party dominance takes cognisance of the above-mentioned criteria. In this context, drawing on the studies of Van de Walle & Butler (1999), Ware (1996), Sartori (1976), Coleman (1960), Blondel (1968) and Pempel (1990b), Bogaards (2004) diagrammatically defined dominant parties using four criteria, as follows:

Table 3
Conceptualisation of Dominant Parties

Authors	Coleman	Van de Walle & Butler	Ware (Predominant)	Sartori ([Pre]dominant)	Ware (Dominant)	Blondel	Pempel
Threshold of Dominance	70% (seats)	60% (seats)	50% (seats)	50% (seats)	45-50% (seats)	45-50% (seats) Double the vote share of the runner-up	Plurality (votes & seats)
Opposition	Dispersed	–	Divided	–	Several smaller parties	Multiple opposition helpful	Inferior bargaining position
President	–	–	–	No divided government (Bogaards's addition)	–	–	–
Duration	Analysis limited to single election	Analysis limited to single election	Permanent	Three consecutive elections	Dominant party should 'usually' win	Analysis over 20-year period	'Substantial period'

Source: Bogaards 2004, p 176

Table 3 shows that irrespective of which definition of dominant parties one chooses this scenario is evident in African democracies. The dominant parties are ruling parties, which use state resources, political patronage and clientelism to consolidate themselves and eliminate the opposition.

Table 4
Dominant-Party Scenarios in Selected African Democracies

Country	Last Election	Total Parliaments	Dominant Party	Dominant Party(s) Seats	Seats of other Parties	Dominant Party(s) Seats %	Seats of other Parties %
Angola	1992	220	MPLA	129	91	58,6	41,4
Benin	2003	83	UBF	52	31	62,7	37,3
Botswana	2004	57 ⁶	BDP	44	13	77,2	22,8
Burkina Faso	2002	111	CDP	57	54	51,4	48,6
Burundi	2005	118 ⁷	CNDD-FDD	64	54	54,2	45,8
Cameroon	2002	180	RDPC	149	31	82,8	17,2
Cape Verde	2006	72	PAICV	41	31	56,9	43,1
C. A. Republic	2005	105	NC[KNK]	42	63	40,0	60,0
Chad	2002	155	MPS	110	45	71,0	29,0
Comoros	2004	18 ⁸	CDIA	12	6	66,7	33,3
Congo (Braz.)	2002	137 ⁹	PCT-FDU	83	46	60,6	33,6
Côte d'Ivoire	2000	225	FPI	96	129	42,7	57,3
Djibouti	2003	65	UMP	65	0	100,0	0,0
E. Guinea	2004	100	PDGE-Allies	98	2	98,0	2,0
Ethiopia	2005	547	EPRDF	327	220	59,8	40,2
Gabon	2001	120	PDG	86	34	71,7	28,3
The Gambia	2002	48 ¹⁰	APRC	45	3	93,8	6,3
Ghana	2005	230	NPP	128	102	55,7	44,3
Guinea	2002	114	PUP	85	29	74,6	25,4
Guinea Bissau	2004	100	PAIGC	45	55	45,0	55,0
Kenya	2002	224	NARC ¹¹	132	92	58,9	41,1
Lesotho	2002	120	LCD	77	43	64,2	35,8
Liberia	2005	64	CDC ¹²	15	49	23,4	76,6
Madagascar	2002	160	TIM	103	57	64,4	35,6
Malawi	2004	193	MCP	59	134	30,6	69,4
Mali	2002	147	RPM & Other Parties ¹³	66	81	44,9	55,1

Mauritania	2001	81	PRDS	64	17	79,0	21,0
Mauritius	2005	70	AS	42	28	60,0	40,0
Mozambique ¹⁴	2004	250	FRELIMO	160	90	64,0	36,0
Namibia	2004	72	SWAPO	55	17	76,4	23,6
Niger	2004	113	MNSD-Nassara	47	66	41,6	58,4
Nigeria	2003	109 ¹⁵	PDP	76	33	69,7	30,3
Rwanda	2003	53 ¹⁶	FPR	33	20	62,3	37,7
São Tomé & Príncipe	2006	55	MDFM-PCD	23	32	41,8	58,2
Senegal	2001	120	SOPI	89	31	74,2	25,8
Seychelles	2002	34	SPPF	23	11	67,6	32,4
Sierra Leone	2002	112 ¹⁷	SLPP	83	29	74,1	25,9
South Africa	2004	400	ANC	279	121	69,8	30,3
Tanzania	2005	323 ¹⁸	CCM	275	48	85,1	14,9
Togo	2002	81	RPT	72	9	88,9	11,1
Uganda	2006	284	NRM	191	93	67,3	32,7
Zambia	2001	150 ¹⁹	MMD	69	81	46,0	54,0
Zimbabwe ²⁰	2005	50	ZANU-PF	43	7	86,0	14,0

Source: Compiled and Calculated from 'African Election Data: A Database for Election Results in Sub-Saharan Africa', <<http://africanelections.tripod.com/index.html>>, July 2006.

- 6 Four members are indirectly elected and the president and attorney general are ex-officio members of the National Assembly.
- 7 100 seats are directly elected by the voters; 18 are allocated based on the constitutional requirements that the CNDD-FDD coalition has 64 seats; other parties shared 54, including 3 reserved for the Twa ethnic group.
- 8 15 members are indirectly elected by the Assemblies of the three islands in the state.
- 9 Elections for 8 seats were postponed because of militia operation in the area of Pool Region, hence they are not included in the statistics.
- 10 Five additional members are directly appointed by the president.
- 11 Coalition of four parties: Liberal Democratic Party, Democratic Party, Forum FORD-K and National Party of Kenya.
- 12 CDC has the majority in the Parliament, but the presidential election was won by the UP.
- 13 Malians in the Diaspora are represented by 13 parliamentary seats, elected in a separate election.
- 14 19 parties participated in the election; the seats were won by the two parties only.
- 15 Only the Senate result was used. Nigeria operates a bicameral legislature. In both chambers of the National Assembly the PDP is in control with a two-thirds majority. The party also controls 27 of the 36 states, and 28 State Houses of Assemblies. This by no means makes the democracy a dominant-party system. However, in the 2007 elections, which were domestically and internally condemned as sham, the PDP still maintained its dominance. Most of the election results are being contested, including the presidential election.
- 16 Additional 27 members indirectly elected, not included here.
- 17 Additional 12 seats reserved for paramount chiefs, not included in the figures.
- 18 Additional 10 seats appointed by the president.
- 19 150 MPs directly elected by the people. Additional 8 members appointed by the president not included here.
- 20 Zimbabwe has a bicameral legislature but only the upper chamber result was used as it reflects what obtains in the lower chamber.

APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
AS	Social Alliance
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
CDIA	Camp of the Autonomous Island
CDP	Congress for Democracy and Progress
CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy
DP	Democratic Party
EPRDF	Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FPI	Ivorian Popular Front
FPR	Rwanda Patriotic Front
LDC	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MDFM-PCD	Force for Change Democratic Movement-Democratic Convergence Party
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MPS	Patriotic Salvation Movement
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NC [KNK]	National Convergence 'Kwa Na Kwa'
NPP	Northern People's Party
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PAICV	African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PCT-FDU	Congolese Labour Party-United Democratic Forces
PDG	Gabonese Democratic Party
PDGE	Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea
PDP	People's Democratic Party
RTP	Rally for the Togolese People
PRDS	Democratic and Social Republican party
PUP	Party of Unity and Progress
RDPC	Cameroon People's Democratic Party
RPM	Rally for Malawi
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SPPF	Seychelles People's Progressive Front
TIM	I Love Madagascar
UBF	Union for the Benin of the Future
UMP	Union for Presidential Majority
UP	Unity Party

Table 4 further clarifies the dominant-party picture of African democracy and the almost total elimination of opposition parties. In fact, even in states such as Liberia and Ghana where the opposition has a reasonable number of seats in Parliament the situation may not be sustainable. In Ghana the opposition party won the election in 2005, but the former ruling party, based on its popular support, was able to win 44 per cent of the seats. In Liberia, the UP was only able to win the presidential election in the second round. Gorge Weah's CDC won the largest percentage of the seats in the parliamentary election and looked poised to win the presidential election. If it had not been for the fact that Weah's political personality was no match for Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's experience and international popularity, the CDC would also have formed the government, giving us yet another dominant-party scenario.

As the statistics reveal, from Zimbabwe to Rwanda, Nigeria to Madagascar, through Equatorial Guinea to Botswana, with the exception of Malawi, the situation is the same and dominant parties have 'systematically outlawed every attempt by the opposition parties to gain equitable and proportional access to political power', often doing so by introducing various electoral laws and changing constitutions on the eve of elections (Olaleye 2003, p 5).

Perhaps the lack of ideological inclination among political parties in Africa and their personalistic, and clientelistic characteristics have not only made them vulnerable to selfish tendencies but have led to the development of 'dominant-party systems'. Despite the proliferation of parties following the 'opening up' of the 1990s, the political scene is dominated by only a few parties. The transformation of the African political landscape has seen the one-party system give way to the dominant-party system in that, in some countries, such as Mali, São Tome and Principe, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, and so on, the ruling parties collaborate with smaller parties to win dominance in the legislature.

The tendency in this kind of electoral coalition is that the smaller parties are either extensions of the ruling parties or the ruling parties have infiltrated their leadership in order to render them ineffectual and susceptible to the ruling parties' political manipulation and co-options. The most dangerous scenario signalled by the appearance of dominant-party system is that the pattern and nature of governance have not change. The so-called democratically elected leaders have continued to rule with extraordinary iron hands and have simply become dictators in disguise. For instance, in a study of about 18 African countries, Bogaards (2004, p 192) argues that 'one party [or at most two parties] has an absolute majority of seats in legislature and can govern alone'.

It is therefore not ironic to posit that dominant parties may, in the long run, degenerate into authoritarianism and have a deleterious effect on the development

of liberal democracy (Giliomee & Simkins 1999 and Van de Walle & Butler 1999). The dominant-party system also points to the general problem with former military and civilian dictators who want to maintain the status quo. In order to achieve this, they employ all manner of illegal and extra-legal measures, from cooption and clientelism to patronage and the muscling out of the opposition.

The nature of the socio-political environment contributes to this scenario. The opposition parties are always divided and, at times, remain acquiescent in the maintenance of the status quo. For example, in Nigeria, the PDP is the strongest and largest party and, since the return of democracy to the country, not only have the opposition parties remained divided, they are also dominated by intra-party conflicts to which the PDP has been accused of being party. Perhaps in order to provide a viable opposition to the ruling party, all 29 opposition parties came together under the banner of the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP). However, this did not threaten the formidable PDP or change the system of democratic governance in the country. This failure is attributable to internal wrangling within the individual opposition parties. The lack of visibility of the opposition thwarts the democratic process (Kura 2005, p 24). This further suggests that despite the transformation undergone by the parties after the return of multiparty elections, the competitive multiparty system presents a challenge to political parties in Africa.

One of the essential components of multiparty democracy is the presence of an opposition to act as a check on abuse of power by the ruling party, which supplements the checks and balances of the legislature. However, it is clear from Table 4 that there is no such strong opposition in Africa. Political parties out of government have failed, therefore, to provide the required opposition for the development of healthy, sustainable democracy. In addition, most opposition parties face serious internal problems, lack legitimacy, and are so fragmented that they cannot even unite as a coalition to make themselves a force in the political process. This situation spells doom for the opposition as well as for the development of sustainable democracy in Africa.

PARTY FUNDING AND FINANCE

In general terms the economic underdevelopment of African states has made political party institutions more vulnerable to grossly inadequate resources and finance for the conduct of their activities. To say that democracy is a capital-intensive project is an understatement. The major sources of party funding include membership dues, individual and corporate donations, state grants, and international assistance. Given the degenerating nature of party membership and the economic hardship of the people (even if members pay their dues) this

represents an insignificant amount in the financial account of the parties.²¹ The problem with individual and corporate funding is that donations come with strict conditions and are seldom regulated in the same way as public finances. There is a risk of money influencing the political process and parties may not be accountable, let alone discharge their democratic functions (Patel 2005, p 10).

Beyond these problems individual and corporate funding of political parties may jeopardise public policy-making. Parties are usually forced to adhere strictly to the terms and conditions of agreements entered into with 'sponsors'. Parties thus become more accountable, not to the public but to the individuals or groups who finance their activities. However, today there is considerable pressure for state funding of political parties, which could reduce the problem of individuals or groups hijacking parties to advance narrow interests. In the same way, foreign funding of democratisation could be extended to political parties.²²

INEFFECTUAL CIVIL SOCIETY OPPOSITION

The problem of dominant-party systems has snowballed into the general and more delicate problem of ineffectual political opposition. While political parties are affected by socio-cultural and economic problems, the larger civil societies in Africa are not doing any better either. The term civil society is comprehensive and broadly encompasses all socio-cultural and political activities outside the government. This comprehensiveness is partly responsible for the loose way the term is used to denote even issues that are outside the boundaries of civil society. Carothers & Barndt (2000, p 19), appreciating this ambiguity, argue that 'properly understood, civil society is a broader concept, encompassing all the organisations and associations that exist outside of the state (including political parties) and the market'. Examples of civil society organisations are: labour unions, professional associations, ethical and religious associations, students' associations, and so on.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a fundamental role in the development of sustainable democracy. They shape governance and policy issues by pressuring government and providing 'expertise' to government and policy-makers. However, for CSOs to be robust and provide the necessary impetus to the democratic process, they must be resourceful, dedicated and diligent.

21 For example, Nigeria's PDP charged each member N10 for revalidation of his/her membership. The amount is insignificant, which means every member of the party can pay. The value of the payment lies in the members' commitment to the philosophy and ideals of the party specifically and multiparty democracy in general.

22 On this debate, see, for example, Burnell (2000). Several international organisations and advanced democracies are engaged in providing assistance in the development of democracies and particularly the development of political parties in Third World states.

During the re-democratisation process of the 1990s civil society was at the forefront of the fight against military and political dictatorships. For example, Gyimah-Boadi (1996) observes that in Benin, Zambia, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Kenya, Togo, Malawi, and several other third- and fourth-wave democracies, civil society was rigorous in fighting one-party dictatorships and military authoritarianism. But despite this singular achievement, while African states are democratically undergoing transformation, civil society organisations have become 'too weak to redress state-society relations in favour of the latter ... , failed to transcend ethno-regional, religious and other cleavages in any lasting way' through ideological and principled opposition and mobilisation. Thus, civil society has, either through commission and/or omission, become invisible in the political process. In many states it either waned, was co-opted, or had serious crises over resources and leadership and thereby lost its political relevance.

Where it is visible it tends to be weak and thus unable to invigorate the political process. This is perhaps why some political analysts are very sceptical about the role of civil society in bridging the gap between the governors and the governed, especially in fledgling African democracies. In Africa the 'existence of a wide range of civil society organisations gives no guarantee that any will articulate norms which further the development of a tolerant or participatory public arena' (Bartlett 2000, p 445).

Like most of the parties, civil society organisations have become conduits for achieving political relevance and tapping national resources. In a broader sense African civil societies are relatively weak and are besieged by financial, organisational, operational and domestic constraints (Makumbe 1998, p 316). This might be the justification for the inability of civil society to provide a political voice in the democratic governance process in Africa.

Conventionally, civil society organisations, especially in the absence of a credible opposition, should check the excesses of the ruling party, preventing it from descending into authoritarianism. The challenge for African political systems is to provide civic education that will lead to the growth and development of opposition parties, or, better still, a populace that is responsive and responsible. International donors should continue to come to the rescue by providing adequate financial and moral support for the development of vibrant opposition parties and civil society organisations that will invigorate the democratic process for better governance and the development of sustainable democracy.

DEFECTIVE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

As political parties are central to democracy, so elections are important to the development of a stable, competitive party system. Conducting free and fair

elections is one thing, acceptance of the elections as free and fair is another and remains one of the most difficult aspects of party politics in Africa. However, organising free and fair elections is a constitutional responsibility of electoral institutions, consequently electoral institutions are an important ingredient of representative democracy. Patel (2005) observes that the nature of the democratic institutions established by a state is integral to and determines the degree of success of the new regime because these institutions define the political process. The electoral institution is therefore important for five reasons.

- It contributes to the evolution of a political party culture that defines the differences between parties.
- It determines the pattern of legislative representation.
- It determines the occupant(s) of government (Patel 2005).
- It sets the parameters for stable political competition.
- It gives the ruling party (government) political legitimacy.

For any electoral institution to achieve these aims it must be equipped with both human and financial resources. However, the choice of the type of electoral system is determined to a very significant degree by the history of the country, the political and administrative system, and the capacity of the state's economy.

It is unfortunate that while African political parties are undergoing transformation states haphazardly adopt a particular electoral system without due scrutiny and debate. This has thrown many states into electoral dilemmas and political crisis. For example, the adoption of a first-past-the post (FPTP) system has often made it easier for only the winning party to have an absolute majority and thus to rule without strong opposition. Seats won by opposition parties are not proportionate to the vote for those parties and the opposition is often silenced through cooption and patronage.

Whichever electoral system is adopted and irrespective of problems that might affect the pattern of electioneering, political parties tend to aggravate the problem by dismissing all election results as fraudulent. It is rare for defeated parties in Africa to accept defeat without question, a situation which affects the legitimacy of government and sometimes makes countries hard to govern.

If parties and elections are two sides of the same coin electoral institutions must organise free and fair elections and parties must learn to accept the results. An election is the only legal means by which 'a large proportion of the citizenry participate in selecting and removing political representatives, it provides a primary source of democratic legitimacy' (Lindberg 2004a, p 3). Effective electoral systems and institutionalised political parties give flavour to sound democratic governance.

In contemporary African democracies many electoral institutions are constitutionally under the direct control of the president, thus giving them official licence to rig elections in favour of the ruling party. For example, the 1999 Constitution which ushered in the current democratic regime in Nigeria gives unprecedented power to the president to appoint the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), his major lieutenants and the resident electoral commissioners (RECs) of the 36 states and Abuja. No wonder, therefore, that opposition parties allege that all the officers of the INEC are card-carrying members of the president's party, the PDP (Mada 2006).

The Constitution gives similar powers to state executive governors. In fact, the 1999 Constitution plays a fundamental role in bringing INEC officials under the direct control of the ruling party, thereby giving it the opportunity not only to rig elections but to destroy opposition candidates. It is significant that even INEC's budgets are directly controlled by the president. Even if the legislature intervenes, as it does on occasion, INEC finances are released piecemeal, rendering the commission relatively ineffective to organise and conduct free and fair elections. That is why perhaps, these institutional anomalies contributed to the PDP massively rigging the 2003 elections, which the opposition All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), contested unsuccessfully in court. However, the conduct of the 2007 election demonstrated that Nigeria has not learnt from history. None of the institutional anomalies responsible for the near failure of the 2003 election has been addressed. Thus both local and foreign observers judged the 2007 election as the worst in Nigeria's political history. The outcome of the election left elected officials struggling to assert their legitimacy. The implications are disastrous to party institutionalisation as well as to the development of democracy in the country (for the nature of the 2007 election, see ICG 2007). The Nigerian case is typical of the situation of many electoral bodies in African contemporary democracies.

THE FUTURE: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

Sustainability of democracy in Africa, as elsewhere, is premised on the institutionalisation of political parties and institutionalisation of the parties depends now and in the future on their ability to stay focused on their mission and vision and to transform themselves in accordance with the socioeconomic and political conditions under which they operate (Wanjohi 2003, p 239). It also depends on the clear vision of leaders and on the way members are incorporated into the daily business of party politicking.

Parties must define clearly what they want to achieve and how they are going to achieve it within the limits of their resources. There must be a systematic

analysis of the environment within which they operate and a clear review process for flexibility. Parties must be dynamic and resourceful and their mission and vision must be built on clear-cut values derived largely from the attitudes, feelings, beliefs and judgement of their members and leaders, factors which aid in the articulate construction of the party's ideology and philosophy.

Given the dominant-party system situation in African democracies there should be a systematically coordinated coalition of political parties, not only in order to wrest power from the incumbent but, importantly, to provide policy-based opposition, devoid of the primordial, parochial and personalised political battles that frequently divide the loyalty of party members. In addition, institutionalisation of the parties depends to a very great extent on their organisational complexities, adaptation, dynamism and flexibility, their resource base, rationality in embracing organisational change, and appreciation of the circumstances under which they were formed and established.

Though the contemporary international system is favourable in terms of assuring a bright future for democratic sustainability through political support and aid from developed democracies, international financial institutions and other donor agencies, much responsibility rests on political parties and other democratic stakeholders vis-à-vis the development of sustainable democracy. Given the pivotal role of parties in democratic governance, this paper articulates the essentiality of good governance as a political mechanism for addressing the imbalance between political parties and sustainable democracy.

There has been a recent upsurge of interest among policy makers, analysts, and academics in good governance as an essential ingredient in addressing major development problems. The term good governance made its first appearance in 1989, when the World Bank identified the lack of it as the main reason for Africa's development problem. Despite, this there is 'no obvious literature available on political parties and their governance-related activities' (Hout 2003, p 259). Though there is a great deal of literature linking political parties to democracy generally, little, if any, has been developed on the issue of good governance, political parties and the sustainability of democracy, particularly in Africa. Conceptually, governance is the way institutions and individuals manage their activities (CGD 1995); it is the overall management of a nation's affairs (World Bank 1989). UNDP (1997) observes that governance is the

exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

Governance is, therefore, the process of decision-making, implementation, and even outcome. What happens in this chain is where good and/or bad governance comes in. So, good governance determines the desired outcome of the policies implemented by formal and informal institutions, either public or private. Good governance, logically, involves the *proper* application of the relevant tenets of governance in the management and administration of the affairs of a state. In this context, while democracy is a means to development, good governance is a means to ensuring the growth of sustainable democracy, and political parties are the pivotal institutions that could mediate between the two.

Drawing on Leftwich (1994) and Hoebink (2001) Hout (2003) identifies two definitions of good governance: technocratic good governance, which emphasises accountability, legality, availability of information, and transparency; and the political meaning that concentrates on the nature and organisation of political and legal institutions in developing countries. Though it seems easy good governance can only be defined by identifying its key features. The differences of opinion thus limit our search for appropriate definitions. The main characteristics of good governance are detailed in the box below.

Based on the above conceptual typologies and the core characteristics of good governance, a strong link can be established between political parties, good governance and sustainable democracy. Accordingly, while technocratic interpretations of good governance do not directly 'recognise political parties as actors that are necessarily central to the way a country is governed', the political interpretation explicitly identifies 'the existence of a set of active political parties [as] a *conditio sine qua non* for the achievement of good governance...' (Hout 2003, p 261).

Beyond this, the governance role of political parties has also directly and indirectly exposed how indispensable they are to the employment of good governance as a panacea for the major problems associated with institutionalisation and how they can influence critically other private and public institutions for the development of *sustainable* democracy.

It can be conveniently hypothesised that there is a strong correlation between good governance on the one hand and party institutionalisation and democratic sustainability in Africa on the other. In other words, through their procedural and substantive role not only in the establishment of democracy itself but also in making it workable, political parties are the custodians of modern representative democracy.

The importance of good governance is that it is the only solution that addresses not only the problems of political parties but other institutional and structural problems that threaten the development of sustainable democracy in Africa.

The Main Characteristics of Good Governance

- *Participation*: citizens have a say in the decision-making process through legitimate institutions, interest groups, individuals, and political parties. This input is based on a guarantee of liberty and freedom of association and speech, free media, and the capacity to participate constructively.
- *Rule of Law*: the framework of adjudication should be fair and work objectively and without prejudice.
- *Transparency*: there should be a free flow of information for public consumption, and citizens should have unreserved access to decision-making processes, institutions, and adequate information to monitor the processes of policy-making, implementation and outcomes.
- *Responsiveness*: public and private institutions and processes should act within a reasonable time to serve all relevant stakeholders.
- *Equity*: all citizens have an equal opportunity to improve and maintain their lives without discrimination.
- *Effectiveness & Efficiency*: institutions and decision-making and implementation processes must produce results that meet society's needs. This also pertains to the sustainable use of resources and protection of the environment.
- *Accountability*: all informal and formal institutional stakeholders should be accountable to the general public though the extent of the accountability might differ from institution to institution, depending on the nature of their operations and the outcome of their services.
- *Strategic Vision*: the leadership and the civil society have a long terms and sustainable vision of good governance and democracy and development. This should also take into consideration the historical, socio-cultural and political complexities of the state.
- *Free & Fair Elections*: elections are the single most important indicator of direct public political participation and provide legitimacy to regimes. Periodic elections must not only be free and fair, they must be seen to be to be free, fair and honestly contested.
- *Consensus orientation*: conflict is a norm in political and economic interactions. Thus there should be broad consensus on important political, social and economic policy issues that affect society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The return of democracy during the 'third' and 'fourth' waves has raised new hopes and aspirations for all African citizens. However, the road towards democratic sustainability involves the activities of several institutional stakeholders, with political parties at the heart of the process. African political parties are undergoing critical changes and facing daunting challenges.

These results of the changes have been palpable, with many countries conducting more than three consecutive elections. In some states, Ghana for example, not only were there successful elections, there was also a peaceful transfer of power from one party to another. These changes have not, in themselves, contributed to deepening democratisation on the continent. Nearly two-thirds of African states are 'partly free' or 'not free at all'. Despite this, though, there have been fundamental changes, especially compared to the situation in the 1970s and 1980s. The changes have further raised the hopes not only of Africans but of the international community that democracy has come to stay in Africa. But, though there have been many changes, the problems of parties with undefined political ideologies, a docile civil society, questions of party funding, and the dominant-party system still seem to threaten the institutionalisation of parties for the development of sustainable democracy.

Despite these challenges, and against the background of the contemporary international system and the keen interest being shown by international organisations and donor countries in the plight of Africa, African political parties have a future. However, this future lies in the domestic structuring of governance. No matter the extent of the concern about Africa and the amount of resources disbursed to the continent, if there is no sound evidence of good democratic governance the same stories will continue to be written about it.

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OPPOSITION PARTY ALLIANCES AND ELECTIONS IN BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND ZAMBIA

Victor Shale

Victor Shale is a Researcher at EISA and EISA's Political Parties Programme Coordinator. He is also a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Political Science of the University of South Africa

P O Box 740 Auckland Park 2006

Tel: +27 011 482 5495; Fax: +27 011 482 6163

e-mail: victor@eisa.org.za

ABSTRACT

The Southern African Development Community has made significant democratic progress since the 1990s following a wave of ferocious internal conflicts, as in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In order for the achievements to be sustained the region requires viable political parties, which are key role players in a democracy. The majority of the current ruling parties in the SADC region such as the African National Congress, the Botswana Democratic Party, Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, Zambia's Movement for Multiparty Democracy and the South West Africa People's Organisation are very powerful, while opposition parties are fragmented and generally weak. However, a trend has developed for opposition parties, having recognised their limitations, to form alliances in order to play a meaningful role. This route has been followed by opposition parties in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. On the eve of the recent general elections in Lesotho and Zambia, parties negotiated strategies to maximise their chances of winning. In Botswana the negotiation process is still under way, albeit threatened by the failure of parties to move from their fixed positions. These developments raise a critical question: does the formation of alliances constitute a viable option for opposition parties aspiring to power? Put differently: could alliances be the winning formula for the opposition parties in their attempts to circumvent the glaring paucity of their numbers and become a force to be reckoned with?

INTRODUCTION

The issue of party coalitions and /or alliances has been discussed widely by various authors (Karume 2003; Khembo 2004; Kadima 2006). In the SADC region, for instance, Mauritius leads the pack in terms of a tradition of party coalitions, which have been the practice since independence, with power alternating between two main parties. Unlike in other countries, where coalitions form after elections, those in Mauritius usually precede the elections (Ramakrishna 2003; Kadima & Kasenally 2005). A report published by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (2001), which covers a wide spectrum of alliance politics in Southern Africa makes it clear that party alliances are not a new phenomenon in the region.

In recent elections in Zambia (28 September 2006) and Lesotho (17 February 2007), the ruling parties were given a renewed mandate to lead their countries for the next five years. Following a successful election in 2004, Botswana is gearing up for the next round – in 2009.

Two of the three countries considered in this paper – Botswana and Zambia – use a first-past-the post (FPTP) electoral model, while Lesotho has a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. It is interesting to note that despite these differences, opposition parties in the three countries face the same challenges in the existence of a growing dominant-party system. As a result there has been much activity within and between parties in these countries between elections.

For instance, prior to the 2006 elections in Zambia, the main opposition party in Parliament, the United Party for National Development (UPND) formed alliances with the other major opposition parties, the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) and the United National Independence Party (UNIP). In Lesotho three alliances were formed just before the 2007 election. The Lesotho People's Congress (LPC), the Basotholand African Congress (BAC) and part of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), led by Ntsukunyane Mphanya,¹ formed an alliance – the Alliance of Congress Parties (ACP). The All Basotho Convention, the Lesotho Workers Party (LWP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) also reached an election pact. The National Independent Party (NIP), on the other hand, formed an alliance with the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). A similar development is expected in Botswana before the 2009 elections.

Karume (2003, p 9) views the formation of pre-election coalitions as unsustainable because they are not based on ideologies but on vote pooling. As a result, they collapse easily, even if they win elections. It is worth noting that, with only a few exceptions, most of the parties which form alliances are the offspring

1 Mphanya joined the alliance after falling out with the party, which had refused to join the alliance, preferring the other parties to join it.

of one party. Ironically, the political leaders who decide to break away from their original parties only resort to negotiations and joint problem solving on the eve of elections, which is what they should have done initially instead of breaking away only to seek reconciliation for the sake of the election. While Khembo (2004, p 123) maintains that 'the formation of new parties is neither a new phenomenon nor a destructive process in a liberal democracy', he hastens to warn that the problem with the formation of new parties is the motive.

It will be shown below that alliances in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia, have been formed when the parties realised that fragmentation and vote splitting limited their chances of winning elections. It is appropriate to look at the alliances and the processes that led to their formation in order to establish the success or otherwise of these efforts.

In considering opposition party alliances in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia, this paper begins with a brief discussion of the reasons behind party coalescence and possible forms of political alliance in the three countries. Secondly, the paper highlights inter- and intra-party relations before the most recent elections in each country as well as the way each party performed in those elections. It also looks at the structures of the alliances and the considerations of the parties when forming the alliance, as enshrined in their memoranda of understanding (MoUs). The paper will show that the idea of political party alliances is not necessarily new to some of these parties. It is therefore important to see if any lessons informed their renewed attempts.

Most literature on political party coalitions points to the fact that parties, whether ruling or opposition, form coalitions in order to secure more votes (Khembo 2004; Kadima 2006; Kadima & Lembani 2006). The decision to form coalitions is, however, not only based on a quest for majority votes but, according to the Social Cleavages Theory, it is also based on historically rooted orientations of the individual parties which guide them on how to respond to issues (Marks and Wilson 2000, p 2). Whereas this theory is validated by the formation of parties along ethnic lines in Zambia (Kabemba 2004), the paper will show that this was not necessarily the motivation in Botswana and Lesotho. Available evidence suggests that the main reason for these alliances is vote pooling.

POSSIBLE FORMS OF ALLIANCES FOR BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND ZAMBIA

Front

In this model all the parties affiliate to one party, using its logo for election purposes as well as forming a government. They use one manifesto and uniform political

and election materials such as civic education and voter education programmes, brochures and leaflets. They contest elections as an alliance and share seats according to a formula agreed between them. The parties subscribe to the alliance while retaining their own identities and maintaining their ideological philosophy and principles. They are still able to pursue interests which do not clash with the fundamentals of the alliance. The African National Congress (ANC) follows this model with its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) even though Cosatu is not a political party. The three parties pursue their individual interests and, on occasion, express differing opinions about issues (Habib & Taylor 2001).

Electoral Pact

In this model political parties join hands only for the purposes of winning elections. Where the FPTP electoral model is used, they may agree not to field candidates in the same constituency but rather to support one candidate in each constituency, or, as is the case in Lesotho where the MMP electoral model is used, they may agree to vote for a candidate from party A in the constituency vote and a candidate from party B in the party vote. Another example of an electoral pact coalition is that of Kenya's National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which consists of the National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) (Rainbow) (Selolwane & Shale 2006). NARC contested elections in Kenya under one manifesto and went on to win them against the Kenya African National Union (KANU). The coalition had adopted a formal set of nomination procedures which applied to all candidates and fielded one presidential candidate in the election (NARC MoU, October 2002).

Unity/Merger

Under this model the parties dissolve and form one political party. This means that one or both parties lose their identity and become one party. If adopted, this model means that all structures of the concerned parties merge. The parties' logos, ideology and principles also merge. The merger of the New National Party, formerly the National Party, with the ANC in South Africa shortly before the 2004 general election is a good example of this scenario. Against this backdrop we turn to the individual countries to see what form of alliance is most favourable.

BOTSWANA

There has always been a problem of internal party democracy in Botswana despite the country's much acclaimed political stability. At independence in 1965 the two

major parties were the Bechuanaland Democratic Party (BDP) and the Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP).² Prior to the 1965 elections, the latter consisted of two factions – the consequence of which was not only to diminish the strength of the party but also to give an edge to the BDP (Somolekae 2002).

Some members of the splinter groups within the BPP regrouped to form the Botswana National Front (BNF) in 1966 in the hope that this would unite them. The BNF was, however, not able to meet this expectation, largely because, from its inception, it was also plagued by factionalism. The BNF contributed further to the proliferation of parties by spawning parties such as the United Socialist Party (PUSO), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Botswana Workers Party (BWP), the Botswana Labour Party (BLP), the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) (Selolwane & Shale 2006, p 125). It is evident that even at the point when the BNF was formed its members had learned no lessons about the causes of intra-party conflicts and their remedy. It is also clear that the leaders at the time did not address themselves to creating the necessary mechanisms for circumventing the challenges of intra-party democracy. They were simply power seekers who wanted to win elections.

Four decades later, the status quo remains the same, with the BDP comfortably in charge of the government, while, judging by the number of votes it received in the 2004 election, the BPP has been reduced to one of the smaller parties in the country. On the other hand, the BNF has gained support, overtaking the BPP, as will be seen below. The 2004 general election was won by the BDP without much difficulty for the ninth time since independence. However, the BDP's hegemony has recently attracted criticism from political analysts within and outside the country (Good & Taylor 2005). Its dominance is attributable to the FPTP electoral model, which, as Somolekae (2005) states, does not consider the popular vote of a party in allocating seats but only recognises the party with the highest vote. Opposition parties see this as a distortion of the real picture. It is axiomatic that the FPTP electoral model often works to the advantage of incumbent parties (see Matlosa 2003), a fact that is affirmed by the election result illustrated in Table 1 (p 6).

The 2004 General Elections and the Pact Parties

Although the 2004 elections went smoothly, without the incidents of violence and intimidation that had been anticipated, there are growing concerns about the fairness of the elections in the light of the FPTP electoral model and the

2 The parties are now called Botswana Democratic Party and Botswana People's Party.

incumbency, which are seen by many as factors which perpetuate the BDP's dominance. As the ruling party, the BDP has been accused of using state resources while the opposition is left without funding. It is also accused of monopolising the electronic media and communications, which accord prominence to the president while restricting opposition leaders on the grounds that their messages are political in nature (Good & Taylor 2005; Osei-Hwedie & Sebudubudu 2005). That the BDP, like other incumbent parties globally, monopolises the media and donor funding is not unusual. What is unusual is the fact that after 40 years opposition parties in Botswana still do not seem to have a comprehensive plan to challenge the status quo. They still grapple with unstructured alliances which emerge on the eve of elections and, because of internal conflicts, cannot sustain themselves until the following elections. Of the seven parties which took part in the 2004 elections only the BDP, BCP, the Marx, Engel, Lenin, Stalin Movement (MELS) and the NDF stood on their own – the other three opposition parties had formed an election pact.

The pact parties – the BNF, the BPP and the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) – fought under one manifesto and agreed not to compete in the same constituency. Each of the parties, therefore, chose the constituencies in which they would stand. On the basis of the pact agreement, rank and file members of the parties were encouraged to vote for whichever of the three parties was standing in their particular constituency. Table 1 reflects the performance of these parties (highlighted in bold) compared to that of the non-pact members, including the ruling party.

Table 1
Botswana: 2004 Election Results

Party	No of of votes	% of votes	No of seats	% of seats
Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)	213 308	50,63	44	77,2
Botswana National Front (BNF)	107 451	25,51	12	21,0
Botswana Congress Party (BCP)	68 556	16,27	1	1,8
Botswana People's Party (BPP)	7 886	1,87	Nil	0
Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM)	11 716	2,78	Nil	0
National Democratic Front (NDF)	3 237	0,77	Nil	0
Marx, Engel, Lenin, Stalin Movement (MELS)	121	0,03	Nil	0
Independents	104	0,02	2	0
Total	412 379		59	100

As Table 1 shows, the BNF was the only member of the pact to win any seats. While the formation of the pact was a good idea, it did not necessarily translate into the expected results. Although some pact members lost in constituencies in which they believed they had strong support the parties can still claim success because, according to their agreement, their members contributed to the BNF's victory in the 12 constituencies in which it won. The reality, though, as reflected in Table 2, which shows selected constituency results, is clearly that if the vote had not been split the opposition (the BNF, BCP, BAM and NDF) would have beaten the ruling party in some constituencies.

Table 2
2004 General Election Results in a Select Group of Constituencies

Constituency	BDP	Opposition	Margin
1. Kgatleng West	3 943	6 319	2 376
2. South East South	3 769	5 363	1 594
3. Mogoditshane	2 375	3 649	1 274
4. Gaborone North	2 480	3 753	1 273
5. Selebi Pikwe West	3 100	4 291	1 191
6. Selebi Pikwe East	2 629	3 709	1 080
7. Ngami	5 291	6 283	992
8. Francistown South	2 843	3 432	589
9. Nkange	4 246	4 531	285
10. Kweneng South	4 658	4 804	146

Source: Somolekae 2005

Table 2 shows that the opposition could have won all 10 constituencies in addition to the 12 won by the BNF. This would have given the opposition at least 32 seats instead of 13, which would have reduced significantly the ruling party's dominance, thereby creating a generally balanced Parliament.

There are a number of possible explanations for the failure of the pact parties to win adequate support. Firstly, they did not all completely understand the desired goals of the pact (see Selolwane & Shale 2006). According to the Cooperative Theory, coalitions exist if all role players believe they can gain from them. It is important that there should be similar understanding of the desired

goals. As Karume (2003, p 7) notes, coalitions are only as good as the results they produce. They should therefore strive to achieve a desired common goal. Related to this, and even more important, is the question of inadequate consultation by the individual parties with their rank and file membership. This is important in two ways. On the one hand members need to be involved in the coalition-building process and own the finished product – in this case, the pact. On the other hand, it is the rank and file members who vote. It follows, therefore, that if they had been thoroughly consulted they would have had a similar understanding and would therefore have voted with the future of the coalition in mind.

Secondly, the failure of the pact can be attributed to the absence of robust outreach programmes. Studies have shown that one of the weaknesses of parties in Botswana is that they do not engage in comprehensive outreach programmes, particularly using tools such as civic and voter education. They leave it up to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and civil society organisations to handle these aspects (Kadima, Matlosa & Shale 2005). Adequate outreach would have assisted the electorate to understand the cooperation option, thereby making the election less confusing. The fact that the parties did not contest the elections under one logo or symbol but retained their own was confusing. Rank and file members were asked to vote for the candidate of the pact member party who stood in a particular constituency. This created problems because voters are usually more conversant with their own party symbols. Again, given the adversarial inter-party relations in Botswana, asking voters to vote for a party which might previously have been demonised without helping them to understand the benefit of such a course was bound to cause resentment.

The Memorandum of Understanding and its Aftermath

The pact parties have, to their credit, continued to work together since the 2004 elections and have been joined by the BCP after consultations with its general membership for a mandate to go into inter-party negotiations (BCP Report 2005). The parties then signed a MoU by which they agreed to work together in by-elections. Initially, the BPP, which had reservations, did not sign the MoU but it continued to share an understanding with the original members of the 2001 election pact. So, although it was not a signatory to the MoU, in October 2005 the BPP supported the BNF candidate in the Gaborone West-North by-election.

According to the MoU the parties recognised the need to strengthen their commitment to inter-party relationships and to inculcate in voters an understanding of the social, economic and political problems facing Botswana. The parties pledged not to compete against one another but to support one another in all parliamentary and local government by-elections from 2005 until the next

general election, in 2009. All the contracting parties agreed to support the candidate of the party which won the highest number of votes in the 2004 election. The MoU also contains a provision allowing the party which is entitled to field a candidate to request one of the alliance members to field its candidate if the former believes the latter has a better chance of winning. The alliance partners also established a Joint Committee, which was charged with overseeing the implementation of the MoU, including the selection of candidates for all by-elections. Table 3 shows the by-election results in the Gaborone West-North constituency in October 2005, which the parties contested under the MoU, thus testing the strength of the alliance. These results are compared to the 2004 general election results for the same parties.

Table 3
Botswana October 2005 By-election Results, Gaborone West-North

Party	No of votes in 2004	No of votes in 2005 by-election	No of seats
BDP	3 315	2 330	0
BNF	3 936	3 723	1
BCP	1 281	*	
BPP	0	*	
BAM	0	*	

Source: Botswana IEC 2005

Clearly the MoU paid dividends as the parties achieved some positive results in the by-election. As indicated above, the party which won the highest vote in 2004 contested the election with the BNF, which had initially won the constituency with 3 936 votes to the BDP's 3 315, retaining it with 3 723 votes against the BDP's 2 330. There was an even wider gap (1 393 votes) between the BNF and the BDP in the Gaborone West-North Constituency by-election than the 621 votes which differentiated the parties in the 2004 general election. The number of votes won by the BNF and its allies indicates the importance of a kind of party unity that the country has not had in the past four decades.

The by-election was significant in that the BNF leader, Otsweletse Moupo, who had contested the 2004 election in Selebi-Pikwe West and had lost by 1 393

votes (IEC Botswana Election Report 2004) won, thus ending the awkward situation where the leader of a party with 12 MPs was not, himself, in Parliament. The positive result was very important, demonstrating that party unity allowed the opposition to defeat the BNF and reflecting the voters' support of the opposition parties' improved political maturity. The following section examines the parties' structured negotiations in preparation for the next election.

Cooperation for the 2009 General Election: A Mirage?

The success in the by-elections became one of the driving factors for the four major opposition parties to co-operate further. They embarked on a negotiation process to pave the way for the 2009 general election and beyond.

While the parties do not necessarily share an ideology, they have similar ambitions to become an alternative political power to the BDP. Prior to the negotiation process, the individual parties consulted their members, a change from the past when the decision to form an alliance was the business of the leadership only. They met with their members to discuss coalition models that might be adopted. This also entailed conducting a comprehensive education campaign, despite limited funds, to ensure that members recognised the value of party unity if Botswana was to have alternation of power. As Greene (2002, p 760) observes, funding is a crippling factor for any opposition hoping to challenge a one-party dominant system.

The respective parties presented a number of alliance models to their members during the consultations and, following the consultations, the parties further discussed these models in regular meetings between the negotiating teams nominated by each party and mandated to engage in the talks on the parties' behalf. A positive sign was that the parties to the negotiations agreed to involve as convenor of their meetings an independent and credible person who did not belong to any of the negotiating parties. The NDF, which had stayed out of the 2004 pact, had now entered into a group membership arrangement (affiliation) with the BCP. This brought to five the number of parties in the MoU, although the NDF had not signed

The delicate nature of the process as a result of the parties' past relationships and many failed attempts at party unity since 1989 (Somolekae 2005) meant the parties were more cautious in their talks and their reluctance to move away from their positions led to the talks collapsing for the first time in September 2006 – 13 months after the signing of the MoU. This followed a disagreement between the BNF and the other parties on the model to be adopted. The BNF favoured affiliation (a front) while the other parties preferred an election pact and what they called an umbrella body, under which a new party with a new name and

logo would be formed and contest elections without the individual parties changing their identities.³

The stalemate was the result of one negotiator, the BNF, insisting that as the largest party it had already established itself as an alternative to the BDP and therefore the other parties stood to benefit from being affiliated to it. The BNF made its position public without due regard to the provisions of the code of conduct which regulated the parties' behaviour in and out of the negotiation process so as to have a coordinated approach to information and publicity. The failure of the parties, particularly the BNF, to observe the code of conduct has once again dealt a heavy blow to the unity efforts, which, as indicated above, have suffered several sustainability setbacks in the past. Apart from the code of conduct the parties devised no other mechanisms to assist them in building mutual trust.

The situation in Botswana is regrettable because it flies in the face of a statement clearly made by the electorate in terms of what they expect from the parties judging by the results reflected in Table 3. The results show that the voters welcomed and blessed the parties' collaboration. So, the parties have a great deal to lose in the 2009 election if they do not resuscitate the negotiations.

The collapse of the negotiations negates theories of pre-election coalition formation such as the signalling device theory, which, according to Ederberg, Tjernström & Kennedy (2006), suggests that the formation of a coalition prior to an election signals to the electorate that the coalition parties would be able to form an effective government. If this were true, in this case, ending negotiations would not be an option. Although critics of Botswana's much-vaunted democracy suggest that the electoral system does not accord opposition parties a fair chance, one would argue that while this is so, the parties are also currently suffering from an urge to self-destruct.

LESOTHO

The 2002 general election in Lesotho and its results were met with accolades from all over the world. Acclaimed by Elklit (2002) as Africa's first Mixed Member Proportional election, it brought political peace and stability. However, it was preceded by a leadership conflict within the country's ruling Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) coupled with subsequent political conflict across the country. After years of internal leadership battles the Prime Minister and BCP leader, Dr Ntsu Mokhehle, left the BCP and, in 1997, formed a new party in Parliament – the

3 Interviews with the concerned parties in February 2006 in Gaborone, Botswana.

Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). Although the internal pressure from the 'Pressure Group' faction of his party forced him to jump ship, Mokhehle was able to cross the floor with the majority of the BCP MPs, giving him the necessary numbers to remain head of government.

The BCP was left with the anti-Mokhehle 'Pressure Group' faction, whose members had been thrown out of the Cabinet by the Prime Minister (Likoti 2005). The BCP, which, as Matlosa (1999) indicates, won power through popular vote, was therefore reduced to an official opposition party while their wittier 'Majelathoko faction' (translated as 'those who eat far from others') continued as the government.⁴ The BCP split surprised many who had thought that the party had become stronger since the King had overthrown it in 1994 and it had later been reinstated through the intervention of a SADC troika consisting of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe (Rake 2001). Mokhehle's strategy in forming the LCD did not go unnoticed by other politicians in the SADC region who would later face similar situations. For instance, the same strategy was replicated by the current President of Malawi, Bingu Wa Mutharika, although the latter, unlike Mokhehle, does not enjoy majority support in Parliament (EISA 2 March 2006).

After its formation, the LCD consolidated its support and went on to win the 1998 general election, which was followed by arguably the most destructive political protests in the country's history, events that would eventually lead to the replacement of the country's FPTP electoral system with MMP. The BCP experienced a further split in 2002, giving birth to the Basotholand African Congress (BAC) shortly before the 2002 general election. The party split again in late 2006 when one of its leaders, Ntsukunyane Mphanya, left to form Mahatammoho a Poelano.⁵

The LCD also experienced a split when its deputy leader formed the Lesotho People's Congress (LPC) in 2002. In late 2006 it split yet again when the Minister of Communications formed the All Basotho Convention (ABC). That such rifts on the eve of elections have become a trademark of the congress parties in Lesotho is no surprise, what is surprising is the political acrobatics that accompany them. It is also disturbing to note the absence of conflict-management skills and the leadership morass that has come to characterise these parties.

Table 4 shows a wide gap of 180 082 votes between the ruling LCD and the BNP. Although the BNP is not a subject of discussion in this paper, reference is made to it to indicate the size of the gap between the LCD and the main opposition

⁴ The word 'Majelathoko' is usually used by members of a group or organisation to describe colleagues who are perceived to have clandestine agendas which may harm the group or organisation. Also see Matlosa 1999.

⁵ The BCP experienced splits even during the colonial era when some of its leaders, mainly chiefs, left it to form the BNP.

party. The LPC was the only opposition party to win a constituency seat. This alone demonstrates the overwhelming dominance of the LCD. The other seats occupied by opposition parties, including four of the LPC's five, are PR seats.

Elections in two constituencies (Hlotse and Mount Moorosi) were declared invalid in the initial poll and the LCD won the fresh elections in both constituencies, increasing its total number of seats from 77 to 79. In its simplest form, the PR allocation formula for the rest of the seats in Parliament was as follows:

- a) Total number of votes divided by number of seats = quota of votes
- b) Party total votes divided by quota = number of seats

UNEAS 2002

According to Elklit (2002) PR seats can be allocated in one or more rounds. In Lesotho two rounds were required to allocate the seats reflected in Table 4 because the LCD had won 12 more seats (77) than its proportional entitlement (65). In the second round the total number of seats was 41 not 118 as in the first round.

Table 4
Lesotho 2002 General Election Results

Party	No of votes	% of votes	No of seats	% of seats
LCD	304 316	54,8	77	65,3
BNP	124 234	22,4	21	17,8
LPC	32 046	5,8	5	4,2
BCP	14 584	2,7	3	2,5
BAC	16 095	2,9	3	2,5
NIP	30 346	5,5	5	4,2
LWP	7 788	1,4	1	0,8
Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP)	6 890	1,2	1	0,8
Popular Front for Democracy (PFD)	6 330	1,1	1	0,8
National Progressive Party (NNP)	3 985	0,7	1	0,8
Total	546614	98,5	118	99,7

Source: Matlosa & Sello 2005

The 41 seats derived from the total of quota of votes of the nine parties which won fewer votes than their proportional share of seats.

The BCP progeny continued to perform poorly in the by-elections, failing to secure even a single constituency from the determined LCD. The continuing dominance of the LCD has been, to a large extent, the result of the fragmentation within the opposition parties (with the exception, so far, of the LPC), which kept them preoccupied with court cases rather than with working to unseat the LCD by selling their political programme to voters.⁶

Table 5 illustrates the performance of the parties, comparing the 2002 election results with the 2003 by-election results in selected constituencies. The rationale for selecting these constituencies is that both are LCD strongholds and in both by-elections were held very soon after the 2002 general election, when the voters' election mood had not yet completely dissipated.

Table 5
Lesotho By-election Results in Two Selected Constituencies

Party	Votes in Khafung 2002	Khafung Votes in 2003 by-election	Votes in Qhoali 2002	Qhoali Votes in 2003 by-election
LCD	3 195	2 585	4 809	3 028
LPC	2 275	1 084	126	122
BCP	311	248	218	100
BAC	232	0	64	0

Source: Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission

Table 5 reflects the decline in the number of votes for all the parties which contested the by-elections compared to the votes they received in the general election. The results for the LPC and BCP in Qhoali Constituency suggest that neither party had attracted any new members in those constituencies by 2003. This is in sharp contrast to the ruling LCD, whose votes suggest that it still enjoys majority support in the selected constituencies. However, these by-election results may not be a sufficient tool with which to measure a party's strength because they were held

⁶ Even the BNP, which has both the following and the leadership capable of dislodging the LCD, has not taken part in by-elections (except in the Mohobollo constituency), leaving the weaker parties to engage in a David and Goliath battle. See IEC National Assembly by-elections summary (August 2003; October 2004).

at a time when parties had just gone through the general election and did not have adequate resources to undertake a second vigorous campaign.

It can also be observed from the table that not all opposition parties participated in the by-elections, for many reasons, ranging from lack of funds to lack of support in the constituencies. While a lack of party funding is a stark reality in Lesotho, non-participation of opposition parties in by-elections further entrenches the ruling party in power. Naturally the LCD is not concerned about the feebleness of the opposition and will therefore not do anything to change the situation because that would be political suicide. It is no exaggeration, however, to say that the continued one-party dominance in Lesotho takes the country back to the Nationalist Party heyday, which is a setback to the democratic consolidation efforts. In fact Schrire (2001, p 27) reminds us that one of the threats to democracy is an imbalance which provides one party with long-term numerical dominance.

The February 2007 Election and the History-Making Alliances

As in Botswana, opposition parties in Lesotho have opted for cooperation to give them a chance to perform well in the 2007 elections and make a meaningful contribution to the country's governance. The LPC, the BAC and Mahatammoho formed the Alliance of Congress Parties, while the newly-formed All Basotho Convention, the LWP and the SDP made an election pact. Interestingly, the ruling LCD, fearing stiff competition and desperate to circumvent the MMP's exclusion of parties with many constituency votes, as happened in 2002, also wooed the NIP to form an alliance.

The Alliance of Congress Parties (ACP)

In July 2006 the leaders of the LPC, the BAP and Mahatammoho announced the formation of the Alliance of Congress Parties (ACP). The leaders indicated their concern that the emerging democracy was degenerating into a *de facto* one-party state. They also lamented the increasingly widespread poverty in the country brought about by both a lack of resources and the distribution of resources (ACP Press statement 2006). The alliance partners underscored the importance of achieving real freedom, peace and development through effective socio-economic policies, programmes and strategies geared towards eliminating poverty and improving the socio-economic wellbeing of Basotho.

The ACP has a well-defined structure and a memorandum of understanding under which it contested the February 2007 elections. The underlying factor which seems to have motivated their partnership is expressed in the MoU. They have indicated that they do not have ideological differences and this has made it easy

for them to form an alliance. For this reason they go further, stating in the MoU how they will allocate resources and Cabinet and other senior portfolios if they win. Judging by the commonalities expressed in the MoU, which include, among others, that they come from the congress culture and orientation, it is not far fetched to suggest that the parties could easily merge permanently to form one party. The alliance's performance in the 2007 election, as shown in Table 6, does not reflect its immediate impact but it does indicate an increase in its collective vote compared to the previous election, which the parties contested individually.⁷ The results further show a better performance by the ACP than by the other smaller parties, like the MFP and PFD, against which it competed in the previous election.

The ACP needs to consult further with its members, who were not sufficiently consulted because of the pressures created by the calling of a snap election. The significance of this alliance is that it is unique in that it has reconciled the congress leaders in a structured manner for the first time. More importantly, although it has not yet been tested, it has clearly sent a message to opposition parties that electoral reform alone is not enough if they remain fragmented.

The ABC/LWP/SDP Alliance

Like the ACP, these three opposition parties put their collective strength to good use in the 2007 election. In almost all the constituencies and in the PR votes (Table 6) the alliance emerged second to the ruling LCD/NIP coalition. The parties to the alliance agreed not to compete against each other and fielded their candidates in the constituencies under the ABC flag. Candidates for party lists (PR) were nominated under the LWP and included the ABC leader and other senior members as well as the SDP candidates, although these were low on the list, giving them less chance of winning seats.

The pattern reflected in column 5 of Table 6 whereby the alliance partners of the stronger parties (the LWP in this case) got a higher percentage of total PR votes, almost tantamount to the stronger party's constituency votes, is the result of an agreement between the parties that their voters would vote for the ABC under the constituency vote and the LWP under the PR vote. The party list then became the basis for the allocation of the ABC/LWP seats in Parliament. The alliance has therefore benefited both parties, with the ABC using it to maximise its representation in Parliament and the LWP, while having significant support in its own right, using the ABC's strength to ensure that it is also represented in Parliament.

⁷ The author is aware that at the time of publication opposition parties in Lesotho are contesting the seat allocation reflected in Table 6. The IEC may be forced to change the results.

Table 6
Lesotho National Assembly Election Results and Seat Allocation Summary
February 2007

Party	FPTP seats	% of FPTP Seats	Total party (valid) votes	% of total party votes	Party's allocation of compensatory (PR) seats	Total no of seats	% of PR seats +FPTP seats
ABC	17	21,3	None	0,0	0	17	14,3
ACP	1	1,3	20,263	4,6	1	2	1,7
Basotho Batho Democratic Party	0	0,0	8,474	1,9	1	1	0,8
BCP	0	0,0	9,823	2,2	1	1	0,8
Basotho Democratic National Party	0	0,0	8,783	2,0	1	1	0,8
BNP	0	0,0	29,965	6,8	3	3	2,5
LCD	61	76,3	None	0,0	0	61	51,3
LWP	0	0,0	107,463	24,3	10	10	8,4
MFP	0	0,0	9,129	2,1	1	1	0,8
National Independent Party	0	0,0	229,602	51,8	21	21	17,6
New Lesotho Freedom Party	0	0,0	3,984	0,9	0	0	0,0
PFD	0	0,0	15,477	3,5	1	1	0,8
Total	79*	100	442,963		40	119	100

Source: Independent Electoral Commission, Lesotho

* Election postponed in Makhaleng Constituency due to death of one of the candidates. A fresh poll will be held in due course.

The LCD/NIP Alliance

This alliance is modelled on the same lines as the ABC/LWP/SDP alliance. The agreement between the two parties is contained in the MoU entitled 'Memorandum of Understanding Between Lesotho Congress for Democracy and the National Independent Party On Strategic Partnership and Co-Operation for the 2007 elections'.

Article 3 of this MoU stipulates the manner of cooperation between the two. Basically, the LCD competes for the 80 constituencies while the NIP competes for the 40 PR-based seats. Article 3(c)(i) states that the NIP will place its own candidates in the first five places and the LCD's candidates will occupy the next 6+4 places. Interestingly, the MoU states that the 6+4 formula means 'the six LCD members who will also be contesting in the constituencies but are being secured should certain eventualities occur (eg, a failed election). Whereas the four names will form part of the entire Proportional Representation list.'

The issue of 'failed elections' is misleading because failed elections have nothing to do with the PR list, which is closed. If there is a failed election, as, indeed has happened in the Makhaleng constituency, a fresh election is held and parties have to nominate candidate for the constituency. The truth is that having read the danger signs of a likely defeat by the new populist ABC in some constituencies, the LCD put its top leaders, starting with Prime Minister Mosisili and his deputy, in the top six places as per the formula. This strategy definitely served the LCD well in the elections because it rescued some senior LCD members, mostly ministers who lost constituency elections but got into Parliament through this formula and went on to become ministers again.

Generally, the alliance has yielded good results for the parties, as shown in Table 6, with the LCD retaining 61 constituencies of the 79 it won in 2002 while the NIP got the highest number of 21 compensatory seats, positioning it as the main opposition in Parliament unless the ABC and others form a coalition. This result places the two parties in a good position in Parliament if they collaborate beyond the elections as, together, they have 82 seats of 120. This seems to be the only logical option for the LCD to pursue. Failure to consider this option, with the alliance having been restricted to elections and the NIP not having been rewarded with any senior position in government for its trouble, means that the LCD government is unlikely to have a firm hold on power should the NIP reconsider its position. Their future collaboration is, however, uncertain, because the alliance has become the most controversial of all the alliances in the eyes of the public.

The bone of contention is that the LCD signed an agreement with members of the NIP, whose leader alleges had no mandate to enter into such an agreement. Again, the PR list, as explained above, deliberately excluded the NIP leader, yet included the LCD leader and prime minister. Furthermore, even though the NIP leader won a High Court battle over this alliance, he accuses the LCD of having used its incumbency to influence the Court of Appeal to hear what he deems a *res judicata* matter between himself and his party's executive committee. The Court of Appeal overruled the High Court order, thereby legitimising the alliance, which leaves the NIP leader without a seat.

Despite the controversy, this alliance is significant in that it has defied the time-honoured taboo of formal cooperation between the ruling party and opposition parties in Lesotho. Thus, it has provided a conduit for interested opposition parties to join ranks with the ruling party, although, as some would correctly observe, this might be to the detriment of the opposition parties because the ruling party might use its incumbency to attract smaller parties in order to get higher numbers, thus deliberately weakening the opposition.

ZAMBIA

Following the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in Zambia in 1991, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was elected to power by an overwhelming vote. The shift of power from the United National Independence Party (UNIP) to the MMD ended more than two decades of the former's political dominance and suppression of opposition politics. The 1991 multiparty elections were run according to a FPTP electoral model. It was, however, not long before the party began to experience internal leadership squabbles. Members of the party were not allowed to contest for the party's presidency. Many were consequently forced to break away and form their own parties. It was during this time that the United Party for National Development (UPND) was formed. One of the reasons why UPND leader Anderson Mazoka broke away was in order to stand for the presidency in 2001 (FODEP 2001) and he could only do so if he was no longer a member of the ruling MMD.

The other major cause of instability within the MMD was that its leader, the then President of Zambia, Frederick Chiluba, had expressed his interest in standing for a third term in violation of his party's and the country's constitutional provisions. There were subsequent attempts by those around him to amend the MMD's constitution to pave the way for his aspirations. A total of 21 MPs of the ruling party who opposed the third-term agenda broke away from the MMD in protest and formed a new party, the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD).

Simutanyi (2005) points out that other parties, such as the Heritage Party (HP) and the Patriotic Front (PF), were formed as a result of the third-term debate. He states that apart from the third-term issue the PF was formed in reaction to the nomination of Levy Mwanawasa as the ruling party's presidential candidate. As the FPTP electoral model often favours the ruling party it was to be expected that the formation of the new parties which broke away from the MMD would not stop the MMD from winning the 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections. The 2001 election results, with the four main political parties, the MMD, UPND, UNIP and the FDD highlighted, are shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Election Results in Zambia, 2001

Party	No of votes	% of votes	No of seats	% of seats
Agenda for Zambia (AZ)	2 832	0,0	0	0,0
Democratic Party (DP)	115	0,0	0	0,0
Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD)	272 817	9,0	13	8,2
Heritage Party (HP)	132 311	3,0	4	2,5
Liberal Progressive Front (LPF)	175	0,0	0	0,0
Movement for Multi party Democracy (MMD)	490 680	43,7	62	40,0
National Christian Coalition (NCC)	35 632	0,0	0	0,0
National Leadership for Development (NLD)	3 155	0,0	0	0,0
National Party (NP)	1 228	0,1	0	0,0
Patriotic Front (PF)	49 362	1,0	1	0,6
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	809	0,0	0	0,0
United Party for National Development (UPND)	416 236	33,0	47	30,0
United National Independence Party (UNIP)	185 535	8,0	12	7,5
Zambia Alliance for Progress (ZAP)	3 963	0,0	0	0,0
Zambia Progressive Party (ZPP)	19	0,0	0	0,0
Zambia Republican Party (ZRP)	97 010	1,0	2	1,3
Independents	59 335	1,0	1	0,6
Total	1 751 214	100	159	100

Source: Matlosa 2003

The fragmentation of the MMD as the 2001 elections approached resulted in a split vote that contributed to its marginal victory over the newly established UPND. The MMD leadership had failed to uphold the principles that brought its constituent parties together in the first place. This is well illustrated by Kadima & Kasenally (2005) in their discussion of coalitions, in which they state that the same political diversity that puts a coalition in power may also lead to its collapse.

The closeness of the results, as noted in Table 7, have led to serious competition in and out of Parliament. The opposition parties have experienced stiff, although unfair competition, with the ruling party poaching their MPs and appointing them to ministerial and assistant ministerial positions, the appointment of UNIP, HP, FDD and UPND MPs being cases in point (Simutanyi 2005). This move has weakened the opposition parties in Zambia's Parliament.

The MMD has not only succeeded in increasing its number of seats by poaching from other parties it has also won more seats in constituency by-elections held across the country. For instance, as illustrated in Table 8, the MMD won three constituency seats from UNIP with large majorities, despite the fact that all three were considered to be party strongholds (FODEP 2001). While the Roan and Chama seats were lost after the MPs in those two constituencies died, UNIP lost the Milanzi constituency after its MP defected to the MMD because UNIP did not approve of her appointment as Assistant Minister and wanted her to resign. When she refused to do so, the party expelled her. The seat was therefore declared vacant, thus warranting a by-election. The same MP contested the by-election under the MMD flag and won by 1 360 votes.

Table 8
Zambian By-elections in Selected Constituencies, January 2006

Party	Copperbelt Province: Roan Constituency No of votes	Eastern Province: Milanzi Constituency No of votes	Eastern Province Cham South Constituency No of votes
MMD	3 995	2 249	3 142
UPND	186	*	*
UNIP	302	1 662	706
FDD	253	352	1 001
PF	1 136	*	*
Party for Unity, Democracy and Development (PUDD)	220	*	*
All Peoples Congress (APC)	*	151	162

Source: Electoral Commission of Zambia 2006

* Party did not participate in the by-election

While it has now become a cliché to attribute the dominance of a ruling party such as the MMD to incumbency, it is equally true that ruling parties are not easy to unseat and they usually do whatever it takes to have the results go their way. It is not surprising that the MMD is accused of having handed out to voters in order to get their votes the food parcels donated to the country by international humanitarian agencies.⁸

However, opposition parties did not help themselves by bemoaning incumbency while failing to improve their internal democracy. It is clear from the figures in Tables 7 and 8 that the ruling party will continue to dominate the opposition unless the opposition devises some strategies to circumvent the challenge. At this point we look at opposition initiatives in the run-up to the 2006 elections.

The United Democratic Alliance (UDA) and the Battle for Supremacy in 2006

In March 2006 the three main opposition parties in Zambia, namely, the UPND, the FDD and UNIP, announced their new political alliance, the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) with a view to strengthening their chances in the 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections. This was to be expected given that the leadership of these parties found the MMD to be a common opponent because it unseated UNIP from power in 1991 and forced the FDD and UPND leaders out of its ranks following disagreements, as set out above.

The leaders of the three parties, which were all represented in the Zambian Parliament, signed a memorandum of understanding in which they acknowledged that they shared similar principles, visions and programmes, while equally recognising the need for a strong opposition alliance in order to win elections and advance democracy and development. The ruling party welcomed the formation of the alliance, indicating that it would focus on a narrower range of adversaries than it had in the past. It claimed that it would win the 2006 elections regardless of the number of opposition alliances in place (EISA 2 March 2006).

The UDA is headed by a national executive committee consisting of the three party presidents plus six other senior officials from each participating party, with the secretary general of the alliance being an ex-officio member. The main organs of the alliance are the permanent committees, namely, the Mobilisation and Strategy Committee, the Finance and Resource Mobilisation Committee, the Administration and Publicity Committee and the Research Committee. The day-to-day activities of the alliance are spearheaded by the Secretariat under the

⁸ Telephonic interview with Mr Njekwa Anamela, UNIP Deputy President, May 2006.

leadership of the National Secretary of the FDD, who has also assumed the position of UDA Secretary General. The alliance developed a manifesto which indicated what it would do if elected in 2006. The three leaders were given a mandate by their parties to decide on one leader among them to be a presidential candidate. This shows the seriousness with which members of each party regard the UDA – their mandate meant that they trusted their leaders and did not require them to subject such an exercise to party conventions or elections.

The death of UPND president, Anderson Mazoka, in May 2006 dealt the alliance a heavy blow as he had been tipped to become the UDA's presidential candidate (EISA 2006) on the basis of his performance in the 2001 election. A dark cloud hung over the party as its leaders fought each other for the position of party president. This led to a split in the party and the formation of the United Liberal Party (ULP) by the estranged UPND deputy president, Sakwiba Sikota. Table 9 shows that the UDA performed far more poorly than expected, despite the fact that it consisted of three main opposition parties, coming after the Patriotic Front (PF) which, in the 2001 election, had been defeated by the UPND (Table 8). This suggests that the split within the UPND drained the confidence of some voters.

The UDA's decision to nominate an inexperienced leader also played in the hands of experience politicians like President Mwanawasa and Michael Sata, who exploited this weakness to bolster their votes. A lesson to be learned by opposition parties from the UDA experience is that it is risky to invest all the hopes of the alliance partners in one person (as with Mazoka). Clearly defined organisational structures and the roles of the respective leaders and their individual and collective potential must be the foundation on which the alliance is grounded.

Table 9
Zambian Election Results 2006

Party	No of seats	% seats
MMD	73	48,67
PF	43	28,67
UDA	26	17,33
Independents	3	2,00
United Liberal Party (ULP)	2	1,33
National Democratic Focus	1	0,67
Unallocated	2	1,33
Total	150	100

Source: EISA 2006

CONCLUSION

The paper has shown that political parties enter into coalitions for two major reasons – to stay in power or to access power (Kadima & Kasenally 2005). Nothing describes the case of political party alliances in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia better than this statement. The ruling parties in the three countries are increasingly dominating the political landscape, while the opposition is becoming enfeebled.

We have indicated that once-strong parties such as the BPP in Botswana, the BCP in Lesotho and Zambia's MMD have produced multitudes of fragmented groupings which have perpetuated the status quo by splitting votes instead of bringing about a shift in power. Based on the evidence presented in this paper there is no doubt that in all three cases the decision of the parties to form alliances has been prompted in the main by their recognition of a common fate in so far as elections are concerned. Thus, little, if any attention has been given to the life of a coalition beyond elections. It has been observed, too, that, in all the cases, the choice of partner is not based as much on ideological, ethnic or historical considerations but on the prospect of victory through cooperation in the zero-sum political game.

The alliance partners in Botswana were toying with the idea of affiliation or election-pact options which never materialised because of the parties' failure to transcend their selfish interests and compromise their strongly held positions. In Zambia the parties adopted a model whereby they came together without losing their original identities; forming the UDA, which, despite having an impressive organisational structure, failed to translate this into impressive votes because of internal conflict in the UPND which split the opposition vote yet again. The alliance in Lesotho, although less structured than those in Botswana and Zambia, lived up to Karume's assertion that alliances are only as good as the results they produce.

Both opposition party alliances and the ruling party alliance with the NIP seem to have benefited from their collaboration. This may explain why the alliance partners in the ACP are now contemplating a merger which would see all of them disbanding to form one party before the 2012 elections.

The paper has shown that in all three cases the challenge to parties in forming alliances was that they had no well-documented lessons in terms of what makes or breaks alliances either locally or regionally. This remains a challenge, which could seriously threaten their sustainability.

Because the alliances in all three countries have largely been formed to fight elections, the parties have not discussed in any detail their plans, not only as the opposition in Parliament but in the event that they win the elections. We have warned in this paper that, although they are a useful strategy, alliances alone are

not necessarily a panacea for the problems of opposition. Parties must work continuously on their internal democracy and inter-party relations if the alliances are to yield sustainable results.

They must consult thoroughly with the people and should ensure that they do not project themselves as merely adversarial but claim their space as a legitimate and constitutional opposition.

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A PREFACE TO AN INCLUSIVE AFRICAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM AGENDA¹

Mohamed Salih & Abdalla Hamdok

Mohamed Salih is Professor of Development Politics at the ISS,
University of Leiden, Department of Political Science

P O Box 9555, 3200RB, Leiden

Tel: +31 71 52 73 902; Fax: +31 71 52 73 815

e-mail: salih@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Institute of Social Studies, P O Box 29776, 2502LT, The Hague

Tel: +31 70 42 60 573; Fax: +31 70 42 60 799

e-mail: salih@iss.nl

Abdalla Hamdok is Regional Director for Africa and the Middle East, International

IDEA, Suite 55 Private Bag X1, Menlo Park 0102, Pretoria

Tel: +27 12 460 5305; Fax: +27 12 346 2581

e-mail: a.hamdok@idea.int

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to contribute to a better understanding of why African electoral systems should be reformed and how to do so in order to improve the quality of representation, participation, and government effectiveness. We attempt to offer a generic framework, a menu, so to speak, whereby African political parties and policy makers can reflect on the current state of play vis-à-vis their electoral systems and then decide whether a comprehensive or partial electoral reform agenda is needed. The paper also delineates the various institutions and stakeholders that should be involved in the electoral system reform process. This is a call to improve the reform process instead of entrusting it with a limited range of state-sponsored institutions, which often create more problems than those they contrive to solve.

The paper is divided into four sections: a) a synoptic exposé of electoral reforms; b) the various types of electoral reforms and the factors which militate against them; c) lessons from the African experience with electoral system reforms; and d) an analysis of the main stakeholders required to steer a comprehensive electoral system reform agenda.

¹ The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of International IDEA or the ISS.

INTRODUCTION

Critics of the conduct of African elections are concerned with at least two types of structural deficiencies emanating from the quality of democracy. The first is the electoral formula (or system) applied in an overall socio-economic context characterised by poverty, patronage and severe social, ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic cleavages, the second the technical deficiencies, often informed by structural problems emanating from inadequacies related to constituency size, balloting, and the conduct of election administration.

It is difficult, even impossible, to make any headway in improving the quality of democratic practice without taking electoral system reform very seriously. It is important to stimulate discussion about an inclusive reform agenda not only because this is an area in which field-based studies are in short supply but also in order to promote effective policy-making in this field. The following factors justify the need for a preface such as this:

- Some African countries are in the formative stages of competitive democratic politics having only recently done away with one-party systems or authoritarian, military or military-civilian rule. Most of the problems they have experienced have related to the electoral system they have chosen.
- Although some African countries (eg, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mauritius, Senegal) have had a longer experience with competitive democratic electoral politics than others, many of them still encounter democratic deficiencies emanating from electoral system inadequacies.
- The same applies even to those hailed as beacons of hope for democracy.
- There is strong correlation between political violence, instability, and democratic deficit, on the one hand, and the quality of electoral systems, on the other.

For these reasons we hope this preface will plug into some grey areas in Africa's democratic experience. We return to these important issues in Table 1.

Electoral system reforms are either dictated by political crises (eg, Nigeria, Kenya, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan, Togo) or by stable democratic developments recognised by the political leadership, political parties and other stakeholders. In both cases, the need for reform is treated as an instrument for improving the quality of the democratic practice.

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Narrowly defined, an electoral system consists of a set of rules for conducting an election and the legal and administrative framework and procedures adopted for translating votes into seats. The rules and framework are informed by three broader issues: the scope of the elected office (which offices are subject to elections); the extent of the franchise (who has the right to vote); and voter turnout (who does vote) (Hague, Harrop & Breslin 1998, p 100). With regard to the first, the more offices that are elected in a process of free and fair elections, the more competitive the political system and hence the more democratic. In relation to who should vote, in most countries every citizen older than 18 has the right, regardless of sex, religion or race. The third factor relates to the number of enfranchised voters who elect to use their vote – universal suffrage does not guarantee that citizens actually go to the polling stations and cast their vote.

Election administration institutions, laws, rules, and regulations, including seemingly mundane issues, are as vital to the operation of an electoral system as the choice of the system itself. Each electoral system is governed by an independent national electoral commission; judicial and electoral petition tribunals; rules for electoral administration; constitutional provisions or basic electoral laws or regulations; registration of political parties and voters; delimitation of constituencies; establishment and equipping of polling stations; overseeing election campaigns and funding; procurement, custody, security and distribution of election materials, equipment and venues; administration and processing of primaries and campaigns; and vigilance and prudence on election day. In short, even a perfect electoral system (if it has ever existed) can fall victim to imperfections generated during the technical processes of election administration.

These aspects of the electoral system can be summarised by three practical or technical considerations:

- Constituency structure: single-member, multi-member, number of seats per constituency, based on the existing administrative structure or nation-wide.
- Ballot structure: Is the vote about the parties or the candidates; who selects the candidates – the party or the party electoral college or party members? Is the system based on a closed or open list ballot?
- The electoral formula: The basic options are: plurality (the party / candidate with most votes wins), majority (the party / candidate with more than 50 per cent of the vote wins), proportional representation (PR) (seats are distributed on the basis of votes obtained), and mixed (a combination of PR and majority or plurality).

Massicotte, Blais & Yoshinaka 2004

More broadly, electoral systems echo much of Dahl's concept of a competitive democracy, including: elected officials or deputies; free and fair elections; inclusive suffrage; the right to run for office; freedom of expression; alternative sources of information; and associational autonomy (Dahl 1989, p 221). The choice of an electoral system is crucial for the functioning of democracy, particularly if it is informed by the socio-economic and political environment within which it is implemented.

According to Heywood (2002, p 232) an electoral system is a set of rules that govern the conduct of elections. Not only do these rules vary across the world, they are also, in many countries, the subject of fierce political debate and argument. They vary in a number of ways:

- Voters may be asked to choose between candidates or between parties.
- Voters may either select a single candidate or vote preferentially, ranking the candidates they wish to support in order.
- The electorate may or may not be grouped into electoral units or constituencies.
- Constituencies may return a single member or a number of members.
- The level of support required to elect a candidate varies from a plurality (the largest single number of votes or a relative majority) to an overall or absolute majority or a quota.

These five considerations are important because they inform the overall electoral system, whether it is a majoritarian system such as a single-member plurality system (first-past-the-post – FPTP), whereby the part which wins the larger number of votes wins the elections and forms the government, or a proportional system, which guarantees a more equal relationship between the seats won by a party and the votes won in the election.

Put more succinctly by Blais & Massicotte (2002, p 41):

There are three basic electoral formulas, corresponding to as many criteria in legitimacy as to what is required to be elected. Supporters of plurality are satisfied when a candidate gets more votes than each individual opponent, while others think that one should be declared a winner only when he or she can muster half of the votes, that is, a *majority*. Advocates of proportional representation feel that political parties should be represented in parliament in exact (or nearly exact) proportion to the vote they polled. Mixed systems combine PR with either plurality or majority.

Working with or striving to reform any of the three basic formulae is important for political parties and the representivity and/or stability of the government they produce. This is largely because electoral systems determine party performance in and chances of winning elections and thus to hold power and to form and control the resources and personnel of government for the public good.

To this extent, the attitude of political parties to electoral systems is determined by whether the system that is adopted gives them certain advantages over their opponents. As a rule, parties prefer to retain the electoral system that is advantageous to them and campaign to reform the system that is disadvantageous to them.

Heywood (2002) laments:

The electoral reform debate is, at heart, a debate about the desirable nature of government and the principles that underpin 'good government' ... Electoral systems therefore merit only a qualified endorsement, reflecting a balance of advantages over disadvantages and their strength relative to other systems. These criteria fall into two general categories: Those related to the quality of representation, and those linked to the effectiveness of government.

Therefore electoral system reforms have to do with how to make democracies respond to the thorny questions of how to ensure that a democratic representative government is a good government in itself, and that it has been elected by rules that guarantee a democracy characterised by competition, inclusiveness and political participation, and guarantees of civil and political liberties.

According to International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (Reynolds & Reilly 1997, p 9), the criteria for crafting an electoral system should ideally include some or all of the following *key considerations*, which are also dependent on the socio-economic and political environment within which the electoral system is implemented. The considerations are:

- ensuring a representative parliament;
- making elections accessible and meaningful;
- providing incentives for conciliation;
- facilitating stable and effective government;
- holding government and representatives accountable;
- encouraging 'cross-cutting' political parties;
- promoting a parliamentary opposition;
- cost and degree of administrative effectiveness.

These eight key considerations carry different weights in different democratic contexts and should therefore be adapted rather than used as a blueprint at the onset of crafting electoral systems or when an electoral system fails to achieve the main objectives for which it was originally designed.

WHAT TYPES OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM AND WHY?

Electoral reforms refer to the processes by which citizens' participation in a democracy is governed. The list of what actually constitutes these reforms is long. It includes:

- reforming or changing the existing electoral system, for example, from FPTP to PR, or introducing a hybrid system;
- altering the rules governing the election of the legislature or executive;
- changing the regulations governing partisan monitoring of elections or supplementing monitors with non-partisan (national or foreign) observers;
- reforming or replacing the existing election law;
- redefining citizens' eligibility to vote;
- changing the rules governing ballot access;
- delimiting, increasing, or changing constituencies and districts;
- designing and implementing a new ballot system;
- using new voting and vote-counting methods and technology;
- introducing and enforcing election campaign regulations or laws.

Most of Africa's electoral reforms in the late 1980s and the early 1990s were concerned with the transition from one-party systems, military socialism, military or civil dictatorship to multiparty democracy, which necessitated broad and all-embracing reforms. Those reforms were part of a broader political process aimed at democratising authoritarian regimes and transforming them into democratic ones. The major African debates during the onset of the democratisation process centred on issues of how to effect the constitutional reforms necessary to change the electoral law and also the introduction of most or all of the constituents of electoral system reforms cited above.

In the same vein, the victorious liberation movements – the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, the Ethiopia Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO), the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF), the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA) – conceived and implemented reforms to the

electoral system within the broader realm of restructuring the state and transforming an unjust political order. In all these countries new constitutions have been designed or engineered in order to respond to the new political reality and, with the exception of Eritrea, all of them, most recently the Sudan with its new Political Party Law (2006), have adopted and implemented multiparty democracy.

For yet another group of countries, electoral reforms meant replacing restrictive electoral laws with laws intended to improve representation; addressing issues pertaining to injustice in the allocation of constituencies; nation-building (ie, improving regional, ethnic, linguistic or minority representation in national or regional institutions); increasing the participation of women in politics by assigning quotas for women; or making changes in the constitution and/or in electoral or political party laws. In Southern Africa this impetus to change has been the result of the combined efforts of the member states and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and some states have fared better than others.

It would be a grave mistake to assume that electoral reforms are the solution to political problems expressed in terms of dissatisfaction with the existing electoral system and to hope that these problems will disappear once the electoral system is reformed. In most cases, electoral systems become entrenched and those parties which benefit from the existing system tend to reject reform, while losing parties agitate for reform in order to improve their electoral chances. The African experience with electoral reforms magnifies what Cox (1997, p 16) referred to as the incompatibility of institutional and social determinants which inform the capacity of electoral systems to activate the formation of political cleavages independent of strong social cleavages based on ethnicity, culture, language, and other attributes. Such attributes, we hasten to add, might stifle the reforms and produce election results similar to those the election system designers are attempting to change.²

Electoral system reforms are, at best, about redefining the losers and winners and improving the chances of those who feel aggrieved by elements of the existing system which narrow their electability. In a deeper sense, electoral system reforms are about power shifts by electoral design which, like all power shifts, may engender turbulent political events and instability, particularly in cases when the prevailing political system has coincided with the entrenchment of structural inequality

2 See Norris (2004) for a more comprehensive comparative debate about how voters respond to changing the rules of the electoral game, contrasting rational choice institutionalism and cultural modernisation theories.

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

We argue in the introduction to this paper that African electoral system reforms are dictated either by political crises or peaceful democratic transition whose necessity is recognised by the political leadership, political parties, and other stakeholders. In this section we introduce the electoral reform experiences of ten African countries. Unfortunately, without exception, the electoral system reforms in all ten countries were dictated by political crises, some peaceful, some violent. The issues addressed are consistent with the overall factors (shown in Table 1), which militate for electoral system reform in other countries as well.

Table 1 indicates that similar problems confront most African multiparty competitive democracies. They centre on electoral reforms issues, which, if they remain unresolved, together create a serious credibility problem for the quality of African democracy.

Table 1
Major Issues Addressed by Electoral System Reform in 10 African Countries.

Country	Issues addressed
Botswana	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Electoral law
	4. Campaign finance
Burkina Faso	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Electoral law / campaign finance
	4. Election administration
	5. Election management body (EMB) independence
	6. Election monitoring
Ethiopia	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
	4. Election violence

	5. Electoral law/campaign finance
	6. Election administration
	7. EMB independence
	8. Election monitoring
Egypt	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
	4. Election violence
	5. Electoral law/campaign finance
	6. Election administration
	7. Election monitoring
Lesotho	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
	4. Election violence
	5. Electoral law/campaign finance
	6. Election administration
	7. Election monitoring
Kenya	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Constitution Review Commission
	4. Political violence
	5. Election violence
	6. Electoral law/campaign finance
	7. Election administration
	8. Election monitoring
Nigeria	1. Electoral participation and competition

	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
	4. Electoral law / campaign finance
	5. Election administration
	6. Election monitoring
South Africa	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
Sudan	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
	4. Election violence
	5. Electoral law / campaign finance
	6. Election administration
	7. EMB independence
	8. Election monitoring
Togo	1. Electoral participation and competition
	2. Party system integrity
	3. Political violence
	4. Election violence
	5. Electoral law / campaign finance
	6. Election administration
	7. EMB independence
	8. Election monitoring

Source: Compiled from various sources, notably ACE/IDEA Electoral Knowledge Database <aceproject.org/electoral-advice/ace-network-facilitators-policy-specialists>;

Electoral System Design <www.idea.int/esd/>;

Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns <www.idea.int/publications/funding_parties/index.cfm>

However, these problems are more significant in some countries than in others. In other words, while Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Sudan, and Togo have more than their fair share of democratic deficit defined by the number of issues either addressed or pending, Botswana (four issues) and South Africa (three) share the least of these concerns, but for different reasons.

In South Africa, the ANC's electoral success has created a dominant-party system which is subject to criticism by those who lost out in the electoral process. Botswana has the longest-serving 'liberal democratic' competitive electoral political party, which depends on the support of the largest ethnic group (the Tswana), making the relationship between ethnicity and voter behaviour an obvious target of criticism. Party dominance in Botswana and South Africa entices the ruling parties to be complacent and less responsive to opposition demands, even where the opposition has genuine concerns about the way in which public affairs are governed.

Table 1 also illustrates that the issues bedevilling electoral reform involve various stakeholders and not merely the national electoral commissions, the legislature or the political executive. If electoral reforms are to have any hope of success they should chart the major areas of concern, enlisting an even more elaborate checklist of issues to be addressed than the generic ones listed above.

That the multitude of stakeholders involves diverse issues and competing interests, making electoral reform inclusive means that a political space for stakeholder participation should be created deliberately. Although it is unrealistic to imagine that all stakeholders will agree on all aspects of the reform agenda, the fact that contentious issues are debated openly, as they should be in democratic societies, will make the end-product transparent and even induce those who were against certain aspects to work within the broad framework.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS IN ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM

Judging from some recent turbulent electoral reform experiences in Africa it is obvious that in most cases the stakeholders are narrowly defined as the electoral commission, the legislature, and the political executive. Opposition political parties were given token representation, enabling the governing party to overrule them. In this section we elucidate the major stakeholders in the electoral reform process and what their functions are.

These stakeholders and functions are outlined in Table 2. However, the table may give the impression that the stakeholders operate in isolation, with each group safeguarding its interests by trying to ensure that the electoral system it prefers prevails over the others. For example, although national election commissions are independent, in some countries the president or prime minister

requests the Speaker of Parliament or the National Assembly to table certain legislation (such as election law or electoral reform) or to organise referenda before starting the consultation process leading to the promulgation of the new legislation.

Table 2
Major Stakeholders in the Electoral System Reform Process

Stakeholder	Role
The executive	Although in most countries members of Parliament can sponsor Bills, which are often named after them when they are passed, in states characterised by executive branch dominance, the prime minister or the president, in consultation with the Speaker of Parliament, works with Parliament to set in motion the electoral system reform process. Once the process commences the executive branch withdraws and leaves the work to the independent national electoral commission.
Independent national electoral commission (INEC)	<p>The INEC is an independent constitutional body subject in the exercise of its functions only to the Constitution and any other law. It should therefore be above partisan politics and should not take sides in determining the outcome of the consultations leading to electoral system reforms.</p> <p>Other functions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• overseeing and coordinating the efforts of the various stakeholders and making sure that they are properly recorded;• preparing the necessary documentation, which requires it to be informed about the electoral system;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a timetable for the duration of the deliberations with a clear plan of action of how the reform process will be implemented; • developing an information and communications strategy to ensure transparency and accountability.
Opinion leaders (chiefs and clergy, intelligentsia, former heads of states, etc)	These groups bring into the democratisation/ reform process the voice of reason and moderation. Such a role is crucial, particularly at times of crisis and transition.
Special interest groups (women, youth, the elderly and underrepresented districts)	Special interest groups articulate the particular interests of the group and contribute to addressing them.
Media and information sector	The media and information sector provides for the creation of a transparent environment and plays the role of watchdog over all other branches of governance.
Democracy and human rights lobby groups.	Democracy and human rights lobby groups play an important role in making sure that issues of human rights are addressed.
Civic education experts	Civic education experts help in the process of educating the public about its rights and obligations. They also contribute to the creation of public awareness and understanding of the issues involved.
Minorities (eg, ethnic, religious, regional, demographic)	In pluralistic societies minorities play an important role in the articulation of the interests of their respective groups. The reciprocal roles of minorities and dominant groups determine whether societies will be stable or experience continuous conflict.
Constitution/ electoral system/ election law experts	Electoral reforms and election or political party laws elaborate on certain constitutional provisions; some are in fact by-laws. Ensuring consistency will eliminate wrangling between

	<p>competing interests, with one using the constitution, the other the electoral law.</p> <p>Electoral system design is essentially a technical process determined by political consultation. Knowing both in theory and practice the advantages and disadvantages of the systems being debated is essential and requires certain expertise. Countries should either establish a technical committee of experts to advise on any controversial matters that may arise or should have experts embedded in the INEC. In countries where the independence of the INEC is in doubt, an autonomous technical expert may be recommended.</p>
Census experts and surveyors	<p>The role of census experts and surveyors is crucial when the intended electoral reforms involve delimiting, changing, or creating new constituencies which might affect negatively the fortunes of some political parties. Instead of leaving this issue to the manipulative skills of politicians, census experts, working as technicians, are expected to endow the constituency delimitation process with legitimacy.</p>
Legislature	<p>The role of the legislature in the electoral process is to provide the legal or policy initiative and to deliberate and legislate after consultations are completed.</p>
The general public	<p>Because the major object of electoral reforms is to ensure participation, inclusivity, and the integrity of the electoral process, the parties and party leadership, its ultimate goal is to address the public's (the voters') general concerns. Another major reason why the public should be involved through its representative institutions and also through a steady flow of information is to bolster its trust in politics.</p>

In the past some electoral system reforms have been beset by serious problems when the executive branch has interfered in the consultation process, circumvented the independence of the INEC, or expressed strong opinions about the outcome of the consultation process before it has even begun.

Such cases are reminiscent of one-party regimes or regimes characterised by extreme executive dominance. In all such cases the opposition, supported by democracy and human rights activists and some opinion leaders, legislators, regional and sub-regional and international election observation missions, have cried foul, dubbing the process cooptive rather than participative.

Obviously, the need for an inclusive electoral reform agenda necessitates adherence to a multiple-stakeholder approach which safeguards against the monopoly by a few interest groups of the agenda-setting process and outcome, which may disfranchise others and lead to its rejection, at best, and political violence, at worst.

Operating within the framework of an inclusive electoral system reform agenda is an exercise in democracy, whereby multiple-problem-solving scenarios are discussed in a transparent and participatory manner. The outcome, in our view, is superior to narrow-based electoral system reform agendas, no matter how technically sound they might be.

CONCLUSION

Electoral system reforms are central to improving the quality of democracy in Africa, where, in the main, the FPTP system has resulted in less political stability and more conflict. The idea that changing to a PR system will immediately redress the inadequacies of FPTP has also been challenged. Increasingly, advocates of plurality-PR hybrids believe they bring together the best of two worlds, thus arguing against Sartori's (1994) contention that hybrid systems probably combine the deficits of both. Recent African examples (Guinea, Lesotho, Senegal, Seychelles and Tunisia) have shown that these countries have become more politically stable with the introduction of mixed or hybrid systems.

However, we argue that the quality of a country's democracy cannot be attributed solely to the quality of its electoral system, though by-and-large, electoral systems such as PR and mixed member PR play a significant role in accommodating political grievances emanating from inadequate representation of minorities, women, and other socially disadvantaged groups.

We argue that electoral system reform may not produce the intended results if experience is not taken into account. Either way, electoral reform is more than a reform of the election laws and the delimitation of old and new constituencies, although these are vitally important.

Therefore, electoral system reform is about shaping a democratic process that can challenge entrenched ethnic, religious, regional, class, or gender interests in the struggle to produce inclusive, representative, accountable, and transparent political institutions. It is also about how multiple stakeholders vie to protect their interests and how the process can be hijacked if it is not participatory, transparent, and inclusive.

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ELECTORAL REFORM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Voter Turnout, Electoral Rules and Infrastructure

Norbert Kersting

Professor Norbert Kersting holds the Willy Brandt Chair on Transformation and Regional Integration (DAAD) in the Department of Political Science, Stellenbosch University
Private Bag X1 7602 Matieland
Tel: +27 021 808 2119; Fax: +27 021 808 2110
e-mail: kersting@sun.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Elections are the most important elements of democracies and, with referenda, the only way to organise mass participation and to promote government accountability. Low voter turnout can be seen as an indicator of low legitimacy and limited political stability. The African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the New Partnership for Africa's Development champion the idea of transparency and the integrity of the electoral process as well as greater participation and electoral turnout. An analysis of the voting-age population of Southern African reveals that voter turnout is declining alarmingly. Do electoral rules and electoral infrastructure matter? The paper analyses election instruments using qualitative criteria from democratic theory. Are electoral systems, quotas for women and the conjunction of elections influencing voter turnout? Is a reform of voting infrastructure necessary? Southern African countries diverge widely in their electoral rules and infrastructure, which allows for cross-national learning. A number of remedies, including the necessity for automatic voter registration, are recommended.

INTRODUCTION

Competitive elections are the main characteristic of democracies. Elections are often discredited as instruments of a purely formal 'electoral democracy' or 'liberalised competitive autocracy' (Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2005) and direct participation and deliberative political discourse championed. Nevertheless, apart from referenda, elections are the only political instrument that allows for

broad representation. Authoritarian systems, however, use semi-competitive elections for pseudo-legitimacy while totalitarian non-competitive elections are often pure acclamation (Abbink & Hesselning 2000; Cowen & Laakso 2002).

Political systems worldwide seem to be under stress. New, often 'non-democratic' institutions are gaining influence and, because of privatisation, the public sector is losing control. Elected parliaments appear to be becoming obsolete and are no longer a forum or 'plaza' for open discussion or decision-making. Instead, 'deformed' and skewed media often seem to shape public discourse and technocratic administrations to dominate decision-making. 'Post-parliamentarianism', characterised by a diminished or weak role of parliaments and parliamentary elections prevails. This may lead to a crisis in the legitimacy of parliaments and to political apathy, cynicism and absence of political interest. It may, furthermore, lead to a crisis in participation. Not only may participation in elections decrease, participation in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society may also fall apart. In Africa's developing countries this is already happening for specific reasons.

Worldwide, societal change is leading to higher urbanisation. Although there are still more agrarian populations in Africa than on other continents and rural lifestyles still predominate in certain countries, urban centres and metropolitan areas are growing rapidly. Demographic change is becoming obvious.

In Europe, a tendency towards a 'grey society' resulting from low birth rates and high life expectancy is becoming a problem for, among others, pension funds. In Southern Africa, the reverse applies: life expectancy has been low because of weak health systems and birth rates have been high. In some countries, however, birth rates are decreasing because HIV / Aids is endemic in the age group 20 to 40. Youth dominance is therefore prevailing – but in a reduced population. Older generations are also profiting from better health systems and higher life expectancy. These factors are leading to societies dominated numerically by children and older people.

Furthermore, worldwide socio-economic change is resulting in growing structural unemployment, a decreasing agrarian and industrial sector and a growing service-sector dominance. Although, as stated above, agriculture is still important in Africa, the problem of structural unemployment is becoming a characteristic of developing African countries.

Finally, in industrial countries, socio-cultural change as individualisation and a lack of social capital is growing. African countries often perform better in this regard but, in some countries, such as South Africa, empirical data show a low level of social capital in urban areas.

Elections are seen as the most important element of representative parliamentary democracy. They allow for the selection of parties, programmes and

representatives and strengthen accountability and political control. They give legitimacy to political power, they lead to peaceful change in power, and they enhance political stability.

African regional organisations and initiatives, such as the African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), endeavour to ensure the transparency and integrity of the electoral process as a whole. SADC, for example, calls not only for equal opportunities in exercising the right to vote, for non-discrimination in the registration of voters, for freedom of association and for equal opportunities for organisations but also for higher participation and electoral turnout.

The lack of participation of certain groups, such as youth and women, however, is becoming apparent to these regional bodies. SADC, in its Article 5 and *Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections*, therefore encourages the empowerment of the younger generation to vote. This is a major principle emanating from the AU in its *Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa* (AHG/DECL1 [XXXVIII]) and its *Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions* (EX/CL/35 [III] Annex II). It is also embedded in the charter of the AU.

Discussion of the electoral system must go beyond whether a majoritarian/pluralist, proportional or mixed electoral system is best practice. Jackson & Jackson (1997, p 371) state that 'each system offers certain benefits and disadvantages in terms of the representation of different groups in society'. Although the electoral system plays an important role, especially in inner-party democracy and the role of parliament, the legitimacy of elections rests upon other factors. Electoral infrastructure and electoral rules become important and are often neglected when it comes to the analysis of voter turnout.

QUALITY OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

In evaluating and defining the quality of electoral systems various writers have endeavoured to seek universal normative concepts. Rae (1971, p 14) has defined electoral systems as 'those which govern the processes by which electoral preferences are articulated as votes and by which those votes are translated into distributions of governmental authority (typically parliamentary seats) among the competing political parties'.

Five criteria may be defined for the quality of electoral systems. These are: representation, concentration, participation, transparency and simplicity. The constitutional criteria for a free, fair, secret vote (Kersting 2005; Reynolds, Reilly & Ellis 1999; 2002) may also be included. In addition to these criteria the consolidation of democracies – incentives for conciliation, the encouragement of cross-

cutting political parties, the promotion of parliamentary opposition as well as costs and administrative capacity – also becomes important in developing countries, new democracies and highly segregated countries, such as South Africa.

Representation

Electoral systems should allow all groups in society to be represented in the elected institution. This has frequently led to the misleading argument that all groups must be represented according to their statistical representation. However, congruent representation does not respect that an advocacy representation by elected incumbents is possible and factor representation implies a relation between citizen and elected bodies. Electoral systems should hold both government and representatives accountable and enhance responsiveness.

Concentration

The systems should guarantee the decision-making capacity of the electoral institution. High levels of fragmentation and a large number of party factions may be counter-productive and inefficient in this regard, since majority systems tend to develop and foster two-party systems, which do not include smaller groups within a constituency. Although this may differ in a national setting, in the case of first-past-the-post (FPTP) constituencies, as much as 49 per cent of minorities might be neglected. Because of the limited number of seats in parliament, a natural quorum and threshold pertain to avoid very small particular-interest groups.

Participation

Electoral systems are significant democratic instruments for enabling participation. This is important in relation both to input legitimacy and to political incumbents and parties. In addition to the election of parties at the local level, the election of candidates (in other words, the personal vote) is seen as important. In some countries citizens have no or few rights to nominate candidates within parties; there are no primaries or pre-elections or polls. The personal vote, therefore, offers the voter the possibility of something that is seen as a special motivation to cast a ballot. Clientelistic networks should be used to build a bridge between the voter and the candidate. Preferential voting and the personal vote are seen as a factor in boosting voter turnout. According to Marsh (1985), however, such preferential voting does not lead to higher voter turnout but, instead, to the enhancement of clientele parochialism.

Transparency

Transparency is the key aspect of the legitimacy of electoral systems. The electoral result should show the will of the voters. If this is doubted, the legitimacy of the candidate, the institution, or the political system may be endangered. The institutional procedures of both ballot casting and counting should therefore be controllable. For example, inside the polling station and in electoral administration, the sealed ballot box and the four-eyes principle enhance trust and the legitimacy of elections.

Simplicity and the Reduction of Complexity

Ease and simplicity affect the cost of information and the limited resources of voters' time. A complicated electoral system may be interesting and motivating for those politically involved and for citizens with, for example, a higher level of education and more time, but it may also confuse voters (Farrell 2002). Elections are, firstly, a choice between different ideas and programmes and, secondly, a choice between parties and persons. This acts as an information clue.

Secrecy and Privacy

The reduction of supervision and the concomitant threat to the secrecy of the ballot may, however, be the most crucial issue. The secrecy of the ballot is considered essential in most modern states. It is adopted in a wide range of conventions and declarations, to which many Western democracies are signatories. These conventions and declarations include the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Article 21[3]), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 25) and the European Convention on Human Rights (Protocol 1, Article 3) (Kersting & Baldersheim 2004). Paradoxically, the secrecy of the ballot in traditional voting is brought about by supervision.

Development of Democracy

In new democracies parliament and party systems are often not consolidated. Electoral systems can, however, provide incentives for conciliation. They can encourage crosscutting cleavages and the development of crosscutting to catch all political parties. They can, furthermore, promote parliamentary opposition. Cost and administrative capacity should also be recognised and electoral systems should not ask too much of the public administration or the institutions implementing the elections.

VOTER TURNOUT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The analysis of official electoral data is largely based on the number of registered voters. This leads to distortions because large population groups are not represented. In the following analysis, voter turnout is recorded as a percentage of the estimate of the total eligible voting-age population.¹ Averages are therefore mostly considerably lower than turnout data using the percentage of registered voters. Low registration levels often have enormous effects. In some cases only particularly interested citizens may register and a wide range of population groups may not participate.

In Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and South Africa, registration severely affects turnout data. In Angola, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Zimbabwe and the Seychelles, these effects are moderate, or even low. There is also a problem with using voting-age populations because of a lack of proper statistical census data. Furthermore, demography changes dramatically because of HIV / Aids. Nevertheless, turnout related to voting-age population rather than registered voters seems to be a more reliable indicator.

In Botswana, with its long tradition of elections, only half (50%) of the voting-age population can be mobilised to vote, a decline that started in 1989. Official figures, however, are distorted by voter registration, with official data showing a higher voter turnout of 77 per cent in 1999 (Matlosa 2003).

In Lesotho, voter turnout declined between the 1998 and 2002 elections; voter turnout fell from 72 per cent in 1993 to 61 per cent in 2002.

The picture in Malawi is mixed. Voter turnout was low in the first election, with only 68 per cent of the possible electorate going to the polls. This went up to more than 90 per cent in the 1999 election, however. A high turnout of 78 per cent of registered voters was recorded in 1999 but that figure dropped in the 2004 national election, although 75 per cent of the voting-age population participated.

Mauritius traditionally has very high voter turnout. In 1982 it was more than 90 per cent, with about 80 per cent of the voting-age population participating. A total of 80,9 per cent of registered voters cast their votes in 2000; the figure was even higher in 2004.

Mozambique had a relatively high voter turnout in the 1994 election. In 1999, it was still moderate – about 58 per cent (about 70 per cent of the registered population). This declined dramatically in 2004, however. Only 40 per cent of the voting-age population participated in the 1999 presidential and parliamentary elections.

¹ Because new census data are not always available, the analysis also uses older census data. This is indicated in the table by the use of italics. Angola, as a praetorian state with one election not accepted in 1992, and autocratic Swaziland are not included in the analysis. The Seychelles, as a former SADC member state, is included.

Namibia's first election, in 1989, was a novelty and 97 per cent of the voting-age population cast its vote. Then there was a decline between 1994 and 1999, when the figures dropped by one-third. An analysis of registered voters revealed the turnout to have declined from an already low 76 per cent in 1994 to 62 per cent in 1999. In 2004, however, turnout increased to 85 per cent of the voting-age population.

Since its first election in 1993, the Seychelles has had very high voter turnout, although this dropped to below 90 per cent in the 2002 and 2004 elections.

In South Africa's first democratic election, in 1994, the turnout was 85 per cent. After this democratic honeymoon, however, voter turnout declined but stabilised, with only 63 per cent (in 1999) and 61 per cent (in 2004) of the voting-age population turning out. Data on registered voters, however, give a different picture: in 1999, 89,3 per cent of registered voters were still casting their votes.

In Swaziland, voter turnout is regarded as generally low. In 1998, 60,4 per cent of registered voters went to the polls.

In Tanzania there has generally been a low turnout in relation to the voting-age population but there registration has had a strong influence. In 1995, 75 per cent and in 2000 approximately 80 per cent of registered voters participated. In 2005, participation declined to 71 per cent.

Zambia has very low turnout rates. In 1991, 1996 and 2001 less than 40 per cent of the voting-age population cast its vote. This is not properly reflected in official data. But, even according to official data, because of an opposition boycott in 1996 Zambia has been facing a dramatic decline in voter turnout, which has dropped to less than 50 per cent. In the 2006 election, however, 63 per cent of registered voters participated.

In Zimbabwe, the influence of registration is small. But voter turnout declined from 95 per cent in 1980 to 54 per cent in 1990 and to less than 50 per cent in 2000. In the 1996 elections, only 32 per cent of registered voters cast their vote.

There are very few data on local elections, with most of the statistics reflecting the position only in the larger cities. Malawi had a very low voter turnout (15 per cent) in its 2000 municipal elections. Because of an opposition boycott the figure in Mozambique's 1998 municipal elections was only 15 per cent. In Zambia, only 26 per cent voted in municipal elections in 1998. In Namibia, turnout in local government elections in 1994 was between 50 per cent and 60 per cent; bigger cities, such as Windhoek, recorded only 35 per cent and Walvis Bay only 30,3 per cent (Africa Election Database 2006). In Mauritius, no turnout data are available for the 2001 local elections; in the 2005 elections, turnout was much lower than in the national election, with between 37 per cent and 43 per cent of registered voters casting their ballot. In Botswana, voter turnout in 2006 was high – 72 per cent of registered voters. In South Africa, only 50 per cent voted in the municipal elections

Table 1
Electoral Turnout in Southern Africa
Voting Age Population (%)

Year	Botswana	Congo / DRC	Lesotho	Madagascar	Malawi	Mauritius	Mozambique	Namibia	Tanzania	South Africa	Zambia	Zimbabwe
1980												84,1
1981												
1982						91,5						
1983				79,9		77,0						
1984	54,2											
1985												75,5
1986												
1987						84,6						
1988												
1989	47,9			72,9				97,0				
1990												48,7
1991		75,3				82,4					34,2	
1992		2,8		66,7								
1993			72,3	54,1								
1994	44,6				67,9		66,4	63,8		85,6		
1995						77,1			47,9			26,0
1996				29,7							39,8	27,4
1997												
1998			71,8	40,6								
1999	42,0				92,3		58,2	61,7		63,9		
2000						79,6			45,7			45,0
2001				<i>n.a.</i>							40,0	
2002			61,1	51,2								53,6
2003												
2004	49,9				74,6			84,9		61,4		
2005						83,8			70,9			47,7
2006		70,5									62,4	

Source: IDEA 2002; Africa Elections Database 2006

of 1995/96 and 2000; turnout dropped again in local government elections in 2006 (Africa Elections Database 2006).

In Namibia, Malawi and Tanzania there have been ups and downs, but the turnout is relatively high. Zambia and South Africa experienced a real decline in participation and turnout is low. In Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique electoral turnout is very low.

What remedies can be employed in relation to electoral laws and infrastructure and what would their influence be on turnout in Southern African elections?

REFORMING VOTING RULES AND VOTING FACILITIES

Voting behaviour seems to be a result of societal development, the influence of mobilising media (such as political parties and churches), individual resources (such as time and skills) and motivation (such as political interest and trust) (Norris 2002). Declining turnout is explained by different theories of electoral motivation. The normalisation theory argues that an adjustment process occurs and that, after years of democratic stability, political apathy and absence of interest grow. This apathy is not always the result of political dissatisfaction but may be the consequence of satisfied indifference. The dissolution of social milieux also enhances the de-alignment of political parties. Furthermore, because of individualisation and a change of values, voting is no longer seen as a citizen's duty. The competing theory sees a strong legitimacy crisis. According to this crisis theory, political alienation develops and non-voting is based on political cynicism. This means that even well informed citizens do not cast their vote. Political apathy is seen more as a lack of interest; cynicism is seen as the dissatisfaction of intellectual elites, which can be destabilising in the long term. Other explanations are based on rational-choice theories. According to Downs's (1957) electoral paradox, individual voting does not count. Additional factors are party alignment, problem and candidate orientation and underdog and bandwagon effects. Only close and unpredictable results seem to have a high impact on people's motivation to cast their ballot (Katz 1997).

What are the effects of electoral rules and constitutional structures? Do institutions matter? Is there a harmonisation of electoral rules and infrastructure in Southern Africa?

ELECTORAL RULES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

To enhance the influence of the electorate some new electoral rules are being discussed and implemented but, in some cases, because of other collateral damage,

some rules are also being abolished (see, for example, the Southern African Elections Forum 2000). Some rules are not being questioned because of long traditions in political systems.

Majority systems can be differentiated as FPTP systems, which are used mostly in African Commonwealth states, and two-round systems, used mainly in former French African colonies (Lindberg 2004). The two systems are simple to understand, offer strong geographical representation and accountability, and lead to clear majorities. They may, however, exclude minorities. They also seem to result in the election of fewer women. Furthermore, gerrymandering can become a problem.

Proportional representation (PR) systems, as implemented with the wave of democracy in Spain and Greece and with the second wave in Eastern Europe, Latin America and, later, in South Africa, strengthen inclusiveness and allow minority representation (Jackman & Miller 1995; Milner 2001). They are seen as responsible for slightly higher voter turnouts. They may, however, result in weak geographic representation, which can reduce the accountability of members of Parliament. Because of strong party influence during nomination, they have to be accompanied by strong inner-party democracy.

Internationally, there is a trend towards mixed electoral systems. Parallel systems have been introduced in Japan, Thailand and Senegal. Mixed-member proportional (MMP) systems have been implemented in Mexico (in 2000), New Zealand (in 1996) and Lesotho (in 2002). Mixed systems are seen as including the best of all worlds. They lead to less party fragmentation, higher inclusiveness and higher accountability. They are, however, more complicated, and sensitive to strategic voting. Proportional systems are believed to produce a higher voter turnout (Jackman & Miller 1995).

Do electoral systems matter in Africa? Namibia, with its PR system, has a very high electoral turnout; South Africa has a relatively low one. Turnout is high in Tanzania and Malawi, with their FPTP, but low in Zimbabwe. Mauritius, with its complicated mixture of majoritarian multi-member constituencies and block votes, has a high turnout, Lesotho, which switched from the FPTP to MMP, a relatively low one.

Most of the instruments and reforms mooted in other parts of the world have been discussed and implemented in the SADC region. Some are not recommended, for example, electoral systems that make voting compulsory or impose sanctions for non-participation, although these may result in voter turnout increasing by about 10 per cent (Jackman & Miller 1995).

Some political instruments focus on the inclusion of new voters, with the legal voting age almost universally set at 18. Internationally, in some countries the voting age was reduced to 16 at local level but because of the lack of effect on voter turnout this system was abolished.

Table 2
Electoral Rules and Infrastructure

Electoral rules	Electoral infrastructure
Electoral systems (Proportional/Majority)	Automatic registration
Size of the electoral districts	Obligatory registration
Electoral counting system (Hare- Niemeyer/ d'Hondt)	Voting on a rest day
Quora (5%), thresholds for non-party groups, etc.	Days of voting, early voting
Enfranchisement of foreigners	Proxy voting
Quota for regions	Postal voting for people abroad
Age of voting	Postal voting
Length of legislative period (frequency of elections)	Electronic voting machines
Conjunction of elections	Cross linking of the polling stations
Personal vote: direct election of the mayors	Alternative polling booth
Gender quota	Electronic voting by telephone, text messages, digital TV, etc
Compulsory voting	Remote Internet voting

Kersting 2005

The conjunction of elections at local, state and federal levels could enhance turnout because saliency in national elections is regarded as high. Such conjunction, however, contradicts the idea of federalism and could confuse voters.

With the abolition of a quorum (5 per cent in Germany, for example) and the introduction of new formulas in representative electoral counting systems (the d'Hondt to Hare-Niemeyer counting systems) in proportional systems, the influence of the supporters of smaller parties is increasing. Although these measures have had almost no influence on the enhancement of participation rates (see, for example, German local municipalities), they are leading to a greater fragmentation of party systems and probably to greater political instability.

In most countries with a proportional electoral system (IDEA 2002) parties present a list of candidates and receive seats in proportion to their share of the overall vote. The personal vote, that is, a vote for individuals not for party lists, was introduced at the local level in some countries in the 1990s (see preferential

voting, Kersting 2006). It is argued that the personal vote reflects the tendency towards a greater personalisation of politics, which, in turn, leads to greater media coverage and higher electoral turnout. At the local level the direct election of mayors, which is also a personal vote, has been introduced in Zimbabwe (Kersting 2005).

The enfranchisement of women in Switzerland in the 1970s was an important step towards political inclusion, although turnout decreased in the early days. With changes in traditional social roles and with new forms of political socialisation, the voting behaviour of women is becoming similar to that of men, especially in the younger age groups. The implementation of voting rights for foreigners has been carried out at local level and has been a step towards further integration of this group. However, because of a lack of interest, electoral turnout has been low.

Southern Africa seems to be in the lead when it comes to women's electoral rights. In some Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, France and Belgium, for example, new quotas are strengthening the role of women and representatives of regional minorities in local parliaments. In 1997 the SADC summit committed itself to equal representation of women (SADC 2000). The SADC declaration on gender postulated at least 30 per cent representation in all decision-making bodies by 2005 although by 2006 only Mozambique and South Africa had met this target, with Namibia and the Seychelles coming close.

Gender quotas are being discussed in different ways in Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and South Africa (Molokomme 2000; Nkiwane 2007). Some countries are focusing on either voluntary or compulsory democratisation within parties, forcing them to implement 'zebra' party lists. Others are focusing directly on quotas within parliament. These quotas seem to have no or little influence on voter turnout.

In Southern Africa voting rights are not extended to citizens of other SADC member countries or to other foreigners. The extension of voting rights to citizens living abroad is discussed intensively in, among other countries, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Expatriates tend to be more highly motivated to vote but are often perceived to be critical of the ruling government. Decisions about expatriate voting are often related to the presence or absence of postal voting facilities.

Southern Africa has experienced a number of referenda, which appear to enhance political interest. This was the case in Malawi and Namibia and in Zimbabwe the referendum in 2000 led to mobilisation of the opposition's supporters for the parliamentary and presidential elections. In the long run, the fact that the Mugabe government ignored the results of the referendum may have led to a higher level of cynicism and abstention from voting in 2005. So it is

not merely the fact of a referendum that leads to increased political interest, the country's leadership must also be politically committed to implementing the will of the electorate.

Electoral systems which include compulsory voting or sanctions for non-participation could increase voter turnout by about 10 per cent (Jackman & Miller 1995). Arguments against compulsory voting, however, often refer to civil liberties. It is also feared that obligatory voting, might increase the number of citizens who vote for extremist parties.

In respect of electoral infrastructure there are problems with voter registration. Registration procedures are cumbersome and require personnel in large numbers (SADC Parliamentary Forum 2001). Registration, therefore, should be a continuous exercise. A high level of transparency and free access to stakeholders to control the process are seen as crucial. A national identity card could help to reduce manipulation, such as removal from the voters' roll. A continuous process of registration or even mandatory registration could stop intimidation through political violence. The only countries in which there is automatic or compulsory registration are Angola, Lesotho and Madagascar. Links to national registration records or data matching with other agencies exists only in the Seychelles. However, voter registration has a major influence on electoral participation in Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa but has less impact in Angola, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, the Seychelles, and Zimbabwe.

Infrastructural instruments are used in various countries to facilitate the electoral process. Surprisingly, Zimbabwe seems to use a number of these, among them postal voting and advance voting. South Africa has not introduced postal voting: after extensive analysis it was argued that postal voting might reinforce intra-family coercion and electoral manipulation. The SADC Parliamentary Forum (2001) requested the introduction of proxy voting and voting facilities for illiterate persons, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Although it is used in many countries of the world, postal voting has not enhanced turnout in the SADC region – Zimbabwe being one example of this failure.

In Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo parliamentary and presidential elections are held at the same time. In Zimbabwe the postponement of the 2008 presidential election to 2010 to coincide with the parliamentary elections was under discussion. Although the survival of the Mugabe regime is an important factor in this discussion, it is also argued that the conjunction of elections reduces electoral costs. Nevertheless, harmonisation of the legislative period and the length of presidential office are not under discussion, nor is the return to a Westminster style parliamentary system, which was aborted in 1987 with the installation of a presidential system.

Other reforms are being recommended and discussed in the SADC region. The SADC parliamentary forum is championing a harmonisation of electoral systems and also refers to the Windhoek Declaration on Freedom of the Press, the Blantyre Declaration of 1997 on Gender Equality, and the Harare Declaration of 1991 to highlight the rights of citizens in the electoral process (SADC Parliamentary Forum 2001).

In its support for harmonising electoral systems the forum calls for government and the ruling party to play a neutral role, which would include not manipulating election dates. The British example of the prime minister setting the election dates is therefore not considered good practice. Public funds should, furthermore, not be misused to support the ruling party in elections. State-owned media should also be neutral and should not manipulate voters.

The implementation of independent regulatory watchdogs and whistle-blowers is also being championed. These include boundary delimitation commissions, electoral tribunals and an impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable electoral commission with independent and impartial staff – in other words staff that are not related to government ministries and therefore do not have loyalty issues. National electoral bodies should be selected by a chief justice and judges and should be approved by Parliament.

The electoral infrastructure should allow for a high level of transparency and control, polling stations should not be in private houses but in neutral public places, and ballot boxes should not be opaque and wooden but transparent. The forum also recommends open counting at polling stations and the immediate release of results and/or the sealing of ballot boxes. Polling agents should also attest to whether an election has been free and fair. A perceived lack of fairness has a major influence on efficacy, political cynicism and on voter turnout itself.

CONCLUSION

Any analysis of electoral turnout in Southern Africa reveals a mixed picture. This is often distorted because of the use of official data.

Namibia initially experienced a democratic honeymoon and had a very high turnout in 2004. In Malawi, the turnout is relatively high but the picture is very mixed, with ups and downs. In Tanzania, turnout increased in the last elections.

In Zambia, turnout is low, although it has increased. In South Africa, turnout is also low and a real decline in participation has been experienced. In Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique electoral turnout is very low. Zimbabwe has experienced a decrease since the 1980s, but there was short-term reinvigoration during the highly contested elections in 2000.

Low turnout could become a long-term trend because political apathy is

very high in the younger age groups. Turnout is even lower for local elections. Low turnout has consequences for, among others, the legitimacy of parliaments and electoral campaigns.

It is impossible to find a made-to-measure electoral system that fits all countries, all national levels and all sizes of political communities. 'The fact is that one country's circumstances can vary dramatically from another's, and a judgement on which electoral system is best for a given country should be made in the light of that country's history, social composition and political structure' (Farrell 2002, p 207). The size of a country, its social structure and democratic maturity seem to play an important role in this regard (Dahl & Tufte 1974). According to Katz (1997, p 308), the best electoral system is based on path-dependency and goal-dependency: it is important 'who you are, where you are, and where you want to go'.

The hypothesis that countries with very low electoral turnouts are hesitantly introducing new electoral instruments cannot be confirmed. Electoral reforms seem to depend on democratic tradition. In new democracies, risky instruments that do not strengthen democratic instruments and that open the door to possible manipulation should be rejected.

In addition to all other arguments, as a result of the HIV / Aids pandemic, which has taken the lives of many elected incumbents, the FPTP system results in numerous very costly by-elections. It often seems useful to mix systems and to amalgamate strategies to find compromises: the MMP system as a kind of personalised proportional voting system seems to combine 'the best of both worlds'. Matlosa (2003) suggests that South Africa and Mozambique should not, however, reform the PR system; that Lesotho should analyse its 2002 and 2006 electoral experiences; and that Tanzania should shift from FPTP to MMP and Zimbabwe should change from FPTP either to PR (as it existed in 1980) or to the MMP system. List PR can control the influence of the party hierarchy over the candidates' list only if there is strong inner-party democracy, so instruments that prevent iron-law oligarchy within parties therefore have to be found. Alternatively, the personal vote (cumulative voting) or MMP system can be implemented.

Although individual efforts are reduced and voting is facilitated by electoral infrastructure (postal voting, advanced voting, etc), Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa have low electoral turnouts. The main reason for this is either the electoral disjunction of presidential and parliamentary elections or the fact that the president is not elected directly. In Mozambique and Zambia the lack of instruments facilitating elections and low parliamentary strength seem to be important reasons for the low turnout.

Tanzania has a presidential system but a relatively strong Parliament, with presidential and parliamentary elections being held together and producing high

voter turnouts. In Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, electoral conjunction and facilitating instruments lead to high turnout. The Seychelles and Mauritius, as smaller countries, do not have to rely on instruments, such as postal voting.

Clientelism and networks are important factors in voter behaviour in all Southern African countries. Strong social networks and group identity motivate the casting of ballots and define voting decision. These networks are weaker in countries with higher urbanisation, but why is voter turnout so different in Southern Africa?

The most important factor is voter registration. It is also a field of manipulation, often invisible to electoral observers. To combat such manipulation automatic registration or mandatory registration (see elections Nigeria 2007) could be a solution. With proper registration, all citizens are included.

Although voter registration appears to be the most critical problem, other electoral infrastructure must be improved. One instrument might be more sophisticated voting facilities – electronic voting machines, which can be combined with electronic registration, are used successfully in many countries, India and Brazil, for example.

Internet voting would be problematic because of the digital divide and low proliferation but, given the high level of cellphone usage, text-message voting might be a more realistic option although there are the same problems as with postal voting with regard to secrecy of the vote and possible manipulation (Kersting/Baldersheim 2004)

Family voting (proxy voting for children), smart voting (more information and control of incumbents), voucher systems (distribution of resources to NGOs or parties) and lotteries for voters (the fun factor) as well as local referenda (thematic decisions initiated by citizen) are being discussed and the last mentioned has been implemented quite successfully at local level (IDEA 2006; Kersting, Schmitter & Trechsel 2007). Local referenda, with their pre-legislative effects, could be a useful tool for strengthening democracy in Africa.

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VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS OF 2006 WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE YOUTH

Maxi Schoeman and Charles Puttergill

Maxi Schoeman is Head of the Department of Political Sciences
at the University of Pretoria
Pretoria 0002

Tel: +27 012 420 4066; Fax: +27 012 420 3886
e-mail: maxi.schoeman@up.ac.za

Charles Puttergill is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology
at the University of Pretoria
Pretoria 0002

Tel: +27 012 420 2715; Fax: +27 012 420 3886
e-mail: charles.puttergill@up.ac.za

ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of the third local government elections in South Africa, held on 1 March 2006. Three broad explanations are given for voting behaviour (rational choice, party identification, and the sociological model). We argue that contrary to the expectations and assumption that voter turnout and behaviour would be determined by material issues (service delivery) the outcome points to participation as being an intrinsic value in itself. In the second part of the paper we focus on youth voting behaviour, based on a pilot study conducted among political science and sociology students at the University of Pretoria in April 2006. We conclude that despite low levels of voter registration and voting among young people, they tend to become more involved in 'ballot box' activities over time and remain largely optimistic about the country. To the extent that voters (youth and adults) are dissatisfied with the performance of the ruling party (the party of overwhelming choice) such dissatisfaction does not point to a shift to support opposition parties. Rather, debates about policy and performance will take place within the ruling party, among various factions fighting for the 'soul of the ANC'.

INTRODUCTION

In the run-up to the South African local government elections (LGE) of March 2006 much was made of service delivery as a) a crucial issue in the elections, b) a threat to support for the ANC in particular, c) a threat in general to the electoral process as a key aspect of democratic expression and d) a threat to democracy in the long run, with voters disillusioned to the point of rejecting elections as meaningless. But is this true? What were the issues in this election, how important were they, and what do perceptions of the delivery / failure of basic services tell us about, on the one hand, how commentators, opinion-makers, and elites view the voting process and impulse and, on the other, the nature of electoral behaviour and values that govern electoral choices?

In this paper we provide an overview of the issues on which political parties and the public focused during the election campaign, issues identified by the media as potentially determining peoples' voting decisions and the voting behaviour of one specific segment of the population – the youth – and the extent of their participation in the 2006 elections. In the first section we deal with a number of theoretical observations about voting behaviour and the role of the media in determining such behaviour. This serves to contextualise our main argument that, contrary to the perception that the election (both in terms of participation and the choices expressed by voters) would be determined or largely influenced by material issues (in particular that of service delivery), the outcome points to participation as being an intrinsic value in itself. In the second section we pay attention to the issues raised during the election campaign and in the third we compare voter behaviour with the assumption that it would be determined by instrumental considerations. In the final section we turn to the voting behaviour of the youth, analysing it by focusing on a sample of students at the University of Pretoria.

First, though, it is necessary to provide, by way of background, some basic statistics relating to the election results. Voter turnout in the 1996 LGE was 49 per cent, in 2000 it was 48 per cent (HSRC 2006, p 3) and in 2006 it was again 48 per cent. Although apparently low, this is in line with worldwide trends of voting patterns at levels lower than in national elections. The highest turnout was recorded in the Eastern Cape where 56 per cent of the voters cast their ballots.

Over all, the African National Congress (ANC) gained 66,34 per cent of the vote, with its highest support (84%) in Limpopo and lowest (38%) in the Western Cape. Apart from the ANC, only three other parties attracted more than 2 per cent of votes: the Democratic Alliance (DA) 14,77, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) 8,5, and the Independent Democrats (ID) 2,2. The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) each attracted one per cent of the total votes cast.

THEORETICAL OBSERVATIONS

Democracy, as Schmitter & Karl (1991) point out, is not only about the electoral process. Yet, in the words of Friedman (1999, p 213) '[f]or many citizens, an election may be... the only occasion on which their choices are stamped on the political process'. Elections and the act of participation through voting remain, for many, the defining proof that they have a voice and the opportunity of 'asserting the political self, of expressing identity and autonomy'. In this sense, then, Friedman continues, exercising one's vote becomes more important to building and maintaining democracy than does one's choice of who to vote for.

But political issues inevitably turn into campaign issues, or are turned into campaign issues, and therefore a perennial question remains why people decide to vote and how they vote, that is, for whom they vote. The decision whether or not to vote is influenced by a range of tangible and intangible considerations (see Ball & Peters 2005, p 172). What has become clear worldwide is that national elections have a higher turnout than elections at lower tiers of government, that there is a general decline in voter turnout and that the youth vote is generally lower than that of other age groups. These assumptions will be tested against the South African LGE in later sections of this paper.

As to explanations of voting behaviour, that is, the reasons for choosing a specific political party, the literature provides three broad approaches, though these are not mutually exclusive (Ball & Peters 2005, pp 172-9). Political elites tend to favour rational choice theory as an explanation for voting behaviour: decisions are based on mainly instrumental criteria.¹ To quote again from Friedman (1999, p 220): 'citizens are believed to use democracy as a source of material benefit rather than of self-expression'. It is, therefore, not surprising that service delivery was turned into a major issue during the run-up to the LGE of 2006 (as was also the case, incidentally, in the 1996 and 2000 LGEs, though not to the same extent as during the 2006 election campaign), together with a number of other tangible issues, as discussed in the next section. The crux of this approach is that it privileges 'rationality' in a materialistically designed way, implying that choices based on intangible considerations such as identity or religion are somehow 'irrational' or 'not normal'.² Rational choice theory implies that elections are first and foremost issue-based, an assumption obviously adopted by South African elites, as evidenced in, for instance the ANC's 'Project Consolidate', launched in 2005, and the heavy emphasis placed on service delivery in the election manifestos of all parties that participated in the elections.

1 This approach was popularised through the work of Downs (1957).

2 See, for instance, the discussion of the 'sentimental vote' (EISA 2006, p 51) as 'being emotional and linked to party allegiance', and Giliomee & Simkins 1999, pp 337-54.

A second explanatory model is the party identification model, according to which voting behaviour is based on loyalty to a specific political party. The assumption is that people vote for the party they feel closest to and such party identification is part of a person's early socialisation. Partisan identification in liberal democracies was especially strong in the 1950s and 60s, with electoral behaviour characterised by stability rather than change. In recent decades liberal democracies have been characterised by 'partisan dealignment' (Ball & Peters 2005, p 173), strengthening the case of proponents of rational choice theory. However, in Southern Africa the party identification model seems to remain strong, as evidenced by the continuing strength of liberation movements turned political parties in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, and the difficulty of new parties or opposition parties in wooing voters away from the ANC, the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF). Horowitz (1985) argues that in deeply divided societies party support is based on these cleavages and therefore, in a racially divided society political representation and party endorsement take on a racial dimension. This is not meant, though, to imply that voting behaviour in South Africa is fully explained by this model, as is argued below.

The third model is the sociological model, which contains various theoretical divergences not discussed here. In essence, this approach emphasises the group membership of the voter and views social class, religious affiliation, regional and ethnic loyalties, and personal aspects such as gender and age as determining voter behaviour. The sociological model 'identifies correlations between social cleavages and voting behaviour; it does not claim that there is a causal connection behind those correlations' (Ball & Peters 2005, p 176) and considers aspects such as apathy, disillusionment and social capital³ (Russell 2005, p 557). It is from this model that assumptions such as the following are drawn, though the definition of these categories (eg, 'class') is important:

- The working class is more likely to support a left-of-centre party.
- Women tend to support right-of-centre parties.
- Older people tend to vote for conservative parties (conversely, young people will vote for liberal/radical parties).

The danger in accepting such assumptions as 'true' are clear: what do we make of a middle-aged working-class woman who votes for the PAC? Or a young man who votes for the FF+, as obviously happens regularly? And for South Africans,

3 Social capital is defined by Russell (2005, p 557) as 'the social glue that binds communities together'.

or people familiar with the country's history and context, such behaviour makes perfect sense. This is not to say that the sociological approach, or any of the others, whether singly or jointly, cannot assist us in understanding voter behaviour. All three are used in the following sections, although it is necessary to keep in mind that history and context often provide the lens through which these approaches can be usefully applied.

A last theoretical consideration that should be touched on briefly in order to provide an analysis of the LGE is that of the media, whose role in shaping or influencing voter behaviour is hotly contested (see, eg. Mondak 1995, p 325), as is the exact nature of media influence. The print media in most states show clear political biases, yet this does not necessarily mean that they determine voter behaviour – one could argue, for instance, that their reach is mainly limited to like-minded readers. Television and radio are considered to be more neutral, though this assumption is also debatable, especially in terms of ownership (public or private; if private, by whom). At least in liberal Western democracies there seems to be an increasing trend for young adults to favour the Internet as a source of information on political issues. It is probable that the news media may create the impression that they determine or influence voting behaviour as they are often considered to be the main source of political information for prospective voters, but being a source of information is not equivalent to having a marked influence on people's opinions.

ISSUES IN THE 2006 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

There can be little doubt that the main issue of the elections was that of service delivery, or, as some would have it, the lack of service delivery. There are a number of reasons for the priority given to service delivery in the run-up to the elections. First among these is the fact that President Thabo Mbeki himself identified 'delivery' as the main focus of his presidency. Second, and as a consequence of this, the ruling party made service delivery part of its political platform ('Project Consolidate'), with the majority of other parties following suit, though whereas the ANC promised to improve and continue service delivery (EISA 2006, p 27), opposition parties focused on the lack of delivery. A third reason was the large number of service delivery protests that erupted in late 2004 and throughout 2005-2006 according to the South African Institute of Race Relations (as reported in EISA 2006, p 79). Finally, local government is the focal point of service delivery, the tier of government closest to the people, and the one to which the country's Constitution (s 153) gives the task of playing a developmental role.

The media made the issue of service delivery a priority in their reporting during the run-up to the elections, though other aspects were also covered and at

least one television programme focused on municipalities with track records of successful delivery (EISA 2006, p 15). Given the extensive and often very critical coverage of service delivery by the media and the attention paid to it by all political parties, one would have expected to see some impact on voter turnout and behaviour, yet there does not seem to have been a correlation in the LGE, as will be discussed in a subsequent section.

In a survey on voter participation in elections prepared for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (2006) even this institution found it necessary to warn the IEC that 'the lack of service delivery might impact on voting behaviour... This issue needs to be monitored since it could escalate and impact on voter behaviour' (HSRC 2006, p 28).

A number of other issues also came to the fore in the elections, though they were all related to service delivery. Inept councillors and municipalities were often cited as problematic, as was the fact that councillors failed to consult with communities. Schlemmer (quoted in EISA 2006, p 79) claimed that more than 50 per cent of municipalities were 'dysfunctional' or 'severely challenged', and much mention was made of corruption (EISA 2006, pp 18, 94) and of the inability of municipalities to spend their budgets. Even the issue of demarcation was closely related to that of service delivery. In the case of both Marafong (Khutsong) and Matatiele the dissatisfaction of the communities related to their fear of being marginalised by their 'new' provinces (North West and Eastern Cape respectively, both of which are amongst the poorer provinces in the country, with weak delivery track records).

One can safely say that the media, politicians and the political elite in general adopted a rational actor model approach to the LGE, assuming or taking it for granted that voting behaviour would be determined by service delivery and related issues. However, and very importantly, this was not the case at all. The ANC again attracted the vast majority of votes (69%) and voter turnout was the same as it had been in the 2000 LGE, and 1 per cent lower than in the 1996 LGE. How does one explain this, and which of the models discussed above best explains South African voting behaviour?

EXPLAINING VOTER TURNOUT AND BEHAVIOUR

In his analysis of voter behaviour in the 1999 national elections, Friedman (1999) refuted the claim that voters based their decision about whether or not to cast their ballot mainly on instrumental criteria. Could one also, then, claim that rational choice theory does not explain the decision to vote in the 2006 LGE? Voter turnout was less than 50 per cent, which, despite the huge support for the

ANC translates into, roughly, 35 per cent support for the ruling party in terms of the number of eligible voters. The fact that service delivery (and related issues such as corruption and the inefficiency of councillors and councils) formed the focal point of party agendas and of the media indicates, at the very least, a general acceptance of instrumentality as being a determining factor. On the other hand, we have no empirical evidence either confirming or refuting such an assumption. However, if service delivery had in fact been the determining factor, one would have expected one of two scenarios: a very high voter turnout with voters casting their votes for opposition parties or spoiling their votes in order to register their dissatisfaction, or a very low turnout, either because people did not believe their vote would make any difference or as a sign of disillusionment.

Yet neither of these scenarios played out – in fact, as indicated above, the turnout remained much the same as it had been in the two previous LGEs, when the issue of service delivery was nowhere near as pertinent and salient as it was in 2006. Rather, it would seem that a combination of the party identification and sociological approaches would, to some extent, explain voter turnout and, by implication, the high percentage of votes for the ANC. Because of its history the ANC has long been the choice of the majority of people in the country, who happen to be overwhelmingly black and working class. This is not to deny that rationality played a role in voter behaviour – the number of service delivery protests points to a level of genuine frustration and grievance amongst large section of the citizenry.

But dissatisfaction has obviously not resulted in a large-scale or dramatic rejection of the voting process, or, for that matter, of the ANC. Booysen (quoted in EISA 2006, p 65) reported that in the Eastern Cape, for example, though voters 'were prepared to engage in protests they were equally determined to turn up to vote on election day'. Despite the fact that Port Elizabeth and East London were the sites of particularly serious protests (EISA 2006, p 18), the highest voter turnout (56%) was in the Eastern Cape, with 65 per cent of registered voters going to the polls in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Council (Port Elizabeth). Over all, the ANC increased its support from 72/3 per cent in 2000 to 81,74 per cent in 2006. Anecdotal evidence from other provinces also points to the fact that although instrumental issues are important to voters they nevertheless cast their ballots (EISA 2006, pp 59-60; 111), indicating a belief in both the importance of the vote and the importance attached to a specific party.

It is also interesting that in an area such as Khutsong, site of some of the most violent protests up to and including election day, the voter turnout was very low (in fact, the lowest in the province, with only 300 votes cast). Yet, it is worthwhile quoting a political analyst commenting on activities in the Khutsong area on election day (EISA 2006, p 68).

... a large percentage of [Khutsong] residents decided to participate in the election by not casting their votes and rather engage in sporting activities next to the polling stations; an act viewed by some commentators as a way of expressing anger, monitoring residents who defied the call not to vote by protesters, etc.

In other words, voters still interacted with the voting process. Khutsong also offers clear evidence of a form of identity politics: voters indicated dissatisfaction by not voting, but their anger did not result in a switch in party allegiance (see *Business Day* 6 March 2006). What their actions did indicate was a continuation of their protest against Khutsong's incorporation into North West *outside* of voting as a form of indicating protest/opposition and therefore in a sense a continuation of the politics of intimidation and boycott used to such good effect during the struggle against apartheid in the 1980s. Such actions suggest an attitude similar to that of Eastern Cape voters referred to above. Importantly, voters do not feel close to any other party, even though they might not or no longer feel that the ANC provides a political home for them (see Lodge 1999, pp 65-6).

The above observations confirm that party allegiance and sociological factors such as race, class and history (what Friedman 1999 calls 'identity politics') still largely determine people's voting behaviour. But does this hold true for the youth – the leaders, ruling elite and opinion formers of the future?

THE YOUTH VOTE

It is generally accepted that the voting turnout of the youth is always lower than that of other age groups (see Jennings et al 1997, p 14; UCLA 2004, p 1; Milan 2005, p 1; Russell 2005). Yet, given South Africa's 'history of youth at the forefront of political organization' (Banda & Faull 2004) one might expect South African politics to be an exception to this rule. What was the case during the 2006 LGE and what trends could be identified on the basis of these findings? In the last section of the paper we present an analysis of the youth vote, based on a pilot study⁴ conducted in March 2006 among a group of 516 students in the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Pretoria and supplemented by and contextualised within broader observations and analyses of the youth vote internationally and in South Africa.

Apart from testing the behaviour of 'tomorrow's leaders', who are, incidentally, the largest age group in the country (as is the case in most developing

4 The authors hope to expand the study during 2007 to include a broad representation of university students on several campuses in the country.

countries), we also hoped to gain some insight, however limited in terms of our sample, into aspects such as whether race and gender had any noticeable impact on voting behaviour, or whether rational considerations or party identification were a notable variable in explaining such behaviour. The University of Pretoria presents an interesting case as it has, on its main campus, both black and white students, but on its Mamelodi campus only black students, all of whom could be classified as studying at a previously disadvantaged (black) institution.

Youth apathy about participating in elections is a worldwide phenomenon. As several authors (eg, Milan 2005; Henn et al 2002) note, though, young people might not be interested in traditional methods of political participation, such as voting, but they often engage in politics through activities 'outside the ballot box'. This observation is confirmed by the frequency of young people participating in or instigating demonstrations, marches, rallies and riots, which belies the notion of 'youth apathy'.

Africa, and South Africa in particular, has a long history of youth engagement in politics, often with a crucial impact on the history of their countries. Nevertheless, there is a perception that in our present era 'low levels of civil involvement and political apathy remain a dominant feature among young people' (EISA undated). Despite the low youth voter turnout, youth participation in service-delivery protests was reported to have been high (HSRC 2006, p 30), confirming political activity 'outside the ballot box', though little, if any, data are available on the extent of such activities.

In an HSRC report for the IEC, based on a survey of 5 000 individuals and conducted in October 2005 on South African voter participation in elections, it was found that a large percentage (64%) of those in the age group 18-24 years were uncertain whether they would register as voters or did not intend to register as they 'were not interested' in voting (HSRC 2006, p 8). There was an increase in the participation levels of young people in the age group 25-34 (HSRC 2006, p 10). It was also people in the age group 18-24 who registered the highest agreement with the statement that they were 'strongly dissatisfied with local government' (HSRC 2006, p 23) and who indicated that they would not vote in the LGE because of a lack of service delivery. Two findings of particular concern in the report were, first, that a higher percentage of males than females participated in elections, though 54,75 per cent of eligible voters are women, and that there was a lower level of participation in elections among respondents at the post-matriculation level than in other groups (HSRC 2006, pp 9, 10).

According to a survey done in the Western Cape in the run-up to the elections (EISA 2006, p 23) up to 70 per cent of those in the age group 18-24 indicated that there were 'no good reasons to vote'. North West province recorded an 'extremely low' youth vote (EISA 2006, p 57) and a Free State report also mentioned high

levels of 'voter apathy' among students in Bloemfontein (EISA 2006, p 89), confirming the finding of Fourie (2006) that students were not interested in voting because they felt neglected by political parties. Similar apathetic attitudes were reported among students at Stellenbosch University (EISA 2006, p 97) and Ramoroka, in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* (3 March 2006), commented on the low youth vote in the Northern Cape, linking it not as much to apathy as to dissatisfaction with living conditions. Overall, a picture emerges of young people across the socioeconomic spectrum being either apathetic when it comes to participation in elections, or feeling alienated and dissatisfied with their circumstances.

Our findings both support and, to some extent, contradict these observations, and allow us to put some of these perceptions into a broader context and to provide some insights into a range of perceptions about the political attitudes and voter behaviour of young people. The discussion is confined to registration as voters, voting, party membership and identification, student perceptions of the most important issues in their home communities, satisfaction levels with local government, perceptions of whether things had improved for them and their families between the 2000 and 2006 LGEs, and preferences and support for political leaders. First, though, some notes on the methods employed.

Methods

Permission to conduct this pilot survey among undergraduate political science and sociology students in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria was obtained from the Dean of Students. Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty Committee before the research commenced.

A questionnaire was developed by the researchers and tested by asking undergraduate and graduate students to complete it. Changes were made to the questionnaire, based on the feedback obtained through this exercise. The questionnaire recorded biographical details and contained a number of questions about political preferences and participation. Most questions were closed-ended.

For this pilot study, given the importance of conducting the survey, which was held during April, as soon as possible after the March local government elections, we opted for convenience sampling. Students attending undergraduate lectures were requested to complete the self-administered questionnaire during a lecture. Foreign students were excluded from the study. If students had completed the questionnaire in another lecture, where registrations between the two subjects overlapped, they were asked not to complete a second questionnaire. Students were informed beforehand about the project and a second opportunity was provided in class for those who had missed the first lecture during which

the questionnaires were completed. Students were also invited to collect questionnaires from the respective departments should they not have made use of the two opportunities during lecture periods to participate. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Of a total of 887 students, 516 provided useable questionnaires, which translates into a response rate of 58 per cent. The response rate among first-year students, however, was lower (49%) than that of second- and third-year students (72% and 74% respectively), due mainly to poor class attendance by first-year students. As to race and gender, 40 per cent of the sample were white students and 60 per cent were black, while 35,5 per cent were male and 64,5 per cent were female. These statistics broadly reflect the demographic spread (both in terms of race and gender) in the two departments from which the sample group was selected,⁵ although in terms of white students there was a higher proportion of females to males: 70 per cent female to 30 per cent male.

Once the questionnaires were completed the open-ended questions were coded with the help of student assistants from the two departments. We report data obtained from this coding. Chi-square tests⁶ were used to determine statistical significance at the five-percent level of confidence, or lower.

Voter Registration

In all, 51 per cent of male students and 39 per cent of female students in the sample were registered as voters. The lowest percentage of registered voters was in the age group 18-21; by the age of 25 all students, with the exception of one 28-year-old, were registered, confirming that registration figures increase with age (as do voting and party membership).

The issue of non-registration needs to be investigated. South Africa adopts an approach similar to that of the US in placing the burden of registration on the citizen and, in order to register, citizens must produce a green bar-coded identity document. Students were asked in an open question why they were not registered as voters. The five most cited reasons were apathy, disillusionment, being under age, not being in possession of a valid identity document and administrative inefficiency. The latter two reasons should serve as a wake-up call to government and the IEC. The act of voting is, arguably, the most basic right in a democratic polity and, as Friedman (1999, p 215) argues, 'precisely because voting is an act

⁵ Percentages are rounded off for the purpose of reporting, except in the case of half a per cent. Therefore, for example, 60,6 per cent will be reported as 61 per cent, but 60,5 per cent will remain 60,5 per cent.

⁶ A chi-square test evaluates statistically significant differences between proportions for two or more groups in a data set.

of democratic identification, the democratic state, if it wishes to ensure its continued survival in robust health, has a core responsibility to ensure that this opportunity is available to all who might wish to take advantage of it'.

A concerted campaign might be necessary to encourage applications for identity documents and voter registration and to ensure that both processes are efficient and affordable. One way of doing this might be for the Department of Home Affairs and the IEC to provide opportunities for students to apply for identity documents and register as voters on campus in an on-going process, that is, once a year. In the case of voter registration this might lessen the pressure on the IEC to run registration campaigns as 'one-offs' in the run-up to elections. Similar processes might be as necessary and successful in rural areas and need not be confined only to the registration of young people.⁷

Apathy and disillusionment, despite being the main reasons cited for not being registered, might not be as serious as implied or often agonised about in the media, given the fact that student registration (and voting) increases with age. What is of concern, though, is the relatively low level of registration on the part of female students,⁸ though being under age (presumably at the time of voter registration in late 2005) was given as the second most frequent reason by females for not being registered. Government suggests a 50 per cent proportional representation of women in all spheres of public life and the 2005 South African Local Government Association '50/50 – get the balance right' campaign was aimed at the inclusion of more women in local government. The 50/50 representation was a major ANC election card, though it was acknowledged that it was a difficult objective to reach (EISA 2006, p 25) and many perceived it as 'undermining the democratic process' (EISA 2006, p 30). There were also reports of ANC male incumbents being dissatisfied with the 50/50 requirement as it would mean that many of them would lose their positions as councillors (EISA 2006, p 25). Over all the gender distribution of candidates remained the same as for the LGE held in 2000: 65 per cent male; 35 per cent female.

Two aspects of the difference between male and female registration (and voting) are important. This difference – 51 per cent male; 39 per cent female – is statistically significant, as is shown by the chi-square test at the 2 per cent level of confidence. First, though gender equality is firmly entrenched in South Africa's Constitution and though government is vigorously in favour of more/equal women's representation, there is still a level of resistance to women in positions

7 The EISA (2006) Election Report abounds with references to the lack of identity documents among rural citizens.

8 The difference between male and female students is statistically significant, based on a chi-square, with a confidence level of 0,02.

of authority, indicating that gender bias is not rooted out or changed only on the basis of legislating gender equality but needs to change at an individual and societal level and that such bias is often the product of socialisation.⁹ So, for instance, Adams (2006, p 5) reports:

But last month saw an outcry at the ANC's Eastern Cape provincial conference after delegates moved to scrap the 50 percent quote for women. It was said that the proposal was backed by a feeling that women needed to be adequately equipped and empowered before being elevated to positions of power [sic].

The belief that women should 'prove' themselves equal to men seems still to be deep-rooted, especially among men. It would also seem that men are apprehensive about a 50/50 system for another reason: the fear of being sidelined. ANC secretary general Kgalema Motlanthe (quoted by Adams 2006, p 5) remarked with reference to such a system that the ANC anticipated the possibility that 'many men would feel sidelined as more women were nominated to governance structures'.

Second, although government and some of the political parties (especially the ANC) emphasise women's representation they do not specifically lobby for the female vote (EISA 2006, p 41; see also Bentley 2004). So, despite legislative provisions and a much larger contingent of women in leadership positions in the country, 'ordinary' women do not yet make their voices heard, even though they are in the majority (54% of eligible voters are female). Both government and political parties need to target women as potential voters and not focus only on leadership representation.

Voting Behaviour

Among the sample student voter turnout was very low – 24 per cent – compared with the national turnout of 48 per cent; 30 per cent of male students voted and 21 per cent of females (reflecting to a large extent the difference between male and female registration),¹⁰ with 53 per cent of registered students having cast their vote. Again, voter turnout increased with age, as did voter registration. A rather obvious reason for the low turnout, apart from the fact that a large number

⁹ Similar biases, with governments encouraging female representation and males resisting it, either because they perceive women to be 'inferior' or a threat to their own positions, are to be found in many Southern African countries, for example, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe (see Schoeman 2004).

¹⁰ The difference between male and female students is statistically significant, based on a chi-square, with a confidence level of 0,05.

of students were not registered, was 'inaccessibility', that is, many students are registered in their home constituencies and therefore could not vote in Pretoria.¹¹

Yet, a breakdown of statistics in terms of race and, to some extent, socio-economic status, reveals some notable differences in student voting behaviour: at the main campus, 22 per cent of registered students cast their votes; at Mamelodi campus, where students are generally considered to come from a more disadvantaged background, 30 per cent voted.¹² The highest voting percentage was among white Afrikaans-speaking students: 32 per cent, slightly higher than the percentage for Mamelodi and considerably higher than the 22 per cent of UP main campus students and the 18 per cent for black African students on the main campus.¹³

This difference contradicts, for example, studies in the USA (see Ranney 1982, pp 175-6) which indicate that high socio-economic status groups tend to vote in much larger proportions than low socio-economic status groups. The US position (which is also reflected in other liberal democracies, at least in the developed world) is very different, though, from that of South Africa, where the vast majority of the electorate, and especially those who can now be considered to 'rule', are black. In Northern democracies the ruling elites are rich and white – in South Africa the ruling class is not yet distinguishable in terms of (high socio-economic) class, but very much in terms of race (see the discussion below on party support), though, as some writers point out, there is increasing evidence of a class cleavage within South Africa's voting population (see, eg, Garcia-Rivero 2006).

Furthermore, both the Mamelodi and the white Afrikaans-speaking students represent marginal groups in society. Mamelodi students come from a background of poverty, lower educational standards than their main campus peers, and a long history of political mobilisation and protest. The former Vista University¹⁴ was an important site of struggle during the late apartheid period (the 1980s) and failed, largely, to develop a university culture, serving as a point of political mobilisation by a strong Pan African Students Movement of Azania (Pasma) organisation with ties to the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and black consciousness groupings. Students exhibit a strong political awareness and

11 A similar situation was reported in Bloemfontein (EISA 2006, p 89).

12 The difference between the voting percentages in Mamelodi and on the UP main campus is statistically significant, based on a chi-square with a confidence level of 0,02.

13 The difference between white Afrikaans- and English-speaking students was not statistically significant, though.

14 Vista University's various campuses, spread over a large part of South Africa, were merged with technikons or historically white universities during the period 2003-2004 and the university ceased to exist.

protests occur much more regularly on Mamelodi campus than on the main campus and also tend to be more violent and disruptive.

This pervasive culture of protest and mobilisation among a group which has traditionally been excluded and is yet to reap the benefits of a post-apartheid society serves to explain their high voter turnout compared to that of their more privileged peers on the main campus. The political revolution in South Africa came from the bottom up, and these students represent those sectors of society that were instrumental in bringing about political change. It would seem that Mamelodi students are on average more politically aware than their black counterparts on the main campus, and share this awareness with white Afrikaans-speaking students, who are also a marginal group, but who come from a background of perceived loss of power, yet are socialised into (and used to) taking responsibility and participating in politics.¹⁵

Does this low turnout indicate a lack of interest in the election process? In an interesting survey on youth voting behaviour during the 1994 and 1995/6 elections, Jennings et al (1997) found that, as is the case in other parts of the world, non-voting decreased with age. They categorised the age group 18 to 35 as 'youth' and found within this group that 35 per cent of those aged between 18 and 20, 51 per cent aged 21-25, 61 per cent aged 26-30 and 66 per cent in the age group 31-35 had voted. Our study confirms this observation with respect to voter registration and voting and also confirms the assumption (Jennings et al 1997, p 11) that youth are socialised over time into participating in election activities and that there is little evidence to suggest that apparent apathy will be carried over into their adult lives. Of the age group 18-20 only 18 per cent voted; 41 per cent in the age group 21-25 and 54,5 per cent in the age group 26 and older (though the latter was a very small group). These percentages are statistically significant, proving that age does have an impact on voter turnout. Interestingly, there was also a statistical correlation between the percentages of students registered as voters and party membership, indicating that party membership has an impact on voter registration.

Party Membership and Identification

In all countries party membership is much lower than party support or identification and South Africa, and our sample, are no exception. Nevertheless,

¹⁵ Nevertheless, the relatively high voter turnout of white Afrikaans-speaking students needs to be further explored as the HSRC report (2006, p 11) mentions that people in the high living standard measurement (LSM) group (to which one can assume the vast majority of white people belong) tended to agree more than other groups that voting is 'pointless' and less than other groups with the statement that voting makes a difference.

though only 18 per cent of male students and 14 per cent of female students were registered party members (this difference is not statistically significant), party membership tends to increase with age: at first-year level only 13 per cent were party members; at fourth-year level this had increased to 30 per cent. There is, though, a marked difference in party membership between black and white students, with 21 per cent of the former being members of a political party and only 4 per cent of the latter, a difference which is statistically significant and indicates that race does have an impact on party membership. One explanation for this might be that a party such as the ANC has traditionally instituted youth representation on its various bodies, allowing the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) to play a significant role in the life of the party. As to support for a specific political party, the percentages were much higher, with 75 per cent of black students and 55 per cent of white students indicating such support.

In order to test students' identification with political parties, they were asked to rank a list of ten parties with '1' indicating the party they felt closest to and '10' the party they felt most distant from. All black students (including coloured and Indian) on both campuses listed the ANC as the party they felt closest to (with an average mean of 3,37). Black African students listed the DA in second place, followed by the PAC and the ID. White students felt closest to the DA, followed by the ID, ACDP and FF+, though there was an interesting difference between white Afrikaans-speaking students (DA, FF+, ACDP and ID, with the ANC in position 7) and white English-speaking students: DA, ANC, ID, ACDP, with the FF+, PAC and AZAPO in positions 8-10 respectively. There was no significant difference between black students on the main campus and those on Mamelodi campus.

These preferences indicate that white Afrikaans-speaking students remain more conservative than their white English-speaking counterparts, yet also more involved in politics, if measured against voting behaviour. But Afrikaans-speaking students clearly do not (yet?) feel close to the ANC (despite the 'merger' of the New National Party with the ANC in 2004) or to any other 'black' party, for that matter, testifying to their oft-reported feeling of alienation and exclusion.

Among black students the difference between identification with the ANC and identification with black nationalist parties was significant, with 83 per cent support for the ANC, as opposed to 19 per cent for the PAC and 7 per cent for the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo). This seems to confirm that support for the ANC remains strong (as discussed in the first section of this paper), despite indications of dissatisfaction with service delivery and other issues, and that opposition politics in the country will continue to play out within the ANC, as support seems to be determined more by party identification than by rational choice. Furthermore, there is a strong statistical difference between white and

black students in terms of party identification, implying that race also has an impact on the extent to which (young) people identify with political parties.

Community Issues

Given the fact that the LGE was fought, both by political parties and in the media, on the platform of service delivery, students were asked to identify the most important issue in their community. Many listed more than one issue, but over all, on the UP main campus, crime was considered most important, followed by basic needs and services and poor infrastructure, with social and moral issues and political maladministration in third and fourth positions. At Mamelodi campus basic needs and services and poor infrastructure were considered to be the most crucial issue, followed by crime and political maladministration.

A breakdown by race and gender gives a slightly different order, with black African students on both campuses indicating that basic needs and services and poor infrastructure were the most important issues, followed by crime. White students all indicated that crime was the top issue, followed by basic needs and services and poor infrastructure, with social and moral issues being third on their list. Male students placed basic needs and services and poor infrastructure in top position, followed by crime; female students listed crime, followed by basic needs and services and poor infrastructure, though there was a very small difference between the two groups with regard to these two issues.

It would seem, therefore, that service delivery, which includes both basic needs and services and infrastructure, features high on the list of youth concerns, but that crime tops the list, though this is due to the large percentage of white students who listed it as the most important issue. This choice reflects the fact that, historically, black students have been much more exposed to crime and have had much less access to basic needs and services than their white counterparts, and that crime is of high importance to women – understandably, given the very high incidence of violent crime against women in South Africa.

Students were also asked to what extent a range of issues had an impact on their decision about which party to vote for (the options made provision for issues of service delivery, but also for the performance of the party in the past, its role in the liberation struggle, and its promise to tackle crime and moral issues).¹⁶ Many students who answered this question were not registered or had not voted, but we took this as a general indication of an association of these issues with political parties and the political process. Over all, students listed, in order of preference,

¹⁶ Cross tabulations in terms of race and campus have not yet been completed and will be considered in an updated version of this paper.

the party's performance in the past as the main issue influencing their choice. Second was the party's promise to tackle crime (though male students added the promise to fight corruption). For female students promises to fight corruption and to create/provide more jobs were their third and fourth choices respectively. Relatively few students indicated that the history of their party of choice in the liberation struggle had an impact on their decision, though it is conceivable that this was conflated with their first choice of 'performance in the past'.

Given the widespread allegations of lack of service delivery, corruption, inept councillors, and so on (referred to as issues on the LGE agenda and discussed in the first section of this paper), it would seem that rational choice does not necessarily determine voting behaviour among student voters, but that party identification and other issues of identity remain the strongest pull factors.

General Satisfaction Levels

Voting behaviour and citizens' political participation do not necessarily reflect their general satisfaction levels. Students were therefore asked whether 'things have improved over the past five years for people like yourself and your family'. A surprisingly large group (70%) indicated that things had improved, attesting, perhaps, to youthful optimism, but also suggesting that evidence of apathy vis-à-vis registration and voting does not necessarily indicate pessimism and disillusionment with the 'new South Africa'. There was a fairly high correlation between those who felt things had improved and the reaction to the question whether voting made a difference, with 80 per cent of the respondents of the opinion that voting did make a difference. There is a statistical correlation between satisfaction and voting: those who indicated that things had not improved for them and their families in the past five years tended not to vote. This was the same for voter registration, with those who were not satisfied also more inclined not to register as voters and those who did indicate satisfaction and an improvement in their lives being more inclined to register.

The situation is markedly different in relation to local government, with only 28 per cent of students indicating that they were satisfied with the services provided by their local authorities and an overall perception that local government does not address effectively those community issues that students deem most important. Yet, as discussed above, there is no evidence that dissatisfaction directly influences the decision to vote, nor that it has an impact on party preference and identification. In short, as was the case in the general discussion on the LGE (in the first section of this paper), despite perceived problems with service delivery, maladministration and corruption, high levels of crime and other problems, overall support for and belief in the democratic process remain high.

Political Leaders as Role Models

A final element to which we pay attention is which political leaders are admired by young people, though one should not attach too much importance to 'admiration for a political leader' in terms of political behaviour. According to many studies (see Ranney 1982, p 170), party identification rather than 'candidate orientation' (ie, personalities) and other variables (as discussed in the first section) remain the most important factors influencing voting behaviour. Only 3 per cent of black students did not indicate any choice, though almost 10 per cent (9,43%, to be exact) of white students did not mention anyone, perhaps a further indication of feelings of alienation and, conceivably, the fact that they do not identify with any of the political leaders. In fact, if 'no one' were to be taken as a choice in terms of ranking, it would have occupied third place. This category ('no one') would have followed Tony Leon of the DA (11%) and been ahead of Patricia de Lille of the ID (8%), 'white rightwing leaders' (7,5%) and Thabo Mbeki (7,5%).

Both black and white students (50% and 45% respectively) placed Nelson Mandela in first position, confirming the continuing very high esteem in which he is held by the vast majority of South Africans, for whom he remains a moral giant and a symbol of what is most positive in the human condition. Compared with the support and admiration for Mandela, there would seem to be a dearth of leadership role models for the youth, as the large percentage difference between their first and second choices (Mbeki for black students, with 33% support and Leon for white students, with 11%) indicates. This difference is particularly marked in the case of white students. One explanation for the high support for Mandela could be that leadership in the post-Mandela era is still dwarfed by his presence and one may assume that this situation will continue into the foreseeable future.

As far as gender differences were concerned, far fewer male students than female indicated a preference or admiration for women leaders.

Black students had as their third choice a range of black political and ANC leaders (excluding black consciousness and PAC leaders), who had 15 per cent support, and again, there is a huge difference between second (Mbeki, with 33%) and third position and also a significant difference between third and fourth position (7% for women leaders, excluding Patricia de Lille). Fifth position is shared by Jacob Zuma, Trevor Manuel and a combination of Black Consciousness and PAC leaders (5% each), though support for Zuma was higher among male students (6,5%) than among female students (1,5%). No white student listed Zuma as a leader they admired.

This leaves a question mark over the alleged 'youth support' for Zuma, a perception largely created by the support he enjoys within the ANCYL. It seems to confirm that his support is confined to specific groupings within the ruling

alliance, and is not spread across the spectrum of voters or ANC supporters. This does not mean that Zuma is therefore not necessarily an important political player or a serious contender for the presidential candidacy in 2009 (see, eg, Monare 2006), but the leadership struggle will take place within the party and between it and its alliance partners, with little input from 'ordinary' citizens.

CONCLUSION

Rational choice theory does not seem to explain voter turnout or preferences in the LGE of 2006. Identity politics – party political identification, together with some elements of the sociological model (such as socio-economic status, race and gender), serves as a better explanation, also in the case of youth voters. If party identification remains so important it is clear that opposition politics (whether in terms of leadership/power struggles or political issues) will continue to play out *inside* the ruling ANC and that instrumental issues, such as service delivery, job creation, poverty alleviation, health care and other related issues and appropriate policy responses will be dealt with within the ruling ANC, with direction determined by whichever faction wins the battle for the soul of the party. As stated above, this is in line with the nature of liberation parties in the Southern African region, and is a product of the symbolic value entrenched in the name and history of the party.

In EISA's *Election Update* (2006) a number of analysts expressed views on 'challenges for the new local authorities' in each of the country's nine provinces and it is interesting to note that the majority of these observations revolve, once again, around issues of service delivery, without taking the implications of the voter turnout and increased support for the ANC (with the exception of the Western Cape) into account or in any way attempting to move beyond service delivery (and related issues) into serious or original thinking about what exactly might come out of and after the elections. So, for instance, Mashabela (EISA 2006, p115) in his analysis of the political implications of the election results in Limpopo (where the ANC gained the highest majority of votes of all nine provinces) in a rather clichéd manner warned that 'failure to deliver on the part of the ANC will have catastrophic consequences for democracy in the country'.

A notable exception is that of Hoeane (EISA 2006, pp 94-95) on the Eastern Cape and, to some extent, Mottiar (EISA 2006, pp 79-80) on KwaZulu-Natal. Both analysts confirm that though South Africa has no sizeable or genuinely effective opposition, opposition politics are being played out within the ruling party, and sometimes viciously so, in an environment in which the vast majority of the electorate seems to be reasonably optimistic about conditions in the country yet remains largely detached from active politics.

Against this background South African youth do not seem to differ all that much from their counterparts internationally: as they grow older, they tend to take their civic duties and responsibilities more seriously. What is different, though, and positively so, is the very high level of optimism of, at the very least, student youth, who, in large numbers, believe that voting makes a difference, that it is important to vote and that things have improved for them and their families in the past five years. We would concur with Friedman (1999, pp 220, 222) that 'democratic intangibles matter to citizens as much as material improvements' and that 'democratic enthusiasm' is still very strong, though this in no way suggests that material issues or the future nature of the ruling party should be taken lightly. What our analysis does suggest is that there is much less evidence than is usually assumed by the political elites and media that apathy is pervasive and that disillusionment and dissatisfaction will keep voters away from the ballot box.

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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEMOCRACY IN TANZANIA*

Ernest T Mallya

Ernest T Mallya is in the Department of Political Science and
Public Administration, University of Dar es Salaam
P O Box Ubungu, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255 22 2410357; Cell: +255 075 4306207; Fax: +255 22 2410084
e-mail: emallya@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world and, as is the case with other poor countries, there have been, for the past 20 years, internal and external efforts to try to free the country from the woes of poverty. There are many theories about what went wrong in Tanzania. These range from colonial domination – and its attendant problems of dependency and underdevelopment – to those which target capitalism and its ‘predatory’ nature, leading, among other things, to unequal exchange on the world market, world division of labour, and so on (Ellis 1983; Dutkiewicz & Williams 1987) as well as the ubiquitous globalisation which currently affects many aspects of life. However, not everyone believes that these theories provide a plausible explanation for what happened and why. Some see the problem as structural and also cite the inappropriate policies pursued by many poor countries, which were candidly acknowledged by the Organisation of African Unity (1986, p 17). Others (eg, Babu 1991, pp 31-4, Shivji 1974, pp 85-90) blame the way the policy was implemented. We will examine the causes of the predicament more closely and demonstrate how things are changing.

TANZANIA: A BRIEF PROFILE

At the time of the 2002 census the population of Tanzania was 34 million, about 24 per cent of whom lived in urban areas. It is widely held that 50 per cent of Tanzanians live below a locally defined poverty line while 36 per cent live in

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abject poverty (DFID 1999, p 1; URT 1999, p 7; Assey 1999, p 129). Studies indicate that poverty is likely to persist for the foreseeable future. Per capita income is about US\$300. Population growth is at 2.9 per cent, while the economy has been growing at about 6 per cent in the past four to five years. Of the rural population, which accounts for about 75 per cent of the total population, about 60 per cent live below the poverty line. In comparison, only 39 per cent of the urban population outside Dar es Salaam live below the poverty line.

Women, who comprise 51 per cent of the population, constitute 54 per cent of the economically active. However, women – and especially rural women – bear the brunt of poverty. Of the economically active rural women, 98 per cent are engaged in agriculture, producing between 60 and 80 per cent of all domestic food supplies (URT 1998, p 5). They also contribute substantially to cash-crop production. Despite this, they are severally disadvantaged (Assey 1999, pp 135-7; DFID 1999, p 2). Firstly, they do not have the same opportunities as men to access education. Secondly, there are outdated traditions that work against them. Thirdly, while they carry a heavy burden of production and reproduction in rural areas, their access to wage employment is very limited. Fourthly, they are underrepresented in decision-making bodies like Parliament, Cabinet and different committees, although efforts are under way to rectify this. For instance, since 2005 women's representation in Parliament through both constituency and special seats has been 30 per cent. Finally, many of them are ignorant of their rights.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF PARTY POWER

When African countries began to gain their political independence the state was seen and used as the main development agency. This was partly because dominant theories of the time advocated the centrality of the state in the development process. Moreover, during the struggles for independence nationalist leaders promised a range of economic and social changes which, given the circumstances, could only be achieved through the agency of the state. In most countries there were no indigenous entrepreneurs with enough capital to take on the challenges that came with independence. The state, therefore, for a considerable period, became an engine for development and the provider of goods and services. In this framework of provision in the newly independent states, political leaders became patrons, creating the networks of patron-client which are characteristic of African politics and which, to a large extent, have led to the characterisation of the African state as 'patrimonial' (Sandbrook, 1993).

To achieve the centrality of the state in the development process, policy-making in Tanzania was gradually designed to take a top-down approach. Few

people (those who made the central committee – CC – of the only party) were *the* policy makers. Deliberate efforts were made by the ruling elite to exclude citizens from the policy process by concentrating policy-making power in the hands of fewer and fewer people. This is attested by the ruling elite's move to shift policy-making power from the Parliament to the party's national executive committee (NEC), where the CC became the ultimate policy-maker.

The exclusion of citizens from the policy-making process took place on two fronts. Firstly, civic organisations and ideas that did not conform to 'party ideals' were suppressed. Secondly, national public-policy-making bodies were subordinated to party organs. Consequently, citizens lacked autonomous avenues for participation. The adoption of a single-party constitution and the creation of the party as the supreme organ of the state elevated party organs to national policy-making level. The Cabinet, which should have been at the centre of the policy-making model, as it is in the inherited Westminster model, was deprived of its power over policy-making and replaced by the CC. Parliament became a committee of the party, subordinated to the party's NEC. What should be noted here is that these structural changes placed policy-making power in party organs, thereby giving the party chairman, who was also the president, enormous powers (Mushi 1981). The dual structure gave the president a great deal of discretion to decide which organ deliberated any particular policy.

THE AUTHORITARIAN DEVELOPMENTAL STATE AND EXCLUSION

The consolidation and institutionalisation of the state and party supremacy was carried out under the banner of 'nation-building', thereby justifying the exclusion of citizens from policy-making (Holmquist 1983). These processes led to the suppression of civil organisations and their forcible affiliation to the regime. It would seem that the state was suspicious of factionalism and sectarianism, and particularly, organised disagreement, which might lay the foundation for the formation of strong civic organisations.

Civic organisations which were permitted to operate were required either to be apolitical or pro-party. As a result, there was little, if any, room left for structuring autonomous civic organisations that could provide channels for citizens to participate in the policy process (Goulbourne 1980; Rodney 1980; Miti 1987). By the time the Arusha Declaration was announced in 1967, ushering in the policy of *ujamaa* (African socialism), the party had monopolised the organisation of society in most spheres of life and potential pressure groups such as women, youths, students, workers, and so on, had been co-opted.

In these circumstances, the policy process became highly exclusive and secretive. All possible avenues for policy expression outside the party were

eliminated, undercutting not only policy critics but also citizens' initiatives and participation in policy-making. The ownership, censorship and monopoly of policy information by the state and its control over mass media worsened the situation. Most citizens were uninformed or ill informed and those who were informed lacked avenues for expression and participation in the policy process.

THE STATE UNDER FIRE

Like many other African countries Tanzania became a major recipient of aid after independence. Aid was needed by the new states to help them attend to the many demands placed on them as 'nationalist governments'. However, aid did not work as expected, a situation which has led to so-called 'donor fatigue' (see for example, Plank 1993) the perception of Africa as a 'bottomless pit'. Despite the quantity of resources directed to poor countries as a means of checking the appalling poverty in which many people lived, there were no tangible successes, and donors and development theorists began to ask questions and look for explanations, bringing the role of the state under scrutiny and resulting in the state being held responsible for the mess. The onslaught on the state as the prime cause of the problems was led by the international financial institutions – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – whose help was necessary for the revival of the economies of these countries. Later, the donor community as a whole applied coordinated pressure on aid recipients to agree to the prescriptions of the two institutions.

It was realised that one of the results of reliance on the state to solve development problems in Africa has been the sidelining of civil society and the private sector as players in the entire development agenda. Even where some economic development was achieved the state-centric approach to development had another weakness – the conception of the state as a vehicle for economic prosperity and the solution of problems of development.

Economic development does not automatically lead to human development. Per capita income, for example, is, to say the least, a misleading indication of the economic welfare of the population of a country (Handy 1995, p 221). The failure of the state to bring about development led to a search for other solutions. This is where the role of society and the private sector in the whole matrix began to take centre stage in policy as well as academic fora (see for example, Hyden 1992). The weaknesses of the state – particularly in its relationship with civil society in the whole process of societal management – came to the fore. The general conclusion was that there is a need for civil society to participate in the political processes that shape the social and economic status of a country; that appropriate interaction between state, the private sector and civil society was a possible solution to the problems African countries were facing.

It has been observed that the interests of state and society sometime merge and sometimes conflict (Nordlinger 1987). As Bratton & Rothschild (1992, p 264) observe, struggles between the two are always damaging. In the case of Africa it was concluded that the state had been more involved than it should or could have been; that the private sector was not given enough chance; and that civil society was virtually, if not entirely, sidelined. There was a need to balance the relations between these three sectors.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIBERALISATION

With the economy in the doldrums by the early 1980s the government of Tanzania held talks with the financial institutions, especially the IMF, and improvised recovery programmes such as the National Economic Survival Programme (NESP) of 1981 / 1982 as well as the home-grown Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1982 (Stein 1990, pp 8-9). These efforts were aimed at attracting more resources for the state, but they were not successful. The state wanted to mobilise more resources for its use, but, at the same time, it maintained its traditional control-cum-exclusionist stance. Concentration of power remained in place. Meanwhile, the financial institutions and other donors were pushing for both economic and political liberalisation. The government began to liberalise the economy in 1986 when the IMF agreed to a loan of SDR 64,2-million contingent upon the achievement of certain agreed performance benchmarks according to timeframes agreed by both parties. This was to be named the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP I).

There were several conditions, however, which the government initially resisted but ultimately agreed to. These included devaluation, liberalisation of crop marketing, liberalisation of export and import trade, and the removal of subsidies to peasant farmers. More reforms were to follow in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They included:

- 'rolling back' the state, in line with the World Bank's paradigm shift in the mid-1980s (see, for example, World Bank Report 1981 – 'the Berg Report');
- the termination of free services and the introduction of user fees in some social services;
- the creation of executive agencies and freezing of wages in the public sector;
- the retrenchment of public sector workers in an attempt to control the wage bill, and several other measures, including the consolidation of allowances / fringe benefits in salaries so they are also taxed and

- the sale of government vehicles to the officers using them so that they bear the cost of maintaining them;
- restructuring and refining the parastatal sector – a large subsidy consumer.

In short, from 1986 all aspects of the Tanzanian economy began to wear a capitalist face.

After the economic liberalisation came political liberalisation, in 1992. Again this was the result of several factors, including the 'wind of change' in Eastern Europe that began in the late 1980s, internal pressure from activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), pressure from donors and, according to Kiondo (1990, p 39), influence from within the only political party in which some members were pro-reform. After 27 years as a one-party state, the law was changed to allow the participation of other parties in the political system.

Hand in hand with that move, by this time NGOs and other civil society organisations were acting more freely than they had been. Organisations focusing on economic matters proliferated with the liberalisation of the economy. In 1993 some 11 new political parties were granted full registration. Others followed in subsequent years. Competitive politics within a multiparty framework was back in Tanzania. The first elections were the local government elections in 1993/94. The performance of the new parties was not impressive, but at least different opinions and a choice of candidates was now possible.

ENTER 'GOOD GOVERNANCE': THE RIGHT POLITICS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (URT 1995) states that Tanzania 'cherishes good governance' and the rule of law in the process of creating wealth and sharing benefits, as well as empowering people so they can hold leaders and public servants accountable. The problem of where to locate the new relationship between the state, civil society organisations and the private sector gave rise to the concept of 'governance'.

Governance is not an entirely new concept, but it was given a particular meaning in the context of the juxtaposition of politics and development in African states. Sometimes the qualifier 'good' is prefixed. The term gained currency in the mid-1980s when, for example, Dunn (1986) looked at good governance in terms of organisational effectiveness, with no particular emphasis on the philosophical orientation of the management of the state. The definitions of governance vary with the sources, but all, in some way, touch on certain key elements. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1997, p xi), for example, sees governance as:

... the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and mediate their differences.

Hyden (1992, pp 7-8) defines good governance as the conscious management of regime structures aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. The World Bank (1989), for its part, is in favour of good governance because it believes it will ensure the presence of human rights, check corruption, and promote democratisation as well as accountability. The Global Coalition for Africa considers the following to be elements of good governance:

- constitutional arrangements and human rights;
- primacy of legality and predictability of the law;
- responsible and transparent government;
- coherence of administrative institutions;
- openness and tolerance in the political system;
- participation by stakeholders;
- favourable climate for the private sector.

The Components of Governance

The concept and practice of governance encompass the processes and structures of society which guide political and socio-economic relationships while protecting people's values, beliefs, freedoms and security as well as guaranteeing the exercise of personal capacities that lead to a better life for the entire community.

Let us briefly discuss the three players in the new management of societal affairs under the governance framework:

- The state facilitates the presence of policy-making and implementation processes under a legitimate (state) authority. Expectations of this player include the presence of a stable political system, in particular a credible constitution which is acceptable to the majority and through which all the processes are regulated, making predictability possible. Such a constitution would provide for the democratic rights of the population, including provisions for human rights and freedoms, electoral processes, accountability mechanisms, allocation of powers to the agreed arms of government, and so on. The state should also provide an administrative system that

facilitates efficient policy implementation. This would include the presence of an efficient, independent, accountable and open public sector.

- Civil society organisations provide checks and balances on government power and on the private sector, but they can also contribute to strengthening both. Examples would include the help they can give in monitoring the environment, checking social and political abuse, running economic activities. When it comes to participation, civil society organisations become the training grounds for their members in the first place and, at a higher level, that is, in state politics, and so on, members become more confident and participate with greater efficiency and effectiveness. They speak for the vulnerable and the poor in society. In some cases (particularly those of cooperatives) they are able to help people overcome market failures and weaknesses.
- The private sector has assumed a greater role in the economies of developing countries in the recent past. With the state's ability to provide (often free) services to the population dwindling with time, the private sector – which, in many countries had long been suppressed – was considered the alternative-cum-partner in the provision of goods and services. Hand in hand with the arrival on the scene of the private sector is the reduction of state activity in the economy.
- This means, among other things, that there will be rationalisation, which usually comes with a cost in job losses.
- The private sector also brings improved technology, which, again, has its cost in job losses.
- On the other hand, production improves, tax revenues increase, and market distortions are eliminated.
- The state will have new challenges:
 - As the economy is opened up, competition becomes stiffer. Local enterprises and businesses will need support in order to become competitive on world markets.
 - On the local scene there will be a need to support formal and informal sector small businesses and enterprises by, for example, creating credit facilities. These are the sectors that will create jobs.
 - There will always be the need to take care of casualties of the reforms – the unemployed and unemployable, the untrained and those who fit nowhere, and so on.

- The state will have to monitor the relationship between the private sector and the environment. In many cases, the private sector has been found guilty of environmental degradation. The sustenance of the environment has become a necessary item on the agenda of good governance.

To sum up, it is obvious that the state, the private sector and civil society must cooperate if sustainable development is to be achieved. The claim of any of these to be able single-handedly to lead society to desired levels of development would be, as it has, until now, proven to be, an unrealisable objective. The state is required to safeguard law and order as well as to provide the required massive investments in infrastructure. The state must also provide the legal framework in which competing entrepreneurs and other members of society will operate. The private sector's innovation and ingenuity is required to alleviate the problems of joblessness, failures associated with the state, archaic technology and business techniques, poor quality goods, and so on.

WINNERS AND LOSERS: LEGITIMACY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

Legitimacy is a distinct form of political support that concerns evaluations of the state from a public or 'common good' perspective (Easton 1965, pp 278, 312). Gilley (2006, p 48) locates where and when a state can earn its legitimacy by saying that 'a state is more legitimate the more it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power'. Among the factors that give legitimacy to a regime are, according to him, good governance, democratic rights and welfare gains.

These may not be compatible bedfellows when it comes to a newly independent country. Independence governments needed to consolidate power by different means in order to be able, at least partially, to deliver what they promised during the fight for independence and partially to pander to the interests of the emerging elites. This would guarantee them the required legitimacy.

The result was that only welfare gains counted – democracy and good governance were not priority issues at the time. In this respect Tanzania was no different from many other new African governments. This is why some (for example, Kiondo 1990) describe the state in Tanzania as authoritarian, with economic and political control over civil society. The result was that when the economy was in trouble extra economic coercion was applied in order to appease the emerging elites while, at the same time, forcing the disenchanted masses to

go on producing – for local consumption and for export. The elite in this case was in the commercial sector as well as the bureaucratic bourgeoisie (Shivji 1990) and acted as a compradorial class for the former in its role of linking the state and international capital. This was the case when Julius Nyerere was in power.

After Nyerere resigned from active politics in 1985 economic liberalisation started in earnest. His successor, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, had to carry out the economic reforms his predecessor had denied Tanzanians. In 1991 he and his colleagues in the party issued the Zanzibar Declaration, which opened the doors for political leaders to participate in business – something that was not allowed during the Arusha Declaration years. The remarkably little private capital there was began to increase through private capital accumulation and a ‘nouveau riche’ group of entrepreneurs joined the political and bureaucratic elites in the race for wealth accumulation. These reforms further threatened the interests of the former elite who already felt that the redistributive policies followed under *Ujamaa* had dealt them a blow, as resources were being directed to the lower and less privileged sections of the population (Shivji 1990).

Examined closely, the reforms associated with cutbacks in public expenditure point to a situation in which the poor will suffer most. Given the corruption levels that prevailed in Tanzania those in government office, even if they were not in high positions, could make use of user fees and charges for services that had previously been free as a bargaining chip to exchange for the money to cover the expenses that will be brought about by the reforms. The most unlucky were the peasants, who had no say in their produce prices and nothing to hold on to to mitigate the effects of the reforms. In such a situation the emerging commercial elites and the political and bureaucratic elites found a means to survive at the expense of the majority peasantry.

The Lethal Alliances

An alliance between politicians and businesspeople resulted in the emergence of a group of rich people who indulged in conspicuous spending while the peasants languished in poverty thanks to the neglect of the agricultural sector by the Mwinyi regime. With the emerging patterns of accumulation, businesspersons started to seek political office, especially vying for legislative seats, while at the same time politicians launched a silent campaign to accumulate wealth either by cooperating with business or through graft.

The levels of graft, and corruption in general, were high by 1995 when the third-phase government (under Mkapa) came to power. As a result, the government was not collecting taxes, the public service work ethic eroded and government services were under funded. This led to the erosion of the legitimacy

of the government, a factor that was addressed by the Mkapa regime in 1996 through the Warioba Commission on corruption. The commission's findings and recommendations did not, however, affect the levels of corruption and little action was taken against corrupt officials because of the absence of hard evidence that could lead to successful prosecution.

At some point during the Mkapa regime lethal alliances were formed between the political, the economic and senior law enforcement elites in get-rich-quick ventures that turned into 'mafia-style' organisations. As noted above, politicians began to do business, business elites began to seek political office and law enforcement officers became trapped under the influence of the business elites into protecting both legal and illegal businesses. Graft was common in relation to public procurement contracts. During this time political clientelism intensified, more so when the ruling party – the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) realised that the opposition parties were not a real threat and it still controlled the politics but not the economy.

Big business openly supported the ruling party after it became disillusioned with the opposition parties after the 1995 elections. Although the control of the economy was ultimately in the hands of forces outside the government because of reforms and globalisation, the CCM was, indirectly, both powerful internal negotiator and kingmaker. In addition, the CCM controlled the government, which issued licences and permits to business. In some way, clientelism increased levels of corruption, as people sought favours rather than engaging in productive activities.

At the level of policy, the government tried to appease the population by making decisions about poverty reduction; the improvement of the education system, starting with primary education; and other programmes backed by the World Bank and bilateral donors. The gap between poor and nouveau riche was staggering. While some urban dwellers could afford only one meal a day, their compatriots were sending their children to study abroad, shopping abroad, getting medical treatment abroad, and constructing homes worth billions of shillings.

The unemployed youth, now exposed to Western life through the liberalisation of the media, and the conspicuous spending by a few Tanzanians created a prime breeding ground for criminals, especially with regard to the use of small arms in robberies and other violent crimes. Armaments were easy to obtain thanks to the conflict situation in the Great Lakes region which surrounds Tanzania and the almost daily influx of refugees into the country. While tax collection had improved tremendously during the Mkapa regime, this was not reflected in people's lives. One reason for this was the fact that the regime was focusing more on building the macro aspects of the economy, including infrastructure, so people could market their produce.

The legitimacy of the third-phase government was based on rhetoric and perhaps some success in putting macro-economic structures in place, promoting good governance, facilitating the democratisation process and fighting corruption. There has also been a strategy for the reduction of poverty, part of which involves channelling funds to villages and district councils, allowing people to plan and implement their development projects. However, when the current government began to act on issues like graft and the collusion between law enforcers and the criminal fraternity, the inertia that abounded in the public service, and the misuse and embezzlement of funds intended for local development, some began to question that legitimacy. Perhaps what needs to be said here is that legitimacy is also relative to the performance of other African governments. Tanzania has been praised thus far, despite some weaknesses in its political and economic structures and despite slippages that expose discrepancies between government policy and reality.

A general election was held in 2005 and during the first months in office of the newly elected government some of the alliances began to crack. The alliance between law enforcement agencies and the business community came under scrutiny. The police force was used by the business elites to protect illegal and legal businesses vis-à-vis the state (taxes), and also against the man in the street (compromised security). There was concern about the fact that some top police officers were part of this criminal world. On the other hand, it came to light that some political elites were engaged in graft through contracts signed during the third phase and beyond, for instance, in the mining, tourism, natural resources and energy sectors. Some of these contracts will now be reviewed.

CONCLUSION

The situation in Tanzania is the logical outcome of uncontrolled interaction between the political, bureaucratic and business elites. With the removal of the restrictions placed on politicians by the Arusha Declaration and by the Zanzibar Declaration of 1991 political elites started to do business and business elites became interested in politics with the two combining and complementing each other through reciprocal favours which put them in pole position to reap economic benefits. Since political elites require the support and actions of the bureaucratic elites to enable them to operate through government machinery it was no wonder that the latter had to be brought into the fold. In a situation where graft is common, the two must collude to make things work for them. And, where there is graft in government, the business elites are the likely suppliers of goods, giving out money in order to win contracts.

Politicians must use the bureaucracy to implement their devious plans. So the trio – business, political and bureaucratic elites – formed a web of actors through

which the allocation of public resources was skewed, so the legitimacy of the governments of Mwinyi and Mkapa was never either permanent or stable, it depended on 'bold' action being taken by the government at a particular time. Where does this leave Tanzania's democracy?

It would be correct, we believe, to talk of a situation in which the people are facing a 'democratic deficit' (ADB 2000), that is, a situation in which democracy is confined – at least at the local level – to franchise issues and electoral participation rather than expanding into the wider context in which the people participate in decision-making. The benefits people have expected from the multiparty political arrangements – such as a more robust Parliament, better-debated policies and more inclusion – are yet to materialise. Parliament has remained one-party dominated and, therefore, controlled. The same party also controls most of the local councils. In other words, the minorities (in terms of party affiliation) are yet to have a forum in which their ideas and preferences can be heard and acted upon.

Although the basic structure of a more democratic Tanzania is slowly being put in place by means of piecemeal constitutional changes, there is a need to develop a better performing economy to enable the economic (welfare) benefits to reach a wider community than they do currently. Since democracy consists of more than the franchise, if the current government is to maintain or increase its legitimacy it must address 'social welfare' issues, as proposed by Gilley (2006), in addition to those of good governance and democracy. This is all the more necessary because of the gradual emergence of classes in Tanzanian society. Without that attention the benefits of democratisation and good governance will be an illusion for the majority of Tanzanians.

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MEASURING THE SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IN NAMIBIA

Intrinsic or Instrumental?

Lesley Blaauw

Dr Blaauw is a lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative
Studies at the University of Namibia
Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: + 264 61 206 3339
e-mail:lblaauw@unam.na

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the notion of liberal democracy is inadequate in explaining the challenges faced by the Namibian government in its attempts to consolidate democracy. The contention is that political freedoms gained, such as free elections, a respect for human rights, and equality before the law are, inter alia, crucial to endowing the political regime in Namibia with legitimacy. For democracy to be truly consolidated in the country, however, these intrinsic elements must be complemented by an instrumental component. Simply put, political freedoms must be supported by economic delivery. Ultimately, the paper postulates that people measure their support and satisfaction with democracy holistically, hence the distinction between economic and political support becomes blurred.

INTRODUCTION:

CONVENTIONAL CONCEPTS OF DEMOCRACY

The notion of democracy is socially constructed. Although we may be able to agree broadly on the elements that constitute the concept we may not expect to reach agreement on its meaning and proper application in a lived social context. As such, the concept invariably invokes heated debate because it involves ongoing social and political processes which aim to maintain political rights and, at the same time, improve the socio-economic well-being of the people.

The latter is necessary because economic inequalities and severe poverty may threaten democracy, its institutionalisation and consolidation. The most basic requirement for a country to be considered a democracy is that citizens be

empowered to choose and remove leaders. Thus, democracy is defined as a form of political regime in which citizens choose, in competitive elections, the occupants of top political office.

Such a concept of democracy is, however, minimalist. Writing on Africa in general, Wiseman (1999) asserts that a minimalist concept of democracy includes the introduction of democratic constitutions, the formation of political parties, comparatively free media, and the conduct of elections in a climate that can be described as relatively free and fair. The introduction of competitive elections is a critical precondition for the establishment of democracy but the institutionalisation of electoral competition is insufficient to consolidate democracy. Simply put, these values are of critical importance for the transition to democracy, but inadequate for its sustenance. A maximalist concept of democracy should cater for dimensions beyond its electoral form.

This paper will focus on two definitions of democracy that are often invoked during debates on the subject in Africa in general. Given the fact that the concept of democracy on the continent is often reduced to elections,¹ a good entry point would be to define embedded liberal democracy.

Embedded liberal democracy as the defining element of electoral democracy consists of five partial regimes: 'a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability,² and the guarantee that effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives' (Merkel 2004, p 36). This definition refers to the intrinsic or political value of democracy. Such a concept is, however, inadequate in a number of respects. For instance, the political right of participation cannot produce political equality in the face of extreme socio-economic inequality.

To be sure, the unequal distribution of economic resources has a negative impact on democracy because it puts the poor at a disadvantage in exercising their civil and political rights. In this equation the definition of democracy does not bring into relief a fair distribution of economic goods or social justice. Thus, as a normative project the 'democratic deficit' of this definition of democracy lies in its inability to 'deliver' economic and social requisites. For democracy to become embedded in the lives of ordinary people it will have to be broadened to meet

1 Wolfgang Merkel (2004, p 34) asserts that 'Electoral democracy merely entails that the elections of the ruling elite be based on the formal, universal right to vote, such that elections are general, free and regular.' The problem with this concept is that the fairness of democratic elections is difficult to ascertain. Hence, the term electoral democracy is not particularly analytically useful.

2 For Merkel (2004, p 41) 'Horizontal accountability of power concerns the structure of power. The term includes lawful government action checked by the division of power between mutually interdependent and autonomous legislative, executive and judiciary bodies.' In short, it refers to a system of checks and balances among and between government branches.

their basic needs. In other words, we need an instrumental understanding of the notion of 'democracy'.

The notion of social democracy is particularly relevant to such an instrumental understanding. For democracy to be successful it must address the vexed question of economic rights and social justice. Simply put, democracy as a developmental ideology must provide for people's basic needs such as access to food, housing, medical care, and a clean environment. Ake (1993, p 241) argues that:

... for African democracy to be relevant and sustainable it will have to be radically different from liberal democracy... it will have to de-emphasize abstract political rights and stress concrete economic rights, because the demand for democracy in Africa draws much of its impetus from the prevailing economic conditions within. Ordinary Africans do not separate political democracy from economic democracy or for that matter from economic-well-being.

This implies that 'Democracy is depicted as a distributive socio-economic order and among its substantive benefits are growing economic growth, socio-economic equity, and the provision of public services' (Keulder 2002, p 5). In other words, the value of democracy is seen to be instrumental, because it concerns itself with, among others, issues such as the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of living standards. This reinforces the social right of democracy, namely, the right to physical well-being.

To achieve this, political freedoms must be supported by effective economic delivery. Van de Walle (2002, p 75) posits that '... strong economic performance facilitates peaceful movement toward greater democracy' (also see Bratton & Mattes 2001, p 451). Moreover, strong economic performance also increases the legitimacy of regimes and contributes to political stability. This reinforces the argument that 'successful development depends on a political and institutional environment that aligns the political incentives facing governments with the requirements of economic growth and improved social welfare' (Alence 2004, p166). A threat to sustainable human development, on the contrary, might occur 'where governments' incentives are at odds with developmental imperatives, policymaking and implementation are vulnerable to economically damaging opportunism' (Alence 2004, p166). This suggests that a broader definition of democracy should cater for both intrinsic and instrumental values. To achieve this, emphasis should not only be placed on the enjoyment of civil liberties, the state must also assume a particular developmental posture.

The resolution of the above apparently mutually exclusive projects has profound implications for the prospects of consolidating democracy in Namibia.

Resolving the discourse surrounding the intrinsic versus instrumental value of democracy requires first and foremost posing and answering the question: What does the notion of democracy mean for ordinary Namibians, and how does this correspond with the literature review? One of the ways in which democracies are evaluated is by looking at democratic attitudes.

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY IN NAMIBIA

A literature review of the concept of democracy in Namibia reveals a common thread: that the edifice of Namibia's democracy is underpinned by liberal precepts (Good 2001; Tsie 2001; Southall, 2003). As such, democracy is most commonly associated with procedures to guarantee political competition and political participation. Schmitter & Karl (1996, p 50) conceive democracy which caters for the above as 'a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives' (see also Huntington 1991, p 7). This definition suggests that democracy as a process finds expression in electoral politics. Bratton & Mattes (2001, p 451) remind us that 'Democracy ... is a system of rules and procedures by which leaders, groups and parties compete for power, and in which free and equal people elect representatives to make binding decisions.' State legitimacy, in this trajectory, depends on the consent of the governed. This suggests that the most basic requirement for democracy in Namibia is that citizens be empowered to choose and remove leaders. This represents the most common tenet upon which liberal democracy is premised.

Ake (2003, p 10) maintains that

Liberal democracy is markedly different from democracy even though it has significant affinities to it, for example, in the notion of government by the consent of the governed, formal political equality, inalienable human rights including the right to political participation, accountability of power to the governed and the rule of law ... liberal democracy focuses on the individual whose claims are ultimately placed above the collectivity.

This conforms to a minimalist concept of democracy and posits that the edifice of democracy is premised on rather fragile structures, such as free elections, multipartyism, and civil liberties. From this reading, the concept focuses on democratic equality. The future consolidation of democracy is thus viewed through an emphasis on the procedural and regulatory aspects of the conduct of elections.

Although the above definitions differ in scope and content a common thread underpins them all: 'Democracy is a form of regime whose legitimacy derives from the principle of popular sovereignty: Namely, that ordinary citizens are equally endowed with the right and ability to govern themselves' (Bratton & Van de Walle 1997, pp 10-11). The above illustrates that the concept and practice of democracy has a strong political component. What is lacking, as yet, is the realisation that if democracy is to have a positive meaning it must also have an economic content. The support for democracy in the above scenario is, arguably, premised on an appreciation of the political freedoms and equal rights it embodies in Namibia. Its meaning is thus reduced to how well and frequently elections are conducted. Political competition through elections, therefore, endows the Namibian government with a high degree of political legitimacy.

This legitimacy is reinforced by the views of ordinary Namibians of the notion of democracy. Successive surveys reveal that the meaning of democracy to ordinary citizens is based on an appreciation of civil liberties. A survey undertaken some five years ago (Keulder 2002) reveals that 21 per cent of respondents interviewed did not know the meaning of democracy. The same survey also suggests that the most common meaning attached to the concept relates to freedom of speech (19%).

These findings are in line with those of a much more recent survey (Bratton & Cho 2006) which shows that for most respondents in 2000 (67%) and 2005 (50%), the notion of democracy is invariably associated with civil and political rights. The meaning of democracy thus refers to a range of attributes that informs political practice. This posits that the meaning of democracy for Namibians is couched within a specific social and historical context, suggesting it is based on its intrinsic value. The exclusionary nature of colonial rule in Namibia means that most of the country's citizens conceived of democracy as ostensibly procedural and inextricably bound to the country's colonial context. Thus, a preliminary conclusion is that both the literature review and the perception of ordinary citizens point to an intrinsic understanding of the notion of democracy.

But post-colonial politics and the meaning of democracy in Namibia should not be reduced to elections and freedom of speech, among other civil liberties. Procedural politics embedded in regular elections is critical, but procedural arrangements are not sufficient to ensure that politics is conducted on democratic lines. This is because even 'Liberal democracy ... connects processes of participation and contestation to a particular kind of economy and a preferred state structure' (Joseph 1997, p 374).³ There is thus scope for continuous

3 In instrumental terms, therefore, a fair distribution of economic resources of society 'create a shield for democracy with regards to the rule of law and participation' (Merkel 2004, p 45).

contestation as we each advance reasons for our preferred concept, meaning and applications of democracy. The argument here is that if democracy is to be consolidated in Namibia, social advancement of people's livelihoods must also enjoy priority.

Henning Melber (2005, p 306) reminds us of the primacy of the above by pointing out that

the anti-colonial movement's proclaimed goals and perspectives were not only about fighting the oppressive and exploitative system of Apartheid colonialism. The liberation struggle was at the same time about creating conditions for a better life after Apartheid – not only in terms of political and human rights but also with regard to the inextricably linked material dimensions to human well being and a decent living of those previously marginalised and excluded from the benefits of wealth created (to a large extent by them).

Not surprisingly, Keulder (2002) notes that Namibians also have an instrumental understanding of democracy informed by, *inter alia*, socio-economic equity and the provision of public services. To illustrate, more than 90 per cent of respondents to Keulder's survey viewed basic necessities such as shelter, food and water for everyone, jobs for all, and equality in education as being as important as political goods. These findings suggest that the substantive dimensions of democracy are as important as its procedural ones.

What was required at independence and beyond was a process of socio-economic transformation. Government's ability to meet the social needs of citizens by providing adequate education is demonstrated by the funds committed to education. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report (2004, p 8) states that

Namibia is among the countries in the world that spend the highest share of GDP on public expenditure on education. Since independence, the education sector has consistently received the largest share of the total national budget, currently around 20%, relatively unchanged since 1990/91.⁴

⁴ This section of social services enjoyed special attention after independence for historical reasons. Tom Lodge (1998, p 27) asserts that 'In the northern homeland reserves before independence government service in the 1970s was lower than in relatively much poorer African countries such as Tanzania: in 1975 only 3,645 Africans were enrolled at secondary schools.' It is thus not surprising that 93% of respondents viewed access to and equality in education as informing their understanding of democracy (Keulder 2002).

In addition, the Namibian government has made significant strides in its development efforts. It has expanded social services and undertaken considerable land distribution. These efforts play a defining role in determining support for democracy in Namibia and its sustenance.

SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IN NAMIBIA

A survey conducted by Keulder (2002) revealed that the majority (57%) of respondents believed that democracy was preferable to any other kind of government (see also Table 1).

Respondents also rejected the concept of one-party rule (37%), military rule (34%) and presidential dictatorship (34%) and believed that the current government should be given time to right the wrongs of the past. The aforementioned is borne out by the degree of economic patience accorded to government by respondents. Bratton & Cho (2006) illustrate that 52 per cent of respondents are willing to endure current hardship for the sake of future economic improvement.

Table 1
Support for Democracy

Percentage of respondents who believed that
'Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government'

2000	2002	2005
58	54	57

Source: Bratton & Cho 2006

Support for democracy is embedded in Namibia's colonial history though colonialism created a paradox: conferring democracy on the white minority while disenfranchising the majority of the populace. Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van der Walle (1997, p 81) assert that in colonial Namibia

settlers reproduced functioning democracies within their own microcosmic enclaves, with features like elections, leadership turnover, loyal opposition, independent courts, and some press freedoms, all reserved exclusively for whites. Thus at the same time that they permitted quite far-reaching measures of political com-

petition, these regimes proscribed access to the political process by limiting participation.

(See also Du Pisani 2000)

What was, therefore, needed in the aftermath of independence was to expand the political field by allowing, in this instance, the majority the opportunity for political participation. The expansion of the political field is provided for in the Constitution.

Democracy in Namibia is underpinned by the supremacy of the Constitution, commitment to the rule of law, the separation of powers, and a comprehensive and enforceable Bill of Rights, which contains internationally recognised fundamental human rights and freedoms (Erasmus 2000). Table 1 shows that more than 50 per cent of respondents view democracy in Namibia as the best type of government (Bratton & Cho 2006). By and large, however, the volatility in the support for democracy means that the process of democratic consolidation remains incomplete and fragile. For Keulder & Wiese (2005, p 3) this unpredictability 'suggests that a significant proportion of Namibians do not support democracy for its intrinsic value, but rather that their support is more instrumental'.⁵ This again produces a caveat: a breakdown of Namibians' support for democracy reveals that political goods, rather than economic conditions, underpin their preference.

Support for elements of democracy again illustrates that choosing leaders through free and fair elections (82%) and a general preference for democracy (56%) (Keulder & Wiese 2005, p4) means that political legitimacy is not under threat. On the contrary, it is reinforced by the acceptance and support of democratic rules and institutions. However, the delivery of civil and political rights is not sufficient to sustain the support for democracy or its consolidation. What these variations illustrate is that the Namibian state must play a more active developmental role.⁶ This means expanding state reach throughout the country.

Since independence, the Namibian government has extended social security benefits to all employees, expanded the civil service to absorb those who returned

⁵ This downward trend in support for democracy based on civil liberties is illustrated by the fact that those liberties were high on the priority list of respondents in 2000 (67%), whereas in 2005 only 50% based their support for democracy on these liberties (Bratton & Cho 2006). A two-pronged explanation may shed light on this shift. Firstly, the downward trend may suggest that people in general have now accepted and support democratic rules and institutions. This has a positive bearing on legitimacy and democratic consolidation. Secondly, it may show that social rights and other economic considerations are now seen as being as important as political rights.

⁶ Conceptually a developmental state is not only one that can foster growth and development but also 'one whose ideological underpinnings are developmental and one that seriously attempts to deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of economic development' (Tsie 2001, p 65; Ajulu 2001; Tsie 1996).

from exile, and has resettled 16 000 families on state-purchased land (Lodge 1998).⁷ Moreover, it has enacted legislation eliminating legally sanctioned gender inequalities, such as the Married Persons Equality Act of 1996, maternity leave, divorce, and abortion, among others (Bauer 2001). The provision of these social rights will certainly enhance support for any democratic polity. However, conditions that may contribute to deligitimising the democratic system and support for democracy will have to be addressed.

A UNDP country report for 2004 (p 10) notes that 'In 2003, one-third of the population was identified as in need of humanitarian food assistance and the most recent figures show that 40% of Namibians are living below the income poverty line' (see also NHIES 2004).

The threats to the twin objectives of deepening democracy and achieving sustainable human development in contemporary Namibia (UNDP 2004, p 53) are:

- the high prevalence of HIV and the multiple impacts of AIDS;
- increasing household food insecurity and deepening income poverty and disparities;
- weakening capacities for governance and for delivery of social services.

The UNDP Report (2004, p 54) notes that: 'HIV / AIDS is increasing the vulnerability of households, eroding institutional capacities and is Namibia's most pressing threat directly to the fulfilment of rights to life and health and indirectly to the status of all human rights in the nation'. Other threats to sustainable human development and, by extension, democracy, are increasing household food insecurity and deepening poverty and income disparities. The report cautions that these elements 'could emerge as a threat to Namibia's stability, particularly in the light of AIDS-related worsening of poverty and the historically inequitable distribution of land'. Moreover, ensuring that sustainable human development is achieved demands that 'Efforts must be made to increase household income and agricultural productivity within the context of the AIDS-weakened capacities of families, communities and institutions' (UNDP 2004). These findings correspond with the perception that unemployment (65%) and food security (53%) remain the most pressing economic concerns (Bratton & Cho 2006). This has implication for sustainable human development and could potentially erode democratic gains.

7 More recent figures suggest that the government has been able to settle 1160 families on 66 farms (Werner 2002).

Addressing these will not only increase the support for democracy but will also improve the Namibian government's political legitimacy. The question to pose is thus: Can the support for democracy be equated with satisfaction with democracy in Namibia?

SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY

Table 2 shows that there has been a significant increase in satisfaction with democracy in the three years 2000, 2002 and 2005.

Table 2
Satisfaction with Democracy

	2000 %	2002 %	2005 %
Overall, how satisfied are you with the way in which democracy works?	64	69	69

Source: Bratton & Cho 2006

Satisfaction with democracy is contingent on the promotion of both intrinsic and instrumental values. Simply put, ordinary people will express satisfaction with a government if they believe it is capable of executing its appointed tasks. For instance, government needs to be able to provide adequate public services, but may also be capable of protecting both the democratic polity and the physical safety and security of its citizens. The ability of the state to perform these multiple tasks is dependent on the trust citizens have in government, in other words, confidence in state institutions. This is because institutions shape the goals that political actors pursue. Tom Lodge (1998) postulates that the goals states pursue are, in turn, influenced by, *inter alia*, social penetration, which is intimately related to state reach. State reach in this context is defined as

the extent to which a central administrative elite succeeds in incorporating an entire geographical area within territorial boundaries ... it is measured ... in terms of the presence of an institutional infrastructure of armed outposts, administrative offices, or service centres.

Bratton 2004, p 3

In simple terms, social penetration refers to the ability of state institutions to link citizens to the state. This not only means that political institutions should be

responsive to citizens' needs, but that citizens' political attitudes should reflect their trust in government institutions.⁸

In Namibia, the perception of government's capacity to solve problems has shown a slight increase from 24 per cent in 2002 to 36 per cent in 2003 (Keulder & Wiese 2005). Over all, however, the low percentage of respondents who express confidence in government institutions suggests poor levels of satisfaction with the political regime as a whole. This reading represents, however, an incomplete picture of the degree of satisfaction the political regime in Namibia enjoys. To measure this level of satisfaction one must look at the delivery of political goods.

As illustrated elsewhere, both the understanding of and support for democracy in Namibia is shaped by the extent to which government can guarantee a basket of political commodities. Indeed, in Namibia, the delivery of political goods is essential to shaping the perception that citizens are satisfied with the political regime as a whole. Satisfaction with democracy can be measured by looking at political freedoms, elections, and the performance of elected officials. To reinforce the contention that instrumental considerations play a defining role in measuring the support for democracy in Namibia, it is crucial to look at political freedoms. A notable element of the survey results is that 'Most Namibians seem to think that the current regime is better at providing and securing basic political liberties: freedom of speech (92%), freedom to join political organisations (92%), and freedom to vote (91%)' (Keulder & Wiese 2005, p 8). These results suggest that Namibians think of government performance first and foremost in political terms. This does not suggest that instrumental considerations are not important. Indeed, economic growth and improved social welfare, two of the variables used to explain how satisfied people are with the delivery of economic goods, have considerable implications for the stability and quality of a democracy.

Namibians are increasingly satisfied with macro-economic conditions in the country. In 2000, 42 per cent indicated satisfaction and the level rose to 57 per cent in 2002 and 59 per cent in 2005 (Bratton & Cho 2006). These positive ratings are reinforced by the evaluation of the way in which government is managing the economy. Keulder & Wiese's survey results (2005, p 15) show that 'The areas in which government's performance is seen to have increased the most from 2002 to 2003 are the following: narrowing the income gap (7 per cent), improving basic health care services (4 per cent) and addressing educational needs (4 per cent).' The above findings suggest that government has been able to improve its ability

8 Satisfaction with democracy is undermined by official corruption. In Namibia, the perception that corruption is increasing is confirmed by the upswing in levels of corruption since 2000. Survey results show that perceived corruption increased from 25% in 2000 to 30% in 2002 and 35% in 2005 (Bratton & Cho 2006). While this does not necessarily have an impact on satisfaction with democracy, it does have a bearing on state legitimacy.

on the economic management front, while provisions for the social sector seem to reinforce the contention that support for democracy is also based on instrumental considerations. Moreover, it also illustrates that satisfaction with democracy, in instrumental terms, is ostensibly measured by reference to the condition of the national economy.

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that, at face value, intrinsic support for democracy in Namibia superseded instrumental considerations. Indeed, the provision of political goods such as civil liberties, voting rights, and equal treatment under the law, influences the perception that citizens are satisfied with democracy. This implies that government performance is invariably measured by the delivery of political goods. This observation posits that the delivery of political goods is crucial for the consolidation of democracy in the country. In simple terms, the regime in Namibia has been able to legitimate itself by delivering political goods. Simply put, the enjoyment of civil liberties remains a critical determinant of satisfaction with and support for democracy.

However, if it is true that people measure government support holistically, then it is critical that we also review economic explanations of satisfaction with democracy. Such explanations are generally reduced to the condition of the national economy. So far, Namibians are positive about the economy, but the government faces a number of developmental challenges. Namibia's development continues to be undermined by, among others, the high prevalence and multiple impact of HIV/AIDS, increasing household food insecurity, deepening poverty, and a deteriorating capacity for governance and delivery of social services.

The above illustrates that the consolidation of democracy in Namibia is threatened and hampered by persistent poverty, unemployment and the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Thus, when analysing the state of democracy in the country, the focus should be on the prospects for consolidation rather than the mere physical attributes of the democratic regime. This is not to say that these attributes are unimportant in themselves, but what must be explained is how they contribute to deepening democracy.

Ultimately, therefore, support and satisfaction with democracy is and should be measured by satisfaction with key aspects of the elected regime. The above illustrates that support for democracy as a preferred system of government supersedes satisfaction with the way it actually works. More fundamentally, it illustrates that intrinsic support for democracy does not necessarily exceed instrumental considerations. This reinforces my contention that in Namibia government performance is viewed in holistic as opposed to intrinsic or instrumental terms.

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FOUNDING ELECTIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

A Highly Fragmented Party System

Patrick Vander Weyden

Dr Vander Weyden is Vice-President of the Institute of Political Sociology
and Methodology, Catholic University of Brussels

Vrijheidslaan 17 1081 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 412 42.64

patrick.vanderweyden@kubruksel.ac.be

ABSTRACT

In this paper we analyse the embryonic party system in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a result of the legislative and provincial elections. Although a strong electoral system (with small district magnitudes) was implemented, the party system fragmentation at national as well as at provincial level is very high. As illustrated in this paper, strong electoral systems (small district magnitudes) generate different effects in emerging democracies from more traditional democracies. The main reason for this difference is the absence of structured political party organisations. A democratic system needs some fragmentation to function, but a highly fragmented system runs the risk of not functioning at all. Thus we plead for investment in structuring the party system by developing cross-district party organisations and stimulating collaboration and cooperation between the numerous existing parties and independent politicians.

INTRODUCTION

Organising elections in a country the size of Western Europe, with little infrastructure and few tarred roads, is an enormous task. According to the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement, ratified by a constitutional referendum, the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were to be held by 30 June 2006 at the latest, but the deadline was extended to 30 July because of the exceptional difficulties involved in organising them.

The Global Agreement entrusted the organisation of the elections to the Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI), led by Reverend Apollinaire Malu Malu. Between June 2005 and February 2006 the CEI focused on voter registration. Despite many difficulties it managed to register more than 90 per cent of the estimated electorate (about 25,6-million voters), which can be considered a notable success. On 18-19 December 2005 in a Constitutional Referendum 83 per cent of voters approved the new Constitution, which was duly promulgated by President Joseph Kabila on 18 February 2006. Thereafter, the CEI began to organise the provincial, legislative and presidential elections for 30 July. It registered 33 candidates for the presidential election, and 267 parties and more than 9 500 candidates for the parliamentary and provincial elections, of whom about 770 were independent candidates, not affiliated to a political party.

The high number of participating candidates and political parties is typical of founding elections in democratising countries. As Bogdanor (1990, p 288) states:

at a founding election, party identification is likely to be weak ... and public opinion highly volatile. It is probably not until there have been at least two further free elections held under normal conditions that one will be in a position to make meaningful generalizations about the electoral process.

Although founding elections are only a first step in a democratisation process they are important because they form the basis of an emerging party system. Between the founding and second elections political groups will split or different political parties (or independents) will merge and form new political parties. Elected candidates and political parties represented in parliament at the founding elections have an advantage over non-represented political groups and politicians. So describing and analysing the emerging party system at founding elections is an important academic activity to highlight potential future difficulties and opportunities. (Founding) elections take place within a set of electoral rules. Political scientists have done abundant research into the causal relation between electoral systems and party systems. If we look to the effects of electoral systems on the number of parties (as the main feature of a party system) the evidence that in first-past-the-post (FPTP) systems the party systems are less fragmented seems quite convincing (Lijphart 1994). Within proportional representation (PR) systems electoral formulas with the largest remainders cause more fragmentation than systems with the highest averages. For example, a Hare quota system with largest remainders (as used in the DRC) causes a more proportional result than the D'Hondt system (a system with highest averages, as used, for example, in Cambodia), keeping the district magnitude constant (Rae 1971).

Apart from the impact of the electoral formula, research is paying increasing attention to the effect of the second dimension of electoral systems, namely the number of seats to be distributed, following Taagepera & Shugart (Cox 1997; Gallagher 1991; Taagepera & Shugart 1989). Empirical results show that the lower the number of districts, the smaller the number of parties.

The main problem with this empirical and theoretical research is that the main conclusions are based on traditional democracies. Although some research has been done into the consequences of electoral systems in new democracies (Birch 2005; Moser 1999; Reilly & Reynolds 1999; Reynolds 1999, 2002), there are many gaps to be filled.

When emerging and traditional democracies are compared major differences are evident. The traditional conclusion that FPTP results in a two-party system or that a FPTP system has a strong reductive effect on the number of parties in the party system seems not to hold in new democracies. On the contrary, FPTP systems in new democracies often result in a highly-fragmented system (Birch 2005; Moser 1999). The main reason for this is the absence of well-organised political parties. According to Moser (1999):

Even if the conditions are favorable for the establishment of two-candidate races at district level, the projection of this bipartism to the national level is not assured. Rather it depends on the ability of parties to unite prominent elites in single nationwide party organizations. If this is not accomplished the two candidates produced in plurality elections at the district level may belong to a multitude of different parties across the country ... Most importantly, the lack of well-established political parties undermines the ability of voters and elites to behave strategically. Parties serve as the primary mechanism to channel and aggregate public opinion, while electoral systems are a secondary mechanism influencing the number of viable political parties ... In weak party systems, the absence of party identification leaves voters with no cues, other than the personal characteristics of candidates and patronage, as to how to cast their votes. Due to the transitory nature of party organizations in the most unstable new democracies, parties continually enter and leave the scene and provide no continuity between electoral periods. Such conditions provide little opportunity for voters to cultivate lasting preferences for one party or another, leaving most uncommitted.

An important point of discussion in research on the effects of electoral systems, and related to the above-mentioned differences between emerging and well

established democracies is the level of analysis. Duverger's dependent variable, the number of parties, is a variable at national system level (Duverger 1951 [1976]). However, the mechanical as well as the psychological effects occur first and foremost at district level, where votes are converted into seats. It is at this level that strategic or non-strategic voting behaviour and strategic party elite behaviour in relation to the electoral system is particularly relevant.

Research in the line of Duverger has mainly focused on the national level by, for instance, analysing the relationship of average district magnitude to national party systems (Blais & Carty 1991; Bogdanor & Butler 1983; Coppedge 1997; Farrell 1997; Lijphart 1994; Taagepera & Shugart 1989). Although theoretically the problem is acknowledged (Cox 1997; Leys 1959; Sartori 1976, 1994; Taagepera & Shugart 1989) very few studies work with electoral district data (Cox 1997; Shugart 1985). Yet, by carrying out analyses at district level we gain a theoretically and methodologically more accurate insight into the mechanical functioning of electoral systems (electoral formula and district magnitude). Moreover, 'interfering' variables, which are beyond the scope of the definition of electoral systems but which can play a role when analyses are conducted at national level, are excluded. An example of such an 'interfering' variable is *'malapportionment'*. *Malapportionment* occurs when geographical units (electoral districts) are allotted a share of seats not equal to their share of the population (Monroe 1994). That is why we believe that in the field of electoral studies and to understand better the mechanical and psychological effects in traditional as well as in emerging democracies the empirical analysis should start at district level.

The central hypothesis to be tested in this paper is whether a strong electoral system in an emerging (electoral) democracy results in a highly fragmented party system. Small district magnitudes (defined as the number of seats to be distributed in a district) and a high number of electoral districts can be considered characteristics of a strong electoral system. To test this hypothesis the paper consists of three parts. Firstly, we will explore the characteristics of the electoral system used during the 2006 legislative and provincial elections in the DRC. Secondly, we will describe in general the legislative and provincial electoral results and parties followed by a more mathematical description of the party system (in casu the number of parties) at national, provincial and district level. And finally we will explore the relationship between district magnitude (as a dimension of electoral systems) and the effective number of parties.

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The electoral system is regulated by the Electoral Law of 9 March 2006 (Loi n°06/006), which encompasses presidential, legislative, provincial, and local elections.

The presidential elections are held by direct popular vote, with the country as one constituency (Art 100). If no candidate obtains more than 50 per cent of the vote in the first round a run-off election is held between the two leading candidates from the first round. The DRC president is elected for a five-year term and can be re-elected once (Art 101).

For the distribution of the 500 seats in the Congolese Parliament (Assemblée Nationale), the country is divided into 169 districts and two electoral formulae are used (Art 115). The district magnitude for 62 districts is one, with a FPTP system applied (Art 118, 1). For 107 electoral districts with a district magnitude of more than one, a proportional representation (PR) system – the Hare quota with largest remainders – is used (Artss 118, 2 and 119). For these 107 PR districts, the district magnitude ranges from 2 to 17, with an average of 4,1 and a median of 3. Taking into account all districts, the mean district magnitude is 2,94; the median magnitude is 2. More than 75 per cent of the districts have a magnitude of less than or equal to 3 (see Table 1).

The same electoral formulae are used for the provincial elections. The district magnitude forms the same pattern, although the mean magnitude is a little higher (3,28) and the median magnitude is 3 (see Table 1).

Table 1
District Magnitude (M), Parliamentary and Provincial Elections

M	Parliamentary Elections		Provincial Elections	
	%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
1	36,6	36,6	18,2	18,2
2	22,6	59,1	27,8	46,0
3	17,1	76,2	18,2	64,2
4	8,5	84,8	13,6	77,8
5	4,3	89,0	8,5	86,4
6	1,2	90,2	4,5	90,9
7	1,8	92,1	5,7	96,6
8	2,4	94,5	1,1	97,7
9	1,2	95,7	0,6	98,3
10	0,6	96,3		
11	1,2	97,6	0,6	98,9
12			0,6	99,4

13	0,6	98,2		
14	1,2	99,4	0,6	100
15				
16				
17	0,6	100		
Total	100		100	
Mean M	2,94		3,28	
Median M	2,00		3,00	

Still, compared to other countries, the structure for the provincial elections is characterised by numerous very small districts. Thus we can conclude that the electoral system used in the DRC will cause strong mechanical effects.¹

In addition to the electoral system and district magnitude it is important to mention that elections are conducted according to an open list system, allowing voters to vote for one candidate only. Candidates for the Assemblée Nationale can present themselves either as an independent candidate or as a candidate for a political party (Art 12). To determine which candidates obtain the seats won by their party, candidate votes are aggregated by party to calculate the number of seats for each party. Once this calculation has been made, seats are allocated to the candidate(s) with the highest number of votes for each party (Art 119).

DATA COLLECTION

For parliamentary as well as provincial elections the territory was divided into electoral districts. As our analysis is concentrated on the district level we collected our data at district level and in as much detail as possible. This meant including in our database the number of votes won by each party, regardless of the strength of the party.

We were able to download detailed provincial election results from the website of the Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)(<http://www.cei-rdc.cd>). Unfortunately, the data for the legislative elections were removed from the website of the electoral commission shortly after the elections.²

¹ Mechanical effects can, for example, be measured by differences between vote proportions and seat proportions. The higher these differences the stronger the mechanical effects.

² We made several applications (by phone, e-mail, and mail) to the Commission Electorale Indépendante to receive the detailed results but received no response.

The only other source of data on the DRC elections is Adam Carr's election archive (<http://psephos.adam-carr.net/>) but we were not able to check whether these data are correct, since they are not presented according to the existing constituencies and provinces. Furthermore, Adam Carr aggregated his data by grouping smaller parties (fewer than 10 seats at the national level). The lack of detailed election data has consequences for some of our calculations (see below).

POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

Political parties in Congo have three main weaknesses: absence of ideology, structural deficiencies generating internal instability, and the survival of ethnic mentalities. Moreover, parties are generally based on personalities and ethnic affiliations not on issues, and have strong regional ties.

The Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie (PPRD), led by Joseph Kabila, has its support base mostly in Katanga and the Kivus. The PPRD's main programme was to rebuild the country and encourage Congolese nationalism. In addition, the Alliance pour la Majorité Présidentielle (AMP), a huge coalition of parties built around Kabila and the PPRD, was formed, with the aim of winning the presidency and securing a majority in Parliament. Kabila and his PPRD were generally seen as the favourites to win the presidential, parliamentary and provincial elections.

The main challenger to the PPRD was the Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC), a movement of former rebels led by Jean-Pierre Bemba; its stronghold is in Equateur province and it is closely linked to Uganda. Its presidential candidate was Bemba, a vice-president in the transitional government, who stood on a platform of promoting social justice and authentic Congolese nationalism.

The Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) also originated in a rebel movement. Its leader, Azarias Ruberwa, was, similarly, a vice-president in the transition government and the RCD's presidential candidate. The RCD is linked with Rwanda, and Ruberwa campaigned against corruption in Congo.

The fourth important party in Congolese politics is Parti Lumumbiste Unifié (Palu), the party centred on Antoine Gizenga. Having been active in Congolese politics since independence in 1960 Gizenga has been imprisoned several times and has lived in exile for almost 30 years (Paco/Unops 2006, p15). Palu has widespread support in Gizenga's home province, Bandundu, and in Kinshasa.

A remarkable candidate for the presidency was Nzanga Mobutu, son of the former dictator Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, and his party, Union des Démocrates Mobutistes (Udemo), which took part in the parliamentary elections. (Udemo won 9 seats, 8 of which were in Equator, and therefore does not feature in Table 1).

Finally, there was the presidential candidacy of Oscar Kashala Lukumuenda, a cancer specialist living in the USA, with his Union Pour la Reconstruction du Congo (Urec), a coalition of 30 small parties. Tshisekedi's UDPS also played an important role in the elections – by boycotting them.

Since this paper is concerned with the development of the Congolese party system at national and provincial level we will explore the election results at these levels.

ELECTION RESULTS

According to the almost 1 700 international observers present during the elections, they generally took place in a calm and free atmosphere and most of the electoral bureaux were well organised. The overall turnout was very high (estimated as between 70% and 90%), except in the Kasai provinces, where it was about 40% because of the UDPS boycott.

In Table 2 the distribution of seats in Parliament is given at provincial level, and shows only the parties that won at least 10 seats. The fact that no fewer than 132 lists (of which 63 were independent candidates) are represented in Parliament illustrates the level of fragmentation.

Kabila's PPRD, with 111 seats, was the clear winner of the parliamentary election. The main challenger, the MLC, finished second, with 64; and Palu finished third, with 34 seats.

Five other parties won 10 seats or more: MSR, Forces, RCD, Codeco and CDC. Another 61 parties won fewer than 10 seats, and are shown in the 'Others' column in the table.

The PPRD was the convincing winner in Province Orientale, Nord- and Sud-Kivu, and Katanga. The MLC's strength was in Equateur and Ville de Kinshasa. The victory of Palu in Gizenga's home province, Bandundu, where it won 25 of its 34 seats, was remarkable.

If we look to the provincial results (Table 3), we see a comparable picture. With 124 seats, the PPRD was also the clear winner of the provincial elections. As in the parliamentary elections the MLC finished second, with 89 seats. Palu lost its third position to the RCD. In both elections the high number of the category 'others' and 'independents' illustrates the high fragmentation of the party system at national and provincial level. That is why it was difficult to form a national government after the elections because more than 50 political groups were involved in a parliamentary majority coalition. It is worth mentioning that the fragmentation is even higher than illustrated by the numbers. Some electoral lists consist of a motley collection of smaller political groups, which makes the political situation even more complex than the numbers suggest.

Table 2
Results of the Parliamentary Election (By Seats and Province)
30 July 2006

Province	PPRD	MLC	Palu	MSR	Forces	RCD	Codeco	CDC	Others	Indep	Total
Ville de Kinshasa	4	8	6	3	3	2	2	2	25	3	58
Bas-Congo	6	3		1	2		1	1	7	3	24
Bandundu	4	5	25	1	2		1	2	13	4	57
Equator	3	21		2					23	9	58
Province Orientale	20	5		8	9	2	2	2	8	7	63
Nord-Kivu	15	3		4	6	5		1	11	3	48
Sud-Kivu	13			4					13	2	32
Maniema	6			2					1	3	12
Katanga	26	3		1			2		20	17	69
Kasai-Oriental	5	7		1	1	2	1	2	13	7	39
Kasai-Occidental	9	9	3		3	4	1		6	5	40
Total	111	64	34	27	26	15	10	10	140	63	500

PPRD Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie
MLC Mouvement de Libération du Congo
Palu Parti Lumumbiste Unifié
MSR Mouvement Social pour le Renouveau
Forces Forces du Renouveau
RCD Rassemblement Congolais Pour la Démocratie
CODECO Coalition des Démocrates Congolais

Table 3
Results of the Provincial Election (By Seats and Province)
30 July 2006

Province	PPRD	MLC	Palu	MSR	Forces	RCD	Codeco	CDC	Others	Indep	Total
Ville de Kinshasa	8	22	2	0	0	2	0	0	8	2	44
Bas-Congo	4	5	0	1	1	3	0	0	12	1	27
Bandundu	11	12	8	4	4	3	0	3	30	2	77
Equator	8	22	0	2	0	1	0	1	24	2	60
Province Orientale	21	7	1	12	11	6	8	5	15	2	88
Nord-Kivu	9	1	0	5	5	7	0	1	7	3	38
Sud-Kivu	8	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	17	2	33
Maniema	6	0	0	2	5	2	0	0	4	3	22
Katanga	28	3	0	3	1	3	1	1	25	13	78
Kasai-Oriental	11	6	0	2	3	8	0	4	22	5	61
Kasai-Occidental	10	11	1	1	1	7	0	0	16	2	49
Total	124	89	12	37	32	42	9	15	180	37	577

Source: Based on the official results published by the Electoral Commission. Since results in a few districts are not published on the website, these results are not complete, although only marginally.

THE PARTY SYSTEM: THE NUMBER OF PARTIES

In recent years, academic descriptions of party systems have emphasised the calculation of the relative share of the national vote (Laakso & Taagepera 1979), following Rae's fractionalisation index (Rae 1971). Especially in comparative studies of electoral system effects on party systems (see, eg, Taagepera 1989; Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997) but also in studies describing and explaining party systems in specific cases (Chhibber & Kollman 1998; Moser 1999; Olsen 1998), the 'effective number of parties' is used as a standard measure. The effective number is calculated as follows:

$$N_v = \frac{1}{\sum_i^n v_i^2}$$

V_i represents party i 's relative share of national votes. Since we will also do our calculations at district level we will refer to the 'effective number of electoral district parties' with the term DNV. Basically, this method of calculation boils down to weighing parties according to their own relative electoral importance. The same mathematical formula is used to calculate the effective number of parliamentary (or provincial council) parties (effective number of parties having seats in the parliament or provincial councils). The terms NS and DNS refer to the effective national/provincial parliamentary or provincial council parties and the effective district provincial parliamentary or provincial council parties respectively.

The effective number of national parliamentary parties (NS) is 10,5, a very high number compared to other countries. Since we grouped the independent candidates together, this number hides a more complex political landscape. Sixty-three of the 500 members of Parliament are independent, which means they constitute 12,3 per cent of all elected members. If we consider all these independent candidates as separate parties the number of parties rises to 12,48.

As mentioned above, the data for the legislative elections were removed from the website of the Electoral Commission shortly after the elections, so we were not able to calculate the effective number of parliamentary and electoral parties at district level.

For the provincial elections we aggregated the district level data to the 11 provinces. If we look at Table 4 we find a highly fragmented electoral arena with an effective number of electoral parties as high as 22 in Kinshasa! Only three of the 11 provinces have fewer than 10 parties. On the other hand, the reductive

effect of the electoral systems is quite high (see Table 5). Only two provinces have more than 10 effective provincial council parties. But the fragmentation at council level still remains very high.

All these factors (high electoral fragmentation, strong reductive effect and a lower number of provincial council parties) create strong incentives for party elites to search for cooperation in the near future. In our opinion one of the main efforts to be made in the following years will be the regrouping of numerous political actors in the embryonic Congolese party system. If party elites are unable to regroup the system will remain highly fragmented and voting will remain unstructured. A more structured party system is necessary for the development of a democratic political system. This means, too, that political parties and groups must develop a working relationship across the different districts and provinces. If the international community wants to assist the development of the democratisation process in the DRC it must invest in structuring the party system.

Table 4
Effective Number of Parties: Provincial Election, 11 Old Provinces

Old provinces	Effective number of elective provincial parties	Effective number of provincial council parties
Bandundu	16,63	12,87
Bas-Congo	16,12	8,78
Equateur	8,86	5,68
Kasai Occidental	13,03	8,03
Kasai Oriental	18,56	12,04
Katanga	8,57	5,40
Kinshasa	22,23	3,37
Maniema	9,27	5,90
Nord-Kivu	11,57	7,08
Province Orientale	11,00	7,74
Sud-Kivu	18,11	8,57

Table 5
Provincial Election, Mean M and Reductive Effect

Old provinces	Mean M	Reductive effect
Kinshasa	1,83	18,86
Bas-Congo	2,25	7,34
Maniema	2,75	3,37
Equateur	3,00	3,18
Kasai Oriental	3,39	6,52
Province Orientale	3,52	2,26
Sud-Kivu	3,67	3,24
Bandundu	3,85	3,76
Kasai Occidental	4,08	5,00
Katanga	4,11	3,17
Nord-Kivu	4,22	4,49

The argument for or the appeal of investing in regrouping the party system and mobilising party elites to develop stronger party organisation is even stronger if the electoral system is kept constant. As mentioned above, a large number of districts with low magnitude tends to increase the number of parties in emerging democracies because of the absence of strong party organisations. But because of the numerous districts with small magnitudes and the weak organisational structure of parties across districts, the number of parties at provincial and national level is one of the highest in the world.

According to Benjamin Reilly (2006, p 816) there are at least four distinct approaches to encourage the development of centrist, aggregative (and multi-ethnic) political parties:

1. Constrain the development of ethnic parties by cross-national party formation rules which require parties to demonstrate a broad organisational base.
2. Design electoral rules to reshape the party system.
3. Strengthen parties from the top down via measures to build greater internal party discipline and organisational capacity.
4. International interventions to influence party systems in post-conflict democracies.

Perhaps it is too late for the international community to intervene directly in the internal political dynamics of the DRC but it is still possible to encourage political leaders and parties to take great pains over the first three strategies suggested by Reilly. It is worth examining whether it is useful to allow independent candidates to run for the elections.

Other measures, like a proven cross-provincial and national organisational base (eg, a minimum number of members in at least half the provinces), an electoral threshold (eg, 5% nationwide and in at least one-third of the provinces), a positive (financial) incentive for parliamentary parties with at least 20 seats and regulations for elected members under one party label to stay within that party during the legislative period would be important steps in structuring the party system in the long run.

CONCLUSION

Although a strong electoral system (with small district magnitudes) was implemented in the legislative as well as in the provincial elections in the DRC, the fragmentation of the party system at national as well as at provincial level is very high.

As illustrated in this paper strong electoral systems (small district magnitudes) generate different effects in emerging democracies compared to more traditional democracies. The main reason for this is the absence of structured political party organisations. A democratic system requires some fragmentation to function, but a highly fragmented system runs the risk of not functioning at all. That is why we plead for investment in structuring the party system by development of cross-district party organisations and collaboration and cooperation between the numerous existing parties and independent politicians.

A more structured party system is necessary for the development of a democratic political system. This means, too, that political parties and groups must develop a working relationship across the different districts and provinces.

If the international community wishes to assist the development of democratisation in the DRC it must invest in structuring the party system. At least, parties and party elites must be persuaded to introduce electoral thresholds. Parties should meet minimal party organisational requirements in order to participate in elections.

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REVIEW

Democratic Reform in Africa: Its Impact on Governance and Poverty Alleviation

Muna Ndulo (ed)

Oxford: James Currey 2006, 304 pages

As democratic reforms have gathered pace around the world since the early 1990s and more states have acceded to internal and external demands for greater accountability, transparency and legitimacy in their governance practices one issue, possibly more than any other, has been interrogated by academics and policy-makers: does democracy benefit economically the lives of citizens?

Although this question has prompted sharply divergent discourses at the macro-economic level, nowhere in the world are the merits and/or demerits of these arguments more clearly witnessed than amongst the many African states which form the majority of the poorest countries in the world. Repeatedly in discussions with local African traders, housewives, farmers, and workers, one question seems to recur: what tangible benefits has democracy brought us?

Many of the contributors to *Democratic Reform in Africa: Its Impact on Governance and Poverty Alleviation* either directly or through related discussions attempt to deal with this simple yet elusive question. There are sufficient controversies and debates about the topics of governance and poverty alleviation to fill several volumes, let alone one 304-page collection, but this book makes a clear and important contribution to these debates.

The volume is edited by Muna Ndulo, presently Professor of Law at Cornell University and a Director of its Institute for African Development. Contributors include: Penelope Andrews, Douglin Anglin, Reginald Austin, Joel Barkan, Kate Fletcher, John Hatchard, Robert Kent, Johann Christian Kriegler, Thomas Lansner, Brian Levy, Colleen Lowe Morna, Daniel Manning, Ann & Robert Seidman, Peter Takirambudde and Tsatsu Tsikata.

The book begins with a discussion by Ndulo of the relationship between governance and the rule of law and their impact on poverty alleviation. From the introduction one concludes that the book's primary focus is methods and means which either assist or hinder poverty alleviation and, for the most part, this holds true. It is a tacit assumption throughout much of the book, however, that poverty alleviation is an accepted and commonly understood concept, as the major themes of the book focus almost exclusively on the practices and policies of good governance and, even more specifically, on the rule of law in African states.

While some of the chapters deal almost exclusively with governance issues and practices and their impact on economic development, others focus more on

economic theories and/or myths that are prevalent in the discourse on poverty alleviation. There is a chapter by Tsikata on Ghana as a case study of a success story, and a fascinating chapter by Levy which develops a framework for analysis of the sustainability of the current systems of governance in 21 African states, arguing strongly that existing deficiencies need to be addressed or a number of these governance systems may ultimately collapse.

There is the obligatory chapter on gender imbalances and their impact on the composition of those most affected by poverty – women, but Lowe Morna goes beyond the usual gender equality arguments and asserts that gender, which is a global issue in governance, is receiving more lively and appropriate attention in African states than in many other parts of the world.

The attempt, which is characteristic of several of the chapters, to go beyond contemporary discourse about an issue without deliberately creating controversy or arguing for the sake of being contrary, is what was ultimately most enjoyable about this book. The editing process has produced a publication worth noting for its depth of insight into multiple elements of the governance-poverty-alleviation debate, while at the same time raising new aspects for consideration and future discussion.

At the end of the volume, I realised that while my understanding of the complexities of some of the issues discussed had been expanded and deepened, I was also left pondering yet other questions. While for some this might represent a failure on the part of the authors to completely convince me of their arguments, I prefer to view it as a reflection of the merit of the topic and the integrity with which these multiple and complex issues are addressed in the book.

Few truly groundbreaking concepts are introduced but there remains plenty of value for the interested reader to mull over long after the book has been put down, making *Democratic Reform in Africa: Its Impact on Governance and Poverty Alleviation* an excellent resource for anyone interested in the current debates about African governance, democracy and the role these concepts can and should play in the alleviation of poverty on the continent.

Grant Masterson
Researcher
EISA